

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

**15 JANUARY 2020**

### **CHRISTMAS 2019 CAMPAIGN EVALUATION**

#### **1.0 Purpose of Report**

1.1 To provide the Economic Development Committee with an update on the District-wide Christmas campaign delivered in December 2019.

#### **2.0 Background Information**

2.1 Members will recall that in December 2018 we ran a Christmas promotion campaign in Newark to support the local retail economy following concerns that disruptive roadworks in the town for the Severn Trent Water works had discouraged customers and adversely affected trade throughout 2018.

2.2 The success of the resultant Newark campaign in 2018 prompted us to plan a wider District-wide Christmas campaign for 2019. We identified that a large and growing number of Christmas/Winter events and activities were planned across the District from mid-November onwards that would appeal to different audiences from both within and outside the District.

2.3 The objectives of the campaign were to:

- i) Raise public awareness of the District-wide Christmas/Winter events, activities and opportunities for shopping and leisure among potential day visitors including from other areas of Nottinghamshire and the East Midlands
- ii) Drive increased footfall from customers in the campaign catchment areas to boost retail and hospitality business in the District specifically in the important pre-Christmas trading period
- iii) Drive increased traffic to our new visitor websites
- iv) Generate public engagement in the campaign to gain more followers on social media for our longer-term marketing advantage

#### **3.0 Proposals**

3.1 The campaign ran between 4 November 2019 and 1 January 2020 inclusive and comprised the following promotional activities:

- Online Christmas events calendar with links to individual event webpages
- 4 dedicated blog posts
- 30sec video compilation of event footage in collaboration with event organisers (boosted post)
- 178 social media posts including boosted video post

3.2 The campaign results were very positive:

- 8,442 unique visits to individual event webpages (the highest being for Newark Christmas Lights Switch On and Rufford Abbey's Christmas Weekend)
- 252,397 social media impressions
- 204,319 video views
- 1,919 social media engagements (on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram)
- 75 additional social media followers gained since 1 November 2019

3.3 The high volume of video views is particularly impressive, showing the value of good quality video footage in engaging people. Footage was shot at several events for use in future years' campaigns also.

3.4 The campaign was one factor among many in whether people chose to find out more or ultimately attend the events and activities, along with event organisers' own promotional activities, the weather etc. However, the above results indicate that it contributed positively to their success this year.

3.5 The Christmas campaign was part of a new plan of promotional campaigns to support the District's visitor economy. It followed the earlier 'Festivals', 'Easter at Sherwood Forest' and 'Late Summer in Southwell' campaigns in 2019. Results from each campaign are helping to inform subsequent plans.

#### **4.0 Equalities Implications**

4.1 The campaign followed the Council's guidelines for accessible communications.

#### **5.0 Financial Implications**

5.1 The annual Promotion of Tourism budget was used to cover all costs of the campaign.

5.2 Stakeholders, including event organisers and hosting attractions, actively supported the campaign by distributing sharing social media posts and links to our websites among their networks.

#### **6.0 Community Plan – Alignment to Objectives**

6.1 The campaign objectives align with Objective 5 of the Community Plan – Increase visits to Newark and Sherwood.

#### **7.0 Comments of Director**

7.1 The reach of the campaign was again impressive, particularly the number of views on the video, which appears to have captured imaginations to far exceed expectations. We will continue to seek feedback from retailers as to how we can assist in promoting offers and campaigns throughout the year, with a view to raising interest and footfall.

## **8.0 RECOMMENDATION**

**That the success of the District-wide Christmas campaign in raising awareness of the range of seasonal events on offer across the District and in increasing visitors and followers to our digital channels for our longer-term marketing advantage be noted.**

### **Reason for Recommendation**

**Delivery of this visitor campaign performance is to be noted with regard to future campaign planning.**

### **Background Papers**

Nil

For further information, please contact Richard Huthwaite, Business Manager – Tourism on Ext 5951.

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