

**Chair: Edward Baines Vice Chair: Mark Shaw Secretary/Treasurer: Ron Simpson BEM**

Uppingham Webcam  Uppingham Hopper

[www.uppinghamfirst.co.uk](http://www.uppinghamfirst.co.uk)

## Annual Report 2022

### 1. Introduction

The following paragraphs provide an overview of the principal achievements and activities of the Uppingham First Community Partnership (UF) and its constituent Business Forum (UBF) in 2021/2022. The activities of the Partnership's Uppingham Neighbourhood Forum (UNF) are, for convenience, also captured in this report and will be presented to the UNF AGM on August 25<sup>th</sup> 2022.

This Annual Report will be distributed to local businesses and social and economic partners, as well as being published online (to maximise transparency) at [www.uppinghamonline.co.uk](http://www.uppinghamonline.co.uk) with a link from [www.uppinghamfirst.co.uk](http://www.uppinghamfirst.co.uk). The report will also be used to support virtual and physical presentations around the UK intended to promote Uppingham as a sustainable next generation community with a progressive business/community relationship.

This year's AGM, held on August 18<sup>th</sup> 2022, confirmed the partnership's board membership for 2022/23 as:-

**Chair:** Edward Baines (Business Director) **Vice Chair:** Mark Shaw (Community Director)

**Business Directors:** Trevor Ellis, Kath Gilbert, Ron Simpson BEM, James Torbell, Nick Townsend.

**Community Directors:** David Ainslie BEM, Janet Thompson BEM

**Statutory Sector Directors:** Lucy Stephenson (Local Government), John Leslie (Health and Wellbeing)

The board has one business sector vacancy and one statutory sector vacancy (Education)

### 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 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
- Seek to foster 'business to business' and 'business to town' relationships in the interests of the wider community

The Forum nominates and elects up to seven local business representatives to be the 'business directors' of 'Uppingham First'. This group acts as an Executive of the Business Forum and reports back to it as required.

**Uppingham Neighbourhood Forum (UNF)** is a fully constituted, neighbourhood infrastructure network and a member of the National Council of Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) which brings together residents and a number of town councillors, charities, social enterprises and voluntary groups. In addition to acting as the voice of Civil Society for Uppingham, the Forum is the vehicle by which community sector directors are nominated for the Board of Uppingham First. The Neighbourhood Forum has been led in 2021/22 by a strong Executive Committee with representatives of the following organisations and areas being recognised:-

- The Elms Residents Association
- Beeches Residents Association
- E J Toon Charitable Trust
- Leicester Road Residents
- Limes, Firs and Spurs Residents Association
- Methodist Church
- Neighbourhood Watch
- Rotary Club of Uppingham
- Uppingham in Bloom
- Uppingham Women's Institute

Executive committee members met formally twice during the year in addition to participating in a wide range of other events. Chair of the Forum is Janet Thompson BEM. Public meetings of the Forum are well attended and usually preceded by a volunteer distributed newsletter to every household as well as notification via social media.

**Uppingham First (UF)** 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 registered company objects 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 directors made up from the three sectors recognised by central government, these being business, the state sector and the third/voluntary/civil society/community sector.

UF is recognised by Rutland County Council (RCC) and Uppingham Town Council (UTC) and has a positive working relationship with the town's member of parliament Alicia Kearns MP. The partnership is a member of Revive and Thrive, Locality and the Community Transport Association (CTA). The company is financially sound with grants and donations having been received from a wide range of sources including residents, businesses, community groups, national and local government, Locality, the Leicestershire and Rutland Community Foundation and the National Lottery.

### **3. Significant Developments and Activity**

Following the community's emergence from Covid lockdown, Uppingham has demonstrated remarkable resilience and continued to enhance its reputation as Rutland's most loved market town. Being voted in a national newspaper as the most desirable place to live in the midlands has added to the town's growing regional and national profile.

Matters of note on the statutory sector scene include:

- The appointment of Uppingham resident Geoff Thompson as High Sheriff of Rutland for 2022/23
- The appointment of a new Town Clerk, Sharon Coe, whose local government experience includes being a District Councillor in Leicestershire
- The election of a new generation of younger town councillors, perhaps to be joined by others in 2023
- The election of a proactive and forward looking Town Mayor and deputy for the 2022/23 municipal year
- The success of the town council's Neighbourhood Plan Advisory Group (NPAG) in preparing a (soon to be published) Regulation 14 consultation draft of an updated Neighbourhood Plan potentially worth up to £4M in Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) for the community
- Political change at the county council resulting in the election of Uppingham ward councillor Lucy Stephenson as the Leader of Rutland County Council, the election of Uppingham ward councillor Mark Oxley as a member of the county council's cabinet, and the election of a new Uppingham ward councillor, Stephen Lambert
- The further modernisation and development of premises and staff at Uppingham Surgery
- Further development at the town's education establishments
- The long awaited acquisition and modernisation of the market place toilets.

Matters of note on the commercial front include:

- The town centre closure of several well regarded family businesses
- The town's continued offer of core trades and services for those who live here
- Investment by a number of local businesses in the further development of the high street
- The arrival of a new generation of local artisans and creative crafts enhancing and diversifying the town centre offer
- The current staffing challenges confronting local businesses
- The risk factors associated with rising inflation and costs, likely to be particularly challenging over the coming winter
- The further development of café society and the visitor offer in the town
- The continued link between the economic success of the town and Uppingham School
- The continued investment in the town's commercial and manufacturing zones at Station Road, Uppingham Gate and Welland Vale
- The proposal to build Rutland's very first crematorium at Uppingham
- The planned expansion of the Gigaclear fttp broadband network.

Matters of note on the community and social front include:

- The clearing of the outstanding balance of the Uppingham Hopper purchase loan
- The closure of the E J Toon Charitable Trust
- The dissolution of The Uppingham Town Partnership and its Events Group
- The creation and continued development of the Uppingham Homes Community Land Trust
- The official opening and early success of the Dying Matters Charity Support Group
- The emerging youth leadership initiative in the town led by Churches Together
- The community support given by The Falcon Hotel as a meeting venue
- The continuation of Neighbourhood Watch in the town following its collapse at county level
- The outstanding and sustained success of Uppingham in Bloom
- The very wide and active range of voluntary and sporting clubs and societies operating in the town
- The ongoing efforts to support our Ukrainian guests and help them at this very difficult time.

#### 4. The Work of the Partnership and its Forums

A series of activities and actions during the period since Covid lockdown have supported the community and its service providers, as well as increasing the profile of the town around the UK. 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 and forums' work is specifically directed toward addressing social isolation, deprivation and community sustainability. Their activities have included:-

The continued operation and development of the Uppingham Hopper bus

The further development of the partnership's website at [www.uppinghamfirst.co.uk](http://www.uppinghamfirst.co.uk) sponsored by local company ClockedIn

Further support for the town's new community benefit society (Uppingham Homes CLT) intended to build and manage community led affordable homes for local people

Acting as a government appointed Neighbourhood Planning Champion providing consultancy as required

An update of the Uppingham Antiques, Arts, Books and Creative Crafts Trail web pages including the downloadable map

Continued support and delivery of a Vanguard Board for Uppingham to enable collaboration on its future development between the Uppingham community, its landowners and its developers

Supporting the leadership and further development of an updated Uppingham Neighbourhood Plan

Operation and licensing of the Rutland Lottery

Extensive collaboration with the Uppingham Neighbourhood Forum and its good neighbour/neighbourhood watch scheme 'UpWatch'

Acting as a judge and sponsor of the annual East Midlands Women's Awards

The acquisition and extensive redesign of the annual Stilton Cheese Run Classic Vehicle event and the creation of the new Round Rutland Run

Support for the development and operation of Social Sundays 2022

The promotion of community health and wellbeing and liaison with the Uppingham Surgery and its PPG.

Support for, and collaboration with, the blue light services

Presentations about the town and its activities around the county and the UK

Public and private meetings on a range of economic and social issues including transport, health and wellbeing, the environment and local policing

Supporting the maintenance and further development of the town's defibrillator network

Sponsorship and support for a wide range of community activity and projects

Participation in a variety of national groups and events including those on economic development, planning, housing and transport

Responding to national, regional, local business and community consultations on a range of subjects including new standards for community transport and the updating of the Rutland Local and Transport Plans

Ensuring Uppingham and Rutland have a high profile in the use of electric vehicles

Promoting Uppingham via the partnership's website, social media pages and on radio and TV

The operation and further development of the Uppingham Webcam to promote local business and enhance community safety.

Support for Uppingham in Bloom

Support for the Uppingham Artisans and other 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 including the arrival of 5G and the installation of public wifi

Support for a range of community events, activities and public meetings.

#### 5. Priorities for 2022/23

These include:-

- Research on, and the further development of, the proposed Station Road Skills and Economic Development Zone
- Supporting the Uppingham Feast and other major events where required
- Supporting the Regulation 14 public consultation on the updated Uppingham Neighbourhood Plan, hosting public meetings as required
- Delivery of the next stage of the Digital Uppingham initiative

- Further development of the Uppingham Vanguard and Uppingham First Work programmes
- Continued support for the Uppingham Neighbourhood and Business Forums
- Further developing the Uppingham Hopper project to engage with local transport needs and the emergence of low carbon vehicle options
- 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
- Further support for the Women in the High Street network and East Midlands Women's Awards
- The broadcasting of a number of events with sound in 2023 via the Uppingham Webcam
- Supporting the further development of Uppingham Homes CLT to become a Registered Housing Provider
- Encouragement of the more environmentally beneficial forms of local transport
- Further collaboration with CPRE Rutland, the Countryside Charity
- Support for all aspects of the town's health and wellbeing strategy
- Further collaboration with the blue light services
- Greater engagement with the youth of the town

## 5. Summary

Uppingham First and its Forums have had another productive and rewarding year.

The support of the Wills family and James Torbell with his team in providing venues for most meetings, and some sponsorship of activity, has been much appreciated. Similarly, the huge support given by so many to the Uppingham Hopper! The town's profile with government is excellent and the Uppingham community is much envied around the UK. The appointment and election of new town council leadership and a new Town Clerk have provided fresh opportunities for increased joint working in the town.

Collaboration between local business and the community continues to flourish. Public and Business Forums have been well attended.

Everyone is working hard to ensure mutual support during this difficult time as inflation rises, footfall drops and staffing difficulties prevail. The town's partners and volunteers have established a community support framework that has received much praise from elsewhere. Together we have made a difference. Local business owners continue to play a critical role in the prospects of the town with our churches, charities, community groups and statutory sector professionals collaborating to care for the sick, the elderly and the disadvantaged.

An important role for the partnership and its forums is to strengthen community sustainability while contributing toward business profitability and social justice. Of equal significance is the fostering of positive working relationships both inside and outside the town.

The partnership is now regularly invited to represent or promote the town. Recent TV, radio and printed and social 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 including the Lord Lieutenant and the High Sheriff. Uppingham First is proud of the community it serves. There has never been a more important time for collaborative venture.

There is obvious concern about the economic and social climate we face as we, no doubt, move towards a difficult winter. Hence the priority still given to attracting and supporting businesses while still working behind the scenes to help those in need. Building homes affordable by our young families will be partly tackled by the town's new Housing Trust with the support of the town council and Uppingham First. The modernising of our communications infrastructure has been given a huge boost by the announcement that Gigaclear has returned to the town to complete their fibre broadband network. It is a huge vote of confidence and vital to attracting continued investment to the town.

Preserving the quality of our town centre environment and conservation area must be a priority if the town is to sustain its heritage. The final content and character of the updated Rutland Local Plan and the latest Uppingham Neighbourhood Plan will be important to the town's future. If we are to build up to 500 more dwellings over the next 20 years, it will be vital to do so in a sensitive and thoughtful manner to protect the heritage and character of Uppingham.

Let's make sure we all continue to work together to ensure Uppingham's future economic and social prosperity. By doing so we can be confident the town will remain a fantastic place to live, work, study and visit.

*Ron Simpson*

Secretary Uppingham First  
19.8.2022

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

**Please direct all enquiries and correspondence to The Secretary, 7 Hawthorn Drive, Uppingham, Rutland LE15 9TA**