

## **Saltash Town Centre Regeneration Forum**

The Forum was set up by the Chamber of Commerce in response to a request by Saltash Town Council and is a representative body with members from all the interested parties in revitalising the town centre. It comprises representatives from the Town and County Councils, Chamber of Commerce, Community Interest Company, Town Centre traders and other interested business people all of whom are able to bring vital different expertise to the consideration of “How to Revitalise the Town Centre”.

On initial formation, in the Spring of 2019, it was identified that the views of many should be listened to and a Charrette was held to ascertain those views. From this the forum has evolved various strands of thinking in both considering short and longer term ideas.

Of the short term, car parking charges were identified as a deterrent to shoppers and alternatives were considered. Based on the agreed parameter that the benefit could be twofold [i.e encourage more usage and a longer dwell factor for those using the car parks], a S106 application was made by the Chamber to subsidise the cost of parking for two hours so that shoppers got 2 hours for the price of 1 hour. Traders have reported positively to the initiative and the visual impact is that there are more cars parked. This has been shown in the statistics from Cornwall Council which show [based on the figures for the same period in 2018/19] that numbers have increased in the 3 months from November 2019-January 2020 by between 4% and 8% dependent on how they are analysed. Based on this a further application to continue the initiative beyond the present end stop of March 31st, will be made shortly.

The Forum recognises that there is not one “mend all” solution that will resolve declining footfall and are evolving other potential initiatives which will not only give short term gains but will have longer term benefit. These will involve the recognition of the changing parameters of town centres with the effects of out of town and internet shopping. Many of the members of the forum have brought forward ideas that have been promulgated in other towns that they have visited and we are evaluating them within the parameters of the Neighbourhood plan and potential funding opportunities that are available.

As the Forum represents all interested sections of the Public and Private sectors, we are very hopeful of delivering a result the early stages of which will start to be seen in the next 12 months.

Peter Ryland