

WINDSOR TOWN FORUM

WEDNESDAY, 27TH JANUARY, 2021

At 6.15 pm

in the

VIRTUAL MEETING - ONLINE ACCESS, [RBWM YOUTUBE](#)

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

PART I

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>PAGE NO</u>
	i. Town Manager Update To receive an update from Paul Roach, Windsor Town Manager.	1 - 4

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ROYAL BOROUGH REOPENING PLAN

Windsor Town Centre update report for Windsor Town Forum - January 2021

The following report provide an update on the activity and areas of concerns for Windsor town centre.

Christmas Programme

In a change to the traditional Christmas programmes which is very much event led had to be cancelled due to the COVID restrictions and would normally see separate leaflets produced for Maidenhead and Windsor. In line with our recovery strategy a borough wide programme was produced to capitalise on the areas of activity over the Christmas period that could be promoted to residents and the wider public.

Windsor Christmas Lights were switched on the 21st November and people were encouraged rather than to come out and watch but to share on line the switching on of their Christmas decorations. Through My Royal Borough, Visit Windsor and Make Maidenhead websites we collective promoted all of the activities across the borough.

Below you will see some of the campaigns that were planned, supported and promoted through our social media channels.

MY ROYAL BOROUGH ADVENT CALENDAR CAMPAIGN



AND CHOOSE LOCAL AT CHRISTMAS



Response and Support Work

RBWM's Town Centre reopening group continues to meet and following a review of the summer reopening programme, provided a number of changes to work programmes to ensure we delivered on agreed town centre safety principals.

- New signage in public open spaces promoting "Hands face and Space" messaging
- Update all Risk assessments based on new government guidelines.
- Provide new guidance for CCTV to monitor/report on specific activity in the town centres (i.e. C-19 breaches, Rough Sleeping, begging)

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- Replenish and install C-19 advice and signage in and around town centre.
- Monitor and amended where necessary the Dft funded extended footways in the town centres.

Key issues raised since September 2020

- Social distancing in town centre - in around the castle benches
- Queuing and face coverings
- Street Activity - begging still taking place with a very small number of individuals
- Cycling in the town centre.
- Complaints regarding permissions to trade.

All of the above issues are under constant review and with the support of community wardens and town management team quickly identified and dealt with or resolved. For more complex issues we have support from Public Health, Licensing and Thames Valley Police and continue to work in a coordinated way to ensure consistency.

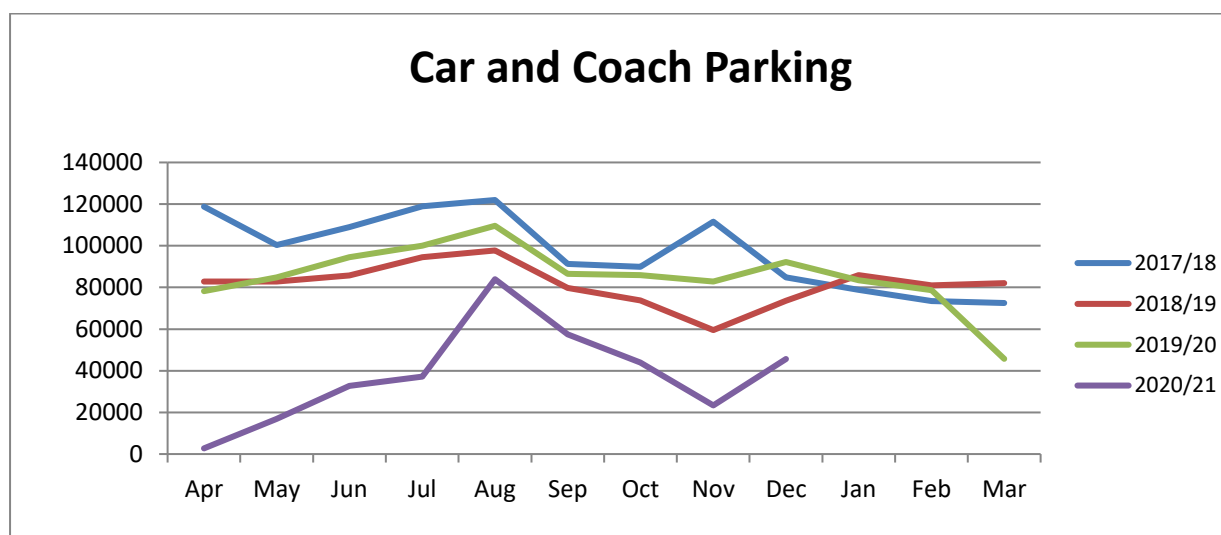
Business Financial Support

Business Rates team has continued to work to ensure as many businesses as possible that are eligible for grant support are processed and provided those grants in good time. The Business support page on the RBWM website is regularly updated and businesses are reminded to check here daily for updates. <https://www.rbwm.gov.uk/home/council-and-democracy/contact-us/coronavirus-information-and-support/business-support/covid-19-business-grants>

Below is an update on the current status of grants and their amounts issued to businesses in RBWM as a whole:-

Grant type	No of Applications	Amounts delivered
LRSB Sector	12 applications	£11,930
ARG	41 applications	£146k
Xmas Support for Wet Led pubs	41 applications	£41k
LRSB Closed	448 applications	£440k
LRSB Open	25 applications	£18.5k
LRSB Closed Adden. (Nov)	594 applications	£1m
LRSB Closed Adden. CBLP (Jan)	361 applications	£2.9m
In Summary	1522 applications	£4.6m

Health check for the town centre

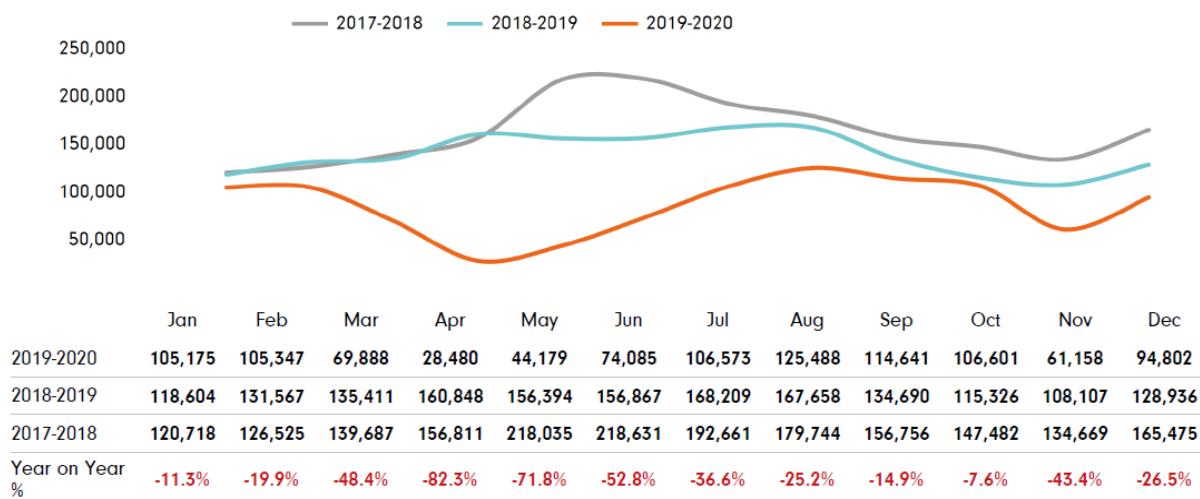


Car parking usage in the town still showing a significant loss (-50%) for the year and is unlikely to see a full recovery for the end of the year. During December limited free parking was offered on a number of week days and weekends in order to support businesses in the town centre. However, due to the Tier 4 restrictions this did not appear to have made a difference.

Footfall

Footfall - rolling 12 months

The figures shown below are calculated using weekly averages.



Following the reopening of the town centre between June and August we saw footfall in Peascod Street slowly build and by October/November footfall had started to recover close to 2019 levels. However, the second lock down in November saw that recovery lost and footfall reduced significantly. Footfall in the two shopping centres has continued to be lower than that of the main town centre with between 50% – 60% reduction in footfall over the same period.

Currently footfall is predicted to be between 40 – 50% down at the end of the financial year. The current year to date percentage is down 39.7%.

Vacancy Rates

	Oct	Nov	Dec
Current vacancy	13.1%	12.37%	12.63%
*Expected Vacancy	19.89%	21.24%	21.24%
**National Average	13.2%	13.2%	13.2%

*this includes businesses that have indicated they are in danger of closing permanently.

** Data provided by British Retail Consortium

Vacancy levels have remained relatively constant for the last three months at around 12% – 13%. This is reflective of what is happening around the country and expected given the current restrictions on the majority of businesses in the high street. Expected long term vacancy rate has increased in the same period as we see more businesses succumbing to the prolonged restrictions and unable to sustain their business.

General business sentiment for those that are closed is one of frustration and no knowledge of when current restrictions will end. Equally we have a growing number of businesses who are permitted to stay open but have seen their income completely disappear and are in significant hardship. Unfortunately under the current guidance those businesses are not eligible for the current lockdown grants as they have not been forced to close.

On a positive note we have seen a number of new business open in the last three months with a number of units under redevelopment. We welcomed the following businesses to Windsor.

New Business opened

Hotrocks – Jewellery - Thames Street
 Harvest Afro Caribbean - restaurant - Thames Street
 Dog's Life - Pet shop – Windsor Royal Shopping Centre
 Intoku - Sushi Restaurant - Church Street
 World of Sweets - Windsor Royal Shopping
 The Long Walk - Restaurant – High Street

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Units under development

Plate at No 6 – Market Street
Tempstay – Agent – St Leonards Road
Beauticians – St Leonards Road
Artisan bakery - Peascod Street
Ice Cream Parlour - Church Street

Communications

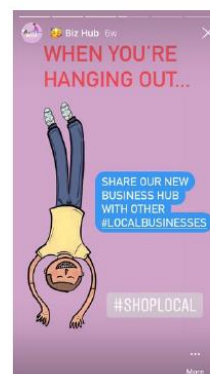
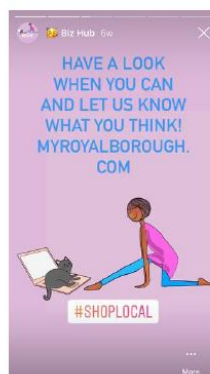
We are continuing to support businesses through our newly created online website “My Royal Borough” providing gateway to promote local business and in recent months has seen the site expand into offering free training session on online marketing as well as being a gateway to national advice and support being offered across the country.

We have used My Royal Borough to create a series of positive stories about what is available in the town centre and what businesses have to offer. We are actively encouraging other to provide their own content to support the website which is growing steadily.

CAMPAIGN AT A GLANCE



WE USED STORIES TO SHARE OUR NEW WEBSITE HUB



Paul Roach

Windsor, Eton and Ascot Town Manager