



Network Event

Wincanton - 28th February 2008

Workshop responses

Event Organisation

The workshop discussed benefits of events as well as technical support needed by new or inexperienced event organisers.

- Events (and particularly Festivals) can draw together people from groups in towns that can have very different (and sometimes conflicting) vested interests. This can 'break the ice' and lead onto better working relationships and other projects.
- Every Event needs a good Action Committee – of Do-ers not talkers!
- 'Get the Kids Involved' – both as a positive thing to do (cohesive/inclusive) but also to minimise possible disruption/vandalism/other ASB during the event. Guy Braga gave a good example from Shepton Mallet – he approached primary schools to get involved in a May Festival, specifically on learning May Pole and another traditional dance, to be performed at the Festival. Some early publicity resulted in an elderly volunteer who then taught the children the dances. Really helps the school to incorporate the project into the curriculum – and using flyers in bookbags to get a message out to pupils and parents is effective.
- Following on from the above, early publicity helps to draw volunteers out who are often experienced in that subject (and keen!)
- There is a lot of technical information that event organisers need to get up to speed on – and this changes (e.g. licencing) so updating knowledge important.
- A simple checklist for new or inexperienced event organisers would help – and the workshop participants agreed to contribute to this, with Matt Day coordinating this.
- A list of experienced Event Organisers with contact details would also be a help to facilitate networking and self help. Matt Day agreed to start this.

Tourism and Town Promotion Groups

This workshop gave participants an opportunity to explain what their town was doing in this area and any plans for future work.

- Castle Cary – producing a leaflet with volunteers. Recommend allowing plenty of time to produce. Interpretation boards installed, part of SS Market Towns Investment Group project.
- Watchet – Information Office run by volunteers, with a £750 grant from Town Council to help with projects. Town Council involved in managing. A town leaflet has been produced – no adverts and a little 'bitty' regards content.
- Shepton Mallet – the TIC (Tourism Information Centre) has paid staff and volunteers. There is an Information Panel subgroup of Shepton 21. Businesses are involved in promotional efforts, esp further afield.
- Martock – has a Marketing & Promotion Group. There is a focus on the Parrett Trail. They pointed out that leaflets produced by towns need to be more accessible – i.e. think about users and esp those coming to town for the first time. The Market House is being revamped – a central location and will house visitor information.

There are lots of horseriders but little information for them.

Martock has a quarterly colour newsletter distributed by volunteers, full of local information.

They are republishing their Business Directory – publicising local businesses to the local community.

Very few B&B's in Martock area – need to promote more and look further afield.

The old railway line – walking/cycling route planned, funding needed.

- Somerton – has a website which promotes events in the town - www.somerton.co.uk – and shops in the town pay to advertise on there.
Developed a 30min walk around the town for families – audio guide on tape – hire this from Info Office. Trying to involve families more.
Children's activities promoted via website
Volunteers are crucial to LIC's (Local Information Centre) and TIC's – and someone needs to organise an LIC in addition to other tourism work
Its important to try and involve the whole town (community).
- Wincanton – LIC housed in Town Hall – a 'one-stop shop' open 5 days in winter, 6 in summer. Initiatives come out from Community Plan and local tourism initiatives (some collaboration with Castle Cary and Bruton).
Website – [click here](#) – inc Community Directory, Whats On, Town Council info
'Stroll around the Town' booklet being reprinted
Have put promotional items at Racecourse – many visitors to area there
- Langport – LIC downstairs from LADT
Businesses involved in Tourism Forum (subgroup of Langport 2020 community plan)
- Areas for Development
Family History tourism could be big!

Further Information

Promoting Our Market Towns – Exec Summary and full Study available from www.somersetmarkettowns.co.uk

Hidden Somerset – sustainable tourism site – www.hiddensomerset.com

If you have any queries or would like contact details for any of the participants, please phone Matt Day on 01458 252005 or email matt@somersettrcc.org.uk