

2. Business Engagement

I recommend we offer regular sessions for local businesses to meet/network and share business to business opportunities. It was hoped to share RTP networking sessions but recently it hasn't been possible for the networking forums to go ahead.

3. Working with Northamptonshire Business Crime Partnership Ltd

Previous conversations have indicated there could be some funding available from East Northants Council towards a Business Crime Partnership scheme in Rushden.

*The Northamptonshire Business Crime Partnership (NBCP) team have offered membership for the High Street, Mrs B's to the Original Factory Shop, including Wilko's. (Iceland are already members) at a reduced rate of **£3,000 per annum** (this would normally be in the region of £5,500). I am corresponding with Mike Greenway (Community Partnership Manager) to see how we can progress this.*

Links with Rushden Lakes

4. Heritage Family Fun Day, Sunday 16th September at Rushden Lakes

The Heritage Family Fun Day on Sunday 16th September was organised on behalf of Rushden and Higham Ferrers Town Councils. The Fun Day was supported by Rushden Lakes and additional funding through the Nene Valley Festival, it brought together a family day out together with an opportunity for new visitors to learn about the heritage and history of nearby Rushden and Higham Ferrers.

***Over 35** local businesses and community groups took up this opportunity and attended on the day, feedback has been extremely positive from all parties. The **"Shop Local in Rushden and Higham Ferrers"** booklet containing over 48 redeemable discount vouchers was produced in September, over 1500 booklets were given out to visitors at the heritage day event. Feedback regarding the offer booklet is currently being collated.*

*The Management team at Rushden Lakes have confirmed **12,871 people or the equivalent of 6,435 cars** visited on the day, statistics also show **an increase of 8% more vehicles visiting the site compared to the previous Sunday.***

The aim of the Heritage Family Fun Day was to raise awareness of what is available in the nearby towns of Rushden and Higham Ferrers and to offer visitors at Rushden Lakes the chance to learn more about the local heritage. By handing out promotional material, the "Shop Local" booklet and by talking to visitors about the area it is hoped more people can be encouraged to come and visit.

Please see publicity links below and some of the many comments received from the local participants.

www.northantstelegraph.co.uk/news/heritage-fun-day-celebrates-what-higham-ferrers-and-rushden-have-to-offer-1-8657630

<https://nenevalleynews.co.uk/e-version/> 20th October issue page 14

- **"Thanks so much for the opportunity. Sunday was a huge success for the Sandwich Shop. I am very interested in future events". Amy's Pancakes – The Sandwich Shop Rushden***
- **"Was an excellent day, thank you Julie for all your hard work in organising" Lisa - Cupalicious Higham Ferrers. Lisa reported she has received new customers plus orders from further afield. Lisa has a regular stall at the Higham Ferrers Farmers Market and***

commented the September Farmers Market was busier than usual due to promotional fliers being handed out at the heritage day event.

- *“Sold out of cakes! Good day, spoke to lots of people, vouchers from the booklet are starting to come in” Elaine Mrs B’s Rushden*
- *“thanks Julie, I thought it was great. Lots of the shoppers stopped for a chat, and we managed to pick up some new members, so a worthwhile day for HiFARS” thanks Rachel Higham Ferrers Archaeology and Research Society*
- *“Firstly, may I say how much the band enjoyed playing at the Heritage Day in September. We have had many comments from people saying how much they enjoyed the day and the music. The band definitely enjoys playing for our local community.*
- *“Awe (Rushden Town Band) weren’t selling anything but we thoroughly enjoyed ourselves and would like to do it again sometime”. Regards Hilary Hill Treasurer Rushden Town Band*
- *“We are very pleased with the Shop Local booklet, we have handed out over 50 goody bags to customers” Will Osbornes Toy Shop, Rushden*

Babies Galore, Rushden



Rushden Town Council Stall



Mrs B, Rushden



Colemans Craft Warehouse, Rushden

5. Splash & Dash Challenge Event at Rushden Lakes

The Splash and Dash event took place at Rushden Lakes on Sunday 30th September and saw local teams of 6 racing in KataKanu’s across the lakes. The event was organised by Rushden based Spurgeons Children’s Charity, in partnership with Rushden Lakes and Canoe2. Some local businesses supported the charity event and took up an opportunity to have a business stall for the day.

The winners of the KataKanu Challenge were Anytime Fitness from Rushden.

6.Future Events – YourTown NN10 Get Together

YourTown NN10 Get Together is a Pilot project for a community based initiative for Rushden and Higham Ferrers. The goal of the project is to be a catalyst for collaborative working between local authorities and the business and voluntary communities around a town centre focussed event. The project has been supported financially by Rushden Lakes.

The “Get Together” is a community focussed event to re-connect people with a sense of place – High Streets, town and local charities. The event is focussed around healthy living – a 5k run ideally starting and finishing in the town centre. This is limited to 100 people who donate £5/£10/£50 to a nominated local charity. At the least this will be £500.

The event lasts just under an hour plus set up/clear down. It is timed to be early on a Sunday 9am so it won't cause too much disruption as well as giving runners the maximum benefit.

*The first run is provisionally planned for **Sunday 24th March 2019** with a view to holding another one 3 months later possibly as part of Celebrate Rushden week in June.*

We have set up a YourTown NN10 Core Group (Rushden and Higham Town Councils, Rushden Lakes, East Northants Council and YourTown) and are having regular meetings – anyone wishing to attend a meeting please let me know.

6. Christmas Events/Activities

I am continuing to work with Rushden Lakes Management team on Christmas events/ideas that allow opportunities for a variety of local business to participate (supply of local choirs, bands, mince pie makers, hairdressers etc).

I have also been asked to provide a monthly update to the Management team.

7. Raising Aspirations Programme – Ferrers School

On Tuesday 17th July I attended a Business Partners Meeting as part of the Raising Aspiration Programme at Ferrers School – I am looking at ways in which we can link students with local business opportunities. I have been invited to the Schools first Business Breakfast Meeting on November 26th.

232/19 HIGH STREET IMPROVEMENTS/RUSHDEN BUSINESSES

Members discussed the feasibility and effectiveness of having two new working parties to consider High Street improvements and engagement with Rushden businesses. With the impending unitary arrangements members felt it would be sensible to establish these working parties as future interest and input from the new unitary authority may be minimal for some time. Therefore it was
RESOLVED

To form two new working parties, a High Street working party, which focus on High Street engagement, improvements and funding opportunities and a Rushden Business working party which will concentrate on engagement with all businesses within the town and capitalise on the formation of the Rushden Lakes development.

The Town Clerk and Town Manager will produce some Terms of Reference for these working parties and bring them back to this committee. It was also agreed the High Street working party would consist of all members of Rushden Town Council and other co-opted stakeholders.

233/19 EXTERNAL AUDIT

Members had been previously circulated with the External Audit report for 2017/018. There were no qualifications on the audit report, therefore Rushden Town Council had met all audit requirements and no improvements or amendments were required. However, Councillors Wright and Underwood were concerned about the term 'Limited Assurance'. Members therefore

RESOLVED

To accept the External Audit report but requested clarification of the term 'Limited Assurance'

Please see circulated clarification below:-

At the request of Councillors the Town Clerk circulated the following statement to clarify matters raised by this item:-

Please find below the definition of ' Limited Assurance', as requested by Councillor Wright

The objective of a limited assurance engagement is a reduction in assurance engagement risk to a level that is acceptable in the circumstances of the engagement, but where that risk is greater than for a reasonable assurance engagement, as the basis for a negative form of expression of the practitioner's conclusion.

The other form of audit used by accountants is 'Reasonable Assurance' and the definition of this is below

Reasonable assurance engagement means an assurance engagement where the assurance practitioner's objective is a reduction in assurance engagement risk to an acceptably low level in the circumstances of the assurance engagement as the basis for a positive form of expression of the assurance practitioner's conclusion.

The reference to Limited Assurance within our External Audit Report refers to the method of audit, not an assurance that the Council's financial position and reporting framework is limited.

Basically a Limited Assurance engagement will result in a negative response and a Reasonable Assurance will result in a positive response. As our Audit was undertaken by Limited Assurance the response as follows was negative

On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance Statement and Accountability Return, in our opinion the information in Section 1 ad 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practice and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority - None

This statement indicates our audit was satisfactory and no issues arising were reported to us.

With regard to Councillor Underwood's comments about an audit report advising of our competence, this is not customary within an External Audit. We would only receive a list of issues arising, if we were not fulfilling our reporting and financial framework obligations. However, we do undertake quarterly internal audits and our competence is assessed within these.

234/19 WORKS IN PROGRESS/PROJECTS

Location	Job Description	Quotes	Committee Approval if applicable	Contractor	Commence/ Finish Dates
Rushden Hall	Interior painting	n/a	n/a	In house	Ongoing
Rushden Hall	Perimeter wall adjacent to track			PAD Builders	Completed
Hall Park	Nature Trail		yes	In house	Autumn bulb planting 2018.
Spencer Park	Tennis Courts Improvements			TBC	
Spencer Park	MUGA Improvements Some funding to come from Grensons Site Section 106			TBC	
Rose Avenue	Climbing Frame Funding from Station Road Site Section 106 monies				Completed
Fosse Green	New Play Equipment Section 106 monies – Grensons Site section 106				Spring 2019
Rushden Hall	Glass Doors	Met with Lloyd – Architect to draw up design			On hold
Spencer Park/Washbrook Road entrance and pollarding	Tree works				Completed
Memorial Gardens	Refurb post/new seats/new litter bins				Completed
Trafford Park	New play equipment Section 106 monies – Station Road Site				Spring 2019
Hall Park	Public Toilets				

St James Park	New Swings				Completed
Hall Park	Refurb Benches and extension of bases for disabled				November 2018
Birkdale Drive	Fence around play area			J W Clark	Completed
Dog Area	Fence along Wymington Road side of area			TBC	November 2018
Memorial Gardens	CCTV			Crimesecure	November 2018
Spencer Park	CCTV			Crimesecure	December 2018
Skidders Hill Bus stop	Benches				Completed
War Memorial	Bernard Vann Stone and plinth				Completed
Rushden Hall	Structural report disabled entrance/bar room				Completed
War Memorial	Interpretation Board				Completed
Cemetery	Memorial tributes review				November 2018
Rushden Hall	Disabled Entrance works				December 2018
Skidders Hill and Rectory Road	Bus Shelter Refurbishment				January 2018

235/19 GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

The Town Clerk reported that the Grounds Maintenance tendering process is on track in terms of timescales and is progressing at a satisfactory pace.

Chairman