

Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Committee

Date:	2 July 2019
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 21 May 2019.

Update

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

The Town Centre Working Group last met on Friday 14 June. Current Focus:

- 2.1. Customer Survey: this has been drafted and sent wider for review. This will be delivered after the summer holidays date tbc. It is similar to the survey completed in 2017 and so we will be able to track changes. The aim is to complete this annually going forward, allowing us to track residents views on work being achieved in the town, and what else they want to see, as well as gather information that may be useful for businesses looking to open in Thame.
- 2.2. Business survey: draft completed and meeting with Graeme Markland and Cllr Dyer held to improve and ensure that the survey captures relevant information from the larger businesses not located in the town centre. Decision taken to run two parallel surveys to capture information for B2B and B2C businesses. This again aims to be an annual survey to identify trends and gather evidence to support our new Neighbourhood Plan.
- 2.3. The Business newsletter has 92 subscribers (up 5 on last report). A recent issues was entirely focused on environmental information, training opportunities, funding and opportunities for businesses to engage with.

3. Partnership work with 21stCT

- 3.1. The Thame Shopping Guides are now installed. Work to update the Bus Shelters outside Coop and the Town Hall will be taking place. This will include the installation of new notice boards that will hold the new Shopping Guide.
- 3.2. 21stCT website is progressing slowly due to delay with E4S. We are likely to look for an alternative option if this doesn't change this week.
- 3.3. Taste of Thame: work is progressing on setting up the background infrastructure such as website and a team to take on the various roles needed to make it happen. Current plans are for the event to include a town centre food and drink trail, tastings and workshops, as well as community activities such as a baking competition.
- 3.4. Thame Art Crawl is currently recruiting artists. We have new locations involved this year including Greyhound Walk and White Stuff, as well as interest from Fat Face and Mint Velvet.

4. Other MTCO work

- 4.1. The Gateway signs have been installed. Overall feedback has been positive but there has been some concern about the names of the Twin Towns being too small and we will be investigating if there is anything we can do to improve on this.
- 4.2. Cllr Fickling and the MTCO delivered Town Guides to all of Moreton. They have also been delivered to all most town centre businesses. Next step is to deliver them to other businesses in Thame. Support is needed for this.

5. Visitor Economy Working Group (VEWG)

- 5.1. 21stCT and the VEWG group are currently joining forces to get the flyers created (Visit Thame, Town Guide and Midsomer Murders) distributed to relevant locations so that we encourage more day trippers to the town from the surrounding areas. We are starting close to Thame and then working out from there.
- 5.2. We have decided not to renew our contract with Experience Oxfordshire. Instead we will be looking at what other ways we could spend this money to promote Thame. We will also review our advert with the Coach Drivers Companion and Visit Buckinghamshire at our next meeting.
- 5.3. Children's Cinema: There is currently a survey open to gain residents opinion about the idea. This has been overwhelmingly positive so we are looking at a pilot of 4 showings between September 2019 and March 2020. Then we will review and continue if it is successful. Red Kite Family Centre will use these events as a fundraiser, but also to boost their profile in the community in general.
- 5.4. A Midsomer Murders Facebook page for Thame tours has been launched and the MTCO is playing a part in supporting the growth of this page to generate more footfall to our town centre.
- 5.5. Museum re-branding is underway at the moment.

6. Public Arts Working Group (PAWG)

- 6.1. Further work as requested by SODC has been carried out on the application for Section 106 Public Art funding.

7. Thame Markets

- 7.1. Work has started to get ready for the Market Community Day – to engage local charities in this event.

8. Other

- 8.1. Since the elections and subsequent change in leadership at SODC, the Economic Development Team has asked to meet with MTCOs from Wallingford, Henley and Thame. This meeting will take place on 11th July.

Action Required: For Councillors to note the report. If anyone is able to support delivery of Town Guides to business parks around Thame please let Becky Reid know.