

## **RUGBY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **QUESTION PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 10**

**COUNCIL – 26 NOVEMBER 2020**

#### **QUESTION B**

**Councillor Douglas to ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Lowe:**

“Black History Month took place in October and was founded to recognise the contributions that people of African and Caribbean backgrounds have made to the UK over many generations. Can the Leader outline what Rugby Borough Council did to mark Black History Month?”

**Councillor Lowe, Leader of the Council, to reply as follows:**

The Council is committed to recognising the contributions to the UK from people of African, Caribbean and other diverse backgrounds. Much of this work is done through the arts, heritage and visitor services team at Rugby Art Gallery and Museum. This year pupils at Brooke School explored the town's historic Redding Collection during a workshop to mark Black History Month.

The workshop held by Rugby Art Gallery and Museum's learning and outreach team was inspired by the collection of nearly 26,000 glass plates and cellulose acetate negatives taken at Rugby's Redding Photographic Studio between 1958 and 1972.

The studio captured Rugby and its residents on camera during a time of rapid social change, with the boom in the town's engineering industry and railways attracting migrant workers from across the globe, particularly Asia and the West Indies. The collection includes photographs of migrant workers posing for portraits to send to family and friends at home - celebrating successful 'new' lives in Rugby.

The workshop explored the stories behind the photographs, supporting Brooke School's programme of lessons to mark Black History Month. Pupils were encouraged to imagine living in the West Indies before travelling to Rugby to start a new life and experience the change in culture - from the cold weather to food and drink.

The Council believes that the diverse histories of Rugby residents should not be just celebrated during October but be part of the ongoing and permanent culture and history of the borough. During lockdown Rugby Art Gallery and Museum has been collecting stories, photographs and objects about contemporary life in Rugby, including items from the Rugby Black Lives Matter group. Officers have been working with the group to support their development and voice. The group are supporting officers with a major project about the diverse histories of Rugby planned from summer 2021. Subject to Arts Council England funding the project will see more of the Redding Collection becoming accessible through digitisation, workshops, displays and collaborative projects as the museum becomes 'in residence' at the Benn Partnership Centre.