

Ware Town Centre Projects & Communications Report October 2021

Ware Town Council and Visitor Website

We have now commissioned a company to rebuild our website, target delivery date e/o Dec 2021. The brief we have provided is ambitious with front-end changes requested to the homepage theme, navigation and look & feel of the. The back-end dashboard changes will make the website easier for officers to update and keep content fresh and relevant. A large amount of new/revamped content is required which we are working on, particularly on visitor information and attractions.

Social Media

The new Ware Town Council Facebook page is gathering interest and followers as is the Instagram page which launched 2 weeks ago for the town council. We have started a weekly round-up of 'This Week in Ware' to list the top things happening in town including events and activities. This is being published on the town centre FB & IG pages and shared on our other channels. We have also started a new focus on businesses and their offers highlighting a post a week with photography and video.

Google Analytics Ware Town Council

There were 2k new users to the website this month, up 13% from previous month. 5.3k more views also, up 16%. The most visited pages this month were for Ware's the Film Festival with 1.4k visits. 84% of traffic to the site is via a mobile device. We have built landing pages for Ware's the Film Festival, 'Eco aWARE' Community Day and Christmas in Ware this last month.

Google My Business

This is a free tool that allows us to take charge of the way our businesses and assets appear on Google Search and Maps. We have now secured ownership of all Google My Business pages and listings for the Town Council, Priory, Lido, Cemetery, Town Centre, Skatepark, Priory Park and Fletcher's Lea. In October, collectively, there were 82k searches made via Google for these places and 140k map views. 97k actions were recorded whether that be for photo views, web site clicks, directions or calls made.

Digital Noticeboards

The touchscreen in the Priory reception is now live, content includes a shopping and eating/drinking directory, maps, and transport services and an 'Explore Ware' section with Ware attractions and activities. Permissions for the placement of the 3 outdoor screens ongoing.

Christmas 2021

Infrastructure is now in place for the cross-street motifs and the festoon lighting for East Street, licensing with HCC/Ringway ongoing. Ware Bear, Cross-street motifs, Festoon lighting and the lantern lights will be ready to be switched on from Thursday, November 18th. We will ask the Mayor and Cllrs to perform a 'switch-on' with photos and video. The Mercury have requested we provide these to them. Using 'Welcome Back' funding we have purchased 4 new planters to go in Tudor Square for Christmas. Ware in Bloom are arranging for real Christmas trees to go in a number of planters. We are sourcing battery powered lights for these trees.

A press release has gone to the Mercury with their headline that Ware Town Council says we are "upping our illumination game" this Christmas. (<https://www.hertfordshiremercury.co.uk/whats-on/whats-on-news/christmas-hertfordshire-2021-were-upping-6153308>) and we have an advert in the Axis Christmas Guide being distributed in mid-November.

Welcome Back Fund

The large marquee for the Priory Grounds to help make our events weather-proof worked well for the Real Ale Festival. Quotes for coloured event lighting for the front of the Priory are being compiled at the moment and a demonstration being arranged this week.

Community Banking Hub

Julie Marson MP wrote to Rishi Sunak on our behalf, a response letter from John Glen (Minister) was received regarding a shared bank branch approach. We applied for funding via the Neighbourhood Plan Locality Fund in May, they requested further information in September and their decision is delayed, chasing.

Burgage Lane

HCC haven't installed the bike rack in as scheduled, being chased. Ware in Bloom planters going to the corner w/c 15 November.

Town Centre Waste & Bins

Costs for a 'spring clean' of the town are being chased actively.

Tudor Square parking and safety

Parking restrictions bollard covers up in Tudor Square to improve pedestrian safety and protect paving in the square.

Empty Units

To trial/prove the concept of the shop window dressing concept we have worked with Southern Maltings to cover the windows of the old HSBS bank unit with a graphic promoting Ware and the new Christmas production at Southern Maltings. Our section of the window is being used to advertise what is going on in Ware and a 'Shop Local, Love Local' message plus the #LoveWareYouLive

Ware Cup

The idea is being socialized at the 'Eco aWARE Community Day' on 13th November.