
SHOP AT MY LOCAL - UPDATE

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides Members with details of the purpose and function of the Shop At My Local campaign, and an update as to the direction of travel and plans for the future.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Shop At My Local (SAML) was launched to businesses in August 2009. Its aim is to work with local traders to deliver a range of projects, events and incentives to attract people to the main shopping areas in the Rochford District. SAML helps to raise awareness of the need to use and sustain local shopping areas and local traders. SAML also seeks to encourage traders to use other local businesses in their supply chains.
- 2.2 Whilst Rochford Council took the initial lead, SAML is actually a partnership between Rochford District Council, Parish and Town Councils across the District, the Chambers of Trade and Commerce, the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) together with a number of businesses based in the district. The partnership is run by a steering group which meets quarterly, with all decisions being made jointly. A Communications group was set up at the launch of SAML to take responsibility for the PR, and promotion of SAML.
- 2.3 The Shop At My Local mission statement is:-
- “The Shop At My Local Partnership will deliver a range of projects and assistance that will encourage residents to buy locally and that will facilitate local supply chains. The initiative will work to ensure that Rochford District’s main shopping areas meet their full potential by creating thriving community centres that offer a unique and enjoyable shopping and social experience”
- 2.4 SAML seeks to create more dynamic, experience led shopping environments that continue to attract residents and visitors through these difficult economic times and into the future.
- 2.5 The scheme was launched to shoppers later in 2009, with the aim of encouraging members of the public to sign-up to take advantage of the discount vouchers being provided by businesses.
- 2.6 Membership of SAML is free; once shoppers have signed up, they have exclusive access to vouchers and offers within the District. The website also provides news from the District, local information and regular competitions.

2.7 Businesses are able to offer discount vouchers or incentives to enable them to promote their business directly to local residents, and in particular shoppers who have signed up to the scheme and who pledge to shop locally. Shoppers have quoted many reasons as to why they pledge to shop locally, to quote a few:

- To support local, smaller businesses;
- For convenience and support;
- To get personal treatment;
- To see local shops survive;
- Shopping locally keeps the heart in the town; and
- More local shops = more jobs for local people.

3 MEMBERSHIP

3.1 When the current Economic Development Officer came into post in August 2011 there were 567 shoppers and 414 traders signed up to the scheme.

3.2 Since that date, and after promotion at various events including Christmas Lights celebrations, Business Breakfasts, and other community days shopper membership has increased by 208 to 775 members. Trader membership has increased by 17 to 431 members.

4 NEW INITIATIVES

4.1 In order to promote the SAML campaign, various initiatives have been introduced over the last year.

4.2 A weekly bulletin has been introduced, which is sent to all Shop At My Local members – both shoppers and traders – and details all the new vouchers that have been uploaded for the week. This has proved popular with an increase in vouchers being seen after this was launched.

4.3 Shop At My Local also now has a page on Facebook, as well as a feed on Twitter. The Facebook page allows information to be given quickly and easily to SAML followers, and also enables them to contact us quickly and easily. The newsletter and the voucher email is uploaded to the Facebook page each week, providing another method of engaging with local shoppers and traders.

4.4 Shop At My Local has its own quarterly newsletter, updating members with information about the vouchers that are available, and any news or updates that would be of use to them, and also informing them of any work or initiatives that is ongoing or to be implemented. The newsletter is emailed out to all members, and is also printed and posted to those members that do not have internet access (approximately 100 people).

5 WAY FORWARD

- 5.1 Shop At My Local is preparing to launch a new updated and improved website later this year. It is intended to organise a launch event to promote the new website, together with publicity exercises promoting Shop At My Local.
- 5.2 Once Shop At My Local has been “relaunched” it is intended to concentrate on increasing the usage of vouchers, and to continue to monitor usage.
- 5.3 It is also intended to start running free courses as has been done previously. This will be dependant on demand, but a pilot seminar (not being run through Shop At My Local) was held in June focussing on the theme ‘Improving Sales to Win More Business’.
- 5.4 The relaunch of the SAML is timely given the various initiatives being promoted by the government to reinvigorate town centres and shopping parades. *The Portas Review*, published on 13 December 2011, set out what Mary Portas thought had led to the decline of the high street and made 28 recommendations about what could be done to breathe life back into them; the government is now seeking to implement the recommendations. The government has also recently published *The Parades to be Proud of: Strategies to support local shops*, a guide which is intended to provide local people and shop owners, who are best placed to find solutions to local issues, with the tools and the strategies to rejuvenate their shop parades.
- 5.5 It is clear then that the SAML campaign, as a local initiative, sits very comfortably with the initiatives that are being promoted by the government seeking to reinvigorate high street shopping and neighbourhood shopping parades. As a result of staff changes at several of the organisations involved the membership of the steering group is less than it was, with no communications group actions for some time. The proposed relaunch will provide a focus for reinvigorating the steering group and develop a new work programme, based on the themes outlined in this report.
- 5.6 Finally, there is currently no way of monitoring voucher usage. The partnership is looking at ways to monitor the effectiveness of SAML, particularly with the launch of the new website. Internet traffic to the website however is monitored. (See appendix 1).

6 RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 At a time of limited resources and an economic downturn, it is vital that the Council continues to engage effectively with local businesses, and encourages shoppers to use local businesses. The effectiveness of Shop At My Local, albeit a partnership not run directly by the Council, is a reputational risk to the Council. If Shop At My Local is well supported and

received, it is likely that there will be a positive reputational impact on the Council, and the businesses trading within Rochford District.

7 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Economic Development Unit, and staff from across the Council, will be regularly involved with Shop At My Local and the events and initiatives that Shop At My Local is represented at.
- 7.2 The preparation of the new SAML website and the proposed relaunch of the campaign can be funded through existing economic development budgets.
- 7.3 Over the last 3 years, the Council has received £11,412 from the sale of bags and advertising, grants and sponsorship, and spent £18,700 on establishing and promoting SAML, plus officer time.

8 PARISH IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Parish and Town Councillors will be regularly or periodically involved in the work of Shop At My Local.

9 RECOMMENDATION

- 9.1 It is proposed that, subject to comments from Members, the Review Committee **RESOLVES** to note the contents of the report.

Shaun Scrutton

Head of Planning and Transportation

Background Papers:-

None

For further information please contact Jody Owens Hughes on:-

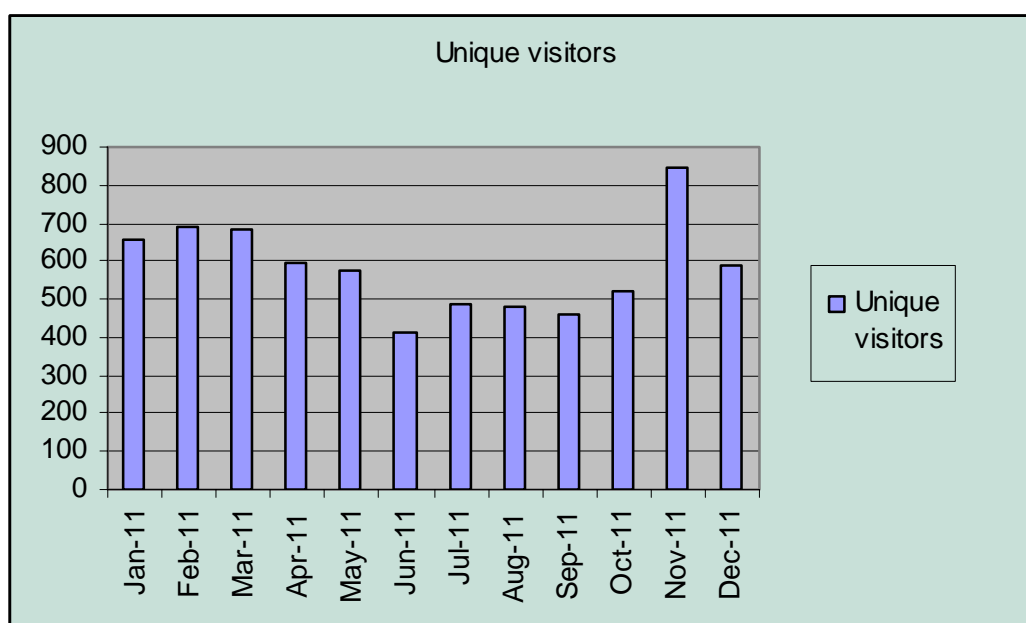
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If you would like this report in large print, Braille or another language please contact 01702 318111.

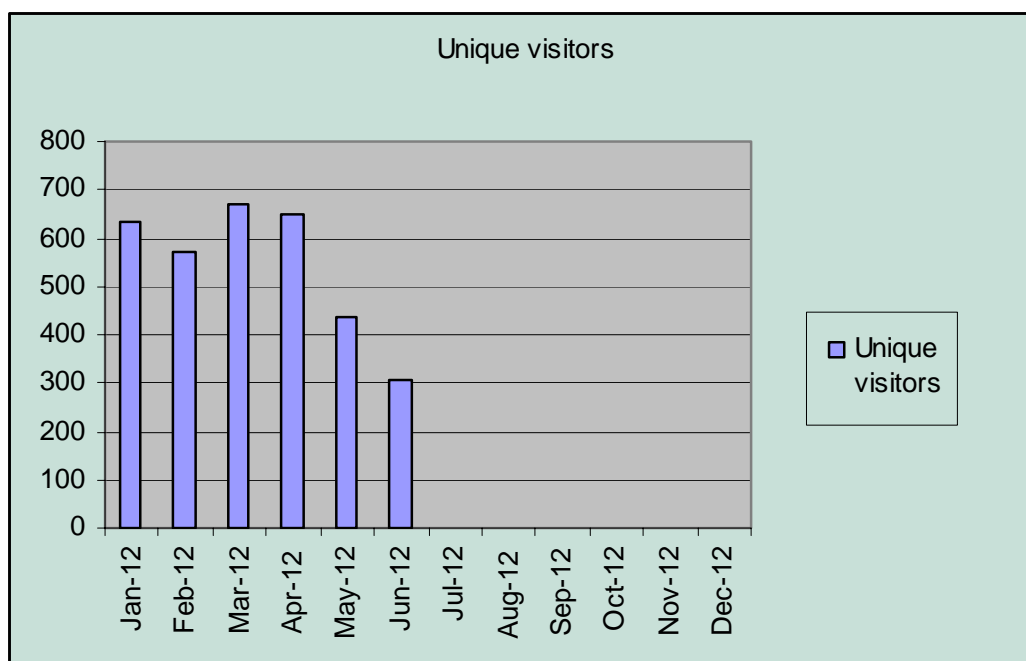
Appendix 1

Month	Unique visitors	Number of visits	Pages	Hits	Bandwidth
Jan-11	654	1,334	6,237	33,362	529.74 MB
Feb-11	691	1,373	6,752	31,499	485.18 MB
Mar-11	686	1,076	4,453	26,035	422.15 MB
Apr-11	593	958	3,224	17,412	273.01 MB
May-11	578	950	3,580	33,873	498.58 MB
Jun-11	416	676	1,951	10,157	200.48 MB
Jul-11	487	700	2,498	14,734	275.37 MB
Aug-11	483	685	3,714	26,062	280.94 MB
Sep-11	457	682	3,623	21,329	270.28 MB
Oct-11	518	738	5,786	38,094	349.21 MB
Nov-11	848	1,335	11,191	70,531	557.34 MB
Dec-11	592	1,012	7,327	37,371	463.36 MB
Total	7,003	11,519	60,336	360,459	4.50 GB



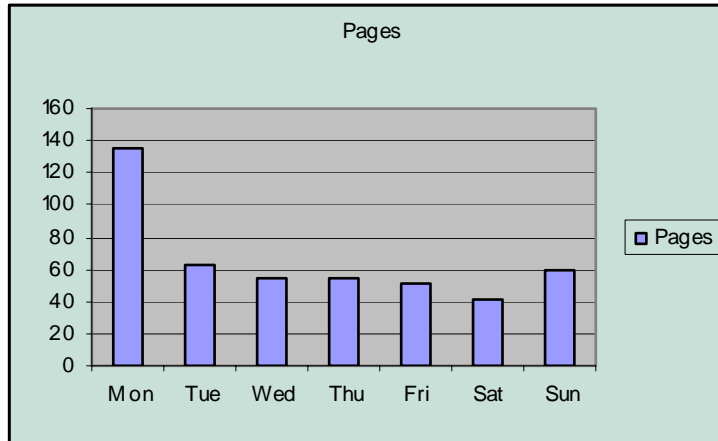
Appendix 1

Month	Unique visitors	Number of visits	Pages	Hits	Bandwidth
Jan-12	634	1,164	7,219	35,447	446.96 MB
Feb-12	573	1,163	4,660	20,157	388.78 MB
Mar-12	669	1,195	6,182	23,095	383.01 MB
Apr-12	649	956	7,642	22,507	361.82 MB
May-12	436	636	3,835	11,556	259.78 MB
Jun-12	305	399	1,565	5,888	150.23 MB
Jul-12	0	0	0	0	0
Aug-12	0	0	0	0	0
Sep-12	0	0	0	0	0
Oct-12	0	0	0	0	0
Nov-12	0	0	0	0	0
Dec-12	0	0	0	0	0
Total	3,266	5,513	31,103	118,650	1.94 GB



June 2011 – SAML.com website visit by day

Day	Pages	Hits
Mon	136	647
Tue	62	265
Wed	54	282
Thu	54	394
Fri	51	307
Sat	42	156
Sun	59	317



June 2012 – SAML.com website visit by day

Day	Pages	Hits
Mon	77	293
Tue	93	350
Wed	116	548
Thu	431	1,362
Fri	175	779
Sat	92	269
Sun	71	297

