

**Buxton Area Forum  
Questions and Answers**

This evening meeting was held on **Thursday, 14<sup>th</sup> September 2006**, in the Methodist Church, Chapel Street, Buxton. Residents and community organisations from Buxton and the surrounding districts, had the opportunity to discuss local issues with officers and councillors representing High Peak Borough Council, Derbyshire County Council and Derbyshire Constabulary.

**Reference:** 01BUXN 14/09/06 Consultation

**Question:** How is it that for the swimming pool everyone can have a flashy coloured questionnaire through their door, but the food hall proposal got a much lower profile consultation?

**Answer from  
High Peak BC**

The consultation process regarding the future of Buxton's indoor leisure provision included the distribution of questionnaires to 20,000 houses and interviews with key stakeholder groups. This was a relatively expensive process and achieved a good response rate. The consultation process for the Regional Food Hall proposal included editorial in the local paper with a return slip, a public meeting, a consultation event with Vision Buxton (representing the local business sector), and feedback from the Citizen's Panel (the Council's normal mechanism for gauging local people's views). This has generated a good response and was relatively cheaper to undertake. The intention was not to undertake a more low profile approach. The Council is trying different ways of seeking local people's views that provide robust management information on public feedback as economically as possible. If the individual questionnaires to households had been adopted for the Regional Food Hall proposal from East Midlands Development Agency (emda), then a wider perspective on the scheme may have been achieved. That is why the Citizen's Panel was used as an additional mechanism to receive residents' feedback.

**Reference:** 02BXN 14/09/06 Citizen's Panel

**Question:** How large is the Citizen's Panel, whose view is supposed to offset the manifest public opposition to the Food Hall proposal? As "natural wastage" occurs within the panel, is the recruitment of replacements as random as the original selection?

**Answer from  
High Peak BC**

The Citizen's Panel 'ViewPoint High Peak' was created in 2001, in partnership with Derbyshire County Council and Derbyshire Constabulary, to provide an opportunity for residents to give their views of services and to help the Council identify priorities. The panel is one of the main consultation tools used by the Council. The panel was established by sending out a recruitment questionnaire to 6,000 local people, selected at random from the electoral register, inviting them to take part. From the responses to the recruitment questionnaire, 1,000 people were selected and invited to join the panel. Since then, a third of the panel has been replaced each year to enable more residents to take part and to ensure that the panel remains 'fresh'. These replacements are selected from a reserve list, which is compiled from individuals who expressed an interest from the initial 6,000 contacted with a recruitment questionnaire. The panel includes people from all backgrounds and all parts of the High Peak Borough Council area.

**Reference:** 03BXN 14/09/06 30 Market Street, Buxton

**Question:** The Council owned building, which used to be the Energy Advice Centre, was by far the nicest looking building on Market Street. It is now a disgrace and in total abandonment. The garden is overgrown, windows broken, and slates off the roof.

The gutters are shot and the water runs down the walls. Left much longer it will be fit for nothing. What plans do the Council have for this very attractive building?

**Answer from  
High Peak BC**

The Council takes the ownership of properties seriously, and to this end, we have developed an asset management plan to coordinate the future use of all Council owned and operated buildings. This plan is available to view on the internet on [www.highpeak.gov.uk](http://www.highpeak.gov.uk). The purpose of the plan is to ensure that the Council disposes of unsuitable property and invests in the property it retains. As a result of the plan, we have recently made significant investment in publicly owned buildings in Buxton, including the refurbishment of the Town Hall roof, and the investment in the toilets at Sylvan car park. The Council has also secured £19.5 million for the refurbishment of the Crescent. The Council has reviewed the future of the Market Street depot and adjacent buildings, including the Council owned properties on Market Street. It is our intention to relocate the depot in the next few months and we have prepared a plan for the area, with a view to enabling a mixed use development (car parking, housing and commercial uses among others). The particular building you mention has severe structural problems, and because the Council has no need for the building, we will ensure that it is kept in a safe state until the wider redevelopment of the Market Street depot area.

**Reference:** 04BXN 14/09/06 Fly posting and recycling bins

**Question:**

Fly-posting – Since fly-posting on the hoarding outside the Pavilion Gardens, and at the end of Spring Gardens is no longer available, this advertising facility is lost for the community. Other hoardings are inaccessible. Where can organisations legitimately put posters?

Bins – Will there be more consultation, when the Binnovation Scheme moves to Buxton, than there was in Glossop? In some areas in Glossop, there are unnecessarily high numbers of bins causing accessibility difficulties. Would it not be better to ask what bins are required? Also there is nothing to distinguish between the types of bins – a tactile feature is required for anyone blind, partially blind or colour blind.

**Answer from  
High Peak BC**

Fly-posting – We need to audit where the hoardings are, and maybe the Access Group can help. Members have not yet decided their approach to fly-posting. If there is going to be zero tolerance, then we need to take a good look at what is going on. Maintenance is an important consideration if more boards go up. Maybe we could get the voluntary sector involved in the updating and maintenance.

Bins – There has been a lot of public consultation, and there is public support for recycling at the kerbside. We must be realistic about the logistics of introducing a new scheme. A lot of staff were involved in putting out advance information and collecting public concerns, after the scheme had been introduced. We will continue to look for improvement, involving the Access Group.

**Comment**

Pro-actively look at places like Fairfield Road. Encourage places of multiple occupation to share rather than wait until they ask.

**Reference:** 05BXN 14/09/06 Litter, street cleaning and signage

**Question:**

Fifty per cent of residents consider that the streets in Buxton are quite clean and tidy. What does it cost to employ an enforcement officer? Cleanliness is about self pride – in Germany, people look after their house frontage, and it's about teaching in schools not enforcement.

Business signage – This is also very untidy. Some signs on street corners (such as Market Place) are all colours, sizes. Perhaps there should be some limits and guidelines. Council road signage up Park Road should be taken down.

The number and size of bins in the Pavilion Gardens cannot cope with the number of visitors. They should be emptied more often, or more should be provided. Drivers tend to empty their cars into the street. Everybody has a responsibility to keep the roads clean. Biggest litter problem in Buxton is the night before rubbish collection, when rubbish blows about. Perhaps we should use the community service or youth offenders to pick up litter.

**Answer from  
High Peak BC**

The Council spends about £400,000 on street cleaning and litter picking per year. While the fines are offset against the cost of the enforcement officer, it still costs about £15,000 for this post. In High Peak, the fines will never meet the costs of an enforcement officer, but there are 15 to 20 fines per week, and the action does change behaviour – this should reduce the amount of litter picking in the future. The cost is modest to enforce. It is not always children who drop litter, many adults do it too. If everybody does take responsibility to keep areas clean, we could employ less people, and reduce Council tax.

**Derbyshire CC**

Agree with comment about signs. There is a problem getting after-care services. The Police has a similar problem with leaving signs out.

Updated answer 25/10/06  
These signs are to be removed.

**Reference:** 06BXN 14/09/06 Litter

**Question:** Would it not be better to include young people in community initiatives, rather than fining them – perhaps work with schools?

**Answer from  
High Peak BC**

Education is the most important thing, and the enforcement officer will get in touch with schools. Most children respond well, but for those who do not, they need to know that there is a penalty for dropping litter. Issuing fines to children does start communication between children and parents. We do not have powers to impose community service orders. People are paying the fines. We hope that the need to issue fines will reduce.

**Reference:** 07BXN 14/09/06 Ashwood Dale area

**Question:** Ashwood Dale River Area – £85,000 has been allocated to improvement. Unless all agencies work together to get the work done, it will not happen. There is a lot of rubbish in Ashwood Park and the river is a disgrace.

In the past, the Ashwood Road area used to be a freeway. Can that be reinstated? Parking at the junction of Ashwood Dale, and the bottom of Fairfield Road, is getting dangerous. Could the pavement be widened and reminders of the speed limit painted on the road? There used to be yellow lines. It's a case of neglect rather than a change of policy.

Parking on pavements – vehicles come tearing around the corner. Not suitable for wheelchair users, no verge and the wheelchair is likely to turn over. Something (signs) need placing.

**Answer from  
High Peak BC**

Let's consult wider and coordinate action, and make it the next priority, and get all the agencies involved.

**Derbyshire CC** Parking restrictions have been considered recently, in light of the growing number of cars parking along this stretch of road. It is, however, a lengthy legal process, which involves public consultation and advertisement. The Council currently has more requests for restrictions waiting, than recourses available. However, it has been added to the list to be done as soon as is possible.

**Police** This is an issue, and people park on the pavement to avoid causing an obstruction on the road.

**Reference:** 08BXN 14/09/06 Buxton Improvements

**Question:** Can the Council do a one-off clean-up of the rear of the Crescent area? There is a problem with "hot-rodding" in the Pavilion Gardens.

As a spa town, could we not consider placing a simple fountain at the bottom of Spring Gardens, or outside the roundabout at the Palace Hotel?  
Congratulations to the Council on the flowers in Buxton.

**Answer from High Peak BC** In terms of tidying up at the Crescent; there is no reason why we could not do a tidy up of that area. There will be another "Going Local" Initiative, for which there will be £10,000 to take up good suggestions like this one.