

615-District Councillors' Report **Parish Council Meeting - 15 December 2021**

REPORT ON THE GALLERIES DEVELOPMENT

The original scheme for the redevelopment of the Galleries has been granted planning permission. At the Council Meeting, opposition leaders asked for the development to be paused in recognition of the strong voice of dissatisfaction of people who presented a petition to the Council, the efficacy of the Consultation, and because of concerns for the existing market traders. This motion was voted against.

We have been reassured that this development will contribute to the wider town centre and will not replace it: it is intended that it will run alongside existing retail provision, and will hopefully draw people into the centre, instead of going to the nearest cities.

It is anticipated that footfall will be increased, and the vibrancy and vitality of the town centre will be improved by the provision of food and beverage establishments, a new Market Hall right at the heart of the town centre, a large, outdoor event space, a 4/6 storey hotel, crazy golf, ten-pin bowling and a multi-screen cinema. In addition, there will be four residential blocks of 218 units and 2 commercial units, with underground parking space. 25% of dwellings (up to 120) will be affordable homes. The Makinson Arcade and its frontage will remain, and an internal square will open up views of key buildings, so acknowledging some of our heritage. The glass-fronted Market Hall will be managed by a new experienced commercial operator.

The current market will remain open whilst the internal strip-out and subsequent construction takes place. Hoardings will conceal this, as well as promoting and acting as signage for access to it. Noticeboards will provide information about the scheme, as well as giving the team contact details. There will be active communication with market traders and retailers. The development will employ renewable and low carbon technologies.

It will be financed partly by the Council and partly by private grant and will commence early in 2022.

SAFETY OF WOMEN AT NIGHT

Government funding has been acquired by Wigan Council to improve women's safety on the streets at night, primarily in the town centre. The aim is to encourage behaviour change, and promote education and reassurance, so that women can feel safe out at night. £270,000 must be spent by the end of March, and will be used to deliver 22 initiatives, including 'Ask for Angela', Safety Marshalls in the Town Centre, St John's Ambulance Safety Havens, and pop-up activities and counselling provision by the Targeted Youth Service. There will be an app that the public will be able to download in order to pinpoint a particular area where they do not feel particularly safe. This might inform Council decisions about lighting, for example.

BOUNDARY COMMISSION CONSULTATION

The Boundary Commission's consultation on the draft proposals for ward boundaries is now open for comment.

Appendix A