

August Update from Dorking Town Partnership

General Overview

Visitors and footfall in the town are increasing, which is very positive. There are 220 shops in the BID area with 9 vacant units (4%) and lets agreed on 12 units in the last three months. Diner@54 was recently in the press with a news story about their success in the town, which is great to see. Board members agreed that the town was busier with many giving their own examples of what they had seen to support this. It was agreed that there was still work to do but the upward trend was encouraging. The Board discussed the possibility of an Amazon drop off point in the centre of town, which was supported for the footfall it could bring to the town centre.

Transport Issues

Following a meeting with Surrey County Council two suggestions have been put forward for traffic issues on Vincent Lane and Horsham Road. Consultants have also been assigned to prepare a quote for an initial scope of work to look at traffic issues and placemaking within the town.

Parking Signage

Following a parking signage improvement report changes have been made for the St Martin's Walk carpark signage. Further improvements suggested in the report would seem to improve how the town centre is navigated by traffic. The cost of the changes would be £10,000. Any changes agreed will be completed jointly with potential outcomes of the report for placemaking and traffic issues.

Shop Front Graphics

A Christmas trail will be painted on shop fronts to bring colour and interest to the town over the festive period. If possible this will be extended to the vacant units in town, especially the larger units in the centre of town (where Oddbins and Santander used to be). This method is preferred over the shop front wraps originally discussed due to the cost.

Visit Dorking Website

This project is ongoing as per previous updates.

In Bloom Competition

A reception for those involved is being held on 11th August at 6pm with The Board invited to attend.

Mayflower Event

It is still the intention of the BID to hold a small reception in September at the United Reformed Church in recognition of the history of the Mayflower.

Love Local

This campaign is ongoing as per previous updates.

SCC Economy and Growth Team Meeting

The BID has been invited to these meetings by another BID manager. Attending the meeting will allow Dorking Town Partnership to see their plans, how they see the district and what is going on in other parts of the area.

Anti-Social Behaviour

A meeting has taken place with local police officer, Dan Henderson, and he has agreed to provide updates for the Board Meetings with a view to attending the meetings in future. He has provided us with information on how to report incidents of crime and anti-social behaviour and this information will be provided to local businesses via the DTP website and in newsletters. It is important that all incidents and crimes are reported so the police can build a clear picture of issues within the area. The officer did tell us that reports from Dorking businesses had recently helped to secure the arrests of 10 or so suspects.

Camera Club

A photography competition is being held in partnership with the local Camera Club. The title is 'Changing Seasons' and there are two entry levels – under 18's and over 18's.

Business Support

Training is planned for businesses in both first aid and social media skills (both beginner and advanced). There will be a Business Show at Dorking Halls in Jan/Feb 2020. It was agreed by The Board that the Business Show was a good idea, especially as it gave non-retail businesses the opportunity to network and showcase their businesses.

Welcome Back Event

This is a family event being held at Meadowbank on Saturday 28th August to celebrate the opening of the town. There will be stalls, including an environmental group section and one for Mole Valley District Council to encourage engagement with the council. All the details are currently on the MVDC website.

Street Entertainment

Mole Valley also intend to create entertainment spots in town where buskers and other street entertainers can showcase their talents. Sites being considered include South Street Gardens, St Martin's Walk and Dorking Halls. Markers to show exactly where this entertainment will take place will be planned once the spots are confirmed.

Mole Valley Together Website

MVDC are planning a website where residents and visitors can obtain information relating to events happening in the town. The website will also include other pertinent information such as details of cycle lanes. There will also be a networking section planned for the website where local businesses can meet online, network and interact - for example a local farmer could use the space to link with restaurants in the town. Further updates will be available as this progresses.

Pippbrook House

A meeting is planned to discuss the future of Pippbrook House, an update will be provided at the next Board Meeting.

Car Parks Regeneration

Due to the lack of a Contract Manager this project is not progressing as quickly as was planned, however, it is still going ahead. Works at Southside carpark will start soon followed by St. Martin's then following this the electric vehicle points will be installed.

Friday Market

Now social distancing is relaxing there will be an expansion of the Friday market with more stalls and a wider offering. Emily Ayres is working on this and an update will be provided at the next Board Meeting.

Arts Alive Festival

This is a series of festivals across the Mole Valley district on 25th September. There will be an opening ceremony and a variety of performers in different areas. In the past pubs have been involved with their own entertainment and this could help the night time economy in the town. CW stated there had been discussions with Claudia Cartwright