

MPAPP Meeting Minutes – 23rd February 2023

In attendance: Keith Thomas (KT), Zara Aitken ZA), Cllr Andrew Kingston-James (AKJ), Maureen Smith (MS), Paul Matcham (PM), Ray Tew (RT), Bryan Howe (BH), Cllr Mandy Chilcott (MC), Jim Whittaker (JW), Nicki Maclean (NM)

Apologies: Cllr Marcus Kravis, Michelle Porter (MP)

1. Chair Role

RT gave update on potential candidate for chairperson. It was suggested that an informal meeting is set up for members of MPAPP to meet the candidate and invite to a future MPAPP meeting. Candidate is away for 4 weeks, so potential in person meeting in early April with formal MPAPP meeting on same date in person.

Action: ZA in get in touch with candidate to find suitable date.

2. Priorities for 2023

- **Shared Prosperity Fund** – KT gave update on Shared Prosperity Fund. Awaiting formal operational plan in terms of governance on delivery of SPF. Government have approved investment plan that Somerset County Council submitted in summer 2022. Currently in year 1 of fund, but there has been acknowledgement that government are rolling year 1 allocation into year 2. SCC yet to determine mechanism of asking for project proposals. Expected that there will be a call for projects. Further conversations to continue. There is a separate element in SPF for rural elements. Number of themes and projects in Minehead plan that may fit with SPF themes. Likely to have to move swiftly in proposals.

KT updated group on Levelling Up Fund bid for Bridgwater and Minehead for just under £20m, for Somerset Academy for Health and Social Care for Bridgwater Old Hospital, with satellite facility for West Somerset. Originally agreed for Seahorse Centre in Minehead but further conversations are ongoing around needs and requirements. Funding to be spent by March 2025.

Action: KT to follow up to obtain further clarity this week.

- **Local Community Networks** – MC updated group that the LCNs are expected to be up and running by June/July. First few meetings will be around getting to know everyone and then working out priorities for area. LCN covers from Minehead to Bishops Lydeard, with Exmoor in separate LCN. Key will be agreeing priorities for LCN and focusing in on one or two topics.
- **Funding for MCDT Project Coordinator role** – MCDT submitted funding bid to The Fore in January. While bid was unsuccessful, positive feedback was given and invited to reapply in March/April round. PM queried whether any Hinkley Point pots available. RT is in discussion with Justin Sargent at Somerset Community Foundation. PM also suggested Henry Smith, which is more community-focused funding. KT queried if any funding available under new Somerset Council. MC gave

update that the new art and culture portfolio holder for new council is Federica Smith-Roberts. MC not aware of any pots of funding available. Currently, all focus is on getting to new council. Once into new council, dialogues may open as to what's next for council.

Action: ZA & KT get together to strategize on funding plans for ZA role.

3. Priorities Updates

- **Mapping Understory** – ZA updated on stats from mapping. Currently 38 organisations contributed to map. Very positive stats coming out of the workshop and data. MCDT to run follow up session for those who have contributed to the map for how to use the map and get the best out of it. KT requested a report on data and outcomes following the final session.
- **Minehead Bay Festival** – ZA updated on MBF 2nd Sept 2023. Early planning stages currently. Looking at making festival financially sustainable.
- **Shelters** – Planning permission granted. ZA to meet with architect and building team to put together critical path timeline with aim of avoiding busy summer season. ZA to update group next meeting.
- **Shelters Maintenance** – MCDT in discussions with SWT Assets team with regards plans for maintenance fund.
- **BioBlitz** – MCDT planning series of nature/environmental focused events in partnership with Somerset Wildlife Trust, National Trust and Exmoor National Park. iNaturalist training event on 4th March from 10am at Beach Hotel – interactive training session for all ages to train people in wildlife identification using iNaturalist. Leading into BioBlitz on 25th March which will include wildlife surveying, arts and crafts activities, seashore safaris and guided walks and talks. Applied for funding from British Ecological Society (£2000) for funding for a second BioBlitz event in June.

4. AOB

- KT queried if there is central database for events – potential project for young people to be involved in creating a website/database for events. ZA to speak to PM to see if youth forum is emerging and developing.
- JW gave update on BID ballot – anti-BID sentiment around but hoping for positive outcome.
- Old Hospital – discussion around Old Hospital, issues and opportunities. Recent flood and fire at Old Hospital. Building is on market for sale for £800k. KT rang estate agents today to explore situation. They have set a deadline of tomorrow for interested parties to submit proposals. Previously looked at it for Levelling Up Fund. KT & RT met with owner but step too far to put into LUF for dealing with grade 2 listed building. Issues with structural integrity, oversized for requirements for Health and Social Academy facility, with ongoing issues over management and maintenance costs. Government announced a Community Ownership Fund in 2022 but only contributing up to £250k so would have to find match funding. Could fall into the correct category for this fund but would be a gap in covering costs for buying,

maintenance and operational business plan for sustainable management going forward. RT to give owner a call next week to determine progress and whether there have been any interesting offers.

5. Future Meetings

ZA to look at dates for meeting in person in early April to coincide with meeting candidate for chairperson role. Future dates to be agreed.