

TENTERDEN TOWN COUNCIL – EXTERNAL COMMITTEE

CINEMA FOCUS GROUP

MINUTES OF A MEETING ON 29TH JANUARY 2019

Present: Cllr. Mike Carter, Cllr. Sue Ferguson, Claire Gilbert (Deputy Town Clerk), Tom Evans (Chair), Alan Bates, Paul Hale, Chris Head, Elaine Mahoney, Carol Parkin, Nic Phillips, Bob Somerscales, Gill Topley, Wilfred Watters and Seren Welch.

1. **Apologies for Absence.** Colin Campbell and Fran Sharp.
2. **Minutes** of the meeting held on 30th October 2018 were agreed.
3. **Matters Arising.** None.
5. **Pre-planning Application Progress Report.** Tom Evans updated the Group on the process since the Council's External Committee approved funding for the pre-planning application. Tom had discovered from checking Ashford Borough Council's website that due to losing a Conservation Officer, ABC were no longer giving pre-planning advice on conservation. Tom had reported this to Stefanie Fischer. Burrell, Foley, Fischer's Status Report (which was circulated to members) looked at the issue and process with going to Historic England for advice. Stefanie was currently looking at two possible ways of reducing the impact on the interior of The Pebbles and improve the linkage to the Millennium Garden.

6.1 Working Groups' Progress/Updates.

- 6.1 Operators Working Group. Paul Hale reported that every interested operator had received equal access/received the same literature to ensure a level playing field. Matt Breckon at Kino would like a visual inspection of the building; it was agreed that all interested operators should be offered the opportunity to look around. *Subsequent to the meeting, White Stuff Head Office would not authorise inspections due to the sensitivity of the situation for staff. Claire will write to the operators indicating this and the possibility of looking round when the building feasibility study takes place.*

Seren reported that she had been in touch with the Head of Development at the Independent Cinema Office (ICO); they offer independent advice on funding. The 'How to Start a Cinema' document Seren had obtained could be used to cross check and perhaps the ICO could be contacted for advice when needed rather than contract their services. It was agreed to keep in touch with the ICO.

- 6.2 Finance & Structuring Working Group. Chris Head reported that they were still no further ahead with how much they were looking for. With inflation, etc. and looking at TTC's and operator's input, we would still be looking for funding of 1.5 million. All advice so far had been to have a clear business plan before going out for funding. Chris was concerned that a full business plan might not be ready until the end of the year. Alan Bates commented that we need to convince people that it is a good investment; bonds are a

possibility. Mike Carter reported that we have a provisional business plan with Ron Inglis' Study.

- 6.3 Route Map Working Group. As reported previously, the route map is a working document and timescales always moving. Chris asked who would sign the Memorandum of Understanding with the preferred operator? Tom Evans reported that it would probably have to be TTC.

6. Press and Community Relations.

- 6.1 Tom highlighted the issues that had come to light with regard to the relationship between the Cinema Group and Town Councillors. Mike Carter briefly outlined the uncertainty of issues that arose out of the November and December External Committee meetings. Tom and Mike had met with Phil Burgess to discuss the issues and it was agreed that a meeting should take place between Councillors and representatives of the Cinema Group; the 19th or 21st February had been suggested as possible dates. It was agreed that a representative from each working group should attend and Tom would write to the Town Clerk with the preferred date.

- 6.2 Seren reported that we needed to focus on economic development, not just that we want a cinema; a cinema would improve the night time economy and we need this information to back it up.

Tom reported that the working group want to set up a meeting with Andrew Osborne in Economic Development (ED) at Ashford Borough Council (ABC). Seren, Claire and Cllr. Pam Smith had met with the cultural team at ABC and felt that they needed to brief and consult with ED; Claire had been trying to set up a meeting with Andrew. Seren reported that they need to look at wider tourism and their priorities before the Cinema Group goes to him.

- 6.3 Questions about relationship with cultural hub: Mike reported that there is a perceived clash with St. Mildred's and Mike suggested holding a meeting to bounce ideas between the two groups. Mike agreed to contact Lindsay Hammond to arrange a meeting in early March.

- 6.4 Press Relations. Tom reported that the Focus Group had no authority of its own; the Group is derived from the Council. On social media, information floats around but it is not clear on who should be contacted. It was agreed that the Town Council's website should be kept up to date with progress on not only the Cinema, but also all the other focus groups. Blogs could then be sent via social media. Claire reported that updates on the focus groups was included in the next Council newsletter, due to be delivered to houses in February.

- 7. Focus Group Membership.** Tom reported that two/three key groups had come up that could enhance the focus group membership: young people, people with disabilities and representatives from the arts. Mike agreed to follow this up with Homewood School and Claire suggested contacting the Youth Cafe; Jo Vos would be a good initial contact. Tom proposed Barbara Lawrence as one representative of people with disabilities and it was suggested that a representative from the Social Hub might like to join. It was reported that Colin Campbell could contact the Tenterden Arts Society to find a representative.

It was agreed that it would be helpful to have a member on the focus group who worked in the legal profession and could offer advice and guidance. Members agreed to ask around and keep in touch via email with suggestions.

8. Any Other Business. None.

9. Date of Next Meeting. Thursday, 14th March 2009 at 7.00 pm.