

## Future Oswestry Group

Note of meeting held 9:30am-11am Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> October 2023 at Oswestry Guildhall

Partners	Oswestry Town Council (OTC)	Shropshire Council (SC)	Oswestry BID	Community Representatives
<b>In attendance</b>	Cllr Mike Isherwood Cllr Duncan Kerr Arren Roberts	Cllr Robert Macey Cllr Chris Schofield Andy Wigley Joe Bubb Samantha Jones Rosie Corner Steve Law	Adele Nightingale	Peter Lloyd Craig Marston
<b>Welcome and apologies</b>			Tim Morris	
<b>1. Notes of the last meeting</b>	Meeting notes were agreed.			
<b>2. Declarations of interest</b>	None.			
<b>8. Update from Property and Development Team</b> (item brought forward)	<p>Update from Steve Law:</p> <p><b><i>Cambrian Building</i></b></p> <p><i>PSG are pursuing the most economic means of retaining the scaffold long term and SC are seeking to mitigate the cost. The scaffolding currently in place is controlled by the contractor. Comms and briefings have been put out. The initial plan to stabilise the corbels has now been expanded into a wider scheme, which will take into account the Heritage Condition Survey and Conservation Management Plan once completed. The Conservation Management Plan also includes an end use options appraisal.</i></p> <p><b>Member discussed the future of the Cambrian Building in light of the proposed Oswestry-Gobowen railway link. Noted that the building will be vital to the running of the new line and any interim uses should avoid preventing its eventual use as a mainline station.</b></p> <p><b><i>Former Morrisons</i></b></p> <p><i>The Range is due to open in December in the former Morrisons building.</i></p> <p><b>Castle View</b></p> <p><i>Active work to consolidate SC users into one specific zone to allow upgrades and improvements to other parts of the asset. Some challenges emerging with the building's condition which could cause slight delays.</i></p> <p><b>Vacant Wilko store</b></p> <p>Negotiations to re-let are in progress.</p>			
<b>3. Governance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formal decision needed on daytime vs evening meetings.</li> </ul> <p><b>The group agreed to continue with daytime meetings. Cllr Mike Isherwood resigned the chair-ship due to his conflicting work schedule. As Deputy Chair, Cllr Duncan Kerr will take over as Chair. The members thanked Cllr Mike Isherwood for his diligent work as Chair.</b></p>			

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Representatives (CRs)</li> </ul> <p>The members discussed the future role of the CRs as the two current CRs are coming to the end of their two-year terms.</p> <p>The CRs noted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councillors are embedded in their communities but there is a role for Community Representatives to support FOG activities.</li> <li>• The role of the FO Group remains slightly anonymous, sitting as it does outside the normal two council structure. The role of the CRs should be used to seek opportunities for a genuine dialogue between this group and the public in order to understand one another better.</li> <li>• For FOG to do more outreach work with the public, there needs to be a new project/narrative to present to public interest.</li> </ul> <p>The members agreed to extend the appointment of the current Community Representatives in the interim, while officers update the job description and undertake a publicly advertised selection process to re-appoint.</p>
<p><b>4. Project priorities</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish task and finish groups to come back the main FOG group with options for specific projects.</li> </ul> <p><b>Officers are having their first meeting immediately following this meeting.</b></p>
<p><b>5. Update from OTC</b></p>	<p>Verbal Update from Arren Roberts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purchase of Llywd Mansion should be completed in two weeks. Security including hoardings will be improved. Initial dendrochronology survey has been carried out. Laser scan will begin next month to create a map of the building. An engineer is looking at the structural condition and necessary repairs. Consultant (Buttress) to undertake a business case and look at options for use.</li> </ul> <p><b>Members were concerned about the state which Llywd Mansion was left in by Toni and Guy and the resulting cost to the taxpayer. Officers explained that there is no statutory requirement to maintain this kind of building. Enforcement measures are only used by local planning authorities in extremis.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OTC visited Ruthin, a market town in North Wales.</li> <li>• Renovations will soon be underway of the Central Car Park toilets including installation of new Changing Places. There will be some disruption to services; there will be temporary facilities and signposting to alternatives.</li> <li>• Oswestry was the winner of Britain in Bloom's Small Town category. This showed the best of the town: its great organisations and great partnerships. There was a special commendation for young people.</li> <li>• Several parties are interested in discussing leasing the Regal building.</li> <li>• Christmas lights are going up and the annual series of seasonal events is starting. OTC is granting free parking on the weekends leading up to Christmas alongside free bus travel.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OTC has adopted the bus shelter in Black Gate Street in order to make necessary improvements.</li> </ul> <p><b>Members discussed the approved designs for new signage at Powis Hall. OTC are progressing with painting, mural and new logo chosen by traders. OTC has applied for funding to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund in conjunction with Wem to include improvements to interior of the Market.</b></p>
<p><b>6. Update from BID</b></p>	<p>Verbal Update from Adele Nightingale:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>BID has met with new owners of the former Dorothy Perkins on Cross Street.</i></li> <li>• <i>Coach Friendly status is being awarded to Oz. This ensures that coach drivers have free parking, adequate signage, meet and greets from OTC and paid refreshments for drivers. The Confederation of Passenger Transport UK (CPT) send this information to their 500 coach company members to assist them with their programming. BID will work with OTC to look at creating itineraries to encourage day trippers.</i></li> <li>• <i>Street Rangers should be operational from the first weekend in November. There was no funding available from the Police and Crime Commissioner, so the BID board committed 100% of the £35,000 to provide 2 rangers for 20 hours per week. BID will continue to seek funding to increase hours. The Street Rangers will work in as a pair from Tuesday to Saturday. They are First Aid trained, Mental Health First Aid trained, and dementia trained. They are accredited Tourism Ambassadors and have undergone training at the police station. BID is looking at an information sharing agreement with West Mercia police. Street Rangers will help to train business in how, why, when and where to report thefts and petty crimes which are currently underrepresented in the town's crime statistics.</i></li> <li>• <i>Halloween Trail is currently underway.</i></li> <li>• <i>BID has met with Tracy Darke from SC to discuss smaller highways projects. Increasingly, BID and the businesses they represent feel they have to pay for things which were previously in the SC remit.</i></li> <li>• <i>On Friday BID attended an event hosted by Shrewsbury BID and Shrewsbury Market. The key speaker was Ojay McDonald, CEO of the Association of Town and City Managers.</i></li> <li>• <i>York Stone for the new pavement has been ordered from China by OpenReach. OpenReach have six months to install the pavement.</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>7. High Street Heritage Action Zone</b></p>	<p>Update from Sam Jones:</p> <p><i>As we are now in the last 6 months of the project things are wrapping up. We are on budget to deliver, and match is now being met. We are working on legacy elements and how we can fund these. I will also be looking at project completion elements from HE and begin on these shortly.</i></p> <p><b>Capital Grant Programme</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>All grants have been completed and claimed that are on the books. We are working with 2 final applicants to come forward.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Public Realm</b></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Clawdd Du – Bin store in on order. Just awaiting installation date.</i></li> <li>• <i>Metal elements - We have finally come to an agreement with contractor that we can install the metal elements. I have contracted an engineer to provide us with fixing advice as we will now be liable as we are installing. Once we have this information, we can sort out getting them in.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Flagship</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>OTC are still in the process of purchasing Llwyd Mansion.</i></li> <li>• <i>Laser Scan has been procured. Structural engineer will be shortly.</i></li> <li>• <i>I have managed to get some free dendrochronology work from Historic England which should hopefully provide us with a construction date for the building.</i></li> <li>• <i>I have also managed to secure some free hoarding panels for the building when the hoarding goes up from Historic England.</i></li> <li>• <i>Once we have results from the survey we can then apply for funding from Historic England and possibly the National Lottery Heritage Fund for the works.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Other</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Interim Evaluation has been well received internally and we are looking at way we can continue the legacy.</i></li> <li>• <i>UKSPF bids in for cultural consortium continuation have been submitted.</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>9. Update from Comms</b></p>	<p>Update from Alice James:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Alice James will be leaving Shropshire Council on 17<sup>th</sup> November, last working day is 7<sup>th</sup> November.</i></li> <li>• <i>Church Street update shared in September:</i> <a href="https://newsroom.shropshire.gov.uk/2023/09/churcqh-street-cross-street-oswestry-update/">https://newsroom.shropshire.gov.uk/2023/09/churcqh-street-cross-street-oswestry-update/</a></li> <li>• <i>Some photography has taken place to capture some beneficiaries of the HSHAZ scheme, and a follow up press release is due to be written to look at the schemes impact</i></li> <li>• <i>Cambrian Railway PR</i> <a href="https://newsroom.shropshire.gov.uk/2023/09/cambrian-heritage-railway-building-work/">https://newsroom.shropshire.gov.uk/2023/09/cambrian-heritage-railway-building-work/</a></li> <li>• <i>Mile End bridge PR</i> <a href="https://newsroom.shropshire.gov.uk/2023/09/bridge-installed-mile-end-junction-oswestry/">https://newsroom.shropshire.gov.uk/2023/09/bridge-installed-mile-end-junction-oswestry/</a> - Cllr Jones has requested we run a wider update about the OIP and its plans</li> </ul> <p><b>Members noted that it will be important that whoever replaces Alice maintains a relationship with Ruth (OTC) and John (BID).</b></p> <p><b>Members noted that previous press releases inaccurately inferred that re-surfacing of Maes-Y-Clawdd was planned, rather than re-surfacing only applying to selected areas.</b></p>

<p><b>10. Gobowen- Oswestry Railway Line</b></p>	<p>Update from Joe Bubb:</p> <p><i>Following the recent announcement of the Network North initiative by Government, a call was held to discuss next steps to progress the proposal involving representatives of the Department of Transport, Network Rail, Cambrian Railways Society and Shropshire Council.</i></p> <p><i>Funding had previously been awarded to undertake the Strategic Business Case with consultants. This report was presented to the DfT in autumn 2022 which identified the need for transport investment in the Oswestry and Gobowen area, set objectives for that investment and appraised a range of options which could deliver those objectives.</i></p> <p><i>The Network North programme has funding earmarked, however projects under consideration will be subject to business case updates. DfT to lead on this with Network Rail who have been asked to prepare costs for the next phase to support the development of the Business Case and present them to DfT for consideration.</i></p> <p><i>This first phase of development will consider high level costs, asset conditions, operations and land considerations. If the success criteria for phase 1 is met – primarily a Benefits Cost Ratio of above 1 then the project would progress into Phase 2. This second phase will include updated costs, economic appraisal, revenue generation, cumulating into a single option choice and the Outline Business Case.</i></p>
<p><b>11. Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Programme</b></p>	<p>Update from Rose Dovey:</p> <p><b>LCWIP</b></p> <p><i>The analysis of all the feedback received from the LCWIP consultation exercise held over the summer has now been completed. Internal (Shropshire Council) stakeholder feedback on the final draft interventions is being collated over October and November. Workshops are being held with those town councils who submitted formal feedback with the aim of firming up the final draft interventions for their town. Adoption of the final LCWIP document is due to take place over the Winter 2023/24.</i></p> <p><b>UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) - Oswestry Greenways route</b></p> <p><i>A bid for improvements to the Oswestry Greenways route (Unicorn Rd to Cabin Rd) was submitted to the UKSPF in October 2023. This scheme was one of four county-wide schemes selected to go forward for this capital-only funding grant under the ‘E7: Active Travel Improvements’ UKSPF category. The funding grant is for £650,000 with a 30% match-funding requirement. This scheme is ranked in the top ten for Oswestry (#5) in the draft LCWIP based on an appraisal process which ranked schemes according to their ability to ‘have the greatest impact on increasing the number of people who choose to walk and cycle and therefore provide the greatest return on investment’ (Department for Transport, LCWIP Guidance, 2017). The proposal includes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>• Lighting improvements, particularly on the eastern side of the route</i></li> <li><i>• Path widening</i></li> <li><i>• Installation of formal crossing points on Unicorn Lane and Cabin Lane</i></li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improvements to allow for better access for all users regardless of age or ability.</li> </ul> <p><b>UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) – Phase 1: Oswestry Cycle Network Phase 1</b></p> <p>Feasibility work is about to commence on Phase 1 of the Oswestry Cycle network. £30,000 was awarded from the UKSPF in 2023 to progress a town-centred focused route.</p> <p><b>One member queried the prioritisation of this project, given the current active transport provision in place and the lack of previous discussion with OTC relating to the bid.</b></p>	
<b>12. Church Street</b>	<p>Update from Adele Nightingale:</p> <p>Coloured resin will be going on 1<sup>st</sup> November. BID seeking confirmation on date for the planters and street furniture to be moved and arrangements for planting. More lining is taking place.</p> <p><b>Members noted issues which had come up during the project: flyers featuring an inaccurate map of the works.</b></p>	
<b>13. Bus Station</b>	No update available.	
<b>14. Engagement</b>	To follow projects.	
<b>15. Date of next meeting and agenda items</b>	<p>Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> December 9:30am- 11:30am.</p> <p>Agenda items will be added following the officers' meeting.</p>	
<b>16. Closed session</b>	To discuss Community Representative Job Description	
<b>ACTIONS</b>		
1	OTC to nominate new FOG representative and Deputy Chair.	AR
8	Update Community Representative job description.	JB
2	Officers to report back on priority projects at December meeting.	JB
3	Britain in Bloom. Chair to write to Natalie Bainbridge with FOG's congratulations	MI
4	Speak to Tracy Darke about the positioning of the 20mph marking and loading only markings on Church Street	AN
5	Share PowerPoint slides from Shrewsbury town management event.	AN
6	Approach SC comms about replacement for Alice James.	JB
7	Oversee comms on the Mile End bridge explaining how it will link to other access ways for pedestrians and cyclists.	JB