

# THE RUGELEY RECORD

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



ISSUE 1



## Who to contact for what!

It can sometimes be confusing to find out which Government agency is responsible for what, so we've put together a guide to help you out

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## Introducing...

We are lucky enough to have on Rugeley Town Council, one of the most knowledgeable local historians around. Cllr Ian Gunner will be writing a regular article to tell you all about our rich Rugeley history.

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## Use it or lose it

The ongoing battle between the high street and the internet.

## CHRISTMAS LIGHTS EVENT A SPARKLING SUCCESS

### Rugeley comes out in force

It's been a long time coming, but on Friday 26th November, the local community came out in droves, to support one of our most popular local events of the calendar year. The 2020 Christmas Lights switch on was cancelled, like so many other things during the height of the pandemic and it was so lovely to see people out and about together, enjoying our town, singing carols and supporting our local retailers.

It was also an opportunity for us to thank our local 'Heroes of the Pandemic', nominated by members of the community, for their selfless support of others during the lockdowns and when the pandemic was at its height.

Our winners were: Sue Merriman for her continued work in the local community, The Jolly Fryer fish bar for their support with reduced priced meals for the vulnerable, Emily Ostle who graduated as a nurse during the Pandemic and has given her all, Jane Smith for her awesome work with the Week of Wonder with Rugeley Victory Church and last but not least Victoria Williscroft for her tireless work feeding and supporting so many members of our community. Thank you once again from us all.



## ARTISAN MARKETS

Our Artisan Markets in Brook Square, held on the first Saturday of each month, have grown in popularity since our first one in May 2021.

The administrative process has now come in-house to us at The Town Council, whilst still retaining the great quality stalls that we have become used to. We provide the stall and covering ready for you to set up your stock.

If you would like to take a stall at the Artisan Market please drop us a line on [office@rugeleytowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:office@rugeleytowncouncil.gov.uk)



## FEBRUARY HALF TERM AT THE ROSE THEATRE

We're delighted to be able to bring our pop up cinema back to Rugeley during February Half Term.

On Tuesday 22nd February we will be showing 2 family films at the Rose Theatre.

The Croods 2 - A New Age will be showing at 10.30am followed by Ron's Gone Wrong showing at 1.30pm.

A drink and biscuit are included in your family ticket price of £6- which admits 4 people (plus a 50p booking fee)

Doors open 30 mins prior to showing.  
Tickets available now on:



[www.ticketsource.co.uk/rugeley-town-council](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/rugeley-town-council)

## COMING SOON...

**An Evening of Burlesque & Cabaret-  
Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> March**

**The Palmer Season and Exhibition Café-  
'I am a Murdered Man' and 'Prince of  
Poisoners', both shows written and  
performed by local people.**

**Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> March  
until Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> April.**

The Rugeley Rose Theatre is available for Private Hire for small or large gatherings, theatre productions and block bookings.

If you would like any additional information, give us a call on-

**01889 584036**

or drop us an email on-  
[theatre@rugeleytowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:theatre@rugeleytowncouncil.gov.uk)



## W.O.W. WHAT A COMMUNITY!

Everyone loves a good underdog story; cheering on the unlikely hero or the team winning against the big boys. Well, let's cheer for Rugeley. We sometimes feel left out, forgotten or second best but we're not done, and I believe our future is bright. We are resilient.

I want to use this opportunity to celebrate our community. The massive volunteer response through lockdowns, the resilience of many community groups, the belief and passion of key people, the work of the churches and the determination to break free of the constraints of this pandemic. This evil force ultimately cannot prevail against Rugeley!

It has taken its toll on our physical and mental health, our bank

balances, our jobs, our social lives, our families and various key services but we are not beaten. I encourage you to look at what's on across the Rugeley area. There are so many opportunities to boost your physical and mental health, to socialise, to build relationships, to access vital help or to give back.

There are coffee mornings and lunch clubs starting back up. There are dance and performing arts groups for different ages.

There is a wide range of indoor and outdoor sports. There is mental health support, ranging from outdoor activities on a farm, to a dedicated counselling service, to a bereavement support group. There is free food and support for people in crisis. There are

volunteers on standby to help fill in forms, provide debt advice or make befriending calls. There are school holiday activities for children and a permanent safe space for young people. That's just a flavour of what's on.

All of this is provided by our community, for our community. Now that's resilience.

To find out more about what's on across our resilient community, visit:

[www.rugeleycc.org.uk/wow](http://www.rugeleycc.org.uk/wow)

*Chris Fielding*  
Rugeley Community Church

## WHY WE NEED TO SUPPORT OUR TOWN CENTRE

**The phrase 'use it or lose it' has never been so important**

The driving reason for putting together an Artisan Market for Rugeley has been to increase footfall and improve business in our local Town Centre. It was also to give local people an opportunity to dip their toe into the business of retail without having to make the investments that are required to run a retail establishment. We think this is going well, and the Town Centre has a healthy buzz about it on Artisan Market days, something that has been acutely missing from Rugeley. What we can't do is stage an Artisan Market every day of the week, but without the regular footfall and support from local people, we will see more businesses folding.

So what can we do to support our Town Centre? Cannock Chase District Council have extended their parking reimbursement scheme, whereby shoppers can get their £2 parking costs reimbursed for a spend of £5 with local retailers who are signed up, which goes some way to enticing shoppers into town. Take a walk around the Town Centre and look at what's there, you may well be surprised, there are a lot of shops that sell everything you need, and much more. It's a fallacy that Amazon or the internet is always cheaper - it's not, and you will get a much better service and quality by going into a shop and choosing the products that you want.

By supporting the retailers that we already have, the town will start to flourish, and only then, from increased business in our existing shops, and a thriving town centre, will we begin to appeal to more retailers, fill vacant premises, and attract more variety.

If you aren't a regular shopper in Rugeley, try it. Grab a coffee from one of our local cafe's and have a mooch, not only will you be doing yourself a favour in the long run, but you will be supporting your local community and the implications of a dead or dying high street will ultimately impact us all. Housing prices will fall, services will cease to exist and public transport will become less frequent. It really is in your best and long term interests to shop local.



# WHO SHOULD I CONTACT FOR WHAT?

We know it can be confusing knowing which council to contact if you need information, or to report a problem. The following list should help you to find the right one!

## Rugeley Town Council: 01889 574074

Small Grants  
Rugeley Rose Theatre  
Commenting on Rugeley Planning Applications  
Urban Greening Scheme Grants  
Rugeley Neighbourhood Plan  
Community Engagement on local issues  
Community Events  
Christmas lights  
Artisan Markets

## Staffordshire County Council: 0300 111 8000

Education and Youth employment  
Transport  
Social Services  
Strategic Planning  
Roads and Pavements  
Highways Maintenances  
Street Lights, signs and traffic lights  
Footpaths  
Blue Badge Applications

## Cannock Chase District Council: 01543 462621

Coordinate and Collect Council Tax  
Environmental Health  
Housing Benefits  
Planning Applications  
Local Plan  
Leisure facilities  
Unclassified roads  
Waste Collection  
Licensing  
Tree and listed Building preservation



## FROM GUNNER'S GOLDEN ARCHIVE

**Rugeley Town Councillor, Ian Gunner, knows his stuff when it comes to the history of our Town. We have invited him to have a regular column in our newsletter, to share some of this vast knowledge of our local area.**

If you frequent a drinking hostelry long enough in the Rugeley area, eventually you'll meet someone (usually over 40) who knows the legend of the tunnels. Many towns in Britain have legends of subterranean passages, much like ours the tales wind around Templars, secret treasure, hiding places, escape routes for the persecuted and all manner of fantastical tales from murders to secret orders. How true are they though? The local would tell you they are certain, the brave and the curious would often explore them as young adults. Nearly everyone over a certain age will know the legend of the Rugeley tunnels. Local tales suggest they go as far as Stafford and Lichfield. Much like Rugeley, Lichfield also has a keen group of individuals convinced their town is built upon

secret tunnels, infat, the Dean of Lichfield Cathedral once told me that its a "persistent story that won't go away". Lichfield of course was once besieged during the English civil war. Radical Puritan Robert Greville, the adopted cousin of Fulke Greville who had previously been a tenant of the Cannock Chase ironworks was shot by a sniper from a fortified position. The Cathedral itself was damaged by a mine and monies for its restoration were supplied by Bonnie Prince Charlie. It is no surprise then that legends of tunnels persist in the towns and cities closest to Rugeley. But are they connected? Well let's deepen this mystery by looking back at a story from a local paper in 1982 that explores the idea that a tunnel linked Spode cottage with Hagley and the legendary caves there.

The story suggests that the alleged tunnels were to hide Catholics during a time of persecution. Many will be thinking of the sunken garden on private property at Hawksyard Hall that has always been a part of the tunnel legends. The story relates how various residents of Rugeley had the tunnel story explained to them by monks at Hawksyard adding fuel to the myths. The gentleman in the story tells of how he showed his sister the tunnels at Spode and how they led a considerable distance towards Rugeley before being blocked by a wall of red House bricks. Many folk have found tantalising clues during lockdown as we began exploring our locale like modern technology didn't exist, perhaps if there is some truth to the legend, more will reveal itself in the coming years.