

Dear Town Centre stakeholder

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself as the new Town Centre Manager.

The primary aim of Town Centre management is to create active partnerships and broad networks to develop a healthy and sustainable environment that involves and benefits all stakeholders. The town centre is an economic competitive location and the private and public sector have an equal interest in its prosperity. The community is also a very important partner, providing the vitality that

to work successfully with all the stakeholders who wish to see Bridgwater prosper in the 21st century. If you are a supporter of Bridgwater Town Centre and have some ideas, comments, or can offer some support or sponsorship towards its future success, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Wendy White



Photo courtesy of the Bridgwater Mercury

makes a town individual and special. Different supporters will often provide resources in different ways, including money for core funding, goods or services in kind, staff secondment or sponsorship for individual events and initiatives.

I have lived locally for 25 years and am familiar with the history and culture which makes Bridgwater individual and special. I come from a background in IT customer support management and sales and project management. I have previously worked for Somerset County Council, an international corporation which required extensive travel and a specialist software supplier.

The Town Centre Manager acts as a catalyst and co-ordinator to achieve our mutual objective of promoting Bridgwater Town Centre as a good place to work, live and shop. I hope that I come into this role equipped with the necessary skills

Office Royal Clarence House, York Buildings,
High Street, Bridgwater

Fax 01278 452538

Telephone 01278 446859

Email

towncentremanager@sedgemoor.gov.uk



TOWN CENTRE WHO'S WHO

- ▶ **Ian Harris** - Manager, Angel Place Shopping Centre
Chairman of Bridgwater Town Centre Partnership
01278 429191
- ▶ **Reg Winslow** - Sedgemoor District Council
Town Centre Liaison Officer
01278 435211
- ▶ **PS Paul White** - Town Centre Sergeant
PC Shaun Desmond
PC Jasmine Graham
PC Mandy Gornicki-Bond
Town Centre Beat Managers
01823 363330 or
Voice mail 01823 363287 Box No 70474
- ▶ **Jon Blake** - Corporate Director,
Sedgemoor District Council
01278 435758
- ▶ **Clive Lilley** - Chairman of Bridgwater Townscape Heritage Initiative 01278 444052
- ▶ **Wendy White** - Town Centre Manager
01278 446859



ON THE TOWN CENTRE BEAT

The Town Centre Police Team now consists of a Sergeant and three constables who are designated to deal with long-term issues and working with various Partnerships. The aim is to further reduce crime which affects the Town Centre such as, theft from shops, criminal damage, theft from motor vehicles

and violence. These types of offence cannot be reduced by the Police alone, everyone has a part to play. This is why it is important to work in Partnership. As well as these Officers there are a further 5 constables designated to cover the Town Centre on 24 hour cover, supported by mobile patrols.

One key objective is to work with the business community towards an application for the Safer Shopping Award. This is a vast multi-agency project backed by the Home Office. To gain this award Bridgwater must have various initiatives in place, e.g. Retail Watch, Pub Watch, Business Watch, CCTV, Radio Link, Exclusion Orders, and Civil Recovery Schemes. Several of these

initiatives had been put on hold due to the Human Rights and Data Protection Acts. I can now report that the Police Service has recently produced several Protocols which under certain circumstances, permits the exchange of information and the showing of photographs of convicted persons. Now the protocols are in place, and with your help and support, we are in a position to move forward with investigating the feasibility of this project.

Dwelling and commercial burglaries are well down on last year, but there has been an upward trend with violence, public order and theft from motor vehicles. These types of crime are neither good for the town or business and we shall be concentrating our efforts in reducing them. On behalf of my team, I would like to thank everyone involved in assisting the Police in our efforts to make Bridgwater Town Centre a safer environment.

Sgt. Paul White
Tel: 01278 363330
Voice Mail 01823 363287 Box No 70474



Photo: Ian Beech Images

"The aim is to further reduce crime which affects the Town Centre such as, theft from shops, criminal damage, theft from motor vehicles and violence."

BRIDGWATER TOWN CENTRE PARTNERSHIP

Action Plan



2002-2003

Members of the Key Partnership have been fortunate to appoint a local person as Town Centre Manager. We take this opportunity to express how pleased we are that Wendy White accepted the position and took up post from 19 November 2001.

Wendy has lived in Bridgwater for the last 25 years and has Bridgwater at heart. It was a very difficult time of the year to commence in such a post. However, we are pleased to report that with the dedication Wendy has already shown, events and

activities during the busy period of Christmas went off without a hitch and proved to be very successful. Wendy has already produced her draft "Action Plan" for 2002, which addresses all the priorities and opportunities needed for Bridgwater to continue to be a major town in the West. There are so many exciting events planned for this year, these will be very well publicised in the press and local radio. With the help and backing from the businesses in town, many small donations make one big one. Think! If we just sit back

and do nothing we will achieve nothing, if we criticise the efforts being made instead of participating, we achieve nothing.

Be part of the community in taking up the challenge that is afforded to us all, with the future projects that are planned for Bridgwater, you will all be proud that you were part of the success team.

Ian Harris
Chairman of Town Centre Partnership
Tel: 01278 429191



Admiral Blake Museum in Bridgwater has changed its name and will now be known as Blake Museum. The name change recognises both the important connection between the museum buildings and the Blake Family, and the variety of items looked after by the museum. There are galleries dedicated to local archaeology, maritime history, art and social history, as well as The Monmouth Rebellion and Robert Blake.

More information about the museum, its exhibitions and events programme can now be found on the website at www.sedgemoor.gov.uk. Events for 2002 are shown below.

DIARY

5 February - 26 April

The Somerset & Dorset Railway - An exhibition by the Somerset & Dorset Railway Trust.

13 March

The Somerset & Dorset Railway - A talk and video presentation by Dr. Peter Cattermole.
Venue - Bridgwater College (F)

1 May - 28 June

Golden Jubilee 1952 - 2002 Exhibition and education programme.

1 - 31 May

Sydenham Camera Club - Exhibition of photographs.

23 May

Somerset Privvies - A talk by Hilary Binding. (F)

2 July - 30 August

Summer Exhibition - In Black & White Part II
Photographs from the museum collection.

5 - 7 July

Somerfest - Bridgwater Arts Festival. A weekend of events at the Museum.

July (tbc)

Highwaymen in the West Country
- A talk by Dr Kilcaldy (F)

3 - 27 September

Somerset Arts Week - Open Art Exhibition.

19 September

The Blake Family - A talk by David Sebborn. (F)

5 November - 21 December

Carnival Exhibition

All events are free apart from those marked (F). These are organised by the Museum Friend's group. A small admission charge is payable. Tickets available from the Museum.



There has been a lot of media interest in the twelve countries who are replacing their currency with the Euro. The countries are, Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal and Spain.

Here in Bridgwater we have a mix of businesses who are trading internationally and already taking orders and making payments with the euro. Other businesses are handling its introduction like any other foreign currency.

Whilst there is nothing inevitable about British membership of the euro it is beneficial for businesses to be able to obtain up to date information. To that end the Bridgwater Business Initiative has collated a list of useful contacts. Your Bank Manager, accountant, lawyer and financial advisor, Inland Revenue and Customs & Excise should also be able to help you consider the impact that the euro may have on your business.

Useful contacts

The government has set up twelve Regional Euro Forums. These Forums can be contacted via a central website.
www.euroforum.org.uk

The South West Forum
0117 900 1700

Support can be provided via Business Links.
www.businessadviceonline.org

Local contact:
Business Link Somerset Ltd., West Quay Business Centre,
12-14 West Quay, Bridgwater TA6 3HW
01278 436500

The UK Government euro website contains a wide range of information on what the euro will mean for your business.
www.euro.gov.uk

The Department of Trade and Industry has produced a CD-ROM designed to give UK businesses an overview of the issues raised by the euro. For a free copy, email:
3es@dti.gsi.gov.uk

The Treasury has published a series of detailed case studies featuring UK firms in different sectors. You can order copies of these case studies or euro factsheets by calling the
Euro Helpline: **08456 01 01 99**

Easter Competitions



Watch the local press for more details of these competitions!



PAINT YOUR MUM COMPETITION

Primary schools are being invited to submit hand drawn pictures of Mum. These will be displayed in Angel Place Shopping Centre during 25 February



- 10 March. The winning school will be presented with a shield. All Mums of children entering will be entered into a lucky dip and the winner will receive a bouquet and chocolates supplied by Flowers International. Winners announced 12 noon on Saturday 9 March 2002.

DECORATE THE BOILED EGG COMPETITION

This competition will be divided into three age groups, 5 and under, 6- 8 years and 9 - 11 years. Decorated eggs must be delivered to Angel Place between 9.00 am and 12 noon on Friday 29 March. Winners will be announced at 3.30 pm. Competition and prizes sponsored by Angel Place.

HUNT THE EASTER EGG

Posters of Easter Eggs with the Sponsors Logo will be displayed in shop windows. Entries which correctly identify the locations of the Egg Posters will be entered into a lucky dip. There will be three prizes for this competition, sponsored by Somerset Skills Project.

Spring Window Competition 2002



Firstly a big thank you is due to the generous sponsors of the prizes for the 2001 Window Display Competitions, (Sainsbury, Iceland, Wilkinsons, Boots and Angel Place). We are planning four window display competitions in 2002.

The four "themes" are:-

Spring - Last date for entry 19 April

Golden Jubilee - Last date for entry 31 May

Guy Fawkes Carnival - Last date for entry 1 November

Christmas - Last date for entry 13 December

The Bridgwater Mercury is supporting these competitions with editorial and pictures to give our entrants maximum free publicity. As well as the prize for the winning windows, we plan to continue the readers choice feature which has been especially popular as it encourages readers to visit all the entries listed by the Mercury.

All businesses that enter help to encourage footfall into the town, enjoy some friendly rivalry, receive some free publicity and possibly win a prize!

If you wish to enter the "Spring" competition and join in the fun please fill in the coupon and return it to me by 19 April.

I wish to enter the "Spring" Bridgwater Window Display Competition

Name of Business

Contact

Business Address

Telephone

Signature

Please return this form to the Town Centre Manager,
Royal Clarence House, York Buildings, High Street, Bridgwater. TA6 3AT

golden web award for bridgwater.net

Congratulations are due to Pip Martin as Bridgwater.net has just been awarded the Golden Web Award for 2002 - 2003 by the International Association of Web Masters and Designers. Pip is very pleased with the award and hopes that this will encourage local businesses to continue to set up reciprocal links to this site.

The popularity of Bridgwater's official web site continues to grow and since the site was launched on 6 February 2001 it has recorded over 260,000 hits, an average of 753 a day. A new statistical measurement has been put in place which analyses which are the most popular pages. The top five are currently:

- 1 The Business Search page
- 2 The Sponsors (Adverts) page
- 3 Bridgwater Town Maps
- 4 Event Diary
- 5 About the Town

We would like to remind you that every local business gets a free local entry line on the web site and if yours is not listed please let us know. Through European funding, there are a few free web pages available for small businesses in the town, but you will need to be quick if you are interested.

Those businesses that do not qualify for this special free entry can advertise on the Town Web Site for as little as £50 for the first year, dropping to £30 for subsequent years. That's £50 for an advert live on the Internet 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. E mail and on line shopping facilities can also be made available for those businesses that require it. Many small firms are surprised that the effort and investment needed to adopt new technology is small, and

how quickly it is recouped by increased efficiency. If companies or businesses with their own websites would like the Bridgwater Town Web to link to them all they have to do is put a link in place to Bridgwater Town Web at www.bridgwater.net let us know and we can put a reciprocal link in place. Small logos are available for these links.

The new BCRfm site links from its frontpage to Bridgwater Town Web and its event diary page is also the same one as used by the Town Web. This is regularly updated. If any business, clubs, arts or society wish to add an event to the Town Web for free they need to email the details to:

events@bridgwater.net

or send them by post to:

Town Web Events, 2 Peace Close, Bridgwater TA6 4LB.

Mark Painter, Bridgwater's 107.4 BCRfm's Managing Director said "We have been using the Internet since our trail broadcasts, and we have found it to be an excellent way of promoting not just ourselves, but Bridgwater as well. We are using the same web designer as the excellent Bridgwater.net and because of this we are able to work very closely with the town "official site", providing useful cross-links between the two sites. Promoting our town is as important to us as promoting the radio station and we see the association between the sites as a very useful development."

All this means that a lot of people are getting 24/7 information about our town. Many of these visitors are potential customers.

If you would like to find out more, or have ideas for expanding the site please contact:

Pip Martin 07887 658035

Wendy White 01278 446859

Bridgwater in Bloom - 2002 Queens Jubilee Year

Bridgwater in Bloom, supported by the Town Centre Partnership and Sedgemoor District Council Commercial wishes to make Bridgwater a blaze of colour to help celebrate the Queens Jubilee. Complimentary to the scheduled planting and display works from Sedgemoor District Council, Bridgwater in Bloom is pleased to be offering hanging baskets to businesses in the town.

Mike Cresswell, Chairman of Bridgwater in Bloom says "We are pleased to report an increase in baskets year on year and hope to see the trend continue in 2002. These partnerships initiatives help make the town attractive for locals and visitors alike. It also helps put Bridgwater in a position to enter National competitions and allows some friendly local competition with cup winners for best Hanging Basket, Window Box and Overall Floral Display for pubs and shops."

Subject to orders of a minimum of 60 baskets, Bridgwater in Bloom is planning to hold the price, for the 3rd year running, at £37.00 per basket. This cost provides a 16 inch basket, to be filled, installed, watered, fed and removed. The display period is scheduled to be from 1 June - 31 September 2002. If you need a bracket that will cost only £10.00 and it will also take a Christmas tree later in the year.

There are also opportunities for business in the town to sponsor larger floral displays and have the name of their company displayed on or near the display - a useful bit of advertising that will help the town as well.

If you would like a basket or are interested in sponsoring a floral display please use the form below.

I wish to order number of baskets for summer 2002 at £37.00 per basket. (Invoice to follow in due course).

Do you require brackets fitted to your premises Yes / No

Please tick box if you would be interested in sponsoring a floral display

Contact Name Tel. No.

Company Name

Address

.....

.....

Please return this form to the Town Centre Manager,
Royal Clarence House, York Buildings, High Street, Bridgwater. TA6 3AT

or

Telephone 01278 446859

Fax 01278 452538

SIG is a self-funding, non-profit making organisation with over two hundred members who receive:

- Free Business Advice
- Regular Newsletter
- Regular Workshops
- Discounted County Trade Show cards
- Networking opportunities
- Social Events



SIG dates for your diary

20 February - Building a Better Business
supported by Butterworth Jones
Guest Speaker - Nick Miles

6 March - Clearly Book Keeping Seminar and
SIG ESF Launch supported by Barclays

24 April - Budget Reaction
supported by A C Mole & Sons
Guest Speaker - Steve Golby.

If you would like to know more please call
Judi Fisher on 01278 424456.
Email: judi@sigbusinessforum.org.uk



EUROPEAN UNION
European Social Fund

RETAIL SERVICE TRAINING

Following on from the successful customer care training courses for retailers in 2001 we are pleased to announce that a new programme will be starting on April 10 2002. We would like to thank Bridgwater College, Somerset Skills Project, Shop Mobility and Angel Place Shopping Centre for their continued support.

If you are interested in sending your staff for some **free** training on how to look after your customers please contact me and I will add their names to the list. The course is divided into six weekly 2 hour sessions from 9.00 am on a Wednesday at Angel Place and covers all aspects of customer care including dealing with aggressive customers.

If you require further information please contact:

Wendy White on 01278 446859

Bridgwater Townscape Heritage Initiative

Grants for repairs to historic buildings in the town centre

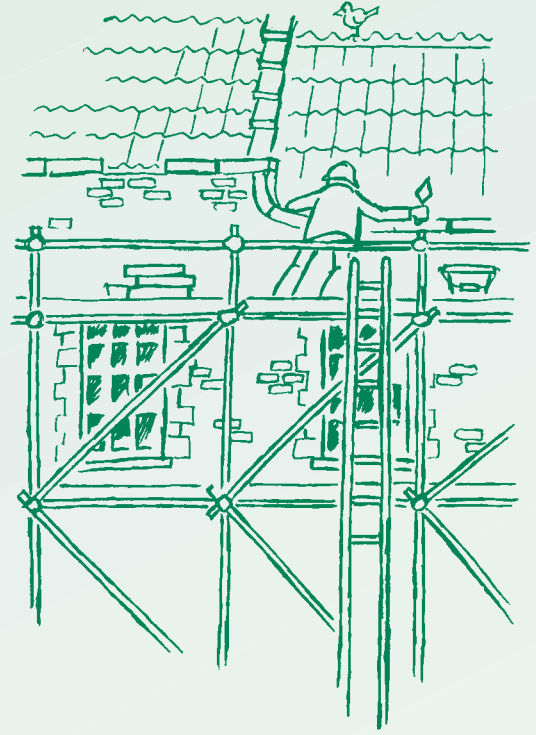
As has been widely publicised, the Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) is a five year grant aid scheme operative in Bridgwater town centre conservation area. The scheme is aimed essentially at the repair and restoration of historic buildings, whether listed or not. The buildings which are to be targeted are identified in an Action Plan. Other work for grant aid could include re-use of vacant floorspace and reinstatement of architectural details. These grants are intended to directly promote the regeneration and attraction of the town centre and the THI team will provide as much assistance as possible to help potential applicants with eligible projects.

If you would like to discuss whether your property might be eligible for assistance, please contact:-

Helen Tasker or Nick Wall - Project Officers 01278 435490

Mark Alcock - Project Leader 01278 435495

or refer enquiries through Wendy White, Town Centre Manager.



BRIDGWATER FARMERS MARKET



You can continue to buy delicious, high-quality, local produce from local farmers on one Friday each month between 9.00 am and 2.00 pm.

8 February

8 March

12 April

10 May

14 June

WI MARKET

The Bridgwater Womans Institute Market is held in the town hall every Friday between 8.00 am and 11.30 am. The ladies sell homemade cakes, preserves, locally-made crafts and plants. Orders and parcel service available with one weeks notice.

The Friday Markets provide shoppers with a wide choice of local produce for local people



Valentines Day Competition

Town Centre Management and the Bridgwater Mercury have joined forces to give one lucky couple a Valentines Day to remember. The winners will be taken by luxury transport for a Candlelit Dinner at the Old Vicarage Restaurant.

Look out for Competition entry forms in the 29 January and 5 February editions of the Bridgwater Mercury.

Prizes sponsored by The Old Vicarage Hotel & Restaurant, Angel Place and the Bridgwater Mercury



FRIARN COURT HOTEL

February contents auction planned

After more than thirteen years of trading as the Friarn Court Hotel in St Mary Street, Gillian and Tony Smith are retiring. Having purchased the almost derelict building in 1988 and converted it into a hotel of their own design they have now sold the premises to the fashionable pub chain J D Wetherspoons plc for development. The new owners are expecting to open in the summer after major refurbishment to convert the premises into one of their stylish outlets designed around a local theme.

The Friarn Court Hotel is now closed and it's entire contents will be going under the hammer at an auction on Wednesday 20 February 2002. Further details of the sale will be found in the local press and catalogues are being prepared by Tamlyns the auctioneers.

Gillian and Tony would like to say a big thank you to all their staff and visitors for their support and friendship over the years which has contributed so much to the successful running of the hotel. Gillian said "I hope that the recent Town Centre improvements and the advent of J D Wetherspoons will bring spin-off benefits to those who live in and around Bridgwater and our fellow traders so that Bridgwater thrives and prospers"

Design by

Sedgemoor
GRAPHIC DESIGN

01278 435245

Golden Jubilee 2002



The Town Centre Partnership are organising a Golden Jubilee theme Window Display Competition and have some other ideas that are subject to funding. If any business has an idea for the Jubilee they would like to discuss with the Partnership please do get in touch.

Local people can congratulate the Queen by leaving a personal message on the Queens Official Jubilee Website. All messages left throughout 2002 will be printed and presented to Her Majesty as a record of her continued worldwide support at the end of the year. If you would like to leave a Golden Jubilee message, the site can be found at:

www.queengoldenjubilee.com

QUESTIONNAIRES



Enclosed with this Newsletter you will find some questionnaires. We hope that you can find the time to fill them in and return them. Your opinions are valued and help the Town Centre Partners with their particular projects. If your questionnaire is missing or you would like further copies, please don't hesitate to contact me.

There has been a gap since the last Newsletter so I hope that you will find this edition useful and informative. I look forward to meeting you all in the coming months.

Wendy White, Town Centre Manager
01278 446859