

**A one minute silence was held at the beginning of the meeting as a mark of respect for Councillor Ron Pinnock.**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY 24<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2020 VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE CALL, COMMENCING AT 7.30PM**

Present: Councillor: Sarah Peacock – Chairman

Councillors: Robin Underwood Richard Lewis  
Philip Humphrey Barbara Jenney  
Gill Mercer Andy Mercer  
David Jenney Adrian House  
David Coleman Colin Wright.  
Janet Pinnock Steven North  
Melanie Coleman [Ex officio]

Town Clerk: Vivienne Prodger

**228/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr Colin Wright declared an 'other interest' in respect of agenda item 5, application for a shop front grant.

**229/21 APOLOGIES**

There were no apologies for absence.

**230/21 MINUTES**

The minutes of the Policy & Resources Committee meeting of 13<sup>th</sup> October 2020 had been previously circulated to members and it was

**RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee meeting held on the 13<sup>th</sup> October 2020 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

**231/21 APPROVAL OF PAYMENTS**

Members had been circulated with details of payments made since 24<sup>th</sup> September 2020 amounting to £139,909.87

**RESOLVED**

That payments amounting to £139,909.87 be approved (as attached to these minutes).

**232/21 SHOP FRONT GRANT**

Members considered the following Shop Front Grant application:

- a) Tibbenham Brown t/a Jonathan Brown

## **RESOLVED**

Tibbenham Brown t/a Jonathan Brown was awarded a shop front grant of £750.00

### **233/21 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE**

Members scrutinized the Income and Expenditure Report April –October 2020 and it was

## **RESOLVED**

That the Income and Expenditure report for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 –31<sup>st</sup> October 2020 be accepted.

### **234/21 ANNUAL EXTERNAL AUDIT 31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2020**

Members had been previously circulated with the External Audit report for 2019/2020

## **RESOLVED**

To recommend to Full Council to accept the report.

### **235/21 COVID UPDATE**

The Town Clerk reported that the Dedication at the Memorial Gardens on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2020 had resulted in 5 members of staff having to self-isolate as they came into contact with someone with Covid 19. Therefore, as a result of this a timetable has now been implemented for two teams of staff to work on different weekly rotas to try and ensure continuity, albeit at a reduced level.

### **236/21 EVENTS/CELEBRATE RUSHDEN 2021**

Members discussed events for 2021 and all agreed that the current programme of events should continue subject to Covid restrictions. The acts already booked had been carried over from 2020 and hopefully will be able to go ahead in 2021.

Members hoped that an event will be able to take place to celebrate Rushden Town Council's 21<sup>st</sup> birthday.

Cllr Sarah Peacock suggested 21 trees are planted to represent the 21 Councillors that serve Rushden. The Town Clerk also suggested that a replacement beech tree is to be planted in preparation for the demise of the large beech tree in Hall Park, and she added this new tree would be a fitting memorial to Councillor Ron Pinnock.

## **RESOLVED**

To continue with all planned events for 2021 and to consider an additional 21<sup>st</sup> Birthday event. Proposed tree planting to be undertaken in the spring.

### **237/21 LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM**

There was nothing to report on this matter at this time.

## **238/21 TOWN MANAGER REPORT**

### **High Street Working Party**

Please see minutes from the last meeting held on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2020.

### **Rushden Business Working Party**

Please see the minutes from the last meeting held on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> October 2020.

**Recommendation** - change the name of working party to Rushden Business & Economic Development Working Party.

### **Working with Rushden Lakes – Community Funding**

**“Rediscover Rushden” Campaign** – allocation of funding approx. £2,200

Working with Rushden Lakes to adapt the annual themed event ‘Heritage Family Fun Day’ into a digital concept/activity. Work with a local videographer/content creator to provide video footage of local businesses/historical sites within Rushden. Run a week of digital activity including snap shot interviews with local business owners and video content of the stores themselves including. Filming to be arranging following the reopening of the shops and when the weather improves (Spring 2021).

**Christmas Project 2020** – allocation of funding £300

Working with local businesses to offer a Christmas hamper made up of goods bought from local shops to be given away as part of a family competition, people guess the total cost of the family hamper and the closest guess wins the hamper – "Shop local, spend local"

## **239/21 HIGH STREET WORKING PARTY**

The minutes of the High Street Working Party meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2020, were reported by Cllr Richard Lewis as follows:-

### **1. Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Marian Holloman declared an interest in the high street.

### **2. Appointment of Vice Chair**

**Resolved**

It was resolved to elect Cllr. Barbara Jenney as Vice Chair on the working party.

### **3. Apologies for absence** were received from Cllrs. Gill Mercer, Steven North and Janet Pinnock

### **4. Minutes of the last meeting**

Minutes of the previous meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> August were signed off as a true record.

### **5. Matters Arising**

- a. Consider any quick fixes for the High Street – JT and ML had submitted ideas to the WP prior to the meeting - **All to submit ideas to JT**
- b. Consider working with a consultant to fully assess the overall situation and to advise on possible schemes – **ongoing (VP)**
- c. produce a map of the area covered by the Working Party showing flats, shops, amenities etc (this could be used as evidence for any Neighbourhood plan changes) - **in hand (JT)**

**5.4.** JT and VP attended The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Local Community Regeneration – Transforming Town Centres and Communities Event on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> October – **JT to share notes**

5.5. Investigate and report back the process to refresh the Neighbourhood Plan – **in hand (VP)**

## 6. **Presentation and Ideas from Greg MacDonald**

### **Step 1 -Vision**

- create a clear vision for Rushden – Rushden needs a story
- RTC must agree the aims and objectives for the town and then decide the steps that need to happen in order to achieve the towns objectives.
- a key document is a 4-page plan to focus all the ideas in one place.

### **Step 2 – Strategy**

- what steps need to happen to enable the Rushden vision to be achieved, draw up a plan of where to start?
- Eaton Walk is a good starting point
- the high street is too long
- land from Iceland, Wilco area could become a feature/focus of the high street.
- look at the neighbourhood plan and work from there.
- Compulsory purchase should be considered
- RTC should create a strategy around car parking to ensure the parking offer is right for the town, the gateway into Rushden appears to be a cluster of car parks owned by ENC – is there an opportunity to bring all the surface car parks together by opening a new multi-storey car park, in doing so land is released for much needed development.

### **Step 3 – Investment Plan**

- preparing an investment plan will enable RTC to be ready for conversations with other strategic partners i.e. North Northants Council.

Considerations include:

- **A Garden Theme** – using a theme to develop the centre of Rushden, green walls, green roofs, introducing bees in the high street etc.
- Attract people into the town by mixing the current architecture with sculptures and garden features.
- The journey through the High Street needs to be exciting with clever use of public realm, key points and milestones along the route.
- **Types of businesses** - are important to the high street offer
- make the most of opportunities to attract new businesses in and allow more support for independent shops.
- Understand the “pound” in the area and how we can encourage the “pound” to come into town.
- **Marketing and Branding** are key
- the overall strategy needs a brand included in the 4-page document which will set the tone of the overall project.

### **Other ideas**

- Street Art and theatre
- Utilise the alleyways – have a theme for each street with use of street theatre, encourage people to move around the town
- Encourage more living over the shops
- Lighting up the architecture above the shops – Look up campaign

7. **Brain Storming** – a full discussion around the opportunities and suggestions made by GM took place at the meeting – ideas and suggestions will form the basis of the proposed 4-page plan.

## 8. Update on Action Points

All action points from the meeting held on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> August are complete unless they are listed under item 5 - Matters Arising

## 9. Action Points

The following Actions were agreed:

- a. Circulate the notes from The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Local Community Regeneration Transforming Town Centres and Communities Event on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> October **JT**
- b. Consider quick fixes for the high street, send ideas/thoughts to JT - ideas will be collated and discussed at the next meeting. **All**
- c. Reinstate the weekly circulation of commercial property and land for sale in Rushden. **NG**
- d. Look at Supplementary planning documents, investigate compulsory purchase Ideas. **VP**
- e. Draw up a draft 4-page plan as per the advice given by GM **RL, SP, VP, JT**

### On Going Actions

- 9.6. Consider working with a consultant to fully assess the overall situation and to advise on possible schemes. **ALL**
- 9.7. Produce up a map of the area covered by the Working Party showing flats, shops amenities etc. (this could be used as evidence for any Neighbourhood plan changes) **RL/JT/ML**
- 9.8. Produce a photographic assessment of the high street identifying areas where paving slabs have been removed and replaced with tarmac and other negative features. **JT**
- 9.9 Investigate and report back the process to refresh the Neighbourhood Plan **VP**

## **240/21 BUSINESS WORKING PARTY**

The minutes of the High Street Working Party meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2020, were reported by Cllr Phillip Humphrey as follows:-

### 1. Declaration of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

### 2. Apologies

Cllrs. Robin Underwood and Andy Mercer and Michelle Lewis - Communications and Economic Development Officer

### 3. Minutes of the last meeting

Minutes of the previous meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> August were signed off as a true record.

### 4. Presentation by Greg MacDonald

#### Step 1 –Vision

Have a clear vision for the town, establish exactly what RTC's aspirations are.

Develop a 4-page economic plan for Rushden.

The economic plan needs to be a visionary document including information such as key employment sites, maps, key bottlenecks, signage first impressions etc.

The 4-page document is essential to beginning talks with North Northants Council.

Consult with the people who live and work in Rushden.

Talk to local shop-keepers and landlords.

Begin conversations with developer and investors.

Eaton Walk could be the focus and catalyst for change to develop the ambitions for the town.  
**Readdress the Rushden East** discussions regarding employment opportunities.  
 Refocus the way in which RTC is going to work with North Northants Council.  
 Look at linkages within the town – Green theme, Greenway, green walls, planting – be inspired, look at other towns and get ideas.

**5. Action Points – update of business database, framework for moving forward**

- 5.1 Currently there are contact details for 450 business held on the master database, AP and PH have submitted additional contact details which have been added. All members encouraged to submit business contact details where known. **ALL**
- 5.2 Pharmaron on Pegasus Way have been identified as the next large company to be featured as the “Spotlight business”– GM to advise contact details. **VP**
- 5.3 Explore costs for a consultant to draw up the Rushden Economic Development Plan **VP**
- 5.4 Make a recommendation at the next Policy & Resources meeting (24<sup>th</sup> November) to change the name of the working party to Rushden Business & Economic Development Working Party. **VP**
- 5.5 Circulate the minutes from the High Street WP held on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2020 **JT**
- 5.6 Allocate resource to contact every business in Rushden to find out business information, how many people they employ, why they choose to trade in Rushden etc. **VP**
- 5.7 Draw up a rough draft of the 4-page economic plan **PH, RL, VP, JT**

**6. Appointment of a consultant to advise on business economic development**

It was resolved to investigate the appointment of a consultant to draw up the Rushden Economic Development Plan, see action point 5.2 above.

**7. Engaging with businesses**

Prestige Homeseeker were contacted and a “Business Spotlight” story is featured on RTC website, Rushden Matters and through our social media platforms.  
 Local businesses are contacted on a regular basis with updates, information and advice by JT, response from the businesses is generally very positive.  
 JT is working with ENC on several projects involving local businesses such as Business Festival week (16<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> November). Also looking at Town APPs, a YourTown project and further recovery schemes to support local businesses.

**8. Date of next meeting**

The next working party will be held on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> December at 7:30pm.

Members considered the renaming of this working party and the engagement of a consultant and it was

**RESOLVED**

To recommend to Council that the working party is renamed Business and Economic Growth working party.

That a consultant is engaged to deliver an economic growth framework

**Chairman**