

# UPPINGHAM FIRST Community Partnership

**Chair: Robert Wills Vice Chair: Edward Baines Secretary/Treasurer: Ron Simpson BEM**

Uppingham Webcam  Uppingham Hopper

## Annual Report 2018

### 1. Introduction

The following notes detail the principal achievements and activities of the Uppingham First Community Partnership and its constituent Business Forum in 2017/2018. This report will be presented to the 2018 Annual General Meeting of Uppingham First and distributed to partners. It will also be used to support presentations around the UK intended to promote Uppingham as a sustainable next generation community with a progressive business/community relationship.

### 2. One Voice

**Uppingham Business Forum** is an unincorporated association whose purpose is to provide a non-contributory, voluntary forum for all businesses trading for profit in and around the town of Uppingham. The governance arrangements for the Forum are the responsibility of the seven business members of 'Uppingham Business First'. The objectives of the Forum are to:-

- Increase the profitability of businesses through the attraction of more visitors to the town and by increasing the public's awareness of the town
- be the recognised joint voice of Uppingham business where opinion is sought, or collective action is thought necessary, by the business members of Uppingham Business First
- seek to foster business to business and business to town relationships in the interests of the wider community

**Uppingham Business First** is the group of seven local business proprietors elected to be the 'business' directors of 'Uppingham First'. The group acts as an Executive of the Business Forum and reports back to it as required.

**Uppingham First** is the 'all sector' elected Community Partnership for Uppingham which brings together the voices of community, business and statutory sector forums. It incorporated as a limited company in January 2009. The objects for which the company was established are, "To protect and promote the interests of Uppingham Town helping to sustain its vitality and economic viability ensuring it remains an attractive place to live work and play." The Partnership comprises a board of three directors made up from the three sectors recognised by central government, these being business, the state sector and the third/voluntary/civil society sector. Uppingham First is recognised by Rutland County Council and is active within the county's Local Strategic Partnership, Rutland Together. The Uppingham First Community Partnership is a member of Locality and the Community Transport Association and is chaired by international businessman Robert Wills.

### 3. Strategic Activity

A key series of actions during 2017/18 have engaged the community and its service providers, as well as increasing the profile of the town around the UK, Europe and the world. Such actions have sought to not only influence policy thinking on market town matters, but also to promote Uppingham as a high quality manufacturing centre and service provider as well as a quality visitor, shopping and gallery experience. Some of the Partnership's work is specifically directed toward addressing social isolation, deprivation and community sustainability. Activities have included:-

- The purchase and operation of an Uppingham Hopper bus
- The authoring and submission of an EU Leader fund bid to create an Uppingham Interactive Audio Visual Online Portal and associated smart phone app.
- The creation of a Housing Task Group and the delivery of a Locality funded pre- feasibility study on the possible construction of a number of new homes for the under 35s
- Commissioning the design and production of an Uppingham Antiques, Arts, Books and Creative Crafts Trail
- Support and delivery of a Vanguard Board for Uppingham to enable collaboration on its future development

- Participation in the activities of the Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership of which Rutland was a member. As of 1st April 2018, the Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough LEP ceased to operate and a new LEP, known as The Business Board, has been created.
- Participation in the economic development and infrastructure elements of the Rutland Local Strategic Partnership 'Rutland Together'
- Dialogue and meetings with senior police officers and the Leicestershire Police and Crime Commissioner on the future policing of Uppingham
- The promotion of Community Safety and High Street security
- Presentations about the town and its activities around the UK
- Public and private meetings on a range of economic and social issues
- Securing national and local grants to support Partnership initiatives
- Supporting the maintenance and further development of the town's defibrillator network
- Sponsorship and support for a variety of community activity
- Participation in a variety of national groups and conferences
- Responding to national, regional, local business and community consultations
- Ensuring Uppingham and Rutland has a high profile in the use of electric vehicles
- Acting as a national and local champion for business and community led neighbourhood planning
- Production of an updated Uppingham Town Centre and Business Zones Plan
- Promoting Uppingham via the partnership's website and social media pages
- The further promotion of the Uppingham Webcam
- Support for Uppingham in Bloom
- Support for new business start-ups in town
- Sustaining a free online facility to advertise job vacancies within the town
- The funding, authoring and distribution of business and community newsletters
- Providing free online advertising for local businesses
- Participation in the activities of the Biz Club
- Acting as a community partner for the Gigaclear Uppingham Fibre Broadband Network
- Acting as local business and community partner for the Digital Uppingham project
- Hosting/organising/supporting a number of events including the Stilton Cheese Classic Vehicle Run 2018, Neighbourhood Planning seminars and the inaugural East Midlands Women's Awards

#### **4. Priorities for 2018/19**

These include:-

- Achievement of a number of the goals identified in the Uppingham Town Centre and Business Zones Plan
- Delivery of the first stages of the Future High Street project including the Uppingham Portal
- Delivery of the next stage of the Digital Uppingham initiative – Planning permission has been secured
- Further development of the Uppingham Vanguard and Uppingham First Boards
- Further developing the Uppingham Hopper project and integrating it with UppWatch
- Completion of the Uppingham Arts, Antiques Books and Creative Crafts Visitor Experience with supporting literature and updated town map
- Further High Street initiatives to support local retailers and strengthen community engagement
- Helping to secure further national and international recognition for Uppingham as a visitor destination
- Further development of the working relationship with central and local government, the new Local Enterprise Partnership and the Local Strategic Partnership
- Continued support for community safety and the fight against crime including collaboration on the delivery of a joint blue light services station for Rutland
- Further support for the Women in the High Street network
- The development of an online sales capability for the Uppingham branded product range
- The broadcasting of a number of events with sound via the Uppingham Webcam

## 5. Summary

Uppingham First and its Forums have had a productive and rewarding year. The support of Robert and Carol Wills in providing venues for meetings has been much appreciated. The town's profile with central government is excellent and the Uppingham community is much envied around the UK.

Relationships between town and gown are good and collaboration between local business and the community continues to flourish. Public and Business Forums have been well attended. Everyone is working hard to ensure a happy community with a vibrant economy. Thanks are due to all those organisations, including the Town Council, which have sponsored and/or supported activities during the year. Together we have made a difference.

An important role for the Partnership is to strengthen community sustainability while contributing toward profitability and social justice. Of equal significance is the fostering of positive working relationships both inside and outside the town. The Partnership's is now regular invited to participate in national and regional events. Recent TV, radio and printed media publicity has helped raise the profile of Uppingham. The common thread in media coverage is recognition of what working together can achieve. In this the Uppingham community excels. Tributes to the town's achievements and forward plans have come from many quarters. The introduction to the Uppingham Town Centre & Business Zones Plan (see [www.uppinghamneighbourhoodplan.info](http://www.uppinghamneighbourhoodplan.info)) evidences two such views:-

*"I am hugely impressed with your strategy and scale of ambition for Uppingham - I think it will put many much larger places in the shade"*

**CEO - Opportunity Peterborough**

*"Uppingham has without question the most progressive agenda across the GCGP area"*

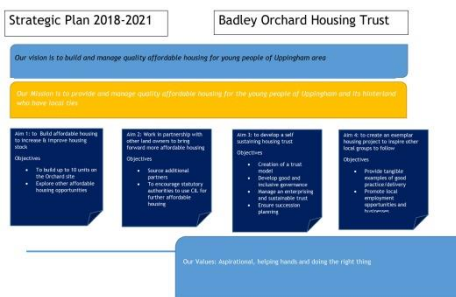
**CEO - Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership**

There has never been a more important time for collaborative venture. There is still concern about footfall in the high street, hence the priority to be given in 2018/19 to the Future High Street project. Building homes affordable by our young families will be partly tackled by the creation of a new Housing Trust. The need to continue modernising our infrastructure is vital to attracting continued investment in the town. However, the town has waited for over a year for proper repair to its market place railings. Tarmac patches have been used for paving repair where stone is clearly the required material. Quality of the town centre environment and conservation area must be a priority if the town is to preserve its heritage. The content and character of the new Local Plan will be important to the town's future. Let's make sure we continue to work together to ensure Uppingham's future economic and social prosperity. By doing so we will ensure the town remains a fantastic place to live, work, study and visit.

## Ron Simpson

Secretary Uppingham First

20.5.2018



**Copies to: - social and economic partners; local and national government; media**

Unless otherwise requested please direct all correspondence to The Secretary, 7 Hawthorn Drive, Uppingham, Rutland LE15 9TA