



MINUTES OF THE BUSINESS SERVICES MEETING
HELD ON 15TH OCTOBER 2020
AT 7.45PM VIA VIRTUAL ACCESS

Present:

Cllr A Snape
Cllr I Blazeby
Cllr P Dodds
Cllr A Lutley
Cllr J Roberts
Cllr M A Williams

Jon Barkat – Rufus Centre Manager
Susan Eldred – Community Services Officer
Cllr J Dann
Members of the public - 1

1194. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Rob McGregor – Town Clerk, Accepted.

Councillor Badham – Accepted.

1195. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive Statutory Declarations of Interests from Members in relation to:

(a) Disclosable Pecuniary interests in any agenda item – None.

(b) Non-Pecuniary interests in any agenda item – None.

1196. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman noted that former Councillor Ryan Coleman's name was present on the agenda. The Chairman requested for this to be removed and updated for future meetings.

1197. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

No questions raised.

1198. MEMBERS QUESTIONS

The Chairman raised a question, asking if the Rufus Centre Manager would be working on a contingency plan and control measure relating to a second Covid-19 Lockdown. The Rufus Centre Manager advised this would be answered under agenda item 9g.

1199. MINUTES

- a) For Members to receive and adopt the Minutes of the Business Services Committee held on 10th September 2020

Members received and approved as a true record, the Minutes of the Business Services Committee held on 10th September 2020.

1200. MATTERS ARISING

- a) Minutes of the Business Services Committee 10th September 2020 – None.

1201. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

a. Vehicle Charging Points

Councillors Williams and Dann expressed their support for a charging station to be installed at The Rufus Centre car park. Councillor Dann commented that there were no charging points within the local area, as far as he was aware the nearest charging points were available in Milton Keynes, Dunstable and Bedford.

Councillor Dann suggested more research was needed into what would be involved in installing electric car charging points at The Rufus Centre. The Rufus Centre Manager was asked to gain information regarding quotes for installation of the charging points, if there would be a grant available and the financial impact on The Rufus Centre.

Action: Rufus Manager

1202. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

a. Occupancy Statistics

Members noted the report circulated by The Rufus Manager.

b. Projects Update

Members noted the project update circulated by The Rufus Manager.

The Rufus Manager informed Members that the current on-going building works within the toilets on the ground floor would be completed shortly. New carpets and furniture have been purchased for three rooms and these will be delivered and fitted in the coming weeks.

Councillor Dodds commented on the re-lining of The Rufus Centre car park, questioning if the lines would have to be changed if an electric car point were installed. The Rufus Centre Manager did not feel this would affect the current format of the car park.

Councillor Dann commented that there were no toilets upstairs for anyone hiring the Davis Suite. Councillor Dann asked if there was a reason why people hiring the Davis Suite could not use the toilets upstairs currently being used by tenants. The Rufus Centre Manager commented

that this was something he was exploring and would report his findings back to a future meeting.

Action: Rufus Manager

c. Health & Safety Update

The Rufus Centre Manager informed Members that the EICR (Fixed Wire Testing) had been completed at The Tractor Store and The Hub. The Hub was 'satisfactory' while the Tractor Store was 'unsatisfactory'. Works will be completed on the Tractor Store to bring them in line with the satisfactory criteria.

The Rufus Centre Manager informed Members that the General Risk Assessment (GRA) and Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) reports commissioned with Ellis Whittam were still outstanding and that an action plan would be implemented by the Councils contractors as a result of the Risk Assessment.

The Rufus Centre and the Amenities Officer have worked together to create a Training Matrix for the whole staff team. The matrix had identified individual staff training needs and a 2-day training programme has been planned for November.

Councillor Williams questioned if The Hub was insured for use by people other than youth organisations. The Rufus Centre Manager will look into the current insurance held for The Hub.

Action: Rufus Manager

d. Marketing Update

The Rendezvous Café has been added to the new website. The website gave full details of the Café including menus and promotion information.

The Rendezvous Café had a Facebook page. The page would be used for social interaction as well as promotions.

The Café had its own branding, with a clear colour scheme and style being used on all marketing material and social media.

A Google review page for the Rendezvous Café had been set up. To date there had been 406 views of the page with 5 people leaving 5 star reviews.

Friday Nights @ Rendezvous had been selling out with a waiting list in place. Currently the Friday Nights @ Rendezvous are able to seat 49 people per week, following Covid restriction guidelines.

Councillor Dodds commented that CBC had released new guidance for Halloween activities this year. The Rufus Centre Manager informed Members that the Café would be decorated for Halloween with a Children's Afternoon Tea on offer for Half Term week. It was felt this would not breach the new guidance; The Rufus Centre Manager would refer to the guidance before a final decision was made on any Halloween activities.

Action: Rufus Manager

e. Events Update

Members were advised that a Santa's Grotto would be on offer this Christmas at The Rufus Centre. The Grotto would follow Covid restrictions, with a booking system in place and each child would get a gift.

The Rufus Centre would be open for 5 Saturdays during November & December for children to come and have 'Breakfast with Santa'. Attendees would pre-book and each child would get a gift.

The Rufus Centre Manager reported that he was investigating providing open training courses at The Rufus Centre, for example in Health & Safety. These courses could be booked by outside companies for staff training.

f. Budget

Members noted the Budget Report circulated.

Councillor Snape commented that the budget figures on the circulated report were incorrect. Councillor Snape asked The Rufus Manager to look into this.

Action: Rufus Manager

The Rufus Centre Manager informed Members that CBC had paid £15,000 from the current outstanding balance owed in relation to the Aged Debt Report.

A payment plan had been agreed with two tenants at The Rufus Centre, to help clear their outstanding balance in regard to outstanding rent. Members asked for the Rufus Centre Manager to provide a list of tenants with agreed payment plans including the payment schedule at the next meeting.

Action: Rufus Manager

Councillor Snape referred to a second account for £4000. It was not clear what this was allocated to. Councillor Snape asked the Rufus Manager to investigate this with the Finance Team.

Actions: Rufus Manager

g. Covid Update

The Rufus Centre Manager informed Members that all Covid measures were up to date and in line with all Government guidance. The Rendezvous Café would offer table service, all staff would wear face coverings and card payments were taken where possible.

Should a second Lockdown be forced, the Café would close, some office staff would be able to work from home via a laptop and CSA's would paint office space, should Lockdown permit.

1203. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

No questions raised.

1204. EXEMPT ITEMS

The following resolution will be **moved** that is advisable in the public interest that the public and press are excluded whilst the following exempt item issue is discussed.

Rendezvous Café & Bar Update

Members congratulated The Rufus Manager on the success on the opening of the Café and Friday nights.

Councillor Roberts raised a question about how much of the Café income was profit. The Rufus Centre Manager would look into this and bring information to the next meeting.

Action: Rufus Manager

Councillor Snape requested information about what meals, food and drink were most popular at the Café. This information would be available at the next meeting.

Action: Rufus Manager

11b. Rufus Centre Income

Members noted the report circulated.

Councillor Snape stated the income for September was down 35% on the budget but that this was an excellent result considering the impact of Covid-19 on the hospitality sector. The Rufus Centre Manager agreed that it was impossible to forecast with any kind of certainty.

The Rufus Centre Manager informed Members that bookings were starting to increase. Bookings from the NHS and other clients were being received but CBC, the biggest client had yet to return.