

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING – 20TH APRIL, 2009

BARNARD CASTLE VISION

1. Pursuant to Minute 187/Mar/09, the continuing main issue involving the Barnard Castle Vision has been communication. Whilst there was a short discussion at the Councillors' briefing meeting on 12th March, 2009, I have subsequently agreed a number of initiatives which hopefully will improve communication problems and help to ensure that Town Councillors are kept fully informed of ongoing developments.
2. The first of the initiatives is the submission of a briefing note to Town Council meetings. The first of these is attached as an **Appendix** to this report and is submitted in the joint names of Annalisa Ward of the Vision team and myself. It is intended that a briefing note will be submitted to each ordinary Council meeting, with the previous difficulties of deciding what Members needed to be told therefore being avoided.
3. There are a number of associated issues which will hopefully improve the communication flow and they can be summarised as follows:-
 - (i) the next two briefing meetings for Councillors have already been scheduled, with provisional dates of Thursdays, 11th June and 17th September, 2009 – these dates will be confirmed in due course;
 - (ii) a further meeting between the Town Mayor and the Vision Chairman has been scheduled for late-April 2009; and
 - (iii) hard copies of the bi-monthly Vision newsletter will be made available to Councillors as soon as they are published.
4. In addition, I am attempting to establish Councillor links with various strands of the Vision process. They can be summarised as follows:-
 - (i) Councillor Peat represented this Council at a Barney Guild Christmas event meeting on 14th April, 2009 and will report back to the next meeting of the Christmas Festival Committee;
 - (ii) the nomination of a Councillor to attend Barney Guild meetings is being encouraged;
 - (iii) similarly, Council representation on the Retail Heart Group is being sought; and
 - (iv) the attendance of a Councillor at a landscaping presentation meeting on 24th April, 2009 is also sought.

I am also attempting to ensure that information regarding prospective changes to Vision Board membership becomes available in the near future.

5. **Recommendation** – Members' views are requested on all of the above, with particular reference to nominations in respect of sub-sections (ii), (iii) and (iv) of paragraph 4.

**G BOSWORTH
CLERK**

Barnard Castle Vision- Updated Note April 2009

Shaw Bank

The master plan was submitted to Teesdale District Council Executive Committee for review and adoption as a strategy and policy document. The report was approved on 16th February 2009. The assistant to the Vision has continued to liaise with TCR regarding development of a youth hub on the site and planning permission was secured for this project at the end of March 09. Following this, it is anticipated that the master plan will progress through the Local Development Framework as an advisory document. It is intended that the meetings with partners who have an interest in Shaw Bank site will continue, to include Teesdale School, GlaxoSmithKline, Teesdale Community Resources, the Rugby Club and the Leisure Centre. The master plan has already attracted developer interest.

Visitor information and interpretation (the box)

The electronic information box has been installed in the Galgate area of Barnard Castle and a formal launch was held in March. Content is broadcast through Bluetooth, wireless and plasma screens with regular wireless users and hundreds of downloads. The information box won the top award at this year's North East regional digital awards for use of mobile technology. The box will provide a tourism information service, engage, inform and consult with local people, visitors and traders through the interactive electronic technology housed within the structure. Many local businesses and organisations are already using the box to engage with their own customers.

The Wireless Barnard Castle project is complete and has been switched on with the launch of the electronic information box. The WiMax part of the project, linked to the Durham wide Wi Max bid, is in abeyance pending news regarding possible State Aid issues. The Barnard Castle Vision and Durham Net are working closely together on this project.

Developer dialogue

A hotel developer has visited the town to look at a number of existing sites.

Work is still in progress to secure town centre premises to redevelop into a heritage centre providing a high-street presence for the Castle and The Bowes Museum. The planning permission for this work has been deferred for further discussion of ideas raised by the Landscape Appraisal study.

The Witham Hall

Five architect practices were short-listed following the submission of expressions of interest. The architects made presentations to the selection committee on 9th April and following a review of sealed fee bids a practice will be ready to be appointed. This appointment will be delayed until future capital project funding is agreed through One North East and DCC.

The Barney Guild

Further meetings have been held and the group have worked successfully to deliver a Valentine and Easter PR campaign. A shop local campaign has begun in conjunction with the Teesdale Mercury and One North East. Further marketing and events activities are planned for 2009 including a "Get Acquainted" campaign to attract more shopping visitors to the town and a number of other promotions to support events such as The Meet, Big Bash and Teesdale Artists Networks' Open Studios. Other business development activities are planned including mystery shoppers, merchandising training and support to develop internet trading.

The Barney Bag was launched with the Mayor on Saturday 21st March and is selling well. A recent stall at the Farmers Market sold 107 bags and the Teesdale Mercury and Orchard have sold over 100 in the first month. Good publicity has been gained for this project in the local press and more is planned over the coming months including "best travelled bag", a window dressing competition and possible poetry competition with schools.

A community toilet scheme is being researched and discussed with Gary Hutchinson TDC/DCC. This scheme would aim to provide funding for local businesses to open their toilets

to the public (ideally pubs, cafes and premises who already have public facilities) and specifically to increase the toilet facilities in the market place. A government model has been developed for these schemes and has been based on work done in Richmond-upon-Thames; the full report can be obtained at: www.communities.gov.uk – Improving public access to Better Quality Toilets. This option is being considered alongside any further discussions to re-open toilets in the Market Place.

Retail Heart

The topographical study was completed in Jan 09 and a review undertaken of previous traffic flow surveys to provide the required information to model options to reconfigure traffic flow to allow access to the Butter Market. An option has been presented to the Retail Heart group and requires further discussion with DCC Highways, prior to any further consultation. Initial highways work costs are being considered and a structural survey has been delayed whilst we consider these costs within our current 09/10 budget allocations.

The Shop Front improvement scheme is underway with work to alter the Boyes shop front already in progress. Packs have been issued to the Barney Guild and further enquiries and applications are in progress. A press release is being prepared with Boyes to further promote the scheme.

A business transport survey has been designed to assess the current loading/unloading requirements and employee travel/parking arrangements. This survey should be conducted in late April 09/early May 09. Development of this survey has been done in conjunction with a working group and has been copied to Geoff Bosworth for comment.

Planning permission has been secured to open a new entrance to the visitor car park off Newgate and construction should begin in late summer due to requirements for a stopping-up order.

A bid has been submitted to the Heritage Lottery – Townscape Heritage Initiative to increase funding for town centre developments £753,000 match funding. The funding officers have visited the town and a decision is expected 21/04/09.

Landscape Appraisal

The consultants have provided an interim report to various stakeholders and very positive feedback has been received. A further presentation will be made on 24th April. Funding research is underway to identify opportunities to deliver some of the recommendations of this study.

Castle Lighting

Orders have been placed for lighting poles, lamps and work to lay cables and procurement is under way for the flood lights. Delays have been experienced due to comments received from English Heritage and the local conservation officer with regard to the light pole designs. We anticipate that work should be complete by End June 2009. However, we are awaiting further advice from DCC regarding the schedule as it is dependent on external contractors providing equipment, availability of Services Direct and foot path closures. On completion of the initial works the flood lights will be installed by Services Direct.

Communications

Updating of the Vision website is ongoing and further editions of Looking Ahead are in planning. In February, the first meeting of the 1,000 voices panel met together at Teesdale School for a day of consultation and engagement. There is a continuous process to recruit panel members and further events are being planned.

Tourism and Food

Working with Teesdale Marketing we have further developed the level of tourism communications undertaken including updating the accommodation website, establishing a photographic library and support for events guides and bedroom browsers.

An innovative project is underway to support the delivery of local food initiatives. Working with the North Pennines AONB, the Enterprise Agency, Teesdale Conservation Volunteers and Teesdale Marketing the vision will support the food and drink sector. This project may be expanded if a partnership lottery bid is successful. The project will also encourage people to "grow their own" food, buy local and recycle. The project will improve the area's sustainability (and reduce its high carbon footprint) by reducing waste, decreasing fuel consumption and reducing food miles.

Craft quarter feasibility study

An experienced Craft Guild manager was appointed to look at opportunities to develop a craft guild and a premise. The report highlighted several opportunities that may be followed up in the next financial year. Specifically the Vision has identified that there are currently no start-up workshop planned within Teesdale within DCC's current capital programmes.

Leadership Day event

This relates to a programme of events to bring together major players from different sectors locally, regionally and nationally to share in and develop the Vision, to build a bank of potential investors, to ensure private sector involvement and to achieve inspirational input from key public and private sectors. A third Leadership event took place on 27th March with representatives from the health, education, business and craft sectors. The Chair of the Vision has also been maintaining contacts with Coutts Bank.

A further element of the Leadership work is making connections with other European countries and exploratory contacts have been made through respective embassies. The aim of these links is to share best practice and bring an objective eye to our own plans.

Project Evaluation

A brief has been prepared and will be issued in April 2009. An annual report and video brochure are being prepared for issue.

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING – 1ST JUNE, 2009

BARNARD CASTLE VISION

1. Pursuant to Minute 219/Apr/09, the second joint briefing note (in the names of Annalisa Ward of the Barnard Castle Vision and myself), is attached as an **Appendix** to this report. The note covers all the main issues in which the Vision are currently involved, with particular emphasis placed on those issues which have a Town Council link. If Members consider that the format or the amount of detail are unsatisfactory, a revision of the whole arrangement can be made in time for the July Council meeting.
2. There are two particular items to highlight in this accompanying report:-
 - (i) Whilst the landscape appraisal report is complete, only one half of the documentation is ready for circulation, with the historical analysis/costings, etc. still awaited from the consultants. When everything is available, the documentation can be made available to Members but only on an individual basis via the office. There will be some sort of formal presentation to the Town Council in due course.
 - (ii) The next Vision briefing meeting for all Town Councillors and local County Councillors is scheduled for Thursday, 11th June, 2009 commencing at 6.30 p.m. in The Witham Hall. If Members have any questions they wish to raise, it will be helpful if they can inform me in advance.
3. **Recommendation** – That the information be received.

**G BOSWORTH
CLERK**

Barnard Castle Vision- Updated Note May 2009

Shaw Bank

Anne is maintaining contact with Keith Jones at TCR and other site stakeholders.

Visitor information and interpretation (the box) and Wifi

Anne is in discussion with Durham Net and One North East to identify a way forward on broadband access for Teesdale. It seems to be clear that a wireless solution is not going to be acceptable to the funders but other options are being explored as a matter of urgency. Anne is researching work currently being carried out in South Yorkshire through Yorkshire Forward (RDA for Yorkshire).

The Witham Hall

An architects practice has been selected to take forward the new designs in accordance with RIBA stages. We are in development discussions with One North East regarding the PIP (Project Initiation Plan) submitted for funding the capital project. A costed business plan is in preparation.

The Barney Guild

The Guild is working on a number of projects including:

- Raising the profile of the businesses on the bank and in particular the antique shops by working with David Harper who is filming a series called "Put your money where your mouth is" and using locations around the town to film five programmes which will be broadcast in the Autumn. The coverage of Barnard Castle will be worth around £1 million. The programme is a challenge between two dealers to raise as much money as possible through buying and selling antiques and art. Each dealer can then donate the money to a chosen charity and David is donating money to the Witham Hall.
- Planning for the Christmas Festival is well underway and the joint working group hopes to confirm the full programme in early June.
- The guild has worked with The Meet to do a Town Trail from 22nd May to 30th May. The trail takes participants from the top to the bottom of town looking for shops and pictures of Teesdale landmarks in their windows.
- The Guild is exploring supporting the Town Council's Barney in Bloom strategy by having hanging baskets or displays.
- The Shop local promotion continues and will include a number of stories over the coming months including – inter-trade business to business and farmers market food miles saved.
- The Barney bag has reached sales of over 1000 bags. A summer "best travelled" Barney bag competition is proposed. A stall was taken at the Climate Change Fayre at The Methodist Church on 9th May and further stalls will be held at Farmers Markets through the summer.
- A project is being developed to look at utilising the empty shops with groups of start-up businesses working co-operatively.

Retail Heart

The bid to the Townscape Heritage Initiative was unsuccessful with money in the north going to Berwick Vision (£700K). We have been encouraged by the Project Officer to consider making a second application in November 09. A meeting is planned for early June to discuss this new application and identify more derelict sites that could be brought back into use.

A number of shop front improvement applications have been received from both independent and national shops.

The team are discussing the expansion of the retail heart working group to incorporate the landscape working group. A first joint meeting is planned for June/July and the group will be lead by Will Weston.

Landscape Appraisal

The final report has been received and Will is looking at ways to disseminate the report to all key stakeholders. The next steps include work to design a new link from the Bowes Museum to town, a review to short-list projects that we can afford within current budgets and a strategy to fund raise for other projects.

£25,000 of Section 106 monies will be transferred to the Town Council to support the Dawson Road play area.

Durham County Council Landscape department are keen to work with us to implement the landscape appraisal. They may be able provide some support for the development of joint funding bids.

Castle Lighting

The feeder pillar and new electrical connections have been made to Scar Top. Following discussion regarding the footpath closure causing problems for local school children this is being discussed with the installation team at Durham County Council.

Communications

Next Vision briefing meeting is Thursday 11th June at 6.30 at The Witham.
The next Vision Partnership board meeting will be held on Friday 29th May.
An annual report is being drafted to provide information on projects delivered to date.

Overseas Links

An inward visit is being planned for October by the Atelier d'Art (Arts and Crafts Guild) from France, this visit may coincide with the Teesdale Open Studios event.

Higher Education links

Anne is working with The Open University to look at a marketing campaign to increase uptake in higher level qualifications.

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING – 20TH JULY, 2009

BARNARD CASTLE VISION

1. Pursuant to Minutes 219/Apr/09 and 19/Jun/09, the third joint briefing note (in the names of Annalisa Ward of the Barnard Castle Vision and myself) is attached as an **Appendix** to this report. The note covers all the main issues in which the Vision are involved, with particular emphasis placed on those issues which have a Town Council link.
2. There are two particular issues to highlight:-
 - (i) the Castle floodlights project is a joint project involving this Council and the Vision and information will appear (from this meeting onwards) on the agenda item on this Council's service and project updates; and
 - (ii) as can be seen in the Appendix, the next briefing meeting for all Town Councillors and local County Councillors is scheduled for Thursday, 17th September, 2009 commencing at 6.30 p.m., the venue this time being Teesdale House. Members are asked to note that the evening will include a short briefing by myself to Vision and County Council representatives – it is considered important that communication is two-way and that information about Town Council activities should be as important to the Vision team as their information is for the Council.
3. **Recommendation** – That the above information be received.

**G BOSWORTH
CLERK**

Barnard Castle Vision- Updated Note July 2009

Shaw Bank

Following discussion with DCC Highway Officers Anne is looking at extending the Shaw Bank Master plan to include land on the opposite side of the road which has in the past been considered for private housing.

Visitor information and interpretation (the box) and Wifi

In relation to broadband, the Vision has submitted a draft RDPE expression of interest with Middleton Plus, the Upper Teesdale Agricultural Support Service and The Enterprise Agency as bidding partners. Talks have also been held with the Primary Care Trust in relation to support for broadband services to deliver healthcare. The information box continues to be improved to give better Bluetooth, wireless and visitor information. Requests from local businesses and organisations to be included within the Bluetooth and plasma presentations continue to be received as a way of reaching customers and target audiences.

The Witham Hall

Architects Fielden, Clegg, Bradley have been selected to undertake the design work and will be meeting with the project working group on 24th July. The working group is a partnership between the Vision and The Witham trustees. Further procurement is underway to contract additional design team members including a Quantity Surveyor and Mechanical and Electrical Engineers.

A project manager has been recruited to support the team with all capital projects but in particular with the ongoing development of The Witham. Edward Strickland will start work in late August.

The Barney Guild

The Guild is working on a number of projects including:

- An Auction Event was held on 27th June as the final part of the filming for "Put your Money where your Mouth is"; we anticipate that this will significantly raise the profile of Barnard Castle as a centre for antiques. Further work is planned to market the Art and Antiques quarter down and around the Bank.
- Full programme agreed and work underway to get all retailers on board, work with the schools, farmers market and local groups especially musicians to provide street entertainment.
- The Guild sold over 45 hanging baskets to businesses throughout the town and will work closely with the Town Council to support further expansion of the scheme for next Spring/Summer.
- The Guild is looking to expand the Shop Local campaign with the introduction of a "loyalty card". A presentation is to be made to the guild in September regarding a current scheme operating across a number of market towns in North Yorkshire. A collaboration with this scheme would mean that the town is marketed to over 4000 current loyalty card holders.
- The Barney bag has reached sales of over 1500 bags. Sales in shops are being expanded by further farmers market stalls, involvement in a food festival at Thorpe Farm and other local events. DCC has purchased over 200 bags for the CCN conference which is being hosted by Durham in the autumn.
- A project is being developed to look at utilising the empty shops with groups of start-up businesses working co-operatively.
- The guild is working to support two major events in the Autumn – Heritage Open Weekend and Teesdale Artist's Network Open Studios. A selection of shops will have displays about their past history for the Heritage Open Weekend 12/13th September. and artists will be paired with local shops and window displays created to bring Art to the Shops throughout the period of the open studios in October.
- The Guild is working with Richard Bell to support the re-opening of the market place toilets. A costed plan and feasibility for a community toilet scheme (the licensed opening of toilets in cafes, restaurants, pubs and other appropriate private buildings), is also being explored.

Retail Heart and Landscape

Will Weston has taken over the management of this working group and is planning to bring together an extended working group that will progress work in the Town Centre and the recommendations of the Landscape Appraisal. This group will include representatives from Highways, English Heritage, Town Council, landowners and volunteer.

Work is progressing on the opening of the Hole-in-the-Wall Car Park and the new link pathway into the Bowes Museum.

Further to initial suggestions made in the Streetscape study regarding a new signage strategy and style further work is being commissioned to take this forward. The new signage would be implemented in test areas such as the Hole in the Wall and Bowes link pathway. There is a limited budget for this work and so it will have to be delivered on a project by project basis.

Communications

Next Vision briefing meeting is Thursday 17th September at 6.30 at Teesdale House.

A report has been produced to summarise progress to date and the future programme of work. Copies will be issued by the end of the month.

A tender for PR services will be released shortly via the DCC E-tender system. Other planned work includes video profiles of retailers and further development of the website.

The Vision is sponsoring two squares on the Durham monopoly board which is being produced for the Durham Tourism Partnership.

A 1,000 Voices co-ordinator has been appointed to lead on this particular piece of work – to involve the local community in the progression of the Barnard Castle Vision. The person selected has considerable experience of community and arts liaison and has drawn up a programme of engagement that has already begun. In addition to this, a PR tender is due to be issued following approval by the procurement section of DCC.

Tourism and the Local Food Economy

A partnership Lottery bid has been submitted in relation to the local food economy and feedback on its success will be received in September 2009. Work is continuing with the Teesdale Conservation Volunteers on a joint 'grow your own' food scheme, to buy locally and to recycle. This will improve the area's sustainability (and reduce its high carbon footprint) by reducing waste, decreasing fuel consumption and reducing food miles.

A destination management plan for Barnard Castle has been produced in co-operation with the Durham Area Tourism Partnership. The Board of the Vision would like to see the document revised to incorporate a more ambitious approach to tourism for Barnard Castle. This revision work is on-going.

Partnership Board

Following the board meeting in May a number of new members have accepted invitations to join the board to provide expertise in themes within the Vision strategy:

David Gallagher, Director of Corporate Strategies, Services and Relations for the Primary Care Trust-
Theme: Health

Hon Harry Vane, Marwood Estate – Theme: Landscape

Paul Harrison, Head Teacher, Teesdale School – Theme: Education

Frances Rowe, Rural and Environment Manager – One North East

Barnard Castle Vision- Updated Note Sept 2009

Visitor information and interpretation (the box) and Wifi

DCC Procurement is assisting with the preparation of a tender for the supply of broadband services across the dale. A meeting has been held with BT with regard to opportunities for broadband in rural areas and they were interested in viewing the tender and informed us of a project they had worked on in North Yorkshire – NYNET. We are currently contacting the project manager of NYNET to discuss how this project was delivered. An expression of interest has been submitted for RDPE funding and we are now exploring the possibility of ERDF funding.

The Witham Hall

Architects Fielden Clegg Bradley have held a first meeting with the project working group (combination of Vision team and Witham Trustees). They are currently working on the first outline designs for a new scheme to be discussed on 10th Sept.

An excellent response has been received for the tenders to supply Quantity Surveying, Mechanical and Electrical and Structural services for the Witham design team. This work has been tendered through the DCC e-tenders system and contracts should be placed within the next few weeks.

Edward Strickland started work 24th August and will be managing both the Witham and other capital projects including the Bowes Link and Hole-in-the-Wall Car Park.

The Barney Guild

The Guild is working on a number of projects including:

- The Auction Event for "Put your Money where your Mouth is" and the rest of the programme's activities should contribute a few thousand pounds to the Witham Cinema Fund. The Cinema is likely to be up and running in October/November. A test event had 62 people in attendance and received excellent feedback.
- The Christmas Festival programme will be finalised in the next week or so and will be an extension of last year's programme but not as ambitious as the group had hoped due to limited staff resources across all the partner organisations. Radio Teesdale are still working on opportunities for a celebrity to be involved in the Town Council switch-on.
- A joint meeting is planned between the Town Council, DCC and the Guild to look at Barney in Bloom for 2010.
- The Guild is considering the production of a larger sized Barney Bag to be launched in the New Year. Sales continue to be good with around 200 bags per month being sold.
- A project is being developed to look at utilising the empty shops with groups of start-up businesses working co-operatively. Additional funding for this project has been identified through DCC and The Arts Council.
- The guild is working to support two major events in the autumn – Heritage Open Weekend and Teesdale Artist's Network Open Studios. 8 or 9 shops will have displays about their past history for the Heritage Open Weekend 12/13th September. During the Teesdale Artists Open Studios event from 23rd October to 1st November artists will be paired with local shops and window displays created to bring Art to the Shops. A walk has been organised to encourage people to visit the artists based in the town centre.
- The Guild is working with Richard Bell to support the re-opening of the market place toilets. A costed plan and feasibility for a community toilet scheme (the licensed opening of toilets in cafes, restaurants, pubs and other appropriate private buildings), is also being explored.

Retail Heart and Landscape

Work is progressing on the opening of the Hole-in-the-Wall Car Park, with a final scheme agreed in line with planning conditions. The work is programmed to commence in the autumn through Services Direct the DCC contractors.

A meeting between the Town Council, English Heritage and The Vision was held on Scar Top to look at both the long-term opportunities for developing the green spaces and the short-term opportunities to improve visibility of the castle and the look of the green areas in general. Notes from this meeting will be circulated shortly and costs for some minor works will be considered within the next few weeks.

An expression of interest has been submitted to the Heritage Lottery Landscape Partnership funding and has received favourable comment; work is due to commence on writing the main bid which would provide money to deliver projects identified in the landscape appraisal report. An expression of interest has been submitted to Leader to seek funding for work to the riverside paths.

Work is progressing to finalise the town to Bowes link scheme.

European Links

The Vision is helping to host a visit to The Bowes Museum by representatives from a Dutch and a French market town. Those attending will include representatives from the French Craft Council, the French Ambassador/or French Consul and the British Council. The visit will include a tour of the Bowes Museum, visit to the Sage for the opening of an Anglo French exhibition, a tour of local artists' studios, workshops to discuss town centre improvement programmes and the role of the cultural sector within regeneration.

Communications

Next Vision briefing meeting is Thursday 17th September at 6.30 at The Witham.

A report has been produced to summarise progress to date and the future programme of work. Copies will be issued at the briefing meeting.

Tenders for PR services have been received and following evaluation and interview it is hoped a contract will be placed by mid September.

A 1,000 Voices event was held on the 25th July. Jill Cole, the new co-ordinator led this event and is now going to organise some further meetings with smaller focus groups who have expressed an interest in a particular area of the Vision work e.g. a group to look at Tourism work.

Tourism and the Local Food Economy

The Food Enterprise bid has been reviewed by the Lottery project officer and will be submitted to the Lottery board for approval, news is expected by end September.

An expression of interest has been submitted to the Lottery Food Grants for a Food Festival event to be held in July 2010.

Castle Lighting

The DCC bat survey showed there are no colonies of bats in the vicinity of the castle. All new lamp posts and lamps have been ordered and we are awaiting notification of delivery dates. The tenders for the flood lights have been returned to DCC and will be assessed in the next couple of weeks. A launch event is to be organised when we are confident of a project completion date.

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING – 19TH OCTOBER, 2009

BARNARD CASTLE VISION

General

1. In accordance with the standard arrangements, the Vision Update Notes attached to this report as an **Appendix** are the latest in a series of Updates submitted jointly by Annalisa Ward of the Vision and myself. It contains information about major issues in which the Vision is currently involved.
2. In the light of ongoing comments, it is evident that a number of Councillors are still not satisfied with the information flow from the Vision, albeit that most of those Councillors did not attend the latest Vision and Town Council briefing meeting on 17th September, 2009 which was incidentally attended by 4 County Councillors and 5 Town Councillors. At that meeting and for the first time, I gave a presentation on Town Council activities which apparently was 'something of an eye-opener' for a number of those present. The joint presentations will be a feature of future briefing meetings.
3. Information is starting to flow (primarily in the form of press releases) via the new Vision public relations arrangement and I have a meeting on 21st October, 2009 to discuss how to ensure that such communications are conveyed quickly and regularly to all Councillors.
4. My continuing attendance at Vision Sub-Group meetings is continuing to contribute towards a difficult workload situation (to be considered at agenda item 103) and it is certainly questionable whether 3½ hours every second Friday is time well spent. As Members are aware, I am frustrated by the criticism that I do not sufficiently inform Members of everything the Vision is discussing. To this end, I am seeking Members' views on whether a request should be submitted to the Vision team for all Sub-Group Minutes to be circulated to all Town Councillors as soon as they are produced but on a confidential basis, i.e. not as part of the Council meeting documentation.
5. As far as the information flow is concerned, I am in a 'no-win' situation, with the current state of play being totally unacceptable. I will expand on this at the meeting as far as I am able during the open part of the meeting.
6. **Recommendation** – Members' views are requested.

G BOSWORTH
CLERK

Date: 12th October 2009

Shaw Bank

The Master plan has been amended to show 2 phase approach and our plans for road ways as agreed by highways for TCR development. The updated plan has been submitted with covering letter to DCC for consideration as part of Local Development Framework.

Place-making conference 16-19 October

Delegations from Harfleur in France and Montfoort in Holland will be visiting the town and surrounding area. The event has been organised as part of the Vision's Leadership Programme which aims to bring the best possible skills and resources to the town and to ensure we are innovative and creative looking outside of the area for solutions. The occasion is intended to bring together arts and regeneration experts from two similar towns in Europe to take part in a series of workshops, exchanging case studies and learning about cultural and economic activities in North East England.

Next Generation Broadband

Various meetings have been held to look at possible solutions, these have included - NorthYorkshireNet (NYNet), Stewart Watkin (NetPark), Stephen Carey (One North East) and DCC stakeholders. A Tender document inviting organisations to bid to deliver a broad band solution for the dale has been drafted. An expression of interest for RDPE funding has been approved. The Vision is working closely with the area action partnership through Charlotte Stowe, Business Representative.

The Witham

The Witham Working Group has met with the architect to support the development of the outline scheme design. It is anticipated that design stage C will be achieved by mid October, although input will be required from the rest of the design team before this stage can be completed.

Procurement for the design team has been completed. EC Harris has been selected as the Quantity Surveyors for the project and is currently working on costing the scheme design. Selection of the Mechanical and Electrical and Structural engineers will be formalised shortly. We will likely procure additional design services to cover the specialisms of acoustics, theatre/auditoria and accessibility; also we will be appointing a CDM Coordinator. Some additional topographical data is being gathered and a detailed historical assessment is to be commissioned shortly on the Witham.

It is provisionally hoped to make an application for planning permission by 1st December, these dates being dependent on the remaining design team appointments and any design changes they need to work up. The launch of the scheme will take place around mid-October. PR Consultants Littlewolf has been appointed to manage all PR etc relating to the Witham and other projects.

Landscape/Townscape Projects

Hole-in-the-Wall Car Park

Work has commenced on the new entrance to the Hole in the Wall car park. Pavement improvements are also being made along the north side of Newgate to maintain a common stone quality surface. Visitor information and a name stone will be installed at a later date. Signage to the Car Park has been agreed with Highways.

Landscape and Riverside pathways

An opportunity has arisen to make a bid for funding from Leader to contribute to work on the walking strategy as set out in the landscape appraisal study. As funding is only available provided the work can be completed during the current financial year a bid is being made to improve the un-adopted riverside path next to the old gas works and the creation of the Green Barney volunteers group.

The Barney Guild

The Guild is working on a number of projects including:-

- The guild celebrated a year of work and is currently on a drive to recruit more members.
- The "Put your money where your mouth is" project has raised a total of £3,171 to support The Witham's cinema project. (this is confidential until the programme airs late Sept/October). Further work is planned to promote the antiques and artisan quarter including a leaflet to be distributed via TICs in Cumbria, Durham, Yorkshire and Northumberland. This will be produced with adverts paid for by the businesses in the area/sector covering the cost of the print and contributing towards the distribution costs.
- Christmas Festival 2009 – a full programme has been agreed with all partners including the Town Council and work is underway to get all retailers on board, work with the schools, farmers market and local groups especially musicians to provide street entertainment.
- The hanging baskets added colour to the town and we are working with the Town Council and Durham County Council to organise an expanded scheme for Spring/Summer 2010.
- The Barney bag has reached sales of over 2000 bags. A larger shopping bag is being costed for introduction in January 2010.
- A project is being developed to look at utilising the empty shops with groups of start-up businesses working co-operatively. This project is being run in conjunction with the Enterprise Agency we are currently contacting landlords to discuss terms for short-term lease. We hope to be able to apply for funding from the Arts Council to support artists to use the shops and from DCC who have been given a grant of £50,000 from central government.

- Eight shops had displays about their past history for the Heritage Open Weekend 12/13th September. For the Open Studios Event artists will be paired with local shops and window displays created to bring Art to the Shops throughout the period of the open studios in October. We have organised arts walks as an additional means to bring people into the town.
- The Guild is working with Councillor Richard Bell to support the re-opening of the market place toilets. A costed plan and feasibility for a community toilet scheme (the licensed opening of toilets in cafes, restaurants, pubs and other appropriate private buildings), has been submitted to the councillors for review.
- The campaign to encourage visitors to "Get Acquainted" with shopping in Barnard Castle has begun with an advert to support a feature on the town in the August edition of North East Life. This campaign is to be developed further in the near future with leaflets distributed by The Bowes Museum and Raby Castle as well as a new website, leaflets distributed by TICs in Cumbria, Northumberland and Yorkshire. The video profiles of local shopkeepers will also feature as part of this campaign.

Communications

A tender for PR services was issued via DCC procurement and following evaluation 4 companies were interviewed. The contract has been awarded to Littlewolf Marketing and PR.

A 1,000 Voices event was held on the 25th July. Jill Cole, the new co-ordinator led this event and is now going to organise some further meetings with smaller focus groups who have expressed an interest in a particular area of the Vision work e.g. a group to look at Tourism work.

The guild has been featured as part of a new County Durham quarterly feature in the Northern Echo. This is Durham will feature good news stories from across the region. In the next feature we will be publicising the Witham redevelopment.

Shop Front Improvement Grants

Seven applications are currently being processed. Changes to the scheme criteria have been agreed to provide a small budget for those just wanting to do basic improvements and painting £10k maximum (of which there have been numerous enquiries) but with a requirement for 50% match funding (rather than 75/25) and for those bring an empty shop back to life then the scheme has been extended to include a contribution to interior and fit-out.

These new developments will be marketed in the next few weeks. Letters have been sent to the agents of empty premises to make them aware of the scheme; the response was one of interest but no applications have been forthcoming to date.

Project Management and Project team

The Vision has appointed a Creative Apprentice. Amberley Elliot has a one year contract to support community arts development and will be working on the Art/Craft quarter development, partnership projects with The Bowes Museum and programming for venues such as The Witham.

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING – 7TH DECEMBER, 2009

BARNARD CASTLE VISION

1. In accordance with the standard arrangements, the Vision update notes attached to this report as an **Appendix** are the latest in a series of updates submitted jointly by Annalisa Ward of the Vision and myself. They contain information about major issues in which the Vision is currently involved. The Castle floodlights joint project is reported on at agenda item 115 as part of the Services and Project Updates.
2. Whilst no formal action has yet been taken regarding the decision (at Council Minute 88(1)/Oct/09) to ask the Vision for copies of all Sub-Group and Board meeting Minutes for issue to all Town Councillors, it is understood that there has been some discussion on the matter within the Vision team. The likelihood is that the Minutes of the Board meetings will be made available but the Sub-Group meeting Minutes will not.
3. I raised at the last Council meeting the associated matter of my possible non-attendance at Vision Sub-Group meetings. Since that Council meeting and mainly because of my overall workload and competing priorities, I have not attended any of the Sub-Group meetings and this is likely to be a continuing problem for the foreseeable future, i.e. at least until mid-February 2010. I intend to speak to the Vision Chairman about the situation but I do not 'see a light at the end of the tunnel'. Of course, the Assistant Clerk could attend the meetings as my deputy but I am not convinced that that action would actually help the workload situation.
4. I recently held a meeting with the Vision's two marketing representatives. The main subject was the issue of press releases by the Vision and the advance notification of the information contained therein to Town Councillors. The two representatives have agreed to send the press releases by e-mail to those Councillors who require them sent by that method. Other Councillors will receive the releases in hard-copy form via the Town Council's office. The main problem is to ensure that the information reaches Councillors before it appears in the media. The press releases are being issued on a regular basis and it is difficult to keep pace with the flow of information. Consequently, views of Members will be welcome, particularly in the light of the general comments from Members that not enough information is conveyed to them by the Vision.
5. **Recommendation** – Members' views are requested on all of the above and the information contained in the **Appendix**.

G Bosworth
Clerk

Barnard Castle VISION

The Barney Guild

The Guild is working on a number of projects including:

- Christmas Festival 2009 – a full programme has been agreed and detailed plans are being finalised. 3000 are leaflets to be distributed to households in Barnard Castle and 1500 via local schools. Local businesses are working with local artists to deliver a programme of Christmas Workshops. The festival includes a school arts competition, late-night shopping and farmers market until 7.00 pm and local groups especially musicians providing street entertainment.
- The campaign to encourage visitors to "Get Acquainted" with shopping in Barnard Castle has continued with the issue of 10,000 Christmas Shopping leaflets to tourist information centres and other distribution points across Cumbria, Northumberland, Durham and North Yorkshire. The leaflets are also being handed out at The Bowes Museum to encourage visitors to come into town during their visit or return at a later date. The leaflet includes a return portion with a draw to win a £50 food hamper. In the first four weeks of the campaign 30 cards have been returned.
- The Art in Shops initiative attracted good press coverage and we are awaiting feedback from the artists studios regarding visitor numbers and the contribution to the local economy from visitors buying art, visiting the shops and eating a local cafes and pubs. This project is to be expanded next year to include Art Talks, more art walks and an Art Lecture to open the event.
- Working with the Farmers Market we plan to develop an annual food festival in the centre of town. A first round bid has been accepted by the National Lottery Local Food fund and we are currently working on the full bid with programme advisor Rory McWilliams. We hope to hold the festival in Summer 2010.
- Funding bids are being developed to enable the development of a one day extension to the thirty-year old "Swaledale Music Festival". There will be 6/7 events in Barnard Castle on Sunday 13th June 2010. These include a concert by cellist Natalie Cline, Art exhibition and story telling at the Bowes, Town walk, workshop and concert with The Snake Davis band involving school children from Staindrop, Richmond, Barnard Castle County School and Teesdale School. The aim of the project is to bring more visitors from the Yorkshire Dales and to kick-start the development of an annual music festival. A Teesdale Summer Fest is also in development with the bringing together of a number of existing and new events to create a full programme of events in July and August that will encourage visitors to stay longer in Teesdale. This will in essence be a marketing campaign to promote the dales cultural diversity, local talent and a wide-range of events and activities to be enjoyed on a visit to the area.

Communications

- Work is underway to produce stakeholder and general public newsletters, revamp the website, develop an engagement programme for the Witham redevelopment, and gather baseline perception measurements and to provide material for a variety of County Council publications.
- A 1,000 Voices focus group event was held on the 3 November. This group focused on developments in the town centre and had an update from David Woods regarding The Witham, discussed the new car park entrance and the proposed Bowes link project.

Shop Front Improvement Grants

- Changes to the scheme have brought a number of new enquiries both for the support for empty shops and for small repairs.
- Follow-up work with the national stores has brought in an application from one of the premises we have been targeting.
- Money has been carried over until next year as we felt we were unlikely to make all grant payments by end March.

Hole in the Wall

- Work is now almost complete. The rear of the car park will remain open and use of the car park as a short-cut will be avoided by a change of layout.

Landscape Projects

- We have been successful with our bid to LEADER for funding. The Environment Agency will be undertaking work on the river bank in January and have offered to work with us on the project. This may well lead to an involvement in the Landscape Partnership bid and an extension of the work we might be able to achieve.
- The Bowes pedestrian link design should be completed by Christmas with work due to start in March/April. Design for a link marker will be part of the consultation exercise to be held in January.
- Procurement has begun on the call off contract for landscape work and will be completed in early December.
- The Waymarking contract has been awarded to Placemarque. We will be arranging an initial workshop to discuss the original proposals contained in the BDP study. They were the sub-contractor for this study. We hope to focus on way-marking initially around the Hole in the Wall, Bowes Link and Newgate as the first element of practical implementation.

The Witham

- The Business Case and Business Plan are now complete for submission to One North East
- First stage design work is almost complete and work is underway to prepare for a community engagement programme in early January. There will be an exhibition of the plans with a physical model and computer modelled 'Fly Through'
- The Vision and Witham Trustees continue to hold regular working group meetings to progress the project.
- An initial meeting to discuss planning issues was held in October and a preplanning discussion has been set up for 1st December.

Digital and Creative Art Space

- Work is underway to develop a business plan for the use of the old Dorant's garage as a creative art space. The building would include studios, exhibition space and networking space for a range of different artists including new media and digital.

Shaw Bank 2

- Research has begun to look at Phase 2 of the Shaw Bank master plan with a focus on the land on the opposite side of the A688. This work will take place within the context of the County Durham Plan (LDF) and Housing Strategy for Durham 2008-11.

International links

- Funding options have been identified through the EU to continue are liaison with Harfleur and Montfoort.

Higher Education Hub

- Responses to the tender to develop ideas for a Higher Education Hub within the town are currently being evaluated.

Digital Dale (Broadband)

- Tender for development work has been issued via DCC procurement. A grant of £300K has been allocated in principle from the RDPE. Vision is working closely with AAP.

AW/GB

December 2009