

Congleton Regeneration Working Group

Notes of Meeting

9th February – 10am – 11am

1. **Apologies** – None
2. **Attended** – Robert Douglas, Kay Wesley, Suzy Firkin, Russell Chadwick, David McGifford, Rachel McCarthy, Jackie MacArthur, Amanda Martin.
3. **Accept Agenda for Meeting** – Agreed – Two AOB added
4. **Actions from Last Meeting not on the agenda (8/11/22)**
 - a) **Travel Plan** – SF in the last meeting mentioned public transport from the new developments, and the lack of it. This will be discussed further in the Integrated Transport Working group.
 - b) **Update on Vinyls for shop windows** - with the new landlord lists updated, we can email the landlords directly now regarding empty shop vinyls, costing roughly £700-£800, to promote Congleton. Agreed worth continuing with and to agree messages. RMc
Remove vinyls from Heart Foundation shop. RMc
 - c) **Update on Diorama** –Check latest via Jenny RMc
 - d) **Mill Street/Cross Street** – Agreed to make contact with landlords about buildings in a bad state of disrepair. May need to back this up with CEC who can carry out enforcement. Includes property in Little Street and former Red Dot agency. DMc and RMc to explore the empty shops.
 - e) **Camper Van Stop Over** – Cheshire East to explore at a later date.
 - f) **Chamber of commerce** – positive outcome
 - g) **Cleanliness of the Town Centre** – ongoing discussions RB/DMc
5. **Congleton Means Business**

Not progressed at present, could be beneficial if done correctly and should be considered for the business plan for next council. More digitally resourced moving forward. Worth exploring ideas with some local landlords
6. **Town Vitality Plan**

Cheshire East has approved the plans. Market area, transport/ accessibility and vacant units are the three main concerns for Congleton. Potential to use the plan when applying for funds.

Group received an update on the Shared Prosperity Fund and the potential opportunities for Congleton. Waiting for CEC to announce sign off on the process for applying for funds and then need be ready to act. DMc will forward the document when available and then may need to call a quick meeting of the group. DMc.

7. **Neighbourhood Plan**

Working Group to review the town centre policies of the Emerging Congleton Neighbourhood Plan. Jackie to send out the current plan. Consider the policies individually and then come together as a group. JMac to arrange a meeting and send copies of current plan and other suggested policy headings.

8. **First Floor Grant**

Money has been allocated to 10 businesses, 6 completed and 5 have been paid. Emails have been sent out w/c 6/2/23 to check if the grants are still required, if they haven't yet returned quotes and images. One returned and no longer required grant. This has been reallocated another business on the waiting list.

Agreed that we should send out a polite letter to businesses occupying premises in need of repair to find out what plans they have for the repairs and to understand what the issues are with getting the repairs needed, highlighting the standards that are expected in the town. RMc

9. **Shop Watch Scheme**

Admin for the ShopWatch scheme has been secured. Sticker to place in the shop window will be drafted w/c 21 Feb , along with a letter to participate and sign with a What's App Group. More of an informative group to alert other businesses of counterfeit money, theft and troublesome children in the town centre. Strict guidance will be needed in the letter regarding non sharing of images.

10. **King's Coronation Bunting**

Discussion to see if we would need to purchase new bunting, King Charles theme, or if we use original bunting we already have which is multicoloured. Decision made to use original bunting which should go up at the same time as the festoon lighting.

11. **Marketing Plan**

Jackie shared a full comprehensive list of the calendar and events, with key objectives, regular work undertaken in the office with an action plan for the Marketing Team.

12. **AOB**

Congleton Furniture Centre

Company trying to relocate closer to the town centre, which requires a large unit to facilitate the large furniture. Currently on Silk Street and many people still don't know they exist. Have missed out on town centre properties and would like help.

We will make contact with Dawn Saville and promote via social media at CTC to help, as this is a recycle/reuse business, and also advise Dawn to create an alert on Rightmove for commercial property to get information as soon as its released.

Sunken Area/Grid on Little Street/Dog Poo Bin's on High Street

Cheshire East Highways will inspect the sunken areas on the monthly inspection test, under section 58 and will make a plan for any actions.

Question raised about the quality of some of the bins in Congleton. Although CEC supply the bins, the upkeep is left to CTC and volunteers. Town tidies/Streetscape clean the bins but need to arrange a deeper clean via Streetscape. RMc to speak with Ruth Burgess.

This could be a Keep Britain Tidy initiative highlighting key hotspots KW
Ideally replace the bins to recycle and litter bins across the town.
Elizabeth Statue needs cleaning, CTC agreed to clean annually. RB – ACTION

Banks

Many towns now are left without a bank. In Congleton we still have Nat West, and possibly Nationwide is classed as a bank. It would good to understand the options open to Congleton with regards to a banking hub if the town were ever to be in a position where all the banks closed their buildings. Agreed to undertake research now as a theoretical exercise so that we understand the options. ACTION JM and RM to carry out background research

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Barclays now operate out of Riverside twice a week for banking queries, but not actual banking, we don't want to be left without any banks, as they will class Nationwide as a bank and could potentially close NatWest.