

Community Services Committee

Title:	Thame Fairs 2025
Date:	11 November 2025
Contact Officer:	Cassie Pinnells, Community Services Manager

Purpose of the Report

1. To receive an update on the 2025 September and October Fairs.

Summary

2. The September and October Fairs took place effectively, the partnership with the fire service, employed security firm and the diligence of some councillors', officers and volunteers ensured the event was monitored efficiently.
3. The Community Services Manager will take account of all that follows in detailed planning for the 2026 fairs.

Road Closure Operations / Setup

4. The marking out of the emergency lane on the Monday afternoon in preparation for the September Fair was effective for attraction placement and in most cases for emergency access.
5. As with every year the Maintenance Team and contractors prepared the Town Centre for both Fairs arrival. Removing street furniture such as floral standards, benches, bins, cycle racks, flagpole and noticeboard. For legal traffic management requirements, placement of the event road closure and event warning signage. Traffic management includes the removal of traffic bollards, metal posts, relocations of the taxi rank, disabled parking, fencing off SRRG for extra parking and road diversion signage, metal barriers and the placement of over 200 traffic cones. This year the challenge of Wellington Street closure placed additional traffic signage requirements on the Town Council.
6. This year the Showmens Guild undertook a regiment sequenced pull on, which enabled a swift setting up process. The security team worked expertly to get some of the fair vehicles in place at the Upper High Street car park and High Street car park. There were however, two parked cars in the Cornmarket area which caused minor operational delays to the Showmen. Officers found that the new eco-car that residents can hire parked in the Upper High Street and following some discussions with the contractor, was removed from the emergency lane on the Wednesday evening.
7. During the event the professionalism of the security firm who worked with the town centre businesses and residents to enable permitted access was maintained.
8. The Security Team evaluated the event plan of where security vehicles blocked entrances, with a further two vehicles placed at the walking entrance of the Fair at the Upper High Street, enabling the fire engine and residents' access to Belmont Mews. This layout is to prevent any rogue drivers entering the main thoroughfare of the event, these precautions are part of the control measures to aid with Martyn's Law legislation for open air events.

9. The dismantling and pull down of the September event went according to plan to ensure adequate safety conditions were upheld.
10. Unfortunately for a second year no charity was able to capitalize on the charity car parking collection at the Southern Road Recreational Grounds. The Security Team ensured that the gates were locked and clear of cars every evening.
11. The October Fair Road closure requirements had been changed, as requested by the Showmen, with the car park/side road closure taking place at 9pm on the Wednesday evening, the security team were in place from 3pm which aided this time change and ensure the car park was clear for early morning setting up.

Event Monitoring / Complaints / Compliments

12. Official paperwork for the September fair was sent through at the start of the September Fair, with the Guild Office having to chase individual showmen to obtain paperwork before they opened to trade. The October Fair paperwork arrived on time with some minor alterations to attractions received.
13. The security team supported the police with no issues reported from the event.
14. For the second time the fire engine had an issue driving through the top of Cornmarket, having to manoeuvre to get through a traffic island within the emergency lane. This issue caused by the same attraction from the previous year being in place, the Showmen will transfer this attraction to another plot, to ensure the emergency lane is clear for next year. A compromise was recorded by the Thame Watch Manager at a further location with the Showman moving the attraction by a meter to aid with emergency requirements.
15. The contracted medical company on site for the September Fair had no medical issues, other than supplying four plasters, as requested by showmen and members of the public.
16. Noise monitoring was undertaken by Councillors, volunteers, and staff, with no warnings raised. Thank you to those Councillors and volunteers that helped with this event.
17. Complaints received from residents and businesses for the September Fair: Allowing the fair vehicles to come into the Town Centre at rush hour. Leaf blowing early on Sunday morning at the High Street. The smell of diesel within the business making it challenging for staff to work. Business complaint about noise, fumes, lack of parking and for the retailers it represents three days of very, very poor business, with a request to move the Fair to the Showground.
18. Compliments received from residents about the September Fair: Thanks for delivering a safe fair and getting the town back up and clear overnight like magic, with congratulations to the whole team given. Sunday morning the town looks like nothing has happened is a testament to all those involved.
19. Complaints received from residents about the October Fair: The hook a duck prize given was smaller prize. Children scared when they went into the haunted house as it was dark and the floor was unstable (part of the attraction).

20. All the complaints will be discussed with the Showmens Guild, with a concern raised regarding the two generators facing a business within the Town Centre, the emergency lane blockage and Fair opening times advertised on the Showmen's Guild Poster.
21. There were no lost or vulnerable persons registered at the September Fair, as with the October Fair nothing was reported to the Showmen.
22. Lost property was collected once advertised on Facebook detailing the item description handed in to the Security Team or at the Information Centre.
23. To aid with layout requirements and issues, a qualified drone operator took images of the September Fair event area.
24. This year Air Monitoring commenced to capture data to aid with understanding of the air quality within the Town Centre while the September Fair is in place.

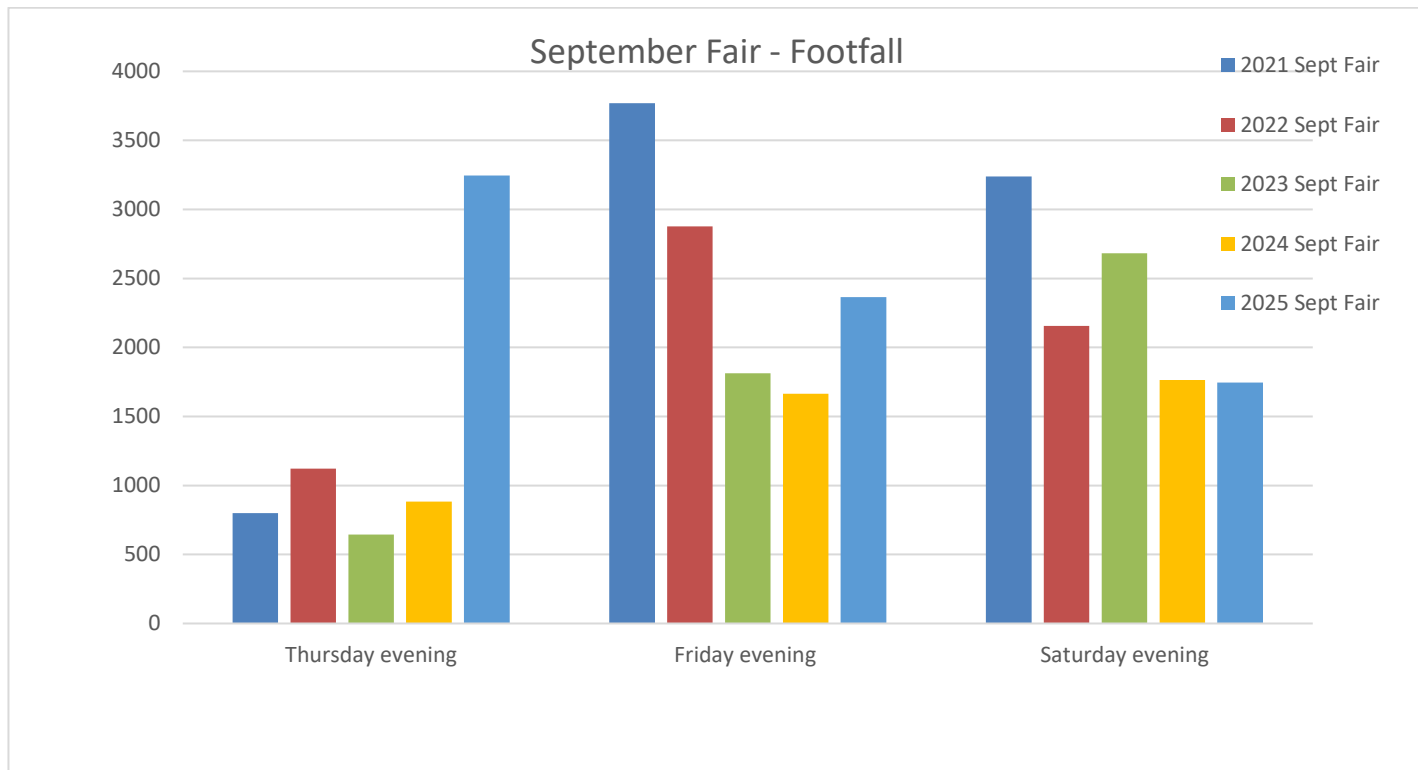
We undertook air quality monitoring of the fair locations linked to the sound monitoring. We used an AirBeam monitor to measure particulate matter PM2.5, which is particle sizes 2.5micron diameter or less. We monitored for the week before, the days of the fair, and the week after, morning, afternoon and evening.

Whilst we are still evaluating the results, the main points are that:

- ***The morning monitoring events of the fair (nothing running) were generally lower than the week after the fair (when traffic had returned)***
- ***The afternoon and evening monitoring events generally recorded higher PM2.5 levels during the fair (averages and peak readings), than on the week before and the week after the fair.***

Further evaluation will be provided to the Environmental Project Officer.

25. During the September Fair event the Security Firm monitored the footfall. Results recorded the peak number of event goers within the fairground on from 2021,2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025:



- 26. This year additional expenditure on portable toilets for the September and October fair due to the Public Toilets at Market House being closed for refurbishment. Despite this the Town Council did not subsidise these events.
- 27. The Fair Working Group will reconvene a meeting in March/April to undertake a wash up of both the September & October Fairs with the Showmen’s Guild.

Recommendation:

- The Committee has asked:***
- i) To note the report.***