



Birmingham City Council

**Notes of meeting**  
1<sup>st</sup> China Area Focused Association meeting  
19<sup>th</sup> December 2013

**Attendees;**

1. Andrew Dunbar, BCC
2. Heather Law, BCC
3. Mike Loftus, News from the Future
4. Peter Clack, UoB
5. James Ng, JN Legal
6. Gordon Harris, Wragge & Co
7. Claire Farrell, EC Arts
8. Rhian Dobbs, Newman University
9. James Woodcock, International Synergies
10. Shuo Shi Harrison, BMET
11. John Rider, IOD and England China Business Forum
12. Bill Glew, Aston University
13. Spencer Terry, West Midlands Economic Forum

**Item 1. Apologies**

1. Paul Mountan SGH Martineau
2. Clive Benford, Midlands 48 Group
3. Paul Forrest, West Midlands Economic Forum
4. Anjum Cave, Bournville College
5. Colin Gale, Birmingham City University
6. Jon Bloomfield, Innovation Birmingham
7. David Houghton, RBS
8. Louise Rowland, JLR
9. Justin Benson, KPMG
10. Peter Laybourn, International-Synergies
11. Mark Dyer, Deloitte
12. Steven Maddock, CBSO
13. Kim Vaughan, Birmingham Metropolitan College
14. Christopher Barron, Birmingham Royal Ballet
15. Jim Simpson, Big Bear Music
16. John Morris, Birmingham Airport

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**Item 2. Governance and general organisational issues**

Issues discussed; Chair, funding, secretariat, presentations, sub groups

It was agreed that Gordon Harris would act as Chair for foreseeable future but that this could be reviewed sometime in the future [at least 6 months]. GH said he thought this was an excellent development and there was a time of great opportunity for Bham developing with regard to China.

There is no funding provided by BCC and the group will need to raise its own funds.



Though there is no obligation it was discussed that perhaps organisations who found membership of the board useful might consider some small donations in the future.

BCC will act as secretariat.

The issue of sub groups was discussed but it was decided to not to develop that idea at this time.

### **Item 3. Round up of current activity**

AD gave a presentation on some of the current activity with regard to China and the general direction of travel of China/Bham relations.

Noted that MB had just signed a Visit Britain Charter in Shanghai to attract more Chinese tourists and they were working hard to promote Bham as a destination.

JR said we needed to attract more PR and that tours such as the Birmingham Royal Ballet tour were excellent ways to do this, they added to the profile of Birmingham.

AD said we need to coordinate high level visits, such as a possible incoming visit by a Vice Mayor of Nanjing.

It was noted that we need to make more of the UK FCO resources in country with respect to Nanjing in particular. AD said it had been mooted that a Bham team could have attended the Nanjing Youth Olympics but for funding issues.

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CF outlined her two public art projects that involved a wide range stakeholders in the UK and China. It was agreed to coordinate mutually beneficial activities around the Lighting Project launch in October 2014. CF will hopefully be commissioning GZ artist for the 48 Sheet project and plans were being developed for GZ to be part of the participating cities.

BG asked what activity could we establish that promoted the key objectives of China engagement such as FDI, Investment, Exports etc. BG said that China was a tough market to crack and we needed to develop a more sophisticated plan together. It was noted that a long term view was needed with regard to China, 5/10 years in some cases.

AD said that part of the point and purpose of the 'board' was to sharing info and events for everyone's mutual benefit.

HL outlined the emerging Portal website and that this could form part of information sharing and will act as a focal point for all parties.

JW said that sharing of info and contacts would be very useful and that in the past he has had delegations in from China where he has felt more could have been done with them to the benefit of Birmingham.

JR said that sport should play a role in any future Bham/China engagement as this was a powerful but under-utilised tool.

JN reminded the meeting that the All England Badminton Championships were a very big draw for the Chinese and these were to be held in Birmingham next year.



**Item 4. Priorities for 2014 onwards**

It was discussed that it would be beneficial for us to lock down dates for a ‘Team Birmingham’ delegation for next year. Though there would be completion on the locations to be visited Guangzhou was a sensible first choice. No dates agreed but July, though hot in Guangzhou, could coincide with other Birmingham related activity in GZ.

**Item 5. Future meeting dates and calendar for 2014**

To be suggested over email by AD.

**Actions for follow up – to be coordinated by AD**

Action	Notes
BHX to present to the Board next time?	AD to approach BHX when dates have been set
Birmingham Made Me Presentation?	JR to look in to Bham Made Me presenting to the board in 2014 with specific reference to ay China related content
Dates of 2014 UoB/GZ steering group meeting?	PC to advise
MB developing a brochure for China?	AD to find out what is being planned
‘Team Bham’ visit to China in July 2014.	More work needed on dates and schedule is dependent on other factors. Ongoing.
All England Badminton Championships are being held 4-9th March.	AD to approach NIA and invite Chinese Ambassador. Other board members to note the dates are 4-9 <sup>th</sup> March 2014
Need for a china focused ‘elevator’ pitch that can be used by all Bham parties when in China and for inclusion in presentations.	AD to coordinate with senior BCC officials, the leader and Neil Rami of Marketing Birmingham.