

Sedgemoor News

Sedgemoor
IN SOMERSET

A MONTHLY FEATURE FROM SEDGEMOOR DISTRICT COUNCIL. CONTACT US ON 0845 4082540

A quiet revolution in the town centre

SINCE the spring of 2010, there has been a quiet upturn in Bridgwater's town centre.

The Bridgwater Retail Initiative, funded by a Government grant, has been working to bring prosperity back to Bridgwater.

Sedgemoor District Council, Bridgwater Town Council; Bridgwater Chamber of Commerce; Business Link; Bridgwater Industrialists and Angel Place Shopping Centre have worked on a number of projects to support traders and to minimise the effects of the recession.

Unfortunately, there is no a magic wand

Bringing prosperity back to Bridgwater

which can be waved to restore any town centre back to full and prosperous trading in an instant.

Sedgemoor District Council has no control over what is charged in rents for mostly institutionally-owned property and can't force owners to charge lower rents; it can't give businesses grants as public money cannot be used to support private enterprises.

Given the change in shopping habits,

with much on-line, TV and home delivery, it is the businesses that adapt to change who are successful.

What flourishes in Bridgwater are independent traders, providers of good old-fashioned service and goods you can't get in faceless High Streets.

Below is a list of what has been going on over the summer and autumn to help the shoppers in Bridgwater.



■ THE Summer Celebration day, held in Bridgwater High Street in July.

CHANGING FOR THE BETTER

Summer Celebration on July 18 – this was a day of fun and entertainment, which complimented traders who open on a Sunday. It was hailed as a great community success with many taking part from organisations and businesses across the town.

HELP FOR TRADERS

Merchandising Training – to provide free independent, professional advice to local retailers on ways in which to encourage shopper into their shops.

Property Doctor Surgery – this is where advice and information can help traders in relation to their properties and leases.

Loyalty Card – The Chamber of Commerce has

launched a loyalty card scheme which aims to encourage shoppers to stay local.

Shop Jacket Scheme – Shop Jackets are used to smarten up otherwise unsightly empty premises and at the same time market those and other premises to prospective lessees. The Shop Jacket initiative is used in combination with additional advice and support for new and established businesses to raise the profile of the town and encourage interest and new business.

Retail Ambassador Scheme – Working with local education providers giving business the chance to share their passion for retailing.

Markets – There is now a monthly craft market, alternating with the monthly farmers' market, sees a lively, vibrant and colourful scene

in Fore Street every fortnight. There will also be a weekly market every Friday during December.

Snowflakes and Shopping – this was a very exciting event on November 24, with many shops staying open for late night shopping with a whole host of entertainment, craft stalls, squibbing, Christmas lights and general festive cheer!

Meanwhile Project – This is a joint project between Communities and Local Government and the Development Trusts Association. It aims to provide a readily available means by which local authorities and potential temporary occupiers can formalise short-term occupation of empty shop units on a basis which (it is hoped) is acceptable to commercial landlords. Utilising a meanwhile lease, we have made enquires with

local letting agents if property owners would support use of their empty property prior to a new tenant. This relies on landlord co-operation but has the potential to utilise empty buildings for community projects. Sedgemoor is registered with the Meanwhile Group which offers advice and support for these projects.

Shop Grants – Sedgemoor District Council and Bridgwater Town Council have launched an Empty Shop Grant Scheme to help new businesses improve their properties with a view to providing valuable support while establishing a new business. This is a matched funded grant of up to £2000 funding 75% by Sedgemoor District by way of national grant received and 25% by Bridgwater Town Council.

NEW SHOP LEASES

■ THE former Woolworths store has been sold and has re-opened as **Proper Job**.

■ The former Bridgwater Bookshop – 34 High Street – has a current planning application for change of use to a **Cafe/Restaurant**.

■ The 'other' half of the old post office is now an **Accessory/Jewellery Shop – Aura**.

■ The former Bastins premises is a **Calendar Shop**.

■ **NEXT** and **Argos** moved to larger premises on the retail park – bringing new shoppers into town and encouraging locals to stay local.

■ **INSANE** games are moving

into larger premises in East Quay as they expand business and services.

■ **Clubland** – in 15 High Street.

■ **Carmels Collection** in St Mary Street – has moved from a market trader stall.

■ 75 Eastover and 73 Eastover – **Polish Sausage Shop** and **Financial Accounts Practice** which improve the gateway entrance to Eastover.

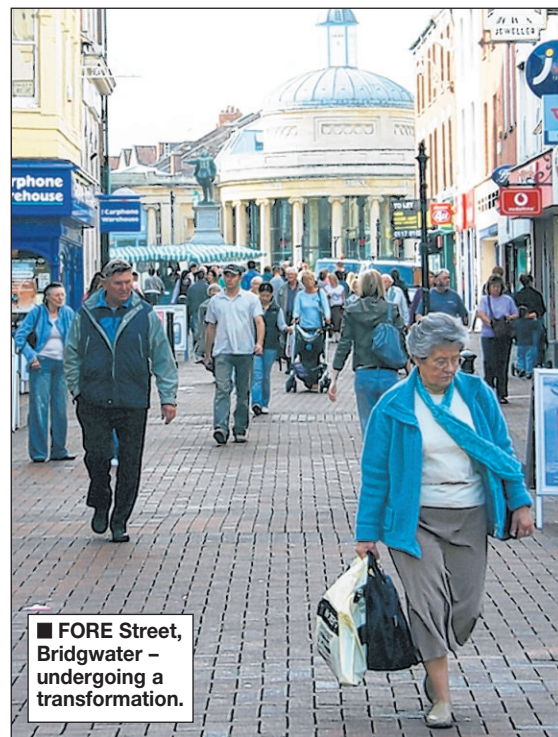
■ Units owned by Sedgemoor on the Cornhill are both **Under Offer**.

■ **27a High Street – Intimates** plan to open a new store on December 4.

■ **3 High Street** – opening soon.



■ THE former Bridgwater Bookshop building in High Street was given the "Shop Jacket" treatment – a fake front designed to entice prospective purchasers by showing what it could look like if a business took it over. ■ The treatment seems to have worked – a planning application has now been submitted to turn it into a café/restaurant.



■ FORE Street, Bridgwater – undergoing a transformation.

Father Christmas is on his way . . .

FATHER Christmas will be setting up his grotto in the Cornhill Market between 10am and 4pm on Friday, 3rd; Saturday 4th; Friday 10th; Saturday 11th; Friday 17th and Saturday 18th December.

Price is £3 per child with a gift from Santa himself!

Please do come along and see Santa and tell him what you would like for Christmas.



Bridgwater leads the way

THE efforts of the Bridgwater Retail Initiative have been recognised locally and nationally in the media and other local authorities have been visiting Bridgwater to follow the town's lead.

FANTASTIC FESTIVE DRAW

THE Cornhill Market Traders have got together to run a free Fantastic Festive Draw to win a whole range of fabulous prizes.

The traders have donated prizes to go into the draw, such as meat, paintings, a £5 box of veg a week for a year, wall clock, magic box, cheese board, jewellery, trains and games. Just pop along to see the list of prizes in the Market.

To enter, just cut out this ticket (right), fill in your details and pop it into the box, which will be in the Cornhill Market.

Whilst there, don't forget to take a look at the festive goodies on sale within the Market. You'll be surprised at the range of things you can buy for Christmas, both to eat or to wrap up!!

Tickets will also be available from the traders. The draw will take place on Friday, December 17, in the Cornhill Market.

Grand Christmas Draw at the Cornhill Market

to be drawn on Friday, December 17

Name

Address.....

Phone number

(no purchase necessary)