

Stirchley, the Way Forward (not for profit) business and community group

PROPOSAL FOR IMPROVING STIRCHLEY

FOR THE BENEFIT OF RESIDENTS AND TRADERS

USING a grant from the S106 MONEY June 2019

Stirchley, the Way Forward has carried out a survey of traders in Stirchley and our resident neighbours. We have spoken with residents attending various events, along with customers of many businesses in Stirchley. Also we have received support from residents living in local areas surrounding the Pershore Road. We have held two public meetings, and StWF meetings where the proposal was discussed and supported not only by traders but residents too.

We asked them what they would desire as an improvement to Stirchley within the criteria of public realm expenditure.

Traders and residents felt there should be improvement to the Stirchley High Street, streetscape. The majority of traders canvassed along the high street and on line visitors to the area and approved a petition in December 2017 for a car park to be provided for the area. Although we must consider the Clean Air initiative we feel the provision of a car park would not be detrimental. To offset the provision of a car park we believe there are many open spaces and parks with greenery within Stirchley, the 'lungs' of the area. We understand this wouldn't be part of the public realm expenditure but hope that future developments will include mandatory car parking and cycle parking facilities.

Many traders would favour a scheme to help them in renewing shop fronts. For example, part grant, plus part say five year interest free loan. Which would enable those who haven't at present, to improve the look of their Stirchley premises and enhance the area overall. This offer should be made to current traders in Stirchley.

The advantage of the improvements to premises would encourage foot fall with visitors dwell time increased. Encouraging them to stop and visit the shops or enjoy a meal or refreshment at many of the eateries or tap rooms/micro pubs in Stirchley. The day time and night time trade could benefit from these improvements.

. We also wish to create a visual impact on our streets enhancing the environment with planter's, flowers and herbs which we feel would encourage bees, birds, insects, generating interest from residents and traders, adopting plant boxes, gardening, which could lead to a healthier lifestyle and help to promote footfall to the High Street.

Stirchley in Bloom, a volunteer group is still in its infancy, we welcome Kerry Leslie as our new lead for S.I.B. We are enthused after speaking with Diane Mansell manager of the award winning Soho Rd in Bloom. Along with the success of Birmingham City Council winning a gold medal at the recent Chelsea Flower Show, we really would like funding assistance for greening up the high street. . Included in this funding, an opportunity to help provide a garden, within the grounds of Stirchley Baths Community Hub. This we believe would fit in with our pursuit for a dementia friendly Stirchley. We would like to green up other areas identified as the forecourt of Stirchley Library, pedestrian access to Bournville Train Station. Entrance/Exit from Maryvale Road and Bournville Lane.

The Fruit and Nut Village and Sustain Stirchley other community groups have already obtained some funding for their projects. It is expected to link the fruit and nut trail route with the high street and the local parks, Hazelwell and Stirchley Park. The Future high streets fund if approved might be considered if it were for improving access from the high street to the trail. We are keen for these groups of residents to be involved.

We are in talks with Dr Rob Tilling and Felipe an idea to apply for funding for work on a garden of reflection for Stirchley Baths. Sustain Stirchley; Local residents have a 'secret garden' along the Pershore Road where they grow vegetables and herbs encouraging engagement with other residents.

It is important to us we celebrate the rich heritage and cultural history of the High Street, building on work by Stirchley History Group which promotes the History Trail and the recent recognition of Mary Cottrell in a blue heritage plaque which has been sited above the former Co-op bakery. We have supported the work carried out by Tracey Thorne, photographic record of the high street including ghost signs which we would like to retain where possible.

### **Shop Front Improvement Programme**

**1. Shop Fronts:** StWF have identified the most significant challenge to Stirchley High Street is the perception of tired and unloved the lack of investment painfully obvious little money spent on frontages due mainly to the uncertainty of Tesco development and now Seven Capital. Although there is a feeling of Stirchley is on the up! Assisting shopkeepers with renewing shop fronts or improvements to frontages will show to visitors a sense of pride in the area. However, we want shopkeepers to retain their own identity. Where possible we will seek re-instatement of heritage features to shop fronts and use of

traditional shop frontage designs as prescribed in a specially designed Stirchley design guide.

Encouraging shopkeepers in fitting open type roller shutters replacing solid shutters. Which we think will improve the daytime and nighttime experience. This will also assist the police with identifying possible crime in progress.

Many places on our High Street there are narrow footpaths and access issues. With this in mind we have consulted with BCC Highways engineer. We will also seek to support disability access for businesses.

Tesco S106 funding we believe was intended for the primary shopping area prior to the enlargement of Stirchley Ward and although some may disagree we are determined the traders should not be overlooked.

We believe there is a difference of opinion to the demarcation of Stirchley Primary Shopping Area. We live here and would like to determine the primary shopping area being adopted. From the closed down Fireworks Shop, Corner of Fordhouse Lane and Pershore Rd. Along Pershore Road and Hazelwell Street to Cartland Rd. We wish to include Bournville Lane, as far as Bournville Bridge including Maryvale Road as far as the Bournville Bridge. The reason we would like to include these side roads, is to encourage visitors from the train station, to explore Stirchley High Street. Especially as Birmingham will be hosting the Commonwealth Games and visitors are likely to go along to Cadbury World. We want visitors to enjoy a welcoming and thoughtfully improved high street somewhere to sit and enjoy the scenery, along with a shopping experience retaining the cultural identity.

Should we be successful with our expression of interest for the High Streets Fund from central government, we could extend improvements to the wider ward, Pineapple area, parts of Cotteridge now deemed as Stirchley Ward. We feel this would gain benefits for the whole community?

### **Shop Front Scheme**

Businesses will be required to fund the work and reclaim grant from the programme. This will provide protection against poor quality or unapproved works.

Businesses will also have to contribute 25% toward the cost of works therefore providing guarantee for procurement as businesses will be looking at cost effectiveness and value for money as a matter of principle.

## **Funding**

We are seeking £100,000 of funding with a further £10,000 cost to cover administration, legal documentation, and expert guidance.

## **Business Grants**

We will be making two levels of support:

- Grants of up to £1500 to cover installation of floral decoration infrastructure, minor shop front repairs, and new litter bins where possible re-cycling type, seating and planting box improvements on forecourts only.
- Grants up to £7,500 to cover new shop fronts and improvements to upper floors.

These schemes with business match funding will accumulate £10,000 of investment each in areas visible from Pershore Rd.

## **Timetable**

We will be seeking to make four rounds of grant each three months apart. This will provide opportunities for businesses to raise investment sums and plan appropriately. It will also enable promotion of the scheme and enable StWF and BCC liaison.

The grant scheme applications will be invited from businesses on a competitive basis with a panel determining those providing the best value for money and design.

The panel, we suggest should comprise of three StWF representatives along with one member of the Neighbourhood Forum representing residents, Councillor Locke and a representative from Cultural Development Services. CDS

## **Monitoring and reporting**

Regular meetings reporting and monitoring will be undertaken between StWF and CDS

## **Legal documentation**

Subject to agreement from our Local Councillor, which is our first step in the process and then authority from Planning and a senior council officer? StWF will enter into a legal agreement to deliver the scheme and will draft the necessary documentation to businesses who receive grants.

## **2. Street Planters.**

In addition to the plan for us to encourage business owners to position window boxes and forecourt planters on their property we would like planters placed at various positions along the high street and side roads off. We would concentrate on the main shopping parade. Floral Fountain Planters, Broad Barrel Planters floor standing. Plus cost of plants, bulbs and composts. We will take advice from BCC and our experienced gardener's, members of Stirchley in Bloom. Fruit and Nut Trail, and Sustain Stirchley.

## **3. Street bins.** Additional bins positioned especially outside hot food outlets.

Survey carried out by StWF We consulted with our local street cleaner Damian who has a better idea of where bins will be more useful.

Also we suggest the repositioning of certain bins along the high street. However, as with planting boxes the locations for the litter bins will be subject to discussions with the local highways engineer.

**4. Graffiti** blight the high street. Some think this is not a priority however we would like to offer traders the opportunity of purchasing anti graffiti paint and anti-climb paint at a competitive price. Once used this should lessen the cost for removal of graffiti in the future. The clear paint system could also be used to protect ghost signs.

**5, Pigeons** As an addition to the graffiti problem most shopkeepers in the central part of the primary shopping area are suffering from the influx of pigeons. It has reached epidemic proportions gone far beyond them roosting; they are causing a health hazard to pedestrians on the high street. The pigeons are defecating on the frontage of buildings and onto the pavements.

A permanent answer to this pigeon problem should be found.

**6. Adult exercise equipment.** This is to aid, improve the health of local people. Jump on and exercise. Suggest a few pieces of equipment for the park or the community centre. The adult exercise equipment has been an interesting proposal. Mainly, there have been verbal objections from users of Stirchley Park. However we have been informed there might be a problem with daily safety checks if positioned elsewhere. Alternatively perhaps a couple of pieces of equipment sited within the interior or exterior of Stirchley Baths could be considered.

**7. Additional smaller bike floor hooks or repositioning of Bike Hoops.**

Survey by Chris Tomlinson – Bike Foundry

Top seven positions as identified by Chris. Plus three others StWF

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|---|---------------------|
| 1. Outside Wildcat Tap                  | 8 Caneat            |
| 2. Printigo                             | 9. Elm Tree Rd      |
| 3. Stirchley Baths                      | 10. Harris Barbers. |
| 4. Em's Pet Shop                        |                     |
| 5. Loaf                                 |                     |
| 6. Artefact                             |                     |
| 7. Vietnamese restaurant (opening July) |                     |