

Report to: Events Committee

Report Ref: E1917
Meeting Date: 27th April 2020
Agenda Item: 7
Prepared By: Town Centre and Marketing Officer



Subject: Impact of COVID19 on the town centre

The Town Centre and Marketing Officer has been liaising with businesses throughout the current COVID19 lockdown and the following gives an overview of the current situation.

1.0 BUSINESS SUPPORT GRANTS

At the time of writing many Knutsford businesses have not received their business support grants from Cheshire East Council. There has much activity on the Knutsford One Facebook and WhatsApp groups including support from Esther McVey MP. Currently £26 million of the £90million has been paid out and businesses are being asked to be patient whilst remaining grants are allocated.

The Town Centre and Marketing Officer has feedback from businesses who have branches within other local authorities that Cheshire East is behind with the allocation and this is causing hardship for some. The Town Centre and Marketing Officer is continuing to work closely with businesses and Cheshire East Council to seek to ensure that grants are allocated quickly

2.0 PROMOTION OF LOCAL BUSINESSES

A website (www.knutsfordhighstreet.com) has been set up partnership with Boxed Red Marketing who provided the time and resource to create the website at no cost. This is to initially support those still open or offering delivery but will be expanded to all retailers over the coming weeks. After lockdown it is hoped the website can be developed to incorporate events and news and possibly e-commerce.

A Facebook group (Knutsford Virtual High Street) has been set up and currently has 1684 members. This group has proved very popular over the past few weeks

Many local shops are delivering within a two-hour period. This is particularly true of those essential traders within Knutsford Market Hall. The Town Centre and Marketing Officer has been working closely with *We Are Knutsford* and many volunteers (including shop owners) are helping with deliveries. This has proved invaluable.

3.0 POST COVID RECOVERY

The Town Centre and Marketing Officer has been communicating news from relevant sources throughout lockdown to local businesses.

Retail in the UK was struggling pre-COVID19 and Knutsford (vacancy rate approximately 7%) was no exception. However, there has been a resurgence of 'love and support' for local shops who have proved themselves more than a match for Amazon over the past few weeks.

Although currently the focus is on survival there will need to be recovery strategy and the Town Centre and Marketing Officer will work with shops after lockdown to capitalise on this for the future.

4.0 BUSINESSES CURRENTLY OPERATING

The following shops are operating as normal (list excludes supermarkets and pharmacies). All are following strict social distancing procedures.

- Jonty's Fruit and Veg
- The Market Butcher
- Bikes n Gear
- Autoden
- Station Garage
- Vikings

The shops currently offering an on-line or phone order service with delivery or collection are:

April's Kitchen	Hal Whittaker	Sheldon's Diary
Arthur Lee	I Vape Lounge	Susie Watson Designs
Barbour	Jaeger	T&S Riley
Bare Necessities	Knutsford IT	Tatton Brewery
Chalk 33	La Casa de Habanos	Techno Type
Cheshire Quality	McDonald Fruit & Veg	Terzetto Stone
Chic Interiors	Project 53	The Bath House
Clarity	Morgan Edwards Fine Wines &	The Cheese Yard
Cocaranti	Spirit	The Edit
Dexter & Jones	Oka	The Lambing Shed
Dominos	Oliver Wild	The Stationery & Art Shop
Eastern Revive	Pastiche	The Tea Room
Evuna	Plastic Free Weigh	Williamsons Bakery
FatFace	Pulse of Perfumery	Willow Boutiques
Fit 4 Life	Real Fruit Creamery	Zapatos
Fryers	Serenity Designs with Attitude	Zo & Co
Glamorous	Shamoli	