

September Update from Dorking Town Partnership

Vacant Units and Rent

Questions raised at the last board meeting were answered by Steve Lane where he agreed that the negative effects of Covid-19 were yet to fully seep into the high street. He also confirmed that there was no indication that retail units were changing their use to residential. Enquiries continue with the larger shop units for having their windows used for artwork. 22 South Street have been contacted; however, others have been harder to reach. Some units have agreed terms and should be open for autumn.

Transport Issues

The walk around with consultants regarding the placemaking project has taken place with observations made of improvements that could be considered. Meetings have been scheduled in for w/c 4th October with MVDC and for 21st October with SCC. The project will focus primarily on placemaking but will also consider highways as part of the bigger picture to ensure issues are not looked at in isolation.

Ongoing Projects

Christmas festival, Dorking Artisan Market, shop front graphics, Christmas window competition, Dorking Town Partnership website, Visit Dorking website, Love for Local campaign, Camera Club Competition, Business support package for Autumn, welcome booklet, changing of street banners and introducing buskers to the high street. The busking will begin in the six weeks up to Christmas. There is also an Autumn promotional leaflet being produced to go to over 10,000 homes and flyposting removal.

Fly Posters

Fly posters should be removed on w/c 20th September. It will be considered whether this should be a occur monthly.

WWI Centenary Profiles

As some of the profiles are starting to look weathered it was discussed whether it was still appropriate to have them in place or whether, if they are to be permanent that more robust replacements are found. As the profiles are sponsored and cover the district rather than just Dorking further enquiries will be made.

Parking

An extension of the Free After Three parking has been discussed by the Board at length. A vote was held with the results supporting the extension of the initiative. Other options, such as date, time and type of offer, have been considered and will be discussed further by the board to ensure the parking scheme is of the best value to both customers and the BID.

MVDC Update

Parking Enforcement and Car Parks

A new parking enforcement officer has been recruited by MVDC to assist with the parking issues within the town. The work to be completed on the car parks has now gone to tender. Work on South Side and St Martin's car parks will start soon.

Welcome Back Event and Plans for Meadowbank

The event was a real success with around 5000 visitors. This was one of several events run over the summer and piloting events such as the Plays in the Park has shown there is an appetite for entertainment at Meadowbank, therefore, Meadowbank will be available to hire as a venue for events. This, along with other activities such as the busking, will draw people to the town to visit and spend money. There is also a proposal for a bandstand within the park and the stall for this at the Welcome Back Event was well attended with people giving their support. The planning application for the bandstand will be submitted shortly. All residents with houses backing onto the park have been leaflet regarding the planning application.

Friday Market

With most restrictions lifted attention will now be given to increasing the number of sellers at the Dorking Friday market. From October new stalls are planned to join the current offering with a capacity of 12 stalls.

MVDC Breakfast Event

MVDC is hosting the Chamber of Commerce for a breakfast event.

BID Ballot

The key date for the BID Ballot is 4th November 2021, this is when the BID must state its intentions for the ballot.

Local Plan

The final consultation for the Local Plan is Sunday 7th Nov 2021, 11.59pm.