

Full Council

Report Title:	Councillors on the Market
Meeting Date:	5 March 2024
Contact Officer:	Mandy Sturdy – Town Clerk

Purpose of the Report

1. To consider the suggestion that Councillors run a Thame Town Council information stall at the Tuesday Market to improve communication with residence and visitors to Thame as well as increasing awareness around the powers the Council do have to deliver services to the community.

Action Required

2. To decide if this suggestion should be actioned and if so, the frequency and who will lead on this project.
3. To review the historic procedure for Councillor Drop-ins.

Background

4. Pre COVID, Thame Town Councillors used to run a Saturday Drop-in to allow members of the public to ask questions of the council. The Procedure for these Drop-in sessions has been attached to give some context and to possibly adapt for this new venture.
5. Provided by Cllr Gilbert *‘Thame Town Council (TTC) is the visible and accessible representation of local government for Thame residents and the Town Hall is the visible embodiment of this. Increasingly, the TTC is being drawn into local issues over which it has little (planning) or no (roads) control. The risk is that if we say “we don’t do that” too many times, the good people of Thame will ask “so exactly what DO you do?” A reasonable question, but the reality is that TTC does a whole raft of things locally – we just need to communicate these to the town. In the recent past (pre-COVID) there was a monthly TTC Saturday clinic, where residents could come to the Town Hall Upper Chamber and put their points to councilors (both Town and District) face to face. However, this had limited success in terms of traffic and was stopped by COVID lockdown’.*
6. This method of communicating could also form part of the information gathering exercise for our strategic plan.

Resource Appraisal

7. Three or four boards which communicate the things TTC does for the community.
8. Officer time to help create boards

9. A pop-up stand / gazebo (we have one)
10. A rota of councillors willing to staff this – the core of this will be the Mayor and Deputy, but it would be good to have other councillors involved (suggest 2/3 available at any one time)
11. Minimal costs expected but agreement of where any funding should come from.
12. Maintenance staff time to deliver and help set up, take down and re - store the gazebo.
13. There would not be a charge from the Market Co-operative.

Risk Assessment

- Safety and welfare of Councillors must be included in risk assessments as part of this project.
- Accurate information will need to be available to support councillors and reduce the likelihood of reputational damage.

Legal Powers

- Local Government Act 1972 s111

Recommendation

- i) **To consider the report and decide if Thame Town Council should run an information stall on the Tuesday Market.**
- ii) **If the above decision is agreed then to decide on the frequency of the events (for example, weekly or monthly) and who will lead on the project.**