

**Runcorn Town Team Minutes
Wednesday 27th March 2013
6pm Boat House, Mersey Road**

Attendees

Name	Organisation
Town Team	
Cllr Norman Plumpton Walsh	HBC Mersey Ward Cllr
Cllr Ron Hignett	HBC Physical Environment Portfolio Holder
Cllr Pauline Sinnott	HBC Mersey Ward Cllr
Cllr John Gerrard	HBC Mersey Ward Cllr
Gary Shaw	Trader
Claire Bradbury	Power in Partnership
Wesley Rourke	Operational Director Economy, Enterprise and Property
Graham Wallace	Runcorn Locks Restoration Society
Maria Tarn	Hazlehurst Craft Studios
Rev Vicki Schofield	St Michael & All Angels
Brian Lunt	Trader
Halton Borough Council Officers	
Jennifer Carr	Regeneration Officer

Apologies

Town Team	
Reg Eastup	T H Brown Trust
Gary Buckles	PCSO
Ann Turner Culverhouse	Resident
Alison Gleave	Halton Voluntary Action / resident
Kristene Karaski	Cosmopolitan Housing Group (Chester District Housing Association)
Si Swanick	Resident
Halton Borough Council Officers	
Gill Watson	Community Development Officer
Sara Munikwa	Regeneration Manager

1. Introductions

Chair, Cllr Norman Plumpton Walsh (NPW), welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Minutes from previous meeting

The minutes from the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate record.

3. High Street Innovation Fund

3.1 Discussion of Grant Applications

3.1.1 Commercial Property Renewal Grant

The second round was launched following the level of interest in the first.

Three applications were received, see the below table for a summary of each application.

Property	Proposed Works
75 Church Street	Replace shop signs & repair and paint the front of the shop
93-97 Church Street	New shop sign with lighting.
Boathouse, Mersey Road	There will be new signage as there is nothing to indicate the name of the building The Boathouse at the premises. We are also getting the building rendered to improve the external appearance.

Discussion regarding the applications followed:

Hair Bern (75 Church Street): Approved Grant Offer: £1565

Runcorn Angling Centre (93-97 Church Street): Question was raised as to whether the owners of the property support the application. Advertising consent will also be needed if the sign is to be lit. Grant Offer: £888.70 (subject to receipt of approvals and a third quote for lighting)

Power In Partnership (Boathouse, Mersey Road): Claire Bradbury (CB) declared an interest and left the room. Everyone supported the element applied for to allow the rendering to be done, however, as the quotes supplied for signage included external banners, the question of how permanent they would be was raised. Decided to approve application subject to a complete set out quotes to be received and a satisfactory discussion on the banners is held. Chair given delegated authority to approve final grant offer. Grant Offer: £3,100 (subject to receipt of additional quotes and permanence of banner)

Action: Jenny Carr (JC) to notify all application of Town Team's decisions as above.

3.1.2 Business Start-Up Grant

Two applications were received, see the below table for a summary of each application.

Property	Business	Proposed Works
75 Church Street	Hair Bern – Hairdressers and boutique	Total redecoration on both floors, new carpet at entrance and flooring upstairs, gas supply to property and full central heating system and hot water. New styling stations i.e. 6 full length mirrors, 6 styling chairs, 2 back wash units with built in shower. Seating for waiting customers, stock cupboard and unit for preparing chemical based products i.e. perms tints etc. Washing machine, tumble dryer, shelving for products, fridge towels, hairdryers, clippers etc.
71 High Street	The Style Factory - Delivering fashion and craft based workshops to the community. Also planning to retail affordable clothing, fabric and haberdashery	To decorate the interior of the property to make it fit for purpose. To purchase new shop fittings for the retail aspect of the project ie clothing rails. Also to add signage to the exterior of the building to replace the existing signage put up by previous tenants

NPW explained the grant was primarily for improvements to the property and due to the Town Team having a limited amount of money to allocate to business start-ups, applications are to be reviewed on an individual basis and value added to the Runcorn offer considered.

Hair Bern (71 High Street): Due to the stage the business is at with improvements to the property, the main internal works have already been completed. Therefore, the application is for equipment for the business to operate. JC explained that the applicant owns the property and has so far made many improvements. Timing of the Town Team meeting and their programme to open (date of 5th April) mean things such as the plumbing, electrics, plastering have already been completed. They have also already been in business on Church Street in a leased property. They have subsequently left that property and bought their own to start a new business from scratch.

Discussion followed around the value added to Runcorn by the nature of the business. With hairdressers already being located in the area, and the owners of 'Hair Bern' relocating but starting a fresh, the Team were keen to offer support but not to the full extent of the application. Approval was granted for the backwashers as these will need to be plumbed in at the property. Grant Approved: £747

The Style Factory (71 High Street) – Maria Tarn (MT) declared an interest and left the room. A lease has not yet been agreed for the property with its owners, however, Caz Moss who owns the social enterprise, is positive it will be agreed in the near future and asked if her application could be considered subject to the lease being agreed. The signage element has an estimate of £700 against it but three quotes will be provided once the lease on the property is agreed.

NPW highlighted the uniqueness of the Style Factory and how it will introduce something new for the community.

Gary Shaw (GS) confirmed The Style Factory received an allocation of grant from the Communities First Fund the night before (26/3/13) for materials.

The Style Factory is something totally new to the Town and a decision was therefore made to support the full grant amount applied for subject to a lease for the premises being agreed. Grant approved: £1967.48 (subject to lease and final grant offer being determined by quotes received for signage).

Action: JC to notify all application of Town Team's decisions as above.

In total 15 expressions of interest were received between 1st December and 27th March 2013, of these 5 also asked for information regarding the start-up grant. Due to the positive feedback received for both schemes further rounds will be launched with deadlines set before each Town Team meeting

Action: JC to arrange for next rounds to be launched

A discussion around business rates followed as one of the delays in The Style Factory agreeing the lease for 71 High Street is business rates.

Wesley Rourke explained that business rates is always a barrier to businesses. At a recent event, some other recipients of HSIF explained they are using HSIF to set up a small pot for businesses to get a business rates holiday. May be something for the Town Team to consider if looking to encourage small businesses, perhaps new and those looking to expand. Officers will look into this idea and feedback at the next meeting.

CB explained there is already help available for 50% discount up to £6,000 in rates, but the remaining 50% may still be a barrier to a new business.

Action: HBC officers to look into feasibility of a business rates scheme.

3.2 Progress Made

3.2.1 Update for live grants

JC feedback updates for the four grants awarded at the previous meeting

- Sefton House - Work to commence w/c 6th May 2013 – waiting for improved weather to begin work (needs cooler and drier weather)

- 12 Church Street (Jake Alexander) – completed 20th March 2013
- 73A High Street Hazlehurst –waiting for the front door to be painted. It is being stripped on Easter Sunday as the painter said it was too cold to start the job and as soon as this is done the sign wrighter will use this colour in the signage. It should all be done in the next 4 weeks.
- Wine Cellar – now looking at over haul of shop, these works will take place as part of that.

3.2.2 Environmental Improvements

Graffiti removal: The agreement with Youth Graffiti Solutions will start on 1st April 2013. All reports of graffiti to be treated as part of the Town Team agreement are to go through Jenny Carr and Sara Munikwa at HBC by emailing the Runcorn Town Team Runcorn.townteam@halton.gov.uk or via the Council's contact centre 0300 333 4300

Mural: The owner of the former Senga furniture building has confirmed they are interested in working with the Town Team for a mural on the side of their building facing the bus station. We will be restricted as to where on the side of the building it can be located as stairs need to be put into place on the outside of the property when a tenant or buyer is found.

3.2.3 Website

Graham Jones, a Computer Games Design Graduate, has begun a 13 week graduate placement. His first job is to develop and populate a Runcorn Town Team website. A draft will be circulate for comment before going live.

NPW asked for it to be in plain English, format needs to be clear with links to local businesses included. The website will ultimately be a single point for people to look for information on the Old Town and include a sign post facility for people looking for funding support. Profiles of Town Team members will be included.

Action: Requests to be fed back to Graham for inclusion in the website. Draft to be circulated before going live.

3.2.3 Logo

Hazlehurst's suggestions for a logo were shared with the group. A decision was made to combine one of the Council designed logos with one of Hazlehursts suggestions. The graphic design team at the Council will now design this combination and once produced will be circulated to Town team members.

Action: JC to arrange

3.2.4 Potential Stockton Heath Visit

JC now has contact details for Warrington Council who may be able to help organise a guided visit. Any visit will take place later in the year when the days are longer.

Action: JC to see if this is possible.

4.0 Runcorn Market

Cllr Pauline Sinnott (PS) explained she had been approached by a stall holder asking about the Town Team and regeneration of the Old Town. JC has since spoken to some of the market traders to see how they would like to see the market promoted.

Suggestions received were

- Marketing/advertising – especially to attract people from the new town area
 - Newspaper
 - station
 - Empty units
 - Halton Lea
 - Printed carrier bags branded for Runcorn Market (a trader said he would also use these at other markets)
- Free bus from Halton Lea / Widnes
- Discounts

The Team agreed it would like to help the market. JG also suggested the possibility of looking to advertise the market on bus timetables in bus stops.

Action: HBC officers to look into the feasibility of the above suggestions and feedback at the next meeting.

As we have two vacancies on the Town Team – Andy Price has resigned and Cosmopolitan Housing are no longer represented. PS suggested inviting a market trader to become a member. Agreed that a market trader should be invited to be a member of the Town Team.

Action: PS to contact John Egan to see if a trader would be interested in becoming a Team member.

GS raised the issue of the Tuesday market closing on days of bad weather with very little warning. Frodsham is a street market and open no matter the weather. Recently three ladies from Bury came to Runcorn and the market was cancelled. Risk of them and other visitors not coming back if there is no guarantee the market will be on.

PS explained there are health and safety issues which need to be considered when setting up the stalls.

Cllr John Gerrard went on to say the stalls are stored in a container on Kings Street and it takes two members of staff to move the equipment and set up on Church Street.

Action: Sara Munikwa to be invited to next meeting to discuss Runcorn Market.

5.0 A.O.B.

5.1 HSIF profile

Brian Lunt asked for a running total of how the HSIF allocation is being spent.

Action: JC to provide update at each meeting

Following approvals at this meeting, the current profile (27/03/2013) is

Initiative	Budget (£)	Committed (£)
Environmental Improvements	9,000	3,000
<i>Grot spots</i>	<i>2,000</i>	<i>2,000</i>
<i>Mural</i>	<i>6,000</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>Graffiti removal</i>	<i>1,000</i>	<i>1,000</i>
Signage	1,000	0
Commercial Property Renewal Grant	50,000	11,112.20
Business Start Up Grant	25,000	2,714.48
To be allocated	15,000	0
Total	100,000	16,827

5.2 Letter of appreciation to Pauline Haplin

GS asked if a thank you on behalf of the Town Team can be passed to Pauline Haplin, one of the street cleaners in the town who goes beyond the call of duty. Agreed a letter of appreciation will be organised through the Mayor's office.

Action: HBC to request

5.3 Town Team Members

With two vacancies on the Town Team, JC suggested with one being offered to the market traders the other should be offered to another Housing Association. Halton Housing Trust has expressed an interest in being on the Town Team. Agreed to offer HTT the opportunity to sit on the Town Team

Action: JC to send out invite.

6.0 Date of next meeting

To be discussed with Sara Munikwa to ensure she can attend.

Thursday 23rd May 2013