

Sutton Coldfield Arts and Recreation Trust - Business Plan notes - MARKETING

The marketing plan is aimed at achieving income by the sale of tickets and the hiring of rooms.

Main income streams

Tickets

1. The sale of tickets to the general public for theatre shows
2. The sale of tickets to the general public for non-theatrical events

Room hire

3. The hiring of the theatre for use by professional acts
4. The hiring of the theatre for use by amateur dramatic and orchestral societies, schools/clubs.
5. The hiring of the rooms by the public for weddings and civil ceremonies
6. The hiring of the rooms for non-theatrical public events (e.g. trade fairs)
7. The hiring of the rooms by companies and public for private events (e.g. company presentations, charity balls, parties).

THEATRICAL

Theatre (Vesey Suite)

The Town Hall theatre is currently a receiving house, a theatre that produces no original work of its own and instead, hosts or 'tours in' other people's productions, usually those of commercial production companies and amateur dramatics/music societies.

The unique selling point is that Town Hall has no commercial theatre competitor in close proximity, is central to the town and to public transport and can provide a fully functioning 427 seat professionally working theatre for the local community.

The competing theatres are listed below. From community research it is quite clear that the people of Sutton Coldfield would prefer to see theatre shows locally rather than travel to Birmingham City Centre or Staffordshire. This is especially the case for older residents and young families with children.

Theatre	Miles distance
Town Hall Theatre Sutton Coldfield	0.00
Tamworth Assembly Rooms	7.90
Old Join Stock	8.60
Birmingham Repertory Theatre	8.70
Hippodrome Birmingham	8.80
The Crescent Birmingham	8.80
The New Alexandra Theatre	8.80
Barclaycard Arena	8.90
The Old Rep Birmingham	9.10
Lichfield Garrick	9.50
The Mac Birmingham	10.80
Solihull Arts Complex	19.10

Sutton Coldfield Arts and Recreation Trust - Business Plan notes - MARKETING

The Belgrade Coventry	23.20
Wolverhampton Grand	25.80
The Palace Redditch	32.00
New Vic Staffs	47.00
The Regent Staffs	48.00

Ticket Sales - Aim

To create a programme of continuous theatre productions that offer more variety and can interest a wider audience. Currently the theatre offers a majority of amateur musical theatre shows, pantomimes and orchestral shows with very few professional acts. To make the programme more appealing the entertainment offered must include other genres of entertainment e.g. drama, classics, stand-up comedy, children's shows and art/cultural. Theatre and entertainment is for everyone and the programme of events should reflect this.

To properly market and advertise all theatre shows nationally;

To ensure the service and overall theatre experience is of a high standard to encourage customers to return;

To introduce a membership facility and to give customers a feeling of ownership;

To encourage sales by offering incentives to returning customers;

To review ticket sales by age and type of customer, analyse seasonal trends and adjust the programme to suit demand;

Encourage feedback, research successes and failures and constantly review the programme;

To book shows 24 months in advance when possible and to advertise events 12 months in advance;

Provide relaxed performances, signed performances and audio descriptive performances to meet demand.

Room Hire Non-Theatrical - Aim

To properly market and advertise all room hire, possibilities and variations;

To ensure the service and overall hiring experience is of a high standard to encourage hirers to return;

To produce a publication that demonstrates dimensions of all rooms and facilities available for use, photographs, layouts and prices;

Encourage feedback, research successes and failures and constantly review the hiring process;

Sutton Coldfield Arts and Recreation Trust - Business Plan notes - MARKETING

How to increase awareness and increase sales of the Town Hall facilities

To entice people to the Town Hall strong publicity is required and a promise that what is on offer is true and correct. Rebranding of the building, information about the new management of the building, providing information on parking, competitive ticket pricing and easy direct and face-to-face sales. Strong social media linking is very important together with regular press releases, local press coverage and editorial and radio advertising.

Information should be also communicated through outdoor advertising, subscription to memberships and newsletters, website advertising and facebook/twitter social media advertising.

The booking and promoting of celebrity acts will greatly encourage sales as well as bar takings. Professional acts command higher ticket prices and box office percentage splits.

Gracechurch (CBRE) and BID have now confirmed their support and will allow us to promote shows and events in their areas (recent meeting with Andy Jackson and Monica Moroson). Other local advertising outlets are libraries, schools, colleges, community centres, shops and churches.

The objective is to offer quality entertainment to the community as well as a facility for events, conferencing, banqueting and weddings. Offering multi-use function room hire to the community and a central information point and community centre would be received well by the local residents.

Products/services can we offer to the community include family theatre, children's shows, classic theatre, ballet, classical concerts, big band, tribute, vintage and antique fairs, drama, comedy, arts exhibitions, arts festivals, conference and banqueting facility, proms, gala balls, coffee shop/restaurant, local history and information centre, education and training rooms, workshops, school presentations, dance and talent competitions.

Short term action plan

- Review diary bookings and check the variety and quality of shows and events
- Review all sales and marketing publications and literature
- Create a new and more effective online ticket booking system
- Create a new website with subscription option
- Create a new customer target plan
- Contact radio and press for support
- Measure success with a monthly review of sales, responses and feedback

Income from Room Hire

From the information I have been given from the Town Hall Manager's records the table below show the income raised in the tax years 2014-15, 2015-16 and 2016-17.

Tax year 2014-15 is total of actual room hire income and bar takings.

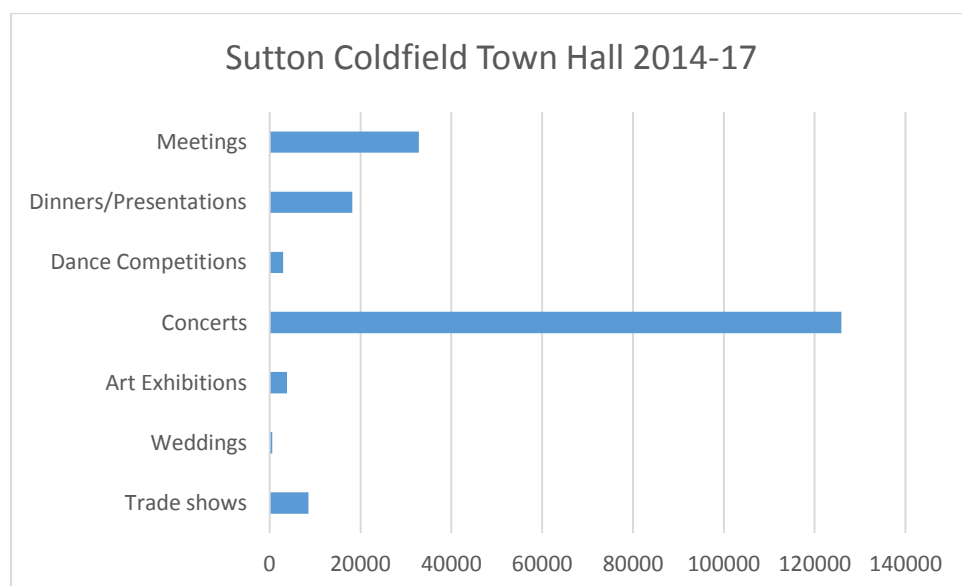
Sutton Coldfield Arts and Recreation Trust - Business Plan notes - MARKETING

Tax year 2015-16 is a total of actual room hire income from April to September 2015 (£72,128) plus an estimate for October - March 2016 and estimated bar takings for the year.

Tax year 2016-17 is based on actual bookings to date, so this is a minimum as more bookings will be taken, plus estimated bar takings.

TY	Room Hire Income £	Bar Income £	Total	
April 14 to April 15	124,000.00	87,000	211,000	Actual
April 15 to April 16	154,000.00	90,000	244,000	Min
April 16 to April 17	111,000.00	90,000	201,000	Min

Breakdown of sales by type



Summary

Currently the hire of the Vesey Suite for theatre clearly generates the most income for the Town Hall.

Room hire income 2014-2017	
Art Exhibitions	£3,845
Concerts	£125,866
Dance Competitions	£3,002
Dinners/Presentations	£18,206
Meetings	£32,890
Trade shows	£8,540

Sutton Coldfield Arts and Recreation Trust - Business Plan notes - MARKETING

Weddings	£600
----------	------

Current regular users

Confirmed users for 2016/17 (confirmed bookings/room hire)

NODA
Elections
Arts Exhibition
Highclare School
Vintage Fair
Rotary
Football Presentation
Harris Dance Academy
Sutton Arts Festival
National Trust
Charity Ball
Birmingham Philharmonic
St Georges Day Concert
Tudor
Trinity
Manor Operatic
Erdington Operatic
Sutton Coldfield Orchestra
Band of the Fire Service
Sutton Philharmonic
RWP
Circle of Light Operatic
Beer Festival
Sutton Choral Society
Jaguar Charity Pantomime
Marie Round
Harriet Ellis (training)
Royal Rose Luncheon Club
Nostalgic Music Club
Western Front
2 weddings booked for 2016

Please see the attached spreadsheet for more detailed information (appendix 1)

Community Response and Feedback

Having undertaken research exercises over the past four weeks the following responses were made by members of the general public.

Sutton Coldfield Arts and Recreation Trust - Business Plan notes - MARKETING

For details of residents in support of non-closure of the Town Hall please see the attached spreadsheet (appendix 2).

Improvements that would make the Town Hall more attractive to visitors include:-

- Offer 'local' prices for theatre tickets, parking and travel.
- Offer a facility to choose individual seats when booking online.
- Ensure the Box Office telephone is answered in the evenings and weekends.
- Provide a telephone taxi link in the foyer.
- Clearly advertise Box Office opening and closing times.
- Provide a Town Hall central point for community/cultural interest.
- Provide a walk-in information point where people can read about the history of Sutton Coldfield and look at historical photos, drawings and maps etc.
- Refurbish the outside of the building so it actually looks like a community centre/theatre rather than a derelict building and be lit up, especially during a show run.
- Improve the whole theatre experience.
- Meet and greet at the door.
- Show guests to seats.
- Produce quality performances.
- Provide a good selection of beverages and merchandise.
- Advertise the next show during shows.
- Ensure box office is open during the show to enable guests to book tickets for other shows.
- Offer Theatre membership offering discounts for regular bookers.
- Add more variation in the programme of entertainment and events.
- Implement more powerful advertising about theatrical and non-theatrical events across the Midlands and nationally.
- Rebrand as 'Town Hall Theatre and Conference Centre' [suggestion] (TTCC?) with recognisable logo etc.
- Create Sutton Coldfield Institute of Arts (SCIA) which would head the theatre workshops, arts festival, arts exhibitions etc.
- Offer adult theatre workshops idea (very well received from research with people willing to pay up to £20 for a bespoke 2 hour workshop, or £6.50 per weekly 1 hour session).
- Provide occasional Saturday night stand-up comedy (this is very popular with younger guests and attracts very good bar takings)
- Create dual use of Theatre and Cinema.
- Cinema club for children - both fun and educational films, e.g. Disney sing-a-longs and dress up / dinosaurs, natural history, space exploration, wildlife.
- Cinema club for Musical Theatre students with classics - Mary Poppins, Hello Dolly, Sound of Music etc. with discussions and educational talks by MT teachers.
- Classic cinema for older guests and ROH satellite if possible.
- Mother and baby/toddler support/entertainment during off-peak times.
- Elderly support /entertainment during off-peak times. Make a friend, support for lonely people.
- Provide information desk with links to Sutton Park, Gracechurch SC, Library, Education, Public Transport, Sport and Activities, Parking, Council, Local Events ie fun run, citizens advice bureau.

Sutton Coldfield Arts and Recreation Trust - Business Plan notes - MARKETING

- Improved publicity campaigns - billboards, electronic interior boards. Lighting outside the main doors.
- Regular (at least monthly) editorial in Observer, B'ham Mail, Families Magazine and What's On.
- Production of a calendar every year with photos of historical Sutton Coldfield.
- Creation of a Children's Town Council - nominated children and/or all head boys and head girls from the schools meeting 4 times a year to discuss and make suggestions about the future of Sutton Coldfield, what children want and feedback to Town Council.
- Clear indication of who runs the TH, whether or not it is closing, what is available, opening times, what's on week-by-week.
- Coffee shop or restaurant open all day to encourage visitors and create a 'meet-up' for friends and shoppers.

Weddings

Below are the main competing venues in the area. The Town Hall offers a large and very versatile facility with four large rooms and a stage in a prestigious and central location with gardens. There are no other competitive benefits. Disadvantage is that the Town Hall offers no hotel or overnight facility.

Wedding Venues

Belfry Hotel

Moor Hall Hotel

Newhall Hotel

Moxhull Hall Hotel

Fairlawns Hotel

Ramada Hotel

Aston Wood Golf Club

Lea Marston Hotel

Middleton Hall

Swinfen Hall

Trinity Centre

Summary

What to do differently?

- Implement a dedicated accounting system.
- Create a website with embedded ticketing facility (using Hippodrome as current model)
- Impact publicity to a wider audience geographically (national campaign)
- Review room hire rates, introduce box office splits for professional shows (20/80 to 30/70).
- Encourage shows that attract good bar takings.
- Review all current literature/booklets - rebrand and professionalise
- Make all literature downloadable/viewable online
- Review box office opening times - currently 10-4pm Mon-Fri. This needs to be extended to 7pm Mon-Fri and Saturdays 10-5pm (as a minimum) - and

Sutton Coldfield Arts and Recreation Trust - Business Plan notes - MARKETING

open all the time during a show regardless of whether the show is sold out or not.

- Transfer of all licences (PRS, PPL, Liquor etc.) to SCART.
- Review of current staff responsibilities.
- Review staff training of applications and ensure correct applications are used for the task.
- Review all policies - booking conditions, health & safety policy etc.
- Evacuation procedures etc.
- Review all insurances - PLL etc

Sutton Coldfield Arts and Recreation Trust - Business Plan notes - MARKETING

The Town Hall Users Group - current members (see appendix 3)

Anticipated savings

Currently the staff are not able to negotiate or 'shop around'. Savings will be made by SCART on most items purchased particularly alcohol and food, stationery, printing and maintenance costs.

Action points

- There should be a period of research and development;
- There should be a period of new admin system installation;
- There should be a handover period for the box office and ticketing system;
- There should be a review, analysis and reporting back procedure implemented;
- There should be a new customer database, subscription and membership system implemented.