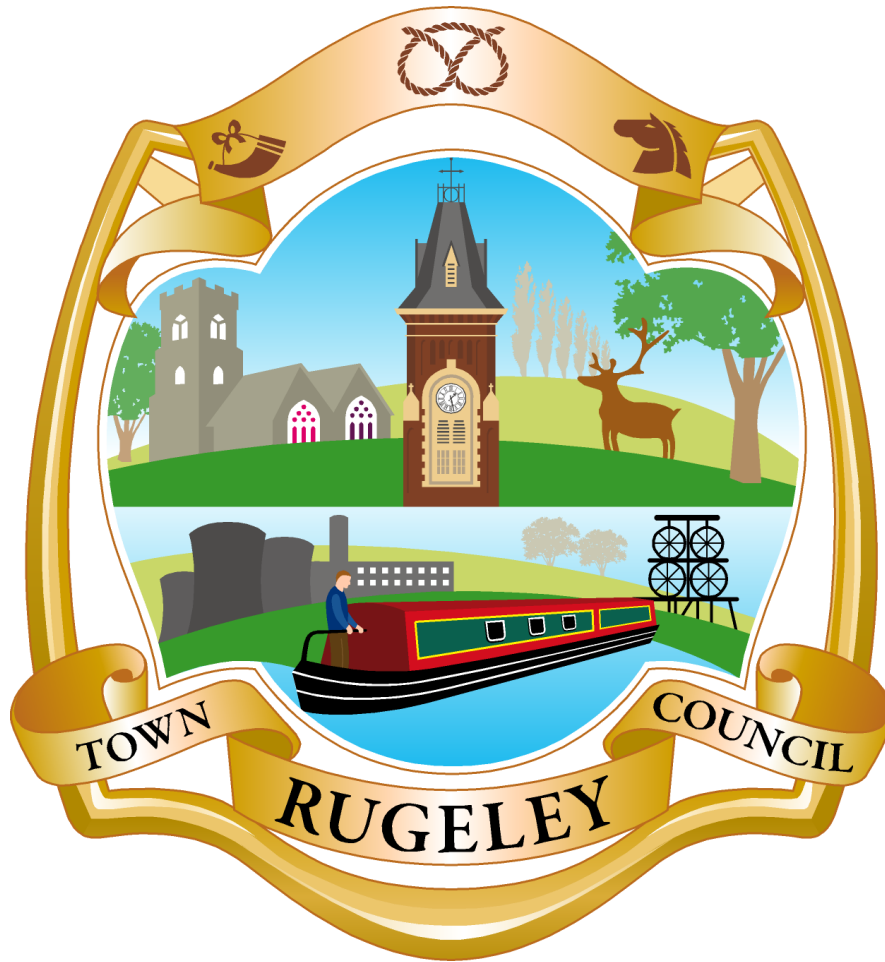


Rugeley Town Council

Annual Report

2021/2022



Message from the Chairman – Councillor Niamh Mahon

After a year of the pandemic, it was lovely to meet people face to face and see schools and businesses slowly and cautiously getting back to normal. The public and Councillors have been wary about meeting up in person but as the year went on, this became easier.

My year started by attending the demolition of the four cooling towers – the end of an era for the town. I was fortunate enough to have a ringside view, but I know many hundreds of the community watched from roads, gardens and other vantage points and accompanied the blowing up of the towers with cheers and tears.

Summer 2021 also saw the start of our monthly Artisan Markets in the town centre. Held on the first Saturday of each month, these markets are growing in popularity. We try to ensure that there is variety between the stalls to maximise visitor experience, and we have been fortunate to secure funding from Welcome Back to the High Street which has been used to pay for additional attractions and activities on the days of the markets.

A focus of my year has been linking to educational establishments and working with our young people. In July I visited the John Taylor Multi Academy Trust in Barton Under Needwood so have a sneak preview of what the new all through school will look like on the power station site. Throughout the year, I have engaged with several Primary Schools, encouraging young citizenship. Indeed, my final role was presenting a Certificate of Good Citizenship to the Year 5's at Forest Hill School. Etchinghill School, and The Hart have also been recipients of this award, introduced this year.

Throughout the year I have been working with local shop keepers to champion the idea of shop local/stay local. It was with great pleasure to be invited to officially open two new stores in the town. Indeed, it is fabulous to see even more new stores and a wider variety of stores opening in Rugeley. This is more important than ever as the pandemic meant that high street shopping opportunities were reduced.

In July the Town Council ran a competition for local artists to submit works developed during the lockdowns. The results were astounding and very emotional.

I continued to work closely with the Youth Council and supported them at their stall at the Artisan Fair in August. I also sponsored a young dramatist from the Hart School and she and her peers, with the support of their teacher and myself, presented Hour Glass at the Rugeley Rose in October.

Alzheimer's Society is a charity very close to my heart and I was also delighted to present a cheque to Alzheimer's Society for £1,639 which had been raised by Time for Tea in our indoor market.

Sadly, our Drive in Cinema and Food and Film Festivals were both cancelled owing to the sad passing of Prince Philip and then an outbreak of Covid. We have managed to move the bookings though to town centre activities during the coming year.

In September I had the pleasure of giving a talk to Pennybank Court Retirement Village on the origins of the building and its changes to its current use. It was lovely to engage with our older residents and hear their experiences.

It was lovely to welcome Zero Carbon Rugeley, Keele University, and other partners to the Rose Theatre in October where we hosted a drop in community forum, workshops, business masterclasses etc around green power.

In November it felt we were back to normal as we had a proper Christmas Lights Switch On event in person. It was lovely to see so many people in town again making the most of the market and enjoying the fair rides. We had invited nominations from the community for those key workers who had made such a difference during the pandemic to the lives of our residents – these people were then invited to turn on our Christmas lights.

2022 saw the return of the popular pop-up cinemas in the Rose Theatre. These are a great opportunity for our younger residents to enjoy cinema in a theatre set up and we run these each school holiday.

In March it was a delight to address the Phoenix Society on the role of the Chair and the Town Council as a whole and this raised £25 for The Alzheimer's Society.

Near the end of my Term of Office I unearthed the origins of the Chairs Chain and was pleased to discover that the designer, Edwina Morgan, still resides in Rugeley. The Chain and I visited Edwina and it was an emotional and thrilling moment to reunite the two after nearly 40 years.

The end of my term of office saw me performing on our very own Rugeley Rose stage in a performance of 'I am a Murdered Man' written by the local creative, Gerry Spinks – this was part of The Palmer Season. Running alongside this two week season, we had a display of historical artefacts on show in the Rose Theatre and Time For Tea supported us with afternoon teas for sale allowing us to raise money for The Voice for the forgotten dogs of Sal Cape Verde.

Niamh Mahon
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, a Development Manager, a Responsible Financial Officer and an Administrative 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) 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) to consider the main town council run events in the town (e.g. Artisan Markets, Christmas Lights) along with project development;
- Planning Committee: meets on the third Wednesday of every month (except August) to consider local planning applications;
- Finance and Management Committee: meets on the third 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: [Council Meetings - Rugeley Town Council](#) and a detail breakdown of the work of the committees can be found on the website: [Terms of Reference Version 5 October 2021.pdf \(rugeleytowncouncil.gov.uk\)](#)

Elected Position of Councillors on the Town Council

During the year we saw the resignation of Cllr Williams and Cllr Burgess. The vacancies were advertised on the Town Council website, the town notice boards and through Cannock Chase District Council. Appointments to these vacancies were made through co-option as elections were not called.

Councillors serving during 2021 - 2022

Councillor	Ward	Elected/Co-opted
Pat Ansell	Western Springs (south) – Liberal Democrat	Elected
Yvonne Burgess (<i>served for December 21</i>)	Western Springs (north) - Independent	Co-opted
Angi Cooney	Etching Hill – Independent	Elected
Bob Dipple	Etching Hill - Independent	Elected
David Gaye	Etching Hill - Labour	Elected
Gary Grant	Etching Hill - Independent	Elected
Chris Green	Western Springs (north) - Independent	Elected
Ian Gunner	Hagley - Labour	Co-opted
Ian Hodgson	Western Springs (south) - Independent	Elected
Robert Hughes	Hagley – Conservative	Elected
Olivia Lyons	Etching Hill – Conservative	Elected
Niamh Mahon (Chair)	Etching Hill – Independent	Elected
Christine Martin	Hagley – Independent	Elected
Chris Panter-Hood	Western Springs (north) - Independent	Elected
Ian Pyke (<i>started May 21</i>)	Hagley – Chase Community Independents	Elected
Neil Stanley	Western Springs (north) - Independent	Elected
Anna Szklarczyk	Etching Hill – Independent	Co-opted
Kieran Tait-Green	Hagley – Labour	Elected
Glenis Turner	Western Springs (north) - Independent	Elected
John Williams (<i>left October 2021</i>)	Western Springs (north)	Co-opted

Councillors Attendance at Full Council Meetings 2021/2022

FULL COUNCIL	Totals		% attendance
	Actual	Possible	
Clr Ansell	13	17	76%
Clr Burgess (<i>Dec 21</i>)	0	0	0%
Clr Cooney	14	17	82%
Clr Dipple	16	17	94%
Clr Gaye	13	17	76%
Clr Grant	16	17	94%
Clr Green	11	17	65%
Clr Gunner	13	17	76%
Clr Hodgson	14	17	82%
Clr Hughes	12	17	71%
Clr Lyons	10	17	59%
Clr Mahon	15	17	88%
Clr Martin	12	17	71%
Clr Panter Hood	10	17	59%
Clr Pyke (<i>started May 21</i>)	14	16	82%
Clr Stanley	13	17	76%
Clr Szklarczyk	10	17	59%
Clr Tait-Green	11	17	65%
Clr Turner	9	17	53%
Clr J Williams (<i>left Oct 21</i>)	6	10	60%

ROSE COMMITTEE	Totals		% attendance
	Actual	Possible	
Clr Ansell	9	11	82%
Clr Burgess (<i>December 21</i>)	1	1	100%
Clr Dipple	9	11	82%
Clr Gaye	10	11	91%
Clr Gunner	8	11	73%
Clr Mahon	10	11	91%
Clr Pyke (<i>from October 21</i>)	9	11	82%
Clr Szklarczyk	5	11	45%
Clr Tait-Green	11	11	100%
Clr Williams	5	5	100%

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	Totals		
	Actual	Possible	% attendance
Clr Ansell	8	12	67%
Clr Cooney	7	12	58%
Clr Green	12	12	100%
Clr Gunner	10	12	83%
Clr Hodgson	12	12	100%
Clr Lyons	6	12	50%
Clr Mahon	10	12	83%
Clr Stanley	10	11	91%
Clr Turner	5	11	45%

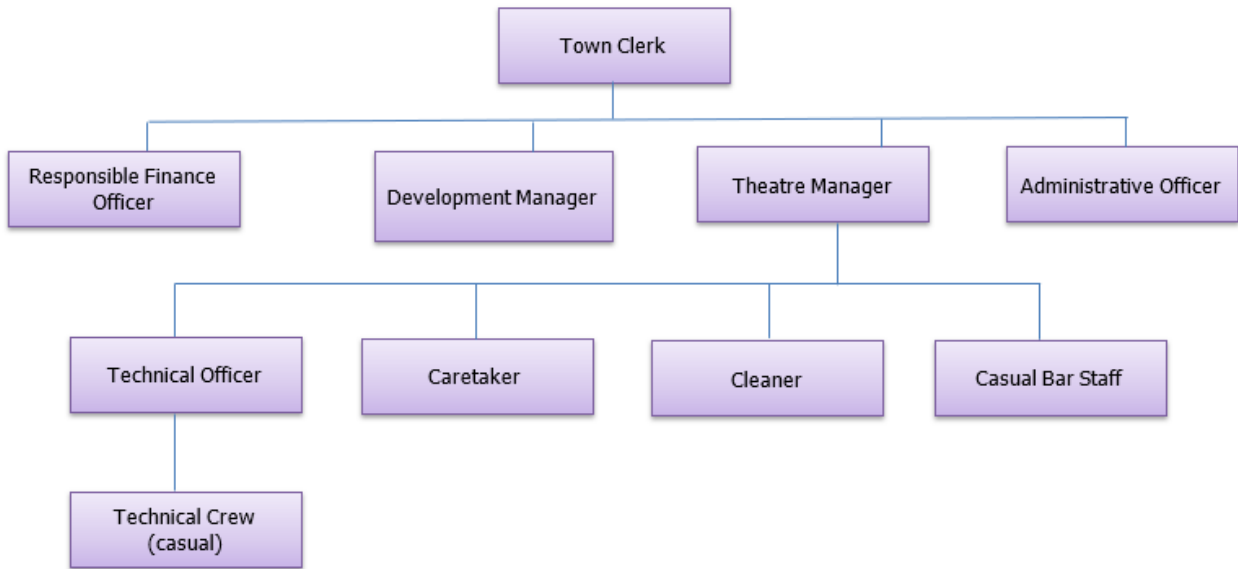
PLANNING COMMITTEE	Totals		
	Actual	Possible	% attendance
Clr Gaye	9	11	82%
Clr Grant	7	10	70%
Clr Green	7	11	64%
Clr Hodgson	7	10	70%
Clr Mahon	8	11	73%
Clr Martin	7	10	70%
Clr Tait-Green	9	11	82%
Clr Williams (<i>left Oct 21</i>)	5	5	100%

FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT	Totals		
	Actual	Possible	% attendance
Clr Cooney	8	11	73%
Clr Dipple	10	11	91%
Clr Gaye	9	11	82%
Clr Grant	8	11	73%
Clr Hodgson	9	11	82%
Clr Hughes	7	11	64%
Clr Martin	7	10	70%
Clr Stanley	11	11	100%
Clr Szklarczyk	5	11	45%

Rugeley Town Council Staff and Management

In April 2021, the Town Council staffing structure was a Town Clerk, Development Manager and a Responsible Finance Officer. In July 2021 an Administrative Officer was employed to support the work of the team. 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. The Development Managers work is driven by Community Engagement Committee and focusses on delivering a programme of community events in the area. The Administrative Officer supports the work of the Town Clerk and the Town Council.

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 2021/2022 the theatre was again hit with problems associated with the ongoing pandemic. The hire of the theatre and function rooms for regular weekly bookings, private events and community activities was restricted but did open when it was safe to do so.

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

Artisan Markets

The Government supported the reopening of town centres through a grant scheme administered by Cannock Chase District Council. Using this money enabled us to celebrate our Town. We started to hold an artisan market on the first Saturday of every month. We started with a dozen stalls and now have around 25 stalls attending each month. The management of the monthly market is now done in house by the Administrative Officer.

Christmas Lights

Following the folding of the Rugeley Lottery, the Town Council took on the management of the Christmas Market which was run in conjunction with the Christmas Light Switch On event. This was well attended and was the first opportunity for our community to come out together and celebrate after 20 months of restrictions! We were able to honour our local heroes who had been nominated by the community to turn on the lights.

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

Remembrance Day

This year the Town Council took over the running of the annual Remembrance Service in the town. We were supported by the Royal British Legion – Rugeley Branch. Being an outdoor event, we were able to see many hundreds of people attending the parade and service at the cenotaph.

Consultations and Project Development

A part of best practice, Rugeley Town Council works closely with neighbouring authorities and other public and private bodies 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 2021/2022:

- Welcome Back to the High Street works with Cannock Chase
- Zero Carbon Rugeley with Keele University and partners

We continued to use grant funding from Cultural Recovery Arts Council to complete our Energy Arts Project – this saw the creation of 12 'Cooling Towers' made from recycled material. These were decorated by a local artist who took inspiration from designs submitted by local primary schools. These cooling towers will form an exhibition which will tour the district and then they will be housed in key locations around the town for their final resting places.

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. In 2021/2022, we had continued interest from residents through our live streamed meetings. A total of 96 planning applications came before councillors for their consideration in 2021/2022.

Newsletters and Promotion

The Town Councils website and Facebook pages continue to play a pivotal role in getting information out to our residents. We continue to look at ways to promote activities and interact with the community. 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

This year also saw the first editions of a quarterly newsletter which is sent to all residential premises in Rugeley.

Audit

The audit for 2021/2022 was once again clear. The Town Council was advised by the external auditors to write off the debt still owing from the fraud in 2018/2019. Actions continue to pursue recovery of outstanding monies owing to the Council.

Policies

The Council again struggled to review many of the policies in this year and a programme was set to review them in 2022/2023.

Donations

With the growing unrest in the Ukraine, the Town Council set aside a donation of £1,000 to support those fleeing the war and settling in Rugeley.

Grants

Rugeley Town Council operates two grant schemes:

- Small Grants
- Urban Orchard Grants

The following grants were awarded in 2021/2022:

Chetwynd Charity	500.00
Cannock Chase SHED	500.00
Lea Hall Brass Band	500.00
Cannock Chase Dementia Alliance	500.00
Katherine House Hospice	500.00
Charity for the Provisionparish of Rugeley	500.00
Total	£3,000.00

Finances

	Revenue Expenditure 2020/2021 £	Revenue Expenditure 2021/2022 £
Administration	69,768	103,595
Charter Fair	0	0
Christmas Lights	34,043	34,632
Council Office	28,819	30,179
Elections	0	0
Grant Aid	2,000	3,000
Donation	0	1,000
Community Initiatives	49,099	8,040
Rugeley Rose Theatre	125,746	170,993
Debt written off	0	135,423
Total Gross Expenditure	309,475	486,862
Income	110,121	108,018
Total Precept	303,634	303,634