

Otley Chamber of Trade Meeting Minutes – Tuesday 21st September

1. Welcome from Simon Raybould and introduction to the members of the Exec team present. Apologies were read out.

2. Exec Team activities;

- Promote Your Business social media posts in partnership with Stella from Love Otley. Use #otleychamber if you want your business posts to be shared. Also please share and comment on social media posts from the Chamber so that they spread further

3. Stella Fee – update on social media

- Stella is looking after the Chamber Facebook page and also has been putting together the Promote Your Business posts. Aims to encourage information sharing between businesses, networking and encouraging businesses to visit the town. Facebook has a large reach.
- A series of 5 videos were done via Love Otley featuring approximately 20 businesses, 5 businesses have been showcased via Promote Your Business.
- If you engage with posts it affects the Facebook algorithms and means the reach starts to snowball.
- How do I comment/like posts as a business page rather than as an individual? Click on 3 little dots, choose option to “like as your page”. You also need to do this when you see posts on your feed. Click on the little icon with your profile picture if you want to comment as your business.
- Stella reiterated the need to use the #otleychamber to get your business posts shared and benefiting from the extended reach.
- Stella will be forwarding some notes about this that will be shared to Chamber members

4. Speakers for the East of Otley demonstration

Catherine Holloway– team leader for Sites and Policies Leeds City Council

Pre application consultation was put before the Council earlier in the year. The land has been allocated for a long time for development. Application was received in February, and was then circulated in April, it has been put out for consultation. A LOT of responses have been received and many are very detailed and have raised a significant number of genuine concerns;

Masterplan –Not enough detail on loss of habitats, infrastructure connections with town, lacked details about phasing/implementation, employment land and school area appear undersized for the size of site to name but a few issues. In order to progress the application the developers will need to relook at the masterplan and then a second period of consultation will be needed. It is a hybrid planning application for both the road and the rest of the development. These may (but it has not yet been agreed) be separated. Working towards a decision by Spring 2022, but there is a big question mark over that. Site works might start Summer 2022, completion by end of 2028.

Catherine confirmed that part funding for the road is agreed. The timetable has slipped from what was hoped last year (road building starting Nov 2021). Reiterated that the application is big, complex and sensitive with a lot of parts.

Mick Bradley – Green town councillor for Danefield Ward and a member of East of Otley Action Group

Mick said that concerns raised in the pre-application stage were not taken on board for the masterplan which was submitted. For example, the number of house increased from 550 -700. EOAG has raised approx. £8k which has been spent on legal fees to put the town people's views across. What do we want the town centre to look like in the future? Relief road has been promised for a long time, and to rid the town centre of through traffic would be beneficial to businesses. However, the design of the relief road may not deliver the benefits to the town centre that have been promised. There is a fear that a quarry might be created for gravel extraction which would worsen traffic through the town. Active travel (walking/biking etc) has not been addressed enough in the plan, so this might lead to the cars from 700 residences being put onto the road system. The traffic impact report for the development is not detailed enough. Along with the issues mentioned by Catherine, Mick mentioned that the vernacular of the housing stock is not in keeping with the area. So many areas of the application need to be substantially rewritten, so it may be that the development is not a done deal. We need clear evidence that the relief road will benefit the town.

Andrew Howarth from Otley 2030 Community Development Coordinator.

Otley 2030 started 2.5 years ago, several projects the group have undertaken were mentioned, mainly focussed on the climate crisis and the bio-diversity crisis. Working with Otley Energy to look at energy use in housing, developing ways of retrofitting houses so they can be resilient to climate change. Looking to create a Climate Action Plan for Otley which will bring together all areas of the community. Andrew showed examples of other developments which are possible that would create a development that was future proofed for climate change and bio-diversity loss. LCC have been quite forward thinking about issues on climate change, so that this application has been presented is unexpected.

Tim Wilkinson raised the issue that members may well have a view as a resident and a different view as a business owner, the Chamber needs to remember it is representing businesses. Example of the effect of the by-pass on Bingley, it has not been as beneficial for the town as expected. If the number of houses on the site has increased, does the amount of employment land need to be increased too. Catherine advised that 5 hectares of employment land is a must on the site, but the number of houses is indicative at 550.

Richard Hughes commented that it is better to give all the objections serious consideration rather than keep to a timetable for development. He also advised that all feedback from the community about whether they want the development to happen is anecdotal, but what we do know is that they don't want this development, that isn't to say a better proposal would not be better received.

Victoria Oldham raised issue of Kex Gill road building which will become an issue shortly, although the road will remain open, so the traffic issues last time the road was closed should not occur. 2-3,000 houses may be built around Beckwithshaw, and because public transport is insufficient those new houses will lead to a lot of cars which may bring people into Otley.

Simon also advised of 400 houses at Burley and 600 in Bramhope, the business community would like to be in a position to service these people, but how they get in/out of town might make it less attractive.

Catherine advised that LCC are the lead on the road development side of things, and contractors have been selected. Some of the funding for the road was subject to the planning application being submitted, but the quality of the documents submitted needs to be revisited.

Any further questions on these issues can be emailed to Otley Chamber.

5. Otley Lido Update

The Lido and the business community have a mutuality of interest in bringing people to the town. Community engagement and fundraising projects have ceased over the last 18 months. But the group has still been meeting, to get the project through planning £65k needs to be raised, 1/3rd is in the bank and 1/3 is promised if the middle 1/3 can be raised. A crowd funding pledge is now underway – look out for the leaflet dropping on your doorstep. Leonie asked businesses to consider crowd funding or pledging of goods or services. Phase 2 – building would be £4-5 million, but you can't go for larger funding pots until phase 1 is achieved. The funding for phase 1 is the sticking point. Subject to planning permission. Go to crowd funding site to donate. Or contact them via www.otleylido.com to pledge goods/services.

6. Otley Coordination Meeting.

Highlights of the meetings – Cooplands would like to sponsor Christmas lights, would any other businesses like to sponsor?

Otley Advent calendar will be published in Otley Matters – small prizes are needed

Super Sundays – 5th & 19th December – will be promoted via social media

Email Otley Chamber if you want to be involved in any of those things.

6. BID Update – Katie Burnett – Director

This is the list of current projects the BID is working on;

A newsletter promoting Christmas in Otley and the Otley Business Awards will go to all LS21 postcodes at the end of November.

Watch out for an email asking you to order Christmas trees for the front of your premises.

Watch out for emails about training opportunities – one went out today, with the hope that our in-house training e.g. first aid can resume in a few months.

A reorder of the well-received paper shopping bags is in the pipeline and how to get hold of supplies of these will be issued shortly.

Breeze events on Wednesdays in the summer and the Otley Music festival appeared successful and it's nice to start having events in the town again.

Investing in Otley project with the Town Coordination Group has begun with the aim of actively encouraging businesses to move to the town.

Planning support is available on an informal basis from a retired LCC planning officer – please contact the BID if you need to speak to him.

Covid Questionnaire results are in and at our meeting on Thursday we'll decide if businesses need any more support from us. Watch out for emails and social media posts.

Tim –2022 benchmarking study update showed net loss of 4 business premises, 6 businesses closed, 10 empty premises have been filled. In conclusion there are 4 more premises occupied than the same time last year, so not all doom and gloom.

7. OBA update – Tuesday 18th November at the Parish Church will be the launch event, watch out for emails with times and we look forward to seeing you there and starting celebrating our fabulous Otley businesses again. Any businesses wishing to sponsor a category for £75 please contact Katie on katie@courtyardplanters.co.uk

8. Ideas for Speakers?

9. AOB - none