

City Management Newsletter

What a fabulous two months of events within the city of Chester



David Pickering
 Chairman,
 Chester City Management

Record attendances at Chester Racecourse kicked off May. I realise that some of our traders don't view this as a bonus but believe me this event is vital to the very fabric of the hospitality industry, which makes up nearly a third of our retail offer.

It is a credit to Chester Race Company and its Chief Executive, Richard Thomas that when every other racecourse has declining gate receipts, they continue to flourish. Something we should be very proud of as a city.

Chester Performs ran its very successful Screen Diva programme in and around the city. This very visible display of "art house" films really created a vibrant environment at an affordable cost to everyone. I thought the family interactive day in Grosvenor Park, featuring film and TV production was wonderful, so well done to Andrew Bentley and his team.

Then there was the Midsummer Watch & Giants parade - what a spectacular event. 30 Giants lining Bridge St, packed with people as the Midsummer Watch parade wound its way through the streets of Chester, taking record numbers of spectators through our streets. I have retailer figures showing 5, 6 and even 15% increases on Saturday the 20th June. Well done again to the teams involved. The Giants have an ambitious plan for 2010 to celebrate 500 years of giant making in Chester, what a spectacular event for Chester that will be.

Following the Giants was the Tour Series bike event. A terrific first event showing just how good the streets of Chester are for staging top class sport. The footage on Channel 4 was impressive. We at City Management hope that everything will be done to secure both this event and the Tour of Britain for Chester in 2010.

The list of "world class" events just goes on because next we staged the British Masters Showjumping, over 800 horses worth in excess of £20 million pounds here in Chester for 3 days and covered on SKY Sport. Our thanks to Cheshire West and Chester Council and the NWDA, with Chester Racecourse, for having the vision to back

this event. The riders confirmed that this is now the best outdoor event in the country.

On the statistical front, footfall in Chester has shown a small dip, year on year in the last 2 months - something in the region of about 2.9% against 2008. This is against a national average for May of over 10%. I really think this shows how important these city events are and will continue to be, providing that



16th Century Rows, 16th Century Giants,
 21st Century Shoppers

special reason for people to come to Chester. Footfall after 3pm has remained strong with car parks being very busy after 3 - something we are very pleased has been adopted by Cheshire West and Chester Council.

Chester City Management is busy with and creating new events and campaigns, and working closely with the Chester Renaissance team. Within the Renaissance team are Roz Munslow and also the Chester Against Business Crime team working somewhat unheralded, behind the scenes,

responding to stakeholder issues raised at Small and Independent traders meetings, Large Retailers meetings and general enquiries. An important role is to provide improved links with and delivery of Council services for city centre businesses; and I am also delighted that we now have an extra 2 dedicated Police personnel on the streets, just for the city of Chester. We also have a new cleaning regime, which has already made a significant difference to our streets and I know that with the consultation work being done on the Rows, headed up by Rita Waters we are all working towards making major improvements there also.



British Masters Showjumping

I read with interest the recent story around the proposed site for the new Performing Arts centre, and whether it ends up there or somewhere else I am delighted this is at the forefront of the new administration's mind. We all know we need it as a city. Well done to Steve Robinson - Chief Executive of Cheshire West and Chester Council for making this a top priority.

I have been lucky enough to be in and around Chester for quite some time now and I think without reservation, I can say I

A FREE community street arts event for Chester

Roam the Rows

Roam the Rows is a FREE community street arts event, taking place on Chester's medieval shopping Rows. Explore the Rows with paper chain people, board games, music, butterflies, and textile characters...

**9th, 16th, 23rd, 29th
and 30th August 2009**

**Watergate Street and Rows
11:30am - 3pm**

Contact:

Chester Performs for more info
T: 01244 409113
E: info@chesterperforms.com
www.chesterperforms.com

Join us anytime between 11:30 - 3pm

Is your business linked in?

At a time when many businesses are cutting costs by reducing staff and cutting security measures 'Chester Against Business Crime' has to deliver real value for money. Members reap the benefits of having a radio linked directly to the 24 hour City CCTV control room and patrolling police officers. Members also have an updated photo album of offenders likely to impact on their trading environment every week, delivered at the weekly retail security meeting in Blossoms Hotel.

Furthermore the exclusion scheme bans offenders from member's shops and has had the effect of dispersing thieves, beggars and those that wish to commit anti-social behaviour out of the City. We believe that at just over £1 a day for most members this demonstrates real value for money. One of the ways we check that we are on the right course is to survey our members. A survey by two Chester University students in June 2009 shows that 95% of businesses surveyed felt that CABCR has a positive impact on crime in Chester. Can you afford not to be a member?

Contact Bob Lelliott on 01244 403615 to see how we can help you.

What a fabulous two months of events within the city of Chester *continued...*

have never seen such an active will to make things happen around the city and with a clear understanding of where we want to be. It has been a long time coming but I do feel there is real reason for optimism as the building blocks to us achieving our aim of a "Must see European Destination" are all beginning to be put in place. I urge you to get involved, become a member of City Management, take part in our campaigns, be a voice and make things happen.

David Pickering
Chairman, Chester City Management

Your Invitation to the Chester Christmas Campaign Presentation

You also get the chance to win a £500 advertising package voucher on the night!

You are invited to attend a Chester Christmas 2009 Retail Campaign presentation evening at the MacDonald New Blossoms Hotel on Wednesday 5th August 2009 at 5.45pm. This is your opportunity to find out how Chester will be promoted to attract shoppers over the Christmas period, get the full picture of planned street entertainment including Christmas Lights Switch on details and late-night shopping evenings' dates and times - and more importantly how you can get involved with the marketing campaign to showcase your business.

We look forward to welcoming you to this very important occasion.

Please reply directly to margaret.lindsay@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk or call 01244 402446 before 5pm on Monday 3rd August.

UK Retail Sales Figures

UK retail sales values rose 1.4% on a like-for-like basis and 3.2% on a total basis, from June 2008, when sales had been hit by cold wet weather, figures from the British Retail Consortium reveal.

Food sales growth edged up further, helped by the heatwave. The hot sunny weather, together with clearance sales, also boosted clothing, footwear and outdoor leisure but big-ticket homewares and furniture sales remained difficult. Given the uncertainty about jobs, customers are still nervous about spending on more expensive, non-essentials.

Helen Dickinson, Head of Retail, KPMG, added: "Although overall sales performance continues to be driven by food, many non-food retailers had a better month in June." She continued "The gap between total sales performance and like-for-like continues to narrow, highlighting the reductions in new store openings in the current environment."

www.shopchester.net



Are you on this site?

The definitive shopping site for Chester was launched last month and we need to know that you are on there, that you are in the right section and more importantly that what it says about your business is what you want.

We will be building the traffic on this site leading up to Christmas, working with Visit Chester & Cheshire and those who have the correct presence will benefit most. So make sure you are listed. This is yet another benefit of being a member of Chester City Management.

Make sure you have all the benefits you are entitled to - all working for you and your business



Visit Chester and Cheshire Marketing update

The Virgin Trains Campaign (May - Sept), promoting Chester and the Virgin train service linking Chester, London and Milton Keynes was supported by Chester City Management. Highlights of the campaign aimed at generating £3m of economic impact include:

Activity to date

- Launched campaign website www.visitchester.com/forless with over 80 offers
- Inserts featured in The Guardian: Weekend, Sunday Telegraph, Sunday Times and News of the World Magazines, total reach 320,000
- Banners online - on facebook, msn, National Rail and other sites, promoting Chester Zoo, Cheshire Oaks and Blue Planet, total reach over 2 million
- Two eshots to targeted databases, driving traffic to the website, total reach 50,000

Results to date

- Total reach with the campaign to date 2.4 million
- Website visits total 5,193 in the first three weeks
- Vouchers on the website viewed total 1,583
- Total competition entrants over 900 to date

Upcoming activity

- Inserts will be placed in 11 more national titles and 2 regional titles, including Saturday Times Magazine and The Guardian:

Weekend (Central editions)

- Two more eshots to new databases of 50,000
- Social networking will be set up – twitter offer of the week!

National Media Highlights

- Sir Richard Branson endorses the new 'Chester For Less' marketing initiative. The coverage is starting to hit locally and in key trade publications
- Midsummer Watch Parade featured in the Telegraph travel pages.
- Cheshire's food trails featured in the Observer travel section
- Belfast Radio piece reaches 119,000 listeners.
- 'Britain' meets the town crier. The official magazine for VisitBritain ran a full-page article about our very own town crier
- Food Trails across Cheshire. InOut Magazine ran a two-page feature about the Taste Cheshire Food Trails.
- Garden Treasures. Country & Border Life featured four page spread about the blue badge garden trail in Chester.

Corporate News

- Tourism Awards Winners featured in local media
- Chester Mini Guide and Taste Chester Trail featured in local media

For full stories and copies of articles contact:

Caroline Hoppé, Email c.hoppe@visitchesterandcheshire.co.uk
Tel: 01244 405638

Three phase approach to improve appearance, environment and safety of Chester city centre

Operation Face-lift, a £1 m scheme designed to boost the timeless appeal of Chester's historic city Centre, has been launched. Face-lift will improve the appearance, environment and safety of one of England's leading tourist and shopping destinations.

Council cash will enable Cheshire Police to put two extra officers on the beat each night at key times and also release support from community safety wardens during the day.

A condition survey of the complete city centre infrastructure has produced a comprehensive scheme to improve the appearance of everything from pavements, lampposts and signage to railings and bollards.

"We will be looking at everything which affects the overall city's overall appearance down to the proliferation of street signs, re-painting faded road markings and improving floral displays," said Cllr Neil Ritchie, Environment Executive Member. "Chester's face is its fortune and we want to ensure it is looking its very best to compete with our tourism and retail sectors."

Rita Waters, Chief Executive of Chester Renaissance, said: "Chester is renowned for its unique heritage and visitor offer which attracts nearly 9 million visitors each year. However, it is a city that has room for improvement and this is a fantastic start to ensuring we grow in strength not just as a cleaner, safer more

vibrant city but one that truly is a must see European destination."

"Chester needs to deliver real environmental changes which, in turn, will deliver economic and trading improvements to the city. We have listened to our traders, residents and visitors and in partnership with Cheshire West and Chester we are delighted that a comprehensive package of improvement works is being implemented within the city."

A city centre cleaning team will be complemented by a dedicated enforcement officer targeting problems like litter, fly posting and graffiti and Rows caretaker will concentrate on liaison with

traders and the appearance of the unique shopping galleries.

The Council, police and private sector in the form of club owners and licensees are all helping to finance installation of extra CCTV cameras - a vital aid to crime detection and prevention - on St John Street.

And work will be also be done to improve Chester CCTV Scheme's present coverage of the Trinity Street Car Park and New Crane Street, together with the

racecourse gates and car park.

Added Cllr Riley: "We regard the safety of our residence, visitors and business community as paramount and Chester CCTV is a key part in helping to achieve both safety and reassurance."

Major features of the scheme planned by Cheshire West and Chester Council in partnership with Chester Renaissance, include:

- More Bobbies on the evening beat during the summer months of July and August.
- Increased CCTV coverage in key areas where coverage was light.
- And a massive clean up of the complete street scene façade.

Graffiti gets the RAP

Councillor Neil Ritchie was at the City Road subways to see the launch of a project aimed at tackling graffiti in Cheshire West and Chester.

The Council is working with Cheshire Probation Service to introduce the RAP (Respect Action Programme), which makes people ordered to serve community payback clean the area of graffiti and partake in other environmental improvements.

The work on the City Road subways includes re-painting of the walls, improved lighting and replacement of signage. It is a joint project between the Council's Highways and Streetscene departments. The scheme is linked to the Council's work on improving local environmental quality for the community of Cheshire West and Chester, and improvements to other subways including painting work in the Fountains subway, then on to the Northgate Arena subway and Top Rank subway, will take place through the summer.



Is the Business Community Prepared for Recovery?

As the economic downturn continues its course, the Chamber of Commerce is becoming increasingly aware of the effect that this is having upon hundreds of small and medium enterprises. This is an issue for all businesses which is why it is reassuring to hear of positive examples about how the right people with the appropriate skills are making a difference to their businesses.

It almost goes without saying that job cuts must be the last resort for businesses. Creative approaches using re-skilling or training to help redeployment within the Company, or job share can be used. It remains important however, that with this kind of exercise, companies do not lose critical skills and key people as this may delay recovery or mitigate against diversification or other survival initiatives. I am aware of one recent example of a company who got everyone together to explain the difficulties confronting the business emphasising the importance of 'pulling together'. You could be surprised by the positive reactions and good ideas that could come from staff on how to increase opportunities whilst reducing costs.

Improved skills through training are an important part of any strategy to 'turnaround' the business or enterprise.

It may be an appropriate time to improve staff capability by retraining or prepare for an increase in responsibilities and where staff will be key in driving success.

Your Chamber recognises this emerging need demonstrated by the diverse and comprehensive services and training programmes made available to members and for a little extra cost, non-members.

The West Cheshire, Chester and North Wales Chamber of Commerce believes that maintaining a work force that is properly skilled and motivated is the more effective way of helping ensure that members emerge from the recession with the prospects of taking full advantage of improved economic conditions as they begin to emerge.

Contact the Chamber on 01244 669988 or email info@cepnwchamber.org.uk. We will be more than delighted to provide you with information or visit your business to discuss the advantages for your business from membership of a British Chamber of Commerce (BCC), fully accredited chamber.

Remember by becoming a member of Chester City Management, you can receive membership of the Chamber too. We look forward to hearing from you.

Dates for the Diary:

Small & Independent Traders Meeting

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

5.45pm Tuesday 28th July

5.45pm Tuesday 25th August

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 30th July

10am Thursday 27th August

Useful Contacts

Streetscene

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

T: 0300 123 7026

E: enquiries@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

Chester Against Business Crime

T: 01244 403615

E: r.lelliott@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

Chester City Management

T: 402047

www.chesterccm.org

E: roz.munslow@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

cheshirewestandchester.gov.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

Historic Building Design & Conservation - Help and advice for signage, repairs and conservation issues.

T: 01244 402327

Community Safety Wardens

T: 0300 123 7033

Licensing Team

T: 01244 402138

E: licensing@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

Business Rates

T: 0300 123 7023