



The newsletter from the progress group for

Ross-On-Wye Town Plan

You may recall the giant questionnaire that went out to everyone in the town. You may have taken part in the "Planning for Real" exercise too....then wondered if anything would ever come of it all.

Well, it hasn't been quietly shelved. This newsletter will tell you what has been done, and what we are working on.

What we are working on

You won't be surprised to hear that there were far too many concerns, good ideas, wants and desires from the planning exercise for us to work on all of them at once. The selection at the moment is:

- Economic development of the town and area
- Improving sports facilities
- Taking care of our historic heritage and landscapes
- A cinema
- Sorting out signs in the town
- More allotments
- A riverside picnic area with new games facilities

Each of these has an active working group.

Signs in the town

Many are concerned that there have long been many signs that are out of date (the destination has gone), are just wrong (the destination has moved), or important places are just not signed at all. Visitors to the town get confused – and let's face it, some of us locals get confused too!

A sign survey has been done, and a lot of plainly wrong signs

have now been sorted out by Amey (it's a Herefordshire Council responsibility). The large map boards in the town are being updated and will be installed once issues over the ownership of the boards is resolved.



Fingerposts like this one have been checked to see their information is correct and altered where necessary.

The lead body on signs is Ross Town Council.

Allotments

138 people responded to the questionnaire saying they want an allotment and don't have one. There are plainly a lot of frustrated veggie growers out there! At the rate of 1/16th acre



These neat and tidy allotments at Cawdor will be lost to new housing in due course.

with landowners, because of the legal rights accorded to growers, which can make getting the land back tricky. So we are considering two alternatives:

- Setting up a "garden share" scheme. This is a sort of "dating agency" to bring together those with land they aren't using, with growers who need land.
- A community garden group – a number of people who together can rent some land for food growing.

The lead body is Ross Town Council

Historic buildings and landscapes

Some 14 people met in November, and focused on how funding can be obtained from

Heritage Lottery sources. The initial work, however, is to identify some projects, and this is underway.

The lead body is the Ross Civic Society, and the chair is David Dawson.

Economic Development

This is by far the most difficult issue raised by the Town Plan. The intention is to identify any blockages to economic growth in the area, which are amenable to practical solutions.

The working group on this consists of Cllr Jane Roberts, Chris Gooding (from Herefordshire Partnership) and



Perhaps not generally recognised as one of the historic parts of Ross – but an example of areas the Heritage Group are interested in.

Richard Hankins.

Riverside picnic area

Four potential sites have been identified between the bandstand area and the Wilton bridge car park. The intention is to build a barbecue facility, along with picnic tables and seating. We intend to add outdoor table tennis and petanque as well.

Choice of site is limited by the nearby Site of Special Scientific Interest, and the fact that a strip of land 25 metres wide back from the riverbank is a Special Area of Conservation. Consequently, the car park is the favoured location at the moment.

The lead body on this is Ross Town Council, and the contact point is Cllr Caroline Utting.



The Wilton Bridge car park

A cinema and better sports facilities

Building a cinema is expensive, and proof of demand is needed before funding can be obtained. Consequently, a Cinema Club is being formed, which will be based at the Phoenix Theatre, to find out just how keen Ross residents are to have their own cinema.



The Phoenix Theatre

For sports, work is concentrating on refurbishment of the Wilton Sports Centre. A feasibility study commissioned by the Ross Sports and Leisure Federation is being discussed with Herefordshire Council, owners of the Wilton grounds. The lead body for this is the Federation, and the contact point is Cllr John Edwards (01989 769090).

Planning

This is less of a working group and more of a slight change in direction. Developers are frequently required to put money into work that benefits the community as part of gaining planning permission for projects they want to undertake. At the moment this money is allocated by Herefordshire Council. In future we want to see the money going into projects identified under the Town Plan.

The body responsible here is the Ross Town Council Planning and Development Group Committee.

How to find out more

Our website at: <http://www.rosstownplan.org.uk> provides a very comprehensive view of all the work that has been done (going back many years) along with the latest information on the projects outlined in this newsletter.

Alternatively you can phone our secretary, Cllr Caroline Utting, on 01989 565685.

Specific questions on the areas we are working on should be directed to the chair of the relevant working group.

And finally...

The RoWToP team are very pleased to have received a letter from the Sustainable Communities Directorate, part of Herefordshire Council, which says:

The planning policy team would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you and your colleagues on the hard work and dedication that has obviously gone into producing the Town Plan over the past three years. The team was impressed with the quality of the document produced and the level of community involvement.

I would confirm that your plan will now form additional planning guidance to the emerging Local Development Framework and will be used as a material consideration in planning issues.