

**Service Evaluation and Analysis – Tourist Information Centre**

Ref	Subject	Why do we do this?	Who benefits?	Cost?	Revenue?	Direct cost to SWTC (cost less revenue)	Risk of not doing it	Considerations	Recommendation
1	Website	To promote Saffron Walden as a place to visit and stay.  To promote events.	1. TIC in revenue 2. Attractions, Accommodation, places to eat in terms of profile and more customers 3. The town in general, retail etc as the website's overall aim is to attract more visitors.	£1250.00 per year maintenance charge	Around £3500 per year at pre-covid advertising rates and volume	£2,250 (returns <b>profit</b> )	Promotion for SW reduced.  Online profile of SW is reduced.  Decreased footfall in town resulting in loss of retail sales locally, including TIC  Loss of trade to advertisers who gain direct business from the website, for example accommodation providers.	Is the pricing correct? Review pricing structure  Can it be increased?  Will we lose clients if we do?  Target places that do not advertise with us (with a mind to quality of course).  Staff time on this project is significant. Approximately a 3 month project from start to finish.	Discount for the year May 2020 to April 2021 of 25% off to support the local tourism industry. Renewal also delayed to September 2020 in terms of payment due.  Prices going back to normal for the year May 2021 to April 2022.  The pricing structure is very reasonable to encourage more advertisers and show an enhanced offer to potential visitors
2	E-Shop	At the specific request of Council initially, to increase potential sales of stock	Customers who cannot, for whatever reason, visit the TIC and wish to purchase an item/items.  The TIC in terms of potential increased sales	Year 1 Set Up £1200.00 + £1000.00 maintenance cost  Year 2 and ongoing: £1000.00 per annum maintenance cost	Unknown at this time	Cost likely to need time to break even and turn a profit.	We don't really know the value of this project without actually trying it.	How long will it take to turn a profit?  Is there sufficient demand for the products outside of our core customer base?  Staff time needed to prepare, pack and post.	A strong marketing plan will be needed to make people aware of this service and what products can be purchased.  Dynamic use of social media, linked in with the above, will be essential too.  This will need to be monitored and measured at all times to ensure that it is money well spent.
3	Shop Stock	To raise significant revenue for the TIC  To provide visitors and locals with quality local gifts, souvenirs and artwork	The TIC benefits financially  Local residents and visitors	Spend is in the region of £18k to £20k per annum	Revenue is in the region of 32k to £34k per annum.	<b>Profit</b> is in the region of £13k to £14k per annum.	Loss of significant revenue.	More space means more stock to sell, which, in turn, means more profit.  To use local suppliers whenever we can.	More TIC shop space given over to stock rather than free information.  A continuing revue of what stock makes us the most profit.

4	Photocopying Service	A service mainly for local residents  An income generator for the TIC	Local residents  The TIC benefits financially	Cost of ink at £175.85 per set of 4 cartridges  Paper at 0.5 pence per sheet from Staples.	For the financial year 2019 to 2020, revenue was £659.46, charging 10p per photocopy, or 5p for local businesses	<b>Profit</b> of around £259.46 based on two sets of toner cartridges per year and £50 for paper.	Loss of a popular service to the public and one that is used every day.  Loss of income	Is the pricing structure fair?  Is it the same as the Library charge?	SW Library charge 15p per black & white copy and £1.30 per colour.  Recommendation is to match these prices.
5	Laminating Service	A service mainly for local residents, offered since the closure of the only other premises in town offering lamination.  A income generator for the TIC.	Local residents.  Financial benefit to the TIC.	Laminator cost is £62.49  Laminating pouches are 15 pence each	£1 per A4 sheet.	So just on the pouches, once the machine has been paid off, we make <b>68 pence profit</b> per lamination, net of VAT	Reduced footfall.  Perceived drop in customer service.  Loss of income.	Is the pricing correct?  Staff time.	Research other outlets, even if not in Saffron Walden, and identify the average charge made elsewhere for the same service.
6	What's On	To promote events to locals including within 30 miles or so, as well as to visitors  Booklet is available to TIC customers for 50p.	The town benefits from additional footfall at events.  Event organisers have additional publicity.  Organisations such as newspapers can access and then use a lot of information at once.	£468.00 per annum (based on the calculation given at the end of this sheet)	What's On Sales = £516.00 (2019)  What's On Subs = £367.70 (2019)  What's On Adverts £725.00 net of VAT (2019)	<b>Profit</b> of £1140.70 in 2019	Non-internet users will not be able to access events information.	The elderly and the socially isolated or vulnerable will be most affected if no paper What's On is produced in future.  'The Flyer' does publish some but not all events information compiled by the TIC, as does 'Salad Days'  An online events section features on the TIC website, and an email contacts list is maintained.	Viewing this as a TIC service, it does have a modest community benefit.  Options: Continue as now Or Produce a simpler version (probably the best option, post COVID, until events become more prolific) Or Axe it

7	What's On Subscription Service	Subscribers (some socially isolated) like to receive paper copies of What's On. The subscription charge covers the cost of the booklet and postage.	65 Subscribers.	As for the What's On itself. No additional cost.	As for the What's On.	As for the What's On.	The elderly and the socially isolated or vulnerable will be most affected if no paper What's On is sent out in future.	As for the What's On itself. If a paper copy is still produced then it makes sense to continue the subscribers.	Dependent upon production of paper booklet.
8	Box Office Service	A three-fold system for selling tickets: For general events For Saffron Screen For Saffron Hall	The TIC The public The event organisers The venues	Small admin cost.  Saffron Screen and Saffron Hall provide their own printers, tickets and where applicable card machine.  The TIC provides the computers to access the SS and SH web-based booking programmes.  On non Saffron Screen and Saffron Hall ticket sales, there is a card processing fee for the TIC to accept cards	General box office: around £2000 per annum net of VAT  Saffron Screen box office: £2191.00 net of VAT for 2019  Saffron Hall box office: £3869.39 net of VAT for 2019  Audley End Concerts in 2019 £1528.54	£9588.93 Commission in 2019	Loss of significant revenue.  Loss of customer support and appreciation for offering this service.	A busier box office benefits the TIC and the whole community.	Continue and if possible grow the box office.  NB. Post- COVID, there will be less events for a while, and less people buying tickets too, so less revenue for the time being
9	Window Hire	To promote events for which we are acting as box office.  To increase revenue through hire fees.	The TIC.  Event organisers.  The public through raised awareness of the town's event programme.	The cost is through lost revenue caused by the removal of our own stock from the window, but this is covered by the hire fee.	£50 + VAT for one week.  £45 + VAT p/w for multiple weeks.  £10 + VAT for A1/A0 poster hanging space.	N/A	Poor public relations with prospective event organisers/box office clients.  Reduced ticket sales for events for which we act as box office.  Poor customer service.	Pricing is due for revue. Can it be increased?  Consider capping the number of weeks any organisation may book the window, especially in our peak season.	Price revue.
10	Accommodation Booking Service	To book accommodation as requested for customers, either locally in in wider Britain	Customers and accommodation providers	None	TIC benefits from a commission (10% of the first night - or 5% of stay for self-catering)	£44.58 last year <b>Profit</b>	Minimal Risk as income is very low	NB. Historically a lot of accommodation was booked this way but now most is booked direct/online.  Also note the rise and dominance of Air BnB in the last decade	Continue this occasional service.
11	Bus Time Tables	To provide public transport information  To facilitate access to the town	Visitors and locals (particularly those without internet access)	0.5 pence per piece of paper  Plus toner at estimated cost of 1 pence per sheet.  Gives a total cost of 1.5 pence per sheet	10 p per timetable requested (8 p net of VAT).	6.5 pence per photocopy <b>Profit</b>	Small loss of revenue. Inconvenience to public.	There is a small profit from this service and it is helpful to the public.	Continue this service.

12	UDC Garden Bags and Kitchen Roll Sales	To help local residents who would find it difficult to walk up to UDC to buy these items	Local residents and UDC	Each garden bag costs £1.20 and each kitchen roll costs £4.99	These items are sold and then accounted to UDC every 6 months. The revenue and the cost are the same.	Financially, they are zero cost and zero profit as what money is taken is given to UDC	It would inconvenience the less able who cannot make it up to UDC to purchase these items	This is a valued service, especially for the elderly and less abled-bodied.  It bears no financial reward for the TIC	That a percentage is now taken by the TIC.  20% to be kept by the TIC as of 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2020  UDC informed by email on 3 <sup>rd</sup> July 2020.
13	Marketing Leaflets	To promote SW as a destination to potential visitors	Visitors planning a day trip or overnight stays	Varies on size of leaflet and quantity printed.  A good ball park figure would be £800 for the design and print of 5000 new leaflets	None for the TIC  The benefit is for the tourism, leisure and retail sectors of SW	£800 per new leaflet  £380 per re-print	A drop in traditional marketing.  Nothing to post to prospective visitors  Nothing to give out at Exhibitions  Nothing to give to TICs and information points who request material.	Storage is now a major consideration at the TIC, with a loss of a third of our storage area and all paper material soon to be kept on metal cabinets	To assess whether the attraction warrants its own leaflet before proceeding with any new design and print run.  Can the costs be shared with third party community partners?
14	TIC Book Publishing	Revenue generation for the TIC.  Raising TIC profile as a creative force.  Forming new working relationships with local residents.	TIC.  Local businesses involved in the design and print process.  Any local residents/organisations/charities featured.	The TIC's first ever publication came out in the spring and was funded almost entirely by sponsorship, advertising and public donations. The equivalent amount of that sponsorship/advertising/donation income will be ringfenced from the income from sales of the book and will go towards reprints or future publication projects.	1000 books printed, retailing at £9.50 per book.	Staff time.	Reduced TIC income.  Perception of the TIC is a 'static' service that does not evolve or use imagination.	Staff time: the reality is that much of the work was done in staff's own time.	The TIC should build on this side of their work to increase income and sustain a reputation for creativity and productivity,
15	Social Media Marketing	To raise the profile online of Saffron Walden, the TIC, the TIC's retail offering, and the TIC website	Direct benefit to public (receiving the information)  Marketing benefit to the town including support for the businesses and the market. Marketing exposure for the TIC's goods and services.	No cost other than staff time and existing computer equipment	Not fully measurable but direct responses to posts by customers are frequently noted with ensuing sales.	No significant cost	The TIC needs to keep up with social media to communicate and engage with an ever-changing audience.	Effective posts are promotional at negligible cost.	Continue and grow present activity
16	Facebook Advertising	To raise the profile online of Saffron Walden, the TIC, the TIC's retail offering, and the TIC website  To promote aspects of Saffron Walden, the TIC, the TIC's retail offering, and the TIC website	The TIC and the town	Paid adverts are of variable cost and reach and can be tailor made to reach a specific target audience.	Of the paid adverts taken out to date, a good response was achieved in each case.	Marketing budget is £5000 per annum	A loss of targeted and measurable marketing opportunities  Missing out on a growing target audience.	Digital advertising is a lot more measurable than paper advertising.	The TIC will be shifting use of its marketing budget to social media promotions online rather than paper publications.

17	General Advertising	To attract more visitors	The town itself will benefit: attractions, retail, accommodation. <u>BUT</u> it is very hard to quantify the benefits of traditional marketing.  No real measurable financial benefit to the TIC	Print advertising offers range from £100 to £350 depending on the advert size and the magazine/publication in question.	None that is measurable.	The cost of the advert	Some people still prefer traditional marketing: looking through magazines etc  Not everyone uses social media.	To balance the use of traditional advertising with digital.	To move more to digital advertising as this can be targeted and measured.  With a reduced and selective use of magazine advertising too.
18	Belonging to Visit Essex	To have a profile for SW at County level.  To have a presence on their website.  To take advantage of subsidised training courses.  So that they will take our leaflets to exhibitions that we ourselves cannot attend.	Local tourism industry and retail.  TIC staff with regard to training and networking	£310 per annum	None	£310 per annum	Potential loss of presence on Visitessex.com  Would they include SW in their marketing campaigns?  Loss of good-priced training courses.	We should be part of county promotion, not isolated from it.  Engage rather than withdraw  Work in partnership rather than on your own	Review annually how much profile promotion SW gets from Visit Essex each year.
19	Clubs and Societies List	To assist local people in finding clubs to join. This is especially useful to newcomers to the town.  It also provides publicity for the local groups themselves.	Local residents and newcomers to the town.  Local groups through increased membership and also a higher profile as the list is also published on our website.	The only financial cost is the cost to print out 100 copies of the list each time it is updated.	None	Cost of printing and staff time.	Depends whether the club in question has an online presence that can be shared with the customer.  It is a popular list and would be missed	Is this a good use of staff time as it is a long-winded project to undertake and to chase and chase again those clubs who do not reply to the request for information?  Is the information readily available elsewhere, for example with the Saffron Directory?	Recommendation to continue for the time being, but review in terms of staff time.
20	Coach Meet and Greet	As an incentive to attract more group travel to town.	The group who get a personal greeting, plus money off vouchers to spend in town (provided by the BID).  The coach company get their coach parking fee paid (by the BID).  The driver gets a £10 lunch off voucher (provided by the BID).  The town retailers get increased footfall and hopefully greater spend in their shops	Just the printing of the vouchers, estimated at around 50p per group.	Potential increased souvenir sales	50p per group	Group travel market is very competitive. Offering a meet and greet will often be a deciding factor on which town a group decides to visit.  The meet and greet service is measurable as it has to be pre-booked. We therefore know how many coaches make use of this service and how many people they bring to town.	This does involve staff time and we do need a greater pool of greeters (we currently have 3 people willing to do this).	To source more greeters and to market SW to the group travel market as much as we can.  To see if there is an alternative to the Excursions Exhibition as this had dwindling attendees in January 2020

21	Poster Displays (TIC and boards)	To promote local events.  To inform local residents and visitors of the local event programme.  To increase income through our box office service.	The TIC.  Event organisers.  Local residents.  Visitors.	No cost except staff time to display the posters.	No charge for displaying posters but potential income from tickets sales for events for which we are acting as box office.	N/A	Loss of TIC revenue through box office sales.  Impact on customer service and local goodwill.  Potential impact on other local businesses if people are unaware of local events that might attract them to the town/area.	Could we charge for poster display? Would we lose goodwill if we did so? Many other potential, free poster display areas in the town.	Continue as we are, without charging for poster display but adhere to a strict 'pecking order' of content.
22	Leaflet Displays inside TIC	To promote the town's tourism/cultural/retail offer.  To promote local organisations, clubs and societies.	The TIC through increased footfall and potential link sales.  The TIC customers.  Local businesses, organisations, clubs and societies.	N/A	Potential linked revenue ie customers browsing the leaflets could go on the browse items for sale.	N/A	Poor customer service.  Impact on TIC's relationship with local businesses, organisations, attractions.  Serious dilution of one of our core purposes.	Manage the balance of display areas given over to free and for sale items.  Can be tempting to over-order free information.	As is already happening, refine the display areas on the shop floor to ensure key free local information is displayed.  Set clear geographical boundaries for leaflets displayed.
23	Theatre Token Sales	TIC gets a good commission	Theatre goers, customers looking for gifts	Nil	£38 last year	£38.00 Profit	Loss of some commission	Theatre tokens may help theatres to pick up after COVID 19 disruption.	Continue.
24	Train Ticket Sales	TIC gets a small commission	Train travellers from Audley End to Liverpool Street and Cambridge only	NIL	Approx £50.00 commission per year	£50.00 Profit	Small inconvenience to a few established customers	Brings in a small income	Continue.
25	Lost Property Service	Since the closure of the central Police Station, people often bring found items into the TIC.  The TIC liaises with the Walden Local to publicise lost & found items on a weekly basis.	The wider public. Even the Police themselves have reported lost items on occasion (diary, keys!)	Time and space. Note that this service has been suspended during the pandemic to protect staff (found items handed in are often wet and dirty).	N/A, although unclaimed items which have been left at the TIC have been sold with monies taken going to the Mayor's Appeal	Nil	No risk, but it is a useful service.	Although there is now a Police Station at UDC offices, it is not very central for the public to take items to.	Keep this service suspended at present.
26	Attending Exhibitions	To attract the group travel market	The town as a whole through increased footfall provided by coach day trips	A typical exhibition cost around £600. This has traditionally been split 50/50 with the BID	No direct revenue from the exhibition itself	Around £300 Cost	A drop in the number of coaches visiting SW	Are we going to the right exhibitions?  Are there any other partners who might like to chip in so we get a bigger stall?	Investigate other exhibitions other than Excursions.

27	Holiday Information Service	To promote not only our area, but Britain as a holiday destination	The public, and the national economy.	Staff time, computer time, storage space for brochures	Difficult to quantify	Difficult to quantify	Less customer satisfaction.	Customers are pleased to be given information and often comment how pleased they are to find a town which retains a Tourist Information Centre.	Continue, but with greatly reduced stocks of paper brochures for other areas. Apply small charge for print outs?
28	Journey Planning	To facilitate customer journeys	The public – visitors and locals	Staff time, computer time	Small cost if information is printed out	Currently no charge made	Less customer satisfaction.	Some scope for a small charge eg. 50 p per search (with print out)	Apply charge?
29	Statistical Work	TIC stats, especially footfall, are one measure of activity and/or performance	The Town Council	Footfall counter (already installed)	N/A	N/A	Useful data for comparison would be lost	TIC processes footfall data, and town/district/county/country level enquiries. It also records numbers of foreign visitors.	This data has proved to be valuable information on a number of occasions, including for Council, for event organisers, and for awards submissions.
30	Miscellaneous projects e.g. Foodbank/War Memorials work	TIC staff occasionally carry out ancillary work for the benefit of the wider community	Two examples: foodbank food purchasing using allocated Council budget Adding information to War Memorials online and applying for restoration grant (albeit unsuccessful!)	Staff time	N/A	N/A	Community less equipped/informed	These are miscellaneous activities which are tackled on an “as needed” basis.	Continue as needed
31	Ice Cream and Drinks	To increase revenue for the TIC	Local residents and visitors	£1.05 per tub	Sold at £2.50 per tub.  Which means a profit per tub after cost and VAT are deducted of £1.03	£1.03 <b>profit</b> per tub  At the time of writing this equates to a <b>profit</b> of £174.07 on the sale of 169 tubs.	Loss of income	This will be a very good income generator during the summer months.	Maximise this opportunity by combining it with a couple of tables and chairs in the Market Square for those who buy their ice cream from us.
32	Partnership Working, e.g. BID and SWI	To pool funds and resources to get thing done that we could not achieve on our own.	In the case of the BID, this is usually a marketing partnership to promote SW. The town will benefit more than the TIC.  The BID pay half the costs of attending the Excursions Exhibition.  The BID, Audley End House, Audley End Miniature Railway and the TIC have combined forces on projects like the large promo board at Cambridge TIC  In case of SWI, the TIC directly benefits as they pay for the printing of the Town Trail	There is no cost for working together as such.	N/A	N/A	Projects that we cannot afford to undertake on our own will be forfeited if we do not work collaboratively with our community partners	Are there other community partners we can work with who would contribute funds and time?	Look for projects that would work well as a collaboratively effort.

**What's On cost calculation:**

My calculation is as follows, based on 0.5 pence per photocopy

Photocopy 20 A4 sides per What's On Booklet:	=	£0.10
10 A4 pieces of paper (printed double-sided), based on Staples price of 0.5 pence per piece of paper:	=	£0.05
Plus another 10p for one side in colour (being generous here):	=	£0.10
Stapling x 2 per edition:	=	£0.01
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		£0.26

So each What's On printed costs the Town Council around 26p. Times this by 300 copies per edition gives £78.00 per print run. Times this by 6 print runs a year, gives **£468.00**