

Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Committee

Date:	18 December 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 the current focus of work and action taken since 6 November 2018.

Update

2. Town Centre Working Group

The Town Centre Working Group last met on 4 December 2018. This year's action plan was reviewed, and decision taken to remove some outstanding action that was felt to no longer be a priority, or was being actioned elsewhere. Next year the group will focus on a few main pieces of work as well as managing the work of the PAWG and VEWG.

These are:

- Creating a range of KPIs for the town centre to help to monitor impact of action taken, and trends on our high street. These will be developed from guidance provided by ATCM. They will include, for example, annual surveys of customers and business owners, parking surveys, footfall monitoring and more. This will ensure that in the future action is informed and evaluated to ensure the effort and investments are worth it.
- Explore the potential of bringing our annual town guide in-house so that it can better meet the needs of a Welcome guide for new residents, as well as information for Visitors who come to the town.
- Proactively identifying and engaging with landlords of town centre businesses in order to influence the development of the Town Centre to meet the needs that residents have.

The group also reviewed this year's Business Survey results. There was a very low response rate compared to last year, but action was identified and will be implemented over the coming year.

Supporting Existing Businesses

- 2.1. Monthly Businesses newsletter. Readership remains at 78 subscribers. Next year the MTCO will explore increasing communications with businesses through Twitter using the Thame4Business twitter handle, if approved by 21stCT.
- 2.2. Business Directory listings continue to be updated.
- 2.3. The MTCO will be working to explore whether or not businesses would be willing to provide brief details each quarter about how their business is doing as part of the KPIs mentioned above. This will give us an indication of any threats to the high street that we are not aware of.

Environment & Infrastructure

- 2.4. The MTCO met with OCC and a representative from a contractor who will be providing a quote to install Gateway signs on 12 December 2018. Hope that this work will be completed in the first quarter of 2019.

Partnership work

- 2.5. Town Centre Shopping Guide: Chiltern View continue to work on filling advertising space which will cover the printing costs of the artwork. Aim for this to be completed and installed early next year. We are also looking at whether or not the artwork can be added to the two main town centre bus stops.
- 2.6. Taste of Thame: a meeting to discuss next steps took place on 3 December 2018 to continue to develop the ideas for the event. Detailed planning will start in January to ensure that this event takes place. Funding has been secured from District Councillor Jeannette Matelot towards this event as well as towards the costs of next year's Thame Art Crawl. The date for Taste of Thame has been confirmed as 25 May 2019. This will run as a 21stCT event.
- 2.7. Thame Art Crawl has been reviewed and action identified to improve the event next year. Feedback from shops involved was positive with indication that some had over 70 additional customers, 1/3 of which had never been in their shops before. They felt that this was a real success and are all keen to be involved next year, with the exception of The W (the new café where Delphine Art used to be located) who felt it did not suit their business. It will be run as a 21stCT event next year.
- 2.8. 21stCT have created a new logo and are working on updating their website to increase their profile and attract more customers.

3. Public Arts Working Group

- 3.1. Three Wayfinding companies have been approached for quotes for the first Public Arts project. This has the potential to expand to ensure that Wayfinding for the whole town is addressed and improved, subject to additional approval and finance where needed.

4. Visitor Economy Working Group

- 4.1. This group continues to meet regularly with action being identified to improve the offer that Thame has for visitors.
- 4.2. Recently a membership of Visit Buckinghamshire and the Chilterns was taken out, and this will help to promote the Museum, Players, Midsomer and Thame in general to visitors from 'over the border'.
- 4.3. Work is being done to create a 'Thame' flyer that will be distributed through the doors around Thame, Haddenham and Long Crendon, as well as to hotels and other accommodation in the area, to increase visitor awareness of Thame and what it has to offer.

5. Thame Markets

- 5.1. Work continues to train traders to better promote themselves through Facebook. This is slow going and not many are taking action despite agreeing to it.

Action Required: To note the report