

Hebden Bridge Community Association



MEDIA RELEASE

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TOWN HALL'S NEW CREATIVE QUARTER ATTRACTS MORE INTEREST

Forty-five people crowded into Hebden Bridge Town Hall last Thursday (20th) to hear at first hand the details of Hebden Bridge Creative Quarter, the new enterprise space being created as part of the overall development of the Town Hall. Following the meeting, another three local businesses have come forward to provisionally reserve space in the new development.

They join the North of Watford Actors' Agency, which a week ago became the first business to announce that it would definitely be taking space in the building. Lisa Allen, North of Watford's marketing manager, explained to the meeting on Thursday that her organisation was attracted both by the facilities on offer and by the opportunity to help build a collaborative community of small business ventures, engaged in complementary areas of work.

North of Watford Actors' Agency is one of the longest established cooperative agencies in the country, established in 1984 by a group of actors based in the north of England who wanted to work together to manage and develop their careers. Since then the agency has provided actors for major roles in both live theatre and in television, and North of Watford and its members have a high

reputation in the industry. Lisa Allen says: “We are so excited about our future move to the Town Hall. We would like to play a more active role within the community and this move puts us at the heart of it. Hebden Bridge will always be our home. This move will secure North of Watford’s role for the next 25 years“

Currently twenty-five actors are members of the cooperative. The decision to move from their existing office accommodation was taken at the cooperative’s biannual meeting, held earlier this month, and reflects the agency’s recent growth and development.

“We’re delighted to have North of Watford committing to the new Town Hall development in this way. Their members share our vision both for the overall plans for the Town Hall and specifically for the new Creative Quarter enterprise space. They’re a successful organisation and, we’re sure, will bring a lot of vibrancy and creativity to the building,” says Peter Hirst, chair of Hebden Bridge Community Association, which is overseeing the development.

Thursday’s meeting brought together a wide range of people engaged in creative and digital businesses. Trustees of Hebden Bridge Community Association gave details of the development, which will provide flexible space on flexible terms for between one and four person businesses. They also explained how they hoped to build a strong collaborative ethos between the different businesses based there. The Association’s approach to sustainability, recycling and energy saving was also outlined. “We’re inviting small businesses to participate in the project and help build the opportunities for networking, mutual support and inter-trading which the Creative Quarter potentially offers,” Peter Hirst adds.

The detailed design for the extension to Hebden Bridge Town Hall was approved last October by Calderdale’s planners and building work is anticipated to begin at the start of April. Building work is expected to last about a year. Once completed, the building will offer a mix of both community and enterprise

facilities, including a new hall as well as rehearsal facilities for the local light opera and youth theatre societies. North of Watford are the first business to reserve an enterprise unit, and have booked a second-floor room overlooking the river Hebden.

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