



## Dereham Town Plan Working Group

a joint working group of  
Dereham Town Council and the aboutDereham Partnership



### Notes of meeting held 28 April 2021

**Present:** Cllr Stuart Green, Chairman; Mike Webb, Vice Chairman; Cllr Philip Morton, Dr Peter Wade Martins, Rev Paul Cubitt, Carolyn Coleman

**Apologies:** None received

1	<b>Apologies</b> No apologies were received.	
2	<b>Minutes of meetings held on 1 April 2021</b> The minutes were approved and can be published on the aD website.	Carolyn
3	<b>Presentation from Chief Executive Officer of Cirencester</b> <i>(Andrew Tubb had been the main driving force behind Cirencester Town Council's scheme to modernise and improve their market place. There are many similarities between Cirencester market place and Dereham's.)</i> Andrew's presentation covered the history of decision-making behind their market-place improvement scheme. Some plans dated back to the 1960s but had never been enacted. It was important, he said, to talk with all the key stakeholders to gain agreement before proceeding. Their main aim in pushing forward with the new scheme was to reduce the volume of traffic: their streets are narrow and traffic congestion, with flows in both direction through the market-place was a problem. This in turn led to noise and dirt and pollution damage to nearby structures, including the historically important parish church. The fumes here were made worse by buses idling outside with their engines running. Over time, their markets had declined, reducing from three per week to only one, much smaller market. As Andrew said, 'Change is inevitable' - the thing is to make sure it is in the right direction. Only the town council can champion the cause of the town. Following a feasibility study, the scheme that was eventually delivered includes an area which is paved, but traffic can move along slowly; pedestrians are protected by bollards - the difference now is that the pedestrian comes first when before the vehicles came first. The environment is cleaner and much more attractive. Markets have increased in popularity and footfall has increased five-fold since the project was completed in 2016. The presentation was very informative and was described as inspiring. Asked about the barriers and lessons learned, Andrew stated that before the scheme started, people were generally fearful of change; local traders were afraid they would lose trade, but the opposite has been the case - visitor numbers are up and trade has increased. Cirencester Town Council also delegated funds to a participatory budget to allow local community groups to deliver projects in the area.	

4	<b>Toilets!</b> Mike updated us: at the last meeting we agreed we should go ahead with a proposal to improve toilet facilities in the town centre. The meeting agreed that it is extremely unlikely the public sector will build brand new toilets and the proposed scheme is a good solution while waiting for that to happen. The meeting agreed the proposal should be taken to Dereham Town Council for debate. Stuart undertook to ensure it goes to full council.	Stuart
5	<b>Finalise vision and/or issues to be addressed</b> Mike and Peter both requested a one page summary of the priorities for improvement that can be presented to the consultants. Carolyn agreed to prepare a first draft and circulate this promptly.	Carolyn
6	<b>Consultants update</b> We agreed that we are unclear if the DTPWG or the aboutDereham Partnership will be offered a meeting with the consultants. Dereham Town Council has a meeting with them on 11th May. We agreed that Mike will ask the Breckland officer for a meeting.	
7	<b>Press and PR for the group</b> Peter apologised for the story which had appeared in the Dereham Times. The journalist had taken what should have been a positive story and given it a sensational and negative slant. It did not represent the views of this group. We have contacts with the press as well as our own news pages on the aD website. We should put out stories that we have agreed on, rather than responding off the cuff to requests for information from the media. It was suggested we might do a news story about the Cirencester presentation.	All Mike / Carolyn
8	<b>Co-ordination of current and planned projects</b> Mike reported that we had heard accidentally about the planned yarn-bombing between Nelson's Place and Norwich Street. This appears to be an MTI initiative as part of the 'Spring Back' recovery programme. There seems to have been a lack of consultation about ideas for the use of the MTI funds in Dereham. Philip M offered to report back.	Philip M
9	<b>Housekeeping</b> There is no action required other than to review the A4 summary of priorities.	All
10	<b>D&amp;TNM</b> The next meeting will be Weds 26th May - this was agreed in the meeting as some people are unavailable on 27th May. Please diary these dates below now.	All

### Next meetings:

Monthly meeting of DTPWG	Zoom	7.30pm	Weds 26th May
Monthly meeting of DTPWG	Zoom	7.30pm	Weds 23rd June
Monthly meeting of DTPWG	Zoom	7.30pm	Weds 28th July