

Report Purpose:

To update committee on progress and work associated with local service delivery.

Author:

Town Clerk, Assistant Town Clerk, Town Centre Manager and Events Officer.

6.1 Events update

Christmas Events

December 2023 saw the rebranding of our late night shopping event as the Twilight Market. Working with local makers market Made In Macc and local street-food and drink vendors we were excited to see a busy afternoon and evening of shopping and socialising in the town centre. Traders reported a busy and successful day with all five food and drink vendors selling out by 8pm.

This year we collaborated with Christ Church on their Christmas Tree Festival which ran from the 1st – 22nd December. More than 30 local organisations took part in decorating a tree for the event and organisers estimate they had a minimum of 30 visitors per session and frequently more than 50, a significant increase on last year, with lots of positive comments.

The weather was unkind again for the Tree of Light ceremony requiring it to be moved indoors. As this has been the case multiple years in a row, we are reviewing this event and how to move forward.

Lantern Parade

Our first event of the year saw the return of light and lobsters to the streets of Macclesfield. The Macclesfield Lantern Parade set off from the Silk Museum on Saturday 20th January, led by the Mayor as well as two inquisitive Caribou who delighted the crowds.

ArtSpace and the Silk Museum led lantern-making workshops with the public and community groups in the lead up to the parade, with the Silk Museum estimating they assisted in the creation of more than 400 lanterns.

Parade participants were welcomed to Christ Church at the end of the parade by the giant lobster, as well as light up circus performances, inside they could pick up a free hot drink before returning outside to watch a shadow-puppet show performed by the Caribou act.

Attendance was high despite the uncertain weather conditions and feedback has been extremely positive.

Lunar New Year

On Saturday 10th February Macclesfield welcomed in the Year of the Dragon. The drummers of All Hallows warmed up the crowd outside the Town Hall before local scouts accompanied the Chinese dragon into Market Place. The dragon then headed up the ArtSpace Zodiac parade as it headed down Mill Street towards Park Green. This year we added the Silk Museum to our usual festivities at the URC, allowing us to offer additional activities such as Tai Chi and traditional Chinese Calligraphy. Both venues were busy all afternoon and the event has received very positive feedback – we think this may have been the largest crowd for this event so far.

Spidey Saturday and Spiderman Exhibition at the Silk Museum

We were very excited to collaborate with the Silk Museum and *Macc-Pow!* on an exhibition of rare comic art and support their launch event on Saturday 17th February. These rare Marvel art pages have only been exhibited once before outside of the US and this is the last time they will be seen in the UK before being moved to a museum in mainland Europe. This was a great opportunity to encourage visitors into Macclesfield and the exhibition was featured in the *i* newspaper as part of their “things to do in half term” feature.

We would like to thank the Town Councillors for all of their support, help and attendance at recent events.

Upcoming

Easter in Macclesfield

The end of this month will see the return of our Easter in Macclesfield event which last year saw an increase in footfall in the town centre of 45% - the weather was very kind last year so we cross our fingers again for this year. Our town centre trails have been increasing in popularity with both the number of businesses on the trail increasing as well as the number of people picking up maps.

Local Events supported by MTC

Spring and Summer see's a large number of events from outside organisers, supported by MTC in the town.

- The Bike-a-thon returns on Saturday 11th May, in support of Just Drop In.
- The Adlington Morris Men will be celebrating their 60th year with a presentational display in various locations around the town on Sunday 19th May.

- Party In the Pews will be back at Christ Church for the late-May bank holiday weekend

Macc Pride

Macc Pride will return to Market Place on Saturday 6th July. This event has been running successfully for a number of years now, bringing high footfall into the town centre. Macclesfield Pride usually apply for a community grant but we would now like the committee to consider securing the town council's support of the event.

Action: – The committee to consider supporting Macc Pride on a Service Level Agreement of £2,000 a year, to be reviewed and approved by this committee each year.

1261 Festival Weekend and Parade Day

A new event this year will be the 1261 Festival Weekend, spanning from the evening of Friday 28th June, through Saturday and into Treacle Market Sunday 30th.

Saturday will see a day-long event of entertainment and socialising with street food vendors and seating in Market Place, puppet shows, art workshops for all ages, dancing, walking tours and music. We hope to make this a wider event extending onto Castle Street, Chestergate, Christ Church and into local businesses for workshops and performances. Friday and Saturday evenings we'll be inviting you to *1261: The Afterparty* with live music and poetry gigs at various venues around town.

Upcoming – D-Day, Do Something Summer,

Looking ahead we'll be marking the 80th Anniversary of D-day on 6th June and we'll be bringing back our Do Something Summer events programme, every Wednesday of the school summer holidays.

ArtSpace

For the past 2 years we have worked with ArtSpace on many wonderful events and paid them per session. This year we have offered them a Service Level Agreement to be involved with 3 major events:

- The Lantern Parade – hosting workshops with the public and local community groups, leading the parade and assisting with marshalling

- Lunar New Year – hosting workshops, creating two new zodiac animals for the parade, co-ordinating the Zodiac Parade, co-ordinating with scouts to provide 'dragon-dancers' to lead the parade
- 1261 Festival – Co-ordinating parade, undertaking outreach and co-ordinating with local groups to provide space and materials to build floats plus assistance and guidance.

This gives them the guaranteed income to plan for the year ahead.

Action: Approve SLA for ArtSpace £8000

6.2 Floral displays

This year the team are investigating the possibility of even more wildflower pockets as they have been hugely popular with residents and visitors:

- South – Junction of Moss Lane and Congleton Road
- East – Corner of Cookstoolpit Hill
- Hurdsfield – Either side of Queens Avenue
- Broken Cross & Upton – Wiltshire Close
- West & Ivy – Junction of Earlsway/Ivy Road
- West & Ivy – Pexhill Road
- West & Ivy – Junction of Oxford Road/Cherrington Crescent
- Central – Sainsburys roundabout
- Tytherington – Dorchester Way (TBC)

The Britain in Bloom committee continues to meet to plan this year's entries and a thankyou event is planned for 7th March 2024. This is to thank those involved last year and to invite groups who may be interested to become part of the entry.

A glowing report was received by the Britain in Bloom Committee, opening with the quote 'We were very impressed by the quality and range of your entry this year, and it was wonderful to meet so many people and volunteers who are involved in making your town so special.'

Ansa and the Rangers have planted the winter bedding and are maintaining it. Pastels have been chosen for the summer bedding.

6.3 Festoons

A tree at Whalley Hayes has died and needed to be removed by Cheshire East Council so we have removed the lights from the tree. When the tree has been felled, the contractor will return to re-install the lights on another tree.

The lights on the trees in Market Place were reported as out. This issue has now been resolved.

The festoon zig zag on Chestergate has also now been fixed. We had an excessive amount of rain in November and December and some of this had seeped into the connection box, as well as condensation being a factor. The box has now been dried out. If it happens again, the connection box may need to be replaced.