

Welcome to the first newsletter of the newly formed Watford Town Centre Partnership

We are a group of businesses and stakeholders from Watford town centre, and have come together in order to help determine the future of the town centre in Watford. We want to help to ensure the town centre is a vibrant and successful environment for business, residents and visitors.

We met for the first time on 3 September and want to let you know what the Partnership is all about.

Opportunity

Watford's town centre opportunity

At the meeting on the 3 September the Town Centre Partnership (TCP) discussed why this is a good time to create a partnership and the reasons behind this. Five key areas were identified:

1. There is an opportunity for the town centre to maximise the benefit from current major investments taking place: The Parade improvements; the new Watford Market; Charter Place redevelopment with Intu; the Met Quarter restaurant area; and other public realm works happening in the area.
2. There is an opportunity to develop a programme of events to promote the town centre and increase footfall, dwell time and visitor diversity.
3. There is potential to build a more balanced town centre that includes retail, the night time economy, leisure and professional services co-existing, complementing each other in their offer to resident and visitors, and ultimately thriving.
4. Increasing Watford's competitiveness as a retail destination is a key driver for the TCP. Whilst the town is under pressure from other retail hubs, the Partnership can explore ways to improve marketing of the town to increase footfall and investigate ways to decrease vacancy rates.
5. The TCP can also consider how barriers to success can be addressed, and explore how businesses could work together to overcome the challenges that we face.

Who we are?

Who we are

We are a business led group, supported by the elected Mayor, Dorothy Thorhill and Watford Borough Council. Whilst the group is currently chaired by Manny Lewis, MD of Watford Borough Council, it is anticipated that a member from the business community will step forward to Chair the TCP board.

Following a meeting with town centre businesses in June 2013, several people volunteered to join the Board. We have

called it a 'shadow' board until the TCP becomes a formal entity.

The team is made up of local business leaders from many sectors and other partners from Watford's business community who all bring valuable experience, guidance and support to the Partnership. **Any member of the town centre business community can join or become a member;** if you are interested in getting involved, please let us know.



An indicative image showing part of The Parade improvements at night.



An early image showing how the new look Watford Market may look.

What we do

What we do

One of the first tasks for the TCP is the appointment of a Town Centre Manager. This person will work with the Board to implement the TCP initiatives and drive town centre activities forward. A job description has been approved and the position will be advertised shortly.

There are other objectives that the TCP board plan to complete in the coming weeks:

- set a vision for the TCP, and define some clear objectives for what can be achieved on behalf of businesses
- define a strategy for town centre events

- explore how marketing and promotion of the town centre can be improved
- start proactive communication and feedback with town centre businesses
- consider sources of funding for the Partnership and its activities.



Getting Involved

Getting involved

This is a partnership of local businesses and stakeholders, acting as representatives for the town centre. Participation will make a huge difference to the success of the Partnership, and will ensure that decisions truly represent the views and needs of those businesses trading in the town centre today. We would encourage as many of you as possible to get involved.

You can do this by:

- joining the TCP shadow board. The Board will meet every six to eight weeks. The next meeting is **Tuesday 22 October, 1.30 to 4pm** at **The Langley**, which is at The Langley 1st & 2nd Floor Gade House, 38-42 The Parade High St, Watford, Hertfordshire WD17 1AZ. Please let us know if you are interested in coming along.
- become a member of the TCP – Simply notify us of your interest, and we will ensure you are involved in all communication and invited to provide feedback on ideas. Membership is voluntary and there is currently no associated cost .

The minutes from the meeting on 3 September are available to anyone who is interested. If you would like to get involved or have a copy of the minutes, please contact Cherie Norris at Watford Borough Council via email at: **cherie.norris@watford.gov.uk** or tel: **01923 278029**.



Who's involved?

The current shadow board members are:

Alex O'Reily, Manager

Oceana

Rajan Gudka, Manager

The Langley

Kwame Tefe, Manager

Weatherspoons

Sam Roberts, Manager

The Flower Shop

Paul Wilson, Manager

Presence

Jonathan Field, Managing Director

John Lewis

Malcolm Harrison, General Manager

Boots

Howard Oldstein, General Manager

Intu Watford

Matthew Russell, Executive Director

Watford Palace Theatre

Manny Lewis, Managing Director

Watford Borough Council

Supporting the group as co-opted shadow board members are:

Roger Gagan, Chief Executive

Watford and West Herts Chamber of Commerce

Deidre Dent, Safer Neighbourhood Team

Hertfordshire Police

Chris Pearson, Communications Director

West Herts College

Simon Arbon, Partner

Brasier Freeth

Richard Philips, Partner

Matthew Arnold Baldwin

Glyn Evans, Operations Director

Watford Football Club

Dorothy Thornhill

Elected Mayor of Watford

For more information about the Watford Town Centre Partnership, email:
Cherie: cherie.norris@watford.gov.uk or tel: **01923 278029**.