

Atherstone Partnership – 2024 Update 1

General Update

We are looking at creating a plan for 2024 that we aim to share at our first open meeting for the year. The plan loosely consists of the following

Job Fair – in conjunction with Job Centre Plus and MP Craig Tracey – we have had our first planning meeting around this and all looking very positive for an April or May date. As soon as we have the date confirmed we will inform the council for attendance and support.

We are requesting the Memorial on a free hire due to this being a very community centred event and as it stands we have secured no direct funding for it but we are approaching some of the larger employers locally for support as we did last year.

Training – we have applied to the Heart of England fund for funding around providing training to the local area, these training sessions would be open to anyone in the area, resident or business on a first come, first served and they would be free to attend. We are looking to offer first aid training supplied by The North Warwickshire First Responders and Mental Health Awareness training, hopefully facilitated by Warwickshire Police's Mental Health Awareness team. The other training sessions will be voted on by the local community to ensure that we are providing what the community is wanting.

Heritage Project – we have brought together the existing members of various Atherstone based heritage projects (The Heritage Centre, The Civic Society) to have a sub Heritage group that is focusing on heritage related projects across the town. Our first project which is going well in terms of planning is at Historical Board/Plaque Trail. We have split the content, areas and subjects between the group and in pairs we are working on one each. We have narrowed our first 4 areas and are now building the content needed ahead of seeking the approvals for installation.

Heritage Week – after the success of the Heritage Festival last year we have decided that we may go forward with a shortened version of the festival over a week in September, within the Heritage funding around the above project we are also factoring this in. Again, once we have more information we would look to share this

Large Summer Event – we have engaged with many local businesses through official surveys, in person feedback at events and online and have gathered that a large event where we welcome people into the town is what a lot would want, we did however gain feedback around not wanting to close Long Street on a Saturday but also looking to have events that incorporated more than just Long Street. With all of this feedback taken into consideration we have settled on providing a weekend event in June. We have researched all local events that already exist to avoid clashes and propose this would be on

1st – 2nd June – although we are still in the planning phase we can provide the top-line detail around the content and we would also therefore still wish to be considered for the funding application in support of this event

Saturday – working in collaboration with NWBC we would be hosting Atherstone's first Teen Market, the concept being it is an event to support up and coming crafters and young entrepreneurs with everything they need to host themselves at a market – we would aim to hold this in the Market Square during the day

The late afternoon/evening would then see a music type festival begin, with the opportunity again for young performers to be given the opportunity to perform on a large stage in the Market Square.

Sunday would see a town wide event, our first stop is to engage with all the shop owners in the town to understand if they wish to open on the event – this would ensure that their shop is not blocked with anything we then plan to bring into the town, this is a priority for us as our aim is to support the businesses already in existence.

We aim to have

Fun fair

Dog Show

Vintage cars (working in collaboration with The Motorshow)

Market stalls

Food market

Train rides

Live music

The plan is still ongoing however we plan to gain more feedback at our open meeting in February to make sure we are helping those in the area.

Therefore our funding application around the help to pay towards the security hire for the event is still applicable and we would be happy to provide more information if needed around the event we are planning

In addition to all of the above we are also working in the background on our digital estate. We are the guardians of the Visit Atherstone website and we are ensuring that the content on there is up to date, relevant and correct. This is a long process but something we will continue to work on throughout the year. We are also working on our SEO (search engine optimisation) this is so we can make sure that the website appears if people are searching on google for things to do in the local area, looking for inspiration etc. This is something that our Chair is working on as this something that she has experience of in her professional career.

A full advertising plan will be in place for all the events utilising some of our funding – again taking feedback from local residents on the channels we should look to use such as local magazines, existing groups and not just rely on social media.

Funding – we are working on funding applications for Heart of England around training, Heritage Lottery for the heritage projects, Severn Trent on a possible regeneration installation. We have also written a letter to all the major businesses around the area, introducing who we are and what we are planning to do and asking for collaboration and support, we will continue to send these and follow them up so not to lose momentum.

We have also decided and voted on as a committee that we would like to raise money for local charities throughout the year. This will be separate money from any funding that we apply for and just money from any fundraising events that we host ourselves. We have decided that a proportion of our fundraising at the end of the year will be split equally across 4 charities in the local area. We are in the process of reaching out to the charities and once we have confirmation we will be releasing this as information.

Open Meeting – Wednesday 28th February at 5.30pm please can we request attendance from councillors to help answer any particular questions that local residents may have?