

# REPORT TO EVENTS AND TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE CHRISTMAS TRIAL



**Report Reference** E-20-03  
**Meeting Date** 16<sup>th</sup> November 2020  
**Agenda Item** 8  
**Prepared by** Events Officer

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## 1.0 BACKGROUND

Two trail events are currently organised by the council, the Bunny Hop on Easter Saturday and the Pumpkin Path on Halloween. Knutsford also took part in the Monster Hero Safari trail event over the summer holidays which was of a similar nature to the council's trail events, where families searched for a sticker or object in business windows.

Both the Monster Hero Safari and the Pumpkin Path have run successfully during the COVID-19 pandemic, offering families a chance to enjoy something different without the need to organise a formal event which would come with greater associated risks, whilst also encouraging footfall to the town centre shops to support the local economy.

Trail events are very COVID-19 friendly due to the casual and outdoor nature of the events. An extended running period offers greater flexibility for families to attend and avoid busy periods and massively reduces any chance of crowding and therefore reduces risk of germ transmission.

## 2.0 PROPOSAL

Due to the success of the Pumpkin Path trail and positive feedback received that the trail offered some light relief and entertainment for families in a period where many events and activities have been cancelled, it is proposed that a Christmas trail could be organised to run in a similar format to offer families another opportunity to have some enjoyment in a suitably safe manner. The trail would also encourage footfall to the town centre where families might do some Christmas shopping whilst enjoying the trail, which would support the local economy during what is usually the most profitable shopping season of the year but is currently at risk due to an increase in online shopping as a result of COVID-19.

The trail would run over the space of a week or two weeks at the beginning to mid-December. Christmas themed stickers would be placed in shop windows instead of a physical object such as the pumpkins for the Halloween event. This would be less disruptive to the businesses who often install extensive Christmas displays as well as being easier for shops to manage during what is usually a busy shopping period without an expectation for them to prepare an object for the window.

A marketing campaign would promote the event locally online via the council's website and social media platforms, as well as promotion in the local press and other publications. A promotional poster would be produced and an entry form for families to complete with the locations of the Christmas stickers in the same fashion as the Pumpkin Path. The marketing campaign would target local people

and not seek to draw a wide audience from surrounding areas.

As per the Bunny Hop and Pumpkin Path prizes would be drawn from those who complete the trail. The Knutsford Voucher could be used as the prize and is redeemable at Mr Simms and Hal Whittaker (amongst others). Due to the challenging climate many businesses are still experiencing due to COVID-19, this is considered more appropriate than seeking prize donations.

The trail would offer an additional reason for local people to visit the town centre and shop with local businesses in instead of online at the end of the second lockdown. Feedback from the Pumpkin Path suggested that the event increased footfall in the town centre and some shops have reported having a very successful trading period and more opportunities for promotion during the week of the event due to the additional footfall it brought.

### **3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The costs of delivering the Christmas Trail are estimated as follows:

Design of Stickers and Marketing Materials	£ 275
Window Stickers	£ 23
Posters	£ 52
Entry Forms	£ 42
Prizes	£ 30
TOTAL	£ 422

The committee has a notable underspend due the cancellation of a number of its events during the current financial year which would cover the additional expenditure.

### **4.0 DECISION REQUIRED**

The committee should consider the proposed trail.