

REPORT TO TOWN CENTRE COMMITTEE

TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT REPORT

Report Reference T-24-01
Meeting Date 17th June 2024
Agenda Item 7
Prepared by Town Centre Manager



1.0 INITIATIVES AND FOOTFALL EVENTS

1.1 FLASH FASHION KNUTSFORD

Flash Fashion was held on 18th May with the third catwalk show taking place both inside and outside the Lost and Found,

The following shops took part: Kanoa Living, Blossom Boutique, 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. Knutsford Photographic Society member John Horsley took photos and MCCM took videos for social media, website and YouTube.

The catwalk show was held both inside and outside the Lost and Found for the first time. The venue was at capacity and being outside attracted lots of passers by and for 2025 (if the sun shines) this will be repeated.

The Lost and Found reported record takings during the catwalk show. The participating venues feedback on the whole was positive with some reporting an increase in takings. Some reported an increase in footfall (and awareness) but not turnover, and one had a 'normal Saturday.' All agreed it showcases the town as an independent shopping venue and an excellent way for putting Knutsford on the map.

The Town Centre Manager is reviewing whether to charge for the catwalk show (consulting with the venues) and how this would work both operationally and marketing wise and whether it would have any impact on attracting more higher spenders.

The event was grateful to the support from Cllr Johnson who did the bulk of the work the catwalk show organisation with help from Cllr Russell.

1.2 FAMILYFEST

Family Fest is scheduled for Sunday 11th August and at the time of writing the leaflet is at first draft stage. The day is a mixture of fancy dress competitions, family yoga sessions, visits from children's characters, pizza making, art sessions, sensory play, hair braiding (amongst other activities) with a visit from the Fire Brigade and the police van (pending emergencies). The day also coincides with Alfresco Dining on Minshull Street and outside the Lost and Found.

1.3 KNUTSFORD AT HOME

This event has been scheduled for September 21st with a deadline from content from participating venues of 14th June. The venues have shown interest in a joint advertising campaign (costs split between them) with Cheshire Life.

1.4 ALFRESCO DINING

The first alfresco dining took place on Sunday 9th June (Minshull Street and outside the Lost and Found). The weather was unseasonably windy with heavy showers. The TCM has asked for venue feedback.

The next dates are

- July 28th (mid-section of King Street)
- August 11th (outside the Lost and Found/Minshull Street)
- August 18th (mid-section of King Street)

2.0 ONGOING INITIATIVES / UPDATES

2.1 TAKE A SEAT

This is now in place with the policy on the website, stickers and posters distributed to the participants. There has been a lovely response to the scheme which encouraged a few more participants to be added. Those taking part in the scheme, include Cranford Café, Knutsford Heritage Centre, Nxtep Gym, Tatton Perk, The Tea Room, Clarity Contemporary Jewellery, Mellor Braggins, Detaljer, Knutsford Methodist Church, Lost and Found, Dexter and Jones and Knutsford Hearing Centre.

The TCM is planning to promote the scheme to Knutsford Medical Partnership, community groups and the Community Hospital.

2.2 BUSINESS RECOGNITION CERTIFICATES

Business Recognition Certificates are ready and the TCM will be putting dates in the Town Mayor's diary to start visiting local businesses.

2.3 FEEDING CHARTER AND SHOPPING CHAMPION VIDEOS

The above are on hold pending the completion of the bulk of the shared prosperity funded work.

2.4 KNUTSFORD VOUCHER

Work has started on the re-brand of the voucher along with posters. The new £20 voucher and the £10 voucher will reflect the Discover Knutsford brand. The posters are designed to encourage consumers to buy/spend the voucher and also be of use to the participating shops. These will also be used to encourage more shops to sign up.

£180 worth of voucher have been sold in the period April to early June.

2.5 CHESHIRE SHOW

The contra deal was finalised between both parties and cross-promotion has begun. At the time of writing, preparations for the Discover Knutsford stand at the show are on-going. The stand will be staffed by Councillors and Knutsford Hosts with raffle prizes from Knutsford Olde Sweet Shoppe, Linden Stores and Rose and Crown.

A table for 10 at the Presidential dinner on the first day of the show will be hosted by the Town Mayor with guests from the Town Awards 2024 winners.

2.7 RHS TATTON PARK

Discover Knutsford will also be exhibiting at the RHS Show with Knutsford Hosts and councillors staffing the stall. Attractions to the stand will be arranged after the Cheshire Show but the TCM is hoping the May Queen/Crown Barer can attend.

Cllrs Johnson and Cllr Mears undertook a visitor survey in early April which the TCM will review and collate for the next Town Centre report.

The next meeting with Tatton Park will take place on Wednesday 21st August.

3.0 TOWN CENTRE SNAPSHOT AND VACANCIES

3.1 OPENINGS AND CLOSURES

The Blind Pig have opened in Heritage Way and RI Home is due to open in the former Glamorous premises.

Lloyds Hall Menswear and ATS have closed.

The vacancy rate is approximately 8%.

4.0 KNUTSFORD MARKET HALL

The current market traders are as follows:

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

There has been two pop-ups Diana Birkett Art and Design and Kodemana Llama and the TCM is speaking to two others. A weekly boosted post for each trader has commenced plus the TCM has commissioned new 'product led' photography for a flyer. There is strong interest from a variety of market traders for the new market. All the traders are eager for the works to commence.

5.0 BANKING HUB

There has been no update since the last report despite the TCM chasing.

6.0 BENCHMARKING

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 map has just been printed and distribution has begun. Work will start on updating the static town centre maps in August.

8.0 SHARED PROSPERITY FUND PROJECTS

8.1 DEVELOPMENT OF A PLACE BRAND

The Discover Knutsford place brand, guidelines and toolkit are now in place. The branding will be used to promote Knutsford as a place to stay, visit and shop. Most events, bar Taste Knutsford and Music Festival, and community events such as Bunny Hop and Pumpkin Path, will move to this brand. This means our social media platforms will be streamlined and more focused.

MCCM and Scene in Knutsford have been working on the videography and social media, respectively. The photographer tender was awarded between Tessa Hari Carrol Photography (people/shops/lifestyle) and MCCM (street scenes). These videos and photos will be used across social media, the website and YouTube.

8.2 TOURISM STRATEGY

The contract for this work was awarded to Savills in mid-March. Savills have undertaken a complete SWOT analysis of the town, conducted wider market research, zoom meetings with stakeholders and in person meetings with local attractions such as Brook Street Chapel and Knutsford Heritage Centre. The TCM is expecting the final report at the end of June.

8.3 DISCOVER KNUTSFORD WEBSITE

The tender was awarded to Maclaren Jones, and it is envisaged the website will be ready at the end of July.

8.4 VISIT CHESTER AND CHESHIRE WEBSITE

The TCM has given copy to Marketing Cheshire for Knutsford's entry to be upgraded to platinum. An e-shot was sent in May and Discover Knutsford has advertised in the July-September flyer which is distributed across Cheshire and surrounding areas.

9.0 TASTE KNUTSFORD

Recent/upcoming Taste Knutsford tours have been:

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|------------------------|--|
| 13 th April | 12 people |
| 7 th May | 12 people (private tour) |
| 16 th May | 16 people (private evening tour for Barclay's) |
| 8 th June | 6 people |

A new logo has been finalised with Bella Marketing and Design which will be rolled out across the website and used for a new marketing leaflet as well as a 'messenger bag' for the tour guide.