

## Section 1: Project Background

<b>Project name</b>	The Development of facilities in Faringdon for Tourists, Visitors and Residents		
<b>Where will the project be delivered?</b>	Faringdon, Oxfordshire		
<b>Name of proposing Community /Town Partnership</b>	Faringdon Area Project		
<b>1.</b>	<b>Estimated funding required</b>	<b>Capital Public</b>	£405,000
		<b>Current Public</b>	£
		<b>Capital Private</b>	£205000
		<b>Current Private</b>	£
<b>2.</b>	<b>Of which how much Small Rural Towns Programme funding is sought</b>	<b>Capital:</b>	£200,000
		<b>Current:</b>	£
<b>3.</b>	<b>Projected Appraisal date</b>	31 <sup>st</sup> August 2009	
<b>Project manager</b>	Nick Elwell, Focus on Faringdon CIC		
<b>Contact name (if different)</b>	Jane Haynes		
<b>Contact address</b>	14 Market Place, Faringdon Oxfordshire SN7 7HP		
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<b>e-mail address</b>	jane.haynes@bordengate.com		
<b>Projected project start date</b>	January 2009		
<b>Projected project end date</b>	2013		
<b>Date of completion of this form</b>	21 <sup>st</sup> August 2009		

**Section 2: Project Description**

*Please provide a brief, clear statement of the project activity and what it will deliver, including proposed SEEDA Outputs. State how partners and/or the community will be involved in developing the project.*

Faringdon Area Project is a group of volunteers local to Faringdon. They, with help from friends and associates, have undertaken both of the Healthchecks in 2002 and 2007 and put together the Action Plans that have resulted from them. From the 2007 Action Plan the following projects will enhance the infrastructure and encourage more tourists and visitors into the town whilst providing an improved level of facilities.

**Item 1. A Performance Venue.**

The need for a performance venue was clearly identified in the recent Health Check. A letter dated 20<sup>th</sup> August 2009 outlining our plans is attached. For the purpose of funds available however, our immediate requirement is to raise sufficient funds to undertake a detailed feasibility study.

*Why a Performance Venue?*

The Vale of the White Horse requires a venue that can seat, entertain, lecture to, an audience in excess of three hundred. Faringdon needs a venue where its talented musicians can perform without worrying about noise limitations. The Defence Academy in Shrivenham needs a venue where they can hold conferences for larger groups than they are currently able to accommodate. The Faringdon Artistic Skaters need a larger venue where they can practise their art and we would very much like to accommodate the Federation of Artistic Skaters who are looking for a future venue for British Championships and GB squad training. Faringdon Community College needs a venue where they can both hold major school productions and less excitingly, assemblies where they can accommodate the majority of the school in one sitting. The students at the college will have a real and ongoing input into the design and subsequent construction of the project further enhancing an already excellent engineering faculty. It is proposed that we should include a museum and gallery within the development and, if possible, the fossil beds close to (and possibly under) the site.

*Where would the facility be situated?*

We have identified a site on the corner of Park Road and the A420 adjacent to the 4 & 20 Business Park. The premises would be within a five minute walk of Faringdon Community College, is large enough to accommodate parking and close enough to the Town Centre to enable any resident to walk there.

*Who would benefit?*

Everybody in Faringdon would benefit. The venue would attract additional trade, would remove the need for some of the louder bands and musicians to perform in the middle of town, the schools would benefit from a facility far larger than they would otherwise be able to contemplate and offering a far higher specification in the form of facilities.

**Item 2 Community Bus**

The Community Bus had been a huge and increasingly successful success and provides a lifeline to many in the community who would otherwise be left at home. Such is the success however that the bus acquired some years ago is now looking a little tired and indeed a second vehicle is required on some days. Initially, our proposal would be to provide a new vehicle and use the retiring vehicle on those occasions when required. The Community Bus is driven by volunteers and provides a regular service to and from the outlying villages as well as being available for special events.

*Why is a new vehicle required?*

Because the current bus is now getting to an age where it needs replacing.

*Where is it required?*

In Faringdon to provide a service to those in Faringdon and the surrounding villages.

*Who benefits?*

Everybody in and around Faringdon who requires public transport where none exists. This includes those with no other form of transport including the elderly and disabled, those who are arranging special community events and for those arranging outings for everyone and everyone in and around Faringdon.

### **Item 3 The Folly Tower**

Funding for the Folly Tower falls into three categories:

- a) the structure
- b) opening and operation
- c) the surrounding landscape

The Folly Tower was gifted to the town. It is now some eighty years old and is in need of some maintenance and repair to prevent further dilapidation. Grant funding is required for the repairs; particularly to the roof which has not been watertight from some years and the previous repairs have proved to be of only a temporary nature.

The opening and operation of the tower provides a tourism attraction and some funding to enable access and to make visiting the tower a more interesting experience. This would include the production of literature and the organisation of special events.

From the top of Folly Hill the views of the Vale are fantastic. However, maintenance of the area is essential if the area is to be enjoyed both by residents and tourists alike. The trees surrounding the Folly need continual attention and replanting will soon be an issue. Suggestions to develop the area into an "Arts Park" have been put forward and if developed would form part of the "Tourism Trail" being considered for the town.

*Why Support the Folly?*

Faringdon Folly has become an iconic building visible from miles and miles away: especially in the winter months when the light erected on the top of the building creates an eye catching beacon for miles around. The Folly forms a point of interest for those visiting the town and for those who live here. The area is frequently used by residents: a march up to The Folly and around it and back to the town proves stimulating exercise for those who have dogs and also those who prefer their own company.

*Where is the Folly?*

On Folly Hill, previously know as Fern Hill at the top end of London Street overlooking the town and the Vale.

*Who benefits?*

Everyone who like a little open space, an enchanting view and a little exercise.

### **Item 4 Cycleways**

The recent Health Check highlighted the fact that there are no bespoke cycle routes in Faringdon. Indeed, cycling out of Faringdon is often an unpleasant if not dangerous experience either up, down or across the A420. Even the "B" roads leaving the other side of town and heading off to Lechlade and Buckland are not ideal cycle routes as the roads are narrow and yet fast. The roads are not wide enough to accommodate two cars and a cyclist at the same time.

There are various bridle paths and old roads that could be drawn into a small network of cyclepaths in and around Faringdon linking the villages both to Faringdon and the more expansive cycle routes in and around Oxford, Didcot, Swindon, etc.

The initial plan for a cycle path is to link Faringdon with the Defence Academy in Shrivenham. There is an opportunity to join the villages of Uffington, Fernham, Little Coxwell, Great Coxwell, Longcot, Watchfield and Shrivenham by linking existing bridle paths and utilising the canal that runs from Swindon through to Uffington. There is also opportunity to make use of the old railway beds running from Faringdon, through Uffington and running off towards Didcot. A start has been made in identifying the potential routes. Contact must now be made with the land owners who have been identified so that we might negotiate access with them and planning permission must be sought where footpaths might be changed to cycle route or their route altered to accommodate the desires of both the landowners and those wishing to use the proposed facility.

#### *Why Cycle Paths?*

With this increasing age of "being green" many who might like to use pedal cycles as a form of transport simply cannot as the roads available do not lend themselves to a pleasant cycling experience. Cycle paths can be used for both commuting purposes and of course for leisure purposes. In the right place, they will also provide a route to school which might reduce the amount of traffic on the roads between 8am and 9am each school day morning.

#### *Where?*

The first cycle route that we are proposing will run from Faringdon to the Defence Academy in Shrivenham, linking in with Uffington, Fernham, Little Coxwell, Great Coxwell, Longcot and Watchfield.

#### *Who will benefit?*

Those who commute between Shrivenham and Faringdon or its surrounding villages will have a cycling option. We are working with Shrivenham Parish Council who in turn are working with the Wilts & Berks Canal Trust with a view to creating a cycle way between Shrivenham and Swindon. This would enable those brave souls who currently cycle from Faringdon to Swindon a safer alternative and we suspect increase their numbers.

### **Item 5 The Corn Exchange**

The Town Council has elected to take on the Corn Exchange building. The Corn Exchange is a much used public building in the middle of town. However, like all old buildings, it is in need of repair. Successful music events held in the Corn Exchange have led to one or two residents complaining about the noise level. So some form of sound insulation is required.

The facility within the building need modernising and the heating system might soon be considered an antique and needs to be replaced. Another of the proposals put forward following the Health Check initiated by Faringdon Area Project was the need for a local cinema. The redecoration and renovation of the Corn Exchange would enable the installation of cinema technology.

#### *Why keep the Corn Exchange?*

The Corn Exchange provides a venue for public meetings. Whilst it is arguable then venue is no longer large enough to support the increasing size of the town, it remains the largest space currently available. It is used for weddings and for funerals. It is used for public debate and political rhetoric. It is used by those running small, local markets and jumble sales, swap shops. It is a space that provides a huge service to the people in Faringdon and is widely used and supported.

#### *Where?*

The Corn Exchange is in the middle of the town. The Town Council offices form part of the building and it is proposed that the Community and Tourist Information Centre is moved into the office space previously

occupied by the Vale of White Horse District Council.

*Who would benefit from the renovation of the Corn Exchange?*

Simply everybody.

### **Item 6 Skateboard Park**

A long time ago various children and their parents keen on the development of a skateboard park raised a sum of almost £40,000.00. However, delays in finding a suitable location, approving a suitable location and then developing that available location has meant that the Skateboard Group were unable to meet the time limitations imposed on the funding promised to them.

It has now been agreed as part of the Bloor Homes development that they would create the base for the proposed Skateboard Park at the top of Folly Park close to the proposed Cricket and Rugby pitches. It is now important to source funding for the Skateboard Park so that when the base is in place we may move forward with completion in a sensible and timely manner.

*Why a Skateboard Park?*

A Skateboard Park has been a requirement for the youngsters within the town for a number of years. We consider it absurd that the parents and children who were first promoting the need for a Skateboard Park are now doing so not for themselves but for their children and grandchildren. To provide this facility would enable the youth to have a proper venue to perform their skills – rather than the town centre!

*Where?*

The Skateboard Park is proposed to be placed adjacent to the Cricket and Rugby pitches at the top of Folly Park.

*Who will benefit from the Skateboard Park?*

Those with skateboards, who will be able to hone their skills, will obviously benefit. However, so will everybody else in the centre of town who will generally be relieved of the thundering noise of skateboard on concrete. It might also encourage more of the youth who have the habit of collecting in the middle of the town to disperse into wider areas.

### **Item 7 Tourism and Entertainment**

The attractions available to tourists and visitors within Faringdon are limited. The town is neither blessed with a river, substantial ruins and the slightly infamous Faringdon House is now longer open to visitors. We are therefore proposing the development of our own points of interest. The ideas put forward so far include:-

1. A series of walking-cycle cards.
2. An area where we might attract local artists and those from further afield to display substantial "outdoor" pieces resistant to both weathering and unfortunately, vandalism.
3. A sundial in the middle of town.
4. A Water Clock
5. A collection of plaques, signs and notices. This proposal is further outlined in the attached appendix.

*Why promote these ideas?*

To create an added interest within the town. To provide both those who live here and those who visit an opportunity to investigate and explore the town and the surrounding area.

*Where?*

In and around Faringdon.

*Who would benefit?*

We believe that in making Faringdon a more interesting place and in promoting those interesting areas we will provide both residents and visitors with a unique and stimulating entertainment facility which will in turn raise interest in the town and what it has to offer.

**Item 8 Focus on Faringdon Guide**

The Focus on Faringdon Guide has proved hugely successful and we are now in the process of developing a Focus on Wantage, Focus of Abingdon and Focus on the Vale Guide. In addition to this, we have developed various websites adopting the same names which are proving both popular and successful. Whilst it is proposed that the publications and websites will become self-funding in their second year, the costs of publishing and website development and maintenance are substantial in the early years when revenue is insufficient to cover costs.

*Why?*

To provide a "coffee table" publication for the benefit of the local population as well as those visiting looking for information.

*Where?*

A test production in Faringdon was created and published earlier this year. A new publication for both Faringdon and Wantage should be available by January 2010. A Focus on Abingdon will be considered if additional funds become available. A sample Focus on the Vale Guide is available on [http://www.focusonfaringdon.co.uk/documents/WhiteHorse\\_VisitorGuide\\_lo.pdf](http://www.focusonfaringdon.co.uk/documents/WhiteHorse_VisitorGuide_lo.pdf)

**Section 3: Evidence of Need**

*Explain where this project appears in your Action Plan. Quote information/data from your community consultation which is relevant to the project.*

Faringdon Area Project began the 2007 Healthcheck revisit by looking at the 2002 Healthcheck, it was felt that the ability to deliver tangible results was affected by:

1. The capacity of those tasked with delivering projects.
2. Realistic aims and timescales for the projects.
3. Management of the projects by an appropriate group or a single volunteer.
4. Land and space available for the projects to be delivered to the population.

A methodology for undertaking the 2007 Healthcheck was developed as a result of this experience and because of much tighter budget constraints, and to fit within a shorter timescale.

The 2002 Faringdon Healthcheck resulted in an ambitious Action Plan containing 52 projects. Volunteers within the Faringdon Area Project were tasked with facilitating or delivering these projects. Many projects were successfully completed, some changed in direction due to changes in circumstances and some, as the 2007 Healthcheck has shown, still need to be addressed.

33 potential projects were identified at the public meeting held on January 10 2008. On February 26 2008 a meeting of FAP and its partners was held in order to prioritise the projects for action.

At the meeting the selection of projects was made with guidance from the following criteria;

- What work is already being undertaken on each project
- Which organisation or person within Faringdon is best suited to lead on each project
- What should be the role of Faringdon Area Project in supporting or instigating each project

After filtering the projects in this way it was found that some of the potential projects (for example the project to improve the public toilets) were already being undertaken by other organisations and required little or no support. The capacity of Faringdon Area Project as a voluntary organisation was also a key factor when decisions were made so that the available time and resources could be targeted in the most effective way.

A key project chosen was to help with the development of a Performance, Arts and Conference venue for the town. This has proved to be the most popular of all proposed projects at each stage of the Healthcheck process. A performance and arts venue would address a social and economic need within the town by filling a large gap in current leisure and tourism provision.

**Section 4: Contributing to Strategic and Local Plans –**

*a) Please explain the project fit with Government initiatives - discuss with the Rural Towns Officer*

The Department for Environment Food and Rural affairs continues to highlight the Government's commitment to socially and economically sustainable communities. It specifically proposes to support initiatives that establish rural areas as places where people want to live, work and develop sustainable communities well into the future.

This tourism and visitor based project aims to significantly improve Faringdon's "Visitor & Tourist" appeal whilst enhancing the town for the benefit of the residents. An improved vitality in the town will not only improve the fortunes of the shops, pubs, restaurants, etc but also the other businesses: success breeds success.

The Performance Venue and attaching museum/gallery space will become a source of local revenue, local

## SEEDA Small Rural Towns Programme

### Form 1: Project Outline

employment and an iconic building representing both Faringdon and the Vale. It will provide a facility not currently available in the Vale.

The Cycle paths will provide safe ways enabling more people to cycle to work – or indeed to cycle for leisure purposes. Currently, Faringdon receives few visitors by bicycle: this project will make Faringdon an interesting and reachable destination by bicycle.

The need for a community bus is self evident. If the bus service can be enhanced, the need for vehicles in the town and villages will be reduced, albeit marginally to begin with, whilst enabling those without transport to go shopping, meet friends, etc at a reasonable cost.

The Folly Tower represents Faringdon from its vantage point on Folly Hill. The “Folly” is probably the centrepiece of Faringdon’s immediate tourism potential.

The Skate-board park has been promised to the youth of Faringdon for decades. It is time to fulfil this promise and provide the youngsters with an opportunity to exercise in an environment they find appealing.

Walking and cycle cards have proved successful. A larger number of alternative routes around the town, to and from the local hostelrys, down to the river and up to the White Horse would be hugely beneficial to Residents, Tourists and visitors alike. The creation of points of interest around the town, the development of an open air Arts Park will all help make the town and the surrounding countryside an interesting and entertaining environment.

Development of the “Focus on” guides and web-sites will provide Residents, visitors and tourists with easy access to regularly updated and well presented information.

*b) Please explain the project's fit with Regional objectives – discuss with the Rural Towns Officer*

We do not currently have a market towns officer but we believe that it is self evident that the projects promoted by Faringdon Area Project reflect and support the principles adopted by SEEDA. The fulfilment of the projects identified will introduce additional revenue to the town and enhance the experience of tourists and visitors whilst developing the amenities available to the populace.

*c) Please explain the project's fit with County and or District objectives - discuss with the Rural Towns Officer*

It is intended that the proposed projects will both fall within and support the Local Development Framework which has been and continues to be the subject of much discussion in and around Faringdon and the Vale generally.

## Section 5: SEEDA funding rationale

*Please briefly describe how the funding from the “Rural Towns programme” will make a difference to the delivery of the project. State whether the project would continue if the SEEDA funding were not forthcoming and what would happen if a reduced grant was awarded.*

The funding from Rural Towns Programme would enable Faringdon to move ahead with the Action Plan projects. If funding was not forthcoming or greatly reduced the projects would still go ahead, but at a much slower pace.

**Section 6: Project Options**

Please state, in **outline only**, options that have been considered to achieve the desired outcomes (Section 2)

*Option 1: Your preferred option (A practical and realistic plan which is achievable and will produce a lasting effect).*

Fulfilment of the 8 projects listed is a requirement and our aim is to meet that requirement. Due to the diverse nature of the various projects under one heading, we anticipate that each will be considered an individual project as funds become available.

*Option 2: A do less option. (Delivering the minimum to meet the project objectives, what you might do if you had fewer resources).*

Fulfilment of the 8 projects listed is a necessity. Fewer resources will mean that the list of projects will take longer to fulfil.

*Option 3: An expanded option. (What you would do with greater investment, perhaps increasing the number of outputs, exceeding the original objectives or delivering a superior product)*

Greater resources will enable us complete the listed projects more quickly and to expand our proposals considerably. For example, the cycle path network could be extended toward Wantage, Abingdon and Didcot. The "Focus On" website and guides could be extended to include Abingdon more quickly than we will otherwise manage. A second and possibly third community bus could be acquired offering a more frequent service to and from further afield.

*Option 4: No SEEDA funding option (What would happen to the proposed project if the "Small Rural Towns" funding was NOT forthcoming)*

Fulfilment of the 8 projects would take for ever. Some may never be completed.

**Section 7: Strategic Added Value (SAV)**

Please state the Strategic Added Value activity that will be achieved by this project. (SAV is defined as behavioural changes SEEDA stimulates among partners' operating environments. It is the value SEEDA brings to the way partners work.)

Success begets success. A busier Market Square would feel safer to all those who walk through it. More visitors and tourists mean more trade. More trade means more money and better upkeep of the premises in the town. Better upkeep makes the place more attractive. An attractive well maintained clean and tidy town will attract more visitors. And so the circle continues.

**Section 8: Funding Profile**

Please forecast the funding required for the project period (on an April to March financial year).

	Year 1 (specify)	Year 2 (specify)	Year 3+ (specify)	Total
<b>Any pre-project funding</b>	85000			85000
<b>Small Rural Towns Programme</b>	70000	70000	60000	200000
<b>Other funding</b>	30000	50000	40000	120000
<b>Total</b>	185000	120000	100000	405000

**For completion by the proposing organisation**

**Completed by:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Name (please print):** Nick Elwell  
**Organisation:** Focus on Faringdon on behalf of Faringdon Area Project  
**Date:** 21<sup>st</sup> August 2009

**For use by the County Rural Towns Network**

*I/we confirm that the applicant town has a broad town partnership in place and has completed a Health Check. The proposed project demonstrates good fit with the Small Rural Towns Programme and I/we recommend that the project be progressed to an Operational Delivery Proposal (Form 2).*

Please tick

*I/we advise that this project is not appropriate to the Small Rural Towns Programme and recommend that the bid be withdrawn.*

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Name (please print):** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Position:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Comments by the above signatory (mandatory if rejected)**

\_\_\_\_\_