



WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL

Notes of a meeting of the Wellington Town Centre Working Group held at 11am on Tuesday 12 November at Odette's Tearoom Wellington.

Present: Councillors M Lithgow, N Powell-Brace, J Lloyd, M McGuffie, J Thorne and Richard Coupe.

Kathryn Hemensley - Town Clerk

1. Apologies: Councillor S Pringle-Kosikowsky, Sharon Davis, Keith Wheatley

2. Pop-up Shop

Councillor Thorne declared an interest as his daughter would be taking the shop in the following week.

Cllr Powell-Brace gave an update on the shop:-

- It is fully booked up until Christmas
- There are 6 bookings already for in the new year (craft consortium, Exmoor ponies, jewellery, potter and the Rotary Club.
- All new bookings in the new year would be charged a deposit of £25.00 per week of planned hire.
- The Royal British Legion had been delighted with having the shop this year and Cllr Powell-Brace confirmed that a booking has been made for them again next year for the Poppy Appeal.
- Reminded that the maximum booking period is 4 weeks, although this could be extended under a new licence agreement if the facility was not booked for the additional period requested.

KH passed details of a new potential hirer (men's barber) to Cllr Powell-Brace.

Comments passed to KH on the user licence had been fed back to the Solicitors and a clean copy would be requested for use once final amendments had been made.

It was re-iterated that there are no hard and fast rules as such but that all hirings should be mindful of the impact on existing traders. Cllr Lithgow had been in contact with Somerset West and Taunton Council (SWT) to explore hirings such as the pop-up shop and feedback had suggested that the main bone of contention was complaints from other traders.

KH provided Cllr Powell-Brace with a notebook for recording all expenses and income and asked that any hiring fees be notified to the office so they can be recorded and the cash paid in promptly at the back.

Until the Clerk was formally qualified all income and expenditure relating to the shop would be dealt with as Section 137 items and as such needed to separately accounted for.

Cllr McGuffie had bought some signage and a first aid kit and would pay for this himself as a donation. He was thanked for his generosity.

3. Christmas Lights switch-on event

A schedule for the general order of events on Saturday 30th November was circulated to those present. It was noted that the judging for the best dressed window competition for retailers would take place a 4.30 pm on 6th December (Mayor and Deputy to judge).

A suggestion was made that the pop-up shop could be decorated and used as a Santa's grotto next year. This would have the additional benefit of including traders in Fore Street who had been known to feel 'left out' in previous years. With additional staff resources new ideas for the switch-on event could be considered in future as the current regime could be changed if this was wanted.

4. Film Festival

Cllr Lithgow would be meeting with the festival organiser (Deb Richardson) in the following week, otherwise most progress was being made behind the scenes. The organiser had received suggestions for films from a member of the public. Using Odettes as a venue was also proposed.

5. Town Centre signage

RC provided information from Cityscape Maps. A dispenser (see attached) would cost around £1,600 to install, with customers paying £1 for a map. The Company also supply finger-posts and RC would seek some pricing options.

6. Any Other Business

a) Promotional Space

Cllr Lithgow had met with CS at SWT, responsible in part for the management of Taunton Town Centre. He had provided helpful feedback about SWT's use of the promotional space, which could be followed up by staff looking at SWT's website (type in 'promotional space'):-

- Main concern is complaints from fixed traders
- Area can be self-designated
- Need to have a procedure to ensure compliance checks are done (public liability insurance and street-trading licence if required).
- Fees can vary enormously (as much as £300 per day/£780 per week).

Cllr Lithgow handed over paperwork CS had shared to KH to follow this up.

RECOMMENDED to set the new trading rate at £50.00 per half day from the New Year. Clerk to advise this in writing to Jonas Fishmongers.

b) Wellington Town as Gateway to the Blackdown Hills.

Cllr Thorne suggested that Wellington might be designated as a gateway to the Blackdown Hills as there is little to notify the area, which is an established Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. He proposed that this could be used as a banner on the new website, and another opportunity to promote Wellington.

c) Big Screen at promotional space

Cllr Thorne advised that 2020 was a football European Cup year and he proposed the Council should look into having a big screen at the promotional space for this and other events of popular interest. It was noted that road closure orders would be needed but there was no overriding reason these would not be granted if requested.

d) Feedback was shared that comments had been made about the positive impact of the Town Council in recent months, and its proactive approach. This was most welcome news.

7. Date of next meeting

Next meeting set for Tuesday 21st January at 6pm. in Council Chamber.

The meeting ended 7.20 pm

Members: Councillors Lithgow (Chair), Thorne, Powell-Brace, McGuffie, Pringle – Kosikowsky, and the Mayor (Councillor Lloyd)

Richard Coupe, Sharon Davis, Keith Wheatley, Adrian Hooper