

TASTE OF THE TOWN COMPANY TO CLOSE

Jeff Hopkins, Chairman of the Taste of the Town Company (ToTT Co.), a local Not for Profit Company, announced the closure of the Company by the Directors, following the AGM on Wednesday 23 March 2011.

"Serious illness and difficult personal circumstances amongst the leadership, have meant little activity over the past 2 years. During this time, the Chamber of Trade has established the excellent quarterly Farmers Market. Many of the countryside activities ToTT Co. initiated have been continued by those involved. More investment was needed. The website needed revamping and new members have not actively been sought. The Directors have decided that this is an appropriate time to close the Company.

The list of Achievements include:

- ✦ 4 Four Day Exhibitions at the Grove School and 2 one day Street Markets. (These included cookery workshops for pupils, Grow your own recipe competition, Recycling competition, food quizzes etc); 3 years of programmes of Countryside Activities for young people and families with young children (river & pond dipping, photographic walks, fishing lessons etc) 2 schedules of Open-To-The-Public visits to key local employment sites including Müller Dairy, RAF Shawbury and HMYOI Stoke Heath.
- ✦ Raised awareness of local businesses and voluntary organisations through publicity.
- ✦ Worked with economic and health forums, and with MPs, including Government Ministers, to seek improvements in local provision for health and the local economy.
- ✦ Commissioned a mural for the old Indoor Market, staged a Theatre Performance and initiated a series of Instant Theatre events and Competitions in local schools.
- ✦ Organised an International event at the Grove school that brought together visitors from Arlon and Pézenas with young people from 6 countries.
- ✦ Published a series of local walks and a 'Journey Along the River Tern ' on the website.
- ✦ Members supported each others small scale activities directly.

Many thanks to those who have supported our work financially, and in kind, over the years: Müller Dairy (UK) Ltd. ; Market Drayton Town Council; Palethorpes; the National Lottery Awards for All; Shropshire Council; NatWest; Shropshire Aggregates Fund; the Grove School; Shropshire Wildlife Trust, Festival Drayton Centre, the Royal British Legion, Market Drayton Library and Information Point staff, local businesses and the many individuals who have given their time, including our busy Directors and to Colin & Paul Ruck of I.I.S.

The support of the Market Drayton Advertiser, the Shropshire Star and Radio Shropshire has been essential in reaching out across our rural community.

Jeff Hopkins

Note for Editors

ToTT Co. was a spin off from the Market Drayton Town Council. From an analysis of the decline of market towns across Western Europe it was decided to focus on employment, visitors and the quality of life. The interest was on the links between the market town and the rural hinterland. In 1999 the Council staged the first of successful exhibitions showcasing local companies and voluntary organisations. It was decided that the event would be better managed by a Not for Profit Company without a formal link to the Council. It was set up as an experiment to explore the potential of the world wide web in weaving the rural tradition of mutual support into the fabric of our disparate modern rural community. In 2000, the ToTT Co. was developed as a virtual community, with personal profiles, on an experimental website, connecting up individuals with a local interest in food, farming and the countryside. The personal connections were reinforced by opportunities to meet up with each other in real time.