

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE VENUES
& COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE HELD IN THE CARNEGIE,
CAGE LANE, THETFORD ON WEDNESDAY 13th OCTOBER 2021, AT 11.00 am

Present:

Councillors:
C Harvey, T J Jermy, S N H Wright (Chair)

Officers in attendance:
David Brooks VEM Manager, Tom Scott Venues & Media Officer
Chris Crimmen Committee Secretary

MINUTES

430/21	<u>DECLARATIONS OF ANY DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS</u> None.
431/21	<u>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u> Apologies were received from Councillor C Barreto.
432/21	<u>MINUTES</u> RESOLVED: The minutes of the Committee's meeting held on 15th September 2021 received by Full Council on 28th September 2021 be confirmed as a true record and signed/initialled by the Committee Chairman.
433/21	<u>MARKETING REPORT</u> The committee had received a copy of the Marketing Report (see Appendix A). The works team have repaired the Rotunda but it has been difficult to source replacement doors. However, the team have repaired the one door that was in the council's possession and fabricated a new semi-permanent display opening that will house a generic poster that will advertise of venue hire opportunities. Councillors noted the marketing report.
434/21	<u>FINANCIAL UPDATE</u> The VEM Manager asked councillors to receive the Venues & Communication Financial Report for the six months ended 30 th September 2021 that had been circulated prior to the meeting. He reported the bar sales have been flat in September as there were very few functions where the bar has been used. Carnegie room bookings are on target and the tearoom has now opened. Market fees are ahead of budget at present due to more casual traders over the summer. Expenditure is lower than budget due to fewer activities There were no questions and Councillors noted the financial report.
435/21	<u>BUDGET PROPOSAL 2022/23</u> The VEM Manager asked Councillors to receive and discuss the second draft proposal for Venues & Communications budget 2022/23 that had been circulated prior to the meeting (see Appendix B). He reported this shows a significant surplus. It was pointed out that this does not show staff costs. It was reported that the staff member who left in the summer has not been replaced. After a discussion Councillors recommend the Venues & Communications budget for 2022/23.
436/21	<u>MARKET PLACE IMPROVEMENTS</u> Councillors were asked to receive a proposal from the Market Place Improvement working group (see Appendix C). After a discussion Councillor T Jermy proposed, and Councillor C Harvey seconded:

	<p>RESOLVED: That the Venues and Communication Committee ask that the two options shown below are taken to Full Council as agenda item for a decision to be made on the options below:</p> <p>Option 1 Full Council to decide to close the Market Place as a Car Park, a decision supported by Guildhall Heritage Hub Public Consultation Survey in 2018, to develop into a safe space for events, improved seating, greening up and delivery of a calendar of family activities.</p> <p>Option 2 Full Council to decide to reopen open the Market Place as a free Car Park reduced by two car parking bays as a result of the extended Guildhall entrance steps and ramp, with the exception of weekly Markets and Thetford Town Council town events.</p>
437/21	<p><u>REVIEW APPLICATION TO WAIVER VENUES HIRE FEE</u> The VEM Manager asked Councillors to receive applications to waiver the Venue Hire fees from:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wood Green Animal Shelter - 4 meeting per year in King's House 2. Thetford Municipal & United Charities - Use of the Carnegie at a concession on a Thursday evening total cost £100. <p>After a discussion Councillor S Wright proposed and Councillor C Harvey seconded: RESOLVED: That Thetford Town Council allow these concessions as listed.</p>
438/21	<p><u>COMPLIMENTS & COMPLAINTS</u> David I have almost a page of comments, but can you write one or two paragraphs summing up the complaint and how you answered them - thanks</p>
439/21	<p><u>COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT</u> The Council makes weekly posts on social media on the markets.</p>
440/21	<p><u>COMMITTEE OFFICERS UPDATE</u> None.</p>

Chairman.

APPENDIX A

MARKETING REPORT – 13/10/2021

Report by Tom Scott (Venues & Media Officer)

ACTIONS

Podcast

For the latest episode of the podcast, we opted to try something different which was to pack up the media equipment and broadcast from a different location with Growkids at the Charles Burrell Centre.

This created a few problems as the room was not purpose built like the Media Suite, and we experienced background noise from other parties, and a less-than-ideal lighting situation.

Despite that the latest episode has seen good success being the most viewed podcast since the first episode.

Due to the issues found when broadcasting elsewhere we will have to plan more in advance of how best we can produce our podcast recording however it is something we wish to develop further in the future, to highlight groups or individuals who need to showcase their facilities and activities.

Marketing Campaigns

Further to our commitments at the last V&C meeting we have started to set up more locations to display physical posters and advertisements. As we are limited on dedicated poster sites, so in the first instance we have taken advantage of locations that we have more control over such as the

the Carnegie and have put up have two A0-sizes poster cabinets on the outer wall on the Raymond Street side of the building. One of the cabinets will display upcoming events for the next three months and will be rotated every two months, the other will host event specific posters that we really want to push.

The plan is to create a number of these larger-general poster sites and there will be more installed in the coming months.

This is an extremely low-cost form of advertisement in quite a high-profile location, so it should be a fantastic use of our resources.

In addition to the above, the works team have repaired the Rotunda, it has been difficult to source replacement doors however the team have repaired the one in our procession and fabricated a new semi-permanent display opening that will house a generic poster that will advertise of venue hire opportunities. I expect these poster sites to be constantly occupied, but in case there are ever any empty spaces, 'filler' posters have been created which can make sure there are no blank spaces in the Rotunda.

On top of this, we have started using a monitor in The Carnegie foyer to display short advertising videos sent to us by the organisers of upcoming events. The area is used as a registration desk for attendees at event and weekly hire events so is a great opportunity to showcase in this format those upcoming as attendees have a bit more time to absorb the information displayed.

As the news of events happening with the council spreads, we are receiving opportunities to advertise further, this past we the Carnegie & Guildhall Complex be featured on BBC Radio Norfolk as a key part of their show and in return Katie & I we received some airtime to talk about all the upcoming events and work done by the team.

The Guildhall Tea Room has reopened, and both Janet & Baiba have been given access to post on the Tea Room social media page and this has been very successful in spreading the word and has seen a lot of viewing activity and good comments from the public.

Newsletter/Website

The Carnegie website has seen some changes since the last report, with some considerable work being put in to make it more user-friendly, and to improve the formatting.

Previously, making changes to event listings would take a very long time and was prone to display issues, after some effort we've managed to make it more streamlined and adding/removing events is now much faster to edit.

The Monthly newsletter continues to be sent out featuring all the upcoming events. This has been made far easier to create thanks to the formatting done on the website. The last issue was sent to the over 400 emails on our mailing list and was our most successful one yet, being opened by 46% of all recipients which was over double any previous newsletter.

At a previous V&C meeting, councillors asked if they could receive these newsletters at their personal emails rather than council emails. If councillors would like to join this mailing list, they can do so by going to <https://www.thecarnegiethetford.com/> and click the 'subscribe' link at the bottom.

MONTHLY OBSERVATIONS

As the Guildhall Tea Room has now opened, it has been receiving a huge spike in activity from previous months, as it used to be largely inactive. This rate of growth won't continue as it is currently, but it's great to see the page hit the ground running.

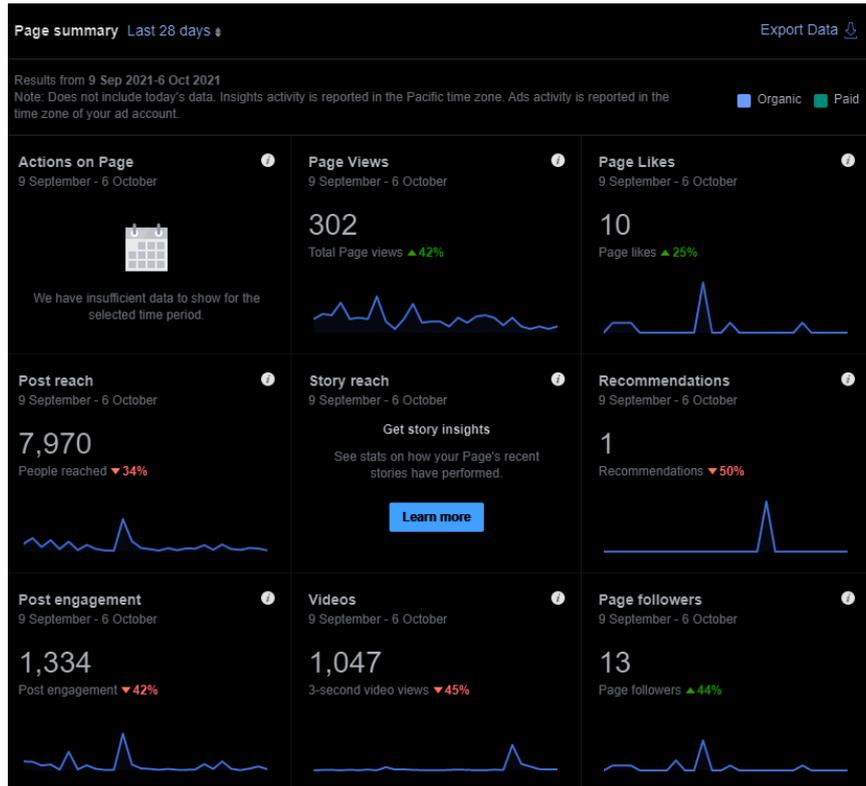
The highest rated post of this month comes from The Guildhall Tea Rooms reopening, which saw 6.6k views and over 400 engagements. This also saw 120 shares/comments, most of which were people commenting that they're glad to see it open again.

The next highest rated post came from The Carnegie & Guildhall Complex, with a post showing the stage and rehearsals for the weekends 'Holmes & Kable' performance on The Marketplace. This received over 2.7k views, over 270 engagements and over 20 shares.

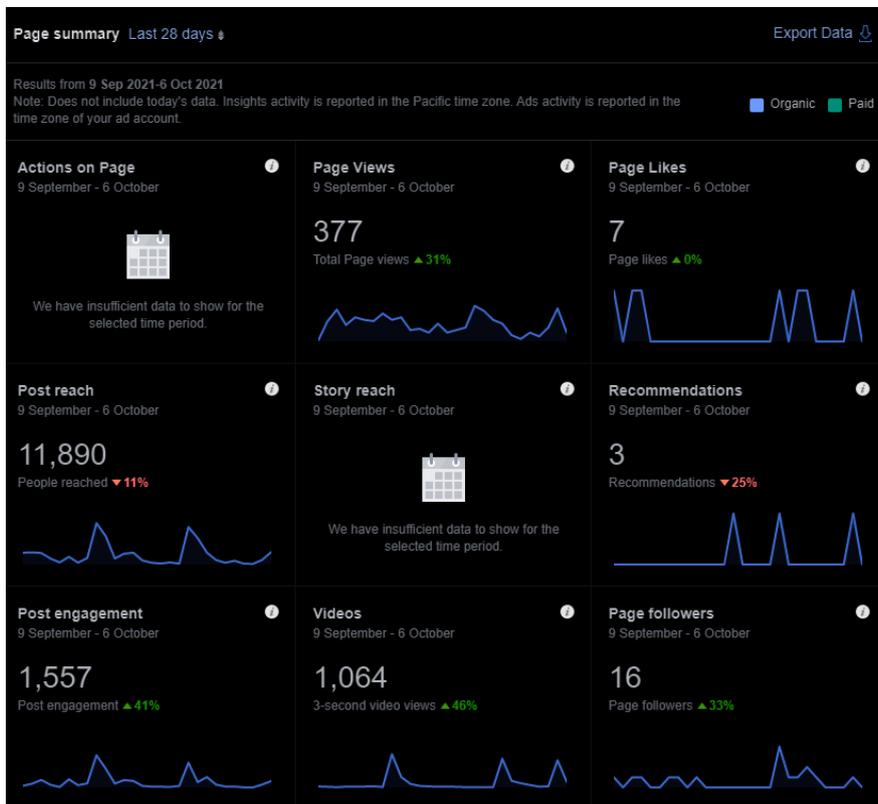
As an extra note, this performance was so popular that more performances were done on the following weekend. While this is likely due to the public nature of the performance, having shows/events that sell out and/or must run more shows due to popularity is great marketing as it creates a demand to purchase tickets ahead of time.

SOCIAL MEDIA DATA

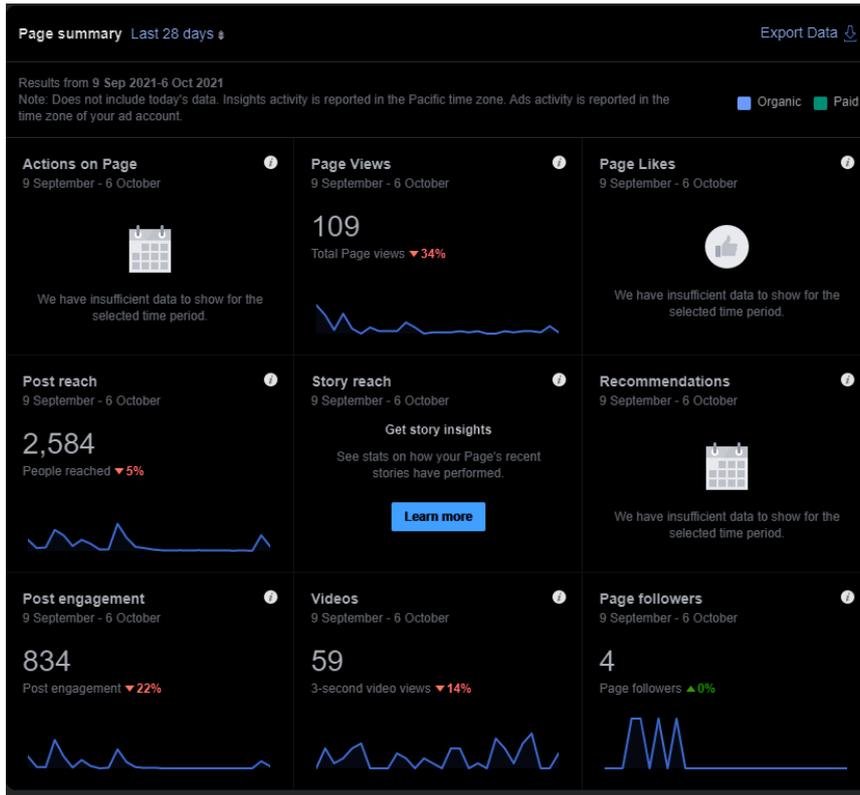
Thetford Town Council Facebook



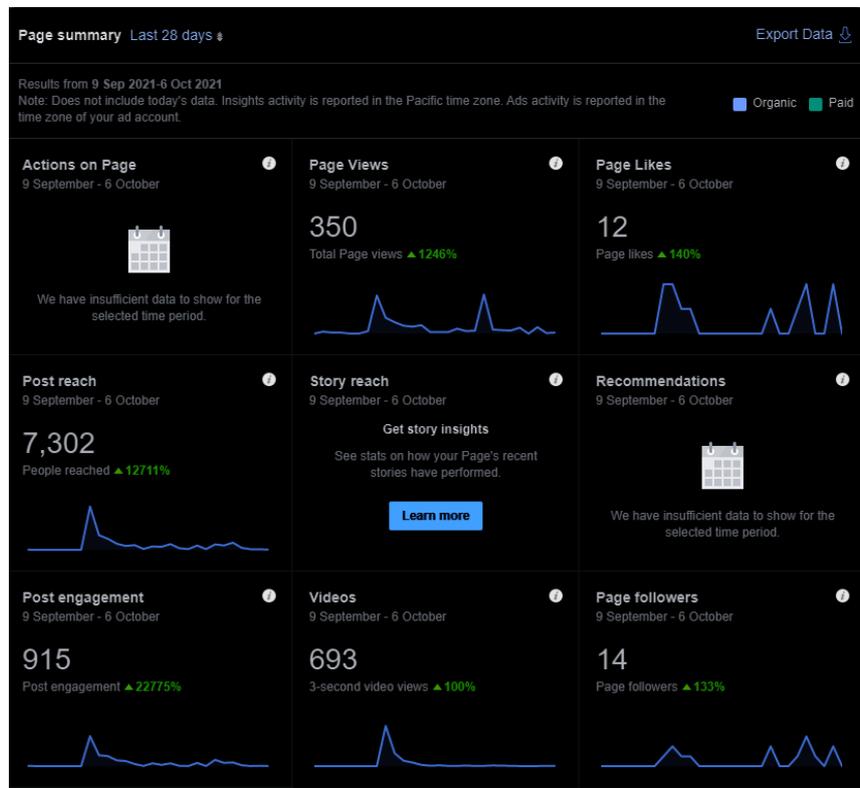
The Carnegie Facebook



Mayor of Thetford Facebook



The Guildhall Tea Room Facebook



APPENDIX B

THETFORD TOWN COUNCIL						
SUMMARY OPERATIONAL BUDGET						
FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2023						
INCOME						
VENUES AND COMMUNICATIONS		2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
N/C	NAME	ACTUAL	ACTUAL	ACTUAL	BUDGET	BUDGET
		£	£	£	£	£
4200	Bar Takings	31,392	39,621	820	16,868	32,000
4202	Carnegie Hire	27,330	33,143	4,606	26,737	38,000
4204	Guildhall Hire	14,325	11,745	2,025		
4206	Guildhall Catering	12,442	12,376	224	4,700	12,000
4208	Grants Received	9,970				
4210	Events Income	11,386	5,959	766	1,535	3,500
4215	Box office income		636		270	750
4220	Fees/Donations Received		108			
4224	Sponsorship		21			
4240	Market Square	13,640	14,889	11,392	19,295	18,000
4245	Specialist Markets				1,220	2,500
TOTAL		120,485	118,498	19,385	70,625	106,750
EXPENDITURE						
VENUES AND COMMUNICATIONS		2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
N/C	NAME	ACTUAL	ACTUAL	BUDGET	BUDGET	BUDGET
		£	£	£	£	£
5200	Bar Purchase	15,341	21,132	2,798	11,022	12,800
5205	Bar consumables			188	3,430	2,400
5208	Lease of Equipment				900	2,800
5210	Catering Purchases	10,427	9,736	197	2,092	4,000
5215	Catering consumables			-	314	500
5220	Building maintenance	28,562	11,697	1,496	960	1,500
5225	Minor Furniture and Equipment				875	1,000
5240	Events expenses	23,728	15,627	1,278	2,894	3,500
5250	Newsletters and publications	1,070	60	12		
5255	Website costs				1,590	1,600
5252	Printing and advertising	1,514				
5260	Box office website & digital media	1,369	1,761	2,765	133	250
5286	Mkt Maintenance & Repairs	2,484	618	1,138	1,000	750
5288	Specialist Markets Expenses				200	1,250
5280	Marketing and communications				3,542	3,500
5281	Entertainment licencing				650	2,500
TOTAL		84,496	60,631	9,873	29,602	38,350
NET	VENUES AND COMMUNICATIONS	35,989	57,867	9,512	41,023	68,400

APPENDIX C

Thetford Market Place Steering Group

Proposed development plan

Background

As part of the accessibility improvements to the Guildhall the new steps and ramp meant that the Market Place was closed during the construction phase which coincided with the desire for extra external space for users of the Red Lion during the Covid restrictions. A working group was set and in January 2021 it concluded that it would accept the views of the public consultation to support the closure of the Market Place and create a safer public space. The working group proposal has been discussed by the Venues and Marketing committee and Amenities, Land and Property committee.

The council now needs to ratify this proposed decision; that being not to reopen the area as a car park in order to make more use of the area as a traffic free amenity space and allow more town events to be delivered whilst maintaining the use for the Tuesday and Saturday markets and the annual service of remembrance. The decision would also allow the provision of extra seating for users of the Guildhall Tea Rooms, The Red Lion and The British Legion as well as casual users wishing to sit and take in the atmosphere of the historic area.

In order to achieve this long term aspiration there are a number of improvements required to make the area more attractive and suitable for these uses. These are listed below and have been separated into short, medium and long term actions and are obviously dependent upon funding becoming available.

Short Term

Action	Status	Cost and funding source
Complete Guildhall steps handrails	Awaiting delivery	No extra funding required
Complete Guildhall entrance modifications to deter pigeons	Scheduled works (in-house)	
Replace non matching windows in Guildhall Large Court	Obtaining quotes	
Install new signage for The Guildhall entrance		
Remove low level bollards along shambles area		£2k
Repair broken pavers with reclaimed slabs		£2k
Install electricity supply to Guildhall Street side		£15k
Provide 2 heritage lamps on Shambles		£5k
Remove parking space markings		£2k
Provide interpretation panel for Guildhall Murals on barrier overlooking Carnegie wall		£5k
Provide outside seating for Guildhall tearoom		£2k
Agree permanent outdoor space for Red Lion		Wetherspoon's cost
Agree lets for Shambles units		

Continue to deliver Guildhall project events		
Develop community events that can make use of Market Place as venue and improving footfall to Guildhall		
Market Guildhall as venue		
Carry out repairs to British Legion		
Provide access ramp to British Legion building in keeping with new Guildhall ramp		
Remove Czech memorial on Guildhall and provide rededicated polished granite memorial at King's House		

Medium Term

Action	Status	Cost and funding source
Agree programme of town events, specialist markets to be delivered on Market Place		Potentially only costs staff time organising.
Agree lighting scheme for Market Place and Guildhall		£2k
Repair broken pavers with reclaimed slabs		£2k
Install electricity supply to Guildhall Street side		£15k
Provide 2 heritage lamps on Shambles		£5k
Remove parking space markings		£2k
Provide interpretation panel for Guildhall Murals on barrier overlooking Carnegie wall		£5k
Provide outside seating for Guildhall tearoom		£2k
Provide moveable planters to section Guildhall tearoom seating area		£6k

Long Term

Action	Status	Cost and funding source
Resurface Market Place with more aesthetic surface including paths around Guildhall and Dad's Army forecourt.		
Provide continuous route to Market Place from King Street by means of speed table at top of Well Street and surface to match that existing King Street to encourage footfall to Market Place		
Provide points of interest around Market Place potentially using plaques etched pavers etc		
Improve link from Market Place to Carnegie apron by redesigning steps and street furniture and build wall to screen rear of shambles to provide unified amenity area		
Provide a step free access from path around Market Place		

Develop plan to extend Red Lion outdoor area as terrace to rear of Shambles.		
Provide lighting scheme for area		
Provide extra parking in Rampart Way to mitigate loss of Market Place parking spaces		