Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Committee

Date:	**28 September 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 17 August 2021.

Update

2. Town Centre vibrancy & vitality: Town Centre Working Group (TCWG)
Last met 15 September 2021.

2.1. KPIs to monitor the health of Thame's town centre have been created. These will be gathered through the following processes:

- Footfall counters: we are exploring the development of these at the moment to allow this work to be carried out electronically
- Customer Surveys -annual in September or October.
- Business Survey: exploring an online monitoring tool to capture some regular information, alongside an annual survey in September or October.
- Walk round survey of vacancies.
- Gathering data from police.

2.2. As part of our initial survey of businesses, we will garner interest in the idea of a Thame Businesses Awards. Meeting to take place in September to explore partnership with Thame.net and Thame Rewards club to achieve this.

3. Partnership work with 21stCT

3.1. 21stCT Constitution will be kept as it is following a review as it is still fit for purpose.

3.2. Thame Art Crawl is progressing well, although 2 shop closures have resulted in a loss of 2 venues. It will still feature the most artists yet.

3.3. Taste of Thame plans to launch in 2022 and a team of people are focused on making this happen. The Black Horse has expressed an interested in being part of this team. We do need an event lead to chair the meetings to progress this project.

3.4. A successful Volunteering Opportunities Fair was run – delivered in partnership with Thame.net took place on Saturday 11 September.

3.5. Quarterly meetings have resumed.

3.6. Shopping Guides will be updated by the start of 2022, including the development of a new side to promote what's on and how to get involved in your community.

3.7. Website updates continue to be completed slowly as capacity allows.

4. Other MTCO work

4.1. Blue Plaques flyer completed and published. To be distributed around Thame this month.

4.2. Christmas event decided and now working, alongside other staff members to make this happen. MTCO focus on partnership and publicity.

4.3. Work on Town Guide starting to be ready for distribution January 2022.

4.4. Thame Inner Circuit and Thame Outer Circuit Roundels to be ordered.

4.5. Statistics:

- Monthly Business Newsletter: 259 subscribers, up from 229 at last report.
- Weekly Town Council Newsletter: 1080 subscribers, up from 990 subscribers last report.
- Town Council Facebook page:1328 followers up from 1251 at last report.

5. Visitor Economy Working Group (VEWG)

5.1. Despite a call for people to support leaflet delivery at the last report, very few responses were received. This therefore will need to be reviewed as a way forward for next year. We continue to try to recruit through other sources.

6. Public Arts

6.1. The 'Art leading Wayfinding' project is underway. The outcome of this project will be:

- To propose a scheme that incorporates several pieces of high-quality artwork, which celebrate the heritage and history of the town using the theme of 'Meeting Places'.
- To create a scheme that improves communication routes through the town, and specifically connecting outlying estates into Thame. These routes are identified in the Wayfinding Strategy and initially should focus on the estates of Lea Park and Thame Meadows, incorporating:
  - connections between these estates and the town centre,
  - as well as across these estates to destinations beyond them.
- The artwork proposed should reinforce and celebrate the history and heritage of Thame. Each piece must be linked to the distinct history and/or heritage of the place it is located in.
- The artwork proposed should either support wayfinding around the town being designed in a way that allows the inclusion of directional signage to relevant locations; or be a standalone piece of work that provides a landmark and/or a functional feature such as artistic seating, lighting, railings, information boards or similar
- The artwork should be of good quality as well as inspiring and uplifting for residents and visitors.
- Proposing artwork with a unique and distinctive feel that can be replicated across the town in future Public Art projects.
- proposing works of art that are long lasting, robust, durable and low maintenance.
- engaging closely with the community in the creation of the artwork.

6.2. The artist recruited to lead on the event is Nicola Henshaw and to date she has delivered 4 days' worth of workshops, engaging members of the community in Phase 1 of this project - Research and Design. This phase will Inspire the works created to be 'site specific' commissions, that embrace the local history and heritage. Community participation/talks/workshops will be arranged to inform this element of the research. The outcome of this phase will be a proposal that identifies:

- which locations, from a Wayfinding report already completed, will have artwork sited on them,
- what artwork is proposed for each of these locations,
- full designs of artwork, including adequate insurances, construction certificates, and full budget,
- an installation plan,
- written confirmation from the applicable planning authority that the erection and/or installation of the art forming the Project shall come within the Permitted Development Rights under The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted (England)) Order 2015 or where Permitted Development Rights are not applicable that Full Planning Permission has been granted or where Planning Permission is granted subject to conditions. This element of the work will be led by Thame Town Council and the Public Art Working Group in close communication with you.

6.3. The proposal will be presented to Thame Town Councils Public Art Working Group for approval and risk assessment as agreed in the Public Art Strategy, and following successful completion will move into Phase 2 of fabrication and Implementation.

7. Thame Markets

7.1. Our weekly and farmers Markets continues to be supported to run safely. A new identity will be created for the Farmers Market to boost the profile and aid marketing.

7.2. A Love your Local Market event will be explored for October to fit in with the delayed national event

7.3. A World Village Market will take place 24-26 September around the Town Hall.

8. SODC

8.1. South and Vale Business Team have confirmed they will support Thame Business Awards once and if set up.

9. Any other business

9.1. Cllr Emery has asked for a meeting to discuss the future of parking once OCC take it over, and how it might impact businesses. She will arrange a separate meeting to discuss this in more detail. The meeting will determine what response the Town Centre Working Group might give to this consultation and what role it should play in supporting businesses to feed into this consultation.

9.2. Cllr Fickling will progress an issue of bins on pavements with Lisa Selby at South Oxfordshire District Council. She will send on photos of bins that are causing a nuisance in Thame to her.

Action Required:
To note this report.