

NEWPORTFIRST

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Newport's 'town team' celebrated its first birthday on 12th February and what a fantastic year it has been with loads of successes thanks mainly to local traders and businesses.

So what have we achieved to date? Well in addition to a regular newsletter, monthly business meetings, all of the organisational necessities (bank account, business plan, constitution, etc.) we have carried out two major surveys, established a trader data-base, regularly monitor empty properties, developed an ongoing 'shop local' campaign, promoted a series of national events like Indie Day (July) and Small Business Saturday (December), published promotional features in local media, developed an on-line presence through a hosted site that costs us nothing, and loads more.

Great start but what next? Year one was just a start for the town team - you have generated some great ideas to help make Newport a better place to live, shop and work. Whilst the Visitor Economy Partnership is taking a bit longer to get going than we had anticipated it has not stopped us developing a package of heritage related proposals for the town centre that will improve our visitor offer. A group of enthusiastic traders are about to launch a markets sub-group with great ideas around improved marketing, increasing days of operation and bags more. We are continuing to explore training and development opportunities for local businesses including ambassador schemes (taxi's & shop workers) and better support for businesses moving into the digital age. We continue to lobby and support the town council to improve car parking. There is a full programme of events throughout the year that we can contribute to and benefit from including St. George's Day, the carnival and Newport Show. We are also exploring ideas to improve Newport's cultural offer and to make the night-time economy an attractive option for all.

What if I have a good idea about improving Newport town centre? The town team strives to be an open and inclusive organisation. We value every contribution, including those that are critical. So if you have a great idea, want to raise an issue, or if you want to get involved in some way, just email or telephone the town team manager

Town Team Annual General Meeting..... The annual general meeting will take place at 6.00pm on Tuesday 8th April at The Pheasant PH. Attendees eligible to vote will be asked to confirm and vote on nominations for the positions of ***chairman, vice-chairman, treasurer and secretary***. All existing post-holders have expressed a willingness to re-stand however new nominations are welcomed. If you wish to be considered for a position you are required to inform the town team manager at least 7 days prior to the meeting and confirm who will be proposing and seconding your nomination.

Traders are Guilty Too.....We are all aware that the absence of traffic wardens in Newport is resulting in many on-street town centre car parkers ***staying well over the permitted 40 minutes.*** Some contravene the restrictions marginally whilst others stay for hours. Some are shoppers and visitors whilst others are traders and business owners / workers themselves. The consequences of these transgressions are clear - less opportunity for our customers to park and almost certainly a loss of much needed trade somewhere in the town. ***Are you one of the offenders?***

The 'town team' and Newport's Chamber of Commerce have jointly agreed to approach all members to request that you respect the waiting restrictions. We are trying to maximise footfall and make Newport a more vibrant town centre - those contravening the restrictions are working against the best interests of all local traders and businesses.

We will continue to jointly support Newport Town Council in their efforts to find an effective solution. Meantime, if you are aware of persistent offenders please let us know (usual contact details) and we will report repeating offenders to the police so when resources are available they can take action.

St. George's Day Celebrations.....Newport will be celebrating St. George's Day on Saturday 19th April with a host of events. Local Cllr and event organiser Peter Scott is delighted by initial interest and has invited the town team and all Newport traders / businesses to get into the spirit of things by joining the local community in making this a day to remember.

The provisional itinerary includes Newport Rotary Club's mile of pennies collection in aid of young carers and Newport Food Bank - both very worthy local causes. This actually starts on Friday 18th and continues into Saturday 19th April.

On Saturday the Royal Society of St. George will host a stall in The Square, adjacent there will be 'free' face painting from 10.00am and Morris Dancing from 11.00am till 1.00pm.

The main event commences at 12.00 noon with a St. George's Day Parade starting outside The Shakespeare PH and progressing along the High Street. This is to be followed by dragon slaying at ~12.20pm, and a mini '*George & the Dragon*' battle at 12.40pm with 'free' tasters of locally made special delicacies including St. George buns' & dragon sausages.

The Royal Victoria Hotel will be serving Shropshire Fidget pie, Matthews butchers will be supplying dragon sausages, and The Barley Mow PH will be selling dragon hot dogs and sandwiches plus loads more. **So get involved and make Newport's St. George's Day a day to remember for local shoppers & our visitors.**

Contacting the Town Team:-

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