



---

## Events

**Date:** 13 December 2021

**Title:** Events Update Report

**Purpose of the Report:**

To provide a review of recent events and an update on ongoing projects

**Contact Officer:**

Ben Bodsworth, Town & Community Promotions Manager

---

<b>Corporate Objective/s</b>	<b>LLTC Five Year Plan – Aim: 3. Vibrancy and Vitality of Town and Town Centre</b>
<b>Implications:</b>	
<b>Financial</b>	Yes - Within existing budgets and use of earmarked reserves.
<b>Human Resources</b>	
<b>Operational/Service delivery</b>	Yes - Delivery of the events programme in calendar years 2021 and 2022.
<b>Procedural/Legal</b>	
<b>Risk/Health and Safety</b>	
<b>Environmental Aims</b>	

### 1 RECOMMENDATION

Should members be minded, the proposal is:

1.1 Consider allocating an additional £1,928.60 from earmarked reserves (970/9026) for piped music in the High Street.

### 2 CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL WEEKEND

2.1 The Christmas Festival Weekend was held on the weekend of 26<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> November with the light switch on & firework display held on Friday evening. 29 stall holders attended in the High Street, along with 4 food traders in the food court creating a festive atmosphere throughout the town centre. Santa's sleigh also attended in the High Street and commented that their donations

were similar to previous years, although they felt the High Street felt busier than normal.

- 2.2 Due to predicted high winds (gusts of 50mph), the Saturday activity (Santa dash and entertainment) was cancelled and the adverse weather policy invoked for the charter market.
- 2.3 The festive market alongside entertainment, Santa's grotto and the funfair continued on Sunday once weather conditions had improved with 29 stalls including food vendors attending in the High Street. The Festive Funnels, the Elves and the Goodometer and Ebor 'n' Gum performed and entertained visitors throughout the day.
- 2.4 Throughout the weekend, two stall holders were unable to attend due to positive Covid-19 results prior to the event and one stall holder was unable to attend on Sunday due to illness.
- 2.5 A survey requesting feedback on the Christmas Festival Weekend has been released via all Leighton-Linslade Town Council social media channels.
- 2.7 Before the event, officers had received a request to show footage by members of the public unable to attend the event due to Covid-19 isolation. As of 29/22/21, some 1,753 people had watched the countdown to the tree lights switch on, on Facebook.

### **3 THANKSGIVING AND REFLECTION EVENT (MARCH 2022)**

- 3.1 Planning is underway for the Thanksgiving & Reflection event, scheduled for Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> March.
- 3.2 The event will feature stalls from groups within the town who have suffered a loss of income due to the Covid-19 pandemic, along with those who have aided those in need throughout.
- 3.3 An LED Screen will provide the opportunity for members of the public to submit photos of their stories from during the pandemic, along with photographs of loved ones for a period of reflection to be held during the event.
- 3.4 The period of reflection will allow an opportunity for members of the public to remember those who have passed away during the pandemic as well as give thanks to key-workers who continued to work throughout.
- 3.5 Whilst it is hoped that the thanksgiving and reflection event will be able to take place, it should be noted that due to the nature of the pandemic, it may not be a suitable time for the event to take place (e.g., if cases or deaths rise significantly over the coming weeks and months).

- 3.6 The allocated budget for the event is £5,000 from earmarked reserves (970/9057).
- 3.7 Officers will continue to monitor guidance from central Government regarding ongoing restrictions and adapt plans accordingly.

#### **4 LIVING HISTORY TRAIL / BUZZARD TRAILS APP**

- 4.1 Work continues with the third-party app provider to make the Sands of Time trail available on the Buzzard Trails app.
- 4.2 An increased workload within the events team during late September, October & November in preparation for the Christmas Festival Weekend along with technology issues has delayed the launch of the trail.
- 4.3 Full information has been received by officers required to produce the trail and passed onto to the app provider.
- 4.4 In addition to the new app, officers continue to work alongside the app provider to streamline the app to work with additional trails including the Children's Trail and allow easy navigation for users.
- 4.5 It is hoped the trail along with a period of increased social media activity highlighting the Buzzard Trails app will launch early in the new year.

#### **5 BUSINESS NETWORK EVENT**

- 5.1 The Business Networking Event due to take place on 6<sup>th</sup> October was cancelled due to on-going cautiousness from other business network communities at the time of the event.
- 5.2 A date of Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> April has been set and booked with Leighton Buzzard Golf Club to hold the event in 2022. Steering group members have been informed.
- 5.3 Information has been provided to previous attendees of the Business Networking Event about opportunities in Leighton-Linslade to promote their business. Information was also provided about business support schemes administered by Central Bedfordshire Council.
- 5.4 A survey on shared workspaces has also been distributed to attendees of the Business Networking Event to gather their views on the need for such a space. The use of the TACTIC centre as a shared workspace is included within the survey.

## **6 RECORDED MUSIC IN THE HIGH STREET**

6.1 Officers re-visited the pilot opportunity to install a speaker system in the high-street for the festive period. The contractor approached to undertake the works last year was unavailable to undertake the works this year.

6.2 A second quote received last year for the installation of the speakers along with the music playback system (excluding any works required to the WiFi system) indicated a cost of £8,965 for a four-week period. A reduction to a two-week hire period would have reduced costs to £5,705.

A third quote indicated a hire cost of £22,000 - £24,000 for hire and a £60,000 - £70,000 cost to purchase a system.

6.3 In addition to the cost of the hire of equipment, the cost for music licensing would have totalled £1,221.60 plus the cost of any works required to the Wi-Fi infrastructure.

6.4 A budget of £5,000 was earmarked (970/9057), to provide the system for 4 weeks. A revised cost of £6,928.60 plus the cost of WiFi works for a two-week period is significantly over budget whilst also reducing the output time to half.

6.5 Should Committee wish to pursue the pilot, additional funds of £1,928.60 will need to be allocated from earmarked reserves (970/9026). Timing of its delivery will also be a consideration with Christmas having been the obvious period for the pilot. It will also be necessary to gain feedback from local businesses and visitors on whether it has an enhancing impact.

## **7 CONCLUSIONS**

7.1 Throughout 2021 officers have continued to ensure the maximum possible events programme has been able to take place whilst adhering to government guidelines and restrictions.

7.2 It is anticipated there may be continued guidance on the safe running of events for 2022 and officers will continue to monitor to always ensure the safety of members of staff and public.

End