

Report to AGM on the 2nd October 2007

The Committee first met on the 18th June 2007 at which the new Chairman [John Armstrong a resident in the Borough since 1945 and professional engineer & business-man] outlined the tasks ahead.

In particular the Terms of Reference drawn from the Twickenham Town Centre Action Plan 2007-2008 were as follows.....

ref OBJ 1..... Assess current health of TTC as a basis for measuring future growth (eg empty units, retailer mix)

ref Project 1 - Attracting New Retailers.....

Work with commercial agents to build a list of the Town's major freeholders. Try to understand their vision for Twickenham, and whether they would both be willing to work with the TTCMB to attract targeted retailers. Produce Marketing Pack aimed at potential retailers

ref Project 2 - Retaining Existing Retailers.....

Produce an Information Pack for new and existing businesses in TTC giving contact information, sponsorship & advertising opportunities and a calendar of events

The Shop Survey of the Town has been completed with the following results (in number of units).....

Empty Shops	20	Banks & Building Socs	12
Charity Shops	8	Estate Agents	17
Food & Drink	70	the remaining	147

These figures when compared with a similar study done in 1996, showed that the Charity&Empty group had improved (ie decreased) by 5%, whilst the Food&Drink had increased by 6%. Such changes only confirm what has been apparent for some time and clearly we have to focus on the Food&Drink group which account for some 16 extra businesses over the period. Most people would agree that this is not sustainable and only within the last week has seen Smollenskys being closed which now means that two medium sized properties separated by a Take-Away, are now empty leaving a distinctly vacant look!.

At the Second Meeting of the Committee on the 25th September its membership was confirmed as follows : Councillors Ben Khosa, Denise Carr, Philip Morgan, Geoff Acton, plus Eugene Bacot (a Public Relations Director & past Chairman of SHRA), Robert Blackburn (Professor of Small Business Studies at Kingston University), Mukesh Shah (of C Goode Pharmacy), Leonard Smith (of Len Smiths), Ravi Thakrar (of Star Print) plus Esther Worboys (our Town Centre Manager).

The main discussion then covered.....

- a proposed **Survey of Residents Shopping Habits** which it is hoped can be included with the next distribution of the Borough's Focus Group Questionnaire at the end of the year particularly to the Twickenham Residents in TW1 & TW2 postcodes. Questions for a **Survey of the Traders** will follow so to understand their needs & difficulties that we can influence.
- potential Initiatives to raise the profile of Traders in the Town and create a *Quality Image* for shopping in the Town. Consider an award for Retailer of the Year for different categories.
- for next summer a specialist Food Fair if possible guided by a high profile figure, with the object of introducing the Town to niche traders who might make a base here and thus fill some of the empty property, this would be part of the *new vision* discussed at last year's AGM
- meeting Rotarians and Residents Associations to hear their views about where this Committee should be concentrating its work
- meeting representatives of the Freeholders of the property in the Town so that they are part of the tripartite longterm interest which also involves the Residents and the Traders
- the Riverside Development as it will both add & affect the commercial success of the Town
- visits to similar towns with interesting Shopping Centres and understand their approach to the parking needs of the average shopper.

There is much to be done and we have only just started, so it is to be hoped that we will be able to report some tangible progress next year.

signed

John Armstrong CEng MIMechE [Chairman]