

Go Kidsgrove Update March 2015

CHRISTMAS

Christmas lights 2014

We were delighted to be able to realise our dream of bringing the first ever Christmas tree to King Street. Special thanks go to the Kidsgrove Rotary Club who sponsored the tree and will also sponsor a growing tree to be planted later this year. Special mention should also be made of the Borough Council's Streetscene team for clearing and preparing the bed with generous support from the Community Team, Smithson's for providing the fixings for the tree and the Police for monitoring the site. Thanks also to the willing volunteers who erected it one chilly Sunday! Unfortunately, there was no time to get power to the tree, so we had to resort to battery lights, which weren't as bright as they could be ... but watch the space – it will be better in 2015.

Christmas Trail

Go Kidsgrove organised a third Family Trail round the shops in Kidsgrove and Butt Lane in response to a request from traders. 28 shops took part, an increase on the previous trail which took place at Easter.

Christmas 2015

The Go Kidsgrove Environment & Infrastructure group met with NBC's Graham Williams in Feb 2015 to discuss plans for the Christmas lights in 2015. Recognising that Borough Council funding is decreasing, we are looking at other possibilities which do not include lighting column fixtures, and which will be sustainable if council funding is withdrawn altogether. Potential ideas will be presented at the AGM on 25th March to gauge business reaction. Go Kidsgrove funding will be used to provide a power source to the bed in which the Christmas tree will be located.

MARKETING

The website www.gokidsgrove.co.uk is now live. Town centre businesses have a basic listing but will be asked to become a member of Go Kidsgrove for a small fee, which will entitle them to an enhanced listing (includes photo, description, web link, etc).

Greater use is being made of electronic communication to keep businesses and residents informed. Go Kidsgrove has a list of over 100 e-mail addresses and social networking continues to be a key part of our marketing strategy with over 570 likes for the Go Kidsgrove Facebook Community page and over 130 @gokidsgrove Twitter followers.

Go Kidsgrove were notified that the Alsager branch of the Co-op Bank was closing in December and produced a flyer promoting Kidsgrove as an alternative for banking. Since December, the Kidsgrove branch has seen a significant upturn in transactions (approximately 250 extra transaction per week which represents a 20% increase)..

At the AGM, businesses will be consulted on how they would prefer to receive communications.

ATCM HEALTHCHECK

The Association of Town & City Management (ATCM) undertook a free town centre healthcheck as part of the support package we won last year. A number of issues were highlighted and an action plan has been put together to identify responsibility for dealing with the issues. A Chairs group (comprising Go Kidsgrove, the LAP and Town Council) is being set up to take this action plan forward.

SIGNAGE

The healthcheck identified a number of issues to do with signage. Go Kidsgrove is going to develop a signage strategy to ensure that the right type of signage is put in the right places to enhance visitor experience for canal users, residents and businesses. ATCM is undertaking the initial consultations with stakeholders in March 2015 as part of the free support. Go Kidsgrove has set aside money in its budget to pay for additional consultancy work on the signage strategy.

Following a successful Expression of Interest to Heritage Lottery Funding, an application is being prepared for £10k of HLF funding to provide an interactive map for the canal noticeboard. This will use innovative technology to provide additional heritage information to canal users with smart phones and tablets, building on the excellent network coverage available in the area. The application will be submitted in April.

Go Kidsgrove are also going to fund a noticeboard for the flower bed by the King Street shops.

OTHER

NBC Newcastle in Bloom team is currently exploring new lamp column planters for Kidsgrove and is seeking funding from the Town Council. Go Kidsgrove has agreed to fund 10 additional planters and has also secured some private sector sponsorship for a further 4.