



## **Bewdley Town Council – Report for Annual Meeting**

Date: 31/03/2021

### **Bewdley Guildhall Complex:**

- BCARA is concerned the proposals for management of this complex do not as yet seem to have any long-term safeguarding of important public assets should the venture fail.
- BCARA are not yet convinced that it is wise to include the QEII Gardens as part of the venture. We would wish to be assured that access to the gardens would not be curtailed by the proposed Trust.
- We believe the success of this proposal is likely to depend on the final structural arrangement of the Trust set up to manage the facility, together with the selection of its Trustees.
- We believe there may be some advantage in a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) to operate the Guildhall and Museum with some long-term financial support from WFDC.

### **General untidiness of the Quays:**

- BCARA is concerned about the general untidiness of Severnside North, South and Load Street. This encompasses repairs to Carriageway, littering, street furniture etc. These issues have been raised with WFDC and Steve Brant indicated he would endeavour to instigate a joint review meeting of all agencies on site.

- The carriageway at the North end of Severnside South needs repair and recently blocks have been taken up and tarmac laid to a small section. We really do hope this is a temporary repair as it looks dreadful.



- WFDC do a great job collecting litter and emptying the bins every morning. There are a great many bins most of which overflow along the riverside, especially during periods of good weather and high footfall. We are aware that WFDC have been talking to some of the fast-food vendors about the style and size of their packaging.
- BCARA feels those vendors should bear some responsibility for collecting excess litter during periods of high foot fall when the town is busy. Maybe by jointly funding staff to collect the excess or each being responsible for a section of the town.
- Street furniture is another issue that needs to be addressed. BCARA understand from regulatory services, that possibly only the odd vendor currently has a license to locate any furniture outside their premises. Some display boards partially block the pavements and in the narrow sections can force people into the road. Licensing needs to be firmly managed on an equitable basis for premises and local residents.



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## **Café Culture.**

- Many residents of Bewdley and visitors enjoy the café culture alongside the river, our members included.
- The town centre is a hybrid of residential and retail properties and licensing needs to be carefully considered, balancing the needs of both traders and residents alike.
- Having spoken to some residents close to the action, most seem to be supportive of the service, but not happy about the noise that can occur late at night. A good compromise maybe to cease activity outside at 11.00pm.
- It may be possible to achieve this via the licensing for street furniture. If not, through future licensing reviews, if such a compromise cannot be reached by negotiation with the traders concerned.
- In granting street licenses, BCARA feel that due consideration should be given to width of pavements to ensure that the more elderly in our society with walking aids, the disabled and parents with pushchairs can safely pass without being forced into the road.

## **Town Market:**

- In talking to a few residents at the North end of Severnside South about café culture, all were not happy about the market. They are woken up at 5.00am on Sunday mornings and inconvenienced by traders who regularly block footpaths and entrances when setting up or packing up and a few are generally rude.
- Originally the market was one supported by local traders and artisans selling largely locally produced goods. Since BDT stopped organizing it and BTC has taken over, the style of the market has changed, and not perhaps for the better, with instances of mobile coffee stalls set up directly opposite the Courtyard Café.

- BCARA feels that the time is right for the market to be re-evaluated.
  - Does it contribute to BTC finances – we suspect the answer is no!
  - Does it benefit the local traders?
  - Does it benefit the majority of town residents?
  - Can it be relocated to enable the outdoor cafes uninterrupted trading and not disturb town centre residents?
- We would suggest to BTC that if the market does not have any cost benefit to the town and it cannot be actively managed it should, perhaps, be discontinued.

### **Town Centre Consortium**

- BCARA suggested a Town Centre Consortium be formed to discuss these issues. The Civic Society expressed an interest and has indeed taken the lead in setting up the Consortium of which we are a member.
- The Consortium, involving around 19 groups have met virtually to discuss the Guildhall complex and a small group of members have held a discussion with Ian Miller and Helen Dyke of WFDC.
- It is hoped that such a group would identify with a greater consensus what needs doing and how best to achieve it.