**Totnes Development Trust recent meetings – summary of matters discussed**

**Trustees meeting: 25th March 2013.**

**Rotherfold:** Richard O’Connell reported on the recent steering group meeting. There had been a good response to the questionnaire and several people had offered to help. The committee had decided to adopt *The Square* concept. The next step would be for Catherine Rathbone to finalise the design and it was agreed that TDT would fund up to £100 for this work. Richard felt that matters needed to be brought to a conclusion soon to avoid the risk of the project losing momentum. TDT was likely to want to set up and support the running of the project, but would need to consider at an early stage plans/organisation for the operation and maintenance of the development.

**Gardening for Health:** Sue Holmes, Ed Vidler and Paul Church had met with Prof Janet Richardson (Plymouth University) prior to the meeting for an update. Sue informed the group of the decision for local government to establish community health programmes for which budgets were available. Ed was making contact with the names of local representatives to follow-up. It could be a strong proposition to take the successful outcome of the pilot forward to a fully fledged solution, with funding from the Community Health initiative.

**Leechwell Garden:** It was noted that the annual fund-raising spring event will be held on 19th May. Revised design for the garden trail markers had been produced and the project would be linked in with Public Art. The new brochure was underway which would also appear on the website.

**Atmos:**  The project was likely to be a joint venture. A housing developer had expressed general interest in such a venture, but had not carried out a feasibility study.

**Totnes Community Development Society:** Steve Casemore joined the meeting to provide some background on the structure of TCDS and Atmos. He explained why the TCDS had been incorporated as an IPS. This “vehicle” provided a relatively simple way to raise funds for individuals and organisations to invest in projects. Each investor would have one vote, irrespective of the size of their investment. Bank accounts and other formalities had now been set up with the support of TDT.

**Skate park:** Judy Westacott updated the meeting on the extended fencing that was nearly complete. The lighting would be installed as soon as the new posts were in place.

**Totnes and District Preservation Trust:** Paul Church reported on an initial exploratory meeting with TDPT to explore a merger with another trust with similar aims. TDT might provide an ideal home for TDPT activities with mutual benefits/synergies which would save them the cost and effort of running a separate organisation.

**Finances**: The treasurer provided a comprehensive overview of the key points from the 2012 annual accounts (previously circulated). It was noted that the year had produced a net surplus of about £10,000, but it was mostly in restricted funds. If we wished to increase general funds in future, this would need to be specifically stated vis-a-vis prospective donors. Paul thanked Geoffrey for his efforts during the year to manage the finances and to produce the annual accounts.

It was noted that the main area of expenditure in 2013 would be a further £8,000 to support *Gardening for Health*.

**Trustees meeting: 29th April 2013**

**Rotherfold**: Comments from the consultation (totalling 99 pages) had been sent to Charlotte for consideration in the final designs. There was a discussion on the nature of the art piece and it was agreed that it could be functional art (such as a chair or an artistic component to the railings).

**Gardening for Health**: further suggestions for support in the context of community health had been received but as yet there was no progress in securing additional revenue for the project.

**Garden trail**: the brochure was ready for printing.

**Atmos**: Credit was given to Steve Casemore for preparing professional governance structure which had been agreed for the TCDS and Atmos. Heads of agreement had been agreed.

**Skate Park**: The new lighting had been installed. Plans were now underway for a grand opening.

**Alignment of community groups**: A meeting had been convened on 19th April under the chairmanship of Judy Westacott. It had been agreed that TDT had synergies with TDPT and further discussions would be progressed with a view to coming much closer together.

There was a discussion on how projects under the control of the Public Spaces Forum might be more effectively aligned and integrated with the work of TDT.

**Trustees meeting 27th May 2013**

**Gardening for health**: The potential was there to take what was a really worthwhile project to the next level, but this required either:

* a broadening of the scope with e.g. incorporation of walk and talk and garden trail, muddy mums + + etc. such that the package of activities under the gardening for health umbrella might be presented in a new format to attract increased funding (e.g. from community health budget) and/or,
* a more focussed communication to the target audience to increase numbers which had been very low this year.

To take the project forward there was a need for an individual to provide the necessary drive and vision. The participants of the steering group are committed, able and very supportive, but none have yet been able to carry this mantel to drive things forward. In addition, a trustee was required to provide the support and sponsorship on the Steering Group.

**Rotherfold**: The final design had been agreed by the committee. Approval was being sought from SHDC, following which a presentation would be made to the town council. It was noted that the project did not need planning approval.

It was agreed to seek proposals on the public art element from the KEVICC’s young people’s art forum in respect of the £2K of the £5K public arts funding now ring-fenced for public art in the Rotherfold (split for public art = £1K trail markers, £2K Pool Garden, £2K Rotherfold).

The overall project was likely to be developed in three phases with an affordable first stage.

It was agreed that as will be customary going forward, the terms of reference for TDT's role – as Chair (during definition and implementation), sponsor, fundraising support and vehicle for charitable status should be agreed on the Steering Group. Robert suggested that the Leechwell Garden might provide a role-model going forward.

The option to abdicate responsibility for projects once they were up and running v/s remaining accountable for operation of developed assets remains and will need to be discussed more fully. It was agree that a full discussion should take place at a future meeting.

**Atmos:** Heads of terms had been agreed with Dairy Crest and the project was moving fast. It was hoped that a legal agreement would be produced by the end of June.

**Skate Park:** The grand opening would be held on 29th June, immediately before the “Jam”

**Finance:** Regular expenditure continued on Gardening for Health, but the treasurer expected it to break even by the end of the year. The recent Leechwell Garden fundraising day had raised £525 and a further £60 had subsequently been raised (in three days) in plant sales with an honesty box.

The cost of insurance was raised. It was agreed that we should consult with SHDC to see if there were more economical way forward than the current piecemeal approach. The current approach produces uncertainty as to which organisation was covering or accountable for what, particularly given we still lacked any formal agreement (e.g. Leechwell Garden). TDT had assets in the garden that needed to be properly insured.

**New website:** Content had now been provided for projects. Jeremy and Paul had attended an initial training with *Vu online* (our new website developer). The service from Vu has been excellent and the new site looked very professional.

Jeremy was being trained to manage the new website and he would get stuck in to the task in mid June. The annual cost of £99 for hosting the website was approved. It was agreed that once the new site was up and running, thanks should be extended to Jasper Solomon for his relentless support over several years in running the old website and that this should be appropriately acknowledged.

**Community groups’ alignment:** Positive discussions with TDPT continued. The forthcoming AGM could provide a suitable occasion to formalise the relationship. Paul suggested a *Federated* *model* – as applied to projects generally. This would imply the concept of centralised (TDT) control of budgets, charitable body status, and strong trustee sponsorship and skills support, with exploitation of synergies across project or assets, with distributed/delegated responsibility for projects execution and operations in spheres of expertise (as per the Leechwell Garden model).

A discussion will also take place with the Open Space Forum. One might foresee a trustee being the sponsor for projects in the Open Space Forum portfolio.

Discussions were ongoing under the chairmanship of Judy for coherence and for various groups to come together, to communicate an aligned strategic approach moving forward. It was noted that Devon County Council was likely to expect more from community groups in future.

Robert Vint tabled a summary note (see below) to help future discussions.

*1. We need:*

1. *Communication, co-ordination and co-operation between community groups*
2. *Clear two-way communication between community groups and councils*
3. *Consultation, identification and prioritisation of projects by residents, community groups and councils*
4. *Delivery/management of projects by competent organisations*

*2. Any structure needs to be seen as legitimate and inclusive by residents, community groups and councils.*

*3. Community groups need consensus and a collective voice if they are to be heard*

*4. Councils need a single point of contact, not several contradictory ones.*

*5. Any structure (s) for achieving this should be formally recognised by the Town Council but to remain autonomous.*

**Shady gardens:** Progressing to public consultation.

**Trustees meeting: 24th June 2013.**

**Rotherfold:** The presentation to the Town Council on 3rd June had been successful and each person present had supported the scheme. Richard had written to Ross Kennerley, asking SHDC to sanction the scheme but was still waiting for a response.

There had been a good turnout at the meeting with residents who had previously expressed a willingness to help in various ways, though no-one had offered to head-up the fundraising. Richard would continue to chair the steering group. There was some discussion about possible fund-raising sources to be explored: a “big hitter” or various charitable trusts. It was agreed that this aspect should be given prominence on the new TDT website. There will be a good opportunity for local publicity once SHDC has sanctioned the scheme. It was assumed that SHDC would be responsible for Public Liability insurance for any activities taking place at Rotherfold, but his needed to be checked out.

**The Lamb/Gardening for Health:** There was a need to prepare the organisation for the way forward, and to think more laterally on the structure to build upon the pilot. Existing Steering Committee members had been asked (all of whom have experience in community health and related fields) to express an interest if they wished to lead the next phase, failing which we will need to cast the net further. There was a huge potential but the project needed committed/strong leadership and regular PR.

**Leechwell Garden used for public events**: Concern was expressed regarding the potential size of a proposed event. It was generally agreed that the Leechwell Garden was not an appropriate venue for an event generally unless numbers were likely to be under ca 150 people and with a closing time of 9.30 pm.

Various efforts were being made to raise further funds for the Leechwell Garden and the results of the recent lottery grant application were expected in July. The local Lloyds Bank branch had supported an application for a grant from the bank. Ed Vidler was hopeful that *Community Spaces* might award a grant.

**Atmos:** Negotiations continued on track and an upfront financing proposal was being worked on.

**Skate-park lighting:** As the lights had been placed in a different position to that on the planning approval, a new application was needed. The launch event would take place on 29th June at about 4 pm - half-way through the Jam - so that more people would be present. TDT members were all invited, as well as Councillors.

**New website:** Members were asked to take a good look at the new website and to let Jeremy have any comments or additional material.

**Shady Garden**: The consultation document will be launched on 11th July. Comments will be sought via the old TDT website in the event that the new site was not yet up and running. Shady Garden would be listed as a separate project on the new website.

**Community groups’ alignment:** A further meeting with TDPT was scheduled for 1st July. There was a high degree of synergy between the two organisations.

**AGM date:** It was decided to defer the AGM until September 30th rather than holding it after the meeting on August 26th which was a Bank Holiday.

**Trustees meeting: 26th August 2013**

**Chairman**

The meeting was chaired by Richard O’Connell who explained that Paul Church had recently started working in Ireland and would not be able to attend meetings for a year. The meeting confirmed Richard’s offer to step in as interim chairman.

**Rotherfold**

The plans had been finalised and approved by SHDC. A fund-raising committee had been formed and a fund-raising day had been planned for 5th October. Ed confirmed that £2000 would be forthcoming from Community Spaces towards Rotherford funds.

**The Lamb/Gardening for Health**

Turnout at recent meetings had been disappointing and it had been decided to curtail further sessions until next spring. It was important to find someone willing to run this project and an open meeting was being organised with a view to finding more volunteers.

**Leechwell Pool**

The Pool project was likely to be delayed for 18 months because of the knotweed issue.

**Skate Park**

SHDC needed to draw up revised plans of the actual position of lights and then issue planning approval.

**New Website**

The new website was well liked my members. However, the constant reference to requesting funds should be deleted from pages that did not specifically refer to fund-raising.

**Shady Garden**

It was agreed that the project had made excellent progress. £6,000 of the total budget of £15,000 had now been donated and spent.

**People Committee Working Group**

Carole confirmed that this project was making excellent progress.

**Economic Blueprint Study**

Carole reported on this new study that encompassed (a) renewable energy, (b) food (from farmers to retailers), (c) health and welfare. For the time being TDT would not become directly involved in this project.

**Trustees meeting: 30th September 2013.**

**Trustee changes following the AGM**

Jim Carfrae, Jill Tomalin and Geoff Townson had not sought re-election at the AGM that preceded the meeting. However, Geoff had kindly offered to continue to act at treasurer for a few more months. The chairman was delighted to welcome Louis Victory as a new trustee.

**Atmos**

The project was now with the legal advisors who were drawing up heads of agreement. It was confirmed that TDT would not have a legal involvement in the project.

**Community alignment groups**

Discussions had commenced with the Totnes District Preservation Trust to explore areas of co-operation and a further meeting was scheduled for 24th October.

**Economic Blueprint**

Ralph reported that the Economic Blueprint was finally making good progress and there was a real momentum within the working group.

**Trustees meeting: 24th October 2013.**

**Rotherfold**

The fund-raising event on 5th October had been a great success, both financially (raising £2,000 on the day itself) and in raising awareness for the project. Detailed costings had now been completed, subject to some fine-tuning. The total cost was likely to be £120K and funds of £20K were needed for phase 1. Richard was congratulated for his efforts.

**Lamb and Leechwell**

Enthusiastic committees were now running both these projects. It was however important that when such projects were handed over to committees, trustees needed to spell out any policies, commitments or requirements that may have been previously agreed by TDT when funding was secured. Whilst TDT remained accountable for the projects, it did not have to run them.

**Shady Garden**

Louis had been project managing Shady Gardens. The project needed legal entity and it was greed that this project be added to the TDT portfolio.

**Economic blueprint**

Carole reported that the hub was working really well. The recent Health and welfare conference had been an enormous success and many excellent ideas had come out of it.

**Trustees meeting: 25th November 2013.**

**Lamb**

Ed and Sue had managed to resolve any remaining confusion about the Lamb. It was agreed that the project need to get back to basic health issues – making it unique from other gardens in Totnes. Janet had agreed to liaise with the NHS regarding future funding and an application would be made to SHDC to cover the six months session next summer, improving standards and/or a series of events.

**Leechwell**

New benches were being purchased. They would be used in the main garden until the pool area was ready.

**Shady Garden**

Louis reported that phase 1 had been completed, with new walls on the perimeter. Some benches had been ordered. Phase 2 would involve resurfacing the front area, with new slabs and seating round the tree at an estimated cost of £11,000. The wall needed painting. It was agreed that the improvements to date had already had an impact on the town, in such a prominent position.

**Website**

It was noted that the website had not been kept up to date. It was agreed that Catherine Munro would be invited to take on the task of webmaster. A job spec would be drawn up.

**Financial matters**

It was agreed to set up an imprest account in the name of LGA with an opening balance of £250. This would allow the LGA to draw on funds for relatively minor purchases. The fund would then be topped up from time to time.

**Trustees meeting: 19th February 2014.**

**Rotherfold**

Phil John, a playwright who lives in the square, is writing a play to be staged on May 11th and 12th at the Rotherfold. It will be a fund-raising event and will include a cast of local schoolchildren.

**Lamb**

Some funding has been received to help cover the cost of gardening sessions.

**Shady Garden**

A fund-raising event would be held on 16th May to include music by local school-children.

**Related work with Councils**

Trustees have been working with all tiers of local government on way of supporting communities in the face of welfare cuts. The concept of “Totnes: A Caring Town” as an umbrella was gaining support with the aim of bringing together a number of service providers.

**Trustees meeting: 19th March 2014.**

**Annual accounts**

The annual accounts for the year ended 31st December 2013 had been audited – giving the Trust a clean bill of health. The accounts would now be filed at Companies House and the Charity Commission.

**Rotherfold**

The project team was planning to repair and paint the walls. It was hoped that a local paint supplier might sponsor the paint. The following phase would be to install new slabs and steps. Documents had gone out to contractors, but funds still needed to be raised for this phase.

**Skate Park**

The recent dryer weather meant that, finally, the lighting could be moved to the correct places.