

Halesowen Area Committee- 13th January 2011

Report of the Director of the Urban Environment

Halesowen Town Centre Development

Purpose of the Report

1. To update the Committee on progress with regard to physical developments taking place in and around Halesowen Town Centre.

Background

2. At the 14th March 2007 Halesowen Area Committee, Members requested that progress reports be presented to future Committees with an update on progress with regard to the development of the Cornbow shopping centre, bus station and town centre development and management issues.

Regeneration and Planning Issues

3. Work is continuing on the Action Plan for environmental improvements for the Town Centre with proposals being drawn up for environmental and ecological improvements to the River Stour in the vicinity of the town centre
4. The Husky Dog Island planting scheme has been completed following the planting of a number of trees on the island and highway verges, with Sandvik Coromant Ltd kindly sponsoring the Cedar of Lebanon tree on the centre of the island

5. Empty Shops Initiative

A survey of all empty shops in Halesowen town centre has been carried out, including an assessment of their suitability for vinyls or alternative temporary uses. Agent and/or owners are now being approached to discuss these alternatives and seek permission to apply the vinyls where appropriate. A verbal update on progress will be made at the meeting.

6. Halesowen In Bloom

The community based proposals for the renovation of the raised planter at the top of Peckingham Street have commenced with the removal of overmature planting and the provision of new topsoil. The railings to protect the planting are due to be installed by the end of January 2011 and the replacement planting by the end of March 2011. This project is being delivered in partnership by the Council, Halesowen Gardeners Club,

Halesowen Chamber of Trade and residents of Halesowen and is a demonstration project of how the community can become involved in such projects.

A community bulb planting exercise took place on the 19th November, with crocus bulbs being planted in the verge at the top of Great Cornbow.

Students from Halesowen College have been participating in an exercise to produce marketing material for the In Bloom initiative, in the form of a logo, poster and badges. 11 students submitted marketing material for the In Bloom Working Group to consider, and 4 students were shortlisted to present their proposals to the Working Group at their meeting on the 14th December. As a result of this, the proposals submitted by Oliver Whittall were chosen as the winner and are proposed to be used as the brand for the In Bloom initiative. All entrants have been presented with a certificate acknowledging their involvement in this exercise.

7. Town Centre Management Issues

Since the last report on this subject to the Area Committee on the 10th November 2010 the Town Centre Management services has carried out the following:

Christmas Lights Switch On 20th November 2010

- Halesowen Chamber of Trade held Halesowen Town Centre's annual Christmas lights event on Saturday 20th November 2010. A fun fair was arranged for the day. The day was hosted by BRMB's radio; and the event was well received Father Christmas delighted the crowd and switched on the towns Christmas lights with the Mayor, Councillor Peter Miller.

Sandvik Tree Christmas Lights Switch On 6th December 2010

- This is an annual event with representatives from Sandvik who have sponsored the Christmas tree inviting the Mayor to switch on the town tree lights. The event had approximately 200 local school children singing Christmas carols accompanied by a school brass band in Somers Square, after which the Mayor, Councillor Peter Miller and Mayoress Hillary Miller were presented with the new tree by Mr. Alan Boulton Managing Director for Sandvik Ltd a brief speech of thanks to all present was made and the tree's white lights were then switched on.

Churches Together Carol Service 18th December 2010

- Churches Together held their annual Carol Service in Somers Square on Saturday 18th December 2010. It was well received by visitors, shoppers and residents in the town centre.

Finance

8. There are currently limited resources available for public realm developments which could contribute to an 'in Bloom' initiative. All other activities and developments detailed within this reported are funded from resources held by the Directorate of the Urban Environment.

Law

9. Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 enables the Council to do anything which environmental wellbeing of any part of the Borough.

Equality Impact

10. The proposal contained within this report complies with the Councils equal opportunities policy.

11. A principal role of the Directorate of the Urban Environment is to encourage regeneration which will impact on all sectors of the community, including the needs of children and young people.

Recommendation

12. That the Committee notes the progress of development in Halesowen Town Centre



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List of Background Papers
None