

Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Committee

Date:	19 December 2017
Title:	TCWG: Market Town Co-Ordinator Update
Contact Officer:	Becky Reid, Market Town Co-Ordinator

Purpose of Report

1. To provide an overview of work undertaken since last report 7 November 2017.

Update

2. Town Centre Working Group & Sub Groups

Next meeting of the Town Centre Working Group is in early January, when we will identify who else needs to be invited to the meeting and receive reports about progress in each of the sub groups. We will also review a proposed action plan for next year to replace the current Market Town Coordinators Action plan. This will take into account the work of the subgroups and the outcomes from the MTCOs recent appraisal.

- Town Centre Business Forum. Dates set for bi-monthly meetings throughout 2018. The first of these will be a Noggin 'Data' workshop which was one of the prizes won by 21st Century Thame this will take place on 18 January 2018. The first half of the meeting (from 2pm – 4pm), is focused at anyone who may want to gather, understand and use data to improve a place. All Councillors have been invited. You will also learn about the pitfalls of data collection and the risks involved.
- Public Arts Working Group: First meeting of this group took place on 30 November 2017 and was attended by 10 people. This meeting gave an overview of the work the group aims to undertake throughout 2018, and set the target of having a draft Public Arts Strategy in place by June 2018. Unfortunately the person from the SODC Arts team that I have been working closely with is moving on to a new role, and therefore a new relationship will need to be developed here.
- Visitor Economy and Marketing Working Group: This meeting will launch on 11 February 2018. A list of invitees has been identified and invites for this meeting will go out prior to Christmas.

3. Infrastructure

Parking & Road Signage

- Date arranged with OCC for January 2018, to talk about Gateway sign placement and next steps for parking signage improvements.
- Town Gateway Signs: Final sign design approved at Full Council meeting on 17 November 2017.

4. Communication

Improved digital Communication

Website development: Now that Christmas is over work to get this ready to launch at the start of 2018 is in progress.

'Christmas in Thame': This year, in order to give maximum promotion about everything happening in our community through the advent period I have delivered an online advent calendar

through the development of a Facebook page dedicated to all things 'Christmas in Thame'. Each day the events that are on around Thame are promoted to let people know what is going on. This site quickly gained over 500 followers and has had feedback that it has been very helpful to have everything in one place. This page was also used to promote the Christmas Shopping Saturday event (below).

5. Partnership Working

21st Century Thame:

Attended partnership meeting 7/12/17. Currently working on:

- Improving the Shopping Guide: Chiltern View will sponsor these maps meaning they can now be updated annually. I am working on a design that will meet the needs of visitors to Thame and shoppers alike, and celebrate the heritage of Thame, not just the shops. Plans for this to be implemented by February 2018
- Noggin 'Data' workshop to be delivered as outlined above.
- Global Treasure Trail App: Completed and launched. More work to be done on this in January to promote it to people in Thame and the wider visitor economy.
- Small Business Saturday: this year we ran 'Christmas Shopping Saturday' on 2 December. Most of the independent shops in the town were listed on a flyer with over 20 offering discounts, incentives or activities as part of the day. The event was widely publicised through social media and through the 'Christmas in Thame' Facebook page. Feedback was mixed, but the event does not seem to have had the impact desired. However participants were pleased about the promotion and felt that it really drew attention to the range of shops in Thame and boosted the profile of independent shops. Next year any event will be led by the Town Centre Business Forum, so businesses will be able to develop ideas that they think will work better.
- Revive & Thrive: the Thame Edition of this Magazine will come out in February 2018.
- Trailtale: 21stCT are exploring working in partnership with this organisation who will make Apps from all of their walking trails – including the Midsomer trail. There will be no costs, and any profits made from getting local advertisers involved will be split with Trailtale and 21stCT. However we are looking into the ownership of information before moving forward.

6. Business Engagement and Support

Customer Survey

Customer Survey has closed and received 304 responses. This data is being collated and will be published prior to Christmas.

Christmas

Christmas Advent Calendar for Thame included shops on days when there were no community events on. In partnership with 21stCT I have also delivered a competition encouraging people to talk about what they have bought from Thame online to win a voucher. This was supported by the Social Media Champions who went round shops to encourage them to get involved in this on line promotion. Next year I would like to see more shops involved in the advent calendar and possibly combine it with a month long shopping event, rather than a single day, if businesses are interested.

7. Increasing Business benefits from Visitor Economy

Visit Midsomer: Meeting with MTCO equivalents from Henley and Wallingford to discuss next steps with this in the New Year.

Experience Oxfordshire: Met with them to explore whether or not to become a partner. To be discussed further in house before decision being made. Henley are exploring alternative options and I am waiting to get feedback from them before progressing.

8. Thame Markets

Market Events

Towersey Village voices will be performing at the market on 19 December.

9. Working with SODC

Had a further meeting with SODC about the decision to reduce funding for 2018/19 financial year. We had been asked to submit reports about what we had done to meet their targets, but it was clear that these were a waste of time and that the decision had already been made with the message that 'it was only ever pilot funding', 'we have funded it for 8 years already', and 'the money will be used to implement the Business and Innovation Strategy Action Plan' being repeated several times throughout the discussion.

Action Required

To note the report