

APPENDIX 1 Executive Board 9th April

MARKETING AND PROMOTIONS IN RUNCORN AND WIDNES TOWN CENTRES

Runcorn Town Centre and Runcorn Outdoor Market

Town Team Funding

Initiatives selected by the Town Team taken forward include:

- Commercial Property Renewal Grants;
- Business Start-up Grants;
- Support for the Street Market (leaflets, advert on minibus, bags, street market mural etc.);
- Runcorn Market/ Reindeer 2nd December. Also advertising for market opening days.
- Environmental improvements including graffiti removal;
- Public arts programme for 2014;
- WWI Commemorative Events and support for Christmas Festival;
- Installation of fake shop fronts on long standing vacancies depicting the Runcorn town centre heritage trail and children's art work;
- Commitment to provide a new town centre map (on-going).
- Runcorn Town Team web page www.runcorntownteam.co.uk

Commercial Property Renewal Grants

£50k *was* allocated to Commercial Property Renewal grants. This entire budget has now been spent or committed.

Businesses that have received support through these grants include: Sabor tapas bar & restaurant (a welcomed new quality restaurant for Runcorn located on Church Street), Halton Carers, Mersey Bridge View, Halton Autistic Family Support Centre, the former Synergy building (a long-standing and prominent vacant unit which has been transformed and now has tenants), Sweet Memories (the traditional sweet shop on Church Street) the Wat Phra Singh Buddhist Temple, Hazlehurst Craft Studios to name a few.

Business Start-up Grants

£18,840 has been allocated to new business start-up grants. The Runcorn Town Team is still offering grants of up to £1,500 to assist new business start-ups locating within the Runcorn Town Team Focus Area. The grant is to help cover the costs associated with making the premises fit for purpose. Proof of lease or purchase of business premises located within the Town Team Focus area;

Fake shop fronts on Long-standing Vacant Units

Two different projects have been commissioned and all fake shop fronts are now in place.

1. Heritage Trail Hoardings – located on High Street (opposite the entrance to the Co-op car park)
2. Children's art work/ old photographs depicting local Runcorn scenes on the former Senga Furniture building, Church Street.

Public Arts Programme:

- **CO3:** New Roots a dance and poetry performance took place on Saturday, 14th June 2014 and saw local community groups coming together to perform at locations throughout the town centre.
- **Old Town Bloom:** Hazlehurst Studios worked alongside the Town Team to bring some blooms into the Old Town, Runcorn throughout the summer of 2014. Working with community groups, schools and businesses in the old town an oasis of flowering tins were created which were displayed in the garden next to the 'Of Heroes and Industry' mural on High Street.
- **The Raven:** An outdoor performance of Edgar Allen Poe's 'The Raven' took place on Monday, 27th October 2014 at All Saints Church, Church Street. This was a youth production run by the Suitcase Ensemble which aimed to support young people aged 16+ with skills and experience in theatre, contributing to their Silver and Golden Arts awards.

Support for the Christmas Festival

The Christmas festival takes place in Runcorn every year organised by the Runcorn Festival Group a voluntary group who have been running this event for years. It consists of a parade/ Christmas tree light switch-on, on the Friday night (early December) followed by a Christmas market the following Saturday in Runcorn Old Town. This year they also did children's workshops at Runcorn Shopping Centre who sponsored the event. The town team provided some funding to the festival group in 2013 and 2014, which included a permanent base for the Christmas tree, along with contributions towards the Christmas tree and its lights.

Priorities for the Future

1. Looking to purchase a new telescope to be positioned on the promenade to encourage 'bridge spotters' to the town centre. It is a great vantage point for viewing the construction of the Mersey Gateway;
2. Commitment to fund art projects: Halton in Bloom 2015 and a performance style project (see below);
3. Commitment to graffiti removal in the town centre; and a
4. Focus on marketing.

Future Promotions

Events Old Town Bloom ~ Inside/Outside

- Main Garden area (High Street garden) will have the theme 'Inside/Outside' with a nod to Alice in Wonderland , as the story is a 150 years old this year (which has a broad public appeal), this will incorporate some planting and gardening displays, as well as an outside art exhibition.
- **Hazlehurst Studios ~ Outside/Inside** Inspired by the Runcorn Heritage Trail, the artists at Hazlehurst will produce temporary works of art inspired by the history at certain points on the map, see <http://runcorntownteam.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Heritage-Leaflet-Runcorn.pdf>

Widnes Town Centre and Widnes Markets

- St. Valentine's Day Advertising campaign Widnes Market, 2 local newspapers carried advert for what can I buy for Valentines Day.
- Mothers Day Advertising campaign Widnes Market 2 local newspapers, carried advert for what can I buy for Mothers Day
- April 2014 Cake Sale in aid of Callum Murray Widnes Market raised £1000 by Market Traders. Press call attracted both local Newspapers who ran the Story.
- April 2014 Easter Market Open Good Friday Widnes Market Easter opening times and promotion. Utilised a treasure hunt as part of the promotion on the Good Friday and Easter Saturday with characters in costume handing out entry forms to children with parents in Albert Rd Widnes.
- May 14th - 28th 2014 Love your Local Market Widnes Market/Runcorn Tuesday Street Market. Adverts in 2 local papers for 2 weeks.
- Widnes Market Del Boy Auction on start day attracted a lot of pre event media coverage in both Local Papers.
- 2 Stalls for £10 initiative attracted commercial providers, plus community stalls from libraries, Cheshire Police, INVOLVE, Riverside College, Womens Institute, Halton Family Voice, Halton Play Council and Halton People into Jobs. Walk about entertainment included Acro Chaps and Escape artist.
- June 2014 Fathers' Day Advertising campaign Widnes Market, 2 local newspapers, carried advert for what can I buy for Fathers Day
- June 2014 Widnes Market Traders and the Mayor Cllr Shaun Osborne present cheques to Marie Curie Cancer Care and Alder Hey Childrens Hospital following the traders raising more than £3000. Both local papers covered story with photo and editorial.
- July 2014 Widnes On Sea Widnes Market. Funfair rides, donkey rides. Vouchers given out by traders on purchase. Face painting, mini beach, community stalls,
- Sept 19th 2014 International Talk Like a Pirate Day Pirates of the Carribbean look alike Johnny Depp, along with 3 shanty bands singing in a variety of places. Face painter and gifts for children. Adverts in World group newspapers only for 2 weeks.

- Christmas. Advertising for opening times and whats on started in November and ran through until 3rd week December. Also ran adverts what can I buy at Widnes Market for Christmas.
- Widnes Market Reindeer 13th December. Walk about entertainment every weekend from 13th – 24th inclusive featuring ice sculpture, Xmas fairies etc. Traders elected not to have a grotto this year. 2 Trees for memorial and wishes with money raised for local charities.
- Widnes Market Jan 2015. Start of a new scheme to encourage new traders. Adverts in local press for stalls, also in Market Trade News and Market Trader.
- March 2015 Red nose day Cake sale adverts on Internet. Raised £765 to date.
- March 2015 Mothers' day. 2 page Adverts in both local newspapers, themed and what can I Buy.
- Grants were available to assist with improvements and / or upgrading of commercial and retail property frontages located within the Widnes Town Centre Focus Area to help improve its appearance and prosperity. Please note that there is currently no new money available to support the Commercial Property Renewal Grant scheme.

Future Promotions

- A consultation exercise with Widnes market traders on developing a longer-term marketing and promotions plan.
- Preparation has commenced for the Love Your Local Market event which takes place from 13th May to 27th May. Promotions to include community stalls and stalls promotions for this event which takes place in UK and Europe to celebrate markets and their offer.
- Discussions taking place on Christmas street stalls (see appendix).
- An additional Thursday Flea Market/Outdoor Market is being piloted to further generate interest and footfall in the market and Widnes Town Centre.
- New Footfall Counters will be introduced to better assess visitor numbers and the impact of future events in and around the market.