

# MARKETPLACE

The annual review of the Gloucestershire Market Towns Forum

2007

**A year of  
awards,  
networking,  
development  
and challenges...**

- Chipping Campden ♦
- Churchdown ♦
- Cinderford ♦
- Cirencester ♦
- Coleford ♦
- Dursley ♦
- Fairford ♦
- Lechlade ♦
- Nailsworth ♦
- Newent ♦
- Northleach ♦
- Stonehouse ♦
- Stow on the Wold ♦
- Tetbury ♦
- Tewkesbury ♦
- Winchcombe ♦
- Wotton under Edge ♦



# Chairman's report

by **Peter Godfrey**

At the end of my first year as Chair of the Forum, I am cheered by how much has been achieved thanks to the hard work of Board members, and I feel we can look forward to a robust future.

Taking over as Chairman from **Janet Marrott** was a daunting prospect, but would have been much more difficult if she had not helped me during my apprenticeship as one of her vice chairs in the previous year. Her continued support, energy, encyclopaedic knowledge of the way communities work and unfailing good humour have continued to be very much appreciated by the whole Forum Board.

All lively organisations such as the Forum should welcome change in order to meet circumstances and we have seen many subtle differences in the way we have worked over the past year.

I have been particularly impressed by the time and energy Janet, my vice-chairman Bob Watters and fellow Board members ploughed into the Forum's new three-year Forward Strategy. It took a great deal of debate and discussion over many months, but now we have a workable plan to carry us into the future.

We will be dependent on becoming more independent – we have been extremely lucky to have received a huge amount of financial and in-kind support from Gloucestershire County Council and the South West Regional Development Agency over many years. But now, like other community organisations, we



ABOVE: Chairman Peter Godfrey and (right) Janet Marrott, whose continued support and energy is much appreciated by members



**'By coming together, we can ensure the voice of market towns is heard loud and clear at all levels of Government'**

have to start being able to stand on our own, with the support of our member towns. We will also strengthen our links with the Market and Coastal Towns Association (MCTA) and the national Action for Market Towns organisation – both Claire Edwards and I are on the AMT Board. We need to continue to develop a range of support and network opportunities which are valued by our member towns at times of great change.

The great strength of the Forum is the opportunity for our member communities from across Gloucestershire to learn from each other. We have such a huge wealth of skills and knowledge to share covering the whole range of challenges – and, by coming together, we can ensure the voice of market towns is heard loud and clear at all levels of Government.

## Thanks to....

- ▶ One of the Forum's 'Founding Fathers' – **Andrew Crook**, the Forum's Company Secretary and former clerk of Cirencester Town Council, has retired. My fellow Board member **Glenys Sykes** has paid tribute to Andrew's unstinting support for the Forum – from before its conception! See page 4. We wish Andrew and his wife Hazel every happiness in their retirement
- ▶ **Bob Watters**, my hard working and extremely supportive Vice Chairman, **Dan Judges**, Gloucestershire First Rural Regeneration Officer who is our day-to-day link with the council, and our new Company Secretary **Claire Edwards**, together with **Eva Harvie** and **Crystal Wood**, have been fundamental to the Forum's development. I also want to thank **Stan Jones** and **John McLaughlin** from Gloucestershire First for their continued support.

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## Claire takes on the role of Company Secretary

Forum Executive Manager Claire Edwards has taken on the role of Forum Company Secretary, following Andrew Crook's retirement. Her priorities are to move the Forum's application for charitable status through to its final stages and to ensure the organisation continues to be well run and managed.

"Before we can finalise the charitable status application, we are going to have to liaise with our specialist advisers because the charity laws are changing," said Claire. "Despite the fact that the application process has taken a while, we're convinced there will

be major benefits to becoming a charity in terms of bringing in future funding and opening doors to new ways of delivering services to our member towns."

Claire is Rural Programme Manager for Gloucestershire First, the County's economic development partnership. She has been involved with the Forum since it was launched and has encouraged continuing support from the county for the organisation.

"The Forum is well regarded by the County Council and will continue to have the

support it needs through changing times," she said. "The development of the new Forward Strategy has really helped the Board focus on what needed to be done to develop the organisation and I am full of admiration to those who spent many hours of their time discussing and agreeing the strategy.

"The success of our market towns comes down to a dedicated group of volunteers in each of their communities – it's vital the Forum continues to support them in the most effective way."

## Vice Chairman's report

by **Bob Watters**

It has been a challenging but exciting year in which I feel the Forum has made good progress in moving forward to take advantage of new opportunities.

We have responded positively to Government initiatives which promote local empowerment and ensure that local communities are given the opportunity to influence the delivery of services which are most important to the majority.

Community partnerships within our towns and larger parishes have the grass roots knowledge to influence the development of rural strategies and community plans. They are now becoming more closely integrated within Local Strategic Partnerships and increasingly improving the evidence base for both community and spatial planning.

However, I believe more needs to be done to provide better integration between community groups and local authorities – especially the balance between a top-down and bottom-up approach. I hope that, together, we can instigate initiatives that provide a lasting solution for the benefit of all communities.

### Nice to meet you!

I have been privileged to be a part of the team that launched GMTF's three year Forward Strategy in April 2007. (See page 4 for a summary of the strategy). I should like to particularly thank **Peter Street**, the Forum's Business Development Officer, for his help and support in bringing the strategy to fruition.

The launch has given me a unique opportunity to visit many member towns and parishes and to enter a dialogue with both established serving members of councils and partnerships and newly elected representatives. At times this was quite a challenge but

it was an experience I would not have missed and something I should like to repeat later this year.

It is gratifying to receive endorsement of the Forward Strategy which will strengthen our united endeavours to raise the profile of our towns and partnerships and take us to a higher level. It is only with the support and co-operation of all members that we can start to make the difference we all want but cannot achieve alone.

I have been impressed by the progress made over the past 12 months – in particular, the willingness to share experiences has been an inspiration to me and many others.

We now have new towns joining us, such as Northleach, and we are developing a much closer working relationship with partners which will sustain us for many years to come.

Finally, I should like to thank all who I have met over the past few months for the way in which I have been received and to thank everyone for your continued support of our Forum.



**We are developing a much closer working relationship with partners which will sustain us for years to come**



*Andrew Crook, Clerk to Cirencester Town Council, founder member of the Forum and Company Secretary, has retired. Seen (centre) with, from left, Peter Godfrey, Hazel Crook, Janet Marrott and Geoff Wheeler. For the full story see p4*

# An overview of the **Forward Strategy**

By Vice-Chairman **Bob Watters**

The Forum's Forward Strategy 2007-2010, based on a membership survey conducted last year, was launched in April and provides a sound platform on which to sustain the Forum for the next three years and beyond. It builds on the 2004-2007 plan and has consolidated 17 original service provisions into the following seven core business areas to enable principle activity to be better targeted:

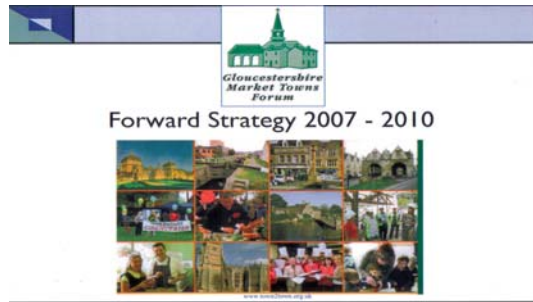
**1 Technical and Practical Support:** Advice, support and guidance for member communities utilising the wide ranging skills of the Board and the practical tools to help develop sustainable regeneration plans.

**2 Quarterly networking meetings and 'Look and Learn' visits:** The provision of networking events between rural communities in Gloucestershire; topic focused workshops and organised fact finding visits across the UK.

**3 Member Satisfaction and Future Needs:** The supply of products and services which meet the changing needs of member communities and prepare them for external influences which may impact on their future.

**4 Relationships:** Activities undertaken by the Board to maximise collaborative working with co-providers and partners; elimination of duplication and overlap and provision of clear direction for members seeking specific help.

**5 Membership:** Targeted activity to raise the profile and voice of towns and larger parishes which will encourage



**The Board is proud of its past achievement but determined in its efforts to ensure that GMTF remains an exemplar organisation**

new members, cross community working and avoidance of isolation.

**6 Development Fund:** The provision of a quick and simple route to small scale support funding which is versatile and effectively managed and demonstrates investment value to funders.

**7 Governance:** The mechanisms to ensure that the affairs of the Forum are conducted professionally and its policies and procedures are fully compliant.

A strategic aim has been defined for each of the core business areas, assessed against the need for doing it, how it will be done and what will be achieved as a result of the investment. Performance measures have been defined for each area to establish achievement against target.

The plan is ambitious, comprising £142,000 investment in 38 projects during its first year. The Board is committed to the delivery of these projects which will provide the support for towns and larger parishes across the county which helps them to sustain themselves.

The Board is proud of its past achievement but determined in its efforts to ensure that GMTF remains an exemplar organisation respected as a leader in its field which is responsive to members needs and committed to high standards.

## Farewell and **good luck** to Andrew

**Forum Board member Glenys Sykes from Wotton under Edge has written this tribute to GMTF's former Company Secretary Andrew Crook, who has retired:**



Andrew has been a great supporter of GMTF from the outset. As a Director, he was very generous in sharing his expertise and wide experience in private sector and local government with his fellow directors and to staff.

His views were always measured, practical and temperate – and it was noticeable that, when Andrew spoke, the Board listened. This did not mean, however, that Andrew was always solemn... far from it. Despite his work commitments as Clerk to Cirencester – the largest Town Council in the County – he was invariably charming, thoughtful and interested in whatever was going on with the Forum.

His commitment and contribution over the years have been invaluable and we shall miss him, both as a professional and as a friend. His fellow directors held a lunch in May to bid him farewell. We wish him a happy and relaxed retirement in sunnier climes and hope we shall still see him from time to time.

Andrew said: "Of all the organisations I have been involved with since becoming Clerk to Cirencester Town Council, I believe that GMTF stands head and shoulders above the rest not only in terms of its objects and vigour, but also by virtue of the quality of the individuals involved. It has been a privilege to work with both the directors and the officers."

## Mine's a half, Shelagh!

Shelagh Hume, the Forum's former Forest of Dean co-ordinator who left last year for pastures new, has become a pub landlady! Shelagh and her son, experienced gastro pub chef Jonathon Jones, made a recent move into the Stroud area and are proud owners of the Royal Oak in Painswick. Shelagh says they serve home-cooked, locally-sourced food with new, daily specials alongside a series of special nights. Forum Board member Janet Marrott has already visited the pub to sample its culinary delights and given it a firm thumbs-up. We wish Shelagh and Jonathon every success.



## Forum wins praise for 'formidable dedication'

Hard work and excellent track record earn plaudits



Market and Coastal Towns Association

The Forum has been praised for its excellent track record and 'formidable' dedication in supporting small and market towns across Gloucestershire.

James Hassett, the Chief Executive of the Market and Coastal Towns Association (MCTA), told *Marketplace*: "Since the Forum was launched in 1998, it has established an excellent track record, both within and outside the county, for providing much-needed opportunities for rural towns to obtain information and advice, share best practice and have their issues and concerns voiced.

"During the last three years I have seen the Forum develop significantly in both confidence and in its professional outlook.

"It has been a real pleasure to work with Janet Marrott, Bob Watters and, more recently, the Forum's Chair Peter Godfrey. Their dedication to the Forum and indeed to the Market and Coastal Towns Initiative generally, has been formidable and a source of inspiration for many other towns across the region.

"GTMF has a significant and important role to play in the development of sustainable communities along with the four other county-based forums in the South West region. I very much look forward to working with the Forum during the year ahead."



James Hassett, Chief Executive of the Market and Coastal Towns Association

Since 2004, the MCTA has invested financially in the Forum to provide a range of services and activities. These include the regular networking meetings which provide a real opportunity for both information sharing and collaborative working. The Forum has also led the way by proactively visiting other towns in the Region, helping to build a broad and vibrant partnership in its truest sense.

### New MCTi towns

In January, the MCTA welcomed 13 new towns across the region into the Market and Coastal Towns Initiative, including two Forum town members, Cirencester and Stonehouse.

Added James: "Since then, the partnerships within these towns with the support of the Association's Community Facilitators have worked hard to establish their steering groups and working protocols in order to be in the best possible position to drive forward change."

Many Forum members attended the MCTA's annual conference in Torquay in February – and the Forum's own exhibition stand attracted many visitors.

## Towns' bright future

**Cinderford's** long-awaited multi-million pound regeneration is a step closer to reality thanks to a £10m boost from the National Coalfields Programme. This Government scheme aims to aid former coal towns like Cinderford, and the Cinderford Regeneration Board has already earmarked six main areas to benefit from the investment. The money will support feasibility studies into the six areas, including Cinderford town centre, the old Northern United colliery site and the Miners' Welfare Hall.

Regeneration Manager Wendy Jackson said: "The Miners' Welfare Hall will be the first project where folks will see a change. This project has also made it through the first round of the Community Buildings Fund with the National Lottery – we will hear in December whether our £500,000 request has been successful."

● More information at [www.cinderford2016.net](http://www.cinderford2016.net)

Meanwhile, plans for **Coleford's** flagship Enterprise Centre have moved a step closer with the appointment of architects for the £2.3m regeneration scheme.

The Coleford Area Partnership, with representatives from Gloucestershire County and Forest of Dean District councils and the South West Regional Development Agency, have commissioned Gloucester-based Quattro Design to draw up plans for the two-storey building. The new Centre will include a library, a new home for the Disability Day Care Centre, community meeting rooms and facilities for young people. There will be a catering-quality kitchen, computer facilities, rooms for hire by the hour and office space.

## Down to business

High on the list of Action Plans for **Fairford Forward**, set up to carry through the good work of the Healthcheck process, was the formation of a business club.

There has been no organisation to represent the local business community for some years so, with the help of grants including one from the Forum to appoint an administrator, a programme of monthly meetings has been arranged. The joint Fairford and Lechlade Business Club now has alternate meetings in each town and prospects are good, said Business Club chairman Roger Fessey. "The club has broken new ground and we are always open to new ideas," he added.

## Volunteers are given the chance to train

Volunteers at the Vale Vision regeneration partnership in Cam and Dursley can train for NVQ qualifications. Two volunteers, Vera and Michael, this year completed NVQs in Business Administration level 2 and 3, and received Adult Learner Awards to mark their achievements.

Vera wants to work in an office following redundancy after working in industry. During her time as a volunteer, she has achieved an NVQ Level 2 in Business Administration and

*Michael receives his award from Dawn Trigg*



Level 2 Industry standard certification in Health & Safety. Now she has begun an Open University Course while working as a volunteer at Cam's GL11 Community Project and the Kingshill Community Group.

A valuable volunteer at Vale Vision, Michael's computer knowledge has been put to good use setting up systems and producing the 'What's On' and Vale Vision Newsletters. He has achieved an NVQ Level 3 in Business Administration and became a national Outstanding Adult Learner. Although studying for a Home Inspection qualification, he spends a day a week helping in the Vale Vision shop and has joined the Vale Vision Board.



## A sense of community triumphs

By **Dan Judges**, Rural Regeneration Officer

Gloucestershire has been severely tested recently due to the floods that hit the County – some have lost everything, many have been luckier, but no-one has been untouched by the heartwarming tales of community support.

It has been incredible to see our county's communities unite under one common purpose. I've been warmed by the effort of the volunteers, the authorities and the agencies in helping to manage and control the situation – a mammoth effort that at times had its faults and which required patience from all involved.

Let's not forget that we in Gloucestershire are privileged to live where we do and have the standards of living that we

**'We all have a role to play in managing our resources to minimise the impact we have on our environment'**

have. Yes, there are areas of deprivation; we should not forget these and should work hard to alleviate them. However, we all have a role to play in managing our resources to minimise the impact we have on our environment.

Although the events in recent months were unprecedented, they could become all too frequent. Many communities are already making a commitment to reduce CO<sup>2</sup> emissions and conserve resources – there's a 'Transition' movement currently sweeping the South West that is trying to tackle these very issues – more information can be found at [www.transitionculture.org](http://www.transitionculture.org)

**We all have a role to play in thinking about how we conduct ourselves, our activities, the services that we provide and where we source materials. Are you doing your bit?**

# Forum towns claim regional prizes

Two of the four category winners in the South West heat of the National Market Town Awards Scheme, co-ordinated by the Market and Coastal Towns Association, involved Gloucestershire market towns.

The Forest of Dean District Council's **First Stop Local Shop** campaign won the Business and Economy category and **Newent's In Bloom** initiative carried off the Environment and Culture category prize.

## First Stop, Local Shop

Since the launch of the First Stop Local Shop campaign in November 2005, the project has delivered a host of schemes aimed at revitalising market town shopping and winning back shoppers, including:

- ▶ The **'Retail Awards Scheme'** where local shoppers nominate their favourite retailer for an award
- ▶ The popular **'Forest Rewards Card'** scheme that gives local shoppers discounts on a range of products. The card scheme now has nearly 7000 members and 110 participating shops
- ▶ The **'First Stop'** Magazine - the local shopping magazine for the Forest of Dean's Market Towns. The free magazine is published every six months and features a range of articles promoting the district's shops and services
- ▶ The **Forest Shopping Guide** - giving Forest of Dean retailers the chance to promote their business free of charge
- ▶ **Christmas Gift Wrapping promotions** - providing a popular service to local shoppers over the festive period

The campaign is funded by the South West Regional Development Agency (SWRDA) through the Gloucestershire Rural Renaissance programme, and the Forest of Dean District Council. This has meant that local businesses have not had to pay for inclusion in any of the schemes.

A Business Training and Support programme and a Shop Front Improvement Grant scheme to improve the appearance of the towns' shops are all part of this successful campaign.



## Newent In Bloom

**Newent's In Bloom** initiative won Environment and Culture category. This is on top of the silver-gilt award the town won in Heart of England in Bloom competition last year. The award was presented to Newent in Bloom secretary Lynn Ashton in July.

James Hassett, chief executive of the MCTA, said: "The judging panel felt this project demonstrated an innovative adaptation to the usual town in bloom project by engaging volunteers on such a large scale and making a significant contribution to the appearance of the town."

Newent in Bloom has transformed the town centre since it began three years ago. Its organisers are now preparing for this year's Heart of England contest.

It is backed by the Newent Initiative Trust and more than 60 individuals and organisations in the town, including Newent Civic Society, Scouts and Guides, Budgens supermarket and Hazelfield Garden Centre.

*TOP: Newent grows for gold in the Environment and Culture category*

*Above: The Forest Rewards Card scheme, part of the First Stop, Local Shop initiative*

## Volunteers rule the airwaves



Earlier this Spring, the Forum joined forces with the CSV Action Desk team at BBC Radio Gloucestershire to develop a weekly series of programmes about volunteering in rural towns.

The Action Desk team spent hours travelling around the county visiting 14 Forum member towns and interviewing key people who give up so much time to make their communities better places to live and work in. We are very grateful to all the towns who co-operated with this venture which resulted in a long-running series of broadcasts on Vernon Harwood's Sunday rural issues programme and a page on the BBC's website dedicated to 'rural towns revealed'.

That webpage now hosts all 14 town features where you can 'listen again' to your heart's delight! Just visit [www.bbc.co.uk/gloucestershire/content/articles/2007/03/02/rural\\_feature.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/gloucestershire/content/articles/2007/03/02/rural_feature.shtml) - or, if this is too long to type out, go to [www.bbc.co.uk/gloucestershire/local\\_radio/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/gloucestershire/local_radio/), click on CSV Action Desk, then on Helping Rural Towns Revival.

## FORUM FUNDING

The Forum annually negotiates a pot of money from Gloucestershire County Council to support member communities wanting to develop their own projects.

Called the Forum Development Fund, it has gone a long way to getting ideas off the ground in recent years, offering small amounts of funding for projects which enhance the vitality and the vibrancy of their town.

The scheme provides up to £2,500 which can be used for small projects, initial studies for larger projects, or to contribute towards matched funding for the implementation of larger projects.

There is a simple application form and the aim is make a grant offer from the Forum for an application that meets the criteria within one month.

An application form can be obtained from Geoff Wheeler (Tel: 01453 545583, or e-mail: [geof.wheeler@btinternet.com](mailto:geof.wheeler@btinternet.com)) who can also provide a description of the Fund scheme and answer any queries. After receiving the draft application and clearing any comments and queries, the application is sent to two Forum Board directors for final agreement, and then an offer made to the applicant.

Here we shine the spotlight on some of the many projects around the county which have received support through the Forum Development Fund.

# Fast track for decisions

## Support for Rural Festival



Gloucestershire's celebrations to mark the launch of the Cotswold Way as a new National Trail were centred on a Rural Festival weekend held in Dursley at the end of May. The Festival, organised by Vale

regeneration partnership, included a series of 27 guided walks catering for all ages and abilities in the stunning countryside surrounding the Cotswold market town. A £2,000 contribution from the Development Fund helped organiser Shirley Hill get the event off the ground. Although poor weather affected the numbers taking part it was a fantastic chance for locals and visitors from all over Gloucestershire to explore this beautiful part of the county.

More info at [www.valevision.org.uk](http://www.valevision.org.uk)

## Right up your street!

People living in and around Nailsworth are being asked what makes where they live special during a year-long consultation funded by the Forum and Nailsworth Town Council.

A £2,500 Development Fund grant from the Forum was matched by the Council to commission the research by the Council's community consultant Helen Bojaniskwa. She said: "We have identified 12 distinct neighbourhood areas and we're recruiting volunteers to 'audit' the buildings and landscape in those areas, talking to their neighbours about what they like and don't like. We've also recruited the youth club and primary school to photograph what they like and don't like and Ruskin Mill College will map the landscape and wildlife in the countryside areas."

The first consultation event is planned at the Farmers' Market in October, with an exhibition of photos. The project has been publicised in the local press and volunteers are being recruited by posters and via local community groups.

The feedback will be used to develop a design statement for the future of Nailsworth and surrounding areas which will be used as

supplementary planning advice in the Stroud District Local Plan.

See [www.nailsworthcommunitypartnership.co.uk](http://www.nailsworthcommunitypartnership.co.uk).



## Tetbury beckons tourists

Local traders in Tetbury were at the heart of a major consultation to discuss ways of putting the Royal town more firmly on the tourist map. The Tetbury Partnership Tourism Group – tourism-related businesses working in partnership with Tetbury Town Council – received a £2,500 contribution from the Forum's Development Fund. With the help of Forum Business Development Officer Peter Street, they were also successful in their bid for a further £15,000 investment from Gloucestershire Rural Renaissance to help pay for the consultation.

Now a recognisable brand, Visit Tetbury, has been developed, along with a new brochure and information website with plans to develop Business Tetbury, Antiques Tetbury and Eat Tetbury sections.

"Tourism is the single most important factor in our local economy – up to 75 per cent of our employment both direct and indirectly depends upon it," said Tetbury Town Mayor Stephen Hirst.

Peter Street was invited by the Town Council to help facilitate the meeting with all tourism-related businesses before the bid was put in for Rural Renaissance investment. Deborah Cook, Tetbury's Assistant Community Projects Officer said: "It is vital for us to be able to tap into other people's experience and GMTF offers this support and advice, giving us the confidence to take on the challenge of this project."

Visit [www.visittetbury.co.uk](http://www.visittetbury.co.uk) or [www.tetbury.gov.uk](http://www.tetbury.gov.uk)

# FORUM FUNDING



*Don Gillard on the narrow footpath of Lechlade's existing road bridge*

## Bridging the visitor gap at Lechlade

A new footbridge across the Thames at Lechlade could make all the difference to the future vitality of the historic town.

Almost ten years ago, a study highlighted the fact that hundreds of visitors who park south of the river to enjoy the views rarely cross to visit the town itself – less than five minutes' walk away – because the only route is via a narrow road bridge. Now, with the help of a £2,500 grant from the Forum's Development Fund, Lechlade has commissioned a full report into creating a new bridge.

Don Gillard, chair of the Lechlade Heritage and Development Trust said: "Our survey of local people showed 96 per cent wanted to keep the town's range of shops. But shops need customers and we must make it easier for visitors to cross

the river and visit our shops, pubs and cafes. "Crossing the river for people with pushchairs, dogs or a wheelchair on the existing bridge is not safe, so people stay south of the river and don't see what we have to offer. Without the grant from the Forum we would not have been able to commission the feasibility study into the new bridge. Once this has been completed we will be able to look at getting funding to have it built. Gloucestershire County Council has already said it will adopt it once it's completed."

A new bridge over the famous river should be an attraction in itself and will encourage Thames Path walkers to cross the Thames. Plans for the restoration of the Thames/ Severn canal will bring many more boats into the area and the bridge will bring them into the town.

■ Visit [www.lechladeonthames.co.uk](http://www.lechladeonthames.co.uk)

## Hear, hear

Elderly and disabled residents attending a Winchcombe day care centre can now join in and enjoy a wider range of the activities thanks to the installation of a hearing loop system. A £835 grant from the the Forum's Development Fund coupled with more than £500 raised by the community and a further contribution expected from Rotary/Round Table, paid for the system to be installed.

John Gerrard, chairman of the Winchcombe Day Care Foundation Board of Trustees said: "As Winchcombe is a member of the Market Towns Forum, we are able to apply for funding for important local projects. Around 42 people attend the daycare centre three days a week, and with an average age of 89, many have severe hearing problems. Consequently they find it hard to take part in many of the activities and can feel isolated.

"We asked Wight Audio Services, who recently installed excellent systems at our Community Centre and Parish Church, to do the work including supply and installation of a sound reinforcement system including four speakers, amplifier, throat and handheld microphones



*People joining in Lyn Percival's exercise class can now hear her instructions loud and clear*

and a hearing loop. As a result our members can enjoy a wider range of activities and it will help staff members who often have to raise their voices excessively in order to be heard."

## BMX track is on track!

Plans for a new BMX track for youngsters in Wotton under Edge and Kingswood have moved a step nearer after planning permission was granted.

The track is part of a major community sports development plan for the New Road field, spearheaded by the Wotton Community Sports Foundation (WCSF). Eventually, football, cricket and tennis facilities will be added to the existing rugby pitch – as well as the BMX track and eventually a new skate park.

The plans got a welcome £2,500 boost from the GMTF – Wotton is a founder member. Barnaby Beere of the WCSF said: "Thanks to June Cordwell who runs the youth liaison committee, I was able to network with the council and found out about funding from GMTF. The application process was very easy – so long as you can prove you are a genuine organisation with a constitution and audited accounts.



## Flying the flags for Fairford

The recent bad weather put pressure on many things – not least the brackets which hold up 60 flags in Fairford. A £750 Development Fund contribution will help Fairford Town Council replace the brackets with more substantial versions which will also double as Christmas tree holders.

# FORUM FUNDING

“I’m a real fan of market towns – people are working really hard here to keep the town vibrant and alive and a centre of commerce. I’m keen to put something back into the community – I’ve met many great people all prepared to do their bit.”

## Newent remembers...



Award-winning record producer Joe Meek will be remembered in his home town of Newent with a festival to mark the 40th anniversary of his death. The Newent Initiative Trust and other partnership organisations including Newent Arts Festival, Newent Community School, businesses and community groups will organise the festival, and have been granted £750 from the Development Fund to help make it happen. In 1962 Joe Meek produced ‘Telstar’ by The Tornados, the first British record to be a number one hit in the US.

## Communities co-operate

The four Forest towns, Cinderford, Coleford, Lydney and Newent have moved to a new level of co-operation by forming a Local Communities Partnership (LCP).

Town representatives meet monthly to exchange ideas and share progress on activities – aiming to eliminate duplication and share knowledge. The LCP will also give a collective voice in the two-way communication between the Local Strategic Partnership and town and parish councils and raise the profile of issues that impact on communities as part of local consultation. The LCP now co-ordinates summer festival events and Christmas celebrations as part of its management role, drawing volunteers from each town. Successes and pitfalls are shared to avoid mistakes and build on benefits. The LCP is also

**‘This contribution is very welcome and makes Forum membership all the more worthwhile’**

involved in regeneration projects, working closely with District and County Councils and Regional Agencies.

## A-peeling for funds

A £2,500 Development Fund donation to the Campden and District Peelers Trust will help pay for essential roof repairs for the town’s historic community centre – converted from the Old Police Station.

The Trust’s John Kohler said: “This four storey building, which includes judge’s robing rooms and cells, is now a multi-use community centre and is very well used. But the massive Cotswold stone roof tiles on the Court Room have caused a lot of worry.

“One fell off and smashed the windscreen of a car, so it’s essential we get the roof repaired and insulated. This contribution to the £41,000 we need is very welcome, and makes Forum membership all the more worthwhile!”

## Quarterly networking meetings

During the past year GMFT networking meetings have been held in Cinderford, Coleford and Chipping Campden. Hosted by member towns, they start at about 5pm and focus on a particular theme or themes.

There is always a chance for informal discussion over supper and a popular Forum business slot where members share information on what is happening in their towns including achievements and difficulties.



*Networking in Chipping Campden*

This exchange increases the capacity across towns and provides a united voice to influence change where it is needed. Topics have included:

- community regeneration projects such as

community centres, cinemas and town centres

- the fight against NHS cuts
- the impact on towns of changing legislation
- progress on community healthchecks
- the development of local associations
- reports from festivals and events

Full reports of all our meetings are on our website at [www.town2town.org.uk](http://www.town2town.org.uk)

The GMFT Board thanks all the towns which have hosted events during the year. They take a long time to arrange and rely on local volunteers to ensure their success. Their efforts are much appreciated as it provides the opportunity for all members to come together to exchange experiences and expertise.

# Building on ways to share expertise

By **Peter Street**,  
Business  
Development Officer



Last year I explained that my new role was to be in touch with member

towns to ensure our work takes the direction our members require. Over the past 12 months, I have worked closely with the Forum Board to understand how they thought the Forum should be focussed for the future and, as a result, our new strategy has been published. The document has been reviewed by member towns and partner organisations, as well as several potential new members, and had supportive feedback.

We have also continued to improve the content of our quarterly networking meetings and 'Look and Learn' visits to community projects outside the county. It is pleasing to see new faces attending these events and learning from others. For those unable to attend, we publish reports of our visits – including key contacts for further information – on the Case Study pages of our website at [www.town2town.org.uk](http://www.town2town.org.uk).

Wherever possible, I continue to help member towns develop their community projects and find it very satisfying to put towns in touch with each other for mutual help. We are also looking at training for member towns and directors and will ensure our portfolio of services is in line with what the towns need for ongoing development and sustainability.



Over the past year, there have been four 'Look and Learn' visits organised by the Forum, each with a theme or common interest for member towns. The aim is to show what can be achieved – and share best practice.

The first was to the Yorkshire community of **Kingsley and Fitzwilliam** where we visited their multi-purpose community centre. Housed in a refurbished '60s school, the Centre offers a wide range of free and low-cost adult classes, a 'drop in' crèche, IT suite, community café and community bus service to bring people from outlying areas. It is also home to the Sure Start initiative, supporting families with pre-school children, and will soon house the local Library.

For more info about the Kingsley and Fitzwilliam Community Resource Centre, visit their website at [www.kfcommunitycentre.co.uk/index.html](http://www.kfcommunitycentre.co.uk/index.html)

In March we visited **Ledbury** in Herefordshire where a group of more than 20 learned about Development Trusts in general and the work of the Ledbury and Area Development Trust in particular. The organisation began as a Market Town Initiative in 2002 with a £300,000 award from Advantage West Midlands. This was match-funded from other sources to yield a total of about £1m which funds 54 local projects of between £250 and £45,000 each.

A study by Staffordshire University revealed the two most important themes for the town were supporting young people and keeping them in the area and affordable accommodation. For more information, visit Ledbury and Area Development Trust [www.ledburyadt.org](http://www.ledburyadt.org)

Last year's *Marketplace* described how **Tetbury** had won the Heart of England's Gold award for their 'In Bloom' project – so in May we challenged them to show a group of other

towns how to manage a successful project! Tetbury in Bloom had operated for 15 years – run initially by the Town Clerk and a small staff. Today it is supported by many volunteers and valued at around £20,000 a year – including the volunteers' time and a £4,500 donation from Tetbury Town Council.

As well as making the town look even better, the quality of retail businesses has improved – leading to more visitors. For information about entering the In Bloom contest, see [www.rhs.org.uk/britaininbloom/index.asp](http://www.rhs.org.uk/britaininbloom/index.asp) Cornwall and Devon were hosts at the end of June to show us projects in **Penzance** and **Hatherleigh**. We also met the local Market and Coastal Towns Association co-ordinators to learn about their work. Community Development Trust Director Sue Guard showed us around the Penwith Community Centre and introduced her team.

The Centre's 20 rooms are used by as many local organisations who in turn have 2,000 members. The Trust even performs the payroll operation for 13 of these groups.

Simon Swale, Cornwall's MCTA co-ordinator, explained the improved process for MCTi towns at his office outside Bodmin – a former Forestry Commission barn converted into eco-friendly office accommodation by innovative architects Arco2.

In Devon, the group met the county's MCTA co-ordinator Caroline Walker at the new **Hatherleigh Community Centre**. She explained that the Centre had vindicated the MCTi process which led to its creation. The town had been terribly affected by Foot and Mouth in 2001 which in turn led to the formation of the MCTi project.

Future visits include the award winning Sherwood Energy Village in October 2007 – more info at [www.sev.org.uk](http://www.sev.org.uk) – and Devizes.

*TOP: A visit to the Kingsley and Fitzwilliam multi-purpose centre*

*BOTTOM: Look and Learn in Devon and Cornwall*



# Best Market Town of the Year

Tetbury became the first town in Gloucestershire to be awarded the title of the county's 'Best Market Town' in a contest sponsored by GMTF as part of the annual Calor competition.

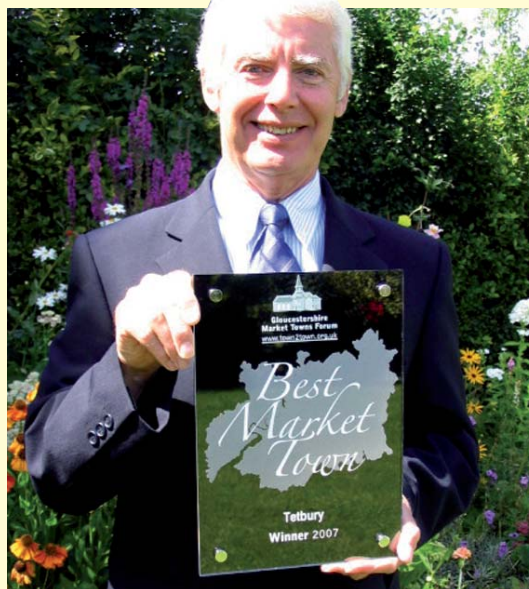
The contest also attracted entries from other communities such as Fairford and Newent with each town entering a project it was most proud of – Fairford's new multi-use Community Centre, Newent's In Bloom campaign and Tetbury's energetic regeneration partnership.

The judges were looking at community involvement and effective project management – often achieved by volunteers passionate about supporting their communities. They were impressed by the quality of all three entries which is reflected in high scoring for all and closeness of the final scores.

It was the structure of the Tetbury Partnership which involved the whole community and maximised the opportunity to develop solutions to issues that most impressed the judges Bob Watters and Pearl Stokes.

Tetbury Town Council is to be admired for its commitment in providing funds to establish a part time co-ordinator and assistant and for the way it has used this investment in resource effectively to get other sectors of the community on board.

A number of sector-specific sub groups were established



Bob Watters with the first GMTF-sponsored Best Market Town of the Year award – won by Tetbury

with membership drawn from residents with a particular interest in the issues and sector specialists from a broad range of associations, agencies and authorities. This provided effective cross community representation.

The Tetbury Partnership has skilfully developed an association of people from all over the town and surrounding villages with an interest in working for the greater good of Tetbury. This approach has overcome some of the barriers which prevent all interest groups working towards common goals to maximise the benefit for all. This could be a model for others to follow.

Runners up were **Newent**, for its In Bloom initiative and **Fairford** for its multi-use community centre.

Reports on these outstanding projects and the judges' comments are on our website at [www.town2town.org.uk](http://www.town2town.org.uk)

## FORUM member communities

Chipping Campden  
Churchdown  
Cinderford  
Cirencester  
Coleford  
Dursley  
Fairford  
Lechlade  
Nailsworth  
Newent  
Northleach  
Stonehouse  
Stow on the Wold  
Tetbury  
Tewkesbury  
Winchcombe  
Wotton under Edge

## Get your communities buzzing with updated Toolkit!



The Forum's highly successful Gloucestershire Community Toolkit, packed full of information essential for market towns embarking on regeneration projects, is being given a makeover.

The new-look pack will include ten case studies shining the spotlight on projects from around the county. These examples of development and planning best practice have been developed thanks to funding from the Market and Coastal Towns Association. They are:

1. **Helping your town bloom – developing an In Bloom partnership** (Newent)
2. **Bringing neighbouring towns together to create a festival weekend** (Cinderford, Coleford, Lydney and Newent)
3. **Attracting external funding for community projects** (Fairford)
4. **Rural cinemas – three different approaches** (Newent, Winchcombe and Wotton under Edge)
5. **Developing a regeneration partnership – the MCTi route** (Tewkesbury)
6. **Attracting shoppers back to your town** (Cinderford, Coleford, Lydney and Newent)
7. **Involving volunteers in regenerating your community** (Cam and Dursley)
8. **Multi-use community centres – the pitfalls and the positives** (Winchcombe)
9. **Developing a tourism strategy for your town** (Tetbury)
10. **Raising revenue – products and services which can bring in revenue** (Forum member towns)

The Toolkit – originally published in 2002 and launched in partnership with the BBC in Gloucestershire – also includes a useful **Four Steps to Success** guide to getting community projects off the ground.

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