

Earls Barton – Where do we go from here?

Colin Suter of Barton Today did a great talk at our July meeting and asked the above question. Below is the feedback gained from the group that attended that day.

Parking

Probably the biggest issue for businesses. Two possible sites were mentioned - the land behind the butchers, and the old Blitz shoes factory. It was suggested to enquire whether either of these could be compulsorily purchased and used as a car park.

School Run

It was suggested that greater effort be made to encourage parents to walk the kids to school rather than using cars. Could a 'walking bus' scheme be implemented to encourage more walking?

Retailer involvement in BBN

It was asked if anyone had actually approached the Earls Barton retailers and invited them to BBN? However, it was also noted that most networking groups have a very small representation of B2C retail businesses, as they generally don't see/understand the benefits of networking.

Communal office facilities

It was agreed that having communal office facilities/meeting room space would be very useful, for access to photocopiers and other things that are perhaps too expensive or bulky for a home office. WiFi would also be incredibly useful and beneficial.

Tied to the above, an ongoing series of workshops or 'clinics' offering advice on different aspects of setting up, managing and promoting your own business could be hosted there, with various local businesses offering advice on their area of expertise.

Online promotion

To help promote the BBN, a Facebook page has been established to allow local businesses and people to stay in touch with the activities of the BBN, and to try and help promote it, and Earls Barton generally.

Chamber Of Commerce

It was felt that a Chamber of Commerce would not be particularly useful, but a collaborative project-based approach to identified priorities e.g. setting up village-wide WiFi, would be the way to go.

Lack of local retail firms

Regarding the lack of local retail firms at the BBN meetings, how about one meeting in the Autumn is specifically targeted at them, with an emphasis on using our businesses to generate more customers for them and vice versa. Maybe October would be a good time; 2 months before xmas when I'm sure their sales start picking up. Maybe some shops could run a "services board" like Tesco and

Sainsburys do. All local retailers could then be invited to that session.

Directory

I know the Barton Today website has an online local business directory, but how about a regular page in Barton Today magazine which does the same thing? Just company name, service detail and phone number would suffice. Colin may wish to charge "non-advertisers" for inclusion in this!!!

Drop in Zone

Re Colin's drop-in-zone idea, we agreed it would have value, maybe as a place for hot-desking, ad-hoc meetings and presentations. My group felt it needed to be smart though, and not particularly in the Church Hall - that begins to sound expensive.

Meeting Area

New client meeting area. Ideal for those who work alone from home especially women who are having a first meeting with a new client.

If anyone has any further ideas or wants to discuss further then please contact Colin Suter directly on 01604 466 582 – he would love to hear from you.
