

**ALTON TOWN COUNCIL  
COMMUNITY COMMITTEE – 13<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2021**

**REPORTS BY THE TOWN CLERK**

**ITEM 6 HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN FOR DECISION**

Enclosed in Members bundles is the revised and updated draft Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Action Plan for approval. When previously tabled Members had a number of additional suggestions which have been included. The document now also reflects the enormous influence that the pandemic has had upon the health and wellbeing agenda.

We are joined at this meeting by Suzi Drummond from Abri (local social housing provider) who will say a few words on their Community Investment Plan and how they can link with the Town Council in delivering their Ageing Well and reducing social isolation agenda.

**RECOMMENDATION.** Members are requested to approve the revised Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Action Plan

**ITEM 7 ALTON AWARDS**

**FOR DECISION**

At last February's meeting (Minute 250 – 2019 refers):

*The Chairman requested Members consider the setting up of a task and finish group to look at scoping the options, categories and detail of a community awards event for the Town.*

Due to the ensuing pandemic this item was not progressed but is now tabled for consideration.

A number of local councils have community awards. Links are included to those at Farnham, Midhurst and Petersfield for reference.

<https://www.farnham.gov.uk/services/servicestofarnham> Farnham Awards

<https://www.petersfieldfest.com/petersfieldawards> Petersfield Awards

<https://fb.watch/2sy92DqFki/> Midhurst Awards

**RECOMMENDATION:** Members are requested to consider to approval of the creation of a community awards programme for Alton.

**ITEM 8 LITTER PATROLS AND ANTI LITTERING CAMPAIGN.**

**FOR DECISION**

We are joined for this item by Bob Booker from the Alton Society who organises a number of litter picks in the town centre and Dean Phillips, Chair of the Alton and District Residents Association to discuss the increasing levels of littering across Alton (in the town centre, the wards and surrounding countryside) and what can be done to combat this through a local campaign.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Members are requested to approve and take forward any measures resulting from the discussion

## **ITEM 9 TOWN CENTRE RECOVERY AND TRANSFORMATION- DIALOGUE AND ENGAGEMENT WITH TOWN CENTRE BUSINESSES**

**FOR DECISION**

The Town Council publicity focus in the latter part of 2020 has been primarily directed at the Shop Local message. Run in tandem with EHDCs Stay Safe Shop Local, the aim of the campaign has been to encourage people to shop with confidence in the town centre, shining a light on our local independent retailers and promoting the message of how shopping local provides a boost to the local economy.

There is a desire to understand the success of this scheme and to gather feedback from local shops and businesses. Prior to the latest lockdown, EHDC were looking to engage consultants to undertake face to face survey work with town centre businesses but this has again been put on hold. It is therefore suggested that the Town Council undertakes its own on-line consultation of town centre businesses evaluate the impact of the Shop Local campaign, the Free After Three scheme and activities such as the MarmArt Trail to see what impact it had on local businesses as well as the viral campaign for the 12 Days of Shop Local Christmas and activities such as the Best Dressed Window.

Looking forward to 2021 it would be useful to seek their views on the economic recovery of the high street and what more we can do to assist. There has also been discussion as to whether a retail forum could be created with Alton Matters and Alton Chamber no longer active.

In discussion with officers at EHDC, it is proposed that in lieu of the face-to-face survey work they were due to undertake, the feedback from this consultation could then be used for an on-line discussion group session which would enable the consultants to be introduced and ask further questions.

In addition, the Council has taken out free trial membership of the Rural /Market Towns Grouping to assist as we look beyond the latest national lockdown and the further impact that this has on our local economy to see what support we can get from a collective organisation supporting many similar sized market towns across the country. Details of the groups has been included in supplementary papers.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Members are requested to approve the next steps in business engagement.

## **ITEM 10 ATC EVENTS PROGRAMME FOR 2021 AND REVIEW OF NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2020**

**FOR DECISION**

### Review of November/December 2020

The Shop Local campaign was the key message throughout November and December (made somewhat challenging with the November Lockdown) This was primarily a social media campaign backed by coverage in the printed press and local radio. It was accompanied by signage across the town centre promoting the shop local, stay local, visit local message together with social distancing and “safe” shopping messages and activities to encourage people to visit the town centre.

The Alton in Harmony with Nature photography exhibition trail ran until the third week of November. Final sales figures for the accompanying calendar are not yet available as many shops continued to sell it in the run up to Christmas having missed the opportunity to sell it in November with the lockdown but needless to say before we could visit in the New Year, the shops had closed again. There are 60 of the larger calendars remaining at the Town Hall and officers have suggested that these be distributed free of charge to local care home residents.

The MarmART trail launched on the 24<sup>th</sup> November and the initial Facebook video created by Luke and Elliot to accompany the launch was viewed by nearly 14,000 people. The trail itself has been completed by nearly 3,000 people to date. (The trail runs until the 23<sup>rd</sup> January but only as part of their permitted daily exercise for local people)

The trail launch was followed the next day by the “virtual” Christmas Light Switch on, with the behind-the-scenes video fronted by Luke and Elliot, being viewed by nearly 22,500 people which is more than the population of Alton! Subsequent publicity in a number of national newspapers, on-line media and BBC South Today boosting the profile of Marmite and Meribel as the “faces” of Alton at Christmas.

The 12 Days of Shop Local Christmas videos were also well supported by the on-line community with each video receiving an average of 4,000 views each day and the Free after Three launch seen by 13,500 people on Facebook.

Our Instagram feed has seen a 30% increase in followers as a result of the festive campaigns, primarily in the 25 – 34 and 35 – 44 age categories and we have also picked up nearly 500 additional followers on Facebook which is great for future campaigns.

The Christmas Markets were also well supported by both stallholders and the public. The feedback received was that these were absolutely the right size and set the right tone this Christmas. The market on the 19<sup>th</sup> December was less popular and anecdotally this seems to be because most people had finished their Christmas shopping earlier this year but something we will take onboard for Christmas 2021.

There is no data currently available for Free after Three and clearly no ticket data as people were not paying to park. On regular visits to Bank Car Park by council staff the car park was visibly well occupied each day and we await data from EHDC on use of the other car parks as a comparator.

### Proposed Events for 2021

Clearly the programme is subject to alteration depending on government restrictions but at the moment the events programme is suggested as per the list below. The Eco Fair at the Assembly Rooms has been cancelled in March and has reverted back to being an outdoor event in the Public Gardens in July, resulting in the Eco Fair displacing the proposed Panto in the Park. It is also suggested to cancel the Battle of Alton for 2021. With the event scheduled for May it is felt that whilst lockdown is likely to have eased and the event is outdoor, it is still too soon to host a mass participation and attendance event. The option for deferring to later in the year is not available due to the likely booking of St Lawrence Church for events/weddings.

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|-------|---|--|
| March | - | <del>Eco Fair (Assembly Rooms)</del>   |
| April | - | Mayor’s Civic Reception (TBC)          |
|       |   | Alton in Bloom entries (April to July) |

May	-	Walking Festival (All month) Cycling Festival (7 <sup>th</sup> – 9 <sup>th</sup> May) <del>Battle of Alton Civil War re-enactment</del>
June	-	Regency Week (19 <sup>th</sup> June) Community Fair. (19 <sup>th</sup> June) King's Pond Bio Blitz (26 <sup>th</sup> June)
July	-	Last Night of the Proms (10 <sup>th</sup> July) Eco-Fair (Public Gardens) (11 <sup>th</sup> July) <del>Children's Panto in the Park</del> Alton Community Dig in association with the British Festival of Archaeology (TBC)
August	-	Fun Fridays Public Gardens Friday 2-3 pm (30 <sup>th</sup> July – 27 <sup>th</sup> August) Alder Valley Brass Band Public Gardens(TBC)
September	-	Alton in Bloom Awards (4 <sup>th</sup> September)** Classic Car Show
November	-	Remembrance Service
December	-	Yuletide (Christmas Light Switch on & Market)

The start of the themed markets has been delayed to April given the current lockdown but the revised schedule as it stands is as follows, with all events held on the first and third Saturday of the month in the Public Gardens unless stated:

<b>Month</b>	<b>Themed market</b>	
<i>April</i>	<i>Beer and Brewing (Alton Beer Festival) Market Square(TBC)</i>	<i>Plants &amp; gardening inc. launch of Alton in Bloom Market Square</i>
<i>May</i>	<i>Walking &amp; Cycling *2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday Market Square</i>	<i>Vegan (potentially with ACAN) Market Square</i>
<i>June</i>	<i>Father's Day??</i>	<i>Community Fair</i>
<i>July</i>	<i>Schools out for Summer.</i>	<i>Literary/Art (Jane Austen House Museum/Gilbert White/local artists)</i>
<i>August</i>	<i>Crafts and Crafting (including Alton Virtual High Street)</i>	<i>Recycling/Upcycling (ACAN/Resurrection Furniture/ repair café/men's shed)</i>
<i>September</i>	<i>Local Traders and Alton in Bloom awards (Public Gardens)</i>	<i>Classic Car Rally</i>

It is suggested that Alton in Bloom be revamped for 2021, launching this year's competition in April at the Saturday market, with the awards presentation held outside in the Public Gardens at a subsequent market in September. New categories for this year include a photography category, including a children's class with a view to producing a calendar for 2022 "Alton in Bloom" as well as a "grow your own" children's category with free fruit/veg plants for young people to collect at the April market. It is suggested to substitute the traditional trophies with perennial plants and a certificate.

It is further suggested that we Yuletide for 2021 take element of previous years traditional event mixed with the format from 2020. This would mean having four Yuletide Markets starting on the 20<sup>th</sup> November running from 10am – 2pm in Market Square, with the same number of stalls at each

event as last month (10 for the charity market and 15 for the other markets) with the market on the 20<sup>th</sup> November being followed by a traditional Christmas light Switch on in Market Square with a fully decorated tree and possibly some smaller live trees which can then be planted out and reused in the public gardens. Officers will also investigate the possibility of extending the Christmas lighting into the Public Gardens.

Marmite and Meribel will have one final outing at the Assembly Rooms and we propose to run the MarmART Trail again as the winter Olympics will be held shortly after Christmas 2021. Officers thought it might be nice to create a couple of new characters based upon people who will be competing in Beijing.

2021 is also the final year of the current Christmas Lighting contract; once again there have been requests from shops in Market Street to include them in the illuminations. We are therefore revisiting this although it is likely that they may only be able to be included in the bottom half of Market Street due to access and permission constraints.

With no Events Guide for 2021 given the current uncertainty the late May Altonian and the Alton Events website will be used to promote events once we have a measure of certainty.

It is proposed to progress the erection of pole banners for 2021 to illustrate the numerous events taking place in the town next summer. The banners were prepared last year and will be ready to deploy (subject to licencing) in late April prior to Walking and Cycling Festival.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Members are requested to review and approve the revised events calendar for 2021