

MARKET DRAYTON COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE ANNUAL REPORT

MDCE is comprised of three main activity functions: Drayton Arts Festival (including Schools' Calendar Project, Canal Towpath Maintenance Group and Core Activities (including Festivals).

A rota for the period during which Trustees could serve before retiring and, if appropriate, be re-appointed was agreed.

Following MDCE's October 2021 'Going Green' Festival providing the catalyst for the formation of Market Drayton Climate Action in January 2022, MDCE's liaison with MDCA ceased in June when it was known that MDCA could function independently, notwithstanding that a pre-planned 'Going Greener' Festival in July went ahead.

A DAF/MDCE Covid Memorial Sculpture with commemorative plaque was installed early April and unveiled by the High Sheriff of Shropshire who was inaugurating MDCE's Spring Festival of Health & Wellbeing. External volunteers provided materials and services free of charge. Regrettably the sculpture and plaque were subsequently vandalised, necessitating repair. The High Sheriff engaged with MDCE to organise a subsequent visit to the Town, particularly to meet with local volunteers, the theme for her year in Office. The itinerary enabled her to meet with over 40 volunteers, plus local dignitaries.

Two Festivals of Health & Wellbeing and one Creative, Culture & Leisure Fair were held, on each occasion attracting 30 exhibitors - most providing services etc to Market Drayton and District's residents but without having an obvious presence in the Town – to the attention of the visiting public, averaging circa 150 per event. This was down circa 50% on pre-Covid visitors. Voluntary donations were invited from exhibitors and entry for the visiting public was free.

A Transport Forum immediately following the Spring Festival attracted over 40 persons to draw attention to the difficulties experienced by the public in accessing anywhere other than Shrewsbury and Newcastle-under-Lyme/Hanley. Neither of the two Shropshire hospitals are readily accessible. Arriva and Shropshire Council failed to be represented, although the newly elected Helen Morgan MP was. Helen has subsequently been extremely active in raising this issue in Parliament and elsewhere, so far without success.

DAF organised various activities covering all generations and the ninth Schools' Calendar Project involving the students at all 13 local schools. Activities enabled anyone to try out new creative skills in specialist workshops; to sing along with local bands and choirs; try martial arts and various dancing sessions; an AmDram performance; a craft and gift fair; displays of local artists, photographers and school children; puppetry and storytelling.

That the Town Cemetery will reach capacity by 2035-40 (estimates vary) coinciding with a perceived need for a natural (green) burial site, led to a presentation being made before local Parish Councillors of Stoke-upon-Tern and Sutton-upon-Tern. This was subsequently deemed by Trustees as not being a project that MDCE should undertake, but not before the matter was taken on board by the two Councils. Thus, it provided the catalyst for an independent Project being initiated for a section of the local cemetery to be allocated to natural burials, pending negotiating for a long term site on the Tern Hill Barracks post de-commissioning per inclusion within the Brief for a Community Land Trust. Following de-commissioning, the Barracks will come within the domain of the two Parish Councils mentioned.

MDCE has been represented at most of the North Shropshire Community Connector Network meetings organised by Qube of Oswestry.

MDCE is liaising with the Drayton Civic Society to produce an update of the Town Trail leaflet.

The Canal Towpath Maintenance Team provide volunteer labour with the Canal & River Trust providing basic tools and consumables free of charge.