

Incredible Edible Mytholm Annual Report 2013

Incredible Edible Mytholm was set up as an unincorporated association and elected its first management committee in November 2012.

This Report outlines the main activities that IEM has undertaken over the past year.

1) Objecting to the Setbray/Belmont Homes Planning Application 12/01003/FUL - Proposed Supermarket and hotel on the Mytholm Works site.

1.1 IEM objected to the Planning Application at the December 2012 meeting of the Calderdale MBC Planning Committee. The Planning Committee deferred the decision (against the advice of the Planning Officer, who recommended they refuse planning permission), pending the developer's submission of a supermarket retail impact statement.

1.2 In January IEM did its own retail impact survey <http://www.energyroyd.org.uk/archives/6637> , prepared together with Coops UK development officer Chris Beebe. The survey was delivered to 77 Hebden Bridge town centre retailers. It asked for their assessment for the impact on their businesses, and their local suppliers' businesses, of both the proposed supermarket and hotel, and of IEM's proposal for an eco-attraction and eco-hotel on the Mytholm Works site.

1.3 The results <http://www.energyroyd.org.uk/archives/7664> showed that most town centre retailers support IEM's proposed development of the site and think that it would have a positive impact on their businesses; most also think that a supermarket on the Mytholm Works site would damage their businesses – largely because it would reduce footfall in the town centre. They think that this adverse impact would cause independent businesses to close, and have a bad knock on effect on their local suppliers. They thought a hotel on the site would be good for their retail businesses.

1.4 In March IEM met the developers' representative Dennis Deakin, to discuss their plans to buy the site and create the eco attraction and eco hotel. DD told IEM the site owners were willing to sell the site to IEM, but only once they had planning permission for the supermarket and hotel, which would considerably increase the sale value of the site.

1.5 Two Calder Ward Councillors, Dave Young and Nader Fekri, committed to objecting to the supermarket and hotel planning application. Cllr Young will object in person at the Planning Committee.

1.6 In August, the supermarket developer published their retail impact statement. This showed that the planning application was purely speculative - no supermarket or hotel is associated with the planning application or interested in locating to the site. IEM published two detailed, critical analyses of the supermarket retail impact statement, urging people to object to it. <http://www.energyroyd.org.uk/archives/9109> , <http://www.energyroyd.org.uk/archives/9123>

1.7 Last week, IEM received notice that the Planning Committee will consider the supermarket retail impact statement on 3rd Dec. If they approve it, they will approve the Planning Application. Today the Secretary contacted the Planning Committee clerk to say

IEM wants to speak at the Planning Committee meeting, in order to object to the retail impact statement. IEM has also created a petition which it will send to Planning Committee members before the meeting. We need to coordinate with Cllr Young and the Coop, who also want to object. IEM wonder where Cllr Battye stands, since last time she spoke in favour of the application.

2. Development of plans for IEM eco attraction and eco hotel on the site.

This idea emerged before IEM was set up. As a result, people set up IEM in order to make the idea happen.

The first aim was to try and get the site declared a community asset, since this would put a pause on any sale process and give IEM time to raise funding to buy the site if the developers put it up for sale.

The idea from the start was to using the site to build and run a working permaculture market garden, retail and wholesale market for locally produced food combined with a managed workspace for food processing businesses and a sustainable food learning centre; together these would form an eco attraction, which an eco hotel would be integral to.

IEM met the Calderdale Planning Officer responsible for the Mytholm Works site, to find out if our proposals were in line with the employment designation for the site. He told us that they were ok in principle, and they are also supported the important NPPF para 17 objective of helping the transition to a low carbon economy.

The Council turned down IEM's application to register the site as a community asset, so we changed the IEM constitution accordingly at a Special General Meeting and went ahead with a public consultation on our proposals, at the end of March.

Hebden Royd Town Council awarded us a grant to cover the costs of the public information and consultation Field Day.

The results of the consultation were very positive. So we decided to write a business plan, to see if our ideas are commercially viable.

The Plunkett Foundation awarded us 3 days of social enterprise consultant Adrian Ashton's time, in order to help us write an outline business plan for the eco- attraction and eco-hotel.

In the process of working out the business plan, some aspects of the original idea changed- specifically, we realised there is not currently enough locally- grown and produced food to support a retail/wholesale market and workspace for food-processing businesses. So we replaced that idea with a managed workspace for innovative, closed-loop manufacturing businesses. In response to the need to find ways of mitigating flood risk in the UCV, and because of the site's location on a flood plain, we also decided to include rain gardens as a key part of the site.

CFFC awarded us a grant to cover the costs of employing a surveyor to value the Mytholm Works site. Without planning permission for a supermarket and hotel, the site has been valued at £600k. The surveyor has said they will revalue the site at no extra charge to us if Calderdale Council approves planning permission for the supermarket and hotel.

We recently completed a first draft of the outline business plan, which we put to the vote at the last Members' Meeting. It received unanimous support.

That September Members' Meeting also supported the mgt cttee decision to incorporate IEM as a Community Benefit Society and Development Trust.

We are currently fact checking all the Outline Business Plan figures and the assumptions they are based on. This is to show that the plans are commercially viable. This is a lot of work.

Following the September Members Meeting, Sophie Michaelena of Locality came to meet the IEM secretary and visit the site and has given IEM support and useful information.

In October/November we carried out online and face to face market research to find out if people would visit the eco attraction and which elements they were most interested in visiting. 39 people responded: 29 HB residents, 9 visitors, and 1 person who intends to visit HB. The results were positive and will be published on the blog shortly.

We have written the first draft of a job description and person spec for a Business and Development Manager, and have received useful comments from an adviser employed by North Bank Forum, and from Tony & Gay Holdich. These comments will help us improve the next draft.

3. External communications

We have set up an IEM blog on the UCV Plain Speaker website. The blog is frequently updated with new posts.

Links to key posts are emailed to all IEM members and supporters - currently this list has about 80 people on it.

All IEM Blog posts are automatically tweeted and also shared to the IEM Facebook page, which has 428 friends.

IEM is part of Incredible Edible Network and occasionally posts info on their website.

IEM has sent various press releases to HB Times, that HB Times has published.

4. Orchard planting

Together with Incredible Farm, we helped the gardening club at St James Primary School to plant 16 apple trees along the border of their recreation field and the Mytholm Works site.

5. Meanwhile projects

We have a number of meanwhile projects in preparation and are currently seeking a meeting with both the Planning Officer, to find out if there are any planning implications, and with the site owners' rep, in order to ask for a Meanwhile Lease on the site, so we can use it as soon as we employ the Business and Development Manager to fundraise to buy the site.

5. Governance

The management committee has agreed role/job descriptions for Chair, Secretary & Treasurer, and policies on external communications and conflict of interest.

We have set up a Wiggio account where all IEM documents and Business Planning documents are stored.

We have had quarterly members' meetings as required by the Constitution. The management committee has met 14 times.

6. Membership of HB Partnership

IEM is a member of HB Partnership. It submitted what the Partnership Report called a "strongly argued" comment on the draft 2020 action plan, calling for a clearer focus on making the transition to a low carbon economy.

7. Thanks are due

7.1 IEM thanks Hebden Royd Town Council and CFFC for grants and the Plunkett Foundation for Business Planning consultancy support. Also members and supporters for donations of £20.

7.2 Thanks also to individuals who have given us extremely useful advice and information out of the goodness of their hearts:

Pam Warhurst
Peter Hirst, Chair of HBCA
Andrew Bibby
Tony & Gay Holdich
Amy Leader
Stephen Curry
Charlie Clutterbuck
Barbara Jones
Tod Food Angels
Rev Howard Pask
Headteacher of St James Primary School
Blackbark for loan of gazebo.

7.3 Thanks to the Calderdale MBC tourism officers who have given us useful information to help us fact check the eco hotel figures in the outline business plan

7.4 Thanks to everyone who's attended IEM events, both members of the public and several HB and Calderdale Councillors.

7.5 Thanks to HB Town Hall for accommodating us at short notice for the Field Day.

