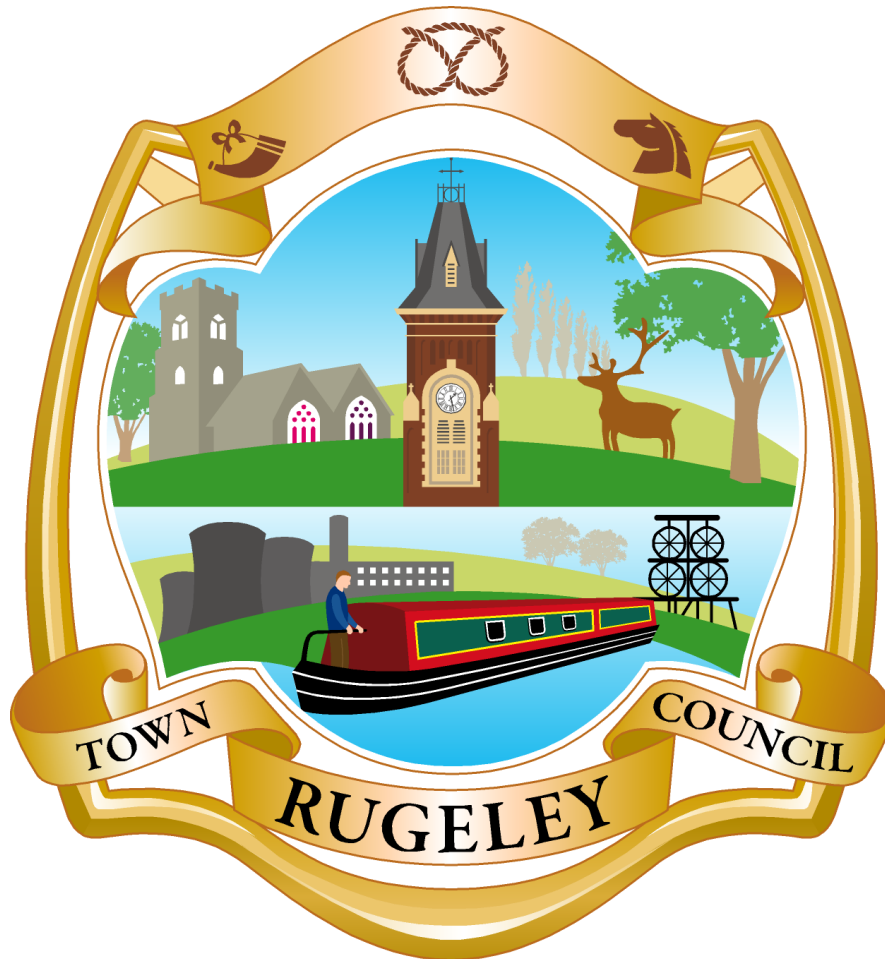


Rugeley Town Council

Annual Report

2019/2020



Message from the Chairman – Councillor Robert Dipple

Now at the end of my second year as Chairman, I would like to thank my colleagues for their time and effort given to running Rugeley Town Council. It has possibly been the toughest two years of this Council's existence with last year's fraud and theft, but it has been a serious learning curve for everyone. Looking back, I do feel that we are all stronger and better for the experience.

The Council is of course supported by salaried staff all of whom have given their all and I thank them for their support. Our Town Clerk, Hilary Goodreid is supported by Kate Roberts as our Responsible Finance Officer and their work and diligence will take us forward to a more secure future.

The last year saw a considerable amount of effort go into revamping and remarketing the Rose Theatre. In summer 2019 the theatre buildings received an external makeover with new paint, signage and external lighting. This has certainly given the building more kerb appeal. The Rose Theatre has had an exceptional year with bookings at an all-time high and a promising year ahead of them. Unfortunately at the end of 2019/2020, we had to temporarily close the theatre in line with government guidance owing to the Coronavirus pandemic. I should like to thank all the theatre staff for their hard work and dedication running this fantastic community facility.

Charter Fair 2019 was unfortunately cancelled due to heavy rain and a waterlogged site. This was a huge disappointment for all staff who had given up a considerable amount of time to organise this, as well as disappointment to local residents, business and charities. We hope that future year's events will not be similarly affected.

Particular mention must go to Councillor Mahon who was instrumental in establishing the monthly town centre window display competitions which were taken on by the Community Engagement Committee. In addition, the introduction of the Totally Locally initiative was a success and we look forward to seeing more of these initiatives over the coming years. There has been a real lift in community spirit, increasing footfall in the town centre and culminating in a fantastic Christmas Light switch on and fair – working in partnership with the Rugeley Lotto Events group.

Thanks also to Cllrs Lyons and Mahon for their work with the community in establishing Rugeley in Bloom which was planned for summer 2020.

The planned redevelopment of the Rugeley power station site saw the establishment of the Power For All group which again was supported by Councillors. The council are also looking to work with this group to deliver the Neighbourhood Plan for Rugeley in coming years.

As Chair of the Council, I attended several events. Amongst them were – Charity Easter Bonnet Competition, the Boer War Plaque unveiling, Childhood Memories display event, Christmas Light Switch On, Children's Vision For Rugeley Competition and a couple of Amazon Liaison Forums. I do enjoy seeing all the generations of this town coming together at these events, celebrating the town and its people.

Along the way, the Town Council benefits enormously from the input of the towns District and County Councillors. My thanks go to them for their support and lobbying on matters that are of importance to the development of this town.

Much of the funding to operate the town council in everything it does comes from the Precept – part of the local council tax. Yet again, we were able to keep the precept at a 0% increase for the local ratepayers.

And as I bow out to a new Chair for 2020/2021, I wish the council well for the future and know that they will be extremely well looked after by our committed staff.

Robert Dipple
Chair
Rugeley Town Council

Introduction

Rugeley Town Council covers the wards of Etchinghill, Western Springs (south), Western Springs (north) and Hagley. The Council has 19 members who are elected every 4 years. The next Council election is 2023. The Council employs a Town Clerk and a Responsible Financial Officer. In addition, the Council employs a Theatre Manager, Caretaker and a Cleaner who are employed to deal with the Rose Theatre for the Council.

The Full Council meets at 7.30pm on the first Wednesday of every month except August. Meetings are open to the public who may raise questions and concerns in the public part of the meeting. In addition to Full Council meetings, we hold the following committees:

- Rose Committee: meets on the second Wednesday of every month (except August and December) to deal with all matters relating to the operation, management and care of the Rose Theatre;
- Community Engagement Committee: meets on the second Wednesday of the month (except August and December) to consider the main town council run events in the town (e.g. Charter Fair and Christmas Lights) and project development and operation for the town council;
- Planning Committee: meets on the 3rd Wednesday of every month (except August) to consider local planning applications;
- Finance and Management Committee: meets on the 3rd Wednesday of every month (except August) to deal with management and operation of the town council itself.

All agendas and minutes for these meetings can be found on the Town Council website: http://www.rugeleytowncouncil.gov.uk/Council_Meetings_11331.aspx and a detail breakdown of the work of the committees can be found on the website: <http://www.rugeleytowncouncil.gov.uk/UserFiles/Files/Minutes/43947-S22C-618060712280.pdf>

Elected Position of Councillors on the Town Council

Elections were held in May 2019 and we started the year with a full complement of councillors. During the year we sadly said goodbye to Councillor Mick Grocott (1950 – 2019). Cllr Grocott played a key role in the history of the town and district council and his loss was sorely felt. Early in 2020 we also had the resignation of Cllr Dave Lucas. Both vacancies were advertised but appointment to the vacancies was delayed to summer 2020 owing to the Covid-19 outbreak. The vacancies were advertised on the Town Council website, the town notice boards and through Cannock Chase District Council.

Councillors as of 31 March 2020

Councillor	Ward	Elected/Co-opted
Pat Ansell	Western Springs (south) – Liberal Democrat	Elected
Angi Cooney	Etching Hill – Independent	Elected
Bob Dipple (Chair)	Etching Hill - Independent	Elected
Richard Elkin	Hagley - Labour	Elected
David Gaye	Etching Hill - Labour	Elected
Gary Grant	Etching Hill - Independent	Elected
Chris Green	Western Springs (north) - Independent	Elected
Ian Hodgson	Western Springs (south) - Independent	Elected
Robert Hughes	Hagley – Conservative	Elected
Olivia Lyons	Etching Hill – Conservative	Elected
Niamh Mahon	Etching Hill – Independent	Elected
Christine Martin	Hagley – Labour	Elected
Chris Panter-Hood	Western Springs (north) - Independent	Elected
Neil Stanley	Western Springs (north) - Independent	Elected
Anna Szklarczyk	Etching Hill – Independent	Elected
Kieran Tait-Green	Hagley – Labour	Elected
Glenis Turner	Western Springs (north) - Independent	Elected
Vacancy	Western Springs (north)	
Vacancy	Hagley	

Councillors Attendance at Full Council Meetings 2019/2020

FULL COUNCIL	Totals		% attendance
	Actual	Possible	
Clr Ansell	9	10	90%
Clr Cooney	7	10	70%
Clr Dipple	9	10	90%
Clr Elkin	8	10	80%
Clr Gaye	10	10	100%
Clr Grant	10	10	100%
Clr Green	7	10	70%
Clr Hodgson	8	10	80%
Clr Hughes	10	10	100%
Clr Lucas	8	8	100%
Clr Lyons	9	10	90%
Clr Mahon	10	10	100%
Clr Martin	6	10	60%
Clr Panter Hood	10	10	100%
Clr Stanley	10	10	100%
Clr Szklarczyk	8	10	80%
Clr Tait-Green	10	10	100%
Clr Turner	10	10	100%
Vacancy			

ROSE COMMITTEE	Totals		% attendance
	Actual	Possible	
Clr Ansell	4	9	44%
Clr Cooney	7	9	78%
Clr Dipple	8	9	89%
Clr Elkin	8	9	89%
Clr Gaye	8	9	89%
Clr Lucas	6	7	86%
Clr Mahon	9	9	100%
Clr Szklarczyk	9	9	100%
Clr Tait-Green	9	9	100%

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	Totals		
	Actual	Possible	% attendance
Clr Ansell	5	9	56%
Clr Cooney	8	9	89%
Clr Grant	7	9	78%
Clr Green	8	9	89%
Clr Hodgson	8	9	89%
Clr Lucas	7	8	88%
Clr Lyons	6	9	67%
Clr Mahon	9	9	100%
Clr Martin	2	9	22%

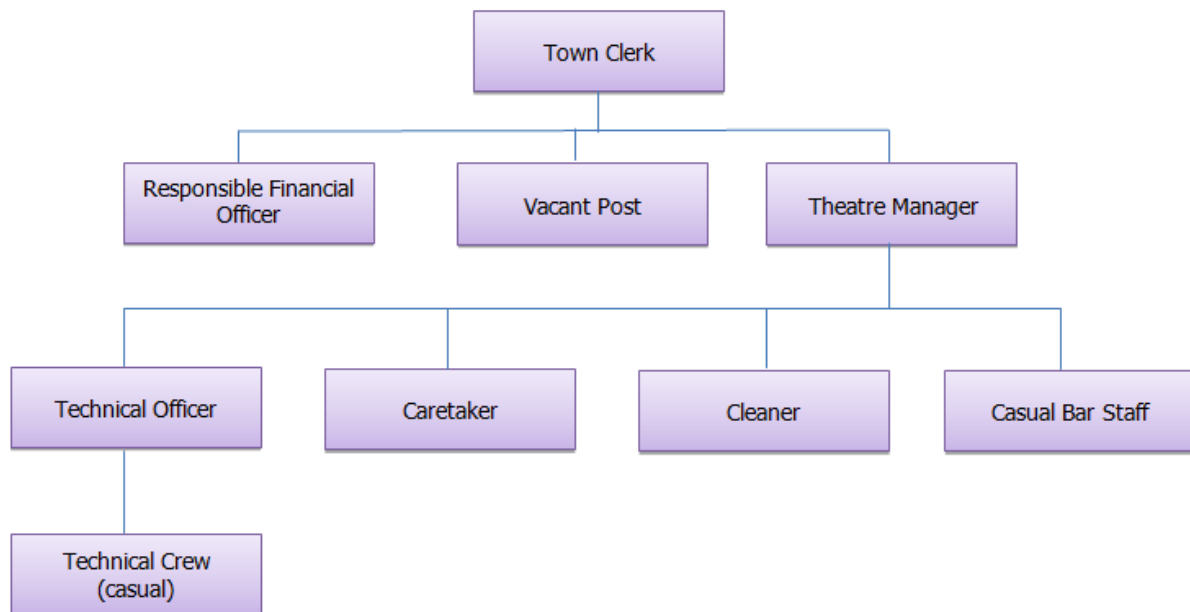
PLANNING COMMITTEE	Totals		
	Actual	Possible	% attendance
Clr Dipple	8	9	89%
Clr Elkin	7	9	78%
Clr Gaye	9	9	100%
Clr Green	7	9	78%
Clr Lyons	7	9	78%
Clr Mahon	7	9	78%
Clr Szklarczyk	4	7	57%
Clr Tait-Green	9	9	100%

FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT	Totals		
	Actual	Possible	% attendance
Clr Cooney	4	9	44%
Clr Dipple	8	9	89%
Clr Gaye	9	9	100%
Clr Grant	9	9	100%
Clr Hodgson	9	9	100%
Clr Hughes	9	9	100%
Clr Lucas	8	8	100%
Clr Panter-Hood	8	9	89%
Clr Stanley	9	9	100%

Rugeley Town Council Staff and Management

In April 2019, the Town Council staffing structure was a Town Clerk/RFO and an Assistant Town Clerk/Finance Officer. Following the dismissal of the Assistant Town Clerk in 2019 a restructuring took place and from January 2020 the structure of the Town Council is a Town Clerk and a Responsible Financial Officer (RFO). The Town Clerk administers all council meetings, manages staff, works with councillors to develop key events through the year, seeks grant funding and develops and runs projects. The RFO maintains the financial systems for the council, manages all payments & expenditure and works with Internal and External Auditors to ensure that the Annual Governance and Accountability Return is correct.

Rugeley Town Council Staffing Structure



The Rose Theatre

Rugeley Town Council manages and maintains the Rose Theatre on Taylors Lane, Rugeley. The Council employs a Theatre Manager, Cleaner and a Cleaner/Caretaker to maintain the property, manage bookings, promote the facilities and run the bar. Casual staff are taken on for some of the larger events in order to help run the bar and clean. A monthly retainer is made to a Theatre Technician.

In 2019/2020 we continued to deliver and support:

- Seniors afternoon tea every Wednesday between 12pm – 2pm
- Weekly Weight Watchers Classes
- Weekly Slimming Club Classes
- Summer Children's show
- Christmas Pantomime
- Weekly Community Art Class
- Pop Up Cinema – 4 times a year
- Touring theatre and musical groups
- Private hire for exam productions
- Learning Disabilities and Difficulties group
- Foster Carers meeting
- Private hire
- Rugeley Musical Theatre Company

The hire of the theatre and function rooms for regular weekly bookings, private events and community activities saw an overall increase in bookings of 42% on the previous

year. In addition 2019/2020 saw the complete external redecoration of the outside of the building with new lighting and signage.

The overall direction and management of the Rose Theatre is done through the Rose Committee.

Charter Fair

This year everything was arranged to have Charter Fair 2019 at Green Lane playing fields. We were all set for an exciting day but unfortunately the weather was not on our side! The event had to be cancelled as the field was too wet for the events to take place safely. This decision was not taken lightly but the safety of the performers and the public was utmost in our minds.

The overall direction and management of the Charter Fair is done through the Community Engagement Committee.

Christmas Lights

This annual event is run in conjunction with Rugeley Lotto Events. The Town Council pay for the Christmas lights in the town centre whilst the Lotto Events team arrange all the stalls and side shows.

The overall direction and management of the Christmas Lights is done through the Community Engagement Committee.

Remembrance Day

This year the Community Engagement Committee sought to add to the Remembrance experience by providing a waterfall of poppies down the clock tower and poppy decorations for the lampposts around town. These are all stored ready for future years.

Local Council Award

In 2018/2019, the Town Council obtained the Foundation Level of the Local Council Award Scheme. Work is underway to allow for application for Gold Level in the coming years. This scheme offers councils the opportunity to show that they meet the standards set by the sector, assessed by their peers, and to put in place the conditions for continued improvement.



Consultations and Project Development

A part of best practice, Rugeley Town Council works closely with neighbouring authorities and other public and private bodies in order to improve the quality of life and assist in the regeneration of the town. The following key consultations and ongoing discussions have taken place over 2019/2020:

- River Trent Management with Transforming the Trent Valley Landscape partnership
- Possible development of Green Lane play area with Cannock Chase District Council
- Redevelopment of Rugeley Power Station with Engie and Power for All
- Flood improvement works with Environment Agency
- Neighbourhood Plan development with local community and Cannock Chase District Council

In addition, funding was secured from a number of bodies to assist with project development:

- Tesco Bags of Help – money to support the redevelopment of Green Lane Play. Area scheduled for completion summer 2020
- Heritage Lottery Fund – Rugeley Childhood Memories of WWII which trained young people to record oral history, interviewing and film making – preserving the memories of Rugeley’s older residents. This is now lodged at the Standards Office and The British Library.
- Celebrate National Lottery 25 – money to help promote the Bicycle at Charter Fair 2020 by creating cycle routes through the town.
- Community Infrastructure Levy – money received from new development in Rugeley and has been ring fenced to help pay for the Green Lane play area.

Planning

Rugeley Town Council has a Planning Committee which sits on the third Wednesday of every month. Applications are received from Cannock Chase District Council where the land/property is in the town council boundary. The committee will also comment on applications which neighbour the town or have a direct impact on the town. Sadly, in 2019/2020 there was little public attendance at these meetings. A total of 60 planning applications came before councillors for their consideration in 2019/2020.

Newsletters and Promotion

Over the past year the Town Council have taken out 3 promotional articles in CityLife publication. The articles promoted upcoming events such as Charter Fair, Rugeley Fringe Festival and the Christmas Lights, as well as introducing the public to councillors following their election. The Town Councils website and Facebook pages continue to be the main way in which information about the council is distributed. The Rose Theatre has its own Facebook page and website, which have been undergoing improvements in the last year.

Rugeley Town Council: www.rugeleytowncouncil.gov.uk
Rugeley Rose Theatre: www.rugeley-rose-theatre.co.uk

Audit

Following a clean bill of health issued by the Internal and External Auditors for 2017/2018 and 2018/2019 the Council were concerned to discover that the then Assistant Clerk had defrauded the Council out of a considerable amount of money. Significant staff and Council time were taken up in the legal proceedings surrounding this event and measures were put in place to tighten up proceedings. Action is still being taken to recover the stolen funds. Despite the loss of Council funds, the Town Council continued to operate to budget and savings were made wherever possible.

Policies

Through the course of 2019/2020, council policies started to be reviewed with new policies introduced around whistle blowing and co-option of councillors. The following policies and procedures are now in place:

Standing Orders*
Financial Regulations*
Banking and Investment Policy
Child, Young Persons and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy
Co-opted Councillor Application Form and Policy
Community Engagement Policy
Complaints Procedure
Disciplinary and Grievance Procedure
Equal Opportunities Policy
Gender Equality Policy
Health and Safety Policy
Information Protection Policy
Information Security Policy
Lone Worker Policy and Risk Assessment
Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Policy
Risk Assessment*
Social Media and IT Policy
Statement of Internal Control
Training Policy
Whistle blowing Policy

** These policies are reviewed each year in May. Other policies are updated when national or legal situations change.*

Grants

Rugeley Town Council operates two grant schemes:

- Small Grants
- Urban Orchard Grants

The following grants were awarded in 2019/2020:

Cannock Chase SHED	£428.57
Rugeley Rifle Club	£428.57
Katherine House Hospice	£428.57
Rugeley Cricket Club	£428.57
Chetwynd Charity	£428.57
Live at Home Rugeley	£428.57
Rugeley in Bloom	£428.57
Total	£2,999.99

Finances

	Revenue Expenditure 2018/2019 £	Revenue Expenditure 2019/2020 £
Administration	76,000	72,987
Charter Fair	20,500	20,000
Christmas Lights	31,500	38,500
Council Office	14,787	24,559
Elections	5,000	11,710
Grant Aid	3,000	3,000
Other Services	56,250	23,320
Rugeley Rose Theatre	160,835	146,779
Total Gross Expenditure	367,872	340,855
Income	70,000	82,050
Total net expenditure	297,872	258,805
Total Precept	301,190	303,542