



1st Nov 2018  
Burnham Park Hall

**Attendees**

Anne Inglis: Chairman  
Steve Colburn: Deputy Chairman  
Martin Carter: BBA Committee Member  
Jo Sommer - Local Business Owner and previous BBA Chair  
Paul Sherriff - Local Resident and Previous BBA Chair  
Paula Prince – Councillor  
Adam Prince – Councillor  
Ekta Kaur-Ross – Councillor  
Donna Wilkinson – South Bucks Economic Development  
Paul Salmon - South Bucks Economic Development  
Judith Foster - Parish Chair  
Sheridan Jacklin-Edward - Parish Clerk

**Apologies**

Anne Hollands  
Martin Tingley  
Iaisha Young  
Igan & Wafa Hayati  
Colin Bougton-Smith  
Sharon (Josephine H&B)  
Liz Munde

Anne Inglis opened the meeting and welcomed the guests who represented the Parish, the district, the Burnham Business Association (BBA) and local businesses. She also thanked Burnham Parish for the free use of the room.

Anne offered the apologies of the above named persons and also stated that Anne Hollands, the BBA Secretary was unable to continue in her post as secretary as she was retiring. Anne thanked Anne in her absence for the contribution, time and effort she devoted to the BBA over the years and wished her well in her retirement.

She explained that in the absence of others coming forward last year, she had taken the role of BBA chair and Steve Colbourn was appointed as vice chair. Since the last BBA meeting a number of other stakeholder discussions had taken place with the Parish and South Bucks District Council to develop an open and transparent relationship. Internal discussions have also taken place to review what the BBA is all about. Anne highlighted that since 2015 the membership of the BBA has remained almost static at 25 members and thanked the previous two chairmen for their efforts in the past in trying to drive up numbers.

Both Anne and Steve explained that moving forward the proposal is that the BBA will NOT be a service organisation and therefore discussions are well underway to novate things like the Market & Christmas Lights to the Parish (with their agreement).

The BBA's future aims and objectives are to evolve towards a lobbying and pressure group, opening up membership to give Burnham businesses a stronger voice.

Steve spoke about the developing relationship with SBDC, particularly the economic development team (represented by Paul and Donna at the meeting).

Anne discussed BBA subscriptions and asked that it be noted that no requests for payment had been made and that moving forward the organisation will step away from requiring payment to join the membership. This being in line with the BBA becoming a lobbying organisation and so financial support should no longer be required. Any monies already gathered will be used to settle outstanding payments and then (once approved) will be passed to the Parish to support the Xmas lights which have been transferred to them.

Paul Sherriff offered words of caution to the Parish that they should not seek to put the market traders on direct debit as he has seen indicators that this will be unsuccessful from the New Forest.

Sheridan pointed out that there have been issues with the High Street since before he started in post and that despite local efforts many issues remain outstanding and a new approach will be required.

The Parish recognise the limited of the BBA's capacity and despite there being no specific mandate the Parish are minded to become more involved and with that in mind that are considering a new position for economic development project management (one of the key findings from the earlier Experian report) This will be a funded officer responsible for markets, lighting, cleanliness, economic development, Xmas lights and landlord and district Liaison. The role is potentially three days a week and will also include promotions, events and publicity.

At the Full Parish Council Meeting on Monday 29th the role was agreed in principle subject to input from the various stakeholders and subsequent full ratification by the council. The BBA indicated strong support for this initiative.

The next steps for the Parish will be to work up a Job Description and Role Specification plus KPI's with a view to having the role approved and in place by the beginning of the next financial Year (April 2019).

Sheridan pointed out the sense of apathy which has been described is actually a sense of frustration, there are strong feelings about the way the High Street needs to develop and in order to achieve this the Parish recognises that an administrative central function will be a positive step forward and will provide the BBA with the ability to focus on lobbying.

Paul Sherriff pointed out that LSC funding still exists and it would be helpful if the new resource could tap into that funding stream.

Paul went on to discuss the planning system and how it is creating a situation whereby the High Street is changing based on the relaxed rules which mean certain uses can now automatically be changed. He pointed out that our High Street is at the crossroads of losing retail and becoming a service only destination.

Anne described Bracknell and how their reinvention has changed them into a destination oriented town and it is essential that Burnham also works to create a destination location which people want to visit and use.

Jo Sommer pointed out that the rents are just too high and that the landlords need to be a part of the solution and not a part of the problem. She explained that we won't get the requisite footfall without the requisite variety of shops.

Another issue raised by Jo Sommer and Paul Sherriff is parking and they asserted that free parking is very important.

Discussion took place around how the BBA can lobby local landlords on how to balance economic forces by perhaps offering a lower cost of entry for diverse uses therefore providing some income on the property rather than allowing it to remain dormant.

Paul Sherriff pointed out that some landlords are more investment based and seem happy to allow properties to fall into disrepair (NOTE: Perhaps this is an area where we could lobby SBDC to consider CPO to ensure the properties do not remain empty). With Listed or Heritage buildings the 'Economic Development Manager' may have more time to look into lobbying for improvements.

Paul and Donna pointed out that their role was all about providing economic development support to local centres. They are new to the role and are already starting to understand the need for local areas to have a lobbying voice. They will be able to provide lobbying support to internal council departments with whom they work closely like planning and enforcement. Some things however may be out of scope.

Steve Colbourn indicate the welcome improvement of having SBDC in the room, this was a key improvement from the discussions and meetings so far.

Sheridan asked SBDC what their KPI's might be and they indicated that they are aiming to become the conduit for small businesses and village centres back to the Council to help economic development. Examples of possible outcomes were promotion of events like Small Business Saturday and lobbying for grants and financial support.

One immediate benefit of the conversations between SBDC and the BBA will be the formation of a local business support leaflet. This will be generated initially in PDF format for the BBA to distribute early in the new year and then, once the Parish economic development post has been filled, more details will be added and a printed version will be produced.

Sheridan asked if SBDC could provide stats, benchmarking and evidence which might support the economic development initiatives. SBDC said that localised stats may not exist but they would likely be able to help with county wide information.

Steve Colbourn reminded everyone that the word of retail has changed in line with online shopping and we need to be mindful of creating a social destination, Paul Sherriff again pointed out that footfall will be key and Anne suggested that working together would be the best way to achieve those aims.

Sheridan reminded us that the purpose of the village is evolving over time and that the village must reinvent itself to be more of a leisure destination.

Jo Sommer reminded us that the footfall had an immediate demise after the closure of Nat West Bank.

Discussion turned to the Market and the lack of a good fruit and veg offer, Paul Sherriff suggested that if one could not be found by Christmas then the Market may die.

Anecdotally since the free parking ended footfall has declined even further.

Paul Sherriff noted that Bourne End Car parking is 30p for an hour and £1 for four hours. Burnham compares very unfavourably at 80p for 30 mins. Apparently parking in Thame is free in order to generate footfall.

Paul Sherriff asserted that South Bucks and Chiltern need to reconsider free parking throughout Burnham.

Discussion moved to comments around Burnham park and Paul Sherriff asked if more could be done to regenerate the park and consider lottery funding.

Ekta Kaur-Ross raise a question as to residents of the high street being included in the BBA, feelings were split on this subject but in general it was felt that the BBA is more a lobbying group for businesses, with residents being served by the Parish and residents associations.

Sheridan offered that different models could exist with different stakeholders taking the lead for each group. Sheridan requested that the BBA identify a clear set of aims and objectives which should be published as some people still don't know what the BBA is about.

Sheridan asked the BBA to consider what the economic development officer role might look like by asking the following questions.

What would you like this person to do?

What would good look like?

How would you measure their success?

Sheridan went on to talk briefly about the more strategic neighbourhood plan steering group who will be looking to take a strategic approach to a thriving local economy and whose outputs may well inform the economic development officers' operational activities.

#### **Next Steps;**

The attendees agreed that the minutes should be sent out with a further "Call to Action" to determine the appetite for local businesses to become involved in the evolving role of the BBA.

The meeting closed at 7pm with Anne thanking everyone in attendance.