

Case study: Markets

1) Christmas Fayre

We recognise the importance of a thriving market to local people, providing employment and opportunities for traders, increasing footfall in the towns and improving the offer to visitors.

One particular highlight in 2016/17 was the Bury St Edmunds Christmas Fayre. The annual event achieved national recognition in 2016 by winning HolidayLettings "UK's Best Christmas Market" award with 2016 the first year that we have asked visitors to take part in the poll. The winning market secured over 700 votes, beating off competition from the other 12 renowned Christmas Markets shortlisted for this prestigious award including Manchester, Bath, and Edinburgh Christmas Markets.

The fayre also saw an increase in visitors, with 125,000 in 2016 compared to 120,000 in 2015. Measures such as increasing the opening times and range of parking options contributed to its success. For example, more than 1000 extra car parking spaces were introduced which added to the smooth running of the event.

Success was also owed to increased community participation. More local people than ever got involved in this year's fayre, with children from eight different schools taking part in the opening night parade and West Suffolk College students running two of the stages and performing street theatre. St Benedict's school also ran a stall in the Apex which raised approximately £250 which will be used to fund their existing after school arts, crafts and design clubs. Furthermore, there were around 12 stalls on St John's Street selling arts and crafts made by West Suffolk College carpentry students. The students raised approximately £300 and this money will be used to fund further community projects within the college.

The Christmas market in Queens Street, Haverhill was also a great success with an enhanced regular market and an extension of the opening times, resulting in increased footfall.



2) Supporting our markets

Our commitment to developing the regular markets and introducing special events and additional markets has continued this year.

Particular highlights this year include a trial farmers market run in conjunction with the Christmas Fayre in Bury St Edmunds. The market encouraged increased footfall in the area, with both businesses and stalls benefitting. Following this success, we are looking at additional areas for the regular market and options for the Sunday market offer.

Our support of 'Independents Week' continued this year, which is promoted by the Business Improvement District (BID) Ourburystedmunds. The aim is to encourage residents and visitors to shop locally, which means supporting the town centre shops, restaurants, cafes and other businesses, over half of which are independent. We also focus on the range of stalls and traders in the market every Wednesday and Saturday of which there are around 80 permanent stallholders.

During the school summer holidays we held six community markets every Tuesday in Newmarket. Stalls taking part included children's entertainment, a farmers market, community and charity stalls. The market was also involved in the town's music festival with a day of live entertainment and children's activities.

Throughout the year, Haverhill has hosted many special events on the Market Square. These have included six craft and gift markets, a motor show, a beer festival, a food and drink festival and a youth market. We also held a world market in Queen Street for two days during Easter and a two day Christmas market to link with Haverhill Town Council's Christmas Light switch on event. Excellent links have been made with the two local academies and the youth skills manager at ONE Haverhill and as a result, all have been involved in our youth market and other events.

Lastly, Mildenhall market has had a regular column in the Mildenhall Messenger and at Christmas there was entertainment and a free reusable bag giveaway.

3) Developing our markets

In last year's report, we talked about wanting to continue deepening our partnerships in order to support local markets. We therefore announced plans that business students in West Suffolk College would conduct market research to better understand the impact that different stakeholders have on each other.

This market research has now taken place and the students recently presented their findings to the portfolio holders for the economy and growth, the portfolio holders for families and communities, the market development officer and members of the market trader liaison group and the markets team.

The presentation was well received and their valuable findings will be presented in a full report later in 2017. The market development officer will continue to work with the students to look at ways to implement their ideas into the Bury St Edmunds market. This project has also provided an excellent opportunity for the students.

Another way that we have worked to develop the markets has been through utilising the creativity of Year 7 and 8 pupils at St Benedict's Catholic School. The pupils were tasked with designing a bag, logo and strap line for the Bury St Edmunds market. Pupils visited the market to gain ideas and the market development officer, along with market traders, worked with the pupils on the final designs. The winning designs were picked by the Mayor and the bags were launched on the market in January 2017.