

UPPINGHAM FIRST Community Partnership

Chair: Edward Baines Vice Chair: David Ainslie Secretary/Treasurer: Ron Simpson BEM

Uppingham Webcam  Uppingham Hopper
www.uppinghamfirst.co.uk

Annual Report 2019

1. Introduction

The following notes detail the principal achievements and activities of the Uppingham First Community Partnership (UF) and its constituent Business Forum (UBF) in 2018/2019. They are accompanied by a performance management report providing some detail against a timeline. The achievements of the Partnership's constituent Neighbourhood Forum (UNF) are featured in a separate report to be presented to the Forum's public AGM on August 29th 2019.

This report will be presented to the 2019 Annual General Meeting of the Uppingham Business Forum, distributed to Uppingham First board members and social and economic partners, as well as being published online at www.uppinghamonline.co.uk with a link from www.uppinghamfirst.co.uk. The report 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.

The death of Uppingham Business Champion and UF Founding Chairman Robert Wills overshadows what has been a very productive year for the partnership and delayed 2019 board elections. A tribute to Robert, first published in the Rutland Times, is appended.

This year's UF AGM held on August 20th 2019 confirmed the partnership's board membership for 2019/20 as:-

Chair: Edward Baines (Business Nominee) **Vice Chair:** Former Town Mayor David Ainslie (Community Nominee).

Business Directors: Trevor Ellis, Kath Gilbert, Jane Lang, Geoffrey Pointon, Ron Simpson BEM, James Torbell.

Community Directors: Mark Shaw, Janet Thompson

Statutory Sector Directors: Lucy Stephenson (Local Government), Geoff Thompson (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, 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 (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). UF is a member of Revive and Thrive, Locality and the Community Transport Association (CTA).

3. Strategic Activity

A key series of actions during 2018/19 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 continued operation and development of the Uppingham Hopper bus
- The construction of a new website at www.uppinghamfirst.co.uk sponsored by local company ClockedIn
- The creation of a new community benefit society (Uppingham Homes CLT) intended to build and manage community led affordable homes for local people
- Updating the design and distribution of the Uppingham Antiques, Arts, Books and Creative Crafts Trail website, leaflet and 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, delivery and further development of the Uppingham Neighbourhood and Town Centre & Business Zones Plans
- 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 including preliminary work on an Uppingham Community Safety Partnership
- Presentations about the town and its activities around the UK
- Public and private meetings on a range of economic and social issues including banking, transport, health and wellbeing
- Securing national and local grants to support partnership initiatives (£75k for Uppingham Homes CLT; £20K+ local business, resident, UTC and National Lottery grants for the Hopper; £6K+ for the defibrillators)
- Supporting the maintenance and further development of the town's defibrillator network (3 more to be added this year funded by Rotary and a residents group)
- Sponsorship and support for a wide range of community activity
- Participation in a variety of national groups and conferences including those on economic development, planning, housing and transport
- Responding to national, regional, local business and community consultations including the draft Rutland Local and Transport Plans
- Ensuring Uppingham and Rutland have a high profile in the use of electric vehicles
- Acting as a national and local champion for business and community led neighbourhood planning
- 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
- Contributions and case studies to a number of national planning publications
- 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
- Hosting/organising/supporting a number of events including the Stilton Cheese Classic Vehicle Run 2019, Neighbourhood Planning support and the East Midlands Women's Awards

4. Priorities for 2019/20

These include:-

- Achievement of more of the goals identified in the Uppingham Town Centre and Business Zones Plan
- Supporting an update of the Uppingham Neighbourhood Plan
- Delivery of the next stages of the Future High Street project including the Uppingham Portal
- Delivery of the next stage of the Digital Uppingham initiative

- Further development of the Uppingham Vanguard and Uppingham First Boards
- Further developing the Uppingham Hopper project and integrating it with UppWatch to provide home deliveries from high street shops to the housebound and the infirm
- Updating the Uppingham Arts, Antiques Books and Creative Crafts Trail
- 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
- The broadcasting of a number of events with sound via the Uppingham Webcam
- Supporting the further development of Uppingham Homes CLT to become a Registered Housing Provider
- Supporting the development of the Badley Orchard Project to build affordable homes for local younger people
- Pursue an increase in parking capacity and new business in the town centre and business zones including a care home, industrial workshops and perhaps a cinema.

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. The appointment of a new RCC Director and Deputy Director of Places and the arrival of a new Town Clerk this September provide a fresh opportunity for increased joint working.

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. Rutland County Council and Uppingham Town Council have supported a range of initiatives with the free half hour in car parks and support for the Uppingham Hopper being particularly welcomed. Everyone is working hard to ensure a happy community with a vibrant economy despite the loss of Barclays Bank and a small increase in vacant business properties. Thanks are due to all those organisations 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 is now regularly 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 including the Lord Lieutenant and the High Sheriff.

There has never been a more important time for collaborative venture. There is still concern about footfall in the high street, hence the priority given to attracting and supporting new businesses. Building homes affordable by our young families will be partly tackled by the new Housing Trust. The need to continue modernising our infrastructure and install 5G capability and fibre to the premise broadband as it becomes available is vital to attracting continued investment in the town. Preserving the quality of our 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 Rutland Local Plan and the updated Uppingham Neighbourhood 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

26.8.2019

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

Performance Management and Activity Report – January to August 2019

1. Meetings Organised

January 31st Uppingham Neighbourhood Forum
February 4th Uppingham Homes
February 5th Uppingham Business Forum
February 8th Uppingham Homes
February 27th Cinema for Uppingham
March 7th Uppingham Vanguard Board
April 12th Uppingham Homes
April 17th Cinema for Uppingham
May 9th Cinema for Uppingham
May 23rd GSS Architects
June 19th Welland Vale Principals
June 21st Uppingham Homes
June 21st Hopper Team Meeting
June 27th Uppingham Vanguard Board
July 31st GSS Architects
August 20th UF AGM and Board Meeting
August 21st Cinema for Uppingham
August 27th Business Forum AGM
August 28th Uppingham Homes Board
August 29th UNF AGM

2. Meetings Attended

January 8th Women in Business – Melton Mowbray
January 10th CPRE
January 11th Hopper Team meeting
January 15th Stilton Run - Meeting with new organiser
January 27th Biz Club
January 30th Choice Unlimited Team meeting
February 7th High Sheriffs Lunch
February 8th RCC Business Summit
February 16th UIB Lunch
February 18th Oakham N Plan - Meeting with Chair
February 20th UIB regional meeting
February 23rd RCC Deputy Leader
February 24th Attend Rutland Service – Peterborough
February 26th Health Service Meeting
March 6th RCC Housing Officer
March 8th CPRE Annual Lunch
March 11th CPRE
March 18th – US Bursar
March 22nd Biz Club with Sir Alan Duncan MP
March 26th RCC Bus User Group
March 28th Highways Dept, RCC ref Defibrillators
April 1st Agricultural Society AGM
April 9th Resilient Rutland
April 24th CPRE
May 8th NPAG
May 14th Rutland Ventures
May 30th CPRE
June 11th Healthwatch Board
June 12th Meeting about Uppingham with High Sheriff Margaret Miles
June 17th CPRE
June 20th CPRE
July 5th Biz Club
July 8th Community Lands Trust
July 21st CPRE AGM
July 30th CPRE Meeting with RCC
August 8th Uppingham Homes briefing for Deputy Leader RCC
August 16th Biz Club

3. Courses/Events Organised or Attended/Presentations

February 5th Hopper Training
February 26th Hopper Training
March 1st Attend Pop Up Art Event
March 12th Attend N Planning Champions Event in London
March 20th Health event
March 21st Locality Housing event – London
March 24th Rutland Civic Service
April 10th Locality – Woodgate Resources Centre, Leics
April 11th RCC Youth Issues presentation and discussion

April 16th RCCC Untapped Talent Event – Ashwell
April 28th Stilton Cheese Run 2019
April 29th UppWatch presentation for Age UK
May 7th LL Queens Award for Enterprise Presentation
May 21st LCC N Plan Network
June 2nd Rutland Show
June 5th Volunteer Fair – Oakham Castle
June 6th CPRE Day Workshop
June 13th Larkfleet Housing Conference
June 25th and 26th National Housing Conference as guest of MHCLG
June 27th Rutland Arts Society Garden Party
July 2nd and 3rd Revive and Thrive Market Towns Conference
July 28th Represented UF at 2019 Eyebrook Walk for LOROS
August 2nd MHCLG N Plan Champions Consultation Event – London
August 23rd to 26th Uppingham Homes Big Clearance Project

4. Research/Consultation Responses and Data Collection

January Uppingham Bypass surveys – Residents and Businesses
March 8th – Future High Streets bid in collaboration with DA and UTC
March 10th Prepare UF annual accounts
August 18th Research and prepare SCF fund bid to CPRE
August 30th Prepare MHCLG staff briefing presentation

5. Media Articles/Activity

New UF interim website sponsored by ClockedIn
Fortnightly newspaper column
Housing Design Case Study for MHCLG
Written interview for MHCLG N Planning Newsletter
Advertising for local businesses
Website updates
Social media updates
Newsletter production and distribution
ABC Trail marketing and distribution

6. Continuous Professional Development

January 31st onward - 10 week Excel Course – WEA
February 14th MHCLG Housing Event - Birmingham University

7. Consultancy

February 22nd Meeting with Leics parishes project leader – Somerby
March 4th Meeting with Leics parishes project - Somerby
Responses to enquiries as N Planning Champion
Responses to enquiries about N Plan and UTC&BZ Plan

8. Other

Bi monthly - Hopper Safety Checks
Drive Hopper Friday AM + extra when required
Defibrillator checks monthly
Drive Hopper once/twice a week (Dave and Ron)
UppWatch call outs (various)
Online and telephone visitor enquiries
Online and telephone resident enquiries
Support and advice for local businesses
Incoming e-mails and social media enquiries
Ongoing website support (Mark and Ron)

Ron Simpson

Director and Secretary
19.8.2019



Robert Wills - Mr Uppingham



If Uppingham were a kingdom surely there is one man who would have deserved recognition as royalty. Major employer, property owner, international businessman, leather goods manufacturer, sports club and youth champion, community benefactor, hotelier par excellence, brewer, restaurant patron, company director extraordinaire, honorary Rotarian and loyal friend Robert Hugo Weyl Wills, has died. Known to many as Mr Uppingham, his contribution to the history, development and international recognition of Uppingham has been remarkable. I offer a personal perspective on the man.

Robert was born in July 1949. Companies House records show 36 active directorships at the time of his death. A remarkable work ethic and a straight talking approach to business earned him respect from business leaders across a wide range of industries. Like his father before him, his core business for many years was the production of high quality leather goods using predominantly local labour sold through internationally recognised outlets. His younger years travelling around Europe acquiring the raw materials necessary to source the production lines was a period of adventure he occasionally talked about as was the time he heard about his father's death and had to take over leadership of the family business.

Robert was the second largest employer in Uppingham. His decision to diversify into the hospitality business was a further stroke of good fortune for Uppingham. The acquisition of Don Paddy's and subsequent ownership of the old HSBC bank building gained a foothold in the market place. The wine-bar culture with atmosphere to match continued to grow, nurturing a developing outdoor cafe society. Add music and occasional events and one can see why the venue has remained popular with young and old. Among my memories will be how Robert would often talk with pride of how he met and developed a working relationship with James Torbell, once Uppingham's youngest licensee and now a director and leading figure within the family business. He was all for young people!

It was a stroke of genius and hugely popular when Robert acquired the rather run down Falcon Hotel. It was desperately in need of investment and a quality refit. "What does Robert Wills know about hotels? The Falcon is not a viable investment" said one former leader of the County Council. How wrong that critic was! A top to bottom quality physical restoration of the building has resulted in a vibrant community hub and a new heart for the town centre. In partnership with wife Carol, supported by James and the staff team, Robert went on to create an outstanding quality venue catering for everything from major weddings and business conferences to a tourism destination attracting five star on line reviews for its bedrooms and quality of service. Most recently it is the home of the Uppingham Brewery.

Robert's subsequent acquisition of The Vaults pub completed a move to protect and preserve quality in Uppingham's primary physical asset, the Market Place. Perhaps it should now be called Wills Square in his memory. However, it is the character of the man, not just his business achievements, which earned him his reputation as Rutland's most amiable Patron.

I first met Robert Wills when I was serving as Uppingham Town Mayor. I had written to 30 business folk in the town asking for an hour of their time to talk about how we might work together to move the town forward. Robert was the first to respond, and with typical generosity, invited me to talk over lunch. From that initial conversation, a nationwide recognised business and community governance relationship has evolved. He was the founding Chair of the Uppingham First Community Partnership, a staunch supporter of the Uppingham Business Forum and has provided a first class venue for the quarterly public meetings of the Uppingham Neighbourhood Forum from its inception. Others, more knowledgeable than I, will talk of his contribution to education, youth service and sport. I can confirm he was the driving force behind preserving a quality high street. Fibre to the premise broadband, free wifi, Rutland's first electric car charging point, the Uppingham Webcam, the Uppingham Golden Ticket, the Uppingham Hopper are just a few of the town centre projects he invested in and helped champion. Little wonder that Robert was the recipient of a Biz Club Annual Award for his work.

Uppingham and Rutland have lost a great community champion. The community's condolences to Carol Wills and her children; they have every reason to be proud of their family contribution to the town's heritage. May Robert rest in peace.