

**NOTES ON 'IMPROVING WIDCOMBE" MEETING
DECEMBER 16TH 7.30pm
WIDCOMBE BAPTIST CHURCH HALL**

Attendance and Apologies.

45 people, including WA members, committee members and other interested parties attended this meeting. Apologies were received from a further 15 people who were interested but unable to attend. In addition, committee members Jeremy Boss, David Maxwell and Jeroen Weimar and David Maxwell sent apologies.

Welcome and Introduction.

Paddy welcomed everyone and opened the meeting, explaining that this had arisen out of discussions of the main committee when proposals had been made to restructure the way the WA is organised to ensure that the Association can meet its aims of making Widcombe vibrant, community-minded, prosperous and cohesive. It is intended to set up new sub-committees under the main committee of which the 'Improving Widcombe' group will be one. This will look to the future following the completion of the work on the Parade. Unfortunately, as neither David Maxwell nor Murray Jones was able to attend, there was no direct trader voice at the meeting but it was acknowledged that successful trading is vital to Widcombe.

A map showing the Widcombe Ward boundaries was displayed and Paddy explained that the area of interest to WA is currently that part of the ward to the east of Wellsway.

Ideas.

Everyone was invited to share ideas on improving Widcombe. It became clear, once this had been done, that they fell into three distinct categories, People, Place and Purpose.

People	Purpose	Place
Connections Children & Schools Elderly Students More Events Volunteer Sector Charities Traders	What is our Focus? Brand (<i>cf Larkhall: 'Village in a City'</i>) Love Widcombe (<i>possibility of a campaign on these lines</i>)	Entry to Widcombe Attract people over the Halfpenny Bridge Facilitate crossing Rossiter Rd Viaduct/Railway Western Entries Signage (to and within Widcombe) Infrastructure – in the Parade and beyond the Parade Excellence in Design Cleanliness and Litter Sustainability Linkage of Natural Resources Traffic Too many Road Signs River & canal – better use Control on Canal (prevent boating accidents) Coordination of Indoor Space

Some specific comments made around these ideas were:

Widcombe needs to be connected to the city as a whole.

The railway viaduct is perceived as a 'fence'.

The necessity of working with the traders to see that the High Street develops to their benefit and to the benefit of the community as a whole.

Better use should be made of the river and canal.

There is too much road signage.

The huge amount of available indoor space could combine with the hotel to provide conference venues.

It is hoped that the new Social Club will open in June 2015, providing yet another sizeable public venue.

Not only should Widcombe be adequately signed as a destination to be reached from the city centre, but also footpaths within Widcombe could be better signed to encourage people to explore and find interesting routes within the area. (This should interest NT).

The electrification of the railway means that introduction of posts and felling and pruning of trees will have a significant visual impact on the area. This needs to be dealt with sensitively.

Other ideas submitted via email by people who could not attend the meeting included:

Colour-washing the upper part of shop fronts in pastels

Versailles-type planters along the north side of the Parade with white cherry trees and seasonal underplanting by volunteers.

Traders to keep the area in front of their business swept clean

Closing Widcombe Parade regularly for a street market (very successful in Frome)

Action.

Approximately 30 people who wished to be involved signed up showing their preferred area(s) of interest. (It is recognised that many will have more than one area of interest.)

January 27th 2015 has been provisionally set as a date for the next meeting to take this project forward. The date, together with time and venue, will be confirmed shortly. Paddy thanked everyone for their attendance and interest and closed the meeting at 8.35pm