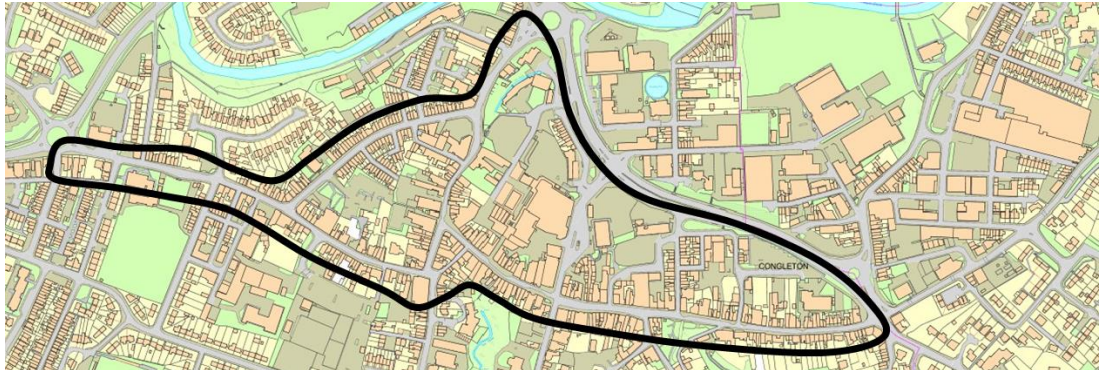


CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL
COMMITTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES

COMMITTEE:	Finance & Policy		
MEETING DATE AND TIME	26th January 2023 – 7pm	LOCATION	Town Hall
REPORT FROM	Rachel McCarthy, Town Centre and Events Officer on behalf of the Congleton Town Council Regeneration Working Group		
AGENDA ITEM REPORT TITLE	16 First Floor Improvement Grant Update Paper		
BACKGROUND	<p>In October 2021 Congleton Town Council’s Regeneration Working Group recommended that the Town Council allocated £10,000 worth of grant money to help Congleton town centre businesses improve the upper floors of town centre properties to improve the look of the town centre. This was successful and officers promoted the offer. Businesses could secure a maximum of £1000 per business which needed to be at least match-funded. Various conditions were placed on the offer, with no funding until the work was complete and all the conditions met.</p> <p>The first floor grant offer built on the success of the shop front improvement grant scheme in 2017, which helped 10 properties improve their ground floor frontage with match-funded grants of up to £500.</p> <p>The first floor improvement grant was to intended to incentivise businesses to improve the look of the outside of the building as seen by the public and to improve the overall feel f the Town Centre.</p>		
Update	<p>The Town Council agreed that the grant support scheme could be used for minor repairs and enhancement to the frontages of independent shop premises in Congleton Town Centre. The First Floor Improvement Scheme aims to improve the visual impact of the Town Centre. The funding was allocated on a first-come, first served basis with agreed funding ring-fenced for up to 12 months to enable the works to take place.</p> <p>It was agreed that all works should be carried out to a high standard with all the necessary permissions gained by the applicant. Congleton Town Council is to check that the works have been carried out in accordance with the details in the application documentation.</p> <p>Many businesses were struggling to get two quotes, so more time was allocated. Any funds not issued by July 2023 will the returned to the general grant budget.</p> <p>Applications received, quotes returned – before & after Images received and copy of receipts/ paid invoices – COMPLETED REQUESTS – these applications are signed off and payment imminent – Total £4,000.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reubens 46 – Lawton Street • Sugarplum Hair Studio – Lawton Street • John Hirst – Well Pharmacy - Mill street • Whittaker and Biggs – High Street <p>Applications received, quotes returned – NOT COMPLETE – no images or invoices - £1,000 ring-fenced for this project when appropriate paperwork sent.</p>		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serenity Designs – Bridge Street <p>Applications received and accepted, waiting for quotes and other information to be submitted – NOT COMPLETE but funds ring-fenced awaiting completion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Browns Furniture – Lawton Street • Richard Camm – Swan Bank • Lux Hair – Antrobus Street • The Mortgage Corner – High Street • Gather – High Street (canopy) <p>This means that all £10,000 has been allocated and the Town Council is no longer accepting applications for this fund.</p>
<p>FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS</p>	<p>There are no considerations for this paper. This paper is to update Councillors on state of the First Floor Grant project.</p>
<p>EQUALITY CONSIDERATIONS</p>	<p>The scheme was made available to all independent businesses in the Town Centre, occupied or vacant, in the map area below. An independent shop could be part of a chain of no more than 5 shops, or a franchise that is run as your own business. The applicant must be able to fund the works in the first instance as the grant will be paid upon receipt of proof of payment. Works to be implemented within a 12-month period of your application being accepted.</p> 
<p>Environmental Consideration</p>	<p>There are no considerations for this paper as it is an update on how the grant is being allocated.</p>
<p>Recommendation</p>	<p>That the Committee note this report and its contents.</p>