

MINUTES OF TOWN CENTRE HERITAGE TASK GROUP

22 JUNE 2017

PRESENT:

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

Michael Beirne (Town Centre and Tourism Team Leader), Victoria Gabbitas (Arts, Heritage and Visitor Services Manager) and Linn Ashmore (Democratic Services Officer)

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED THAT – Councillor Miss Lawrence be appointed Chairman of the Task Group.

2. BRIEFING PAPER AND PRESENTATION

The task group received a presentation from the Town Centre and Tourism Team Leader setting the scene for the review. A copy of the presentation is attached to the minutes.

In addition to the presentation the following points were made:

- 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.
- The Town Centre Action Plan 2016-2020 focuses on five areas:
 - Marketing
 - Visitor economy
 - Planning
 - Physical environment/public realm
 - Investment/business support
- The visitor economy element includes the promotion of Rugby as a tourism destination to attract visitors.
- One specific piece of work carried out on marketing was the new branding with the strapline 'Find Yourself Here'.
- Key points to consider in relation to marketing were:
 - Target market
 - Digital technology
 - Ability to gather customer information
- Rugby's key unique selling point was related to the fact it was the birthplace of the game but it also has a rich heritage.
- The key objective of the review was to drive footfall. Care was needed to balance the work of the task group.

The following options were discussed:

Option 1 – introduce a Green Plaque scheme. There were some specific plaque schemes in London affiliated to English Heritage but in other parts of the country locally operated schemes were in place that were more flexible.

Leaflets on Rugby's Blue Plaques were circulated to members. There were currently 32 blue plaques located in and around the town centre. The task group were informed the leaflets were very popular with visitors and there were plans in place for a re-print to include the new branding.

Option 2 – enhance existing initiatives such as the Blue Plaque Trail, Pathway of Fame, Town Guides and sculptures.

Option 3 – review the extent that the current town centre events programme focuses on heritage. Some of the annual events include the Festival of Culture, the food and drink festival and the Christmas lights switch-on. Collectively they encourage over 30,000 visitors per annum.

The review could define how heritage was represented in the events programming.

Option 4 – mobile apps have huge potential to enhance visitors' experience and change how to access information. Members were shown a video of an example of an interactive advertisement highlighting how locations and objects could be brought to life.

Some form of mobile app could be developed using links to famous personalities from Rugby's past to bring each location to life. Old photographs of Rugby could be included to show Rugby as it appeared in the past to show then and now.

QR codes would be relatively easy to introduce and could be added to plaques.

During further discussion the following points were made:

- The target audience should be considered, and also how could younger people be encouraged to visit?
- Some statistical analysis collated as part of the Rugby World Cup celebrations could be useful.
- Visitors should be encouraged to visit while the shops were open, but at present not many shops in the town centre open on Sundays.
- Weekdays were more likely to see older visitors coming to the town.
- There was more to the town than Rugby School and the game. Links to past history could include:
 - The beginning of Rugby as a settlement
 - Rugby as a market town and as a railway town
 - Rugby as a centre for industry and manufacturing
 - Links to local world championship motorcyclists
 - The Crossroads Care Charity was set up in Rugby taking its name from the programme Crossroads
 - The Green Flag scheme was introduced in Rugby
 - Burial place of Denise Dael, known as the "Lady of the Menin Gate"
 - Burial place of the Wratislaws family, reputedly descendants of King Wenceslas
- There should be tangible or physical land marks for visitors.
- The Rugby Art Gallery and Museum (RAGM) has a separate programme of events.
- The RAGM could produce information on activities and events around the broader themes of heritage. There would be opportunities to explore what the public would like to see and identify which topics were of the most interest. This could also be an opportunity to measure the extent of public knowledge and possibly gather artefacts or collections.

- There was a collection in storage relating to Black History Month and linked to community heritage which included 25,000 glass plate negatives. These could be scanned and printed and included portraits of people arriving in the town between 1958 and 1972.
- There were a number of external funding streams which could be accessed to provide funds for heritage schemes or projects.
- People's place of birth can be important and the review could also link to people who have moved away from the town.
- There were a variety of well-established local history groups, including some in local villages that may have relevant information to support the review.
- Other towns and local authorities such as Stratford-upon-Avon may have marketing strategies to draw visitors. Links with other tourism officers from similar towns to Rugby could be explored to share good practise.
- Community groups and venues would be a valuable source of information.
- There may be opportunities for literary tourism through marketing the local links to famous poets and writers. This could include the war poets and the centenary for the end of WWI.
- A suggestion was made to develop what Rugby has to offer and market this. One example was hiring stalls at literary events such as the Hay Festival.
- It was acknowledged that not every period in history has local significance.
- The Town Centre Guides should have a more consistent script for the tours.

The media team should be requested to publicise the review and encourage potential partners, local history groups and people to come forward. This could be via local newspapers and the website. Officers undertook to consult with the media team on ways to promote the review and create a press release.

Due to the limited amount of time before the next meeting it was agreed that officers would liaise with the communications team on the suitable approach to publicise the work of the task group and appeal for relevant information, in consultation with the task group Chairman.

The task group would consider who to consult and what evidence was required at its next meeting.

Officers were requested to prepare a report outlining what was currently available and an overview of the town's history. This should identify any gaps in history.

Members of the task group were encouraged to join one of the heritage walking tours being carried out by the Rugby Town Guides and featured as part of the Rugby Festival of Culture.

The task group aimed to report to the parent committee, Whittle Overview and Scrutiny Committee, at the meeting either in November or January.

3. ONE PAGE STRATEGY

The task group agreed the one-page strategy which had been circulated with the agenda. The broad aims of the review were defined as "to encourage local residents and visitors of all ages to explore, to enjoy, and to take pride in Rugby town's heritage."

The task group agreed that it would need at least four meetings to undertake an effective programme of work. The specific topic areas were reviewed and the order of the programme of work was agreed as follows:

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.

Opportunities for funding was included on the list of areas relevant to the discussion and local history groups, Rugby First Limited, Rugby School and Rugby Art Gallery and Museum were added to the list of consultees.

4. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the task group’s next meeting be held at 5.30pm on Thursday 27 July 2017.

The next meeting would focus on part 1 of the specific review topics (as minuted above) and a report from officers outlining the current history/heritage and identifying any gaps.

CHAIRMAN

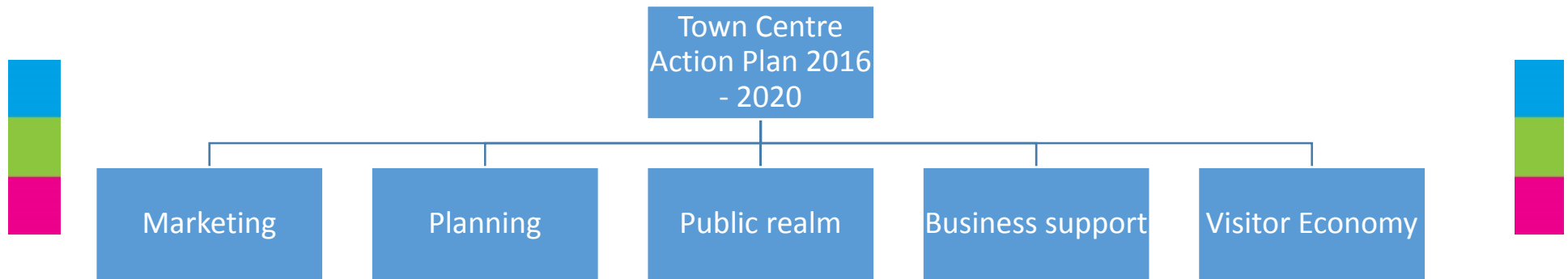
TOWN CENTRE HERITAGE TASK GROUP JUNE 2017



Introduction

- Green Plaque scheme considered: 12 September 2016
- One-page strategy agreed 13 March 2017
- Rugby Town Centre Action Plan 2016 – 2020
- Visitor Economy Working Party and World Rugby Hall of Fame Scrutiny Group





SINCE 1823 THE RUGBY TOWN



WARREN CLOSE CHARLOTTE STREET ALBERT SQUARE ALBERT STREET ARNOLD STREET BANK STREET BARBY ROAD BENNFIELD ROAD
ACE ELBOROW STREET ELSEE ROAD CHESTNUT FIELD CHURCH STREET CHURCH WALK CLIFTON ROAD CORPORATION STREET ESCENT JAMES STREET
LITTLE ELBOROW EVRELIK WAY GAS STREET HENRY STREET HIGH STREET HILLMORTON ROAD HORTON CREEK ROAD NORTH STREET OLIVER STREET PARK ROAD PENNINGTON STREET RAILWAY TERRACE STREET MANNING WALK MARKET HALL
WHITE-HALL ROAD WILLIAM STREET REGENT PLACE REGENT STREET RUSSELHEIM WAY SHEEP STREET ST. MATTHEWS STREET UNION STREET WARWICK STREET WEST LEYES WESTWAY WHITEHALL ROAD WILLIAM STREET REGENT PLACE REGENT STREET RUSSEL



FIND YOURSELF HERE

Marketing: what needs to be considered?

- Target markets – where from and who?
- Use of digital and modern technology for unique experiences
- Opportunities to collect customer information e.g. town centre Wi-Fi network
- Promotion of the town's wider heritage vs birthplace of the game
USP
- Increasing footfall in the town centre and to individual destinations

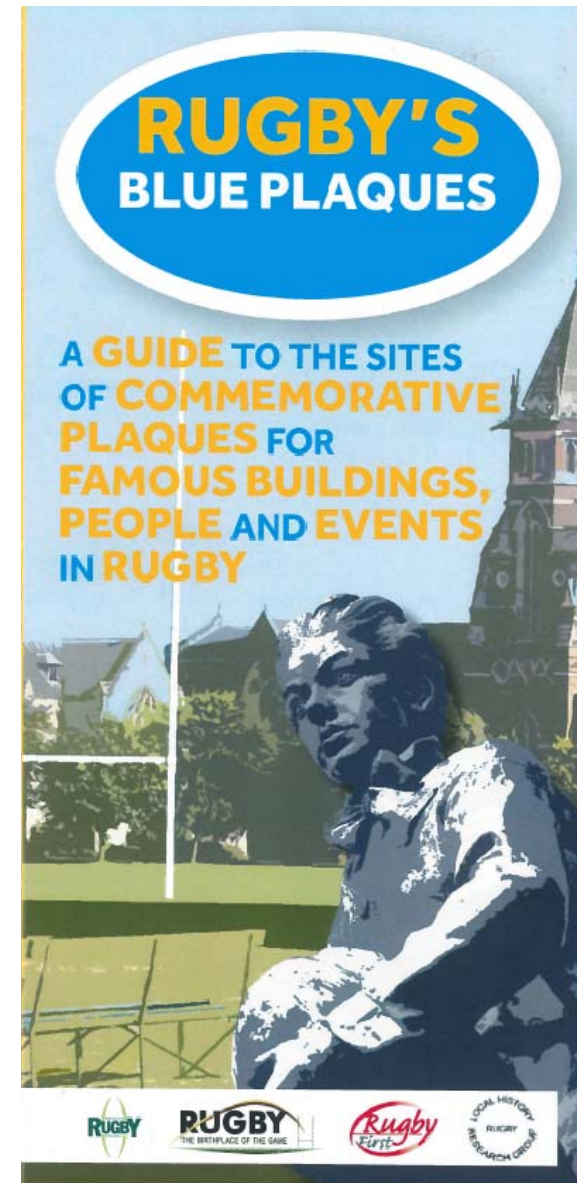
Plaque Schemes

- Some schemes supported by English Heritage – London based only
- Green plaque schemes in other borough's – providing more flexibility
- Local-run schemes not bound by English Heritage criteria
- Blue Plaque scheme created in Rugby: 2004
- 32 in total to date - commemorates people and places



Enhanced promotion of existing schemes

- Blue Plaques, Pathway of Fame and sculptures
- Town Guides programme
- Leaflets, social media, website and events
- Other opportunities



[ENTERTAINMENT](#)[SHOPPING](#)[FOOD AND DRINK](#)[STAYING](#)[DISCOVERING](#)

Rugby Town Centre Information

[Home](#) > [Discovering](#) > **Guided walking tours**

Guided walking tours

The Rugby Town Guides take residents and visitors on a journey of discovery through the town centre, revealing fascinating facts about the history of the borough.

The free tours start at Rugby Visitor Centre and visit the Webb Ellis Football Museum, the Webb Ellis Statue and The Queen's Gates at Rugby School's The Close. Other stops include Regent Street, High Street, the Rupert Brooke Statue and St Andrew's Church.

Tours leave the visitor centre at 2pm on Wednesdays and 11am on Saturdays, every week until November.

Categories

[Entertainment](#)[Shopping](#)[Eating and drinking](#)



The Rugby Town

25 May at 12:32 · 🌐

Enjoy the warm weather this weekend with a free town tour! Depart Rugby Visitor Centre every Saturday at 11am and Wednesday at 2pm.
[#findyourselfhere](#)



👍 Like

💬 Comment

➦ Share



Town Centre events programme

- Bikefest, Festival of Culture, Food & Drink Festival, Christmas light switch-on
- Jointly funded by Rugby First and Rugby Borough Council
- Attracts 30,000+ visitors per year
- Review of objectives and target markets



Mobile apps

- Town centre environments with additional interesting and engaging content
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vDNzTasuYEw>
- 3D characters, video or visitor interpretation
- Ability to enhance existing trails



Summary

- Consideration of wider town centre marketing activities and projects
- Projects dependent on different target markets and objectives
- Options – new activities vs existing opportunities
- Further details and costs required