



Chair's Report 2020-2021

Introduction

This has been a significant year for the Foundation, the year we finally acquired the old Police Station for the long term benefit of the community and the town. This is thanks to our wonderful community members and is a “landmark” event for Cricklade.

Five years ago, the Police Commissioners Office publicised their intention to sell the old Police Station. Our group have been working since then, initially forming the Cricklade Development Foundation in 2018, as a not-for-profit community organisation, and then working on ways to raise funds for the purchase and development of the site. Whilst the purchase of the old Police Station was always our initial intent, due to uncertainties and delays over the years, on whether the building would ever become available, your directors continued to monitor property on the High Street and raised appropriate objections to planning requests for change of use from commercial property to residential property to ensure no further commercial units were lost to the High Street forever. In addition, we reviewed property that came up for sale and carefully considered if we should step in and buy the property to ensure it didn't fall to residential development e.g., Lloyds Bank, 88,89, 89a High Street.

As this year closes not only is the old Police Station owned by the Foundation, but plans have been submitted to Wiltshire Council for the redevelopment of the site to increase ground floor commercial space and convert the first floor into two small residential flats. These plans have been shared in the first Foundation Open Days and the positive support and useful comments have been very welcome. We continue to receive and respond to ideas and suggestions from members and official bodies.

Finances

The ability of the Foundation to publicise and fund raise has been stilted over the last year due to COVID restrictions and we currently are still in need of significant funding to enable the project to achieve its full potential. Between June and September, we raised more than £340,000. Our funds raised from members are now £359,600 and whilst this is an outstanding achievement, this is still an estimated £104,000 short of what is needed to carry out the planned redevelopment work, and efforts will be increasing to try and spread the word and raise more funds.

Membership

As a community organisation we welcome more members to join the group. The current membership is 121 an increase of 111 since our last AGM. Our members are the lifeblood of our organisation – and so our target is to increase membership to 150 and beyond. This will help provide the additional funding, but also demonstrate widespread support for our main aim, which is to retain a viable and vibrant High Street.

Please also remember we always welcome feedback from our members, so feel free to get in touch if you have any queries or information to impart. Thanks to those that have done so already, whether it be advice, recommendations and/or offers to volunteer. We expect the workload to increase significantly in the coming months, so you never know, you might get a call!

Working with other Organisations

We continue to have the welcome support of Cricklade Town Council and Wiltshire Council. Working with Cricklade Town Council a group called “High Street Strategy” was formed with membership from Cricklade Town Council and Cricklade Development Foundation (led by Terri Robertson), the aim of the group being to review and propose a strategy to help keep our wonderful High Street as a busy, successful service centre which serves the community. Again, COVID has restricted progress, but we remain hopeful that next year will see more progress.

Special thanks to the White Hart Hotel, who gave the directors a temporary meeting space to support our many planning meetings.

Current Directors

It is fair to say none of the above achievements would have happened without the tireless work of the current group of directors. Over the years their expertise, positive attitude, resilience, hard work and huge number of volunteer hours spent has achieved a positive result. I can only profusely thank this group without them there would be no Cricklade Development Foundation and no purchase of the old Police Station.

Looking Forward

Exciting times ahead. We would hope to commence the redevelopment over the next few months, but this is dependent on raising more funds and I would urge all members to spread the word and do anything they can to encourage more support. More open days are planned to share information on the project and to get input from both members and non-members. Quotations for building work will be sought and some work undertaken by volunteers. I very much look forward to working with the other directors in the year ahead and turning the first Cricklade Development Foundation project into a reality.



Ruth Szybiak

Chair – Cricklade Development Foundation Limited

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