

Herefordshire Business Board Meeting
Tuesday, 13th January 2015
Weston's Cider, Much Marcle, Herefordshire

Present:

Frank Myers, Linda Smith, Nick Read, Matt Hayes, Sue Browning, Clare Greener, John Reed and Angela Fitch.

Stephen Eckley arrived at 5pm as previously advised.

Apologies:

Cathy Meredith, Helen Thomas, Mike Ashton, Nick Webster and Rachel Jones

FM welcomed all to the first meeting of 2015 and apologised for the delay in circulating papers for the meeting.

FM congratulated CM on her receiving her MBE for Services to Rural Communities and to NW on the safe arrival of his first child.

1. **Notes of HBB meeting 11th November**, will be revised to include:
 - Confirmation of the Chairman and Vice-Chairmen elections to HBB: Frank Myers (Chairman), Clare Greener and Linda Smith (Vice-Chairmen).
 - To conduct a mapping exercise identifying existing groups linked to business support, economic growth, MLEP activities and so on for Herefordshire
2. **Relationship between HBB and MLEP:** Concerns were raised at the lack of effective communication between HBB and MLEP. A lengthy discussion raised a number of issues around: management of MLEP, effective two way communication channels, the role HBB plays within MLEP and within the county and the current difficulties in agreeing HBB meeting dates to tie in with MLEP dates. The outcomes of this discussion include: FM to meet with SBB and TBB Chairmen to gain some background and to put in place a MLEP policy which allows the three Boards to work in unison with MLEP in planning meetings and drafting appropriate agenda.

Success would look like:

- A calendar of MLEP meeting dates with HBB dates set seven – 10 days beforehand.
 - A two way flow of information which would help the three Boards to place appropriate items on the MLEP agenda.
 - A mapping exercise by HBB to indicate the potential reach and make up of the various publics with whom Board Members can communicate.
 - The need to create opportunities to cascade information from HBB to businesses and other interested parties – thus raising local awareness of HBB and its function/connectivity.
 - HBB needs to create some clarity with its publics on what it exists for.
- 3. Broadband:** NR reported that the Food and Tourism Group had conducted a survey of its members to identify barriers to growth. The survey found that a lack of Superfast Broadband was the single most influential factor to business growth.

The Duchy fed into the debate and commissioned its own report on community Broadband in Herefordshire. The final report has been sent to Herefordshire Council and Fastershire.

Question: What plans are being put into place for 100 per cent SFBB for Herefordshire?

The Food & Tourism Group has taken a SFBB lead by opening dialogue between Herefordshire Council, Fastershire and the MPs. CG reported that the F & T Group has called for a digital support centre for Herefordshire.

Resolution: FM proposed that HBB members should commit to reading and commenting on the Broadband Report and that it would appear on the next HBB agenda.

4. Hereford Civic Society

FM to invite John Bothomley to make a brief presentation (15 minutes) at a future HBB meeting. MH suggested that HBB could use any successes with HCS as an early media/profile raiser for HBB.

5. Apprenticeships

Ian Oakes, of University of Wolverhampton, is hosting sub-regional meetings to engage with SMEs. FM will contact MA and Holme Lacy College to see if IO has approached them and how they fit into the local Apprenticeship scheme of work.

6. AOB:

- JR kindly offered meeting room facilities to HBB at Cargill
- JR suggested that Karen Usher and/or David Shephard could be invited to a future HBB meeting to report on progress to date on the new University of Herefordshire.
- AF reported that her application to join the European Strategic Infrastructure Fund panel (ESIF) for the Marches was successful; she will represent HBB. A deputy was required - NR volunteered; this was approved by HBB; AF to advise ESIF.
- AF suggested that HBB should embark on some planned media and profile raising. This would initially include obtaining a branded pop up for photo opportunities. AF to contact RJ.
- LS reported that Ambery Risk, a Herefordshire company, made it into the Sunday Times Top 100 businesses at number eight.
- MH recommended a protocol when circulating information with and between Board Members.
- HBB minutes should be uploaded to the website – AF to liaise with RJ.

Previous Actions

- FM and LS will invite Caroline Davies to a future HBB meeting following Gill Hamer's appointment to MLEP and progress made within MLEP on its own plans for the way forward.
- FM has contacted Jesse Norman, MP, about JN's Broadband survey. The Duchy's report (see above) has been sent to JN, who has agreed to circulate.
- FM has met with Alistair Neill, and reports that AN is keen for HBB to succeed.
- FM to contact Herefordshire Council with regard to improved HBB presence on the website.

New Actions

- FM to invite Karen Usher/David Shephard to a future HBB meeting.
- FM to invite John Bothomley to a future HBB meeting.
- AF to contact RJ re possible purchase of HBB branded pop up banner
- ALL – report to FM the publics with whom each can communicate HBB news etc.
- ALL – read and comment on the Broadband report.
- NR to circulate the minutes from the Sustainable Food Group to HBB members.

Date of next meeting

3rd March, 4pm – 6pm – Cargill, exact location TBC.

ENDS