

Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Committee

Date:	24 September 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 13 August 2019.

Update

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

The Town Centre Working Group met on 18/9/19.

- 2.1. Customer Survey: this has been brought forward and was launched on 19/9/19, initially remaining open for 2 weeks. This was to include questions to get feedback on what people think about the wayfinding in Thame to support the development of a Wayfinding strategy that will support the implementation of our first Public Arts projects. The survey was launched through the newsletter and Facebook and Cllr Emery will aim to carry out street surveys outside the Town Hall and at the Tuesday Market. Paper copies will be available in the Town Hall.
- 2.2. The Business newsletter has 97 subscribers (up 1 on last report). The MTCO will be spending time increasing this readership throughout October, whilst also building up support for the Christmas event.
- 2.3. A decision has been made to combine the Christmas event advertising with Small Businesses Saturday and work towards publicity that will promote both, and include details of activities running throughout the festive season in Thame. This will be launched after Remembrance Sunday, and will include a calendar of events, the town trail, a 'Santa letter' initiative between The Book House and The Red Kite Family Centre, Shop local promotion, and more. The MTCO will be designing this.
- 2.4. A review of the annual MTCO budget will take place next meeting.

3. **Partnership work with 21stCT**

- 3.1. The Thame Shopping Guides: Bus Shelters outside Coop and the Town Hall have been refurbished, with some final work being done to fix some of the seats. This included installation of new notice boards that will hold the new Shopping Guide. These will be installed in October.
- 3.2. 21stCT website continues to be developed to promote the organisation and try to attract new members. 2 events to attract new members are also scheduled for 24 and 25 September.
- 3.3. Taste of Thame: Pentangle have created a webpage for this to allow businesses and producers to sign up to the event which is booked to take place Saturday 30 May 2020. Work now needs to be done to update this and then start promotion in earnest after Thame Food Festival has ended. An application will be made to SODC Councilors to support this event through their Councilor Grant Scheme.
- 3.4. Thame Art Crawl organisation is well underway with all venues and artists selected and promoted through an updated website. Now work has to be done to get all the publicity created and distributed for this. Next year the timeline will be brought forward to better coordinate with TAL.
- 3.5. Thame Children's Cinema launched on Sunday 29 September, with 3 further dates secured for the future. This project has been delivered by partnership work between the Red Kite

Family Centre, Thame Cinema 4 All, Thame Players and 21st Century Thame. Tickets are now on sale. A leaflet has been sent out through every child's book bag in each local primary school and distributed around town. Promotion is also being done on Facebook. We are looking for people to get involved in volunteering at this event long term.

4. Other MTCO work

- 4.1. The Gateway signs: no further progress at present.
- 4.2. Work to get all the relevant positions for Christmas Lights locations is continuing, involving liaison with both landlords and tenants of each locations identified and confirmed

5. Visitor Economy Working Group (VEWG)

- 5.1. Thame Library have accepted an invitation to be part of this working group. As a venue in the town that can run events to encourage footfall around the town their attendance will be a real benefit to the work of the group and lead to improved partnership working between the Library and the Council.
- 5.2. Work to develop a new Thame Flyer for the 2020 holiday season will start after the Christmas publicity is completed.

6. Public Arts Working Group (PAWG)

- 6.1. The initial stakeholders meeting for the development of a Wayfinding Strategy has taken place. This included members of the PAWG, Cllr Fickling, a member of LPRA, Charles Boundy representing Thame Green Living, Abigail Brown from, SODC Arts Team, member of 21stCT. This means that all the work previously completed on wayfinding around the town – particularly in Lea Park was passed on. Also groups that have an interest in improving Wayfinding for different reasons were all represented and so all agendas will feed into one strategy for Thame, allowing a joined up approach. A survey will now take place – see 2.1. We expect the project to last approximately 2-3 months resulting in a comprehensive Wayfinding Strategy that will allow us to re-convene the PAWG and move on to the next step of calling for artists who are interested in creating Public Art for Thame
- 6.2. Cllr Sonja Francis is now part of this working group.

7. Thame Markets

- 7.1. The Market Community Day ran successfully
- 7.2. The Market Cooperative have called an internal meeting early in October to discuss issues in the market, including declining footfall, regular parking of trader vehicles on the market, traders leaving early and more. Decisions will be made about how to move forward and these will then be implemented.
- 7.3. A French Market will visit Thame on Friday 4 and Saturday 5 October.

Action Required: For Councillors to note the report.