

Brentford

Community Council

Founded in 1989

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The Chairs of the Isleworth and Brentford
Area Committees:
Cllr Jon Hardy + Cllr Shirley Fisher

Dear Chairs,

November 25. 2008 ref:BCC426

Brentford High Street In Decline,

At their last meeting the Brentford Community Council asked that we write to you to seek special measures which would help to preserve the vitality of the High Street in a time of recession.

We request that you put this letter to your fellow Councillors so that the Council as a whole can adopt policies and budgets to weather the present difficult times. Without a positive approach Brentford may effectively lose its town centre and be left with no nucleus to revive when the time for re-development returns.

We appreciate that Brentford is not alone in facing these difficulties, but our Council has steadily maintained support for Brentford as a Town Centre and has adopted policies through the BAAP to ensure the long term development of the centre. Further decisions to ensure that the adjacent Commerce Road site did not usurp these functions were recently endorsed by the Council and by the Secretary of State after public inquiries.

Never the less Brentford continues to decline. There is no indication when the developer will apply for planning consents nor when even a first stage development might begin.

The Council has not adopted preferential policies to support Brentford traders or to ensure that a more robust shopping centre can be looked for.

We call on the Council with your support to do everything possible to reverse this decline.

We ask that the Council urgently considers adopting and financing a new initiative which would include:

1. Preparing and adopting short term plans for Brentford High Street based on diversity and survival rather than maximum economic rents.
2. Appointing now a Town Centre Manager (within the LB Hounslow Economic Development Unit) reporting through a small executive of ward members and co-opted members to your committee.

3. Making the maximum use of existing facilities. Including asphaltting the new car park, opening up boarded up frontages on short lets, seeking diversity of outlets, improving cycle stands and seating.
4. Promoting Brentford through discounts, advertisement promotions and events with the Town Manager.
5. Re-opening the farmers market and diversifying the stalls. Providing parking vouchers to customers.
6. Making plans now in support of the Isleworth and Brentford Area Plan objectives to prepare for the later re-construction of the High Street by:

Adopting as "locally listed" the remaining historic structures on the South side of the High Street,

Protecting the waterfront and boat repair facilities which make this town centre unique.

Considering whether the boundaries of the adjacent Conservation Areas should be extended.

Promoting the phased rebuilding of the Town Centre to a human scale as finance for an incremental approach may be more accessible in the current economic climate

Re-aligning the High Street so that the pavement on the south side would be more generous without demolishing all of the present frontage.

Improving bus stops, cycle routes and parking, signage, seating and planting and the footpath links to Syon and Waterman's Park.

Ensuring that Waterman's Arts Centre and the Library remain lively services in their present locations.

Additionally we ask that English Partnership should be approached to see whether they would invest in a suitable regeneration scheme for Brentford Town Centre.

We know that we are asking for special measures when funds are short, but we believe that without positive action now there will be no Brentford Town Centre to revive and that the vision of the Area Plan will not be realised.

Yours sincerely

Denis Browne
Chairman, Planning
Consultative Committee BCC

Peter Hughes,
President, Brentford
Chamber of Commerce

cc. Cllr Arbour GLA and, Cllr Dakers Brentford High St Steering Group