

MAKE IT MARKET DRAYTON RECOMMENDED PRIORITIES

2026/27

Introduction

The recommended priorities for 2026/27 are drawn from the original Make It Market Drayton Marketing Plan and informed by feedback gathered from a range of sources over the past year. This includes input from the business consultation event held in June, as well as responses from community groups, charities, and residents collected at other local events and through general enquiries.

These priorities focus on areas where action will have the greatest impact in supporting local businesses, promoting Market Drayton as a destination, enhancing the visitor experience, celebrating the town's heritage, and encouraging collaboration across the community. They reflect the collective views of those who live, work, and invest in the town, and provide a clear framework for the work of Make It Market Drayton in 2026/2

Monitoring & Evaluation

As part of the Marketing Plan, the project's progress has been monitored and evaluated through regular reports showing website statistics, social media performance, and timesheets. Moving forward, I would like to gather more qualitative feedback and will encourage people to leave reviews on Google, which will then be shared on the website.

The link to leave reviews is: <https://g.page/r/CdY3AdU5XicMEAI/review>

There has been substantial press coverage, as well as face-to-face and Facebook feedback regarding our events. I will now begin promoting the Google review link to collect more qualitative feedback.

THE MARKETING PLAN



Website Creation

The website has been created with a directory, events section, blog, and an interactive map. This has been successfully delivered, with 300 businesses and charities now added, with the exception of the interactive map.

As you may remember, the additional work required to upload events and add business profiles was not included in the original quote, as it is time-consuming and costly. It has been great to have Lorraine's help in keeping the website updated and in researching new events and business profiles.

Businesses have been very supportive of having their profile featured on the website free of charge, and we have received several requests from them when we host events. Many of the events listed are organised by charities, providing excellent content for the website. Combined with the blog, this makes the site a valuable resource for anyone wanting to find out what's happening in Market Drayton.

I would recommend keeping this within the budget for 2026/27, as maintaining it internally within Market Drayton Town Council is far more cost-effective.

The blog has been updated regularly, and given the importance of having unique, up-to-date content, it should remain a priority. Continuing to share news, information, and stories from people in the town helps raise awareness of what's on and strengthens community engagement.

Social Media

The original Marketing Plan aimed to increase awareness of Market Drayton's offerings, and our social media channels have become a key place for people to share news and find out what's on—particularly through the Make It Market Drayton Facebook Group, which remains very active.

At first, our content was based around national campaigns such as Mental Health Week, Love Your Parks, and Beer Days. However, as the number of local events and activities we've been involved with has grown, the focus has naturally shifted towards sharing updates about what's happening in the town and showcasing our own involvement.

It is recommended that we continue maintaining this level of content and interaction, as it has been great to see so many people become regular contributors to the group. Moving forward, I see this evolving further by sharing more content directly from the Market Drayton What's On pages and highlighting stories from local businesses and charities.

Email Marketing

In the Marketing Plan, we recommended sending monthly email newsletters once the website was launched. Since May, we have sent nine email newsletters, with open and click rates performing well above average. I would strongly recommend continuing with this activity.

Thanks to the work involved in hosting events and researching companies for the directory, we now have an email list of 443 recipients. The newsletters have mainly focused on events and activities we've organised, and we have also received requests from businesses to include their own news stories. This will further strengthen the newsletter as a valuable tool for sharing updates and driving traffic to the website.

Community Engagement

In the Marketing Plan, we highlighted the importance of community engagement, which continues to play a vital role in connecting with people in Market Drayton. Initiatives such as the afternoon tea for volunteers, business networking events, and engagement with schools are integral parts of this work.

Community engagement also serves as an excellent PR tool for Market Drayton Town Council, helping us become more visible in the community. Feedback has been very positive, with requests for more councillors to attend local events.

As events play a major role in driving footfall, it is a high priority to continue organising these and to work with partners to deliver larger-scale events. Increasing footfall is essential for attracting further investment, such as from potential hotel developers.

Feedback from the Launch Event

During the launch of Make It Market Drayton, attendees were invited to provide feedback on the Town Centre Action Plan and share their priorities. These priorities and possible next steps are as follows:

1. Dress the Large Empty Retail Units

Possible next steps: The Council has had some success in dressing the empty B&M retail unit, and it would be beneficial to extend this approach to other vacant retail outlets. Perhaps we could seek the assistance of local art and heritage groups to create presentation boards or window displays for these spaces.

Does the Council have contacts with the landlords of these units, and would it be possible to liaise with Shropshire Council regarding High Street Rental Auctions?

2. A Good News Story

Possible next steps: Continue sharing stories from local people. This is already underway through podcasts and workshops that help local businesses develop skills. I also recommend publishing a story to highlight this success

3. Maximise Visibility of Existing Offer

Possible next steps include organising litter-picking events, improving signage between the canal, shops, and market, enhancing lighting, running a doorstep competition, hosting a continental market, and providing outdoor seating. Could the Council liaise with Streetscene regarding improved signage, and would it be interested in exploring the idea of a continental market?

I am currently working with James Pledger from Grove School to involve students in a litter-picking event planned for April 2026, to coincide with the Big Spring Clean.

4. Town Market Actions & Quick Wins

Possible next steps include improving signage between markets and shops. Should a working group be established to explore ways in which markets and shops could collaborate more effectively or should this be incorporated into the next networking events?

Feedback from the Launch Event

5. Local Heroes, Producers, Food, Hospitality & More

Possible next steps include promoting the heritage of gingerbread and working closely with the museum.

Good progress has already been made: I attended the walk during the Ginger & Spice Festival with 12 participants, and these walks are likely to grow, particularly as we continue to promote them. I am also developing hospitality trails, such as a historic pub crawl, to support local businesses and highlight the town's gingerbread heritage.

A Gingerbread page has been created on the website (thanks to the Civic Society), and the next step would be to promote the museum's existing monthly heritage walks. I also plan to publish more content about Market Drayton's heritage with the assistance of the Civic Society.

6. Family Fun Days

We have hosted successful spring and summer events and recommend continuing them during the summer months, as feedback has been very positive.

Given the success of the Health & Wellbeing Hubs and the number of health and wellbeing businesses in Market Drayton, I recommend combining these events to make health-focused activities fun and engaging for the community.

7. Discover Market Drayton Website and Social Media

We are beginning to deliver the next steps by offering a range of digital media workshops. The first four workshops are scheduled for October and November, supporting local businesses and community groups to develop digital skills and increase engagement.

Positive Response at Events

We have consistently received positive feedback when hosting events. Business leaders have expressed that they greatly appreciate the support from Market Drayton Town Council and feel fortunate to run a business in the town, noting that few other towns would offer the same level of support—particularly free networking and training opportunities.

Volunteers attending the afternoon tea spoke very highly of the event and the support they receive from the Council.

Families attending community events have also given very positive feedback, often travelling into town specifically to participate. Many are pleasantly surprised that the events are free. The main requests from businesses, charities, and residents are to continue promoting their activities and “what’s on.” I believe this should remain a priority, helping businesses and community groups share their news, attract visitors, and create opportunities for growth and increased customer engagement in Market Drayton.

Summary

The Make It Market Drayton website has continued to grow steadily since its launch, with a notable increase in active users this quarter. News stories, event listings, and community updates remain among the most-visited pages, highlighting the importance of keeping content fresh and regularly updated.

Several objectives outlined in the original Marketing Plan have already been accomplished, and ongoing work—such as delivering community events, litter-picking initiatives, and free training—demonstrates that we are listening to local businesses and responding to their requests. While social media continues to be a key channel for sharing content, the strategy is now focusing on directing users to the website to engage with full articles. This approach not only increases on-site traffic but also provides better insight into audience interests.

Improvements to GEO targeting and the addition of new keywords are helping to boost visibility, while new content formats—such as podcasts and directory updates—continue to enhance engagement with local businesses and community groups.

Overall, the website is establishing itself as a central hub for community news, events, and connections, providing a strong foundation for future growth and engagement, while reinforcing our commitment to supporting local businesses and the wider community. These efforts contribute to making Market Drayton a place where people want to live, work, visit, and stay.