

## Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Committee

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<b>Date:</b>	<b>29 January 2019</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>TCWG: Market Town Co-ordinator Update</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Becky Reid, Market Town Co-ordinator</b>

### Purpose of Report

1. To provide an overview of the current focus of work and action taken since 18 December 2018.

### Update

#### 2. Town Centre vibrancy & vitality: Town Centre Working Group (TCWG)

The Town Centre Working Group last met on 23 January 2019.

- 2.1. A letter to landlords was approved. As Landlords are identified we plan to send this out to them as an initial contact, to encourage them to engage with the group and Thame Town Council. Initially our hope is to send them information about what Customers and Businesses are feeding back to us to help them to make informed decisions about the sorts of businesses Thame residents are keen to see. BR also to make contact with Fields to get their feedback on it and whether or not they feel landlords would be interested in regular communication.
- 2.2. Our monthly business newsletter now has 82 subscribers.
- 2.3. The TCWG feels strongly that delivering our Town Guide in house will provide real benefit to Thame, helping us to achieve our target of a developing a Welcome pack by allowing us to provide a publication that ensures residents and visitors to Thame are fully aware of all that the town has to offer. A proposed layout has been approved and work has started to explore whether or not this is financially viable. So far, in less than a week since approaching town centre businesses, we have had a commitment of £1315 against the £7047 needed to cover the costs of printing and distribution.
- 2.4. A complaint was sent to the Post Office about the poor service they offer in Thame, which is starting to encourage people to go elsewhere and therefore detrimental to footfall in Thame. Their response acknowledged that staffing was an issue and they were recruiting at the moment, but that they are committed to improving the service. The groups will continue to watch developments here.

#### 3. Partnership work with 21stCT

- 3.1. The Thame Shopping Guide has been delayed while we wait for Chiltern View to secure the remaining 12 advertising spaces. However we have agreed on a deadline of the end of February for this, so that they can be printed and installed in March, ready for the new tourist season.
- 3.2. The MTCO is working with E4S to implement a new, simplified website for 21stCT in order to better promote how the group can support other organisations in the town, as well as to try to recruit more volunteers.
- 3.3. 21stCT has offered the Global Treasure Trail App & Trailtale Historic Walking Trails, as 'products' that the Museum can use how they want, to increase their offer to people who are interested in exploring the Thame, specifically it's history.
- 3.4. Despite funding being secured through SODC Councillor grants, the Taste of Thame event that was being headed by Hannah and Joe from Deli@No5 will now be delayed until 2020. This is due to their personal circumstances which mean that they do not feel they have the capacity to deliver this properly by 2019.

**4. Other MTCO work**

**4.1.** Gateway signs are progressing with 2 quotes secured for installation and a 3<sup>rd</sup> expected by the 25.1.19. Once received, the working group will meet and be able to give a go-ahead on this work that should see our new Gateway signs installed in the first half of 2019. The final place of the sign on the Phoenix Trail also needs to be confirmed.

**5. Visitor Economy Working Group (VEWG)**

**5.1.** This group continue to meet regularly, focusing on increasing awareness and attractiveness of the activities on offer in Thame – the current focus in on Midsomer Murders, The Museum and The Players Theatre. Thame Cinema4all has also been invited to join the group.

**5.2.** A joint flyer is being created between these first 3 groups. This will be funded through advertising and will be delivered to 8000 homes in Thame, Long Crendon and Haddenham to boost awareness to local residents. It will also be distributed to hotels, B&Bs and other relevant locations in order to ensure that Visitors to the area find out more about what Thame has to offer, encouraging them to choose to spend their day here. Mapping of the relevant tourist destinations for these flyers will be identified with consideration given to how to ensure they remain well stocked.

**6. Public Arts Working Group (PAWG)**

**6.1.** Three Wayfinding companies have given quotes to provide a wayfinding strategy that will be used to inform our Public Art. Funding to cover this part of the work may however need to be found elsewhere as it does not fall within the remit of Public Art. This needs to be discussed further internally. However the TCWG feels that decent wayfinding is important in encouraging people to walk to town rather than drive, and so anything that supports this would be beneficial. If there are no funds elsewhere to support this the group feel using Economic Development funds would be acceptable.

**7. Thame Markets**

**7.1.** We are looking to develop a logo and branding for the market that will allow us to promote it further afield and through publications this year.

**8. Other**

**8.1.** The MTCO attended the Year 10 Local Planning morning at Lord Williams school, supporting an activity that gets the students involved to plan the re-development of the Cattle market.

**8.2.** Dave Cookson, our main point of contact in SODCs Economic Development team has moved on to a new role. The MTCO has spoken to the head of the team – Melanie Smans - who has explained that due to staffing issues they are at 40% capacity, so the team is not getting out and about as a result. However she is very willing to be contacted at any time about any pressing issues, and if they need to come out, or engage with businesses over a particular hot topic they will. So an invite to talk about a specific item on an agenda would get them to meetings if needed. Melanie has said that Employment space is one of their priorities. They are also currently pushing for tourism to come back onto their priority list for South Oxfordshire as well which is a welcome development.

**8.3.** We have chosen to unsubscribe from ATCM as a cost saving measure. It does not feel a good use of funds at the moment. We still get relevant information from them and other similar Town Management organisations. This can be re-instated at a later date if needed.

**8.4.** Completed work with Graeme Markland on the consultation from government about expanding permitted development rights on the high street

**Action Required:** To note the report