

REPORT TO EVENTS AND TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
HEAD OUT NOT HOME AL FRESCO DINING EVENINGS

Report Reference E-22-03
Meeting Date 13th June 2022
Agenda Item 9
Prepared by Town Centre and Marketing Officer



1.0 BACKGROUND

In September 2021 the council coordinated al fresco dining evenings where hospitality businesses could utilise the street for al fresco dining. At its November meeting, it made the following resolution at its November 2021 meeting:

*It was **RESOLVED** to approve the principle of alfresco dining evenings in 2022 subject to the committee considering further detail following further engagement with hospitality businesses on the policing, timing, and frequency of the evenings. In particular it was requested that views on preferred months and the day it takes place alternating between streets be gathered.*

The engagement with businesses was delayed due to the vacancy in the position of Town Centre and Marketing Officer early in 2022. The new Town Centre and Marketing Officer has now undertaken this further engagement with a survey to hospitality businesses in April.

2.0 SURVEY RESPONSES

The results from this survey have been collated and summarised below. The results are broken down by the street on which a business would participate.

Q1 With the need for 8 weeks' notice for road closures, there are now 3 realistic weekends to plan the Al Fresco events from July-September. The original proposal was to have 5 events, once a month from May-September. Are 5 days...

	King St	Princess St	Minshull St	Total
Too many	3	1	-	5
Too few	3	-	-	3
Just right	1	2	2	5

Q2 Currently the proposed plan is to have Al Fresco on Princess/Minshull Street on Fridays and King Street on Saturdays. Do you believe road closures should be kept the same or alternated each month?

	King St	Princess St	Minshull St	Total
Keep the Same	4	1	-	5
Alternate	3	2	2	6

Q3 Are you comfortable with being responsible for security in your designated area?

	King St	Princess St	Minshull St	Total
Yes	6	3	2	11
No	1	1	-	2

Q4 Do you have security who can support this?

	King St	Princess St	Minshull St	Total
Yes	1	2	2	5
No	6	1	-	7

Q5 General Feedback

Positive:

- Brilliant nights for the town and independent businesses within it. Great to have the support to enable them to happen and we as a business are happy to work with all parties involved to ensure a safe and enjoyable event.
- It was such a great environment and atmosphere around Knutsford it brought the town to life Definitely needed more often

Negative:

- We have attended numerous meetings on this and were told Princess Street, where our business is located, could not be fully closed. If this remains the case, we have huge concerns. We were told the only place we could operate is outside Lost and Found, which is a fair walk across a busy road. A) no one will order our products from this distance when Lost and Found is on their doorstep, B) it would be dangerous to transport them. This massively impacts our trade on the 2 busiest days of the week when we have strived to create a safe and welcoming space. In truth this could crucify us and others on our street. The scheme prioritises businesses on king street which will be closed therefore attracting additional trade, and where public disturbance issues have prevailed recently also causing us issues for concern regarding the reputation of our lovely town and for what will filter back to us once trouble makers have been moved on. We also question what facilities you have for this e.g. toilets etc? Something we have spent a fortune providing for since opening a beer garden. Unless this scheme is built fairly to include every business on both streets, we cannot support it and plead with you not to go ahead unless for a very limited number of dates.

3.0 FEEDBACK SUMMARY

In summary, the majority of businesses are in favour of the event going ahead again this year. The majority of businesses would like to alternate the days in which the events take place on which road. The majority of participants are happy to be responsible for security concerns and at least 5

businesses should be able to help with security. The primary concerns are from one business due to the proposal not to fully close Princess Street, security and toilet provision.

4.0 PROPOSED 2022 EVENTS

It is proposed to hold alfresco dining evenings in August and September for King Street (individually) and Princess Street and Minshull Street (together). This will cause the minimum disruption for residents and allow the venues to have an equal opportunity to maximise revenue from each event.

In addition to the contracted traffic management, it is recommended that security personnel are hired for each evening; this would be alongside any officers/volunteers managing the evenings and aim to prevent any issues arising.

The following dates are proposed:

Month	Date	Roads Closed
August	Friday 12 th	Princess Street & Minshull Street
August	Saturday 13 th	King Street
September	Friday 9 th	King Street
September	Saturday 10 th	Princess Street & Minshull Street

The August dates tie in with the Food and Drink Festival. Road closures will start at 5.30pm to minimise disruption to non-hospitality businesses to ensure a full day of trading. There is also the option to extend opening hours if businesses believe they can take advantage of increased footfall.

The TCMO will liaise with the Police and Cheshire East Council. The council will hire one security officer and some businesses say they can provide their own security/have trained staff to deal with any issues. A full risk assessment will be undertaken, and weather conditions will be assessed prior to the events. All affected residents will be informed in advance.

The closure of Princess Street is more disruptive to residents due to it providing the only means of vehicular access to a number of properties. As per the report in November 2021, it is proposed that the Princess Street evenings be facilitated by closing the parking bays from HSBC to Chicinos to enable the pavement to be utilised for dining. The bays would be barriered off to enable pedestrians to use the area to pass diners. The section outside Lost and Found would also be closed. This would enable April's Kitchen, Kuckoo and Chicinos to utilise the pavement section and Copper 29 and Dexter and Jones to use the space outside the Lost and Found. The Old Sessions House could also use the space on Red Cow Yard as long as businesses who use this space to access parking are communicated with in advance and the pavement outside Simon and Boyd could also be used by Copper 29 and Dexter and Jones.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The total cost for the two weekends would be £. This covers the costs of traffic management, road closure consents and security as follows:

Item	King St	Minshull St/ Princess St
Traffic Management (per night)	£357	£717
Road Closure Charge (per weekend)	£100	£100

Security Charge (per night)	£105	£105
Total (per night)	£562	£922
Total (x 2)	£1,124	£1,844
Cost per venue	£94	£153

The road closure charge is £200 per weekend, split equally for the two areas. The cost per venue is based on 12 venues on King Street and 12 on Minshull Street/Princess Street.

It is proposed that the evenings be facilitated by the council but with the cost borne by the participating venues on a recharge basis. An agreement would be drawn up for participation and where evenings are cancelled (due to poor weather) the cost would reduce.

5.0 DECISION REQUIRED

The committee should consider the proposed al fresco dining events for 2022.