



## **Barnstaple Place Partnership board**

**Friday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2025 09.30am – 11.00am**

**Guildhall, Barnstaple**

### **1. Welcome and introductions**

Apologies – Amanda Howard, Bill Blythe, Lee Baxendale, Malcolm Prowse, Ella McCann

Notes from previous meeting agreed.

### **2. Improving the look and feel of the town centre:**

Vacant Units working group update:

HH – our current vacancy rate is 8.25% of which 28 of these properties are listed. The Local Data Company (LDC) use a much wider area so the figures vary from them to our own data. We are building a database of all the owners of the vacant properties doing land registry searches and asking the letting agents. We have been out on site with Matt Brown from planning and Collette Hall (conservation officer) to start allocating each building a priority and what interventions we intend to proceed with. JRJ stated that as part the buildings trust they have been looking at grants to improve the listed buildings that are vacant. The buildings trust is going to employ someone to do this – SJMS offered support from NDC staff if required. MB added that the new enforcement officer and contract officer have been advised to make the vacant units a S215 priority. We can then deal with each building individually and make it known what NDC expect to happen ie. Remove hoardings and make good, or paint the building. MM asked what the value of the buildings are, SJMS made an action to invite a commercial agent along to the next meeting to discuss the reasons why the properties arent being let.. demand, rents? And also added that this is a nationwide problem she is in talks with Homes England. HH then went on to say that we will be prioritising the worst buildings first. We will most probably start out with The White Horse, Boutport Street showing that we will be chasing up these building and setting a precedent. AW suggested the RAG system be applied so all properties follow the same process and we need to outwardly explain what we are doing to the wider public. SJMS suggested that there maybe some UPSKF money to entice the vacant buildings owners to spruce up their property, start with the exterior and then look at activating the use of the property.

Street Scene working group update

HH reported that since we last met the group have met and have set up an whatsapp group which is working really well. AW stated that the license was granted to DCC last November giving them permission to install ANPR cameras with the square being a priority.

Public Art update



AM up dated - 11 artist applied and the public have voted and the results can be revealed.

1<sup>st</sup> Quay sands on Rolle quay - this will have 6 sound tracks. The bandstand had to be excluded due to budget. 2<sup>nd</sup> The Welcome mosaic for the train station, 3<sup>rd</sup> the Tide Clocks on The strand my Michael Pinsky, these will all form part of the Art Trail and will hopefully be installed within the next 12 months. NDC will be engaging with local communities at Forches and Gorwell to create their own pieces of work.

### **3. Improving the functionality of the town**

Wayfinding update:

AM – DCC have the order to install the fingerposts. Plinths are being manufactured. The interpretation boards need to be linked to the heritage trail which is being launched tomorrow. The HT is being led by Rosie Mahoney from BTC, there are 10k maps that have been printed to start with.

Butchers Row/Cross Street

HH reported that not much has changed and the works will begin next Jan 2026 as discussed with the traders. SJMS added that the redecoration of the canopy and the shop fronts are starting next week.

Tuly Street project

The PID is in. This project was identified as part of the Barnstaple Vision. We need to be mindful of what we want to achieve, deliveries and accessibility to the library. LY suggested that the new car park may take some pressure off of the Cattle Market car [ark and requested this is monitored.

### **4. Community Networks / Projects and Programme updates – key updates or issues that need escalating:**

Future high street fund update

SJMS reported that the scaffold is down on 36 Boutport street and she will bring photos to the next meeting. 37 is in progress. The entrance to the central car park from Alexandra road will be completed on the 13<sup>th</sup> March and by the end of March the whole car park will be fully surfaced and opened.

CB reported that the tiling is on track in Green lanes. Concerns raised about the youths causing trouble around the town.

AM reported that the contract has been signed on Bridge buildings and the work should be completed by the end of the year.

Ella McCann updates:

Accessibility network - disabled parking lines in cattle market car park nearest library Square - can they be redone to make clearer. Any feedback on crossings?

Accessibility / Repair Cafe - Is the loading area in Tuly Street (outside Beer Matters and the Architects) only for commercial vehicles or would this also include domestic vehicles when unloading and loading tools into the library on repair cafe days when they are providing a voluntary service in the community?



Accessibility / Children and Families / North Devon Inclusive Communities - successful learning day in January with taster sessions mythbusting and informing attendees on trauma informed practices and what support and training is available to enhance the compassionate approaches we use in our community to enable better access and integration for those living with multiple complexities including substance use and homelessness. Full evaluation still to be completed before second iteration to test learning from phase 1 and open up to more attendees.

OB as a whole but specifically children and families network, youth network and community food network / LCP / Tackling Health Inequalities (NHS/OHID) / - Congratulations to the Food for thought project for being finalists in the national Sustain (Alliance for better food and farming) Children's Food Campaign. Heading to Westminster last week to hear who won the Best Local Initiative was like winning - we were runners up and proud to be! With 3 MPs and 2 Baronesses on panels at the event, policy makers and campaigners, project leads and community groups too - everyone shared stories and ideas from across the UK around school meals, HAF, local produce and nutrition, environment and economy - and Barnstaple was part of that 🍌

Landmark Theatres Community Decision Makers Panel - plans are starting for this year's Welcome Weekender which will take place again in Ilfracombe whilst still connecting with Barnstaple groups and community members. Discussions are being had around a programme or activities / taster sessions to give access to those who don't often (or ever) frequent the theatre or get involved with performance and to help inform and shape the programming of Landmark Theatres; Helping Landmark Theatres understand the local community and welcome more people to events which matter to them.

Green and Blue Network - an idea for a community growing project in the centre of town which doubles as a seating area and art has been put forward by The Gardeners Co - The Grow Room (IKEA designed flat pack style sphere construction incorporating planters all around in tiers) is an opportunity to bring together community groups and citizens with local trades and engineers to build and care for the installation(s) which could grow edible or ornamental plants. Initial discussions with Wayne are scheduled in the next fortnight to look at practicalities. Opportunity to explore Greenlanes and Pannier Market as locations would be very much appreciated. More formal proposal will come in the next few months.

Green and Blue & Repair Cafe - will be co-hosting Devon Repair Cafe in October for International Repair Day alongside DCC and guest volunteers from across the network of Devon Repair Cafes

## 5. DoNM

- 9th May 2025