

PROJECT CLOSING REPORT – Merchandise

1. OVERVIEW

The project involved the production and retail of:

- Tea towels (design incorporating the visual from the Academy of Urbanism)
- Jigsaws (illustrated map design)

2. DETAIL OF WHAT TOOK PLACE

Research was carried out to ascertain best quality suppliers and purchase price for different quantities, and also to ascertain willing local stockists. Discussions with potential retailers informed the decisions on the level of mark up that would be acceptable and hence the retail price and trade pricing structure. We liaised with Vision Buxton regarding the use of the 'Buxton brand' - this was incorporated into the final design of the tea towel and included on the jigsaw packaging.

A significant number of retailers was recruited, including the Tourist Information Centre, No 6 Tea Rooms, Higher Buxton Post Office, High Street News, Pooles Cavern, the Old Hall Hotel and the University of Derby. Some only bought once, others have placed repeat orders. Some organisations have also purchased tea-towels as corporate gifts.

As well as selling through retailers, we sold the products ourselves at stalls on the Artisan Market and the 2015 Spring Fair, and as direct sales from advertising on our website and Facebook page and mentions in member newsletters.

The first batch of tea-towels and jigsaws was ordered in November, in time to meet Christmas sales. They sold out quickly and as the TIC in particular was asking for replacement stock, the decision was taken to re-order. As a result, instead of generating a surplus of around £500, by the end of 2015 the project had generated a surplus of just over £2,000.

3. ASSESSMENT AGAINST AIMS AND SUCCESS CRITERIA

The aims of the project were:

Aim	Assessment
Promotion of Buxton through saleable, branded items	Achieved
Raise funds towards other BTT initiatives	Achieved
Promotion of Buxton Town Team	Achieved

The measurable success criteria of the project were as follows:

Success Criteria	Assessment
We recover our outlay within 6 months by selling two-thirds of the initial stock.	Tea towels: costs recovered in 6 weeks Jig saws: costs recovered in 3 weeks

4. ANY FURTHER BENEFITS

The items are generally bought by visitors, or by Buxton residents to send elsewhere as gifts; as a result they have been distributed across the UK and beyond, promoting Buxton as a beautiful place with an interesting history.

Some sales will be to visitors who might not otherwise have made a purchase, so there is some economic benefit to the town, but it is unquantifiable.

Supplying helps develop a good relationship between Buxton Town Team and the town's retailers.

Since these products were launched we have seen a number of retailers develop their own items of Buxton branded merchandise, which again are bought by visitors or as gifts and help to promote Buxton far and wide.

Sales of tea towels and jigsaws have continued since the end of the project, as an ongoing activity, and continue to generate funds for other Town Team activities.

5. COSTS

Project income and expenditure in the years 2014 & 2015 against budget was as follows:

EXPENDITURE		
	Budget	Actual
Tea-towels:		
Purchase cost including packaging	£440	
Artwork	£90	
Delivery	£7	
VAT	£107	
Total costs of tea-towels	£644	£2,119
Jigsaws:		
Purchase cost including insert	£343	
Set-up charge	£20	
VAT	£73	
Total cost of jigsaws	£436	£1,232
General Promotional Activity (maximum spend)	£70	
Total	£1,150	£3,351

INCOME		
	Budget	Actual
Tea-towels:		
Direct sales	£599	
Sales via third parties	£401	
Total income from tea-towels	£1,000	£3532
Jigsaws:		
Direct sales	£384	
Sales via third parties	£256	
Total income from jigsaws	£640	£1822
Total	£1,640	£5,354
Surplus	c £500	£2,003

6. LEARNING POINTS FOR THE FUTURE

Buxton Logo - the need for flexibility regarding its use, being overly restrictive discourages users.

Retailer outlets - careful selection about who we ask to sell the product, some are more suited and better at promoting the product than others; also about how many of them we recruit, to avoid over-competition and flooding the market.

Quality - a high quality product can sell well in spite of the higher retail price, and conveys a better image of the town and Buxton Town Team than something cheaper, as well as generating a higher margin.

Outlets beyond Buxton - many of the surrounding caravan sites have shops which stock this type of item.

Recommendations:

As the products are still in demand, it is recommended that we continue to sell them as an ongoing activity; we should re-order as required to supply a small number of retail outlets, and continue to make the products available for direct purchase via the website or other opportunities as they arise.

Suggestions for further product lines should be considered as they arise.

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January 2017