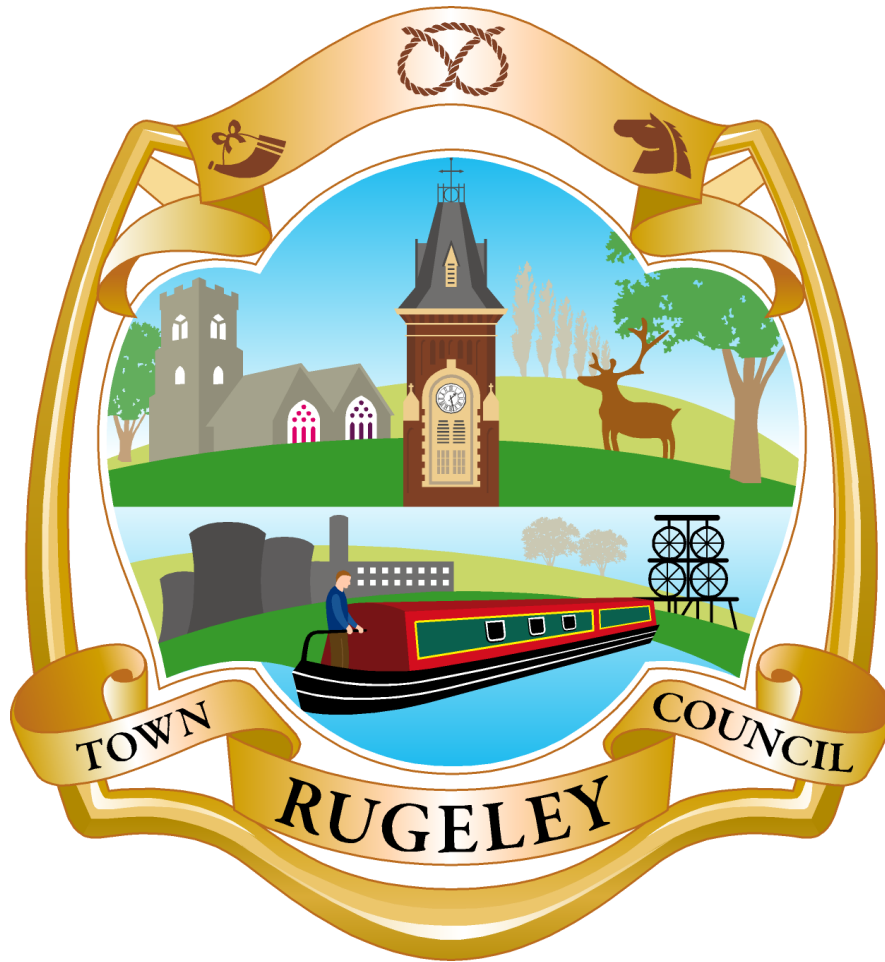


Rugeley Town Council

Annual Report

2020/2021



## *Message from the Chairman – Councillor Pat Ansell*

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Well, who would have imagined a year like this! We began with plans for a Charter Fair in town, our first Fringe Festival, and creating events that benefited the community. This all changed very early on! We quickly learnt how to adapt to working from home, adapt to online meetings, adapt to lockdowns, adapt to contacting the public in different ways...in fact adapting was what we learnt to do very quickly!

Councils, as with all businesses have been guided into operating in a whole different way. We first thought that this may be a problem and would reduce community contact, but we could not have been further from the truth. We worked with the Hart School to ensure the creation of visors to protect those working in the care services and worked with Brereton Millions to provide art packs for families with children confined to staying indoors.

The change in rules which allowed us to hold online meetings meant a greater engagement with the community than we had ever seen! The Annual Parish Meeting was cancelled but we prepared to hold our first online Community Conference in May 2021 which would look at the effects of the pandemic on the local community, economic regeneration opportunities etc.

The year saw us being creative in the way we held the Christmas Lights Switch On with a videoed shoot of the event. We worked with local talent to record Rugeley's first ever Fringe Festival which was broadcast on YouTube and available to watch in local bars when they opened back up after the first lockdown. Similarly, we recorded a piece for Remembrance Day which again, was live streamed on our Facebook page. We now also live stream our council meetings to our Facebook page where possible.

Everything has not always run smoothly with councillors being muffled having to speak through masks and having to talk in the Chamber with the doors and windows open letting in noise from outside, whatever the weather! But we have got through it!

My year in office was certainly not what was expected, but I embraced the challenges, and I was grateful to work alongside the staff and other councillors.

Patricia Ansell  
Chair  
Rugeley Town Council

## Introduction

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Rugeley Town Council covers the wards of Etchinghill, Western Springs (south), Western Springs (north) and Hagley. The Council has 19 members who are elected every 4 years. The next Council election is 2023. The Council employs a Town Clerk, a Development Manager and a Responsible Financial Officer. In addition, the Council employs a Theatre Manager, Caretaker and a Cleaner who are employed to deal with the Rose Theatre for the Council.

The Full Council meets at 7.30pm on the first Wednesday of every month except August. Meetings are open to the public who may raise questions and concerns in the public part of the meeting. In addition to Full Council meetings, we hold the following committees:

- Rose Committee: meets on the second Wednesday of every month (except August) to deal with all matters relating to the operation, management and care of the Rose Theatre;
- Community Engagement Committee: meets on the second Wednesday of the month (except August) to consider the main town council run events in the town (e.g. Charter Fair and Christmas Lights) and project development and operation for the town council;
- Planning Committee: meets on the third Wednesday of every month (except August) to consider local planning applications;
- Finance and Management Committee: meets on the third Wednesday of every month (except August) to deal with management and operation of the town council itself.

All agendas and minutes for these meetings can be found on the Town Council website: [Council Meetings - Rugeley Town Council](#) and a detail breakdown of the work of the committees can be found on the website: [Terms of Reference Version 5 October 2021.pdf \(rugeleytowncouncil.gov.uk\)](#)

### ***Elected Position of Councillors on the Town Council***

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During the year we saw the resignation of Cllr Elkin but welcomed Cllr Williams and Cllr Gunner. The vacancies were advertised on the Town Council website, the town notice boards and through Cannock Chase District Council. Appointments to these vacancies were made through co-option as elections were not able to be held.

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## Councillors serving during 2020 - 2021

Councillor	Ward	Elected/Co-opted
Pat Ansell (Chair)	Western Springs (south) – Liberal Democrat	Elected
Angi Cooney	Etching Hill – Independent	Elected
Bob Dipple	Etching Hill - Independent	Elected
Richard Elkin ( <i>left Sept 2020</i> )	Hagley - Labour	Elected
David Gaye	Etching Hill - Labour	Elected
Gary Grant	Etching Hill - Independent	Elected
Chris Green	Western Springs (north) - Independent	Elected
Ian Gunner ( <i>started June 2020</i> )	Hagley - Labour	Co-opted
Ian Hodgson	Western Springs (south) - Independent	Elected
Robert Hughes	Hagley – Conservative	Elected
Olivia Lyons	Etching Hill – Conservative	Elected
Niamh Mahon	Etching Hill – Independent	Elected
Christine Martin	Hagley – Independent	Elected
Chris Panter-Hood	Western Springs (north) - Independent	Elected
Neil Stanley	Western Springs (north) - Independent	Elected
Anna Szklarczyk	Etching Hill – Independent	Co-opted
Kieran Tait-Green	Hagley – Labour	Elected
Glenis Turner	Western Springs (north) - Independent	Elected
John Williams ( <i>started June 2020</i> )	Western Springs (north)	Co-opted

## Councillors Attendance at Full Council Meetings 2020/2021

FULL COUNCIL	Totals		% attendance
	Actual	Possible	
Clr Ansell	14	15	93%
Clr Cooney	13	15	87%
Clr Dipple	12	15	80%
Clr Elkin ( <i>left Sept 2020</i> )	6	8	75%
Clr Gaye	15	15	100%
Clr Grant	15	15	100%
Clr Green	15	15	100%
Clr Gunner	12	13	92%
Clr Hodgson	14	15	93%
Clr Hughes	15	15	100%
Clr Lyons	14	15	93%
Clr Mahon	15	15	100%
Clr Martin	14	15	93%
Clr Panter Hood	11	15	73%
Clr Stanley	15	15	100%
Clr Szklarczyk	15	15	100%
Clr Tait-Green	11	15	73%
Clr Turner	15	15	100%
Clr J Williams	12	13	93

ROSE COMMITTEE	Totals		% attendance
	Actual	Possible	
Clr Ansell	9	9	100%
Clr Cooney	8	9	89%
Clr Dipple	8	9	89%
Clr Elkin ( <i>left Sept 2020</i> )	1	2	50%
Clr Gaye	9	9	100%
Clr Mahon	9	9	100%
Clr Szklarczyk	9	9	100%
Clr Tait-Green	9	9	100%

<b>COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT</b>	Totals		
	Actual	Possible	% attendance
Clr Ansell	9	9	100%
Clr Cooney	8	9	89%
Clr Grant	8	9	89%
Clr Green	9	9	100%
Clr Gunner	8	9	89%
Clr Hodgson	9	9	100%
Clr Lyons	7	9	78%
Clr Mahon	9	9	100%
Clr Szklarczyk	9	9	100%

<b>PLANNING COMMITTEE</b>	Totals		
	Actual	Possible	% attendance
Clr Dipple	2	2	100%
Clr Elkin <i>(left Sept 2020)</i>	4	4	100%
Clr Gaye	12	12	100%
Clr Green	10	12	83%
Clr Gunner	1	4	25%
Clr Lyons	11	12	92%
Clr Mahon	12	12	100%
Clr Szklarczyk	2	2	100%
Clr Tait-Green	12	12	100%
Clr Turner	8	10	80%
Clr Williams	10	10	100%

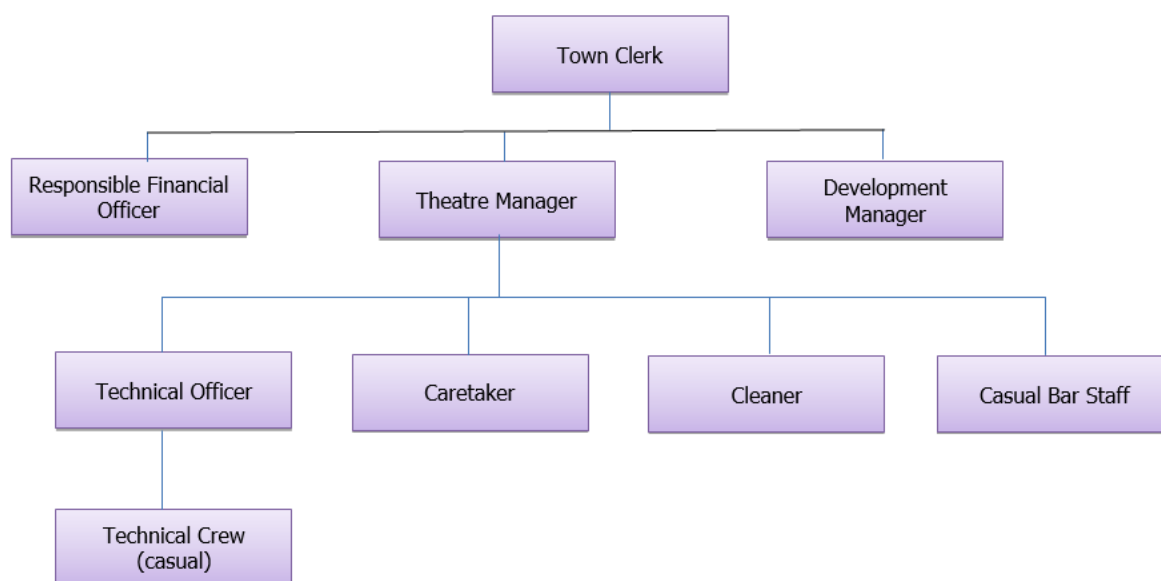
<b>FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT</b>	Totals		
	Actual	Possible	% attendance
Clr Cooney	9	11	82%
Clr Dipple	10	11	91%
Clr Gaye	11	11	100%
Clr Grant	10	11	91%
Clr Hodgson	11	11	100%
Clr Hughes	9	11	82%
Clr Panter-Hood	9	11	82%
Clr Stanley	11	11	100%
Clr Szklarczyk	8	9	89%

### ***Rugeley Town Council Staff and Management***

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In April 2020, the Town Council staffing structure was a Town Clerk and a Responsible Finance Officer. In November 2020 a Development Manager was employed to lead on community events in Rugeley. The Town Clerk administers all council meetings, manages staff, works with councillors to develop key events through the year, seeks grant funding and develops and runs projects. The RFO maintains the financial systems for the council, manages all payments & expenditure and works with Internal and External Auditors to ensure that the Annual Governance and Accountability Return is correct. The Development Managers work is overseen by the Community Engagement Committee and works to deliver community events in the area.

## Rugeley Town Council Staffing Structure



### *The Rose Theatre*

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Rugeley Town Council manages and maintains the Rose Theatre on Taylors Lane, Rugeley. The Council employs a Theatre Manager, Cleaner and a Cleaner/Caretaker to maintain the property, manage bookings, promote the facilities and run the bar. Casual staff are taken on for some of the larger events in order to help run the bar and clean. A monthly retainer is made to a Theatre Technician.

In 2020/2021 the theatre was severely hampered in providing the normal range of events owing to the pandemic. As a result, the theatre reinvented itself as a virtual performance space with socially distanced recordings of performances, including a Fringe Festival, that we distributed via Facebook and our YouTube page. This was made possible through receipt of a grant from the Covid Recovery Heritage Fund.

The hire of the theatre and function rooms for regular weekly bookings, private events and community activities was restricted but did open when it was safe to do so.

The overall direction and management of the Rose Theatre is done through the Rose Committee.

### *Charter Fair*

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This year everything was arranged to have Charter Fair 2020 in Rugeley Town Centre but with the pandemic, this was cancelled.

The overall direction and management of the Charter Fair is done through the Community Engagement Committee.

### *Christmas Lights*

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This annual event is run in conjunction with Rugeley Lotto Events. The Town Council pay for the Christmas lights in the town centre whilst the Lotto Events team arrange all the stalls and side shows. Whilst we were unable to hold the Christmas Market, the lights were still installed and we had a virtual switch on which was live streamed on Facebook.

The overall direction and management of the Christmas Lights is done through the Community Engagement Committee.

### *Remembrance Day*

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In memory of those who have served the country, we did have the poppy waterfall and banners put up around town. The formal Remembrance Service could not take place though so a fitting tribute was broadcast on our Facebook page.

### *Consultations and Project Development*

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A part of best practice, Rugeley Town Council works closely with neighbouring authorities and other public and private bodies in order to improve the quality of life and assist in the regeneration of the town. The following key consultations and ongoing discussions have taken place over 2020/2021:

- Ongoing development of the Neighbourhood Plan
- Redevelopment of Rugeley Power Station with Engie and Power for All
- Welcome Back to the High Street works with Cannock Chase

In addition, funding was secured from several bodies to assist with project development:

- Cultural Recovery Heritage Fund to pay for Fringe Festival and Food and Film activities.
- Cultural Recovery Arts Council Funds to pay for Energy Arts Project.

### *Planning*

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Rugeley Town Council has a Planning Committee which sits on the third Wednesday of every month. Applications are received from Cannock Chase District Council where the land/property is in the town council boundary. The committee will also comment on applications which neighbour the town or have a direct impact on the town. Previously

we had received little interaction with the community on planning applications. In 2020/2021, we had an increased interaction with residents through our live streamed meetings. A total of 94 planning applications came before councillors for their consideration in 2020/2021.

### *Newsletters and Promotion*

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The Town Councils website and Facebook pages played a pivotal role in getting information out to our residents. We continue to look at ways to promote activities and interact with the community. The Rose Theatre has its own Facebook page and website, which have been undergoing improvements in the last year.

Rugeley Town Council: [www.rugeleytowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.rugeleytowncouncil.gov.uk)

Rugeley Rose Theatre: [www.rugeley-rose-theatre.co.uk](http://www.rugeley-rose-theatre.co.uk)

### *Audit*

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The audit for 2020/2021 was clear and gives us a good base from which to further expand the activities of the Town Council. Following on from the fraud experienced in 2019, the Council was able to recover a proportion of the losses through the Proceeds of Crime Act.

### *Policies*

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Through the course of 2020/2021, council policies struggled to be reviewed. The Council will look to undergo a thorough review of all policies over 2022/2023.

### *Grants*

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Rugeley Town Council operates two grant schemes:

- Small Grants
- Urban Orchard Grants

The following grants were awarded in 2020/2021:

Chetwynd Charity	£550.00
Cannock Chase SHED	£500.00
Cannock Chase Dementia Alliance	£400.00
Hospice at Home	£550.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>£2,000.00</b>

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## Finances

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	Revenue Expenditure 2019/2020 £	Revenue Expenditure 2020/2021 £
Administration	56,449	69,768
Charter Fair	8,832	0
Christmas Lights	34,726	34,043
Council Office	37,965	28,819
Elections	0	0
Grant Aid	12,999*	2,000
Community Initiatives	2,292	49,099
Rugeley Rose Theatre	140,744	125,746
Total Gross Expenditure	294,007	309,475
Income	13,612	110,121
Total Precept	303,542	303,634

\*Includes grant spent from Heritage Lottery Fund