

Notes of the Town Centre Regeneration Working Group

Virtual Meeting –Friday 18th August 2023

Present: Cllr David Brown, Cllr Amanda Martin, Cllr Russell Chadwick, Cllr Suzy Firkin, Bob Edwards, David McGifford, Jackie MacArthur, Rachel McCarthy,

Guests:

Agenda item	Subject /Issue	Action	By Whom	When
1.	Receive Apologies for meeting	Note apologies from Cllr Kay Wesley and Cllr Robert Douglas	On Notes	Complete
2.	Approve Draft Agenda	Congleton Football Club added to item 7	David McGifford	Complete
3.	Appoint a Chair of the Meeting	Agreed Cllr Russell Chadwick		18/8/23
4a.	Appoint a Vice Chair	Agreed Cllr Robert Douglas in his absence		18/8/23
4b.	Approve minutes from 9th February SF – Travel Plan , no funding from CE, this has been discussed in the Integrated Travel Working Group. Looking into Flexibus to expand routes. Can we influence talks with Richard Hibbert to expand route? Need a response to the flexi bus consultation by September	Agreed – actions discussed Precept from local parishes ideally should contribute to the service, without this we may not get a result. Vinyl's , progress new vinyl's for empty units Diorama , closed, Jenny has this covered. Mill Street/Cross Street , contact CEC to understand the hold up with this site.	DMcG RMcC DMcG	Ongoing Ongoing
5.	Neighbourhood Plan Health check update as soon as possible, aiming for October for start of consultation.	Health check- feed back to Councillors – particularly on town centre policies	DMcG JMacA	Ongoing
6.	Congleton Market Quarter (CMQ) Council has approved DMcG exploring options with CE and CMQ about future of the market area.	David to report back to the next meeting, note discussions underway regarding Streetscape maintaining the area.	DMcG	

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7a.	<p>Congleton Town Football Club Council has approved DMcG opening discussions with the Football Club and CEC about potential transfer of asset to CTC so that we can help to improve sporting facilities in Congleton.</p>	<p>Grant through associations to provide better facilities for grass routes through the Community Committee at CE</p> <p>To add to the next agenda for an update from David</p>	DMcG	
7b.	<p>Cheshire East Car parking Payments – Pre consultation comments</p> <p>CEC hasn't increased parking charges since 2018 and will be holding a public consultation from the 6 Sept – 16 October. Town and Parish councils have a chance to send some pre-consultation information if there are things that they feel are unique about the town.</p> <p>Following discussion agreed</p> <p>Most of the points raised in the 2020 consultation document still valid and to repeat.</p> <p>Would like to see first hour free (or longer)</p> <p>Harmonisation if harmonising up would be a disaster for Congleton.</p> <p>Inflation rise likely to be 30%</p> <p>Question the legality of making profits on car parks</p> <p>Raise concerns about displacing cars into side roads</p> <p>Raise concerns about deflecting custom from Town Centre to the free shopping centres at Barn Road, West Heath, Talke,</p> <p>Could CEC look at offering a parking permit to allow local residents to park in CE car parks.</p> <p>.</p>	<p>Send an outline response to the CEC consultation by the 25 August. Send suggested response to all Councillors for their input.</p>	JMacA	

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8.	<p>ShopWatch Scheme</p> <p>This is all up and running, it's a WhatsApp group run for businesses and is having a positive impact, recognising and warning each other about suspicious activities. Over 50 businesses are part of this group, CIC have sponsored stickers to display on the shop window to acknowledge their participation.</p>	<p>Can we arrange community wardens to fine people who drop litter in the town centre? Other towns used to enforce this,</p>	BE	
9 & 10.	<p>Town Centre Projects & Vacancy Rates</p> <p>We submit quarterly vacancy figures to Springboard on ground floor units that are not occupied, these are then collated by them, and comparisons generated over the whole of the UK and regionally. Previously we have hosted 'Town Means Business' in the town hall which promoted the town centre and potential investors visited.</p>	<p>How many long term vacant units are there in the town centre?</p> <p>Rachel to circulate the Springboard report with the minutes.</p>	RMc	next meeting
11.	<p>Public Toilets</p> <p>There is a need to sort out decent good quality public toilets for Congleton. Discussions are on-going with CMQ about a possible collaboration with CTC. Conversations also need to be resolved with Capital Walk. The library toilets on the 1st floor are available during opening hours. There are security issues around leaving the ground floor open.</p> <p>Question raised around whether CEC may apply for grant funding from national sources as it did for Macclesfield Town Council to build a new block> .</p>	<p>Research options around 'Changing Places' grant.</p> <p>David to continue discussions with Capital Walk and CMQ</p>	DMcG	

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12 & 13.	First Floor Grant update & Future Grant Ideas 7 grants returned and paid out, varying amounts, some used the full amount of £1000, others less.	Bring future grant ideas to next meeting	ALL MEMBERS	Next meeting
	Priorities for the group	Compile a list to identify more events in the town centre. Get the Airbags housing estates into the town centre more. Frequent 'Play Day' activities over the summer in the town. In Bloom judging, always have the flags out Bear Necessities has a 13k distribution, address new houses that do not receive it, increase the budget to distribute wider, we feel parishes need to contribute towards this. Recommendation of a budget increase for wider distribution (marketing budget).	RMc DMcG	
14.	AOB AM wants ideas for people to paint up dilapidated buildings in the town centre. DB would like to explore idea of umbrellas outside the Specsavers area, need to check if Boots the Chemist is a listed building. (Alan Redfern – Forensic umbrellas)		RMc	
15.	Date of Next Meeting - 5 dates a year for the meetings, excluding August, December and holidays. Suggested months – November, January, April, July, September. Suggested day for meeting – Tuesday Next meeting - Tuesday 28th November			