

LAUNCH OF MAKE IT MARKET DRAYTON EVENT REPORT

July 2025

Key Information

Launch of 'Make It Market Drayton' to local businesses

Date: Thursday 26th June 2025

Venue: Festival Drayton Centre

Attendance: 69 attendees, including high street shops, home-based businesses, community organisations, and Shropshire Council representatives

Purpose of the Event

The event was held to formally launch Make It Market Drayton to local businesses and introduce the accompanying website where they can upload and share information. The project aims to provide a local platform to support, promote, and connect Market Drayton businesses and community groups, and to encourage involvement in wider town activities.

Overview

The launch of Make It Market Drayton brought together a diverse group of people committed to the future of the town. With 69 attendees from local businesses, community groups, and Shropshire Council filling the Festival Drayton Centre, the atmosphere was warm, engaged, and forward-looking.

What stood out most was a shared enthusiasm to work together, forge new connections, and play an active role in shaping the town's future – whether through tidying public spaces or promoting all that Market Drayton has to offer.

Attendees were inspired by the speakers and took away valuable information about support and funding. They were particularly encouraged by the focus on positive stories, the celebration of local successes, and the realisation that there truly is something for everyone in Market Drayton – the challenge being that many hadn't known about these opportunities before.



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Speakers

There was a quick introduction by Cllr Tim Manton and Geoff from the Festival Drayton Centre, followed by the programme:

- Helen McCabe introduced the new website and showed how businesses and community groups can add their details, promote events, and share updates.
- Mark Hooper (Visit Shropshire) highlighted the recent rise in tourism across the county and shared tips on how businesses can tap into growing visitor numbers.
- Ruth Westwood (Invest in Shropshire) outlined support available through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), including grants for high street improvements.
- Flores Diem reflected on the day-to-day realities of running a small business during challenging economic times and the importance of local support.
- Lee Gilbert (Fowler & Gilbert Ltd) shared how his creative business continues to grow through adaptability, partnerships, and a local-first approach.

Cllr Tim Manton then provided a quick look at the Action Plan and took people into the consultation part of the evening.

Consultation

Attendees then took part in the table discussions were held around the seven priorities from the town's Action Plan, sparking plenty of conversation and ideas and at the end were given the opportunity to feedback on one key point raised on each table.

7 Take Away:

1. **Dress the Large Empty Retail Units** - Pop-up shops in vacant units and inviting local artists to display their artwork.
2. **A Good News Story** - Emphasising the importance of networking — beyond just websites — to share positive stories and support each other.
3. **Maximise Visibility of Existing Offer** - Organising tidy-up events, with strong interest in combining litter picking and social “pint” gatherings.
4. **Town Market Actions & Quick Wins** - Improved signage between the town centre, market, and Talbot Wharf; addressing feelings of exclusion among high street businesses during market days.
5. **Local Heroes Event, Producers, Food, Hospitality, and More** - Ideas for events like a gingerbread trail, walking festival, and telling more stories about Market Drayton's heritage, especially its gingerbread legacy.
6. **Family Fun Days** - Making better use of community spaces for family activities, with some discussion about providing events for teenagers.
7. **Discover Market Drayton Website and Social Media** - Developing the town's online presence, with significant interest in podcasts, video content, and social media — noting that some businesses may need training to get involved.

More information will be provided from the notes made on each table.

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Networking & Collaboration

The event also served as a space to build new relationships. Attendees swapped contact details, shared experiences, and found areas of common interest. Many said they felt energised by the atmosphere and left with new ideas, potential collaborations, or simply the confidence to get more involved.

Several people came forward to volunteer for future events and get more involved, and many expressed the importance of speaking positively about the town, support each other's projects, and keep the momentum going.

Feedback Forms

From the event, the following contributions were received:

- 7 requests to add business details to the website
- 4 business surveys completed
- 2 written responses to "What do you love most about Market Drayton?"
- 1 event submitted for the online community calendar

These submissions will be followed up and added to the site, and we'll continue collecting feedback and content at future events.

Next Steps

The launch event sets the tone for a wider programme of activity. Actions to be considered include:

- A full report of feedback gained from the discussion tables.
- Monthly community events to support the Aristan market, the next Community Day on Saturday 12 July
- A Community and Charities Showcase event in September, focused on support and funding
- Development of a 12-part podcast series featuring interviews with 24 local businesses, groups and residents
- Continued promotion of the Second Tuesday networking sessions for businesses
- Formation of working groups to develop specific Action Plan priorities
- A pilot Litter Picking & Pint event
- Greater involvement from young people, including outreach to The Grove School
- Meetings with organisations including the Patient Group and Shropshire Chamber of Commerce
- Themed content and campaigns around Care Month, Play in Parks, World Chocolate Day, Weddings, Allotments and more.

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Conclusion

The launch of Make It Market Drayton demonstrated a clear appetite for connection, collaboration, and shared ownership of the town's future. Attendees brought ideas, energy, and goodwill – and the message was clear: people want to get involved and help Market Drayton thrive.

With continued communication, practical outcomes, and space for people to play a role, the platform provides a strong foundation for long-term local impact.

Press Coverage

You can read more the launch event at:

- Interview on BBC Radio Shropshire, 10.16am on Thursday 26th June
- Write up on Make it Market Drayton <https://makeitmarketdrayton.com/businesses-help-launch-make-it-market-drayton-at-packed-event/>
- Interview with BBC Campaign to promote town gets under way - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cly83gr6k7ko>
- Businesses help launch 'Make It Market Drayton' at packed event - <https://www.shropshirestar.com/your-world/2025/06/30/businesses-help-launch-make-it-market-drayton-at-packed-event/>
- Businesses to work together on ambitious plan to make Market Drayton 'talk of north Shropshire' - <https://www.shropshirestar.com/news/local-hubs/north-shropshire/market-drayton/2025/06/28/businesses-to-work-together-on-ambitious-plan-to-make-market-drayton-talk-of-north-shropshire/>
- Many attendees also shared the news on their social media accounts.
- To be included in Lee Gilbert's Youtube channel

