



Development/Theatre Director's Report

October 2023

Artisan Market

- Artisan Market is this Saturday 7th September – a verbal update will be given on that at the meeting.

New Thursday Market

- At the time of writing this report we have had our first Thursday Market. We are absolutely blown away by the response from both the community and the traders themselves. Those of you who were able to make it into town last Thursday will understand that we were overwhelmed by the number of traders who have signed up for the first market in Rugeley, offering a very high standard of produce – particularly in terms of the butcher, baker and veg stall. The butcher sold out and was floored by the enormous response which he personally received from the community, highlighting the desire from local people to have fresh, non-supermarket produce available to them at excellent prices. He will be bringing a much larger stock with him this Thursday.
- The community came out in force, and we have not seen the town centre as busy as it was other than on the days of special events. The response on social media was, frankly, overwhelming too, so we are extremely hopeful that the market will continue to grow and thrive with the support of the town. If you are able, pop down and support, you won't be disappointed.
- Bescot were also extremely pleased with the outcome of the first market – when they started Cannock Market they started with considerably fewer stalls, and they are now at 100 stalls per market, so the future looks bright, with 57 Gazebo's being booked for this week's market.
- Parking for the traders on the day is a bit of an issue, and we have offered the RTC Car Park for them to park their vehicles whilst the market is operational. The Rose has several bookings on a Thursday so that car park is not an option, and we have directed any overflow vehicles to St. Josephs Church Car Park as it is the cheapest option. Obviously we want to encourage traders to take stalls at the market, and not hit them with additional parking costs, and would be interested to find out if the traders at for CCDC's weekly markets have any dispensations in Cannock Town Centre Car Parks.

- We did have one issue with a stall selling illegal vapes. They are a regular trader with Bescot, who have never had the issue with them before, and they suspect that they were taking advantage of it being a new market. We ensured that all of the illegal vapes (over 600 puffs) were removed, and I have told Bescot that we do not wish them to trade in Rugeley again, which they fully supported.
- This situation has also alerted us to the fact that two retail establishments in Rugeley are also allegedly selling illegal vapes. This matter has been referred to Trading Standards who have confirmed that it has been submitted to their team as part of an ongoing investigation.

Theatre Bookings

Bookings for the Rose Theatre are incredibly healthy. We are now booking well into 2025 and are considerably busier than we have been in previous years.

Our growing profile in the community is bringing more enquiries and bookings from existing and new users.

Laurie has been working incredibly hard to secure these reservations and is maximising on the space we have to offer and the staff we use to accommodate bookings to keep overheads as low as possible.

Additions to the Theatre through Grant

To confirm, as previously discussed, we have purchased through the Levelling Up fund, the Barista Cocktail Machine, an Automated Coffee Machine and a Super-fast Pizza Machine. These should all be operational by the beginning of November – pending Food Hygiene Certification. These items can be utilised across both Theatre and Town Events and will become a positive revenue stream for the Theatre. We will do a sample evening when we are up and running to test suppliers.

Christmas Lights Event

Just to confirm that we are currently in the process of reserving all of the elements of the Christmas Lights Event, and everything is going to plan.

The schools have all been written to, inviting them to perform on the main stage during the day, along with the Hart School performing a Musicals Mash up and Rugeley Musical Theatre Company performing also.

Churches together have confirmed their desire to be involved and will be leading us in carols and a blessing before the lights are switched on at 5pm.

We have gone out to the community via social media asking who they would like to see turning on the lights this year. We have had many suggestions, and I will be putting a 'poll' out asking people to vote for their favourite.

Security have been booked.

Stage and lighting have been booked.

We are awaiting costs on fireworks/drones, but at first glance, it would appear that drones may be out of our price range.

Santa is happy, and is busy in his workshop as we speak. An up-to-date DBS is in hand.

We are expecting to have a greater number of market stalls than we have had before, as many of the traders who are booked onto our Thursday Markets have already expressed an interest in coming. We are meeting with the managers of the Brewery Street Arcade to discuss best practice on the day, to maximise on the space that we have and ways of potentially drawing people down Albion Street to the Brewery Street Arcade by possibly using the car park for stalls.

Business Survey

Given the poor response to the Business Surveys circulated to the Town Centre retailers and the lack of commitment to joining a 'Town Team' to work on specific campaigns to help to increase footfall in town, it was agreed that we set up a group as a trial, inviting key stakeholders to meet and discuss town centre issues, with the hope of it becoming an established working party.

Stakeholders to be invited:

- A representative from CCDC Economic Development Team
- Cllr Olivia Lyons as both a Cllr for RTC and CCDC
- A representative from Brewery Street Arcade
- A number of business owners from our town centre
- PCSC Kevin Lee/Chad Carrington
- A Cllr from SCC

Buskers/Performance Pitches

It is looking unlikely, unless we have a sustained period of good weather, that I will be able to complete another Buskers Pitch in Market Square this year. This will be parked until the Spring 2024.

Pop Up Cinemas

We are holding Pop Up Cinemas during October Half Term. As discussed at the last meeting, these will now be trialled on three consecutive mornings to give parents the option of attending all showings if they are looking for cost effective activities with their children during the holidays.

Performances as follows:

Tuesday 31st October – Hocus Pocus – PG – 11am

Wednesday 1st November – The Adams Family – PG – 11am

Thursday 2nd November – The Witches – PG – 11am

We have slightly increased ticket costs to £3, taking into account increased overheads, and that still comes with a drink and a biscuit.

Flyers are being produced in-house and will be distributed to all Primary Schools in our catchment ahead of the Half Term Holidays.

AOB

Any other updates will be shared verbally.

Sam Bird