

City Management Newsletter



David Pickering
Chairman, Chester
City Management

Chester - facing the Challenges Ahead

It would be easy for us all to put our head in the sand and start believing the prophets of doom that feature almost every day in our national newspapers.

Firstly that wont get us anywhere and I am not even going to use "that phrase" which is constantly in use now and secondly I think that Chester is in a good position to really move forward in 2009. To follow I have listed some of the reasons that I think justify real optimism for Chester and why we should all have hope for the future.

- 1. A new unitary authority – Cheshire West and Chester.** I have had a number of conversations with the new authority's CEO Steve Robinson and I am very encouraged about his understanding of Chester and its importance. He tells me that this authority has real budgets and will have the ability to deliver big projects; that is something we have wanted to hear for some time. I put to him, signage, Amphitheatre and performing arts as some of our must fix priorities.
- 2. Chester Renaissance.** Rita Waters, the CEO has been in office just over 2 months and has covered an incredible amount of ground getting to understand Chester and its "historical problems". She is pitching at the highest levels to make people understand our needs and has a proven track record of success.
- 3. Chester – "The Giant City"**. This project has the ability to transform our city and take communities, companies and schools along with it to see us at the very forefront of marketing UK to tourists. I urge you to seek out information, find out more about it and get involved – you will benefit.
- 4. Visit Chester & Cheshire.** VCC this year are spending £150,000 marketing Chester around the UK. Using our best assets including, shopping, restaurants and hotels, they will be getting more people to visit Chester than ever before. We are working with them to get more people in to your business.
- 5. www.shopchester.net** Our own definitive shopping website. All our members will get a *free listing* on this site. The potential is 70,000 unique users monthly looking at your business. Make sure our office has your details or you could miss out on all this extra business.
- 6. The *mini guide*** – almost 500,000 of these in and around Chester could be telling people about your business more details in this bulletin.
- 7. Virgin Trains.** 13 direct trains a day from Euston, with the possibility of 270 people on each train all coming to Chester in 2 hours – now that's a great connection.
- 8. Chester City Management.** Working with you all to keep Chester at the forefront of all work done locally and further afield. Stephen Wundke is working on the Food and Drink Festival, Chester Races Parade, The Polo and Show Jumping Tournaments, all events that can bring over £1 million pounds of economic benefit to the City.
- 9. Chester Chronicle & Dee 106.3.** Continuing to work with CCM this year to deliver even more information to our prospective customers.
- 10. Finally – your resolve.** Working with us, helping to make Chester a better place to live and trade, if we continue to work together we will win the fight.

As Chairman of CCM I am committed to making a difference through our partnership but please remember it is nothing without your involvement. I urge you to take up membership of CCM and give us something to fight with on your behalf.



Chester in Bloom

Invitations will shortly be going out to invite businesses to display a hanging basket for the summer season.

This year Chester is entered for the national RHS Britain in Bloom competition and CCM will be working with Cheshire West and Chester Council to improve the floral displays in and around the city centre.

In addition Chester City Management will once again be staging a window dressing competition to compliment the Chester In Bloom activities.

If you need help or advice about how you can do this please contact Alison Kelly 01244 402525

The definitive website for shopping in Chester

Chester City Management is building www.shopchester.net website, the definitive website for shopping in Chester. It will feature all of our members, free of charge.

If you contributed to one of our campaigns last year, or are joining CCM as a member this year then you will be included free of charge. All we need from you is 3-4 good quality images of your business. 150 words that tell us why your shop is a must visit venue in Chester and of course your contact details. Phone, fax, address, web address and email address, that's all we need. Please forward this information to hannah.worrall@btconnect.com as soon as possible.

Just think the possibility of 70,000 unique users monthly looking at your business, finding your web site and shopping in your shop – all for no cost to you but some of your time. **Don't miss this opportunity!**

City Management and Chamber of Commerce join forces

Chester City Management and the Chester, Ellesmere Port and North Wales Chamber of Commerce have joined forces to deliver a Credit Crunch busting membership for Chester City retailers.

The new City Management membership rates are now published and offer great benefits and discounts for businesses who want to play a part in the City's marketing and business activities. Membership has the potential to deliver a minimum of 25% discount on marketing campaigns such as Christmas as well as FREE Chamber membership.

Chester City Management Chairman David Pickering, was delighted with the new accord:

"After the successes achieved last year by Chester City Management with our various activities we were keen to provide a membership package for the City stakeholders that increased their potential business and also provided help in the many administrative areas of red tape that they face daily. This new membership of City Management does both. I hope retailers will join us in working to beat the "credit crunch" and put Chester back to the very top of must see UK destinations."

Chief Executive of the Chester, Ellesmere Port and North Wales Chamber of Commerce, Bob Williams, sees this as an important development for the Chamber:

"We have not always been able to engage with retailers as many see our organisation as one featuring the professional sectors of the business community. This partnership with CCM shows us looking out into the business community to link all aspects of commerce. We are well placed to help people through the administrative maze and with CCM on board we know that businesses in Chester will be at the forefront of all the new and exciting marketing initiatives for 2009."

Chester City Coordinator, Stephen Wundke explained:

"Our team will be out on the streets over the coming weeks explaining to stakeholders the many benefits of being a member of Chester City Management and being able to make people a member of the chamber at the same time, with all its benefits, is a huge plus for us. We delivered an awful lot of activity last year with the highlight being "Free after 3" and we have an ambitious programme of events for 2009. With a strong membership we can really deliver a quality Chester retail experience and show retailers the support they need and deserve."

For further details contact:

Stephen Wundke Tel: 01244 350233 www.chesterccm.org

David Pickering Tel: 01244 629495

Bob Williams Tel: 01244 669988





Disappointing National Sales and footfall figures Reported

It seems that the resilience of the high street, witnessed at the end of 2008, to what is now officially a recession has all but disappeared.

Reinforcing the national results issued by the British Retail Consortium of a 1.6% annual fall in non-food retail sales in January, the National High Street Index recorded an annual decline in footfall of 8% in our town centres across the country - the largest annual decrease for January since the Index began in 2005, and twice the level of decline in footfall recorded in January 2008.

However, **regional cities** appear to be weathering the storm better than towns and other cities generally. Not only was an annual decrease in footfall of 3.6% recorded across regional cities in January - less than half of the UK national average of -8% - but this is also a significantly smaller decrease than that recorded in the same month in the previous two years.

The contrast between the performance of all towns and cities nationally and regional cities is highlighted further by the annual change in footfall in each week during the month: while for towns and cities nationally footfall fell annually by between 3.6% and 8.5% in each week during January; for regional cities the annual decline was less than 5% in any week of the month, and in the final week of January, footfall increased annually by 3.8%.

More locally, the number of people using Chester market increased significantly in the last four months of the year probably reflecting its proximity to the *Free after Three* Market Car Park and people's need to find a bargain as the recession loomed. It was also reported to City Management that value shops performed well throughout the city centre and the Christmas campaign was well received. The number of people staying overnight in the city in December was 2% down on December 2007 but with an achieved room rate slightly up. Although the poor December performance was in line with national figures it is a warning sign that needs to be monitored.

Increased Businesses Support Available

In the current economic climate the NWDA is increasing its support to businesses. This new publication has been produced summarising the range of support available to Northwest companies, designed to help them through the current economic conditions.

http://www.nwda.co.uk/publications/business/support-for-northwest-business.aspx?dm_i=1G3,J3H,6SPCU,YXW,1

Chester City Council has put together a comprehensive guide to where to find help and support locally which you can find at:

http://www.chester.gov.uk/advice_and_information/money_and_finance/dealing_with_the_credit_crunch.aspx

which also provides a link to the Government document *Real Help Now for People and Businesses*.

Your Invitation to Disney Institute and "The Disney Keys to Excellence"

Masterclasses

Wednesday 18th March, Halliwell Jones Stadium, Warrington

Experience Disney's Strategies for Success. "Experience the Business Behind the Magic" from the world-renowned Disney Institute. Their professional facilitators will share the successful business practices that have made the Disney name synonymous with leadership strategies, service excellence, and customer loyalty throughout the world.

You will learn how to apply Disney's innovative approach to your own organisation for immediate results.

This is a 'first' for businesses in Cheshire and Warrington as Disney Institute training has previously only ever been accessible via a Disney location!


Only a limited number of places are available to an invited audience of business leaders, managers and entrepreneurs specifically from within Cheshire and Warrington and these have been heavily subsidised. Places are available by application, strictly on a first come, first served basis.

<http://www.cwea-events.co.uk/disney/index.php> for full details and booking information, or call the Cheshire & Warrington Economic Alliance on 01606 738083

Chester Mini Guide

Visit Chester and Cheshire have begun on a new mini guide for Chester which provide all the information a visitor needs to enjoy the city including shopping, attractions, where to eat and drink plus practical information on maps, parking and toilets. There are great value discounted advertising rates for City Management members and half a million copies will be distributed in the coming year.

Don't miss out on this great new marketing opportunity contact Gerald Tattum on 01244 405634



City Walls Collapse update

The tendering process has now started to identify a contractor to undertake City Walls dismantling and rebuilding work. Tenders are to be returned 1st week in March. Thereafter, tenders will be assessed and a contractor appointed.

In parallel to the above, scheduled ancient monument consent applications have now been submitted to Department of Culture, Media and Sport to gain approval for the dismantling and rebuilding work and the construction of a temporary visitor walkway. The latter will enable the public to re-gain access to the City Walls whilst the repair work takes place and also to act as a viewing area. Also, a planning application has now been submitted to the City Council for the construction of the same temporary walkway. Similarly, legal consents from each affected landowner are also being formally sought for the construction of the walkway.

A web site and other interpretation panels are also being designed in readiness for the rebuilding work starting in the spring time. Linked to this, a web cam will be installed on the temporary walkway allowing people to view the work taking place via the dedicated web site.

A Grant bid has been made to English Heritage to pay towards other repair and maintenance work around the full 3km circuit of City Walls. Importantly, this grant application has included a proposal for the removal of vegetation growing around the wall including the Northgate area. A decision is expected from English Heritage during March as to whether the grant application has been successful. We will let you know as soon as we hear the result.

Brook Street improvements

Chester City Council is committed to delivering planned improvement works that have been favourably received by many people in the area.

The improvements will bring long term benefits to Brook Street such as a better connection with the station and city centre making it an even more attractive area to visit. Some traders raised concerns about disruption during the works and the council has responded by promising

- To work closely with contractors to make sure disruption is kept to a minimum and keeping traders fully informed at all times.
- To give local people and traders a contact number to raise any day to day issues that may concern them
- During the works free use of one free car parking space in St Anne's Car park for all traders affected by the works

Cllr Stuart Parker Executive member for development Chester City Council commented that 'I would like to thank the traders and residents in Brook Street for their interest and comments. These have helped us make sure the planned work brings benefits to as many people as possible whilst minimising any disruption caused.'

The funding for this project has been provided by North West Development Agency (NWDA) and the Townscape Heritage Initiative. Work will start in Summer 2009 and will be completed within 8 to 10 weeks.

Anti Social Behaviour

The Police continue to work with our community partner agencies to resolve the long term issues surrounding rough sleepers around our city centre. They have been completing early morning patrols to remove the rough sleepers from the areas around city retail premises so as to stop them effecting local business.

If you have any issues with rough sleepers or homeless persons please contact the number below to discuss.

Contact us on 0845 458 6384 or email Chester.inner.cat@cheshire.pnn.police.uk

Dates for the Diary:

Small & Independent Traders Meeting

Every last Tuesday in the month at Chester Renaissance Office, Vicars Lane

5.45pm Tuesday 31st March
5.45pm Tuesday 28th April

Chester Against Business Crime

Members Meeting at Blossoms Hotel

10.30am every Wednesday

Sealand Road Area Retailers Meeting

Held every last Thursday of the month at Tesco

10am Thursday 26th March
10am Thursday 30th April

Useful Contacts

Chester Customer Contact Centre

Litter, graffiti, fly tipping, pigeons and community safety issues

T: 01244 402477

E: customer.contact@chester.gov.uk

Chester Against Business Crime

T: 01244 403615

E: r.lelliott@chester.gov.uk

Chester City Management

T: 01244 402047

www.chesterccm.org

E: roz.munslow@chester.gov.uk

Chester City Management

Chester Renaissance

T: 01244 402047

www.chesterccm.org

www.chesterrenaissance.co.uk

Chester City Management Coordinator

T: 01244 350233

Chester, Ellesmere Port and North Wales Chamber of Commerce

T: 01244 669988

E: info@cepnwchamber.org.uk

Police

T: 0845 458 6384

Chester City Council Building Design & Conservation - Help and advice for signage, repairs and conservation issues.

T: 01244 402327

Chester City Council Community Safety Wardens

T: 01244 402477

E: customer.contact@chester.gov.uk

Chester City Council Licensing Team

T: 01244 402138

E: licensing@chester.gov.uk