

REPORT TO TOWN CENTRE COMMITTEE

TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT REPORT

Report Reference T-23-18
Meeting Date 22nd April 2024
Agenda Item 6
Prepared by Town Centre Manager



1.0 INITIATIVES AND FOOTFALL EVENTS

1.1 FLASH FASHION KNUTSFORD

Flash Fashion is scheduled for May 18th with the catwalk show taking place at The Lost and Found at 11am. The following shops are taking part: Kanoa Living, Blossom Boutique, Smook Styling (at Gusto), Redress at Dexter and Jones, Zapatos, Bare Necessities, Willow Boutiques, Paris Ladies Boutique, L 'Atelier London, Second Hand Styling, Clare and Illingworth, Cocaranti, Milania Boutique, Chalk 33 and Lanigan and Hulme

To help with the organisation Cllr Johnson is assisting with the catwalk show which is very appreciated by the TCM. A post event review will take place including a review of charging for the fashion show.

1.2 HEALTH AND WELLNESS WEEK

This new event took place from 20th January to 27th January and focused on

- Nutrition
- Physical Health and Fitness
- Mental Health.

The event was well received with many establishments reporting full attendance for their slots (Roberta Beauty Redefined, Knutsford Hearing Centre, Natural Mat, and Perfect Podiatry). Other slots were quite 'niche' and less busy but the feedback from the therapists was that they would like to take part in another event. The event at the Lost and Found was poorly attended with hindsight it was held too early in the day, but the therapists involved found it a good networking event for them and this networking continues today. It has been agreed with the Town Clerk that Refresh and Wellness should be merged with both held in January 2025. There is a natural crossover and help with the workload of the TCM and Communications Officer during the busy Christmas period.

3.0 FAMILYFEST

The above is scheduled for Sunday 11th August and at the time of writing an initial meeting with interested parties had taken place with deadline for content by the end of April.

Evuna have agreed to sponsor the event.

4.0 KNUTSFORD AT HOME

This event has been scheduled for September 21st and a meeting is due to be scheduled during April to start discussing content. Sam Youd (RHS member and former Head Gardener at Tatton Park) is already confirmed for a talk plus an 'Ask the architect' slot is a new feature.

2.0 ONGOING INITIATIVES / UPDATES

Work is progressing with regards to:

- Take a Seat
- Business Recognition Awards
- Feeding Charter

The stickers for Take a Seat and Business Recognition are ready and will be distributed within the next quarter. Final tweaking of the branding for the Feeding Charter is underway and should be ready by end of April

2.1 BUSINESS SKILLS WORKSHOPS

A programme of workshops has been completed with Instagram Reels and TikTok proving the most popular and well attended. The TCM will be asking for feedback and has thanked all those who ran the workshops. The TCM would like to extend the programme next year with possible Shared Prosperity Fund to cover topics such as leadership development, recruitment and selection, and team building. This would also appeal to the business-to-business sector.

Topic	Date	Delivered by
Introduction to Visual Merchandising	13 th February	Sue Cottingham of D&S Living
Instagram Reels	21 st February	Hannah Locke, Scene in Knutsford
Introduction to TikTok	21 st March	Bella Marketing & Design
SEO & PPC	27 th March	Mike Lyon of Agenda 97

2.2 SHOPPING CHAMPION VIDEOS

The above videos are continuing with 22 videos completed so far and a mix of shops represented. Four more are currently in the pipeline. This initiative will continue if there are willing participants and if any members wish to take part, please contact the Communications Officer.

2.3 KNUTSFORD VOUCHER

The difference between voucher sales and redemptions for the 2023/24 financial year was £374. £10 vouchers were most popular, and a reprint is required. Additional promotion of the voucher scheme has been included in the new branding tender for 2024-2027 period.

Marketing for the voucher scheme needs to be increased (incorporating the new branding) and this will commence in the next quarter.

2.4 TENNER TRAIL

The following took place between 1st – 14th April with the following businesses taking part: Knutsford Olde Sweet Shoppe, NyxCat Crystals, Knutsford Mobile, The Market Café, Heathfields Fruit and Veg, Knutsford Market Hall Butcher, Slipped Discs, Morgan Edwards, Clarity Contemporary Jewellers, Lost and Found, Roberta Beauty Redefined, Cranford Café, It's the Little Things and Amador

The TCM is currently gathering feedback from those who took part.

2.5 ALFRESCO DINING

The following dates have been agreed with hospitality venues:

Date	Area	Venues
9 th June	Minshull St and Outside Lost and Found	April's, Linden Stores, The Angel, Café on the Corner, Lost & Found
28 th July	Mid-section of King Street	Wine and Wallop, King Street Kitchen, Morgan Edwards, Gusto
11 th August	Minshull St and Outside Lost and Found	April's, Linden Stores, The Angel, Café on the Corner, Lost & Found
18 th August	Mid-section of King Street	Wine and Wallop, King Street Kitchen, Morgan Edwards, Gusto

At the time of writing the TCM has booked 9th June and envisages 11th August will be booked w/c 15th April. King Street venues have been slower to respond. The Tea Room will also be participating but due to their courtyard do not need to contribute to the road closure.

2.6 CHESHIRE SHOW

The TCM and Communications Officer held a meeting with Bella Marketing and Design and the CO of the Cheshire Show to discuss contra marketing/partner deals. An agreement has been made that will allow a *Discover Knutsford* stand and promotion at the Cheshire Show and on their mailing list, in return for promotion of the Cheshire Show on the Discover Knutsford website and on some marketing collateral.

3.0 TOWN CENTRE SNAPSHOT AND VACANCIES

3.1 OPENINGS

- Lanigan and Hulme have opened a childrenswear shop in the former Manchester Building Society premises
- Tomorrow Screening are due to open in Regent Street.
- Mowgli Street Food have started to promote their plans to open in the Barclays Bank premises.
- Oil Art Advisory have opened in King Street
- Vivre have opened opposite the Market Hall
- GPT Waste Management is due to open in the former Techno Type premises (which they will owner occupy)

Tomorrow Screening have already expressed an interest in the Wellness Week. Mamma Mia is also

under offer and a ground floor tenant has been secured by the owners of the Silk Rooms

3.2 CLOSURES

Glamorous and Reformer Pilates have now closed.

The vacancy rate is approximately 7 % (compared to 7.5% in January's report)

4.0 KNUTSFORD MARKET HALL

The current market traders are as follows:

- Knutsford Market Hall Butcher
- Nyxcat Crystals
- The Market Café
- Slipped Discs
- The Market Barber
- Knutsford Mobile
- It's the Little Things

KHD Thai have left, and NyxCat Crystals will be leaving at the end of May. Due to workload the TCM is behind with 'pop-up promotion' but will increase recruitment over the next few months. All the traders are eager for the works to commence.

5.0 BANKING HUB

The additional cash access survey (for Princess Street Post Office) was successfully completed on 13th February and the TCM has been informed by Cash Access UK that they are 'looking to have your deposit solution in Knutsford in May/June this year'. Further information on what this is, is awaited.

6.0 BENCHMARKING

A programme of benchmarking took place on 13th and 16th December with both questionnaires and footfall counts and a footfall count only in March. These final reports will be incorporated into a 2023/4 benchmarking report.

The 2024 surveys will take place in

- 12th and 15th June (survey and footfall)
- 11th and 14th September (footfall)
- 11th and 14th December (survey and footfall)
- 12th and 15th March (footfall)

7.0 TOWN CENTRE MAP

The TCM has sold all the advertising on the above and has written copy. It will be printed in late spring/early summer. The map will reflect the new Discover Knutsford brand and be followed by a refresh of the physical town centre maps (funded by the Shared Prosperity Fund).

8.0 TATTON PARK/RHS SHOW

A meeting took place in late March with the above, with the TCM and Cllrs Johnson, Watson, and Hartley also in attendance. The next meeting will be held in June which will coincide with the general RHS meeting but allow some time for Knutsford specific concerns. Cllrs Johnson, Mears and Watson undertook visitor surveys in Tatton Park on Friday 4th April and the data is currently being collated.

The TCM has yet to hear from the organisers of the RHS with regards to the theme for this year's competition or confirmation that a stand will again be on offer despite chasing numerous times.

9.0 SHARED PROSPERITY FUND PROJECTS

9.1 BID FEASIBILITY STUDY

The study carried out by Mosaic Partnership is nearing its completion. A meeting was held with businesses on 10th April with Mosaic Partnership presenting their initial findings. Attendance split was as follows:

Business Category	Attendees
Independent Retailer	4
Independent Hospitality	5
National Hospitality	2
Supermarket	1
Business to Business	1
Health/Wellness	1
Landlord	4

Many businesses were represented by more than one member of staff. The mood of the evening was overall positive with an engaging discussion. Some have already expressed an interest in a place on any potential BID board or Task Force or if under the rate threshold to be a

The business meeting was followed by a meeting with Councillors Hartley, Wood, Dalzell, Grey, Robertson, McCulloch, and Jo Wise of Cheshire East.

The outcomes of the feasibility study along with recommendations should be with the TCM for circulating within the next three weeks. In the interim, the TCM will be contacting Wilmslow Town Council to discuss their experience as a relatively new BID town.

9.2 DEVELOPMENT OF A PLACE BRAND

The council has been working with Bella Marketing and Design to develop a *Discover Knutsford*

branding. This is currently being finalised ready for roll-out. The brand will then be used to across all our marketing including the new Discover Knutsford website. The brand is not a replacement for Knutsford Town Council's branding, but designed as a specific tourism focused identity.

9.3 TOURISM STRATEGY

The contract for this work was awarded to Savills in mid-March. The TCM has had two planning meetings with them and is currently collating a stakeholder list. This is split into two – one for tourist attractions (one to one) and one for retailers/hospitality etc which will be a zoom format. The TCM will keep the committee updated with progress.

9.4 DISCOVER KNUTSFORD WEBSITE

61 tenders were received for this work which was both unexpected and overwhelming. After a long evaluation period, the tender was awarded to Maclaren Jones Marketing. Once the branding work has been handed over, they will begin development in line with the new brand guidelines.

9.5 EXPANSION OF DISCOVER KNUTSFORD WORKSTREAM

As has previously been reported, the council secured an additional £15,000 of funding for the following:

- Renewal the town centre visitor information boards
- Delivery of a programme of social media marketing to promote Knutsford using the new Discover Knutsford accounts
- To develop the Heritage Open Days event planned for September 2024
- To advertise Knutsford on the Visit Chester and Cheshire website

The TCM has been in touch to progress the Visit Chester and Cheshire website. The videography (after tendering) was awarded to MCCM Videography services. The social media tender was awarded to Scene in Knutsford.

9.6 TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN FEASIBILITY STUDIES

Hydrock has now developed a traffic model for the town centre following the receipt of journey time data from Cheshire East. This will be presented to the working group on 18th April and will now be used to model a number of scenarios from the *Top to Bottom Street* report. Sub-consultants are working on proposals for public realm changes and work on the feasibility of a multi-storey car park at Tatton Street has been developed and is currently being costed. This aspect of the work is expected to conclude around the end of April.

10.0 TASTE KNUTSFORD

Recent/upcoming Taste Knutsford tours have sold well:

- 3rd April - 11 people (private corporate tour combined with a Pulse of Perfumery consultation)
- 13th April - 12 people (sold out)
- 7th May - 11 people (private tour)

The TCM has briefed Bella Marketing and Design regarding a new leaflet (which will incorporate the new Discover Knutsford branding) and a new logo design. The TCM is also exploring a wine only tour with selected venues - a wine tasting, not a 'bar crawl.'

The TCM has completed a marketing review of the tour and after undertaking a competitor analysis recommends a price increase to £60.00. This would remain a competitive price, and all bought vouchers and current tours would be honoured.

11.0 DECISION REQUIRED

The majority of the report is for information.

Approval from the committee is sought to increase the price of Taste Knutsford tours to £60 from 1st May.