

Report of Pudsey Town Centre Manager

Report to Outer West Area Committee

Date: 9th September 2011

Subject: Pudsey Town Centre Manager Update

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s): Pudsey	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

This report looks at the following main issues with reference to Pudsey Town Centre:

1. Economic growth / Prosperity
2. ASB In the town
3. Problems with littering
4. Events
5. Christmas lights / Children in need
6. Budgets / fund raising
7. Empty Units
8. Reward Card
9. Forum
10. Markets
11. Update

Recommendations

The Area Committee is asked to note the information set out in this update report and comment on future priorities for the Town Centre Manager (TCM) to focus on.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report will give members an understanding of the direction and actions that are planned in Pudsey and the issues the town is faced with. This report seeks to inform all members of the positive actions and good things happening in the town of Pudsey and the way it is moving forward.

2 Background information

- 2.1 Since the appointment of the TCM nearly 2 and a half years ago there have been many successes in the Town Centre. Pudsey is now in a much stronger position with only a few units left unlet, footfall seems to be increasing and feed back from many retailers is positive. Although trading conditions still remain critical, Pudsey as a town is fairing far better than most. As a town that had really no direction or dialogue with retailers, Pudsey now has a good grip on where it wants to be. Promoting the town, events, and input from businesses are all helping to move Pudsey in the right direction. Through the efforts of the TCM Pudsey has had good media coverage and attention. There have been several radio interviews with radio5 live and BBC radio Leeds. Working relationships with other council departments are very good and he has an excellent rapport with external agencies such as the police, has been developed. These groups have all been very useful in getting Pudsey to where it wants to be.

3 Main issues

3.1 Economic growth / Prosperity

Pudsey is without doubt bucking the trend of many towns in the country. It has had a number of new shops open in the town over the past year. These independent traders have fitted their shops out very well to make them look very attractive. This helps the appearance of the town and helps with promoting Pudsey. Retailers have said that business for them is steady which given the current economic climate is a bonus. Also the fact that businesses are choosing to move here means they are seeing the potential in the town. Several of the new traders spoken to have expressed that they have come to Pudsey because they see the town as a nice area to open a business. For example, "The Big Bathroom Shop" on Lidget Hill said "Their business is doing exceptionally well and the reason they came to Pudsey was because they had heard about how it was a growing town and they liked the area". Pudsey has many selling points and is a very compact little town where people can get almost anything. It is lacking a in diversity of shops such as shoe and fashion shops for younger people. This

was highlighted in a recent BBC radio programme where people were interviewed and asked what they would like to see in the town. Pudsey does have a number of repeated traders such as takeaways and sandwich shops. It would be in the town's interest to try and fill its empty units with retailers offering something other than food or drink. The TCM is making efforts to try and diversify the offering of retailers in the town.

3.2 ASB in the town

Pudsey has the reoccurring problem with Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) from pupils from the local schools at lunch times. Working with the Environmental Action Team, EAT the TCM is trying to address the problem. There are some ASB issues on weekends with people who come to Pudsey to drink, with shop door ways being used as a public convenience and rubbish from takeaways being discarded. The police have been made aware to look out for this problem, and the TCM has passed the concerns of retailers on to them. There have been a few issues in Pudsey park but the Police have not reported any real major problems.

3.3 Problems with littering

This problem seems to be more prevalent with school children in the town on lunch times. As mentioned in 3.2 the TCM is working with EAT to tackle this problem. Also the issue with the weekend drinking culture and litter around takeaways. Again the TCM is working with EAT to try and look at ways of putting some of the responsibility for this issue back on the shop owners.

3.4 Events

Pudsey is now becoming known for its regularly held events. The vintage fair and farmers markets have been well attended as have the other events held there. The "Teddy Bears Picnics" have been extremely well attended and continue to grow in popularity, and work very well combining the bands in the park with the event. The events attract a very good mix of families with young children, and older people

enjoying the different entertainment which is a great free day out that lasts most of the afternoon.

3.5 Christmas lights / Children in need

The TCM is working with Cllr Coulson to try and bring a smaller downsized light switch on in Pudsey. Both Cllr Coulson and the TCM are coordinating with the working group from the business forum and the BBC to bring together the light switch on and children in need event. This will be a very big thing for Pudsey and will give the town a much needed boost in terms of media exposure. There is a lot of work to do and many hurdles to overcome. The TCM has urged businesses to get involved and he is talking to some of the larger businesses in Pudsey. These businesses include Greggs, Britvic and Asda. The BBC will be doing a live broadcast from the town throughout the evening and they will be filming in the town a week leading up to the event of fundraising activities done by local businesses and groups. The TCM is seeking to use an empty unit to promote the event.

3.6 Budgets / Fund raising

The TCM budget has been used on various events in the town and to support some locally based events organised by local businesses. In addition, the TCM is also looking at private sponsorship from some of the bigger businesses in Pudsey.

3.7 Empty units

As mentioned in 3.1 many of the empty units in Pudsey are now occupied. One still remains on Lidget Hill next to the new Big Bathroom Store, the old Whitegates Estate Agents is being decorated. The two nearer the bottom end of Low Town are proving difficult to let but the agents insist they are being proactive in trying to let them.

3.8 Reward Card

The reward card scheme is still running very well with more and more entries each month. There have been record numbers entering the scheme and some retailers are

stamping cards on a regular basis. A marketing campaign to promote the scheme to inform other people about the scheme is underway. Banners will be put up in the town and flyers distributed as well as press coverage.

3.9 Forum

Unfortunately, There have been dropping numbers in the businesses attending the forum, work continues to promote it existence.

3.10 Markets

A few issues have occurred with Markets recently with queries being made about the way the TCM holds events and runs them. The TCM has run and continues to hold all events in line with markets rules and regulations. The TCM will continue to hold events in the market following the procedures set out by markets. Markets may also look at how to best make use of the space available in Pudsey market. This may include making the space a more flexible area to use. This could be done to accommodate holding more events in the market.

3.11 Update

The car park on Robin Lane is now enforceable as a short stay car park. Highways are aware some of the signage leading into the car park needs to be changed as it is causing confusion with people who are wanting to park there.

The TCM has entered into a dialogue with ASDA who have said they would like a closer working relationship with Pudsey town. It has been proven that you can have a closer working relationship that benefits both parties. This has proven the case in Morley where the TCM there has been able to get the White Rose centre to help and support Morley and some of the events the town holds. Likewise Morley then does support White Rose in some of its activities. Pudsey TCM has taken some advice from the Morley TCM in order to have an understanding as to what can be negotiated.

The TCM is looking into further promotional and marketing initiatives for the town. These could include working with some PR businesses in Pudsey who have offered their services in a limited capacity for free.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

4.1.1 Not applicable

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

4.2.1 The work of the TCM aims to improve the vitality and viability of Pudsey Town Centre for all sections of the community.

4.3 Council Policies and City Priorities

4.3.1 Not applicable

4.4 Resources and Value for Money

4.4.1 The TCM has very little help in terms of man power to organise events and other activities. He does receive some admin support from Area Management however given the lack of support he manages to achieve a great deal.

4.4.2 There are now a number of non-council funded projects running in the town of Pudsey. These include the Shop Local magazine, Shop Local website, venues for the forum and voluntary work carried out by local business owners. These activities include organising some events, advertising for the magazine and website and putting together the Shop Local magazine. This was a large part of the TCM's role which was to get businesses more involved in developing their town's profile and being more proactive. To this end Pudsey now has a good involvement from the businesses in shaping the town's future. Something which was not happening before the TCM came into post, and therefore, the TCM role, can be said to be providing value for money.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

4.5.1 The TCM post and associated events budget is solely funded by the Outer West Area Committee.

4.6 Risk Management

4.6.1 Not applicable

5 Conclusions

5.1 The TCM role is now well established in Pudsey. It has secured a number of successes including trader engagement, new community events and reduced retail unit vacancy levels. There are now a number of non-council funded schemes and activities happening in the town as a result of businesses now being more proactive

in the promotion of Pudsey. This was one of the TCM's main goals and objectives. To engage with traders and get them heavily involved in promoting the town and liaising with them on behalf of the council to resolve any issues. This has by and large been very successful.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 The Area Committee is asked to note the information set out in this report and comment on the future priorities for the TCM to focus on.

7 Background documents

- 7.1 Not applicable