

Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Committee

Date:	25 May 2021
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 April 2021.

Update

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

Last met 12 May 2021.

2.1. A Business Training Course programme proposed to the local business community did not have enough responses to be worth pursuing. Those who responded will be contacted directly to inform them of this. No further action to be taken.

2.2. Our new Town Map is complete and installed in Montesson Sq and the Information Centre.

2.3. The TCWG continue to meet fortnightly to evaluate Thame Town Centre against good practice guidelines to support town centres. We have signed up to take on a High Street Task Force dashboard to monitor town health. This will involve regular footfall counting and make result in the installation of footfall counters. We are also developing KPIs that will be monitored alongside this, providing us with valuable data to monitor the health of our Town Centre going forward.

2.4. A proposal for a Thame Businesses Awards is still being explored. The hope is that this will be run by local businesses, supported by Thame Town Council, in partnership with Thame.net and Thame Rewards club if they are keen to progress. Meeting will be held to discuss further.

2.5. The TCWG are exploring the potential of temporary additional seating in the town centre following requests from residents and Thame Rotary to consider this. Work is being done to scope whether this is possible as a trial over the summer months. The TCWG has always planned to review the use of Montesson Square and discuss if changes are needed, and so a longer-term project is also being progressed to explore this. It will be done in line with and possibly as part of NP2 consultations

3. **Partnership work with 21stCT**

3.1. Since the start of the year several tree planting projects have taken place with 21st CT, supported by tree from the Woodland Trust, grants from SODC and business sponsorship.

3.2. 21stCT is currently in discussion with Thame Green Living about how the two groups can work together.

3.3. 21stCT Constitution is being updated.

3.4. Website updates will be completed as capacity allows.

4. **Other MTCO work**

4.1. Thame Outer Circuit Waymarkers are still in development.

- 4.2. A Monthly newsletter to benefit the businesses: still being delivered with 228 subscribers, up from 227 at last report.
- 4.3. Town Council Facebook page – followers are up to 1212 up from 1154 last report.
- 4.4. Venue flags that will become a resource for events to use within Thame are being designed and purchased. This will allow visitors to events to find the locations more easily.

5. Visitor Economy Working Group (VEWG)

- 5.1. A new Thame flyer has been printed. This will be distributed to almost 100 locations along with the Thame Outer Circuit, Midsomer Murders Leaflet and another Thame Walking Trail over the next month. This aims to encourage stay-cationers to the town, benefiting the local economy.
- 5.2. Midsomer Murder flyers and posters have been printed and installed. Although TTC is not selling tickets for these tours at present, it is something that will be considered in the future.
- 5.3. New 'Thame' leaflet holders will be created to promote the town in surrounding areas to.

6. Public Arts Working Group (PAWG)

- 6.1. Artists brief for a wayfinding project and additional stand along pieces of art was completed and sent out to tender until May 25. A shortlisting event will then take place with the Public Art Working Group. Interviews will follow with a select panel. The hope is that work would start by July assuming we have an adequate number of applicants. Implementation will be coordinated through the PAWG..

7. Thame Markets

- 7.1. Market continues to be supported to run safely.
- 7.2. Coordination of application for road closure for World Village Market, due to attend town in May has been ongoing and required a SAG meeting with OCC. This went smoothly and we are waiting for licenses to be released.

8. SODC

- 8.1. Karen Roberts, the Economic Development Officer for Vale has been to visit Thame. She is likely to be developing a Visitor Economy partnership network that extends across South Oxfordshire, supporting us in our bid to attract more visitors to Thame to boost the economy. This is a really positive step.
- 8.2. SODC have also provided marketing materials to encourage a safe return to the Highstreet and these are being distributed to the relevant locations.

Action Required:

To note this report.