

## Altrincham Town Centre Update - January 2024

Compiled by Angela Stone – Our Town Centre Lead

### **BUSINESS MOVEMENTS**

A lot has happened in the last few months!

Randall's have moved to Regent Rd opposite Phantong in what was Scope

Holland and Barratt have moved into their old unit, H&B old unit is now up for rent.

Poundland (which doesn't seem to have much for £1!) Opened in the old Wilko.

County Galleries is now closed.

2 new openings on Shaw's Road - West Beverley owned by Justin & Diana from California Coffee and The Beacon in the formers PI unit owned by Chris and Will of Batch Bottle Shop.

Sud Pasta on Shaw's Road has reopened as Rigatoni's

Unagi opened at the end of December as a restaurant on Central Way...

Bernie's reopened in September after a crowd-funding initiative as a canteen and bakery

Pranda bar opened in December in the former Sardus unit.

Noria opened in Goose Green at the end of the year in the former Francs unit serving Mediterranean food.

Memories, a new bar has opened in the former Kingfisher unit.

Jojo Aalay has opened in the unit that was Kathmandu.

Damo has opened in the former Scalini unit on Ashley Road.

Altrincham Football Club now have a unit in the Stamford Quarter.

Re-store, an eco friendly shop has opened on Regent Road next to Randall's

The Chinese supermarket is proving popular as is Utility, especially with youngsters. Utility seems to be a cheaper version of Paperchase.

The art gallery on The Downs has closed.

Traders Tiki and Evuna are up for sale. Evuna closed at the end of December.

Just Plonk has closed, they also have a unit in Alderley Edge.

IlCaperno has closed and the lease is up for sale.

Stutter and Twitch have closed and moved to a unit in Hale.

JD Sports has closed and moved to Broadheath.

Suki's the ladies clothing shop in the unit that was Shopmobility has closed sighting poor building maintenance. The unit forms part of The Grafton's.

Work has started in the unit that used to be Contemporary Art Gallery for a door company, Lakes Doors.

Fusion Creative Studio has opened on George St. The unit offers a full recording studio as well as a bar and event space.

A new tenant for the rear block in the Regent Road had been confirmed as a cosmetic surgery (which we knew about)

A new solicitors, Yates Legal is opening on Regent Road where the cartridge shop used to be, they've moved a few doors down.

Seems like Shaw's Road and Regent Rd are the place to be!

### **CRIME & STREET SCENE**

There is an increase in shoplifting; the Business Improvement District team (BID) have been actively working with Greater Manchester Police (GMP) to increase their visibility. The problem however remains for the retailers. BID is also working on the issue of Chuggers in the town centre. I generally use the line "sorry I don't have time" & they seem to cheerfully accept this.

Buskers are still causing issues for some businesses on George St. We do get some talented buskers & I refer them to the live music venues to see if they can get bookings, there are some that just create "noise" though, so I do see their point. If I ask them to move they normally do.

I'm joining the first Counter Terrorism course of 2024 on-line later this week. These sessions are useful in helping the Committee consider where we have problems in the Town Centre. We remain concerned about bollards in place (& working) to protect the public from Marauding Terror Attacks (vehicles being used as weapons) as well as any fresh news and advice relating to incidents.

### **PUBLIC REALM WORKS & PARKING**

Public realm work is underway in the Stamford Quarter; this seems to be progressing well though is creating problems of footfall for businesses. Work is due to be completed by the summer.

The new one-way system is not proving popular with businesses. Businesses that use Central Way (George St, Greenwood St and those actually on Central Way) now have to drive round town to get to their locations; this of course includes frequent deliveries to everyone. A Tesco 40ft lorry was seen heading down Regent Rd presumably not realising there was a one-way system in place. Discouraging residents to drive into Altrincham is one thing, but delivery access is essential for everyone.

Once Regent Road Car Park is open the same will apply to town centre visitors wanting to use the car park that they'll have to drive further to access. It is already creating issues for patients at the Health & Wellbeing Centre (H&WBC). Ironic really when we fought to get parking at the H&WBC at considerable extra cost and we also fought for extra spaces at Regent Road to cope with demand for parking. Regent Road will have EV charging facilities.

The knock on effect is that The Downs and Railway St are becoming rat runs and traffic is heavier on outlying roads - Groby Rd and Bentinck Road as people try to work out how to get to where they want to get to.

Some New St residents are still waiting to move into the rear block of apartments behind Regent Rd car park. They have all been allocated apartments.

We still have the Remembrance Garden to discuss for Chapel St. This will also include the "there but not there" statue which got damaged and is now resting inside the Town Hall.

## **HOSPITALITY**

BID gained Purple Flag status.

The Roebuck were awarded Gold for their RHS entry, which was well deserved. Iain and Gareth work hard on this each year.

Christmas trading went well, however January is very quiet which is to be expected. Bars have largely remained, however the restaurant sector are finding trading a struggle.

### Best Bar None

15 venues of 36 have now been assessed & completed. We have a few more working on their applications that need a bit of encouragement, so if they don't make the cut off for 2023/24 they can be added in 2024/25

We also have nominations in for the Best Town Centre and Recognition Award for the National Awards. These will be announced at an event at the House of Lords on the 20<sup>th</sup> February following the conference. Trevor and I will be attending as we are both scheme Assessors and me as Altrincham Co-ordinator.

The Committee has its first post-Christmas meeting next week to plan for 2024.

We now have a fresh supply of Pubwatch posters to distribute – for some reason drinkers find it amusing to remove our posters.

## **Other news**

### **BID**

Have been successful in obtaining a grant for a cargo bike scheme.

## **EVENTS NEWS**

Paint Altrincham Blue took place in November, this is an initiative organised by Tony Collier. "Red4Feb" is taking place in February, raising awareness & money for the British Heart Foundation; this is being co-ordinated by Bridgewater Rotary

Paint Altrincham Pink will be 4<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> March. Planning started today. This 2 week event involves businesses across Altrincham raising money for Prevent Breast Cancer based at The Nightingale Centre at Wythenshawe.

Manchester Marathon is on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> April and is now sponsored by Adidas which we're seeing as a positive step in becoming a major event. The event for runners is now sold out. The route may have to change again to accommodate public realm works in Manchester; we have yet to find out how this will affect Altrincham.

Brit Fest takes place in July at Ashley Hall. The 3 day event is being organised by Edward and Anthony Prophet (who now own the Bowdon Rooms) and is sponsored by Myerson's. There are some big names performing as well as some emerging performers.

## **NEIGHBOURHOOD BUSINESS PLAN**

The Working Group has been re-designated by the Council.

The Working Group need to re-convene to look at the existing plan to consider what is working and what isn't as we're now half way through the Plan term. As it took us 7 years to get the first one in place we need to gain traction to ensure continuity!