

UPDATE

WINTER/SPRING 2010/2011



Operation Artemis

Royston First continues to sponsor regular, uniformed police patrols throughout the Royston area. Typically an Operation Artemis shift will commence at 7.00 pm with two officers heading out to the parks and open areas in order to curb anti-social behaviour and support the PCSO's. A couple of hours later and the officers will be in a patrol car touring the industrial estates in order to check that commercial premises are secure. From 11.00pm onwards the patrol will be in the vicinity of bars, restaurants and fast food outlets ensuring that a police presence is recognised at 'chucking out time'. The police car will then patrol to discourage over-boisterous behaviour on the walk home.

Royston based officers credit Operation Artemis with making a major contribution to a reduction in crime rates of over 15%. The fact that our patrols cannot be 'abstracted' allows a very visible police presence to be maintained. This in turn discourages anti-social behaviour and allows for early intervention in 'situations' (Violent Crime is down 27%). Patrols also act as a deterrent for 'planned' crimes (there have been no burglaries in the industrial areas... at a time when similar areas in other local towns have been experiencing something of a crimewave).

Not that anybody is getting complacent. We are aware that there have been thefts from town centre retailers, both within and outside opening hours. Although an arrest has been made in relation to a recent offence, we intend to look at new ways of tackling the issue. This will be just a part of the continuance of Operation Artemis during 2011/12.

Angel Pavement

This project is substantially delivered – with just a few, minor 'snagging' items left to be addressed.

The re-surfacing of Angel Pavement stemmed entirely from a Royston First initiative. Having budgeted sufficient funds to re-pave using very basic materials, an approach was made to the Area Committee of NHDC for additional funds. This resulted in not only a potential upgrade to the surface material but also in an expansion of the project to include the Market Hill edge of the Pavement. Both organisations then combined forces and succeeded in securing funding from the HCC 'Vibrant Towns' fund to enable the use of York Stone (to match the High Street).

This re-surfacing of Angel Pavement was completed ahead of schedule in February. Assuming no unforeseen issues arising during the minor works yet to be completed, the proportion of the project cost allocated to Royston First is within budget.



Work in progress

photo: Alan Fleck



Work completed

photo: Dan Wilson

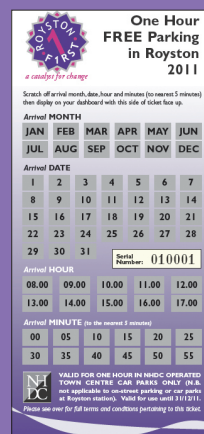
PARKING FREE after 3

Free parking after 3.00 in all town centre car parks has proved a great success, with retailers in particular reporting an increase in business at a time of day when previously there was frequently a lull. The car parks in Fish Hill and Market Hill now average over 90% occupancy after 3.00 pm.

Royston First is working with NHDC to extend the Free-After-3 initiative for at least the remainder of 2011.

SCRATCH CARDS

Although free parking after 3.00pm has proved popular, there are still other times when employees of Royston companies will want to visit the town centre. This scheme is designed to make the trip easier by providing one hour's free parking.



This is a new parking initiative scheduled for release within the next few weeks. Companies located outside the town centre will be sent a quantity of tickets allowing a single hour's free parking at any time on any day during 2011. Initially it is proposed that 1,000 tickets will be issued... but the scheme may be extended if it proves popular with Royston businesses.

Retail Mailing

Eye-catching mailings are being designed to remind people of what is on offer to the Royston shopper. Intended for mailing to over 10,000 households, the four page publications will feature public-facing businesses throughout the town. The first of two such publications will focus on new businesses in the town centre. The second issue will feature businesses on the industrial estate and elsewhere throughout Royston. It is intended that both will include an extensive directory of businesses and clear street maps featuring all car parks.



This new project is currently being worked on and is due for release during March and April.



Following the receipt of monies from Royston First and the Royston and District Area Committee of NHDC, work commenced on the project to ring Royston with ANPR cameras. Suitable sites were located and surveyed and the latest cameras scheduled for purchase. At this point an unexpected delay was encountered. Because the technology is relatively new, Hertfordshire Constabulary needed to appoint a contractor not covered by their existing framework... and this required completion of an EEC tender process. However, a contractor has now been appointed and it is anticipated that installation will commence in April.

SIGNAGE



Business locator signs

Some groups of businesses are tucked away and not always easy to find. Royston First is proposing to install impactful, quality signs in prominent locations where visitors can be guided to their destinations. This project involves Royston First in negotiating with landlords and the planning authorities on behalf of a group of companies. Not a simple proposition but ultimately worthwhile if it delivers extra customers (projects currently under consideration include South Close and The Quadrant).

Area signs

Discussions have been underway for some time with Hertfordshire Highways to introduce additional signage designed to aid visitors trying to locate some of the more hidden business areas. Commercial areas proposed for these signs currently include Green Drift, Lower Gower Road, and Lumen Road. Although the signs themselves are relatively straightforward, the process of introducing them on the public highway is anything but simple!

Community Cinema

This is the big project for 2011/12. Indeed it is the single largest budgeted item across the five years of the Royston First BID. Keenly followed by the local population (and media!), the reintroduction of a cinema offers huge potential for boosting the evening economy of Royston.



Currently a great deal of consultation is taking place with specialists and contractors. The concept, as it currently stands, is to retro-fit a state-of-the-art digital cinema into the upstairs of the Town Hall. It is intended that the hall will maintain multiple uses and therefore will be outfitted for cinema, dancing, theatre, meetings, etc. Work by Royston Town Council to install a disabled lift and other facilities commences in April. Other conversion work will take place later in the year following much discussion and debate!

Window Dressing

Royston First has continued to dress the windows of empty retail units. The latest such installation featured photography supplied by a member of the Royston Photographic Society.

We note with interest that a number of long term empty properties have been let since having their windows dressed by Royston First (two properties in Angel Pavement and three in the High Street ... including Woolworths). Perhaps just a coincidence... but a happy one nonetheless!



Your representatives 2010/11

The Royston First Advisory Council is responsible for directing/delivering the actions specified in the BID Prospectus. All businesses within the BID boundary are entitled to propose candidates for the RFAC. The volunteers for this year are listed below, together with the business or organisation they represent.

Alan Barlow, ABA Consultants
 Cllr. Bill Davidson
 Cath Boughton, The Listing
 Cllr. Fiona Hill, NHDC
 David Smyth, WVKH
 Ian Knowles, Sharman Knowles
 James Keatley, NPK

Jim Bullard, Archers Residential
 John Gourd (Chairman), Johnson Matthey
 Kay Makowiecki, Godshaws
 Madeleine Jones, Knibbs Meatsafe
 Mike Mildwater, Hiremeo
 Nick Tait, Syrris
 Nigel Reader, Borders & Bows

Oscar Sassoli, Penn Sassoli
 Rick Hollway, TAP
 Rupert Matthews, Fourways
 Stephen Larcombe, Limbach Banham
 Steve Jackson, Enfield Electrical
 Susan Thornton-Bjork, RTC

We thank everybody involved with the RFAC for their time and effort on behalf of Royston.