

BBEST Development Meeting, 22nd September 2015.

Meeting Report

Present:

Pete Marsh, BBEST Chair and Leader of Active Travel Theme

Emily Pieters, Leader of Conservation and Development Theme

Anne Daw, BBEST Vice Chair and Leader of Sustained and Balanced Communities Theme

Alan Wellings, Leader of Retail Quarter Theme

Chris Topliss, BBEST Treasurer

Kath O'Donovan (Notes), BBEST Secretary and Leader of Environment and Green and Open Spaces Theme

17 BBEST Supporters attended the meeting.

Introduction to the meeting

Pete Marsh welcomed several BBEST supporters who were attending a BBEST meeting for the first time.

The first draft of the BBEST Neighbourhood plan will be presented for consultation and discussion at the BBEST Workshop and AGM on Saturday 7th November. The Plan is based round 5 themes as noted above. Each theme has a Vision statement and Objectives. In addition, there are 4 projects related to the themes, and these were discussed during the meeting. Several Partnership projects were planned, and these would initially be discussed with proposed partners.

Emily Pieters outlined the format of the meeting. Theme leaders would outline the project and those present would be invited to comment.

Development of Oriel House and Garden as a BBEST Community hub

Pete Marsh noted that current library occupies only about 50% of the space in the building. The attic rooms could be developed as studio space, whilst the extensive basement area, already equipped with sink and toilet facilities, could become space for community meetings and activities.

The historic garden, designed in the 1930's by landscape gardener Percy S Crane, is of particular interest and could attract Heritage Lottery funding. BBEST is working with the Library Group in this area.

Points made in discussion were:

- The front garden of Oriel House is also important as a public space as it offers quiet space for local workers to have lunch outdoors, and for children to play. There are very few locations like this in the central area of Broomhill.
- Can BBEST help to get a lease on the house? Pete Marsh confirmed that discussions are ongoing.
- Suggestions for activities in Oriel House were: drama, carer support.
- The Hub would be a welcoming place for partners and families of mature students at the University.
- Have other locations for a community hub been investigated? Pete Marsh noted that the Council had for some years looked to find alternative accommodation for the Library without success. The 'FABLE building' had been a possibility at one point but had not proved feasible. The realisation of the historical significance of Oriel House, and surveyors reports that access issues could be resolved economically, have lent weight to the case for Oriel House.

Community Gardener linked to Environment and Green and Open Spaces Theme

[Insert bullet points from PM document]

Kath O'Donovan noted the following points about the Community Gardener/Ecologist project:

- Gardening is a popular activity in the BBEST area, with a successful 'open gardens' afternoon forming a focal point of the Broomhill Festival. This means that there is community interest and possibly a reservoir of volunteers to help the project. Perhaps we should aim to be 'the gardening suburb'.
- The project is scalable. Whilst the ideal would be to have a full time person, progress could be made from a much smaller base.
- What would the gardener/ecologist do?
 - Advise on planting
 - Advise on guardianship of trees in private gardens
 - Help inexperienced gardeners
 - Work with landlords to liven up gardens in rented properties
 - Pocket parks
 - Tubs and flower boxes
 - 'Green' bin stores
 - Guerilla gardening

The following points were raised:

- Trees and walls make the 'feel' of the BBEST area and guardianship of these assets in private gardens is important.
- Could there be a fund to maintain public planters
- Heeley City Farm has expertise in this area.
- The volunteering which is done in the Botanical Garden may be a model which could be adapted for BBEST.
- The example of guerrilla gardening in Todmorden was noted.
- In response to a query about the status of the former university garden and arboretum at Tapton, PM noted that the trees and the garden are protected, but that the garden may not be open to the public.
- The contractors on this site could be asked to contribute to the development of the Oriel House garden.
- The Union of Students has a full time sustainability organiser who may be able to contribute ideas.
- Students may be interested to volunteer in gardening projects.
- The BBEST and Union of Students websites could link to each other.

Developing Running and Walking Guides

Emily Pieters noted that developing walking and running routes would make the BBEST area accessible and increase interest in the historic aspects of the area.

The following points were made:

- Routes would encourage active lifestyles

- Walking routes would help people to understand the history of the area.
- Lee Kenny is preparing a gazetteer of the listed buildings in the BBEST area and looking at interactive maps.
- It would be possible to link the routes to Google maps. Noted that someone in Sharrow Vale films running routes and may be able to advise on this.
- Sheffield City Council also has walking guides.
- A discussion of 'blue plaques' raised the following points:
 - Getting the plaques is time consuming and there has not been resource locally to put into the process.
 - Heritage open days at the Masonic Hall etc have been very popular
- Parents of students form a potential audience for historic information
- Possible link with Welcome to Sheffield – Cllr Isabel Bowland?
- Producing a map of the area might be a student project.

New concepts for bin storage

[Insert bullet points from PM document]

Anne Daw noted:

- A successful project could make a difference to many streets in Sheffield which do not have storage for bins in individual properties.
- Bins could be hidden in 'green' storage.
- 'Community bin design' could include swappable planter – another job for the gardener
- Loss of one parking space on a street could accommodate bins for 3 properties.
- Designs could be 'rented' by streets to ensure that they were maintained.
- The following points were also noted:
 - Bins are not just a student issue – the bins currently used are not suitable for all locations
 - The possibility of communal, rather than individual, bins was discussed. Bin lorries may need to be adapted to clear a different design of bins. Concern was also expressed that such bins may be filled with fly-tipped waste.
 - The University of Sheffield established charity collection points for students to recycle items. Could these be established in parking slots in residential areas?

Conclusion

The following points were made in conclusion:

- Discussion points will be included in the consultation on the Plan.
- Some actions, for example progress with Oriel House, will be taken forward.
- BBEST aims to have a rolling exhibition on the themes and projects for display in Broomhill Library and other venues. This could also include display in student halls of residence.