

## **Better Barrow Community Project**

### **Chair's Report April 2013**

The year's activities can be summed up under four headings:

#### **Fund-raising and Events**

##### **Raising Awareness**

##### **Gathering Opinions and Advice**

#### **The Main Focus: the Market Place**

In order to do all this, of course, we had to organize ourselves. From our first open meeting we gathered a group of people who were willing to be on the committee and give up their time to help the project. That group has been remarkably stable and effective and we've added two more to our number over the year. While we do have separate sub-groups working on particular areas such as funding or events we have avoided too rigid a structure, with four officers and others who take on roles as necessary.

We have accumulated a large group of people who wish to be kept informed whom we update regularly by email or by a newsletter through the letterbox. There is also a membership list of 80 people who support our aims and that can be viewed and added to.

**Fund-raising:** we have run two cake stalls which were very successful and also raised some money through the sale of wheelbarrow trail maps and entrance to Andrew King's talk. Steve Lewis of the Six Bells also ran a raffle over the Jubilee weekend, all of which gave us some cash for expenses such as hiring rooms, duplicating etc. The Parish Council also gave us money to pay for the printing of our questionnaire forms before we had any cash of our own. Members of the committee, apart from giving their time freely, have also carried out tasks which involve, for instance, travel without claiming any expenses. Late in the financial year we were able to get a grant of £5,000 from the North Lincolnshire Community Fund. This will enable us to pay initial architects fees and other costs. One item you will see fairly soon is a Barrow Community Project notice board which will be situated next to the boards by the Post Office.

The major event which we organised was the wheelbarrow trail on the Jubilee weekend, when we had 40 wheelbarrows decorated in a huge variety of styles all around the village and some beauties in the market place. It was a really friendly communal event which we intend to repeat this year and add a few open Village Gardens to the attraction.

Under the heading of **Awareness raising**, we should mention the excellent evening with Andrew King who shared his knowledge of the Harrison family with us and about 80 others in the Village Hall. We have also contributed information to the Barrow On Humber website on Harrison and the village history. Individual members have visited the

Lincoln Archives and talked with the John Harrison Foundation in Grimsby and with Jonathan Betts at the Royal Maritime Museum in Greenwich. We hope to build on these contacts, all of which have been very supportive.

**Opinion and advice gathering** has been a key feature. The trialling, distribution and analysis of the questionnaires was a major undertaking when you realise there are 1200 letterboxes in Barrow. The results though were encouraging and we made sure that these too were widely publicised. Support for the key elements of a refurbishment of the Market Place was strong, especially more events, reduction of parking and a commemoration of John Harrison.

We have also had meetings and/or conversations with officers from North Lincs Council who have been very helpful including Planning and Highways. We have had advice from Keith Miller of English Heritage, Gary Allen of VANL and Graeme Kynman of Kynman Design, a freelance architect as well countless pieces of research by individual committee members into anything from bus shelter design to grant funding bodies.

### **The Main Focus**

All this has enabled us to get to the point where we felt we could engage the services of a firm of architects. This was done through an open invitation to about twenty relatively local firms, from which three were selected to present their ideas to the committee, plus a representative from the PC and from N Lincs. We chose the firm 2B Landscape Consultancy of North Cave unanimously and so will be moving on to the next exciting stage very soon.

We have a meeting scheduled with 2B in three week's time at which we will try to work out, in more specific detail, how we would like the Market Place to look, taking on board all of the consultation and advice we have received so far. From that meeting 2B will draw up some outline designs which we will then share with the community probably in the form of an open day in one of the village venues. From this consultation, firmer plans can be drawn up and costed and an application for substantial grant funding made.

It all seems a long way from wanting the trees in the Market Place to be replaced but, as many people have commented, if we are to achieve something worthwhile in the centre of the village and which will stand the test of time, we need to make sure we do things properly and take as many views into consideration as we can.

Once again, very many thanks to the Better Barrow committee and to all those in the village – and beyond – who continue to support us.

Trevor Millum 26.3.13