

## Monthly Report to Building and Communities Committee

Despite a rather wet summer our events have been incredibly lucky to have survived with in some cases bigger audiences than last year!

July was packed with events starting with the Mayors Picnic. This was as ever well attended and with the Mayor's gazebo it was great to have a presence. Many of your constituency came to air their views and were greeted by either the Mayor and Mayoress or Nicqui and I. There is a huge opportunity to do more to integrate with our community at this event and I would strongly recommend we look at this as part of our future event fixtures to be manned by Councillors and staff as a showcase to what our Council does and how we can help the community.

The Beggars Fair certainly filled the town with joyous music and crowded streets. There was minimum trouble and retailers and pubs all talked positively about the event. In 2024 it will be the 30th annual event next year. This is a huge asset to Romsey tourism and brings vast numbers of day visitors and money to our town. The costs attached to this event are high and it is free to attend. I would therefore like to try, with your assistance, to help them create a buoyant float to secure the future of this event and have your support to enlarge it for next year's 30<sup>th</sup> celebrations.

The Romsey Festival was also a tremendous success with some great attendance figures and a huge array of varied events across the area celebrating the arts. Sadly, the weather was a little rough for the Summer Carnival and Bed Race, but this was still well attended, and everyone had an amazing time and raised money for charity.

The sun shone for the second Food Fair drawing in crowds and a lovely atmosphere it was highly successful in promoting local produce with many stalls selling out by the end of the day. Other food establishments also reported fantastic takings for the day which is incredibly positive the event can be successful for all.

The End of Summer Drinks by the Chamber was held at Romsey Town Hall and was well attended by Romsey Businesses members and non-members. It was fantastic for local businesses to work in partnership to achieve such a fantastic space for everyone to network in. Also, the evening raised monies for Alfie's Wish.

The first Jobs Fair at Crosfield Hall was held mid-September and we were lucky to have local businesses such as The Work Shop, Bradbeers, Co-Op and Hilliers who all reported a high number of promising candidates. All attending businesses were keen to do this event again in early 2024.

The Town Centre (retail and Markets) has reported a slower attendance of buyers and feel today's climate has slowed spending.

Trips and falls are a concern in the centre of Town with many of the traders voicing their concerns. Bradbeers first aiders have been attending many of the incidents. I have asked that they and ShopWatch members report to me when and where, to try and get a grasp of the severity.

## **Event & Business Group Meetings:**

- Romsey Mutual Business Group Breakfast Meetings
- Test Valley Community Safety Management Group
- **Continued action** - Romsey Disabled People Partnership – Worked with TVBC and was introduced to members. The group is looking to increase attendees to help discuss how the Town can help, assist, and cater for those with all disabilities. Please continue to pass this plea onto your constituencies.
- Romsey Chamber of Commerce Networking, Breakfast Meetings and Exec Meetings
- Test Valley Tourism Meetings
- Beggars Fair Committee Meetings
- Romsey Carnival Committee Meetings
- Romsey Festival Meetings
- Romsey Food Fair Meetings
- Romsey Pubwatch
- Visit Test Valley Comms Meetings

## **Event priorities have been:**

- Romsey Festival - promotion / marketing, problem solving and crisis management.
- Italian Twinning Visit (Treviglio performers)
- Marshals - encouraging additional volunteers to join the team, managing schedules, operations, and protocols for each event. Taking advice from different parties on the complexed needs to improve the security and safety of the town during events.
- Beggars Fair - promotion / marketing, problem solving and crisis management.
- Bed Race/Carnival - promotion / marketing, problem solving and crisis management.
- Work with Outreach Radio to produce an advert for Romsey events in July.
- September Food Fair – press release and promotion/radio/social media, marshals, problem solving.
- End of Summer Drinks Party for Romsey Businesses – press release and promotion, ideas generation, sign-up and negotiations, set up and catering.
- Antiques Collectable & Decorative Arts Fair - press release, promotion and liaising with Market Manager with set up and planning of the event in October.
- Christmas events

## **Business**

Promoting and liaising with Job Centre to help promote the new Jobs Fair at Crosfield Hall to potential businesses to showcase their opportunities and then to help generate prospective employees.

Working in partnership with Hampshire Police/ShopWatch to help reduce anti-social behaviour and shoplifting in the area.

- Talked with accounts in Dukes Mill regarding the change of use in that area to discourage anti-social behaviour.
- TV Community Safety Management Group aware of these issues in the town – had additional discussions for ideas to help alleviate issues.

Attended a free Google Training Programme set up by Hampshire Chamber.

## TVBC

Monthly catch-up meetings with **Jennie Pell**, Principle Economic Development Officer

Met and discussed all things southern Test Valley with the new Economic Development Officer, Jackie Hewson.

Tourism Comms meeting

Monthly catch up with **Louisa Rice**, Engagement Team Leader

## HCC

Prepared a detailed photo library of all flawed paving in the centre of town including areas which is: broken, uneven, needs replacing, mended temporarily and need upgrading.

## Elected Members

Ad hoc meetings with Councillors to resolve any issues and keep updated with all things Romsey.

## Key priorities:

### Future events

- Antiques Collectable & Decorative Arts Fair
- Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday
- Beggars Fair
- Christmas Lights Switch On, Carnival and Lanterns Parade
- Saving Santa
- Carols in the Marketplace
- Santa Run (new to Romsey)
- Volunteer Fair Jan 2024
- Jobs Fair – working with TVBC and DWP – 2<sup>nd</sup> event planned for Feb/Mar 2024.

### Opportunities

- Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday: This year is planning to be one of the biggest events, will promote to local news agencies.
- New Markets for 2024?
- New events for 2024?
- 30<sup>th</sup> Beggars Fair 2024

### Threats

- Turning trend of converting commercial shops and office space to residential in Central Romsey.
- State of pavements in Town Centre
- Areas of Romsey looking tired, weeds, broken and rotting benches

## Empty Retail Space

M & Co – planning applications in process

Old Cornmarket (prev. Barclays) - Vacant

2 Latimer Street (prev. Herbwise) – Vacant

7 Bell Street – Vacant

29, 31A The Hundred (prev Ladbroke's) – Vacant

56-58 The Hundred – Planning applications in process

6 Cornmarket (prev Computer Repair) – Vacant

1 Marketplace (prev Chemist/Print shop) - Vacant

### **Meetings coming up:**

Catch up with Andy Ferrier – next due in October.

Romsey Food Partnership

Food Fair wrap-up meeting

Christmas Planning Meetings – all events

TVBC Communications Meeting

Test Valley Safety Management Group

Beggars Fair planning for the 30<sup>th</sup> event in 2024 – (additional funding required)