

Meeting : Congleton Partnership Executive.

Date : Tuesday 7th March 2017 **Time:** 5.30pm.

Location: Grand Hall, Congleton Town Hall.

In attendance: S.Foster(Chair), M.Smith, D.Murphy, P.Aston, D.Daniel , G.Williams, J.Money, J.MacArthur, M.Gartside, P.Pinto, L.Alcock, J.Money ,D.Brown,V.Cutcliffe, P.Boon,P.Holdsworth,D.Topping.

Guests: A.Harrison & R.Boston (Fairtrade Steering group) Cllr S.Holland.

Item	Agenda Item / discussion	Action / comment
1	<p><u>Welcome, Introduction & Apologies:</u></p> <p><i>The meeting was chaired by S.Foster</i></p> <p>Steve opened the meeting by welcoming everyone including guest speaker Alan Harrison (Fairtrade Group) Cllrs R.Boston & S.Holland.</p>	<p>Apologies were received from : R.Edwards, J.Crowther,S.Nixon, A.Morrison,S.Akers Smith</p>
2.	<p><u>Minutes From Previous meeting / actions arising.</u></p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 6.12.16 were accepted as a true and correct record (GW/PA)and signed by the chair.</p> <p><i>Matters Arising:-</i></p> <p><i>Item 3. Dementia Friends.</i> D.Murphy felt there was value of Sara presenting to the Pub Watch Group and Ex-servicemen's Club.</p>	<p>D.Murphy still to action this</p>
3.	<p><u>Community Projects.</u></p> <p>MS sent out Jo report prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Subjects covered included :-</p>	

	<p>A new date for the Xmas light switch on (SAT 25th November)</p> <p>Food 7 Drink Festival (Sun 11th June)</p> <p>Hidden Places Theatre Day (6th May) plus workshops starting 8th April.</p> <p>Vol Fest – CVSCE’s Volunteer and Gala Evening in Congleton Park (1st July)</p> <p>Get Involved booklet update and print, letters gone to almost 100 groups.</p> <p>Margaret Sculpture, planting, stepping stones and plaque to finish off.</p>	
4.	<p><u>Town Centre Report – J.MacArthur</u></p> <p>1. Occupancy Rate: We currently have 183 filled town centre properties out of 204 – making our occupancy rate 89%. We have some worrying vacancies in the pedestrian area. A planning application has been re-submitted by Boots Opticians for the large unit on the corner of Victoria Street. But we have 5 empty units on the pedestrian area as well as some big gaps in the High Street. Once the Public Realm improvement works have taken place on the pedestrian area the whole area should look more attractive and which should help stimulate interest.</p> <p>2. Business Rates - there’s some good news for smaller independent businesses. The nationwide rates review put Congleton prices up slightly (now based on 2015 rentable values rather than 2008) the government set annual multiplier has slightly decreased (Businesses Rates are worked out as the Rentable Value x the Government multiplier). The standard multiplier has reduced from 49.7p to 47.9p and the small business multiplier reduced from 48.6p to 46.6p. On top of this the qualifying level for Small Business Rate Relief has increased so that 100% relief is given on Rateable Values of £12,000 compared to £6,000 last year and those with rateable values of £12,000 - £15,000 will get tapered relief 100% down to 0 meaning more of our independent traders, providing they only have one shop are paying less than in previous years.</p> <p>3. Big Data Small User Project: Data patterns for footfall and sales are starting to establish and the maths</p>	

department at Cardiff University is having fun detecting patterns. They have identified four main types of town based on annual footfall flows. Congleton is falling into the community/convenience town pattern. (A term that the universities are using to group together towns with similar footfall packages) Congleton market has limited impact on footfall. Saturday is consistently our busiest day, followed by Friday. Sunday is the quietest. Tuesday or Thursdays usually take third place. Weather has an influence. The interesting work will come with the interventions to see what impact they have on sales and footfall. Nationally shopping centres are losing more footfall than town centres. It appears that some of the older planning assumptions with hierarchy of towns is becoming outdated, Institute of Place Management looking to put out a policy paper based on population and accessibility research – but the five mile radius is more accurate than the traditional catchment zones.

4. **The Public Realm £1 million funding:** Public Realm works in the pedestrianised area and immediate road either end, is due to start in Spring 2017. Cheshire East is in the final throws of contracts – the public realm team is expected to present the final designs to the Town Council soon and these will be shared with the partnership. The design is picking up on the heritage but with a modern twist. The works are expected to start at the B&M end of the pedestrian area, working on a section at a time before starting the next section. Information will be forwarded as it becomes available.
5. **Gas Works :** The pedestrian area was completed two weeks ahead of schedule and was relatively smooth. The works in Mill Street are causing more problems and I am starting to work with some of the traders on compensation claims. The latest update is that the current works in Mill Street should finish on Thursday. The works on West Street – just around the corner from Swan Bank will start on Monday 13 March and must be finished by the 10 April, although hopefully won't need the full time. During the West Street works traffic will be able to travel up Mill Street and Swan Bank but will be diverted up Waggs Street and around the crescent. We know we are going to have to work at getting customers back into town and are looking at a Congleton Treats day on Tuesday 11 April and have also planned an Easter Egg shops hunt for April 1 – 18th.
6. **The Mills Congleton – AKA Scarborough Development :** I understand from Cheshire East Councillors that Scarborough is presenting the Congleton Ward Councillors on Wednesday 8th March with the intention of moving towards a planning application, Scarborough will be discussing releasing the

	<p>information to the Town Council and Partnership following their meetings with Cheshire East. <i>(NB Scarborough presenting to CEBC ward members 8.3.17)</i></p> <p>7. Congleton in Bloom: This year the team is going out to win North West in Bloom and get the town back in the National Finals in 2018 which will be the 20th anniversary of Congleton in Bloom. The In Bloom team are delighted with the support of the partnership on so many projects to improve the town –Moody Street Gardens, Margaret’s Place, Greening Mountbatten Way and Public Realm. All of which add up to making Congleton more attractive. The judging will be in July. There will be monthly town tidies – starting in Congleton Park on Saturday 25 March from 10-12 and led by Glen Williams - all very, very welcome!</p> <p>8. Christmas: The Christmas Group is shaking things up a little this year, and following consultation with a wide range of groups involved with the switch on the main event will take place on Saturday 25 November. There were a number of reasons for the change, but ultimately we aim to attract more people into town for longer at a time when more of the shops are open and make the event more of an all afternoon celebration rather than a very concentrated period that it has become. The Town Council is putting £4k into this event and Bob Edwards, David McGifford and myself have started looking at sponsorship deals for the town for the year to include Christmas and In Bloom.</p> <p>9. Welcome MAP : These will be up by the end of March this year.</p> <p>10. Bear Necessities: The next edition will be distributed from the 4th April. Copy is being written at the moment. If any partnership member has information for April, May and June please let Jackie know urgently – 01260 270350 ext 3 or jm@congletontowncouncil.co.uk</p>	
5.	<p><u>Fairtrade – Alan Harrison (Congleton Steering Group)</u></p> <p>Alan took us through a presentation about Fairtrade, its origin, ethics and range of products currently marketed. He questioned if we were aware of the branding and if in fact we look for the brand when making a purchase. Congleton has been a Fairtrade town in the past, but now coming up to a review of its status, currently we</p>	

	<p>display the Fairtrade Logo on our town entry signs and will allowed subject to the review of our status.</p> <p>The steering group is short on numbers and looking for recruits, if anyone wishes to join please contact Alan at alancharrison@tesco.net</p> <p>Alan has spoken to D.McGifford about the renewal of the towns status, Sally Holland felt that the council should consider this.</p> <p>SF indicated that a local company Thrive Creative Congleton (MD Dave Powell) was currently offering free marketing courses, and may be a way of learning how to lift the brands profile.</p> <p>The group does work closely with other local Fairtrade groups, eg Alsager, Macclesfield.</p>	
6.	<p><u>St John's Community Centre</u></p> <p>Peter Holdsworth advised us of the grand Opening of the St John's Community centre in Buglawton. Around £400k has been spent on renovating and developing St John's Church Hall and Headmasters House.</p> <p>Thanks to agencies and sponsors (including The Partnership providing 4 cookers) most of the work is now complete and they are holding a grand opening event from 12 noon on Saturday 11th March.</p> <p>Leaflet drop has been carried out around Buglawton, MS has Emailed all of the Partnership Groups and Town Councillors. Everyone welcome to attend.</p> <p>The group was successful in the health and wellbeing PB funding exercise being awarded funding to run cookery classes.</p>	
7.	<p>Congleton Museum – David Topping.</p> <p>David gave a talk on the continuing success of increased visitor numbers, the breadth of schools receiving the museum's educational programme and how accreditation had broad major exhibits to Congleton.</p> <p>David issued a couple of handouts indicating:-</p>	

	<p>1. Where the visitors came from, there was a large proportion from the midlands and northern England but also further afield (Manitoba, Mexico, Australia & New Zealand, Qatar and Europe.</p> <p>2. School attending educational workshops, all Congleton Schools (primary) plus others from Ellesmere Port to Biddulph and Calverly to Altricham and many schools in between.</p> <p>Visitor numbers are up +50% (equiv of 20% of Congleton's population) Donations from visitors +100% and accreditation has brought both the Cheshire and Roman Hoards.</p> <p>Now is the time to improve visibility, the move the Bradshaw House would not only do that but improve footfall for Lawton St, increase space for education but also mean more exhibits being displayed (currently only around 50% are displayed)</p> <p>D.McG to act as a link between CTC, CEBC and the Museum and develop a business plan.</p> <p>The Congleton Partnership is fully supportive of the developing plans for the museum.</p>	.
8.	<p><u>Group Reports:-</u></p> <p>Youth Forum.</p> <p>Glen reported that the forum had been focusing on Mental Health and Drug Misuse for the last 12 months. We have been successful through the PB funding round and received £2500 to support a programme on this subject which we hope to deliver starting in the next few weeks.</p> <p>The forum indicated that we should still focus on delivering a little bit more of the same, more on YP's life choices. The next meeting will explore this and look at more positive opportunities and activities.</p> <p>DM again raised the idea of sporting opportunities, Basketball, Table Tennis and Cricket Club Youth Bowling Section. DM offered to put our YP's in touch with them.</p> <p>CSG / Cycle Legacy.</p>	

Cycling Legacy. New 5 Towns Cycling map being produced (update on original)

New CEBC Cycling Strategy going to cabinet 14.3.17

N.Hood Plan. Cycling and walking now prevalent within the plan

Ambitious plan to link Barn Rd with Town Ctr, new bridge across the Dane.

Vale Allotments. All plots now allocated inc a community plot and one for Marlfields School

Current issue around the collapsed wall back on Moody St.

Havannah Weir Hydro. Eaton Bank School are hosting a public launch event on 28th March at 6.30pm

Applied for £80K grant from DEFRA , letter of intent from Siemens re support and power procurement.

Fracking. Barry Fox has written a paper on Fracking. Cheshire East appears a ripe area for this kind of activity and CSG's view is that we should not have it. We would like some direction from CEBC. PA/BF to write to CEBC for clarification.

Congleton Creative. A full report was issued to members prior to the meeting. Subject covered included :-

Mosaics for Moody St Sensory Garden.

Carers 4 All adult art workshops

Hidden Places Promenade Theatre Day 6th May

Art Exhibitions "Freedom" , "The Map You Make" and "No More Heroes Anymore".

Jazz and Blues – August bank holiday weekend.

Senior Forum. Currently getting some good attendances at meetings, last one held at Old Saw Mill, sessions by Cheshire Hospice and U3A Congleton. Good support for the elderly across Congleton, the trick is to reach them, a new data bank to link to our website page is being put together. Senior Health Fayre planned for Sept 29th, sub group is busy in pulling this together. Will be much bigger and more interactive than last year's event.

The Old Saw Mill. Peter reported on recent developments. A new stairlift is now operating thanks to The Town Trust and Young Peoples Trust.

Disabled toilet has been gifted and constructed downstairs.

The commercial kitchen is being fitted out thanks to CEBC

Heating fully working thanks to The Partnership.

PA now has a licence to sell alcohol, and is now working on a premise licence.

2 paid cooks taken on Mon to Fri

Xmas lunch was a great success now more are planned. Easter Sunday, Mid Summer and Harvest Festival, details to follow.

Membership scheme is now open, MS to send out application form.

AGM being planned for Apr/May, tbc.

Projects and Finance. A full report was sent out prior to the meeting. Good progress being made on Moody St Gardens, Play Area signage/ development, Town centre maps, Mountbatten Way greening.

Cenotaph still awaiting CEBC to confirm Colehill Bank Wall and Tree work plans. (*just confirmed should start around 17th July*)

	<p>Mountbatten Way Greening. Cheshire East has now become a partner in this project and means that we can look to further work on improving the whole aspect around this area. The Executive voted to spend some of the previously set aside Public Realm monies on purchasing 16 large tubs to replace old and damaged on MB Way. £4768.</p> <p>DM raised the issue of a piece of land at the bottom of Booth St. Suggest this goes before the next In Bloom Meeting to see if there is a desire to work on this area.</p>	
	<p>A.O.B</p> <p>Mini Bus. Congleton Community Transport Partnership (sub group but separately financed arm of The Partnership) is holding an event to officially launch their mini bus scheme at New Life Church on Wednesday 15th March, 2.00 to 3.00pm.</p> <p>Two mini buses are now available for use by organisations with some attachment to The Partnership at very reasonable rates.</p> <p>1 x 8 seater</p> <p>1 x 15 seater.</p> <p>Choral Society Stage. Currently being housed at OSM, but as they are about to enlarge the stage it will be too much for OSM to cope. DM suggests that PA has a word with Cheshire Police to see if they have any storage we could use.</p>	
	<p>The meeting ended at 7.24pm</p> <p>Next Meeting is:- Tuesday 6th June 2017, Bridestones Suite, 5.30pm.</p> <p>Signed:- Chair.</p>	