

Runcorn Town Team Minutes
Thursday 23rd May 2013
6pm Churchill Hall, Cooper St

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
Si Swanick	Resident
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
Ann Turner Culverhouse	Resident
John Egan	Market Trader
Neil McLoughlin	Market Trader
Halton Borough Council Officers	
Jennifer Carr	Regeneration Officer
Sara Munikwa	Regeneration Manager
Graham Jones	Graduate Project Officer
Gill Watson	Community Development Officer

Apologies

Town Team	
Reg Eastup	T H Brown Trust
Gary Buckles	PCSO
Alison Gleave	Halton Voluntary Action / resident
Brian Lunt	Trader
Cllr John Gerrard	HBC Mersey Ward Cllr

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.

Wesley Rourke (WR) raised the award of grant to Power In Partnership (PIP). Since the previous meeting PIP has moved out of the Boathouse, therefore, the offer of grant has been retracted.

Jenny Carr (JC) emphasised that all grants are not paid until proof of payment is received to ensure grant is spent as agreed.

3. High Street Innovation Fund

3.1 Discussion of Grant Applications

3.1.1 Commercial Property Renewal Grant

The third 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
33 Church Street	Change of signage above shop premises from present plastic signage of former tenants to new signage for the business, to be made from metal as a material for durability and wear.
25 Church Street	External improvements to property including new signage, windows, doors and roller shutter with associated electrical installation costs.
67A Church Street	New windows and doors and repainting of brickwork

Discussion regarding the applications followed:

Sweet Memories (33 Church Street): JC confirmed that the lease for the property was received on the day of the Town Team meeting (23/5). Only one quote submitted, applicant was made aware that three are needed and he is making arrangements for another 2 quotes to be obtained. **Approved Grant Offer: Max. £122.50** (subject to receipt of 2 further quotes)

Taylor's Hair & Beauty Spa (25 Church Street): Applicant for the maximum grant allocation of £10,000 with a significant cost being new shutters for the property. As the grant scheme is working to a limited funding pot a discussion followed as to whether the maximum amount should be awarded. Chair (NPW) proposed as

property already has shutters support should be offered but with this item removed.
Approved grant offer: £2,825

67A Church Street: Property owner Mr Dykes has applied for the grant. The premise is currently being marketed and has a potential tenant lined up. Three quotes provides for windows but so far only one quote has been submitted for paint work. Mr Dykes is chasing another two quotes. Agreed to offer grant subject to receipt of a further two painting quotes. **Approved grant offer: max. £625**

Action: 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
33 Church Street	Sweet Memories	Change from present use as opticians, via a process of a complete refit of shop to one that is able to function as a confectionary business. The refit will include a kitchen upgrade and certain plumbing tasks, such as water heaters that need exchanging.
25 Church Street	Taylor's Hair & Beauty Spa	Ramped access to rear/office; full electrical heating system; platform lift; complete rewire of lighting and power circuits; access corridor for treatment rooms on first floor; replacement flooring, alterations to upper floor to provide disable wc access and shower

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.

Sweet Memories, 33 Church Street Mr Charlesworth did not realise that 3 quotes were required so only one was supplied. He has promised to get the extra quotes required. The quote provided is over the maximum grant therefore proposed a grant offer of £2,500 be made subject to the receipt of two further quotations. This was approved.

Taylor's Hair & Beauty Spa, 25 Church Street Three quotes received, all above the maximum grant allocation. Waiting for proof that the business is a start-up as no evidence was provided with the application to confirm attendance on a business start-up course. Ms Richards has been asked to contact Blue Orchid who will confirm this. Agreed to offer maximum grant allocation subject to proof of business start-up.

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

3.2 Progress Made

3.2.1 Update for live grants

JC feedback updates for the grants awarded at the previous meetings

- Sefton House – Painting work has commenced and the scaffold is erected at one end of the building. The forecourt resurfacing is scheduled for this Friday the 24th May 13.
- Hazlehurst Craft Studios – Door has been painted and work continues to finalise the signage design
- Booze Buster – improvement works on hold
- Runcorn Angling Centre – Working with HBC planning to establish if advertising consent is required for small LED lights around the sign.
- Hair Bern – complete, grant paid and the shop is open
- Jake Alexander – Windows installed and grant paid
- The Style Factory – Have 2 of the three quotes request for signage. They have now moved into the building and are having an official Launch Party on Saturday 25th May offering free demonstrations and activities to the local community and sharing their ideas for future projects. All are invited

3.2.2 Environmental Improvements

Graffiti removal: graffiti has been removed from the following areas:

- The alleyway down the side of Thomas Cook (There is a little bit left at the back of the building which they could not get to)
- Names from the wall at the back of Sayers
- Graffiti from the alleyway which leads from the Brindley car park down to the main road (there is a bit left to be treated)
- Graffiti has been removed from the bridge over the canal near the Brindley
- The BBC has been out filming the young people removing graffiti on the long wall on the run up to the subway on Leira Way. There is a lot here so this will be a project completed over time.

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

New Mural: Working on a call for artists with Louise Hesketh in the Arts Team. Propose to have something erected in October/November. Suggested theme is the street market but brief will be worded to allow other ideas to be submitted.

Mural bench: A quote of £300 has been provide to turn around the bench adjacent to the existing mural on High Street so it faces towards the mural and not away. Approved by the Town Team

Action: JC to instruct for the works to take place.

Blue Container: Complaints have been received regarding the relocation of a blue container used to store the market stalls from King Street to adjacent to 19 Church Street (former Senga furniture building). A meeting was held with Council officers before the Town Team meeting to see what options are available.

Neil McLaughlin (NMc) supported the current location as it allows quick and safe access for the stalls to be erected.

WR explained operationally setting up the market by moving the stalls from the container needs to be a safe for staff as possible. May consider moving the container further back on the grass verge. Other locations are not possible due to highways issues and the health and safety aspects of moving the heavy equipment, especially on days of bad weather. Looking to make it more appealing by repainting the container with a mural which will also promote the market.

Gary Shaw (GS) stated it is unsightly and a repaint would be better than the existing appearance.

Action: JC to coordinate repainting of the container with a market mural.

3.2.3 Website

Graham Jones, the local graduate recruited through Halton People Into Jobs' Graduate Internship scheme, talked through the website he has designed and populated for the Town Team. The address is www.runcorntownteam.co.uk

The Team were impressed with the website and subject to a proof read, agreed for it to be made live.

3.2.3 Logo

The below logo designed by the Council's in house design team was approved.



3.2.4 Business Rates

WR explained that one of the blocks to people investing in town centre is business rates so the Council have begun to look at incentives which could be offered by the Town Team. Provide opportunity for those who do not receive business rates relief to apply for some financial help. Each application would then be received on a case by case business.

NPW confirmed HBC Officers are looking at the feasibility of a percentage of rateable value scheme and whether such a scheme could be implemented by the Council.

3.2.5 Runcorn Market

Sara Munikwa (SM) explained there is a weekly Tuesday market on Church Street. It is well supported in the summer, but less so in the winter and has both regular and casual traders.

It is a break even operation. Widnes has a small element of rent towards marketing costs, but Runcorn is labour intensive (takes 4 people to set up stalls) and rents just cover operational costs so there is nothing left for advertising.

There are regular customers who use market. Have had issues with health and safety in bad weather for the setup of stalls and consequently the market has been called off last minute on a few occasions.

When it first started it was well used, not so much now. Want to show what the market offers in addition to the shops in the town.

JC has spoken to traders for their initial ideas as shared at the previous Town Team meeting and costed up the preferred options.

NMc explained that carrier bags could be funded by Town Team and bought by traders to then fund for bags. This is something all traders would support and encourage.

John Egan (JE) asked if it would be possible for traders to set up in the fronts of empty shops. SM explained that there is a licence which shows a red boundary within which the market stalls need to be located on Church Street. This is renewed on the 1st April every year and allows for the roadway to be kept clear and consideration given for access to shops.

Agreed for a meeting to be arranged to discuss this outside of the Town Team between HBC officers and market traders.

NPW proposed £5k of support to help promote the market which the Team supported.

NMc explained newspaper ads wouldn't be encouraged by traders as they have minimal impact. Would be keen to see the plastic bags done. Other ideas are bus advertising and promotional mural on the container.

Action: JC to work up ideas with traders working within the £5k budget.

The Mercian Regiment will March through the market on June 11th. NPW proposed TA stand at market for the Mercian March on 11th June

Action: JC to arrange for promotional leaflets to be given to market and shop traders and speak to colleagues regarding the possibility of a TA stand.

GS asked if it had been considered to advertise the market on the advertising columns on Church Street and the rear of large highways sign on High Street.

WR explained he has been speaking to Highways colleagues regarding promotional signage in the town, including the large highways sign on High Street.

Action: WR to follow up

4.0 A.O.B.

4.1 HSIF profile

Following approvals at this meeting, the current profile (23/05/2013) is

Initiative	Allocated (£)	Committed (£)	Remaining (£)
Environmental Improvements	9,300	3,000	6,300
<i>Grot spots</i>	<i>2,000</i>	<i>2,000</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>Mural</i>	<i>6,000</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>6,000</i>
<i>Graffiti removal</i>	<i>1,000</i>	<i>1,000</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>Bench relocation</i>	<i>300</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>300</i>
Signage	1,000	0	1,000
Commercial Property Renewal Grant	50,000	11,584.70	38,415
Business Start Up Grant	25,000	5,214.48	19,786
Market Support	5,000	0.00	5,000
Contingency	9,700	0	9,700
Total	100,000	19,799	80,201

4.2 Tidy up of empty premises

PS asked if it would be possible to tidy up vacant properties in particularly the shop on corner of Church Street and Regent Street. It creates a bad image for the town especially so close to Frailers which people visit from far and wide.

WR offered for HBC Officers to look into this and with the building being in private ownership speak to the Council's Enforcement Team to see if what, if any, action can be taken.

Action: HBC officers to take forward

4.3 Guest speaker slot

JC explained she had received an enquiry indirectly about whether the Buddhist Monks who have purchased the Waterloo pub could be invited to a future Town Team meeting to discuss what they are planning to do in community.

NPW proposes a guest speaker slot for future meetings and invite them to attend the next meeting.

Action: JC to add as an agenda item for next meeting and invite a representative from the Buddhist Monks to attend.

4.4. Topics for next meeting

NPW propose waterways and HBC procurement be discussed at the next meeting. HBC was recently one of 10 Local Authorities in the country to be awarded an accolade for work with small businesses.

JC also presented the idea of updating the out of dates maps dotted around the centre.

Action: All to be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

5.0 Date of next meeting

The dates of the next three meetings were agreed. All will start at 6pm. Venues TBC.

Wednesday 24th July, Wednesday 25th September and Thursday 28th November.