

Runcorn Town Team Minutes
Thursday 3rd April 2014
6pm Holy Trinity Church, Trinity Street

Attendees

Name	Organisation
Town Team	
Cllr Ron Hignett	HBC Physical Environment Portfolio Holder
Wesley Rourke	Operational Director Economy, Enterprise and Property
Gary Shaw	Trader
Graham Wallace	Runcorn Locks Restoration Society
John Egan	Market Trader
Tony Collacott	Wat Phra Singh UK
Ann Turner Culverhouse	Resident
Cllr Pauline Sinnott	HBC Mersey Ward Cllr
Alison Gleave	Halton Voluntary Action / resident
Syd Broxton	T H Brown Trust
Rev Vicki Schofield	St Michael & All Angels
Claire Bradbury	Power in Partnership
Gary Buckles	PCSO
Guest Speaker	
Karl Clawley	Centre Manager, Runcorn Shopping Centre
Halton Borough Council Officers	
Jennifer Carr	Regeneration Officer

Apologies

Town Team	
Cllr Norman Plumpton Walsh	HBC Mersey Ward Cllr
Cllr John Gerrard	HBC Mersey Ward Cllr
Si Swanick	Resident
Brian Lunt	Trader
Neil McLoughlin	Market Trader
Maria Tarn	Hazlehurst Craft Studios
Halton Borough Council Officers	
Sara Munikwa	Regeneration Manager

1. Introductions

Chair, Councillor Ron Hignett (RH), welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Minutes from previous meeting

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

3. Guest Speaker – Karl Clawley, Centre Manager, Runcorn Shopping Centre

Karl Clawley introduced himself to the Team. KC has been the Centre Manager at Runcorn Shopping Centre for about 8 months. He explained he is looking to set up a retail Business Improvement District (BID) for Runcorn covering Runcorn Shopping Centre, Trident Retail Park and Runcorn Old Town.

Consultation so far has found there is an appetite for such an initiative. KC previously worked at the Arndale in Manchester which had a very successful BID. Looking to improve retail sector in Runcorn, aware BIDS already exist across two business parks (Astmoor and Halebank).

A BID is based on the rateable value of a business. Estimate 70% of the businesses in the areas to be included in the Runcorn Retail BID will benefit and not be required to make a contribution. Larger companies, such as Asda, Polar Ford, Tesco etc will be required to contribute but smaller, independent businesses will not. Contribution is usually 1.6% of rateable value.

A Board and shadow board will be established and they will be responsible for allocating money. BIDs run for 5 years. Likely to be funded through private monies (Shopping Centre), public transport and larger retail businesses. This will create a substantial pot.

Want to engage areas, attract people and keep them in Runcorn. Ideas so far include – proud of Runcorn parade to link Old Town to Shopping Centre, 4 events a year, a shop local scheme, town in bloom, and a free bus between shopping centre and Old Town.

Wesley Rourke (WR) explained vote for a BID is done through electoral system.

PS asked how the BID will fit in with Town Team and other things happening in the town?

KC confirmed the BID is a way to enhance existing offer.

ATC stated her belief of the potential for the new town and Old Town to better. A BID will make a lot of difference.

TC explained he represents a company in Halebank BID, believes once approve scheme everyone has to sign in.

KC confirmed 51% yes vote results in BID being accepted. This BID is about retail. Need to be ready for opportunity of Mersey Gateway and can influence how we want the town to develop. See the main streets in the Old Town as High Street, Regent Street, Granville Street and Church Street. KC another meeting for ideas will also be needed to form shadow board.

WR explained that the money is pooled and can therefore make a much bigger impact. It is early days of the process and there is a complex process to go through.

PS believes it is good the Town Team have been asked to be involved at this early stage. The BID can help promote shopping locally and people working together.

Agreed JC to circulate TT contact details to KC for him to arrange a meeting to discuss ideas in due course.

Action: JC to share TT contact details with KC

ATC asked KC if he is confident big players will buy in?

From other BIDS elsewhere, KC has an understanding of which retail businesses vote yes in other areas and which don't. Want to convince don't knows' to 'yes'. Get them to understand appetite at local level.

A revote is held every 5 years. All BIDs known to KC have voted 'yes' for reissues.

GW asked if a BID would persuade other retailers to move to Runcorn who aren't already here.

KC believes the tolled bridge is a reason for companies to consider Runcorn as new location for business.

PS emphasised that there is an opportunity for Runcorn with the construction of the Mersey Gateway. It makes senses for retailers to be ready and the BID will provide an opportunity to prepare for it together.

4.0 Grant Applications

4.1 Business Start Up Grant

One received – Intuition School and Spa - beauty treatments and training workshops/short courses. New flooring and 3 dividing walls to section property into salon space, training room and additional treatment room. Look to start as soon as lease agreed.

JC explained she had been asked to emphasise by the applicant that they believe this is a new offer for the Town. The business will provide short courses in new areas of beauty treatments. They aim to not be in competition with the college or Old Town businesses by providing up to date courses and innovative treatments. They have

been working with Blue Orchid on their business plan and therefore will have gone through a process to ensure this proposal is viable.

Grant approved. Works exceed £2500 max grant therefore provisional offer of £2500 to be made subject to receive of additional quotes and copy of signed lease for 58A High Street.

Action: JC to notify applicant of decision.

4.2 Commercial property Renewal Grant

Four received. Value of applications exceeds the allocation left in the grant pot. RH recommended discussing each application in turn to then make a decision on which should be supported. (Grant funds left £7578, applications total £13,243.50)

Halton Carers seek funding towards the cost of renovating the frontage of 62/64 Church Street to include: Automatic disabled access door; New downstairs windows; Ground level to be rendered with first floor remaining as brick frontage

PS suggested Halton Carers consider approaching Area Forum for financial help towards frontage works.

Halton Autistic Family Support Group repair or replace existing front doors plus motorise 3 existing shutters.

Halton Disability Partnership flat roof repairs and timber treatments and re-felting.

PS declared an interest and left the room.

The team acknowledged that this application will not visually improve the property from street level.

Mersey Bridge View Ltd external painting, new signage and windows to rear and side

GS stated his support for this application. The owners have invested a lot of money in the building and like the Buddhist Temple it is an opportunity for the Town Team to help fund improvements to a prominent building in the Old Town.

SB raised concerns with awarding grant to someone who has spent a lot of money to date. Why give them a grant?

PS highlighted that applicants sometimes spend a lot of money on the structural and internal improvements to a property and the Town Team may be asked for help doing the extra things that aren't structurally required but will improve the appearance of the property.

Decision made to support the following:

- Halton Carers – provisional offer of £2,707 towards costs of frontage works.

- HASFs – offer to cover repair of doors and new shutters - £940.
- HDP – application rejected as does not meet the priorities of the grant scheme as well as other applicants.
- Mersey Bridge View Ltd – provisional offer of grant £3,931 subject to further quotations and planning permission being gained for signage.

Action: JC to notify applicants of decision.

An application was received at the Town Team meeting however this was too late to be considered at the meeting.

5.0 Updates

JC provided an update of live projects

5.1 Grants

- Chameleon (tapas restaurant) – sale still pending. They are in regular contact regarding progress of the sale.
- Runcorn Angling – outstanding grant for lights not yet claimed. Spoken to owner and he has confirmed the grant will not be needed in the near future, therefore, the offer for this element of work has been withdrawn.
- 64 High Street roof repairs – works have started on site, anticipated completion date is 18th April. Cost came in under budget therefore some grant money has been put back in to the pot
- Wat Phra Singh – works complete. Came in under budget therefore some grant monies has been returned to pot.
- Synergy – some delays have been experienced with internal works being more detailed than envisaged but confident work will be completed within the next 5 weeks. Have tenants lined up for the two retail units on the ground floor and in talks with the Council's Arts Development team about the potential for a creative hub in the offices upstairs.

5.2 Runcorn Market

- Plastic bags expected very soon! They will be sold to the traders and the money reused to purchase more plastic bags.

JE asked if the canvas bags can be shared with traders.

JC explained they have been ordered by the market team and are therefore not related to the Town Team. They are being stored for Love Your Local Market in May.

WR confirmed he will speak with market team to see if they can be given out.

Action: WR to speak to Markets team regarding canvas bags.

5.3 Arts Programme

- **Bringing in the Blooms** project, Hazlehurst are just drawing up a list of tasks. They are applying to ACE for some match funding but do have the funding to support the project from their own funds if needed. The project aims to start in early April, with planning going on in March, with contacts being made in April, and delivery of the project by the end of July. £1100 of the Town Team money was allocated to them.
- **CO3** and **Suitcase Ensemble** are applying for further match funding.

5.4 Fake shop fronts

- All Saints are working with City Dressing to design the frontage for the former Senga furniture building on Church Street. It will be a collage of images for Runcorn Old Town's past, present and future.
- Stringers and Washington Upholstery will also have fake frontages. They are currently working on a mock up design which incorporates the Heritage Trail for the Old Town split over the two premises. This will encourage people to walk around the Old Town and hopefully introduce them to new areas, buildings and their history. Town Team approved this proposal.

Action: JC to work with City Dressing on design.

6.0 Moving Forward

Table of suggested initiatives shared by JC.

Priority	Idea	Indicative cost
1. Landmarks/ Family Friendly places	Town Centre walk around to identify opportunities	Free
	Leisure offer - Waterways, Brindley, Library, (identify ideas after walk around)	4,000.00
	Events – Jim Yates / Community Development - WWI	4,000.00
	Total	8,000.00
2. Funding Opportunities	Match sources? Types of projects? – see list from External Funding	
3. Promotion and Advertising	Information boards (1 new board - source and installation)	1,800.00
	Map - review every 6 months	60.00
	Article in Intouch Summer ed.	no cost
	Total	1,860.00

4. Looking forward	Programme of works - programme of works for the projects agreed going forward to be reviewed at each meeting	No cost
	Marketing plan - Nominate marketing officer for Town Team. Work with Chair and Council officers to produce Marketing Plan. Requires advertising budget	1,000.00
	Establish Town Team Facebook/Twitter pages? To be managed by nominated marketing officer	No cost
	Total	1,000.00
5. Physical Environment and niche market	Business start-up grant scheme – reduce from £2500 to £1500 and make 4 more grants available.	6,000.00
	CPRG - allocate no further funding to CPRG scheme unless more funding becomes available	-
	Total	6,000.00
6. Technology	Workshops with traders – ecommerce and social media	500.00
	Organise a free customer service course for local traders	50.00
	If above are successful consult with traders over what they would like courses in	500.00
	Total	1,050.00
		17,910.00
	Allocation remaining @ March 2014	18,260.00
	Contingency	350.00

The list was well received and welcomed by the Team.

Action: JC to begin work on initiatives listed.

7.0 A.O.B.

7.1 Mural, Church Street

SB explained it looks as though a brick has fallen between the mural and the wall behind. Worried it might rip the mural

Action: JC to investigate

7.2 Runcorn Locks

GW believes Society is starting to make progress in their campaign for the reopening Runcorn Locks. A new publicity campaign will soon be launched under the theme 'Unlock Runcorn'. Believe opening of the locks will attract tourists, allowing people to travel through Runcorn by boat. Leaflet will be generated shortly and more publicity is due to take place. Bridgewater festival took place last year. Bridgewater Motor Boat Club is now involved and looking to make it an annual event. About 90 boats anticipated this year. If lock reopened substantially more would attend.

8.0 Next meeting

The next meeting will be held at **6pm on Wednesday 4th June 2014 at All Saints Church, Runcorn.**