



Ledbury & District Civic Society

Registered Office:
Burgage Hall
Church Lane
Ledbury
Herefordshire
HR8 1DW

*Butcher Row House Museum
and Burgage Hall.*

Ledbury Places Group Completes Business Plan

The group leading a national pilot scheme in Ledbury – which has been made possible thanks to funding from the Social Investment Business (SIB) – has confirmed it has drawn up a business plan which can be submitted to various organisations, such as the Heritage Lottery and Architectural Heritage Fund, as an application for funding to take the project to the next stage.

The Ledbury Places project – www.ledburyplaces.org – is looking at ways that the long-term future of six heritage buildings in the town – the Market House, the Barrett Browning Institute, Burgage Hall, the Town Council Offices, Butchers Row House Museum and the Heritage Centre – can be safeguarded while also ensuring they are put to fuller use by the community moving forward.

The business plan – which is available in two different forms to the public – is the culmination of the feasibility study commissioned by the Ledbury Places group last year (having been initiated by the Ledbury & District Civic Society) to examine the potential for these six buildings to be jointly managed by a new charitable entity.

Over the past few months a series of studies have been conducted by experts in various fields – including architecture, surveying, tourism and retail – and the informed views of these experts have been used to underpin the business plan. In addition, the Ledbury Places group has also carefully considered the views of those people who have taken the time to give feedback on the project over the past few months.

The aims of the business plan include looking at new potential uses for the buildings if they were managed as a group; testing the viability of these uses both financially and in terms of community benefit; looking in detail at the condition of the buildings and the ongoing cost of their preservation; and also working out whether the income from new proposed uses would be sufficient to cover maintenance and other costs.

Acknowledging these aims, included in the business plan are recommendations that there is a strong case to be made for the joint management of these buildings; that the pooling of the income and expenditure would enable the essential maintenance and other costs to be covered; and that there are also clear benefits to the whole Ledbury community – and visitors to the town – in this collective approach. This approach will also link well with other key heritage assets in Ledbury such as the Master's House, St Katherine's Hall and St Michael's Church.

Speaking about the completion of the business plan, Civic Society Chairman Alex Clive, who is a member of the Ledbury Places group, said:

“The Ledbury Places group has worked very hard through the feasibility study to develop this business plan for the benefit of the whole community in Ledbury. The plan sees a number of proposals put forward but in such a way that we have tried to give ourselves as many options as possible to maintain flexibility while seeking funding.



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“At present our business plan does include the potential of securing funding to install a lift in the Market House and also the possibility of converting Number 1 Church Lane into a holiday let, while maintaining good structured public access to the Painted Room.

“However, I would like to reassure people that this doesn’t mean that any decisions have been made about these options and that we fully understand local concerns about possibilities such as these. Because of this we are determined to consult further with local people on all our plans.

“The funding available – as well as careful consideration of the historic fabric of each building – will determine which future uses are the most viable in the longer-term.

“As a community we cannot hide away from the fact that these buildings are under-used and that to change or increase the use of many of them accessibility has to be improved. This means for everyone, not just those of us to who can negotiate a small, tight or steep flight of stairs.

“As of today the business plan we have put forward is available to view in two different forms – a short executive summary giving an overview and the full business plan itself. These documents are now available to view online on the Ledbury Places website, while hard copies are also available in the town library for those people who don’t have internet access.

“What I would ask of local people is that they take the time to read at least one of these documents and then begin to form their own opinions about the plans we have put forward. This is the only chance our town will get to safeguard the future of these buildings in this way and therefore it is important people look at the full facts and get the whole picture, rather than jumping to conclusions by listening to hearsay and speculation.

“As I said earlier, public consultation about Ledbury Places has not ended and local people should still make the most of the opportunity to have their say. Furthermore, please feel free to contact us via the Ledbury Places website or via the Town Council if you’d like to offer any observations after reading the business plan.”

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Additional notes: The studies and reports conducted as part of the feasibility study are too lengthy to put online but are available for the public to view. Please contact the Ledbury Places group if you are interested in these documents.

As a reminder, the Ledbury Places group is made up of local people and a number of representatives from the organisations responsible for the six buildings involved. These organisations are Ledbury & District Civic Society (who initiated the project), Ledbury Town Council, Herefordshire Council, the Trustees of the Barrett Browning Institute (the current location of the Library) and the Ledbury Area Development Trust (LADT).