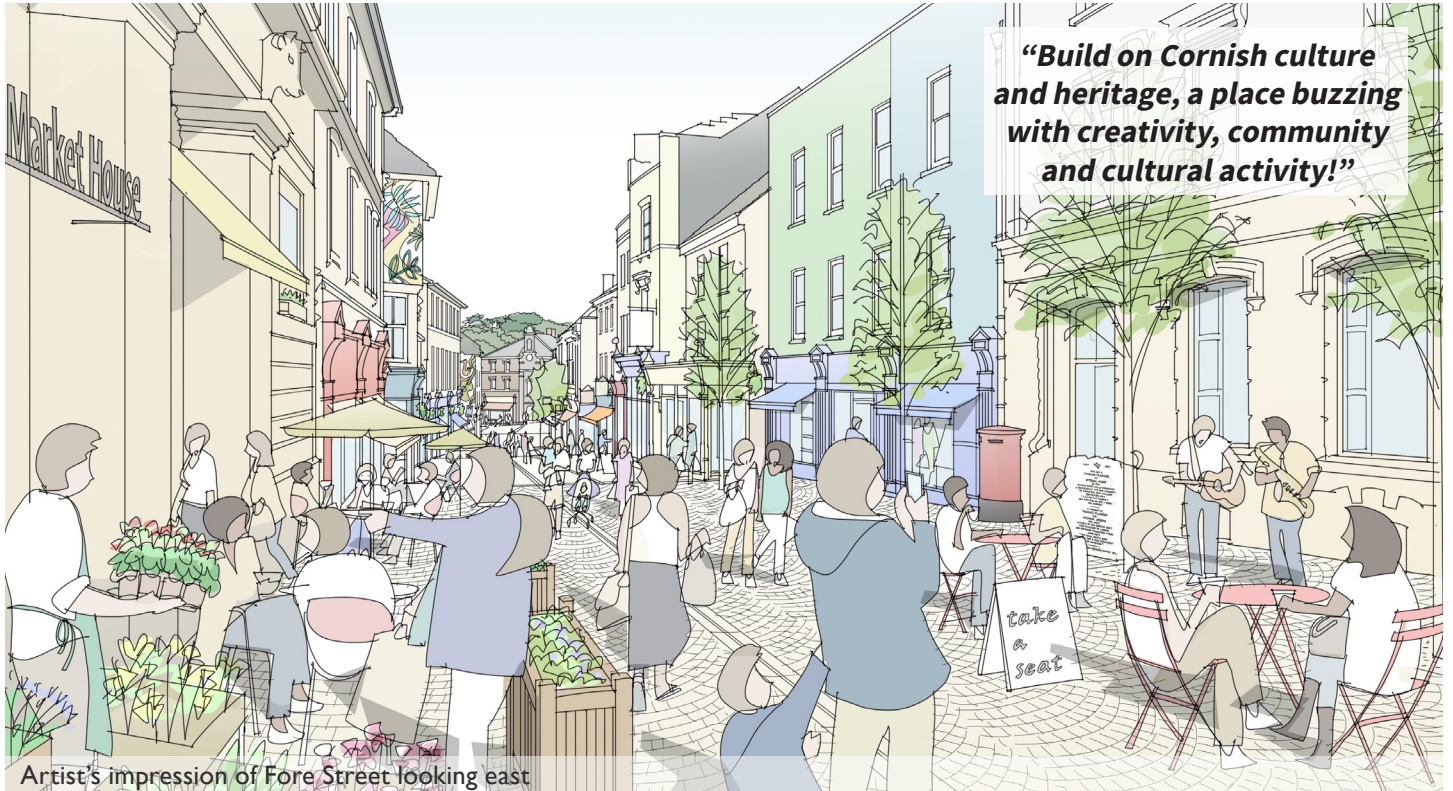


# A Vision for Bodmin Town Centre Charrette

## Report Back Broadsheet

### 22 March 2022



Make far more of Bodmin's unique Cornish cultural and built heritage; co-ordinate the array of visitor attractions to focus on Bodmin and encourage more people into the town centre all year round; reduce dominance of the car in Fore Street and generate a diverse and vibrant mix of shops, cafes and residential, community and business uses; bring more greenery into the town centre and improve the look of buildings and shopfronts; create an accessible network of streets and alleyways with a range of quality places and spaces to linger and enjoy through the day and into the evening, and; improve local education, skills training and job opportunities for the local community.

These are just some of the ideas to emerge from the Bodmin Town Centre Charrette held from Friday 18 to Tuesday 22 March 2022 to create a new Vision for Bodmin Town Centre.

The Charrette was an open invitation community planning and co-design event, held by Cornwall Council, with partners Bodmin Town Council, Bodmin Town Team and Bodmin Chamber of Commerce, and facilitated by architects JTP. Residents and local stakeholders shared their local knowledge and ideas through a series of workshops, walkabouts and hands-on planning groups.

After two days of public workshops, the JTP team drew up a Vision for the town centre, including an illustrative masterplan, which was presented back to the local community on Tuesday 22 March at Shire House Suite.

The Charrette work and illustrative Vision will be used to inform a Town Centre Action Plan and the Reimagining Fore Street work, funded by Cornwall Council's Town Centre Vitality funding and led by the Bodmin Town Team.

The Town Centre Action Plan and Reimagining Fore Street work will use the revenue funding to identify how the ambitions outlined from the Charrette can be delivered and identify 'meanwhile' uses to revitalise the town centre. The work will be considered by the Neighbourhood Plan Group, Bodmin Town Council and local Cornwall Councillors. Partners will then work together to develop business cases for individual elements of the scheme which will be used to support future bids for funding.

***"If we all have the same vision, it's a way to move forward!"***

#### Background

Previous work has identified growth and place priorities for Bodmin. This work was informed by earlier consultations and is outlined in the Cornwall Local Plan and the associated Site Allocations document. The Bodmin 2030 and Beyond Vision, which was launched in 2019, identifies the long-term ambitions for the town as *'an attractive, thriving town centre which has evolved into a community hub offering a variety of daytime and evening meeting places and experiences as well as retail opportunities.'*

# A Vision for Bodmin Town Centre Charrette

## Illustrative Masterplan

### Key

1. Berry Tower to Beacon - A north/south green link through the town.
2. Fore Street Moments - creation of spaces to pause along the street.
3. Fore Street Landscaping - a more attractive streetscape putting people first.
4. Greening Fore Street - opportunities for tree planting on the main street.
5. Art in The Alleys - enlivening the alleys with art and installations.
6. Defining the start of the Camel Trail - creating a cycle hub, with café, cycle hire and storage.
7. Linking the Camel Trail - reinforcing the route through landscaping and art.
8. Burgage Plots - Getting the community involved with growing and gardening.
9. Community Hub - Creating a focus for the local community with creative workspace and public realm.
10. Street Trees - Greening of the approaches to the town and the key thoroughfare.
11. Market Hall - An opening up of the historic structure for indoor markets and events.
12. Fore Street Links - connecting Fore Street with the Community Hub.
13. Eastern Gateway - announcing the town centre by further improving the setting of Church Square.
14. Activity Hub - promoting wellbeing and education in a new setting for dance, scientific exploration and creativity.
15. Landform amphitheatre - using the gradient of Priory Park to create an outdoor performance space.



# A Vision for Bodmin Town Centre Charrette

## Report Back Broadsheet

### 22 March 2022



Artist's impression of Market House on Fore Street



Artist's impression of Priory Park landform amphitheatre



Artist's impression of the community hub

# A Vision for Bodmin Town Centre Charrette Report Back Broadsheet: Key Themes

## 22 March 2022

The following key themes represent a summary of the views of the participants through the community planning process. All quotes are from participants in the process unless otherwise stated.

### **Celebrating Bodmin's unique Cornish heritage & culture**

Bodmin and its institutions have played a unique role in creating Cornwall's history and culture, and its 119 listed buildings are a visible link to an eminent past. Bodmin's heritage is a significant asset that should be better appreciated and promoted as the town moves forward and seizes new opportunities. Revitalisation of the town centre should combine protecting, enhancing and interpreting the town's rich heritage with 21st century living and technology.

*"We've got some fabulous buildings. If you look up, you can see the beauty, but we're not making the most of them."*

*"We need to plug in technology!"*

### **Focus on the Bodmin community**

A wide cross section of Bodmin's community participated in the Charrette, with all ages and backgrounds, including many young people. Existing community activities should be supported and there is a clear need for more provision and access to appropriate, affordable community spaces. Many Bodmin residents have to cope with the huge challenges of living on low incomes and there is a need for more investment in skills and training, youth work and social care. The revitalised town centre must provide welcoming and safe spaces for everyone. Employment and training opportunities will need to be a key component of the high street supplementing more traditional commercial zones on the edge of town.

*"KBSK need a big space that's permanent, the kids need continuity. There would be a hell of a lot of disappointed kids if this had to stop."*

### **Connecting attractions**

Bodmin has several significant visitor attractions including the Camel Trail, Bodmin Jail, St Petroc's Church, the Beacon, Lanhydrock, Bodmin Town Museum, Discovering42 - Science Museum, Bodmin & Wenford Railway, Bodmin Keep, Cardinham Woods and the Capitol Cinema.



Bodmin Town Centre Charrette, 18 to 22 March 2022

Participants felt these attractions are usually visited in isolation and not associated with Bodmin or connected into the town centre. There are opportunities for the attractions to be more linked with Bodmin to showcase its heritage, bring more footfall to benefit the local economy and make Bodmin town centre a destination. Providing a Camel Trail cycle hub/cafe at Dennison Road could be an early win.

*"Showcase what we are, not what everyone says we are!"*

*"Make Bodmin a destination!"*

### **Restore the network of streets and spaces**

When Dennison Road was built in the late 1950s the fine, urban grain of the north side of the town centre was taken away, exposing the backs of Fore Street and interrupting the natural flow of the town. New mixed-use development at Dennison Road car park will complete the frontage onto Dennison Road and act as the catalyst for the restoration of an attractive, fine grain network of streets and spaces throughout the town, incorporating Fore Street, to enable visitors to explore, discover and enjoy all that the town has to offer. Opportunities should be taken to reduce the dominance of cars in Fore Street, with car parking in the main on the periphery of the town centre.

*"High Streets aren't isolated things, it's all about connectivity – how to provide spin off benefits."*

# A Vision for Bodmin Town Centre Charrette Report Back Broadsheet: Key Themes cont.

## 22 March 2022

### Fore Street Renaissance

The town's principal shopping street, designed for use by people and horse and cart, is today dominated by cars and vans causing a poor pedestrian environment. There is strong support to invest in high quality street and shopfront improvements and create a pedestrian zone at agreed hours, whilst allowing for servicing at set times. Many of the fine historic buildings are neglected and provide opportunities for renovation and repurposing, including opportunities for living above the shop or mixed residential uses. Restoring the Market House would provide a focus for traditional markets and street food and provide additional public space for events.

*"If the shops are empty – do something! It doesn't help to look like a desolate place."*

### Burgage plots

The burgage plots are a unique and loved historic landscape asset in the heart of the town just above Fore Street. There is an opportunity to create a community project to restore and manage the area, providing community involvement and meeting spaces, skills training and food growing, all to preserve the area as an important green space for the town.

*"A community garden would pull people in, create a place to spend time in."*

### Greening the town centre

The town centre's valley setting provides wonderful views to the green landscape on the skyline surrounding the town. There are many highly valued public open spaces adjacent to the town centre, including Priory Park and the burgage plots north of Fore Street. However, the town centre has limited greenery and there are opportunities to redress this by introducing focused planting, opening the Leat under Dennison Road car park, and installing vertical greening and food growing areas. Many participants suggested providing more outdoor performance areas, including a grass amphitheatre on the slope by the war memorial in Priory Park.

*"Expose the Leat, see the water, hear the water, use it to generate electricity."*

### Look and feel

The town centre has lost its significance as a focal point for the town and the community. Uninspiring public realm, empty shop units and poorly maintained buildings do not entice people in to explore the town centre and spend money in the local economy. Participants want to reverse this spiral of decline and there was support for "early win" initiatives to brighten up the town centre, followed by drawing in public and private sector investment to put Bodmin on the map again as a 21st century Cornish market town.

*"If you get it right for the locals, it will be attractive for visitors as well."*

### Getting around

Bodmin lies in hilly terrain, and for many people from within the town and from the surrounding parishes cars are their first choice. However, Bodmin is a walkable town, for many the town centre is no more than 15 minutes' walk, and there are opportunities for promoting more active travel. Better walking and cycling provision, including electric bikes, can bring environmental and health benefits. Other suggestions included an electric hop on hop off bus service with a simple ticketing system. Bodmin town centre needs to become a focus of clean green travel accessible to all.

*"I don't see anything promoting how pleasant it is to walk round Bodmin from the town centre."*

*"Don't forget that Bodmin serves the outlying villages. You need to cater for people who live in a wide area."*

### Continuing community participation

Participants contributed their time and creativity at the Charrette and helped to shape the Vision for Bodmin Town Centre. Individual residents and members from different local groups appreciated the opportunity of working together and want this positive collaboration to continue. The renaissance process requires ongoing engagement with the residential and business community, including young people, in order to create a sense of genuine community participation, agency and civic pride to take forward the regeneration of Bodmin Town Centre.

*"You've got to have everyone 'buying in' to the area – you've got to get everyone on side to be able to make these changes."*