Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Committee

Date:	**30 January 2018**
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 9 December 2017

Update

2. Town Centre Working Group

Latest Town Centre Working Group meeting took place 25 January. Amended Terms of Reference (Appendix 1) for the Working Group were agreed and are submitted here for approval by NPCC. The Working Group also approved an updated action plan for the MTCO that runs until end of March 2019

Supporting Existing Businesses

2.1. Business Newsletter: to be launched with the launch of the updated Website

2.2. The results of the Customer Survey run in November 2017 have been reviewed and action will be taken to share the findings where relevant. A decision was made to improve the consistency and way that information is gathered so that we can start to build up an evidence base to help us better understand trends in Thame. Investing in survey monkey membership as a way to achieve this will be investigated.

2.3. Updated Website now has a go-live date for Thursday 1 February 2018. This will mean that our website is down on this day, and users will be informed about this through our newsletter and a holding page

2.4. An Events Calendar was approved (after some design amendments) for distribution around the town centre to all businesses so they are able to know in advance what events will impact them as well as how they can get involved in the events – such as sponsorship, entering a team into events, Dress to Impress window display and hosting stalls.

Environment & Infrastructure

2.5. MTCO met with Mark Francis from OCC on 24 January to finalise the new Gateway sign positions. This has thrown up additional questions so a further meeting of the working group will be arranged to progress this.

2.6. Improvements to parking signage from Aylesbury Road, down Rooks Lane, to Dorchester Road Car Park have been put on hold due to further OCC changes in staff structure that mean there is currently no capacity to take action.

Partnership work

2.7. Town Centre Shopping Guides are currently being re-designed. Costs of replacement Keys and Perspex where needed will be covered from the Economic Development budget. (21stCT)

2.8. Global Treasure Trail App & Trailtale App for Historic Walks & Midsomer Murders Walks are currently being developed. (21stCT)

2.9. Thame will host the March edition of Revive & Thrive. (21stCT)

2.10. The MTCO has spent some time delivering letters for the 'Taste of Thame' a proposed new event that The Deli at No 5 is heading up. A meeting to discuss this proposed event will take place

on 15 March 6pm – 7pm in The Upper Chamber, Thame Town Hall. All businesses who are interested in getting involved are welcome to attend.

3. Town Centre Business Forum

The Noggin workshop about how to use Data to benefit your town/business was held on 18 January 2018. This provided several options for how to collect Data and will provide a focus for the next TCBF which will take place on 15 February 2017. The next TCBF will focus on the digital outcomes we want for the town, and the opportunities for gathering and using data. We will be seeking feedback from businesses about whether these outcomes would be beneficial to them, and what else they would like to see, to inform future investment plans.

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4. Public Arts Working Group

4.1. Terms of Reference for this group have been agreed by the TCWG.

4.2. The group is meeting monthly, to write the first draft of a Public Arts Strategy. A member of the SODC Arts team will be attending regularly from now on.

5. Visitor Economy Working Group

Cllr Dodds, Cllr Midwinter and the MTCO met to decide the direction of the Working Group. Instead of inviting a large number of people to create a marketing strategy, the decision was made to start small, mapping the opportunities we have and investing time in developing a few specific projects initially, before taking the opportunity wider. These were identified as Midsomer Murders, Thame Museum and Thame Players. However larger meetings will be run to consult relevant parties as needed in the future.

Visit Midsomer: Meeting to be arranged with MTCO equivalents from Henley to Wallingford to discuss next steps with this.

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

6. Thame Markets

6.1. Developing their Social Media Presence: The MTCO is working with the market traders to encourage them to make better use of the Social Media opportunities they have. At the moment it is down to 2 traders to do all the work, so we are looking at more being done by the rest, to better promote the services they have.

6.2. Work is being done to encourage the take up of stalls to reinvigorate the Farmers market, with the aim of running something specific through Love your Local Market this year;

6.3. Pancake event: we are developing plans for a Pancake event this year.

7. Working with SODC

21stCT are planning to write an open letter to John Cotton to express their disappointment at the cuts in funding that have been proposed. They will do this before the final decision in February, and have asked Thame.Net to publicise it.

Action Required

To approve the new Town Centre Working Group Terms of Reference submitted at Appendix 1