



# OUR LONG-TERM TOWN PLAN

<b>NAME OF MEETING:</b>	Town Board Meeting
<b>DATE/LOCATION</b>	Newchurch Methodist Church 13.12.2024
<b>ATTENDEES</b>	Andy MacNae MP (AMac), Andy Schofield (AS), Chris McKee (CM), Councillor Scott Smith (SS), David Gould (DG), David Smurthwaite (DS), Iain Taylor (IT), Jaid Flatley (JF), Jodie Oatway (JO), Lynn Smith (LS), Rachel Gildert (GD), Rob Huntington (RH), Samantha Sandford (SS), Stephen Anderson (SA)
<b>GUEST SPEAKERS</b>	Paul and Vinny (Police) Mhorag and Jo (Valley Heritage) Jo, Rory and Martin (Youth representatives) Leonie (White Horse Project)
<b>APOLOGIES</b>	Alyson Barnes (AB), Chris Warren (CW), Clare Birtwistle (CB), Deyrick Allen (DA), Jan Shutt (JS), Jackie Oaks (JAO), Kimberly Howarth (KH), Megan Eastwood (ME), Milly Yielding (MY), Peter Terry (PT),
<b>MINUTE TAKER</b>	Jodie Oatway (JO)

THE MEETING	
1	<b>Welcome and Apologies</b>  IT opened up the meeting and welcomed attendees.  Apologies received above
2	<b>Minutes of previous meeting</b>  Minutes of the previous meeting were accepted. All actions completed  <b>Decision: Previous minutes agreed</b>
3	<b>Government Update</b>  The government has confirmed that the plan will proceed, though the time scales have been adjusted. The main funding will now be available by March 2026, with an additional £200,000 allocated after April 2025 for feasibility and design work. The three existing themes will remain in place but may be expanded. While loans are a potential option, there are some conditions to be clarified. There is increased flexibility in the revised time scales, and the funding should be utilised as effectively as possible. A clear strategic approach should be emphasised, focusing on identifying constraints and enablers to drive meaningful growth and ensuring efforts target areas with the greatest potential impact. Guidance will be issued in full in January 2025  Action: DS to update on conditions for loans

<p>4</p>	<p><b>Police update</b></p> <p>The police delivered a presentation on anti-social behaviour (ASB), highlighting nuisance and environmental issues as the most common concerns. Lancashire faces the highest demand for ASB-related responses, with approximately 140 ASB incidents reported daily. In Rossendale, there have been 2,300 ASB issues this year, 23.9% of which are youth-related. Key problem locations in Rawtenstall include the bus station, Asda, Tesco, Marl Pitts, and McDonald's, where young people often gather due to a lack of warm, safe spaces with WiFi. Fridays and Saturdays are the most problematic days, with peak hours from 3 PM to 9 PM.</p> <p>Efforts from other areas were discussed as potential models for reducing ASB. In Kirkham, a targeted approach involving neighbourhood policing and local businesses identified boxing as an effective solution, securing funding for the initiative. Fleetwood's Commando diversion scheme engages young people through the youth referral team with indoor and outdoor activities led by former marines. Bacup Family Centre attracts up to 40 young people weekly and has secured £12.5K in funding, though sustainability is a challenge as it costs £26K annually to run for one night a week.</p> <p>Recommendations include establishing youth clubs, improving access to sports facilities, installing additional CCTV and better artificial lighting, and fostering stronger partnerships to maximize venue use. Utilising venues collaboratively could enable consistent, multi-night availability. Additionally, vapes are becoming a growing issue in Rossendale, driven by the increase of vape shops.</p>
<p>5</p>	<p><b>Youth Update</b></p> <p>The Youth Representative felt that youths are simply looking for safe places to meet friends and relax, rather than intentionally engaging in ASB. They want environments where they feel secure but not overly controlled, structured, or monitored, and prefer spaces without a visible police presence. There is also a noticeable lack of respect for the police among young people, often influenced by social media platforms. Breaking down these barriers may involve addressing perceptions of the police, including whether uniforms contribute to the divide.</p> <p>It was noted that youth culture has evolved significantly due to the influence of social media, the rise in vaping, and increased drug usage, making it essential to adapt youth provision to current needs. The White Horse Project was cited as an example, who run a successful youth club at Newchurch Methodist Church. Pre-COVID, the club attracted up to 90 young people weekly, supported by pensioner volunteers teaching activities like pool and darts. However, registration requirements and the need for adult sign-ins have created barriers, suggesting that providing a minibus for transport could improve accessibility for youths from areas like Haslingden and Bacup.</p> <p>Improving existing facilities and drawing on successful models from other areas were identified as priorities. Suggestions included incorporating technology, coding, and gaming into youth activities. To advance these efforts, a follow-up meeting focused on youth provision was proposed for January by IT, with an open call to invite interested stakeholders. The meeting aims to map current provisions, appreciate existing efforts, and identify opportunities for growth and improvement.</p> <p><b>Action: Group members to identify buildings, people, funding, suitable days, and activities that could support youth programs</b></p>

	<b>Action: Follow up meeting to discuss youth provision</b>
6	<p><b>Valley Heritage Update</b></p> <p>Valley Heritage is actively working to transform derelict buildings into valuable community assets, exemplified by a £900K project in Alliance that successfully converted unused spaces into apartments and co-working facilities. Building on this success, they aim to revitalise more properties. Current initiatives include the decarbonisation of Rossendale, with Rossendale Valley Energy receiving an award from Electricity North West, and the Rossendale Heritage Futures project. The Heritage Development Trust, funded for three years by the Architectural Heritage Fund, has extended its core funding and continues to deliver impactful results, including 11 completed and active projects, 170 visitors during heritage days, five trustees, two employees, 11 volunteers, and £1.5 million in funding to date.</p> <p>Valley Heritage offers expertise in feasibility studies, project management, due diligence, and funding opportunities. Discussions are ongoing regarding potential LTPFT funding for feasibility studies on three buildings (Tricketts Arcade, St John's Church and Heritage Arcade Rawtenstall). Additionally, they are pursuing properties in Rawtenstall, although these may lean toward residential use and might not align with criteria.</p> <p><b>Action: Valley Heritage to prepare proposals for potential building projects to drive further regeneration efforts.</b></p>
7	<p><b>Waterfoot Arts subgroup including Tricketts</b></p> <p>A final survey of the building is scheduled to be conducted by the owners in January. The window for expressions of interest for artist grants has now closed.</p> <p>Regarding the event space, work is underway with architects to explore ways to reshape and repurpose the area. The aim is to involve the public in the process, ensuring community input drives its future use. The proposed changes will remain small-scale in terms of capital investment but are intended to enhance the functionality and appeal of the space.</p>
8	<p><b>Logic Plan</b></p> <p>The Logic Plan outlines the discussions held and demonstrates how these ideas flow coherently through the planning process. It serves as a framework to ensure that the context and barriers to growth are clearly identified and addressed with robust strategies. This structured approach helps align actions with objectives. A draft logic plan was presented in the meeting for comment.</p>
9	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p>It was observed by the Chamber of Commerce that footfall in Rawtenstall Town Centre has decreased, primarily due to ongoing roadworks impacting accessibility.</p> <p><b>Action: JF to advise footfall figures</b></p> <p>Progress continues with the development of a masterplan for Whitaker Park, which includes proposals for youth facilities, improved lighting, and other enhancements. Funding has already been secured for the junior area of the park.</p>