

10 November 2017

## TOWN CENTRE HERITAGE TASK GROUP – 16 NOVEMBER 2017

A meeting of the Town Centre Heritage Task Group will be held at 5.30pm on Thursday 16 November 2017 in Committee Room 1 at the Town Hall, Rugby.

Councillor Miss Lawrence  
Chair

### A G E N D A

#### PART 1 – PUBLIC BUSINESS

1. Minutes – to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 25 October 2017.
2. Apologies – to receive apologies for absence from the meeting.
3. Declarations of Interest

To receive declarations of:

(a) non-pecuniary interests as defined by the Council's Code of Conduct for Councillors;

(b) pecuniary interests as defined by the Council's Code of Conduct for Councillors;  
and

(c) notice under Section 106 Local Government Finance Act 1992 – non-payment of Community Charge or Council Tax.

***Note: Members are reminded that they should declare the existence and nature of their interests at the commencement of the meeting (or as soon as the interest becomes apparent). If that interest is a pecuniary interest the Member must withdraw from the room unless one of the exceptions applies.***

***Membership of Warwickshire County Council or any Parish Council is classed as a non-pecuniary interest under the Code of Conduct. A Member does not need to declare this interest unless the Member chooses to speak on a matter relating to their membership. If the Member does not wish to speak on the matter, the Member may still vote on the matter without making a declaration.***

4. Draft Review Report.

## **PART 2 – EXEMPT INFORMATION**

There is no business involving exempt information.

### **Membership of the group:**

Councillors Miss Lawrence (Chair), Mrs Avis, Mrs Bragg, Gillias, Sandison, Mrs Simpson-Vince, Srivastava and Ms Watson-Merret

*If you have any general queries with regard to this agenda please contact Linn Ashmore, Democratic Services Officer (01788 533522 or e-mail [linn.ashmore@rugby.gov.uk](mailto:linn.ashmore@rugby.gov.uk)). Any specific queries concerning reports should be directed to the listed contact officer.*

*If you wish to attend the meeting and have any special requirements for access please contact the Democratic Services Officer named above.*



# REVIEW OF TOWN CENTRE HERITAGE

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November 2017

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## **TASK GROUP MEMBERSHIP**

The task group consisted of the following members:

Councillor **Kathryn Lawrence** (Chair)  
Councillor **Tina Avis**  
Councillor **Sally Bragg**  
Councillor **Anthony Gillias**  
Councillor **Neil Sandison**  
Councillor **Jill Simpson-Vince**  
Councillor **Ramesh Srivastava**  
Councillor **Carolyn Watson-Merret**

## **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION**

Please contact:

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The Group would like to thank the following for their valuable contribution to this review:

Chris Stanley, Unlimited Communications  
Aftab Gaffar, Managing Director, Rugby First Limited  
Amber Merrick-Potter, Events Manager, St Andrew's Parish Church  
Dr Rex Pogson, Open Door Programme, St Andrew's Parish Church  
Martin Stahel, Sales Director, Zappar

The Group are also thankful to the following officers who have supported them throughout the review process:

- Rob Back (Head of Growth and Investment)
- Victoria Gabbitas (Arts, Heritage and Visitor Services Manager)
- Michael Beirne (Town Centre and Tourism Team Leader)
- Matthew Deaves (Communication, Consultation and Information Manager)
- Linn Ashmore (Democratic Services Officer)

# **CHAIR'S FOREWORD**

**To be written by the chair**

**Councillor Name**  
**Chair**

# 1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Group proposes the following recommendations to Cabinet:

## IMPROVEMENTS THAT COULD BE MADE QUICKLY AND AT LOW COST

1.	Include heritage-led events in the town centre events programme, starting with the Festival of Culture in 2018.
2.	Update leaflets for walking tours and town centre trails with 'The Rugby Town' branding, ensuring information is clearly presented, relevant, factually correct and up-to-date.
3.	Continue support for the Town Guides programme and adopt a new marketing plan to promote walking tours more effectively.

## MEDIUM TERM PROPOSALS WHICH WILL REQUIRE SOME COMMITMENT OF TIME OR FINANCIAL RESOURCES

4.	Reposition the commemorative Blue Plaques trail to ensure the route is visible and accessible, also exploring options for themed routes.
5.	Develop an 'augmented reality' mobile app to help bring some of the existing town trails to life and engage new audiences, subject to costs/ detailed proposals.

## ASPIRATIONAL PROPOSALS WHICH WILL REQUIRE LONGER TERM COMMITMENT OF TIME OR FINANCIAL RESOURCES

6.	Support the redevelopment of St Andrew's Church Gardens as part of a long-term public realm strategy.
7.	Support the redisplay of the Rugby social history collection through a Heritage Lottery Fund bid.

### 1.1 Alignment with the Corporate Strategy

The review relates to the following corporate priorities:

**GROWTH AND INVESTMENT: Promote and grow Rugby's visitor economy with our partners**

## 2. OBJECTIVES

### 2.1 Background

At its meeting on 19 July 2016 Council referred a motion on the topic of a Green Plaque Scheme, and in accordance with Standing Order 11 the Motion then stood referred to a scrutiny committee.

Whittle Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the motion referred by Council at its meeting on 12 September 2016 and decided that the proposal should be considered alongside wider work taking place in the town centre and that a task group should be set up to carry out this work.

Whittle approved the one-page strategy at its meeting on 13 March 2017.

On 6 February 2017, Cabinet also decided that a cross-party Visitor Economy Working Party would be established to provide guidance and overview on matters relating to tourism, destination marketing and the town centre.

The focus for the task group was to represent Rugby's heritage through initiatives to increase town centre footfall.

### 2.2 The One Page Strategy

The 'one-page strategy' is the name given to the scoping document for the review. It defines the task and the improvements being aimed for and how these are going to be achieved. The review's one-page strategy, revised by the task group at the first meeting in June 2017, is as follows:

#### **What is the broad topic area?**

Town Centre Heritage. The broad aims of the review are to encourage local residents and visitors of all ages to explore, to enjoy, and to take pride in Rugby town's heritage.

#### **What is the specific topic area?**

Representing Rugby's heritage through initiatives to increase town centre footfall. A number of options are available, based on initial research of initiatives in other places, each with different advantages and disadvantages – broadly these include:

1. Reviewing the extent to which the current town centre events programme focuses on heritage and making initial recommendations on how this can be improved.
2. Enhancing access to information and marketing activities for existing initiatives i.e. the Blue Plaque trail, Pathway of Fame and Town Guides.
3. Green Plaque Scheme – progress with the original proposal of a new trail focusing on heritage sites and places of interest in the town.



4. 'Augmented reality' mobile apps – this would allow people to view town centre environments through the lens of their camera phones, with additional interesting and engaging content. Examples include interaction with 3D characters, video or visitor interpretation and QR codes.

### **What should be considered?**

The following areas are relevant to the discussion:

- Use of digital and modern technology to provide unique visitor experiences.
- The wider marketing plan for the town centre and opportunities to collect information on our customers, particularly through the free public Wi-Fi network.
- Target audiences – the extent to which initiatives are designed for different local, regional, national or international visitors.
- Promotion of the town's wider heritage links alongside Rugby's unique selling point as the birthplace of the game.
- Ways to increase footfall not only the town centre, but specifically between individual cultural assets.
- Funding opportunities.

### **Who shall we consult?**

The Council's Town Centre and Tourism Team Leader, responsible for overseeing the Town Centre Action Plan 2016 – 2020, will support the Task Group to develop their recommendations.

- Arts, Heritage and Visitor Service
- Representatives of places with current good practice examples
- Local History Groups
- Rugby First Limited
- Rugby School
- Rugby Art Gallery and Museum

### **How long should it take?**

Report to committee in either November or January.

### **What will be the outcome?**

Recommendations on the development of heritage-based initiatives to increase town centre footfall.

## **3. METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Overview**

The work of the task group has focused on four main areas:

- Enhancing access to information and marketing activities for existing schemes and initiatives.
- Review the extent the current town centre events programme focuses on heritage.
- Plaque schemes.
- 'Augmented reality' mobile apps – to enhance the visitor experience and help tell a story.

The task group met six times between June and November 2017 and built a strong evidence base to support its conclusions, drawing on a variety of sources. This included:

- Scene setting presentation giving background and context for the review.
- Current town centre history and heritage.
- The town centre events programme and how heritage is represented.
- Public engagement and results of an online consultation and questionnaire.
- Feedback from members on their experiences of the Blue Plaque trail and the walking tours carried out by the Rugby Town Guides, and the Rugby Festival of Culture events.
- Enhancing access to information and marketing activities for existing initiatives.
- Festival of Culture feedback.
- The future plans and programme of events at St Andrew's Parish Church and a scheme to develop St Andrew's Gardens.
- The role of Rugby First Limited, marketing promotion and town centre events.
- Commemorative plaque schemes and guidance published by English Heritage.
- Use of technology and software to enhance the visitor experience, including a presentation from Zappar on codes and apps.

## **4. EVIDENCE**

### **4.1 Call for Evidence**

The Task Group sought the views of a range of different individuals and groups. A public consultation was launched and an online questionnaire was set-up for people to submit feedback to the Task Group. Physical copies of the questionnaire were also made available in the Visitor Centre. The number of responses were low however the following general observations were made:

- There was general agreement that town centre events could include a clearer link to the town's own heritage. One respondent provided examples of how this could be done.
- No respondents felt the need to provide more blue plaques, though there were various ideas for other sites of very local interest.
- Most respondents had ideas on how to make information about the Blue Plaque trail and other heritage assets more accessible, including using web technologies.

- There was general agreement that smartphone technologies should be used, with various ideas of how this could be achieved.

### **4.3 Access to evidence**

The task group review papers are available online at [www.rugby.gov.uk/meetings](http://www.rugby.gov.uk/meetings) in the section 'agendas, reports and minutes', and can be found by selecting the Town Centre Heritage Task Group.

## **5. FINDINGS**

### **5.1 Background**

The task group received a presentation setting the scene for the review outlining current initiatives.

The Town Centre Action Plan 2016-2020 focuses on five areas:

- Marketing
- Visitor economy and Destination Management Planning
- Planning
- Physical environment/public realm
- Investment

It was important not to duplicate related work being carried out and maintain distinct work streams. It was acknowledged that matters relating to the town centre economy would be covered by the Visitor Economy Cabinet Working Party.

### **5.2 Current town centre history and heritage**

The Arts, Heritage and Visitor Services Manager gave the task group a presentation on history and heritage in Rugby.

This included history relating to geology, railways, canals, Romans, the town centre market, Rugby School, the game of Rugby, Victorian buildings, engineers amongst many personalities associated with literature, invention, innovation and design.

It was important to distinguish between heritage and culture. For the purposes of the review heritage was defined as being something tangible from the past that was worthy of preservation, and culture was defined as being something much wider and more intangible that related to traditions and the way people live.

There were a number of collections within the Rugby Art Gallery and Museum (RAGM) containing objects with stories about people and place they related to.

A large piece of work has just begun on the redisplay of the museum but this was still at the initial planning stage. Connections should be developed to link the inside exhibits with the outside. Funding was being sought through the Heritage Lottery Fund.

### **5.3 Town centre events programme**

Chris Stanley from Unlimited Communications gave the working party a presentation on town centre events and how heritage was represented.

There were a number of well-established annual events taking place in the town centre and there could be opportunities to enhance these.

Rugby has a strong association with authors and this could be one way to encourage a new audience. Other towns have had success with literary events.

Some suggestions for events, and points to consider included:

- A literary festival
- Open heritage weekend
- Literary walking tours, living history or theatre productions – this could include storytelling authors
- Heritage Open Days – this could be a quick win
- Themed events
- Link events or tours to related buildings
- Use a similar model to the Festival of Culture
- Explore ways of promoting events and an improved visitor approach
- Connection to the centenary of WWI and war poets
- Link the Hall of Fame to written material such as a book launch
- What is the ideal target market?
- What is Rugby's unique heritage?

### **5.4 Current Schemes and Initiatives**

Members of the task group gave feedback on their experiences of attending the Festival of Culture events, completing the Blue Plaque trail and taking part in one of the Rugby Town Guide walking tours. The following points and comments were made:

Festival of Culture

- The brochure was excellent.
- It was delivered to homes but some residents mistook it for a trade magazine and disposed of it.
- One councillor ordered 50 copies which proved very popular across their local community.
- The musical events were fantastic.
- Some events were poorly supported, but this could have been due to clashes with more popular ones.
- St Andrew's Church was a good venue for musical events due to the excellent acoustics but mainly attended by older people.

- The venue for the performance of the Reluctant Dragon was unsuitable
- and uncomfortable as it was cramped, meaning it got very hot, and
- children were expected to sit on the floor rather than with their parents.
- The concerts at the Temple Speech Room were very good and were all sold out.
- There was a good range of events and the outdoor musical events were very popular.

#### Blue Plaque trail

- The plaques were not numbered which meant it would be easy to add to.
- The map was not clear and it was difficult to see where the plaques were located.
- The use of modern technology as a way of bringing the locations to life was widely supported.
- It could get boring and would benefit from an upgrade.
- Positioning of the plaques was an issue. Some were high up, covered by shrubbery or only visible by stepping out into the road.
- The information contained in the leaflet was good.
- There were a number of historically interesting buildings which do not have any form of plaque or signage.
- An enhanced plaque scheme would include a number of other sites of interests and the use of apps would enhance the visitor experience.

#### Heritage walking tours

- Last year's Mayor organised a tour to raise funds for the mayoral charity
- which included the tours, a visit to the Hall of Fame, and afternoon tea at
- RAGM. This promoted these activities with civic guests for other local
- authorities.
- Each tour held was different and it was suggested that the guides used
- the same information.
- The pace of the tour was very good and the time passed quickly. It was
- An excellent way of drawing attention to the architecture of the buildings.

### **5.5 Enhancing access to information for existing trails**

The Town Centre and Tourism Team Leader circulated draft copies of the Rugby Town re-branded versions of the Blue Plaque trail leaflet, the Rugby Town Guides walking tours and the Heritage Open Days. Officers were updating the current range of leaflets and creating one for the Pathway of Fame.

The task group acknowledged that the text in the Blue Plaque trail leaflet was being revised and updated. The group reviewed the leaflet and gave the following feedback:

- It was pleasing to see the number of local women represented.

- The numbering of the plaques was random and did not reflect a walking route.
- The route should begin at the Visitors Centre.
- On opening the leaflet to view the map the list of plaque begins at 16 rather than the first plaque.
- The text in the boxes for each plaque was too small.
- Should a large print version be made available?
- Different walks or trails could be considered.
- There was a concentration of plaques within a small area and there were other buildings of importance that were not included.
- The plaque tour should focus on the immediate town centre and plaques outside this area could be listed separately.
- To support the local economy visitors should be drawn towards the shopping areas.
- Some ways of identifying the length of the trail, either by distance or time would be helpful.
- There could be a range of walks. Different routes could be created for different areas of interest, such as sport or literature.
- Some form of scale on the map and directional arrows would be useful.
- Plaque 31 (Rugby's Third Station) would be better described as Rugby Junction and the wording could be improved to include a reference to Charles Dickens.
- Plaque 1 (Caldecott Park) should include up-to-date information on the Green Flag award.

The Tourism and Town Centre Team Leader met with the volunteer Town Guides in July and one of the agreed outcomes from the meeting was that a new marketing plan was needed for the walking tours. Some ideas included:

- The use of social media
- Targeting specific community groups such as the Women's Institute or Ramblers.
- To install some form of flag or air board to advertise the walks.
- Businesses and hotels could be targeted and specific offers could be linked, such as afternoon tea.

## **5.6 St Andrew's Church and the public realm**

The task group received a presentation from Amber Merrick-Potter (Events Manager, St Andrew's Church) and Dr Rex Pogson (Open Door Programme, St Andrew's Church) concerning the St Andrew's Church and Garden. During the presentation, the following points were made:

- Amber Merrick-Potter has been in post as the new Events Manager at St Andrew's Church for three months.
- St Andrew's Church is a key part of Rugby's heritage, the town's oldest building with unique architecture and a rich history.
- New lighting has been installed to illuminate the church ceiling.
- The Events Manager is in contact with the Arts Development Officer at the Rugby Art Gallery and Museum with regards to displaying public art collections at St Andrew's and working with Coventry Cathedral on how to bring their Centenary Arts Festival to Rugby.
- St Andrew's will be applying for arts funding from the Council to support a community, culture and heritage programme which will be based around 1918, suffrage and WWI. Part of the programme will also be celebrating Woodbine Willie's life. It will also be a throughout the year project tying in with some of the annual events already taking place in the Town Centre.
- Working with the Warwickshire County Council, the Rugby Borough Council and a range of partners, the church aims to develop St Andrew's Gardens as a space for Reflection, Recreation and Renewal at the Heart of the Town.
- The area between the garden and the road is usable for a whole range of things if adapted and modernised without doing anything too drastic. It could be used for anything from drama, music, lectures in the summer right through to dropping in an ice ring or bring in anything movable.
- The railings are a sensitive issue. If there is no immediate decision for the Town Centre under the Public Realm Strategy, there is very little point in taking on such a sensitive issue. The railings were removed during the war which was followed by a campaign to have the railings reinstated.
- The Church House was sold with some of the money being used by the church for three posts carrying out community work in the church but also for lighting, sound, etc. The posts and the works are being 50% funded by others.

## 5.7 Use of digital technology

The task group received a presentation from Martin Stahel, Sales Director for Zappar, on the development of an 'augmented reality' app and what could be achieved in Rugby. During the presentation the following points were made:

- Augmented reality (AR) apps connect the physical world with experiences and events to offer enjoyment and information.
- They can be used to deliver commercial objectives.
- The journey of the user was key to them connecting on an emotional level.
- The apps can be personalised with a range of marketing channels.
- The technology was based on smartphone technology which has been more widespread since phones became more powerful and cheaper.
- It was accessed by people of all ages who use it to entertain, carry out research or purchase items online.
- The mobile phone has become a digital media tool that can be used to unlock content and put people in touch with their surroundings.

- All the well-known media companies were embarking on their own AR technology.
- Many household name companies were using AR technology to promote their businesses or products.
- The system can be used to collect personal data.
- Incentives and rewards can be built in to offer users, news, information on events, tokens or vouchers.
- The AR experience can be easily shared on other social media.
- Within a town or city environment it could be used to drive wider exploration. Bath City has an icon, similar to Pokemon Go, that leads users through a visual pathway targeting particular points.
- Historical content and local stories can be brought to life.
- AR can be used to encourage visitors to explore areas and move around points of interest. Fun content can be shared digitally, for example by the taking of selfies.
- The icon can be attached or printed on physical objects, buildings or leaflets so could be used in a variety of ways.
- Zappar was a small global company in AR stakes. It was formed around seven years ago and its aim was to democratise new technology and make it quicker and more cost effective in the hands of the user.
- App sizes vary depending on the amount of content. They range from six megabytes (equal to downloading one tune).
- The apps can be accessed quickly and do not use up a lot of data.
- The key to success was targeting the right audience at the right time.
- There was a need to consider what is interesting or important that would attract someone to scan the app.
- Some examples of work carried out with known brands was given. These included an example of fitting in a simple video of a sports personality, allowing the user to take a selfie and watching action clips that could be shared on social media.
- The app could automatically detect user language, or allow users to select a particular language.
- Other examples showed catalogue products being brought to life.
- The app was a simple means of connecting. Care would be needed to select the right message for the right user group.



## 6. CONCLUSIONS

The task group drew the following conclusions from the evidence that it gathered:

- A redisplay of the museum's social could be made possible through a Heritage Lottery Fund bid – officers are currently in the early stages of looking at the project's feasibility.
- The town centre events programme should be reviewed to include more heritage-related events.
- The positioning of commemorative Blue Plaques should be reviewed to ensure the route is visible and accessible. There is also potential to have different themed routes giving visitors more choice.
- Leaflets for walking tours and town centre trails need to be updated with 'The Rugby Town' branding. At the same time, a number of improvements to the design of these marketing materials should be made to ensure information is clearly presented, relevant, factually correct and up-to-date.
- The Town Guides programme should continue to be supported and promoted more effectively with a new marketing plan.
- Improvements to St Andrew's Church Gardens could have significant positive impacts for the wider town centre and should be considered as part of the long-term public realm strategy.
- Use of 'augmented reality' technology could help bring some of the existing town trails to life and engage new audiences. More detailed proposals and costs are required before a project could be developed.