

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE VENUES
& COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE HELD IN THE CARNEGIE,
CAGE LANE, THETFORD ON WEDNESDAY 15th SEPTEMBER 2021, AT 1.00 pm

Present:

The Mayor Councillor M P Brindle

Councillors:

C Harvey, T J Jermy, K H Parker, S N H Wright

Officers in attendance:

David Brooks VEM Manager, Tom Scott Venues & Media Officer

Chris Crimmen Committee Secretary

MINUTES

327/21	<u>DECLARATIONS OF ANY DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS</u> None.
328/21	<u>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u> Apologies were received from Councillors C Barreto and C R P Burnett.
329/21	<u>MINUTES</u> RESOLVED: The minutes of the Committee's meeting held on 14th July 2021 received by Full Council on 29th July 2021 be confirmed as a true record and signed/initialled by the Committee Chairman.
330/21	<u>MARKETING REPORT</u> The Venues and Media Officer asked Councillors to receive July/August 2021 marketing report (see Appendix A). He reported on the following and answered Councillors questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Media. • Poster boards. • The Rotunda. • The Newsletter that is emailed out. • Paid Advertising on Facebook. • Flyers and leaflet drops. Committee members very happy now the Rotunda is being used and is full but there are two panel that need repairing with a Perspex cover. This will be done as soon as possible. Councillors noted the Marketing report.
331/21	<u>GUILDHALL HERITAGE HUB</u> The VEM Manager reported that the Guildhall is now fully open and the Punjab event held over the weekend was the first event. The tearoom will open on the 16 th September 2021 and all the catering areas have been retested and given a 5-star rating. Part of the conditions of the Heritage Lottery Funding grant that enabled the internal and external improvements also stated that certain activity needed to be delivered, 6 specialised markets were one of those conditions and the first, and Arts & Craft market was delivered on Sunday 1 st August with a Christmas Market planned on 5 th December 2021.
332/21	<u>VENUES EVENTS 2021/22</u> The VEM Manager asked Councillors to receive the 2021/22 Thetford Town Council venue events schedule – (see Appendix B) the Events update by Katie Wright the Heritage and Events Officer. The VEM Manager reported the drawing workshop had taken place yesterday and was a great success with 14 attendees producing some wonderful work, it was hoped to deliver more and also arrange an exhibition of their work. Councillors noted the report.
333/21	<u>BUDGET REVIEW 2021/22</u>

	The VEM Manager asked Councillors to receive and discuss the update of the budget 2021/22 which had been forwarded to them. The Finance Manager had included explanations of any variances (see Appendix C). There were no questions and Councillors noted the report.
334/21	<u>BUDGET PROPOSAL 2022/23</u> The VEM Manager asked Councillors to receive and discuss the first draft proposal for Venues & Communications budget 2022/23. (see Appendix D) The budget will be further refined and reviewed at the October meeting. There were no questions, and the first draft of the budget was noted by Councillors.
335/21	<u>REVIEW APPLICATION TO WAIVER VENUES HIRE FEE</u> The VEM Manager asked Councillors to receive an application to waiver the Venue Hire fees from the Safer Thetford Action Group (STAG). There followed a discussion: Councillor T Jermy proposed and Councillor C Harvey seconded: RESOLVED: That Thetford Town Council waive the hire fee for STAG to use the Large Court to hold a public meeting 4 times a year at a total cost of £240.
336/21	<u>COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT</u> It was agreed to prepare press releases of Council events to be sent to the Eastern Daily Press, Bury Free Press and About Thetford.
337/21	<u>COMMITTEE OFFICERS UPDATE</u> The Chair asked the Officer about a complaint from 4 residents when a workshop was cancelled during Covid 19 at short notice by the organiser. This was an event where residents were asked to book but they had not done so and turned up at the Carnegie. There was no way to know they were coming or who they were. In future a notice will be posted on the door of the Carnegie announcing the cancellation. It was agreed by Councillors to have a standard item Complaints and Compliments added as an item to the monthly agenda.

Chairman.

APPENDIX A - MARKETING REPORT – 14/07/2021

Tom Scott – Venues & Media Officer

ACTIONS

Podcast

- As of right now, we have now created 3 episodes of the ‘Thetford LIVE’ Podcast. The latest episode involved inviting on our Heritage Officer Katie to discuss the upcoming Heritage Week (which will be in full swing at the time of this meeting) and generally going over her history in theatre. This was an ‘emergency’ interview prepared as a contingency, as the original interviewees (Meetup Café) were all isolating due to Covid.
- As we are still in the early days, I don’t expect to receive many views at this time, however this is the perfect time for us to experiment with different ideas and see if they work. One such idea was scheduled for last month’s campaign, which was to take the entire recording setup directly to the Meetup café and shoot the whole show on location. This would require a little extra effort but could pay dividends in the long run for groups/communities we choose to highlight, as it will help raise their profile among the town even further.

- There are also plans to have multiple guests in the media studio at one time and we have a steady schedule of intended guests lined up for the podcast, which are scheduled all the way up until 2022.

Marketing Campaigns

- As mentioned in the last marketing report, we have had a swift increase in events happening within the complex and public spaces, which means there is a lot more content to advertise. We will start scheduling posts for upcoming events in order to make sure all events receive sufficient advertisement, while also avoiding oversaturating our social media with pure advertisement posts.
- The intention going forward is to have more of the TTC team have input on the social media posts. What this will achieve is creating more informed, accurate advertisement of events from those in charge of running/supporting the event. This is also ideal for social media posts unrelated to events, as it will allow quicker and more accurate posts to be made about information and positive stories within the town.
- As we are developing our social media it's important to make sure we don't turn it into exclusively an advertising space, as – while that's appealing on the surface – people will see through it and lose interest if all we do is advertise events. I have spoken with various other media managers at larger companies and it's important to mix in more 'casual' posts, which makes the team (and therefore the pages) seem more casual and friendly. Hopefully this will be assisted by having multiple staff with access to posts, as it will add different 'styles' of talking to the public to our platform.
- As mentioned in last week's report, we have started displaying our posters at full size within the Rotunda and using some other key space in the Kings House noticeboard. We are currently being met with a positive issue of having so many events and other things to advertise that we do not have space for all of our major upcoming events, but posters for the most recent events are being prioritised. If we maintain this tempo for events and other things that require posters it may be good to have more space available within the town centre in the future.
 - As part of this offline marketing, Katie created a double-sided flier showcasing the upcoming events over the next couple of months, which had a link to access our calendar and tickets for these events. These fliers were taken to key locations in the town such as the Charles Burrell Museum and handed out during events by our team.
- As an extra note, in order to assist the Heritage Week, we looked into a new medium for providing information and created an 'e-brochure' for the Heritage Week, which can be seen on the front page of the Thetford Town Council website. This is the first attempt at using this medium so there are definitely areas we can improve upon, but I consider this another well implemented addition to the council website and can be used again in the future.

Newsletter

- As mentioned in the last report, we have started issuing email newsletters to a mailing list which highlights upcoming events within the town. We have now had 3 of these go out to the public.
- On all of our ticketed events, we now ask if attendees would like to be added to our mailing list. The vast majority of attendees decline but we still receive some new additions after each event. As a result of this, our mailing list has grown up by roughly 100 new members since the first newsletter.

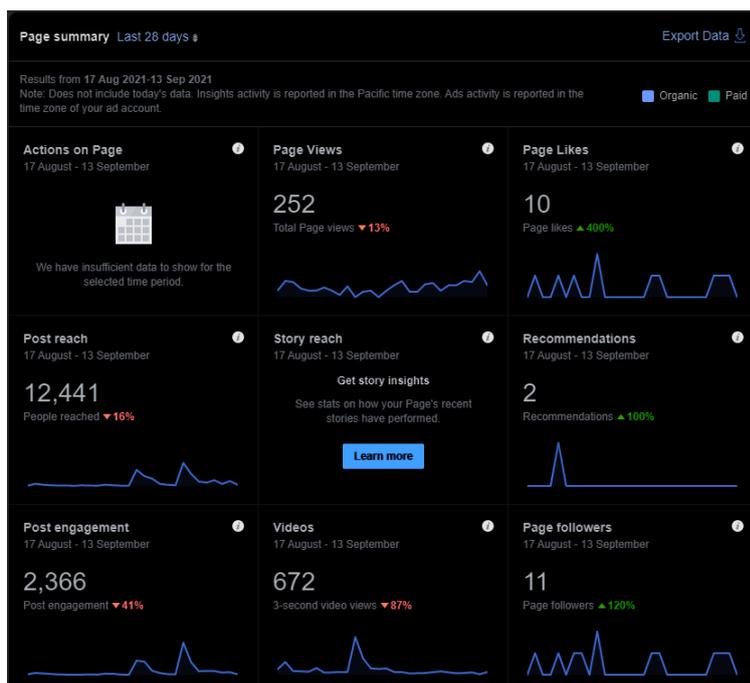
MONTHLY OBSERVATIONS

NOTE: due to the nature of how social media displays information, we are only able to display 'general data' for the most recent month. Therefore, it will not be complete and indicative of the time since our last meeting.

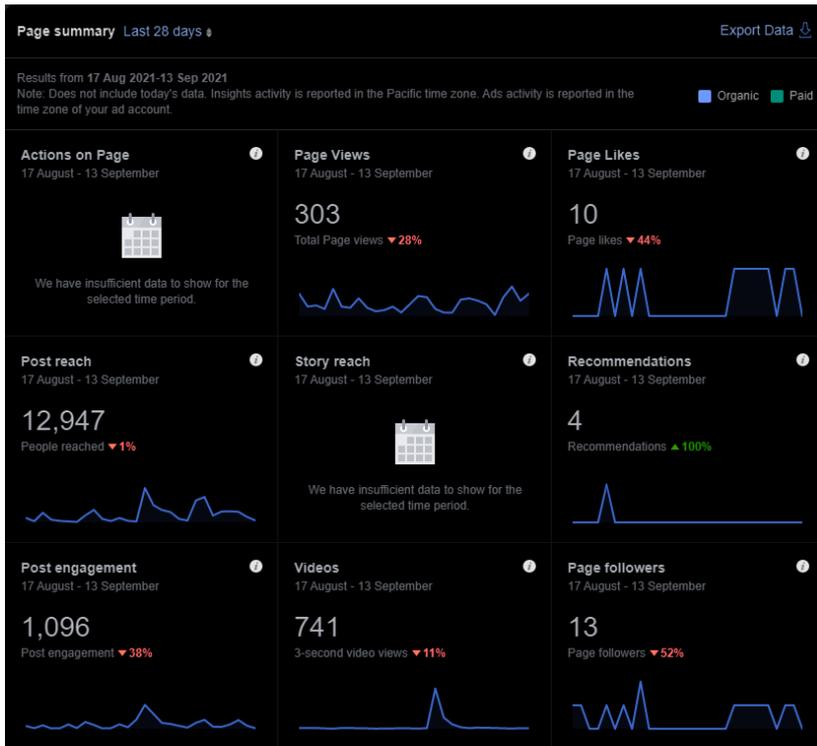
- The highest rated post of this month from the Thetford Town Council page was regarding the 'Mowing public spaces' consultation. This was reposted periodically to keep discussion moving. But this post received a whopping 17.5k views and over 6k engagements (which I believe is the highest of ANY post on this page ever). This post also received over 300 comments, over 200 reactions and over 50 shares.
 - This shows the value of using our social media platforms to gather opinions and views from the public of Thetford, as this consultation also received over 150 fully completed responses, on what was a very long and detailed consultation.
- The highest rated post from The Carnegie was advertising the 'Thetford Summer Sundays' musical event on 1st August. This post received over 5k views, but just over 100 engagements. Which is surprisingly low. This can easily be attributed to the fact it's one of our advertisement posts for a free event. These are easy to share & view but - as there is no ticket link for a free event like this – there is no incentive to engage with the post past looking at it.
- We have two posts in particular which are worth highlighting from The Carnegie. During this period, we trialled our first attempts at using the 'paid advertising' methods, and the analytics show us how much they effected these posts.
 - Our first was a post for Hi-De-Hi, for which we added £14 of paid advertisement. This £14 contributed to 2.3k views of a 4.1k total views, and roughly half of all engagements
 - The second was a post for the Writers Group with Atiha Sen Gupta. This £8 Contributed to 1.3k views of a total 2.3k views, and roughly half of all engagements.

SOCIAL MEDIA DATA

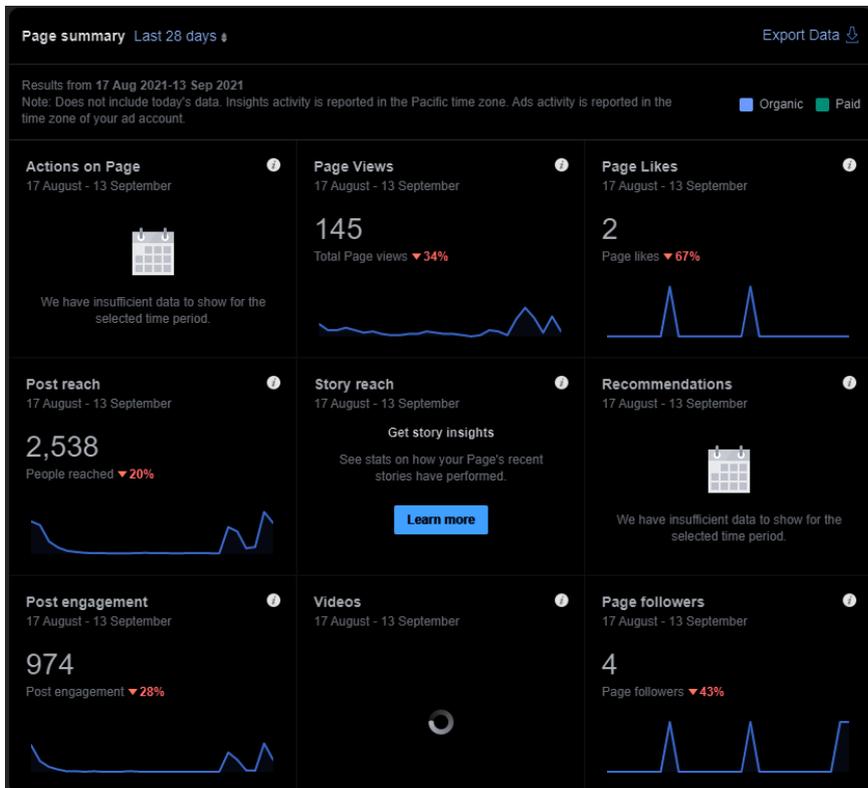
Thetford Town Council Facebook



The Carnegie Facebook



Mayor of Thetford Facebook



APPENDIX B - Events update 2021.

Katie Wright – Heritage & Events Officer

Past Events round-up:

Hi De Hi - 23rd and 25th July - kicked off the opening of the Carnegie. Good audiences as well as free performance on the Sunday do some underprivileged families great feedback.



Under the Clock Tower Summer Market, - 1st August - first market place event , really well turned out despite the rain – over 700 people came throughout the day and a good number of stalls.

Athia Sen Gupta - 8th August - first new writers’ group – turn out was great with 14 people attending.

Alice in Wonderland - weekends 14th 15th and 21st and 22nd kings house gardens – well attended and a buzz throughout the town , over 8 of the shows were sold out.

James McDermott – 16th August - 2nd new writers workshop again really well received and people really keen to carry on. 16 people attended.



Craft group is happening every week still with great turn outs and over 100 flowers made some far , as well has having bespoke workshops like flower arranging that are also well attended. We have just started on our heritage craft project.

Military Wives Choir - 10th September - could have been a little more uptake, they are keen to come again and know I have footage of them I think it might be easier to market. We had 16 attended in the end but feedback was great, and it was lovely to hear the guildhall being sung in. it works well as a singing venue.



Heritage Week – commenced beginning of this week and the Tea Room hosted a number of children’s activities with more planned through to Sunday 19th September.



Upcoming events

Botanical drawing workshop 14th September – in the Carnegie

Guildhall sketchers group 14th September (we will invite people to have free reign of the Guildhall and some historical postcards so they can get inspiration for drawings, paintings – Any art forms. These will then be displayed in the Gallery for a short time. No uptake yet but I have schools interested so will pick this up in a few weeks when schools are further into term).

Edible wild plants evening 16th September.

Holmes and Kable outdoor production – play on the marketplace – 18th and 19th September.

Community choir commences on the 20th September.

The Writers group. This is a progression from the attendances on the Atiha Sen Gupta & James MacDermott workshops with a regular group meeting from 6th October.

The Time Machine – Children’s Theatre play in the Carnegie on 5th October.

Hansel and Gretel children’s theatre show - 27th October.

Tales of the Assizes – an immersive theatre show – an evening of real tales of the assizes court 29th October .

Christmas light switch on and Santa and Christmas experience - 26th November.

TTC Christmas parties – 3rd & 4th December.

Christmas Gifts & Crafts Market – Sunday 5th December.

Christmas food event A visiting author demonstrating traditional foods to celebrate Christmas – Sunday 5 December.

A Christmas Carol - immersive walk around theatre, in Kings House gardens - 11th,12th 18th and 19th December.

APPENDIC C - Financial Report for August 2021

THETFORD TOWN COUNCIL						
VENUES AND COMMUNICATIONS						
FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021						
INCOME					EXPLANATION OF AUG 21 VARIANCE	
VENUES AND COMMUNICATIONS		2021-22	2021-22	2021-22	2021-22	
N/C	NAME	AUG 21 ACTUAL YTD	AUG 21 BUDGET YTD	AUG 21 VARIANCE	ANNUAL BUDGET	
		£	£	£	£	
4200	Bar Fees	4,168	900	3,268	10,000	Bar sales have increased as lockdown eased. Budget should be exceeded.
4202	Carnegie Complex Room Hire	9,237	4,350	4,887	18,000	Bookings on track to meet budget. Order book at 31 Aug 21 is approximately £6,700.
4206	Guildhall Tearoom		700	700	6,000	Tearoom has not yet opened. Budget may not be realised.
4210	Events Income	695	450	245	1,500	There have been few TTC events. Mostly events so far have been promoted by third parties.
4215	Box Office Income	25				There is still some revenue to be booked (estimate of £127).
4240	Market Fees	6,795	5,000	1,795	17,500	Market fees are ahead of budget at present.
4245	Specialist Markets	160		160		This is a new venture related to promoting the Guildhall.
TOTAL		21,080	11,400	9,655	53,000	Income is better than expected but there may be limited income generation opportunities.
EXPENDITURE					EXPLANATION OF AUG 21 VARIANCE	
VENUES AND COMMUNICATIONS		2021-22	2021-22	2021-22	2021-22	
N/C	NAME	AUG 21 ACTUAL YTD	AUG 21 BUDGET YTD	AUG 21 VARIANCE	ANNUAL BUDGET	
		£	£	£	£	
5200	Bar Purchase	3,084	563	2,521	6,250	Unsold stock not excluded from purchases. Will do quarterly stock valuations going forward.
5205	Bar Consumables & Equipment	2,380		2,380		This is the purchase of new bar related equipment.
5210	Catering Purchases	16	310	294	2,650	This is below budget as the tearoom has not yet opened.
5215	Catering Consumables & Equipment	34				Not a significant variance.
5220	Repairs and Maintenance	611		611	5,000	There may be costs additional costs due to statutory work. Budget unlikely to be exceeded.
5240	TTC Events Expenses	864	900	36	3,000	Costs in line with budget. Budget unlikely to be exceeded.
5245	Carnegie Events Expenses					
5260	Box Office Website & Digital Media	890		890	7,500	The new website has not yet been developed so cost much lower than budgeted.
5288	Specialist Markets Expenses	200		200		These are costs of promoting and running the new specialist markets.
5281	Entertainment Licencing			-	1,250	There have been no events that require this cost to be incurred so far this year.
5286	Market Repairs & Maintenance		2,500	2,500	2,500	No costs incurred to date.
TOTAL		8,079	4,273	3,772	28,150	Expenditure lower than budget. Fewer activities.
NET	VENUES AND COMMUNICATIONS	13,001	7,127	5,883	24,850	Overall a better than expected net contribution.

APPENDIX D

VENUES AND COMMUNICATIONS				
INCOME			COMMENTS	
		2021-22	2022/23	
N/C	NAME	ANNUAL BUDGET	PROPOSED DRAFT BUDGET	
		£	£	
4200	Bar Fees	10,000	32,000	Returning back to forecast prior to Covid restrictions and revision due to 0% precept commitment.
4202	Carnegie Room Hire	12,000	32,000	As above
4204	Guildhall Room Hire	6,000	12,000	Guildhall now improvemnets, however 2nd yr of NHLF commitment
4206	Guildhall Catering	6,000	16,000	
4210	Events Income	1,500	5,000	
4240	Market Fees	17,500		
TOTAL		53,000	97,000	
EXPENDITURE			COMMENTS	
VENUES AND COMMUNICATIONS		2021-22	2022/23	
N/C	NAME			
		£		
5200	Bar Purchase	6,250	16,000	
5210	Catering Purchases	2,650	8,000	
5220	Repairs And Maintenance	7,500	10,000	
	Market expenses		2,000	
5240	TTC Events Expenses	3,000	3,000	
5260	Marketing and communications	7,500	10,000	
	Entertainment licencing	1,250	2,000	
TOTAL		28,150	51,000	
NET	VENUES AND COMMUNICATIONS	24,850	46,000	