

## SAVE OUR STUTE - SUMMARY OF IDEAS SUBMITTED (Updates 27/6/19)

Notes on sources: (PM) = Public Meeting, (MR) = Members Register, (SB) = Suggestion Box, (SM) = Since Meeting

### Awareness and Engagement

(PM) Advertising - needs to be better. Many people don't know what's on and when things are on. Also, outside of Stute - need to make it clear it's a club

(PM) The idea of having a suggestion box in The Stute so that when people have ideas, they can be recorded and tried. (we have jointly implemented this and are collecting and documenting the suggestions)

(PM) Someone suggested making the online presence stronger, especially the use of social media. Said that events were not always seen / shared. (we have created a Twitter feed that has attracted 42 followers - there was already a Facebook page - we could do more ongoing though)

(SM) Invite committee members from other local clubs, e.g. Aycliffe Big Club to give advice on how to sustain business, what works, what doesn't

(SM) A summer themed community welcome open day showcasing what The Stute has to offer for events, parties, christenings, etc. Also do another membership drive? Target residents at Middridge Vale - many don't even realise The Stute is a club!

(SB) More advertising outside the club to say it's open and everyone is welcome (I have created a banner design - Anthony is working on improving it - we could get 3 done for about £65-£70)

(MR) Create a website (This has been done and is active and being updated)

(MR) Expand social media presence to publicise what's on (see above - we need to do more maybe)

(MR) Make it easier to become a member and make the joining experience better (We updated the membership cards and had them printed - making it easier to join, and so club has more contact information to use to contact members)

(MR) Explore whether it need to be a 'membership' club

(MR) Start an institute newsletter

(MR) Do a door to door survey to hear from the people that didn't come to the meeting what would make them visit the institute

(MR) Keep using the Town Crier and newspapers to keep people up to date on successes (We have run 3 stores so far - need to decide what the next opportunity will be)

(MR) Create some appropriate banners to put on the railings outside the institute (see above about the banners)

(SM) Place updates on the notice board at the Institute (We have started doing some of this - but only on behalf of our group - though we have introduced institute branding - as long as the committee is OK with this)

(SB) (New) Someone suggested putting an entertainment leaflet out to let people know what's on

### Ownership and Legality

(PM) Someone asked about trustees of The Stute - how many were there. (Committee responded that Fred was looking into it all with solicitors and would feedback once things were clearer) (This matter is in progress - we hope to reach a position where the committee will be able to resolve it and engage new trustees soon)

### Fundraising for the Long and Short Term Future

NB: Major fundraising can't really start till ownership is resolved - to do so now would not only see us rejected but may prejudice further bids

(PM) Someone asked if sponsoring had been looked into for 2025. Mentioned Netrail, Richard Branson, Heritage Lottery Fund, etc. (We are unable to make any major fundraising bids until the ownership is resolved, but we have started looking at sources. Any major fundraising will of course have to be in the name of the institute committee)

(PM) Someone suggested the idea of a working committee to try and get funding bids developed.

(PM) Someone mentioned the idea of starting a monthly fund - maybe a few pounds? Asked if tax relief could be an option? A lady responded by saying that a Go Fund Me page could be started?

(PM) Someone asked whether the RMT might be able to help. Could contact them to see what options are available

(SB) Do more raffles - maybe a 1-90 card or 100 club

(SB) Have a Coffee Day like was done previously for charity, but to raise money for the Stute - members will bake and make sandwiches etc.

(MR) Get funds for a fundraising drive booklet explaining our case

(MR) Start a scheme to get members of the public to sponsor part of the fabric of the building (bricks, tiles, panes of glass) to commemorate someone who worked at the works or to whom the Institute meant a great deal

### **Membership and Loyalty**

(SB) (New) Someone suggested loyalty discount cards or loyalty offer cards - buy 9 pints get one free

(SB) (New) Someone suggested having one night a month where members get 5% or 10% off drinks if they present their card

### **Other Services**

(PM) Someone mentioned the idea of having a facility to look after children (perhaps in the function room?) while their parents come in and have a drink

(PM) Lady asked about the possibility of having a Women's Club where flower arranging, bingo and other activities could take place. Could pay to join and put money aside for a trip once a year

(PM) Gentleman from Shildon Chamber of Trade (Lloyd) complained that Locomotion don't do enough to encourage their visitors to go into town. Wants to see Car Rallies, Galas, etc. in Shildon and said they could even start / end at The Stute. (Fred has been liaising with Locomotion and they are keen to do 'something' though we may be some way from being able to implement this)

(PM) Someone mentioned the possibility of Junior Membership being pushed more - is it well known that this is available?

(PM) Someone asked if The Stute's function hall could be used for corporate events, meetings, etc. Suggested that local businesses could be contacted to offer them the service.

(SM) Try to encourage local groups, e.g. Slimming World, support groups, charities to use The Stute

(MR) Find out if there are any things the building cannot be used for

(MR) Engage local groups to see if they would like to use the Institute

(MR) Start educational projects - adult classes, youth music groups, engineering taster (Dave has a youth brass master in mind who has expressed previously that he'd be keen to do something - instruments is the challenge - there is a stash of instruments in Shildon owned by Graeme Scarlett but when Dave approached him Graeme won't discuss parting with them - the spaces upstairs left by the boxing club would be ideal - especially if left as 'all purpose' space - for other classes we'd need to source tables & chairs as a minimum)

(MR) Create bookable meeting space on the upper floor

(MR) Create exhibition space on the upper floor

### **Entertainments**

(PM) A gentleman asked what plans were in place to attract younger members to join and drink in The Stute. Suggested poker nights, pool nights and music nights. Was willing to help with events such as these

(PM) Someone mentioned the ideas of children's discos - once a month? (we've taken a look at this as something for Saturdays during the school holidays but have struggled to find an easy model that will make us much money - i.e. it might make more money on days when parents pay for the discos and bouncy castles and what have you as a regular booking - generally parents are where the money is at - we could be wrong)

(PM) Someone mentioned putting regular show nights on again. Some bands have been very popular, e.g. Alexanders Palace (Both the campaign group and the committee are looking at this)

(PM) Also queried why several pubs / clubs in Shildon have events on at the same time - could they not work together to prevent this from happening?

(SM) Does the function room have a sprung dance floor? Encourage local DJs that do Northern Soul nights to book the hall for their nights (Colin approached local Northern Soul groups but they have felt it hasn't worked well in the past in Shildon - he's now exploring a joint Motown/Northern Soul possibility)

(SM) Bingo Boogie - have a Facebook Page?! (Michelle has approached Bingo Boogie and the campaign group are looking at a night in November - but the committee have also arranged something earlier in the year)

(SB) Have a St Patrick's Day or St George's Day even - singer on during the day maybe

(SB) Have a beer festival (Dave has been progressing the beer festival with that task group and have been making great progress - a band is booked (Eric & The Vikings) for the Friday 11th at a great rate - the beer package is almost sorted - once the logo is done we're ready to approach sponsors)

(SB) Celebrate Burns Night

(SB) Use local singers or groups - they go down well and it gives them a chance (Kelly has a number for a local singer - we'll look to book in soon as a SOS fundraiser)

(SM) Film nights / afternoons (depending on age) Could do a Star Wars family screening also and have characters from Star Wars in costume (Stormtroopers, etc.) - Sam Townsend's husband is involved in groups that provide this. (Fred has secured Elliott Hanna - star of the Billy Elliot the Musical film - we have a date booked for August where we show the film and have a talk in - Kelly has a contact involved in the Pauline Quirke drama schools who we'll directly market too. A poster has been designed - only the pricing strategy and ticketing remains to do. Looks like we probably won't be doing the Star Wars film though)

(MR) Does TV Sport form an essential part of the Institute offering

(MR) Include local young originals bands on the entertainment programme (Dave has spoken to Tim Loades at Brothertons Music who teaches at Bishop Auckland College re approaching local talent - NB The Civic have also had some success in this regard - watch this space)

(MR) Have a folk night, or open mic night

(MR) Have all ages family concerts in school holidays

(SB) (New) Someone suggested a Children's Christmas Pantomime

### Interim Spruce-Up

NB: Before we can do this we need to raise some money, and have a vision as to what the interim spruce up needs to look like

(PM) Someone mentioned the example of how Shildon AFC get volunteers for their spruce up every year - could a similar thing be done here?

(PM) Someone asked about the state of the building and how much it might need for repairs - wonders if Shildon firms might be able to help with some reduced price repairs in return for advertising for their businesses. Might they also do it for goodwill? Could always ask!

### Environment & Facilities

(PM) Someone mentioned the idea of a beer garden. (We note that the committee have had a member add another gate to the enclosed forecourt so are part way towards this - good stuff - acquisition of even a couple of picnic tables would be a good next step)

(PM) Someone mentioned making the outdoor area more attractive and using it to advertise the place and its events.

(PM) Could the bar be refurbished to modernise and encourage younger people into the place? Might be an outlay but might reap benefits? Suggested a modern theme on the heritage / railways and possibly rename it as THE STUTE.

(SB) Young people want a juke box - it doesn't have to be loud

(SM) Partner up with some local taxi firms - could they give discounted rates for members? Could the community bus be used on some nights, e.g. dance nights?

(SM) Under 18s disco - would need to think clever and market this carefully to appeal to this difficult age range. Tindale put on a very successful one not long ago.

(SB) The big club at Aycliffe has a 'pub' in the club and made the Lounge into a games room with juke box.

(SB) Make the lounge into a 'gin bar' or make the 'Ginstitute' a feature of the lounge

(SB) Get a singer or group on every month instead of every three months

(MR) Consider whether unblocking some or all of the downstairs windows would make it clearer whether the Institute is open and a social club

(MR) How safe is the roof and might it prevent us from any of our goals if not attended to. (The visit we organised from the DCC Regeneration Officer and Conservation Officer suggest that it's a major problem - and needs resolving as a priority - but it oughtn't to get in the way of anything we're doing this year - it should be our first major fundraising priority - along with a structural survey)

(SB) (New) Someone asked if it's possible to have a non-members area that members of the public that aren't members can access without signing in or being a member. Harrogate Hill have done this.

(SB) (New) Someone suggested that the bar should be classified as a Sports Bar - suggested Virgin Media for packages - suggested getting a big screen and projector [www.projectorpoint.co.uk](http://www.projectorpoint.co.uk)  
[www.bigscreenonline.co.uk](http://www.bigscreenonline.co.uk)

(SB) (New) Someone suggested the beer is expensive - to look at local micro-breweries to source cheaper beer (NB: I suspect it works the other way around - i.e. bulk brewers supply cheaper, but I also suspect that this is something the committee have already done due diligence on)

(SB) (New) Someone suggested sorting out so people could pay for their drinks with a card payment (We proposed a solution to this, and Shaun has tried that out for himself. Not sure how long that offer was open for, but in any case it will be easy enough to resolve once the Institute committee are ready. It has been suggested that aligning it to the next price increase might be a good idea as Shaun feels it necessary to make sure the customer pays the transaction charge. We have suggested to add a small surcharge to all drinks to mitigate any added cost rather than charge two prices for a drink (i.e with card, without card - which is probably not legal otherwise everyone would be doing it))

## Heritage

(PM) Gentleman suggested the idea of making more contact with the Museum to encourage visitors to The Stute

(SB) Have exhibitions of memorabilia from the museum or wherever we can get it - and have evenings to with food drinks or sandwiches to open the exhibitions - pies, sandwiches.

(MR) Create an inventory of heritage assets - like the memorial

(MR) Find out what happened to the assets the Institute had before - can any come back?

(MR) Jane has offered to bring some of the Hackworth collection on loan to the Institute - how can we best utilise that offer

(MR) Bring the 1975 banner to display at the Institute

(MR) Help get the 1919 banner restored and bring it to the Institute (Dave created a music video featuring footage of the build up to the closure of Shildon Works to promote fundraising for the banner appeal - the sooner it's restored the sooner we can use it)

## Food

(PM) Someone mentioned how people are attracted by food - could it be an option to attract more custom? Are there kitchen facilities? Could start with easy options, e.g. sandwiches, pies.

(PM) Someone suggested solving the issue of food by asking food vans to come and use the car park. Says that Caps Off in Bishop Auckland use this very effectively and it's a very on-trend thing to do. Said it might attract drinkers to The Stute who like to try different kinds of foods.

(MR) Explore simple ways to introduce a food offering to the Institute

(MR) Look at making a food offering on a better scale later

## External

(PM) Also mentioned how reduced bus services have stopped people coming regularly and a lot of people just can't afford to get taxis, etc. Could local taxi firms offer something to help? (Dave suggested that we raise a petition that members can help promote which will be given to Arriva when we have enough signatures asking them to reinstate services past the Stute)

(SB) (New) Someone suggested contacting Arriva to get them to put busses on down Byerley Road and Up Redworth Road after 5:30 (See above)