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| Briefing Paper  To  Overview & Scrutiny Committee (Place)  On  1 February 2022 |
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| **TOWN CENTRE UPDATE** | |

**1. SUMMARY**

* 1. This briefing paper gives Overview & Scrutiny Committee (Place) an update on the services provided by Town Centre Operations.

**2. BACKGROUND**

2.2 The areas in this paper are bullet-points for Town Centre Operations.

**3. MARKETS**

3.1 Market Income

The income for markets is not comparable to the same period in 20/21 due to Three Tier restrictions and introduction of Lockdown 2.Therefore, to give an indication on recovery the income has been compared to the same period in 2020/21 and 2019/20.

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|  | **Oct - Dec** | |
| **Year** | **Income** | **Year on Year**  **% change** |
| 2019/20 | £37,651 | N/A |
| 2020/21 | £14,377 | -61% |
| 2021/22 | £20,942 | +46% |

As you can see whilst income has increased by 46% on the same period in 20/21, the 21/22 income is still down by 44% when compared to pre-Covid rates in 19/20.

A marketing plan is currently being finalised to advertise for new traders, with some adverts already being circulated to promote ‘Kipper Season’ offers.

**4. CAR PARKS**

4.1 Car Park Income

The income for car parking is not comparable to the same period in 20/21 due to half price charges form the 1st September to 31st December. Therefore, to give an indication on recovery the income has been compared to the same period in 2019/20.

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|  | **Oct - Dec** | |
| **Year** | **Income** | **Year on Year**  **% change** |
| 2019/20 | £437,658 | N/A |
| 2020/21 | £122,975 | -71% |
| 2021/22 | £270,957 | +120% |

The percentage change has been calculated to compare 19/20 to 21/22 income which shows a decrease of 61% over this time period.

There was also a period of 2 ½ weeks free parking in the Four Seasons car park from late December to early January due to faulty barriers which would have had an impact on income.

The fire doors have been assessed, the quote received and the work should be completed w/c 21 February 2022. This will enable the car park to re-open. There are some additional works that are required, but that can be done once the car park has opened and the contractor is already programming that work.

It is anticipated that the car park will re-open to the public at the end of February.

All other outstanding work that would prevent the car park opening has been completed by Facilities.

There is no set date yet for the closure of the Old Town Hall car park but it is likely to be the 2nd week in February.

Grove Street car park continues to host the Covid testing centre, which has restricted the number of spaces available for visitors to use.

A decision will be taken in the next few weeks to declare surplus to requirements Victoria Street, Garden Road and Radford Road car parks, as well as the Town Centre Operations compound.

Virtual Permits

The virtual permit system is now fully operational and is being used by Town Centre based staff, market traders and businesses.

This has significantly reduced the workload of the admin assistant and enabled people to self-serve at a time that suits them.

It also has a positive benefit for the environment as it reduces our printing and laminating levels significantly.

This scheme will be rolled out to all MDC staff and councilors who qualify for a parking permit over the next 2 to 3 months and will be administered by the Facilities Team.

**5. SHOPMOBILITY**

The Shopmobility service has continued to operate throughout since the re-opening in late June 2020 from the shop unit in the Four Seasons shopping centre.

Although the service has continued to operate there are several factors affecting usage and therefore income, i.e. located within the shopping centre, bus station delayed re-introduction of scooter service, drop in footfall and continued reluctance for vulnerable people to return to normal due to risk of infection in particular more recently around the new Omicron strain.

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|  | **Oct - Dec** | |
| **Year** | **Income** | **Year on Year**  **% change** |
| 2019/20 | £1,040 | N/A |
| 2020/21 | £232 | -78% |
| 2021/22 | £271 | +16% |

The percentage change has been calculated to compare 19/20 to 21/22 income. As you can see whilst there is a 16% increase on the same quarter in 20/21 there is a 74% decrease when compared to pre-Covid income in 2019/20.

**6. PUBLIC CONVENIENCES**

The charges are not comparable from 2020/21 to 2021/22 due to charges being removed, therefore the percentage change has been calculated by comparing 19/20 to 21/22.

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|  | **Oct - Nov** | |
| **Year** | **Income** | **Year on Year**  **% change** |
| 2019/20 | £10,413 | N/A |
| 2020/21 | £0 | N/A |
| 2021/22 | £3,472 | -66% |

**7. FOOTFALL**

Please see Appendix 1 attached for the footfall information for this quarter.

Footfall was higher by 38% in this quarter when compared to the same period in 2020/21 due to implementation of lockdown 2 during November. However, when compared to the same period in 2019/20 prior to Covid there is an 18% decrease in footfall.

**8. WELCOME BACK FUND**

The Welcome Back Fund activity plan was accepted and work has started to implement the work highlighted in the report.

To date the following activities have been funded through this project:-

* Covid Ambassadors – up to the end of September.
* Public awareness campaigns, including banners, floor markers, lamp post signs, bollard covers, flags and window vinyls for empty shops.
* Repair and fitting of new closing mechanism to Clerkson’s Alley gates to deter ASB and support the Safer Streets project.
* Walkabout entertainers in the town centre scheduled to the end of March 2022.
* Hire of light tunnel to enhance the Christmas offer.
* Security for the light tunnel on key target dates to prevent damage.
* Provision of snow globes for Warsop, Pleasley, Ladybrook, Oak Tree and Bellamy Road estates to enhance their festive events.
* Financial support for the Winter Festival event held in Titchfield Park.
* Repair and refurbishment of ‘Centre of Sherwood Forest’ plaque and plinth (work in progress).
* Removal of poster point and barrier on Stockwell Gate / Queen Street.
* Quotes obtained for painting of street furniture including benches, lamp posts etc. – work to be carried out in early Spring 2022.
* Repairing slabs and procurement of deep clean for the ticket office area of Mansfield Railway Station to support re-opening to passengers.
* Awaiting quote for repair to cobbles in front of Mansfield Railway Station ticket office / waiting room.
* Cost of deep clean of ticket office at Mansfield Railway Station to facilitate re-opening.
* Provision of Christmas lighting for Warsop and Pleasley.
* Awaiting quote for clearing banking in ‘Tesco Valley’ to enable re-planting to support Urban Greening Project.

As stated previously the parameters for how the money is spent is quite restrictive and can include repairs, beautification, temporary installations or events, signage, business support etc. but it cannot be used to gain a permanent asset.

**9. URBAN GREENING PROJECT**

* Placeholder site visits took place on the 14th December.
* Tech queries were received by the 5th January.
* Tender submissions due back on the 28th January.
* Tender award to be made to successful contractor by 4th February.
* Work anticipated to start 2nd week of February.
* Memorial agreed, order placed, awaiting final designs and schedule.
* Old Town Hall site includes SUD’s and raingardens as part of the Severn Trent Water flood mitigation project.

**10. PUBLIC ART**

A repair has been carried out on the Leaning Man statue, as well as repair work to the Feather. However, further issues have been identified with the Feather and a more in-depth structural survey is being commissioned to assess the current condition and future inspection / maintenance regimes.

Work will commence on the Bentinck Memorial on the 9th March and is likely to last for at least 2/3 weeks.

The ‘Centre of Sherwood Forest’ plaque will be re-instated on West Gate on the 8th March and the mounting stone will also be repaired at this point.

**11. STAFFING**

The team have been impacted by Covid isolations but have continued to keep all services operating.

One staff remains off sick due to long term sickness, which does have an impact on one team, but work is prioritised accordingly.

The Christmas period is always busy for the team supporting various Christmas events and Mansfield BID Christmas Market.

Once again the electrical team (3 staff) did a fantastic job of installing all the Christmas lights across the district and supporting the various events. The light tunnel and display in front of the Old Town Hall was exceptional and drew lots of people to it to have photographs taken and also lots of compliments from the public.

We are already planning Christmas 2022!

**13. COMMENTS OF HEAD OF SERVICE**

13.1 The team have worked very hard over the festive period to ensure that the town centre looks great, and continues to provide a safe and clean environment for visitors. The move towards less paper-based processes for parking season tickets has gone very well and more is planned to ensure the service benefits from more modern ways of working.

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