**Markets Working Group**

**Tuesday 21st May, 12 noon**

**Notes**

In attendance: Cllrs Hughes, Manton, Nellins and Town Clerk

 Shropshire Council: Kate Gittins and Ruth Westwood

 The Retail Group: Mike Evans

1. **To elect a Chair for the meeting**

Cllr Hughes was in attendance and chaired the meeting

1. **Apologies**

Cllr Aldcroft

1. **Notes**

The notes from the meetings held on the 31 January 2024 were agreed.

1. **Shropshire Councils Business Growth Service**

Ruth Westwood, Key Accounts and Investment Officer, Business Growth Service, Shropshire Council, introduced herself.

She explained that she is the officer responsible for large businesses, mainly in the north of the County providing:

Help and support to help businesses grow

Support with inward investment

Guidance for businesses moving into Shropshire to ensure they move to the right locations

She works with Muller and businesses on Turn Valley Business Park.

The economic growth team also administers the SPF funding which is available to small-medium enterprises and the Marches Energy Grants along with other grants.

A conversation took place around the promotion of the town to encourage new retail businesses to the town and the need for a town prospectus.

The contact at Shropshire Council to approach about a prospectus is Lucy Roberts, Place Plan Officer. Ruth agreed to speak to Emma Williams about the need for a prospectus.

1. **Market**

Kate Gittins provided an update on the markets.

She said:

* she currently has 50 expressions of interest for a market stall.
* the social media has been improved which has resulted in some positivity.
* there have been some changes in the indoor market, a new vintage menswear stall has recently opened.
* there is more interest in the outdoor market currently as it is summer.

Kate is the Town Champion and part of the Market Town Collective. Meetings are being organised by Shropshire Council for the Market Town Collective representatives and Town Clerks to discuss issues within towns/share best practice etc.

1. **Market Drayton Town Centre Strategy and Action Plan**

Mike Evans, The Retail Group, presented the Market Drayton Town Centre Strategy and Action Plan. He said a lot of research has taken place which drives the conclusions and recommendations.

There was good feedback from stakeholders.

The main points identified were:

* Market Drayton has a lot of assets to build on and promote; need to make more of the natural assets.
* Lack of information/signposting to some of the assets ie. the Canal, Church, Market, Home of the Gingerbread.
* Public Realm needs improving
* 3 large empty shops give the wrong impression of the town: remove closed signs and install some window displays promoting what is available in the town.
* Produce a promotional prospectus to encourage new business to the town. Mike to send through some examples.
* Improve the shopping experience; remind the ‘lost’ shoppers of what is in town; make the town a destination town.
* Hold more family, friendly events/markets
1. **Next Steps**
* Action plan to be shared with Town Councillors
* Action plan to be shared with Shropshire Council Economic Development Department with a view to it being used as an evidence base for funding applications
* Investigating setting up a Market Drayton Promotions Action Group.
* Investigate the production of a Market Drayton Town Prospectus; information contained in the action plan and from Visit Shropshire could be used to populate the document.