



Cultural and Economic Services Committee

Date: 12 September 2022

Title: General Service Updates

Purpose of the Report: To inform Committee of service work activity.

Contact Officer: Sarah Sandiford, Deputy Town Clerk

Corporate Objective/s	LLTC Five Year Plan – Aim 3. Vibrancy and Vitality of town and town centre
Implications:	
Financial	Yes. Utilising annual budgets and earmarked reserves
Human Resources	
Operational/Service delivery	Yes. Service work updates
Procedural/Legal	
Risk/Health and Safety	
Environmental Aims	

1 RECOMMENDATIONS

Should members be minded, the recommendations are:

- 1.1 To note the report.
- 1.2 To consider the recommendation to run two High Street Safari trails for Halloween and Christmas, with costs met from the revenue budget.

2 SERVICE UPDATES

2.1 Pigeon Management Grant Scheme

- 2.1.2 Committee had previously endorsed an 'open completion date' within 2021/22 meaning the deadline for work completion was 31 March 2022 (88/CE). Due to the delay in receiving confirmation from the Local Planning Authority, Committee was asked to extend the deadline for completing the works a further 3 calendar months to 30 June 2022. The last few grants are now being monitored by the Finance Officer.

2.2 Greensand Ridge Walk and Cycleway Gateway Feature

2.2.1 The Greensand Country Gateway Feature project, led by The Greensand Trust, (TGT), successfully recruited artist Stephen Pardue of Differentia last June.

2.2.2 In its planning capacity, Central Bedfordshire Council has granted a lawful development certificate for the installation. With this now granted, an order will be placed with Anglian Water for the installation of a water bottle filling station in accordance with a town council objective.

2.3 Black History Month

2.3.1 The Council has been pleased to liaise with residents leading on this activity to create a programme for this second year of marking Black History Month in the town.

2.3.1 The month of activity will be launched at 12pm on Saturday 1 October in the Library Theatre, led by the Mayor and joined by speaker Patrick Vernon OBE who will discuss “Why Black History Month is important for everyone”, followed by a talk by Guyanese-born resident Ken Breinburg.

2.3.3 A display from the Movement for Justice & Reconciliation of Colonial Slavery will be available from 1 – 8 October, explaining links to the colonial past and how this affects daily life in Britain.

2.3.4 Local resident and facilitator Christine Sheppard will be running workshops on “Understanding how white racism affects white people” on 8, 15 and 22 October.

2.3.5 Additional activity during the month includes Fairtrade chocolate treasure hunts, displays of black literature and live music events in some of the town centre venues.

2.4 Buzzard Trails

2.4.1 The Children’s Trail has been the focus so far this year, with the delayed repair and maintenance works having taken place in the Spring. This launched some renewed promotional activity including an Easter competition, attendance at the Mayor’s Spring Fayre, presence at Picnic in the Park, presence at the market with storytelling and culminating in a 10th anniversary birthday party in August 2022.

2.4.2 Ceramic tiles were created by local students to form a new, temporary “Trail in the Trees” in Linslade Recreation Ground. This was officially launched at the anniversary birthday party and is intended to run until December.

- 2.4.3 Events and activities have received a fantastic response from residents and much enjoyed by all.



- 2.4.4 Attention now returns to the Sands of Time trail, which was partially completed last year with the addition of points of interest within the parish onto the Buzzard Trails app. The Greensand Trust is currently updating its website with the complete Sands of Time trail and officers will then work towards creation of publicity for this trail.
- 2.4.5 At its meeting held 13 September 2021, Committee endorsed the recommendation from the Living History Task and Finish Group to change approach from the previous Living History Day to the creation of an annual trail each October, with associated activities.
- 2.4.6 In May-June, the Council ran a Platinum Jubilee town centre trail supplied by a provider of “off the shelf” High Street “safari” trails. The trail involved several local shops and an estimated 200+ residents participated. The supplier is now marketing new storytrails for Halloween and Christmas and with limited time and resources, it is suggested to use this mechanism to provide new town centre activity this Autumn/winter. Both trails could be provided for £1,000 with costs met within the revenue budget.
- 2.4.7 Resource permitting, it is anticipated that work could commence in January 2023 on trail ideas for Autumn/winter 2023 and 2024.

2.5 Christmas lights

- 2.5.1 There were slight teething problems initiating the first year of the contract with the contractor unable to install the wall mounted town centre motifs. The motifs will be installed for the 2022 scheme. The contractor acknowledged this and provided additional lamp column motifs on the town centre lantern lights free of charge. As a goodwill gesture they confirmed that they will do the same

for 2022. Officers have requested an indication of the cost of these motifs should Committee wish to secure them for the 2023 scheme. At present, no additional funds are available in the 2022/23 budget. Officers will bring options forward to committee in readiness for the 2023/24 budget setting activity.

- 2.5.2 Additional standalone motifs were incorporated in the 2021 scheme using welcome back funds. There are currently no planned additional standalone motifs for future years.
- 2.5.3 The town centre Christmas Tree for 2022 has now been reserved and will be installed in the week leading up to the Christmas Festival Weekend. The Head of Grounds and Environmental Services will be liaising with suppliers in respect of the tree and lights.

2.6 Town centre

- 2.6.1 This year's Jubilee bunting and flags have now been removed, with options for next year under consideration.
- 2.6.2 A newsletter created for town centre businesses using Welcome Back funds will now continue until March 2023, funded through the revenue budget. Committee may wish to give consideration to continuation of this activity into 2023/4 during the budget setting process.
- 2.6.3 The Town Centre map and shopping directory has been updated for 2022 with an initial print run expected imminently. Additional funds remain ringfenced in earmarked reserves for further print runs or future updates.
- 2.6.4 In December 2021, Committee received updated costs for a proposed two week trial of recorded music in the High Street. A total of £6,928.60 has been allocated to this project. With Christmas the most obvious time for such a trial, research has been taking place on options for delivery. A key obstacle is in the provision of electricity supply, which is needed by a number of traders at the twice weekly market (see Events Update report).
- 2.6.5 Committee may wish to consider whether the above investment would best support the town centre in its crucial pre-Christmas trading period or whether alternative uses for allocated funds could be considered, for example a repeat of the 2021 sponsorship of free car parking in the town centre on Saturdays.

3 STAFFING

- 3.1 In addition to the Market and Community Promotions staff, the team has two Cultural & Economic Support Officers. One has recently successfully passed her six month probationary period. Working 20 hours per week, her focus from September onwards will be on signage & wayfinding, finishing the Sands of Time trail project, additional storytelling events, Autumn trails (if agreed) and

starting to look at option for future trails, in addition to ongoing promotion and maintenance of the Children's Trail.

- 3.2 The second Cultural & Economic Support Officer started working with the Council in June 2022 and is currently in her probationary period. Her focus for her contracted 15 hours per week remains 55UP projects until at least 31 March 2023. Projects include monitoring of contracts with Central Bedfordshire Council (Movies for the More Mature), Citizens Online (technical support helpline) and BRCC (Community Agent and Jazz up your Life), as well as researching older persons initiatives (e.g. possible tablet loan scheme) and liaising with a range of local groups and organisations – for example, in the launch of the recently updated Information Booklet for older people.



4 CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 Work outlined in the current year committee work plan and town council objectives is being delivered as scheduled.
- 4.2 Looking beyond the current year, in the budget setting process consideration will be given to anticipated rising costs as well as future projects, with any recommendations brought to the December meeting of the Committee.
- 4.3 Looking further into the future, consideration is starting to be given to possible options for marking the 50th anniversary of the creation of the parish of Leighton-Linslade in 2024. This might for example include projects utilising the allocated funds for town centre photographic displays and creation of a celebratory 50th anniversary trail.

End.