

## **Congleton Neighbourhood Plan (CNP) Town Centre and Heritage Sub Group Meeting Thursday 8 Jan 2015**

As it was the first meeting the group introduced themselves:

**Mike Warke** - retired, IT Skills, Vice Chair of museum, interested in the neighbourhood working on a HLF grant for the museum

**Glyn Roberts** - recently retired from the planning inspectorate. Experienced in plans and how they are examined, regeneration, infrastructure and development.

**Jackie MacArthur** – Town Centre and Marketing Manager – knowledge of the town centre and changes over the past 7 years, liaison with the shops and businesses, communications

**Andrew Thomson** – 42 years in planning, Consultant to Cheshire Community Action on Neighbourhood plans. Helping Congleton and 6 other NP. – Strategic help.

**Brian Hogan** – Town Clerk Congleton Town Council – years in industry at large national and international companies. Production, manufacturing and strategic thinking.

**Steve Foster** – Group Chair – Retired scientist, passionate about science. Led big teams on drug development. Chair of Congleton Partnership and Vice-Chair of Astbury Mere Trust.

General talk about CNP and the issue about most of the new houses being outside of the CNP boundary and how that makes it difficult to move forward as a comprehensive plan. Assume we are the service centre for the parishes and for the additional housing (increasing housing stock in the vicinity of Congleton by upto a 1/3)

Need to come up with VISION for the Town Centre and Heritage part of the plan. The AIMS and OBJECTIVES of what we want to achieve. The EVIDENCE for the aims and objectives and the hooks for policies.

Assume the plan will take us to 2030 – although if delays in Local Plan the time period for the NP could be extended.

General agreement there should be a questionnaire to residents – which would give us the consensus to move forward – PASS TO STEERING GROUP

### **How the Town Centre is Changing**

- Increase of internet. Growth of niche markets – possible help to reskill
- End of 25 and 15 year leases (est 37% high Street leases up in 2015 nationally– source Springboard)
- Family businesses not being taken on – closure due to retirement
- Growth in coffee bars, beauty salons, tattoo parlours, hairdressers - services

- Change of use back to residential
- Predicted merger of more banks – no need for big buildings
- High Street not 9-5 – growing evening economy
- Accommodate and encourage day visitors not just service local needs

**Needs that came up in the conversation....**

Realistic schemes that can be delivered.

Make sure Town Centre accessible from the Link Road developments

Things that can help generate footfall to support the retail element of Town Centres

Town Centre to provide for the people – is it meeting people’s needs?

Car Parking - make sure there’s enough for the growing size of the town, make sure affordable so people are **not** deterred from coming into town, make sure in the right place, balance the asset with the need – multi-storey car park may be better use of space.

**Things to explore:**

Need to engage with Cheshire East Officers who have responsibility for delivery to get detailed information.

Getting detailed evidence on a range of subjects such as leakage to other towns, traffic counts, car park usage

Do we know which developers are interested in Congleton Town Centre - could we invite them to speak to the group about their ideas. The group wouldn’t give comment or commitment, but may help formulate plans.

Information from the museum on Lawton Street and aspirations for change – need more knowledge on heritage and buildings of note/ historical importance for the town.

Getting breakdown of statistics into smaller units – (CEC)

More people onto the Group – Cllr Paul Bates, Roger Lomas, Cheshire East Surveyor, Nino Mancini, John Lilley. (post meeting note; Paul Bates has agreed to join the group and SJF has invited Nino Mancini)

**ACTIONS**

<b>What</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>When</b>
Look at Congleton Town Centre Plan Short, medium and long term goals, report back on what has been achieved, and what hasn’t and why (tabulate information).	JMac and SF	Fri 16 <sup>th</sup> Jan
Site Walk around Town to look at the areas and identify needs	ALL	Mon 26 <sup>th</sup> Jan Meet 2.00pm at Town Hall
Invite new Members Paul Bates (Jackie to send mobile number) Roger Lomas Nino Mancini	SF AT SF	Before 19 <sup>th</sup> Before 19 <sup>th</sup> Before 19 <sup>th</sup>

Cheshire East Surveyor (via Michael Jones?)	SF	When appropriate
Get hold of Atkins Report - COPY IN THE OFFICE – 68 pages	JMacA	Available to view in the office
Find Scarborough Plan and evidence documents and let GR have sight of it	JMacA	By 19 <sup>th</sup> Jan
Request results of Congleton questionnaire on the Local Plan Strategy - WE HAVE THIS IN THE OFFICE - 74 pages long	JMacA	Available to view in the office
Request results of Car Park Consultation from CEC – Congleton residents	JMacA	For next meeting
Get list of developers known to be interested in Town Centre development (from Congleton Means Business and local knowledge)	JMacA and SF	For next meeting
Ask Tom Evans (CEC Planning) if possible to have a GIS map of underground Congleton	SF	For next meeting
Map showing ownership of parts of the Town Centre as far as known. J MacA to make first start others to add info as known at next meeting	JMacA	For next meeting

### General

Believe this is likely to be process that will take a year – not 6 months.

Believe that the Walk around on the 26<sup>th</sup> Jan will help shake out ideas for the Vision and subsequent aims and objectives. Date 'for next meeting' to be set following on from walk 26<sup>th</sup> Jan.