

TENTERDEN TOWN COUNCIL – EXTERNAL COMMITTEE

CINEMA FOCUS GROUP

MINUTES OF A MEETING ON 16TH NOVEMBER 2017

Present: Cllr. Sue Ferguson, Cllr. Mike Carter, Phil Burgess (Town Clerk), Claire Gilbert (Deputy Town Clerk), Pippa Carter, Tom Evans, Reverend Lindsay Hammond, Elaine Mahoney, Carol Parkin, Fran Sharp, Bob Somerscales, Gill Topley, Kimberley Trow, Wilfred Watters and Seren Welch.

1. **Apologies for Absence.** Chris Head, Vicky Morgan, Nic Phillips and Lindsay Phillips.
2. **Minutes** of the meeting held on 21st September 2017 were agreed.
3. **Matters Arising.** None.
4. **Review of Architect's Visit.**
 - 4.1 Sue Ferguson reported how impressed she was with Stefanie Fischer who was very enthusiastic. The pre-feasibility study had been circulated with the agenda for this meeting.
5. **Possible Proposal to the Council for a Pre-Feasibility Study.**
 - 5.1 Mike Carter reported that the pre-feasibility study would be discussed at the External Committee meeting on Monday, 20th November.
 - 5.2 Sue read out Chris Head's comments on the architect's proposal:
 - (a) Stage 1 (Pre-feasibility) looks to me to be covering a lot of the issues you already addressed in the previous Options study and by the Focus Group. We do not want to pay for another discussion on the demographics of the town and competing cinemas in the locality before concluding that it is worth moving on to Stage 2, which will undoubtedly be the findings of Stage 1. I think that it would be more efficient in terms of time, and maybe cost, to combine the two stages.
 - (b) The fees and the indicated time span do not seem unreasonable, although one can only judge this after seeing the end-product. However, in commissioning the consultants it is important to stress that we are looking for them to add value and not simply go over the same ground again.
 - (c) I was initially concerned that there would be three separate contracts, but that having considered this I think it's a good idea because it is essential to avoid any explicit or implicit understanding that the same consultants would necessarily be commissioned for the next stage, either individually or as a group. TTC needs to be free to go to others if necessary. In particular for a relatively small building job like this, I doubt whether it makes sense to have a QS located on the other side of the country.

Tom Evans made the observation that Chris was not at the Architect's presentation which would have addressed some of his concerns. At the presentation, Stefanie Fischer had asked the question "is anyone present a specialist" and the answer was "no".

- 5.3 Fran Sharp had spoken to Siggie Nepp regarding her ideas for a cinema at the Town Hall and Fran asked whether it was worth re-visiting those plans. Mike Carter responded that at the time a two screen was not an option as there was not enough space and additional land would be required. Tom Evans advised that the Consultants would look at the option of using the Town Hall as part of the scoping exercise. Mike also commented that the advantage of using Stefanie Fischer is that she has actually designed and built a cinema.
- 5.4 Sue advised that it would be worth meeting again with the Town Hall Focus Group, however, they were currently forging ahead with refurbishing the Town Hall. Kimberley Trow was concerned that both Focus Groups were not working together regarding the Town Hall; Mike advised that the Town Hall Focus Group had agreed to take on board the architects views and possibly incorporate them. Elaine Mahoney observed that this was where the pre-feasibility exercise comes in and this would identify if the Town Hall was viable.
- 5.5 Tom reported that a specialist consultant was needed to protect the Council and help the management of a potential cinema whether the Council was the provider or it was financed.
- 5.6 Seren Welch advised that the group should go back to the Town Hall Focus Group and try to get the discussion going and this could be done formally through Phil Burgess. Phil reported that it was urgent to reorder/refurbish the Town Hall as it was not being used as much as it could be. Both Fran and Kimberley suggested the groups combine as it would be more cost effective.
- 5.7 Seren requested that the timelines are checked between the two focus groups to ensure they coincide. She also advised talking to the architects to see if the dates of the stages could be moved forward so that the work could get underway once agreed at the External Committee meeting on Monday.
- 5.8 The Focus Group agreed to go forward and recommend the pre-feasibility proposal to the External Committee on Monday, 20th November.

6. PR & Social Media.

- 6.1 Mike was keen to raise enthusiasm amongst residents in order to create more support for the Cinema.
- 6.2 Mike advised the Group to read the Lipton Report if they had not already and Claire agreed to circulate with the minutes the link to the Report on the Town Council's website.
- 6.3 Phil asked the Group to bear in mind that there would potentially be a 25% increase in the Precept (Council Tax) on any million borrowed. The boxes

were ticked with regard to capital expenditure, however ongoing funding would need to be found.

- 6.4 Mike raised the issue that out of all the projects identified in the Lipton Report there had never been a Council vote as to whether the recreation ground reordering should be prioritised.
- 6.5 Seren advised that there were no culture facilities in the Town and there needed to be a culture hub. She stressed that it was important to not only think of a two-screen cinema, but what else could be shown, i.e. it needs to appeal to all ages.
- 6.6 The Group discussed changing the name of the Focus Group to incorporate Seren's advice and it was agreed to rename the Group 'The Cinema and Culture Hub Focus Group'.

7. Any Other Business.

- 7.1 Sue asked if the sub-groups had conducted their site visits as Sue had been to the Tenterden Club. The Group discussed whether this was now required, however, Tom advised that Stefanie requests the information in order to carry out Stage 2. This includes obtaining the boundary lines from Land Registry and copies of any plans/drawings that exist on each possible venue. The Group need Stefanie to advise on what she thinks it will cost to build/renovate each location.
- 7.2 Seren advised that if the Cinema does become a Culture Hub as well, then this would open up avenues for obtaining grants.
- 7.3 Sue recorded the Groups thanks to Wilfred and Mike for finding Stefanie Fischer.

7. Date of Next Meeting. To be confirmed.