

REPORT TO EVENTS AND TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT REPORT

Report Reference E-21-14
Meeting Date 8th November
Agenda Item 6
Prepared by Town Centre and Marketing Officer



1.0 TOWN CENTRE VACANCY RATES

There has been considerable activity in the town centre over the past two months which means the vacancy rate has fallen to 4.5%.

- Hot Cocoa (Artisan chocolate shop) are busy refurbishing the former Hayes Travel premises
- Stix (dog coats) have opened near Holly Johnson on Old Market Place
- Fine and Country have opened in the premises formerly Delia Metcalfe
- Golden Thread have opened in the premises formerly Dad's & Lad's

As previously reported Kampai Sushi Bar is to open in what was Jacobs, and Sigiriya have applied for planning permission for what was Martins Newsagents. Work has also started on The Freemasons which has been purchased by a Knutsford based property developer and work is continuing in their former Broadbents unit.

2.0 KNUTSFORD SHOPPING BAG

The Knutsford Bag is now in stock and can be purchased for £3.50 from Hal Whittaker, the Tea Room, Cheshire Quality and Mr Simms.

3.0 TOWN CENTRE FOOTFALL

Cheshire East Council is still receiving footfall figures from Visitor Insights; for Knutsford in September there was a 40% increase compared to 2020 and 16% increase compared to 2019.

4.0 KNUTSFORD VOUCHER

Voucher sales have slowed with £130 of £10 vouchers sold between mid-September and the end of October. The Town Centre and Marketing Officer will increase promotion as we enter the festive season.

5.0 TASTE KNUTSFORD

Since the previous meeting the following tours have taken place/are scheduled -

- October 15th – tour for 11
- October 16th – tour for 14

- November 6th – tour for 11

Scheduled tours will re-start in February although there are two private tours booked for January and February already. These are a corporate tour and a Hen Night.

The TCMO will increase promotion of the Taste Knutsford voucher for the festive season.

6.0 KNUTSFORD AT HOME

The first Knutsford at Home took place on 18th September and involved 11 retailers. Feedback from them indicated the event was a success and they would like to repeat it in Spring. The spring event would involve a garden element and Sam Youd (former Tatton Park head gardener) has indicated he would take part and offer a talk

7.0 TOWN CENTRE VISITOR MAP

This is now in production and should be printed in time for the Christmas Market weekend. The map has been fully funded by advertising sales.

8.0 SANTA IN THE SHOP/KNUTSFORD ADVENT

A family friendly trail in 12 of Knutsford's shops will take place between 1-24th December. A small Santa (with a different festive message for each shop) will be in 12 shop windows for young families to find. They will hand the form in Santa's special letter box in Little Waitrose, for the chance to win some prizes from local retailers. There will be posters and stickers in the town centre too with entry forms available from retailers, the library, Curzon cinema and council offices.

The TCMO will be producing for social media '24 days of a Knutsford Christmas'. The aim to promote what you can buy across the town from various independent and small regional retailers. The short videos taken by the TCMO will be uploaded daily on Facebook and Twitter from 1st December

9.0 FREE PARKING DAYS

Cheshire East Council has given each town 4 free parking days for 2021/22. 3 of these have been allocated for the first three Saturdays in December (4th/11th/18th)

Free parking is from 10am in Silk Mill, King and Princess Street car parks. City of Chester Brass Band will be playing on Regent Street from noon on Saturday 18th December to add some festive cheer

10.0 WELCOME BACK FUND

Cheshire East Council has confirmed it has been awarded an allocation from the Welcome Back fund to support the safe reopening of high street post Covid-19. Activity/funding must be spent by 31st March 2022. Cheshire East Council gave each town a number of options for activity/items and the Town Council has requested a range from the list including:

- Continuation of footfall data into 2022
- Newspaper advertisements subject to them being bespoke to the town and with clear

messaging

- Social media videos
- A supply of deck chairs, foldable chairs and tables, and gazebos to be used for events/activity
- Bunting – if to match the existing town centre bunting to be used as replacement/spare.
- Painter/Decorator time for refurbishing street furniture but the Town Council has requested this be utilised to fund additional Town Ranger time rather than an external contractor
- Plants and planters subject to location permissions being obtained.
- Litter picking Equipment
- Funding to cover the alfresco dining events in 2021