



Talk Up The Town

Cinderford's Regeneration Newsletter

Issue 3 – June 2007

Welcome to the third issue of **Talk Up The Town** the regeneration newsletter for Cinderford in the Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire. This newsletter from the Cinderford Regeneration Manager contains information about progress being made to regenerate and revitalise Cinderford and its surrounding area.

The Forest of Dean District Council is leading on the regeneration of Cinderford working in partnership with Gloucestershire County Council, the Forestry Commission, the South West Regional Development Agency and the national regeneration agency English Partnerships. The partners are working together to prepare the **Cinderford Business Plan** which will promote both physical regeneration, and new learning opportunities in the town and its surrounding area. Importantly, the Business Plan will feed into the statutory planning process and will help underpin a new Area Action Plan for the town.

Business Plan update

A big thank you, to everyone who returned feedback forms, town centre enhancement questionnaires, sent in emails and letters, or attended the various meetings held to seek your views about the content and direction of the Cinderford Business Plan.

The last round of community consultation ran from 1st February to 29th March 2007. Consultation feedback has helped to formulate new regeneration options the town.

The Cinderford Regeneration Board received a presentation from consultants Halcrow on 23rd April, which outlined their ideas for the town centre and Northern Quarter priority areas. Although, plans presented that day need to be amended slightly to include the Board's detailed comments – the presentation and preferred strategy for the Business Plan was approved in principle.

Priority projects will include the development of a tree-lined avenue to create a new road access into Cinderford from the A4136, the road will unlock a number of brownfield sites to facilitate a mix of new development in the Northern Quarter. Halcrow envisage that the mix will include a new education hub that could offer local further and higher education courses, a lakeside hotel, offices, new homes and an indoor multi-purpose leisure and recreation facility.

In the town centre, Halcrow propose major redevelopment to attract a mix of larger commercial units, new homes and attractive public open spaces. Particular priorities are to fully pedestrianise the Triangle; and, to transform the route through to the Miners' Welfare Hall. Both of these proposals aim to significantly raise the environmental quality within the centre.

The next step will be for Board Members English Partnerships, to present the draft Business Plan proposals to their own

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Projects Board on 17th July. This important meeting will seek to confirm the level of National Coalfield Programme funding that will be made available to deliver the Business Plan through to 2012.

Tesco news

Following a two day judicial review hearing in the High Court last month, Mr Justice Collins has indicated that he plans to quash the Forest of Dean District Council's decision to approve Tesco's plans to develop a new superstore in the town centre.

The official written judgement is still awaited and this will detail the grounds for his decision. Attention will now switch back to the District Council, as the planning team and Planning Committee members work to determine the latest planning application from Tesco on the same site.

Rural Towns Revealed

Reporter Andrea Johnston from BBC Radio Gloucestershire joined the Cinderford Regeneration Consultative Group meeting on 5th March to record how local people are being involved with the regeneration work in Cinderford. The show aired on Vernon Harwood's Sunday morning show at 10.40am on 3rd June. If you missed the programme, please contact Wendy Jackson to obtain a free copy of this audio piece.

Miner's Welfare Hall (MWH)

A new Steering Group is working with John Beddis from the MWH Committee to secure funding to refurbish and extend this 100 year old community building in the heart of the town centre. In April,

John submitted a £500,000 funding bid to the Lottery's "Community Building Fund". Successful applications from this national pot will be announced in late August. In the interim, work is underway to help recruit and train a new Management Board for the Miners' Welfare Hall. The new Board will oversee the design, refurbishment and new build from start to finish.

ForestMobility Service

Officially launched on Friday 11th May by Mark Harper MP, this new service is designed to improve access to the Forest's footpaths and cycleways. Based at the *Go Ape!* chalet, Mallards Pike Lake, ForestMobility offer people with walking disabilities a chance to enjoy a day out using rugged electric buggies. User training is provided as part of the day hire package. Contact – 01594 562400 and www.forestmobility.org.uk



Anyone interested to offer their services as a volunteer to help run the service may wish to look at the volunteer page on the above website and then email Peter Wood at peter@forestmobility.org.uk

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Paint the Town

To date, 13 Cinderford town centre shops are signed up to receive one of the Forest of Dean District Council's Shopfront Improvement Grants. Grants of up to 75% of the total cost, up to a maximum of £5,000 are available to re-vitalise local shops. Photographs below show how local butcher Graham Swaine has used his grant funding to help launch his new business "Cheers Café".

Before



...and after!



To find out more about the grant scheme please call 01594 812642 or email

retail.support@fdean.gov.uk for an application form.

Sheepscape

Although troubled by some recent fibreglass sheep-rustling problems, plans are now back on track for this summer's innovative public art project.

The Cinderford Regeneration Board has sponsored a flock of five sheep that will be appearing within the town centre over the summer months. Sheepscape designers are working to interpret the themes of eco-design, learning and mining heritage.

Local primary and secondary school children are working hard to come up with their own unique designs. Some 34 children at St Whites' Primary School, have been working to finalise artwork for their 2 sheep. GCSE art students at Heywood Community School have 4 sheep to transform. Students at Lakers School have been involved with the project's website development www.ewetube.co.uk

Steam Mills Lake – Access to All

The Forest of Dean Angling Club has successfully secured £12,000 grant aid from the Environment Agency. The Club will be making several environmental improvements around the lake to promote water related recreation for everyone visiting the lake. Footpath improvements and work to stabilise the fishing platforms for able-bodied and disabled anglers will be completed before October this year.

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Cinderford Community Learning Plan

A vital element of the Cinderford Business Plan over the next ten years, will be working to improve skills, formal qualifications and all round employability of the local workforce. To tackle this, a Learning Plan is being prepared to develop skills, knowledge and attitudes through formal and informal learning for all ages.

Four key themes or "learning platforms" have been selected to inspire local learners:

- Enterprise
- Healthy Living
- Creative sector
- Woodland environment

On 21st May, Joanne Lewis joined the Cinderford Regeneration team and is based in Forest Community Media's offices in Dockham Road.



Joanne Lewis – Community Learning Co-ordinator

Joanne will be promoting local adult learning opportunities and will be

designing new informal taster sessions to encourage people to try something new.

Joanne is already preparing a "What's On" style guide to let people know just how many courses are available, what childcare services are there to help and what bus services are available during the day and early evening. Joanne's work is being funded by the Learning & Skills Council's *Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities Fund*.

Forest Vale Network

The first Cinderford Parklife Network meeting took place on 26 April at Cinderford Rugby Club. Bill Nicholl, (Grail Engineering), Chair of the Network group said: "The turnout of a dozen local businesses was a great start for the network and a really solid base for us to build on for the future. Since the meeting we have been approached by a further 10 businesses who were unable to attend due to other commitments but want to be involved in future events. There was a lot of interaction from those attending in bringing forward ideas – particularly the need for members to know more about what each business can offer so they can act as ambassadors for each other when out and about. This will help to strengthen the local supply chain and hopefully generate extra sales for businesses in the Forest."

To find out more about the Network and how you can get individual support for your business, please contact Fred Reed on 07813 841742 or 01452 450058.

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