#### In the Chair: Councillor C. Wise

**Attendance:**

A. Cllr. D. Baverstock P. Cllr. J. Critchley

P. Cllr. J. Burnage P. Cllr. K. Dunleavey

P. Cllr. J. Cairney P. Cllr. M. Southey

P. Cllr. M. Cooper P. Cllr. J. Parker

P. Cllr. I. Culley P. Cllr. C. Wise

P. Cllr. N. Daas P. Cllr. S. Wilkinson

Chief Officer: Judith Giles Present:

Public: 0 Debbie Forder – Events Manager

Howard Brisland – Building Manager

Lisa Mortimer - TCM

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies received from Cllr. D. Baverstock

1. **DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

None

1. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the Building & Town Committee Meeting held on 13th October 2020 were confirmed as a correct record.

**PROPOSED:** Cllr. J. Parker

**SECONDED:** Cllr. S. Wilkinson

**CARRIED**

**Matters Arising** –Cllr. S. Wilkinson requested the new bench to be installed on Botley Road to include a plaque stating “installed by Romsey Town Council”. The building Manager to investigate

1. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION -** None
2. **ARCHIVIST REPORT –** None
3. **REVIEW OF BOOKINGS**
4. **TOWN HALL**

The Events Manager reported the income for 2020-21 is down substantially due to COVID-19. However bookings are on the increase, in particular weddings for 2021-22, COVID19 guidelines permitting.

1. **REVIEW OF FILMSHOWS**

Cllr. C. Wise asked if the filmshows, currently held at the Plaza Theatre were being successful. The Events Manager reported due to lockdown very few films have been shown. She will contact The Plaza for an update.

1. **TOWN HALL – WAY FORWARD – COVID 19**

The Chief Officer reported due to the changed COVID-19 Government Guidelines the Town Hall staff are now providing a scaled back staffing presence in the Town Hall and working from home.

1. **FINANCE REPORT**

The Chief Officer presented Month 7. It was noted income is down due to COVID-19.

1. **PROPOSED LIFT INSTALLATION**

The Building Manager confirmed Council has approved the Lift Installation can go ahead in the Town Hall. He reported detailed drawings are available if any Councillors would like to see them, to please contact him.

1. **BUILDING MANAGER’S REPORT (Appendix 1)**
2. **TOWN CENTRE MANAGER‘S REPORT (Appendix 2)**

The Committee thanked the Town Centre Manager for her detailed report.

A discussion was held with regards to concerns at the increase in crime in Romsey. The Covid vaccine roll-out will commence 22nd December 2020. In the New Year it will be 5 days a week, 10 hours per day. It was identified parking could be an issue.

1. **EMERGENCY PLANNING GROUP**

As representatives of the Emergency Planning Group the Chief Officer and Cllr. John Parker reported they are working closely with Unity and other organisations during the COVID-19 pandemic. Social media is proving to be a successful route to get information out to the public. The Chief Officer has Teams Meetings with other authorities/organisations on a regular basis to keep informed of what is happening and what is required.

1. **GRANTS**

None

**Meeting closed 8.54p.m.**

**Building Manager Report to Building and Town Committee 15th December 2020.**

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| 1 | **Maintenance Technician** | David Chase started today. |
| 2. | **Lighting** | Background lighting to be installed into Court Room. This is to replace the old spotlights that were removed earlier this year with dimmable LED’s |
| 3. | **Covid Working** | I am regularly checking the information updates from both the Government and Health & Safety Executive. The Risk Assessment and guidance is then updated. This is taking an unprecedented amount of time. |
| 4. | **IT** | The old PC’s have been replaced by laptops with port replicators to enable seamless office/home usage. |
| 5. | **Asset Register** | This has now been added to our RBS online systems along with Omega (finance) and Bookings. There is now a lot of work to update it to the latest requirements. |
| 6. | **Christmas Lights** | Installation this year went very smoothly. It is noticeable that the operatives were showered with positive comments and not the normal abuse. The tree was supplied by a new local company. They are half the price of the previous supplier who had increased their price by 30% year on year. |
| 7. | **Lift** | We are now at the stage to be able to select the contractors and order the works. Building control is still to be finalized. We have started discussions with our tenant Cranfield Trust on coordination of works through their offices. |
| 8. | **External Decorations** | Due to the potential of the Lift Works above, this has been postponed to coincide with these works to share scaffolding and roof work. Planned for early spring. |
| 9 | **Piazza Tree** | This took place as planned. The replacement looks a more promising specimen than the previous one. |

Appendix 2

TCM Meetings since last report in October

14th October – Romsey Future Combined Meeting (TVBC)

17th November – Online Town Centres – Steve Godwin (Andover Bid) David Gleave (TVBC)

17th November – Beggars Fair Committee Meeting

18th November – Romsey Smart Town – Andy Ferrier, James Moody and Hollie French (TVBC)

19th November – Introductory meeting with Terry Bishop – (Unity)

23rd November – CSMG – Andrew Pilley (TVBC)

26th November – Virtual Christmas Carols – Kerry Daly - (Romsey Rotary)

27th November – Helping Local Businesses – Betony Bayliss (Freelance IT consultant)

1st December – Digital High Streets – Angela Ellis (Freelance online Retail platform consultant)

1st December – Romsey Future Stakeholders Event – James Hill etc (TVBC)

2nd November – Vaccination Exercise Support – Judith Giles (RTC) and Terry Bishop (Unity)

Planned Meetings

9th December – Local Shopping Platforms – David Gleave (TVBC), Steve Godwin (Andover Bid) and Angela Ellis

11th December – Tim Lincoln (Brightbeech property)

16th December – Test Valley Resilience Forum (TVBC)

18th January – CSMG – Andrew Pilley (TVBC) ?

**Attachment 2**

**Item No 11**

**Lisa Mortimer MRICS - Romsey Town Centre Manager**

**Report to Romsey Town Council Building and Town Committee December 2020**

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| **Item No** | **Subject** | **Report** |
| **1** | **General commentary:** | Since my last report in October England has been subjected to another National Lockdown spanning the period 5th November to 2nd December.  As a result of this lockdown all non-essential retail shops were to forced to close as well as personal care such as hairdressers, beauticians and the like. Also indoor markets and market stalls selling non-essential goods also had to cease trading.  These restrictions have had a profound impact on our Town Centre over the last month, with reduced footfall and market activity both indoor and outside.  However, there has been a marked difference between lockdown 2.0 and the first lockdown, as businesses and retailers have learned to adapt and find more creative ways to continue trading. These initiatives have included offering click and collect services, coupled with an increased online presence and also harnessing the power of social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram etc. As an example Cavendish menswear in Bell Street was offering virtual tours of the shop for customers in order for them to make their selection of goods.  We have now emerged from the latest Lockdown into the new Tier system for England and our Town + the rest of Hampshire (apart from the Isle of Wight) has been placed into Tier 2 “High Risk”.  Although non-essential shops, markets and personal care services can now re-open along with pubs/cafes (subject to strict curbs on the sale of alcohol), it is likely that the new restrictions will remain in place for some months to come, even with the roll out of a UK wide vaccination programme.  These restrictions will no doubt have a continuing impact on our Town Centre businesses, including our events programme, at least for the first half of 2021. |
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| **2** | **Town Centre trading activity:** | During the lockdown, the town was generally quiet as expected. However the temporary suspension of the car parking charges by TVBC did appear to have an unforeseen consequence in that many car parks were quite full for most of the day with the town centre being quiet. It would appear that some residents and businesses may have been taking advantage of the free parking to park their vehicles all day in the Council’s short stay car parks. The situation had been raised with TVBC’s parking team after some traders had commented on their and their customer’s inability to find a car parking space easily. Hopefully the situation will alleviate itself when car parking charges are reintroduced on 10th December. .  For your last meeting, I had said that l would ask TVBC to supply details of car parking usage/income for a comparison with last year. However the lockdown 2 and the suspension of car parking charges has made this research impossible. |
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| **3** | **Town Centre events and markets:** | The Romsey Maker’s Market in the Piazza and The Cornmarket re-commenced on Sunday 6th although a number of vacant pitches were observed. Bradbeers has now also opened on a Sunday. Last Sunday 6th December, the town centre was busy but not as busy as a normal year December.  It has become apparent that the Makers Market had not been properly regularised when it moved from the Town Hall out into the Market Place and Cornmarket. I am therefore working with Test Valley Borough Council as Licensing Authority and Hampshire County Council as Highway Authority and landowner to regularise the situation so that a proper licence can be entered into as the Makers Market or other users of the Piazza/Market Place are not covered by the existing Charter Market agreement. As part of this regularisation process, TVBC will be producing a large scale plan for the Market Place and the Cornmarket so that I, in liaison with Bradbeers and traders can plot, designate and record stalls for the various market activities. |
| **4** | **Planning and redevelopment matters:** | **The Abbey Hotel** – conversion of the front ground floor into retail space proceeding under permitted development. Determination of planning application by TVBC for conversion to provide residential units above the retail ground floor unit and to the rear was permitted by TVBC as Planning Authority  **14 Market Place (Santander)** – recent press announcements have been made about the refurbishment and conversion of this unit into a cocktail dining venue to be called The Exchange  **8, Market Place** – application for micro pub yet and new signage to be determined by TVBC  **7, Market Place** – application for certificate of proposed lawful development for change of use from A1 retail to A2 financial and professional services – withdrawn with no further planning applications. Upload Printing who have an existing business on the Budds Lane Industrial Estate are opening in this unit in January for retail printing and embroidery  **21a, Market Place** (former Romsey Advertiser office) - Certificate of proposed lawful use issued. Charters Estate Agents have relocated from 37 The Hundred |
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| **5** | **Vacant units:** | **34 The Hundred** – former Carphone Warehouse unit still being marketed. Available by an assignment of an existing lease which is due to expire in June 2021. Rent passing £20,000 pa  37, The Hundred – former Grade II Red Lion building that had been occupied by Charters Estate Agents and is owned by Brightbeech is now vacant and available to rent. 149.7 sq. m/1611 sq. ft. of space on 2 floors available. Asking rent £25,000 per annum on a full repairing and insuring lease  A full schedule of all commercial users and vacant units in the Town Centre is being compiled in association with TVBC |
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| **6** | **Temporary closure of the Hundred** | Ongoing complaints and on- going social media commentary of the closure of The Hundred. Complaint escalated. HCC Highways and Transport Planning Team have erected “No Access to Portersbridge Street” signage around the town. |
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| **7** | **Meetings/discussions (in the last month and planned)** | Attached schedule sets out the meetings/discussions that I have had since my last report |
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| **8** | **Romsey Futures** | I attended the Romsey Future Combined Meeting and Stakeholders Event on 1st December, which was well attended. Breakout sessions in groups were useful to garner opinion on the direction of travel and to consider a refresh of the plan going forward. Further meetings are scheduled for the New Year. |
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| **9** | **Christmas events and shopping** | The Christmas lights and tree in the Piazza have helped to restore some sense of normality to Romsey at this Christmas season, albeit that there are limited Christmas events this year  The extra security patrols in Romsey Town Centre are in place and I will be patrolling with them over the next week or so. |
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| **10** | **Future Initiatives**  **Online Town Centre Local Business Directory and online retailing platform**  **COVID 19 Vaccination Roll Out** | As an outcome of my meeting with Andy Ferrier and Nick Adams-King in which my ideas for a digital/smart high street were discussed, I have been invited to join the TVBC Romsey Smart Town working group and input my ideas.  I have had further discussions with David Gleave of TVBC and Steve Godwin from Andover Bid, in respect of devising ways in which local residents and businesses can be made aware of local retail and business offerings, as well as tourism offerings in a digital platform. Specialist consultancy advice is being obtained and funded by TVBC.  Attached are my presentation slides used in discussions with TVBC for information.  As a result of the mass COVID 19 vaccination programme, The Chief Officer and I have been involved in discussions with Terry Bishop of Unity in respect of securing volunteer assistance for the vaccination roll out in Romsey. We have offered the Town Hall as a possible respite centre for volunteers. This is likely to be a 7 day per week operation, with several shifts of volunteers required per day.  Potential social media recruitment campaign to follow, once more details are obtained from Terry. We will keep members and councilors informed as details emerge and arrangements confirmed. |