

Help shape the future of Kettering:

Working together for a better town

Be part of the conversation...



Firstly we'd like to thank everyone who was able to attend the Kettering Town Centre Conference on 13th September; it was great to hear such a constructive, positive discussion coming out of the workshops for us to build on. This correspondence will let you know what we've done since we met, some of the key points to come out of each workshop, followed by more activities you can get involved with.



Done and delivered

It's important to remind ourselves that this is the start of a conversation; however we were keen to take swift action on points that have come up. These are some of our initial actions that have been delivered:

- Free Twitter training sessions Dates for Digital training on Twitter set up (see below)
- Purple Flag Weekend 6-8th October – look out for promotional activity in Town Centre to celebrate the National Award
- New events and activities have been added to www.thisiskettering.com following requests.
- Pop up Ping Pong activity in empty Newlands Centre unit due to open in coming months
- Market Place and Market Street resurfacing of the temporary tarmac has started
- Christmas events programme launched – join in our #ChristmasinKettering social media campaign (see below)
- Clean and Refresh - a programme of small works to improve town centre has started

Key note speakers

Our two guest speakers began the day by giving interesting presentations. Ojay McDonald from the Association of Town & City Management spoke about the digital revolution on the high street and Polly Barnfield OBE's showed us the #WDYT campaign. You can find a copy of both presentations, [here](#).



Workshop 1 – Getting Around & Safety

One of the prominent topics to arise from this workshop was parking. There were a number of good ideas to come out of the conversation, all aimed at increasing dwell time in the town centre. A new **review on parking charges** is set to take place soon and will take into account the points raised.

A number of more cosmetic improvements were highlighted that could enhance the appearance of the town centre in a few areas. It was made clear that some of these could easily be addressed and a **'Clean and Refresh'** programme of small works has begun.

An idea to use empty shops for pop up activities and enterprises has been explored with a **Pop-Up Ping Pong Parlour** in the pipeline (above Poundland), which will bring free to play table tennis to the Newlands Centre on a trial basis. Free blood pressure testing took place in a Newlands Centre empty shop unit on World Heart Day and Kettering Futures Partnership will hold a walk-in event 10th October for World Mental Health Awareness Day.

Other ideas around more outside seating and better signage and way-finding have been noted and will be explored.

Workshop 2 - Opportunity Sites & Public Spaces

The 'Opportunity Café' focused on three different sites, Meadow Road, Wadcroft and the area around the train station.

At **Meadow Road** ideas came in the form of: permanent perimeter fencing, seating, outdoor gyms, play equipment, and dividing up the green space for different age group areas. It was felt that local users and neighbouring residents should be engaged in all plans.

Promoting the **Station Quarter** and its relationship with the town centre and Kettering Conference Centre would be beneficial for all areas, as would improving car parking in this area. Incorporating some office and mixed development around the station and improving transport opportunities, as well as connections east/west across the line, would help make the Station Quarter more of a 'hub'.

Wadcroft was recognised as an important area of the town which could contribute to a greater variety of uses and complement the current shopping and evening activities available. This could include more leisure uses for a wider range of age groups. Utilising the partly vacant BT building was also identified as an opportunity. There were comments raised about the lack of identity in this area of the town and suggestions for making it more attractive to encourage people to dwell.

Generally, in our public spaces, people were keen on:

- More public art
- Modern and better planters
 - Well-lit trees
- Grit the pathways and roads
- Stronger pedestrian connections to Town Centre
- A14 signage to Town Centre
- Recycling waste bins



Workshop 3 - Communications, Events & Business

We had some positive feedback on the work we have done through 'This is Kettering' to celebrate the highlights and hidden gems in and around the local area. Plans are in place to make more people aware of this. Please visit the website/ like the facebook page and let others know about it. If there's anything you think we should add, or you have any events for the events calendar you can let us know by emailing thisiskettering@kettering.gov.uk

It was apparent that **wider communication networks** are needed to spread messages further, E.g. schools / business communities / churches / local forums / facebook groups & pages / housing developers. If you are able to help with this in any way, contact us at thisiskettering@kettering.gov.uk

It was also made clear that we shouldn't just rely on digital – traditional physical communication material is also important for different audiences. **Signage and poster sites** were seen as important to this, as well as face-to-face communication where possible.

The current **events** schedule seemed popular but could be publicised more. More sporting events, speciality markets, events on Sundays or festivals would be well received, although resource restrictions were understood. There were also some ideas specific to improvements to the **market** around electricity access and stall placements.

A good debate was had on the prospect of introducing **free town centre wifi**. While the overwhelming majority would be in favour of such an initiative, some reservations were made about whether this should be a priority.

FREE Twitter Training!

Want to learn how to make the most of Twitter for your business? Sign up for FREE twitter training sessions for local businesses, run by local marketing director Simon Cox. Sessions will last 3 hours and be held at Kettering Borough Council.

- Monday 16th October – 6pm
- Tuesday 17th October – 6pm
- Friday 20th October – 9am

To find out more and to book onto the course, contact [Simon Cox](mailto:Simon.Cox@kettering.gov.uk) on 01536 869 688 or at simon@simoncox.info



#ChristmasinKettering Social Media Campaign

We'll be using the Christmas period as a chance to promote what the whole of Kettering has to offer with a **#ChristmasinKettering** campaign. We'll be using the 'This is Kettering' website as well as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to show off the offers, events from local businesses in the area. Make sure you **get involved** by using **#ChristmasinKettering** and we'll help share your messages with you!

If you'd like to get involved or find out more about this campaign please email thisiskettering@kettering.gov.uk

The Ideas Tree

The ideas tree proved popular with almost 50 leaves added to the branches. Thank you to all those who submitted an idea – the future of Kettering town centre runs wider than just the Council's activities and relies on local people, organisations and businesses doing their bit too.



What's next?

We want to keep in contact with you – one overwhelming response was that the local stakeholders wanted to be communicated with more. We plan to do this with more emails in the coming months; please let us know if you don't want to receive them.

If you have any comments please contact us at towncentre@kettering.gov.uk

