

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR AGM 2015

Welcome everyone to the seventh annual meeting of HCPG.

### The Vision

The original purpose of HCPG was to prepare a 20 year Vision for the town. This was completed in 2008. We were then charged by the people of the town to facilitate the 400+ projects the people of the town had suggested. The projects were divided into areas, but these areas do have considerable overlap.

1. **Economic Development:** generating wealth to enable the town to flourish
2. **Culture and Heritage:** celebrating Highworth's uniqueness
3. **Transport**
4. **Environment**
5. **Quality of Life:** enable current and future generations to enjoy an excellent quality of life

### Progress so far

- We are delighted to welcome a new member of the Strategy Group during the past year. We are sure that he will bring a wealth of expertise to the group.
- The Vision: I am delighted to report that thanks to a keen statistician from Swindon Borough Council, we finally have a new set of statistics with which to update The Vision. It has been a tortuous couple of years but we will finally see a revised version in the New Year. This will complement the Neighbourhood Plan being produced by Highworth Town Council, which should also be completed in the next few months. I have been privileged to attend the working group as HCPG's representative.

HCPG has been active in many ways over the past year– supporting groups right across the town.

- Totally Locally has received an injection of new blood and is fired up to support businesses in Highworth. It has an excellent website and businesses are encouraged to contribute regularly to that and the Facebook page. It is worthwhile taking a look.
- We continue to support Highworth Town Council as they set about producing a Neighbourhood Plan.
- HAFFT – continues to promote Fair Trade in the Town. Highworth's status as a Fair Trade town has been renewed yet again.
- Highworth in Bloom continues to blossom.
- May Day Market – our sixth market, celebrating the 1960s was another huge success, with large crowds of people attending. This year a new committee was responsible for its organisation and carried the day, brilliantly. Next year's market is already being planned. 2016 will see the 4 yearly Highworth Festival and the two

groups are working closely together. Our thanks go to the new committee for all their hard work.

- Job Club continues to meet every Wednesday in the Library from 10am to 12pm. Huge thanks go to Sandra, who does a terrific job. We have a new helper this year. Dennis attended Job Club several years ago, but then went back into employment. Now he has retired he pops in to help whenever he can. With an increased number of jobs available, our clients numbers have dipped dramatically, so some weeks we have no takers, which is god for the economy.
- Connections: I am disappointed to report that the Connections project has stalled. We were hoping to link up with SEQOL, the health and social care social enterprise, but unfortunately this has not happened. Until we can identify a project with a sustainable income stream, Highworth's social enterprise remains a dream. One positive that came from the exercise is a directory that has been shared with the 25 or so organisations that attended our two discussion sessions.
- Nexus Project: Last year at this AGM I spoke about the Listening Project and how around 500 residents had given in depth interviews to Swindon's Locality team and some of our Strategy Group. One recurring theme in those interviews was a need for meaningful activities for young people. With the opening of Puddleducks cafe an opportunity arose to use the cellar for a youth cafe. Thanks to the sterling efforts of Sandra, Rosie and Charlotte, with the very able assistance of Tracy from SBC the cafe is due to open in the next couple of weeks. All those involved are delighted that Highworth Town Council have invested £10k over two years, with other substantial donations from the Lions, the Community Church, St Michael's Church and other local groups. They are also delighted that John from Puddleducks is wholly behind the venture. I am sure you will want me to wish them all a very successful venture.

### **Other Matters**

HCPG continues to be a member of the Wiltshire Forum for Community Area Partnerships . We were delighted to welcome their new manager to our meeting recently. Unfortunately along with many other non-statutory organisations funding from local authorities has been removed completely, which means there will be a real chance of it close at the end of this financial year. Although the organisation is Wiltshire based they have been very supportive of both Highworth and Wroughton over the past 8 years.

**SBC Locality Partnership:** The Locality partnership has gone through another metamorphosis, with our very special team member Mark Pritchard moving on to a new post in SBC. Although we have been very fortunate to gain the services of Tracy Scott, who has worked very hard to ensure that the Nexus Project can be launched safely.

### **In Conclusion**

Finally I would like to put on record my huge thank you to all the members of the Strategy Group, for their continued hard work and support over the year. Each one of them contributes to the Highworth Community in a different way. This year continues to be busy with the day to day running of the Community Centre, the May Day market, Totally Locally, the continued development of a Neighbourhood Plan by HTC, the development of the Youth cafe and next year's Festival. Much of this huge community commitment can be traced back to Highworth: The Vision. I think we can all be justifiably proud of our contribution to the future well-being of the Town.

I commend my report.

Keith Smith  
Chairman