

Watton & Swaffham Project Support Officer

Quarterly Report, January to March 2021

1 Admin

- With lock down this quarter has been largely working from home with occasional visits into the offices.
- Taking notes and minutes at meetings. Setting up and distributing agendas, minutes etc.
- Attended the Community Action Norfolk virtual Village Halls of Eastern England Conference.
- Attended Norfolk ALC webinar Greenways to Green Spaces.

1.1 Project Management

- Watton Town Council have agreed to continue with a part-time PEPSO post. SD will continue in this post.
- Swaffham Town Council are reviewing their options for the replacement post.

2 Publicity and Promotion

2.1 Social Media

Social media continues to be a key way of information and communicating with residents in both towns. Facebook remains the main platform but news is now also shared across: Twitter, Instagram and Nextdoor. Nextdoor in particular is building as a 'community' platform for both towns.

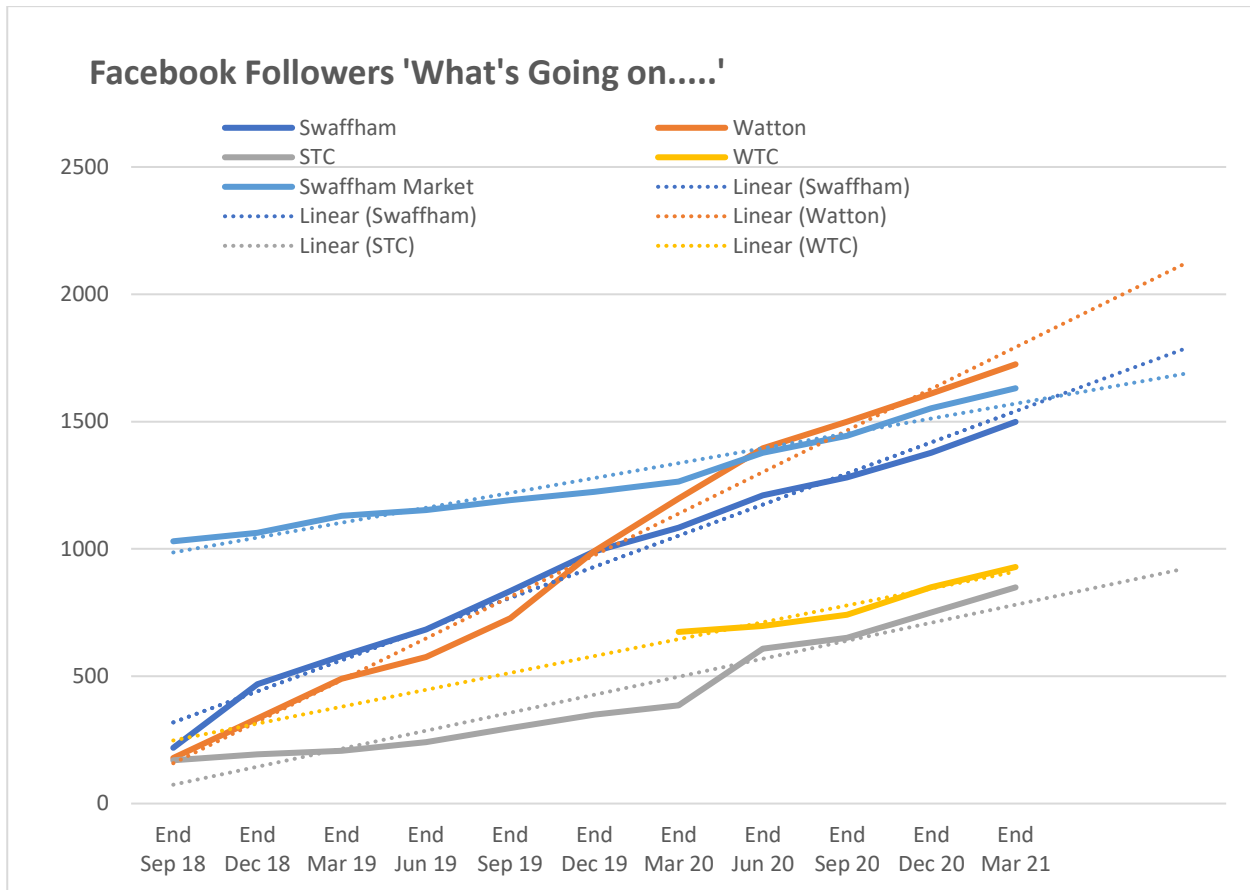
Featured this quarter in both towns were updates on: Covid rules and regulations, advice and recommendations; weekly markets and shop opening; community news and activities; weather updates.

Swaffham: Results of the Christmas Tree Competition, details of the Swaffham Heroes Awards.

Watton: The 'Make Watton Sparkle' shop window competition.

2.1.1 Facebook

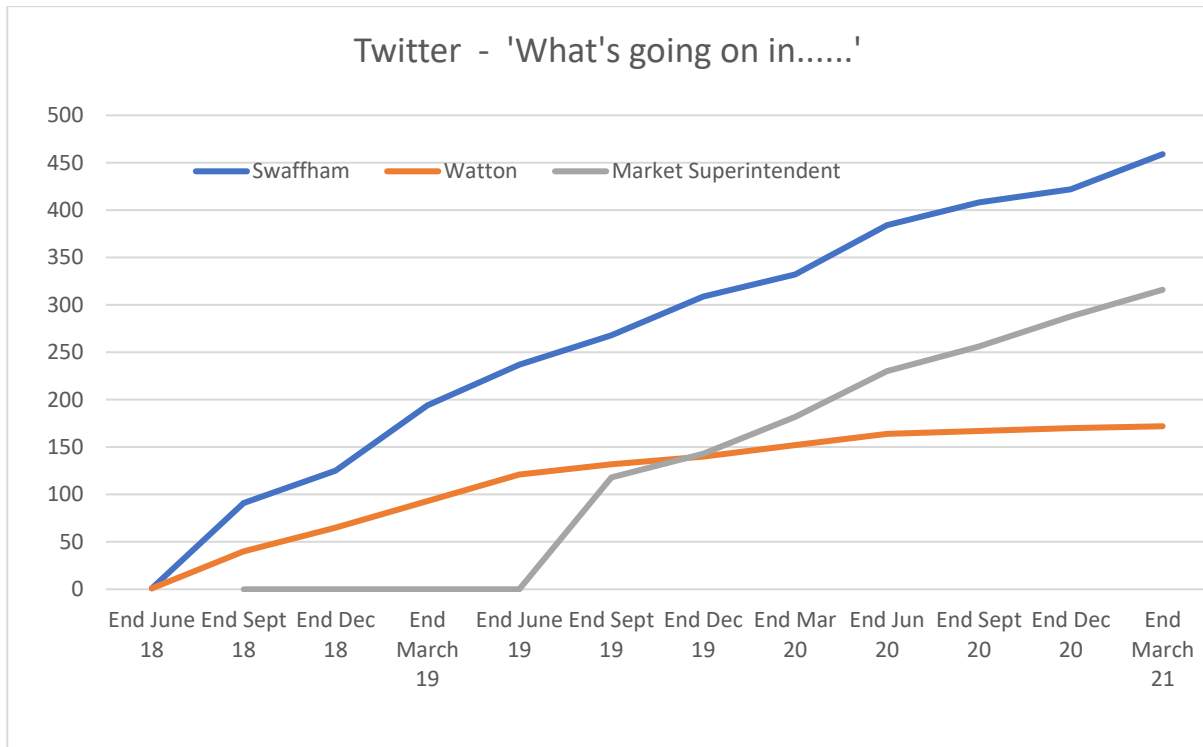
Quarter	Followers	Swaffham	Watton	Swaffham Town Council	Watton Town Council
1	End September 18	219	179	170	
2	End December 18	469	334	194	
3	End March 19	579	490	207	
4	End June 19	684	576	241	
5	End September 19	835	728	297	
6	End December 19	992	990	349	
7	End March 20	1083	1198	386	666
8	End June 20	1210	1395	608	705
9	End September 20	1281	1500	651	741
10	End December 20	1378	1610	750	850
11	End March 21	1499	1725	849	929



The number of 'Followers' on Facebook continues to build steadily continuing to gain around 100 extra Followers each month.

2.1.2 Twitter

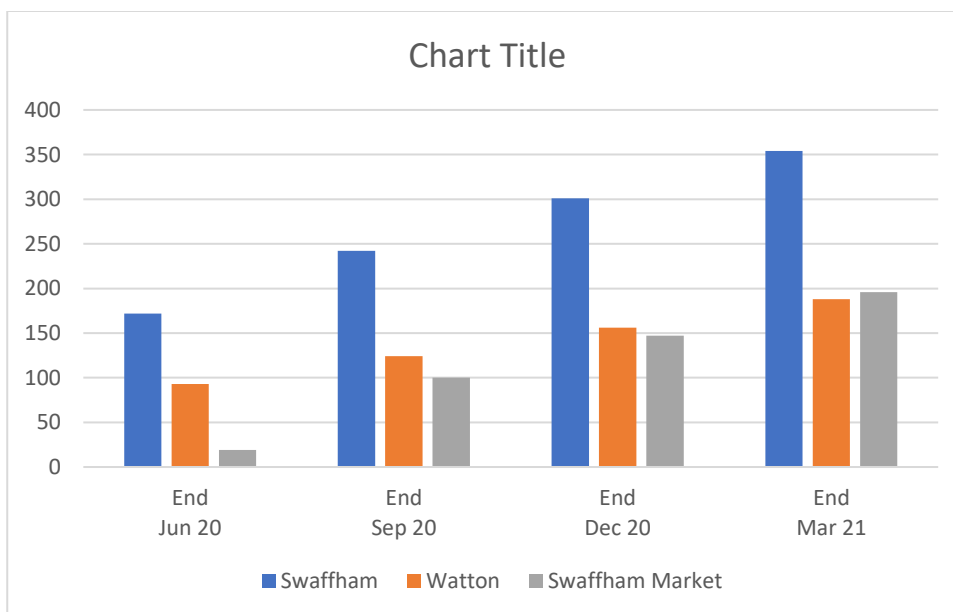
Quarter	Followers	Swaffham	Watton	Swaffham Market Superintendent
1	End September 2018	91	40	
2	End December 2018	125	65	
3	End March 2019	194	93	
4	End June 2019	237	121	
5	End September 2019	268	132	118
6	End December 2019	309	140	143
7	End March 2020	332	152	182
8	End June 2020	384	164	230
9	End September 2020	408	167	256
10	End December 2021	422	170	288
11	End March 2021	459	172	316



2.1.3 Instagram

Using Instagram is very much in its early stages but it is relatively easy to combine its use with Facebook so it seems worthwhile to extend to this new platform.

Quarter	Followers	Swaffham	Watton	Swaffham Market
8	End June 2020	180	100	59
9	End September 2020	242	124	100
10	End December 2020	301	156	147
11	End March 2021	354	188	196



3 Events this Quarter

It wasn't possible to run any 'live' events as the new lockdown lasted for the entire quarter. It was also difficult to start to 'plan ahead' until the way in which the lockdown was going to be lifted became clearer.

3.1 Swaffham Heroes Award

Swaffham Town Council did run a 'Heroes of Swaffham' competition to recognise those who 'went the extra mile' to help during Covid-19.

There weren't a great number of entries & perhaps the 7 categories were too many in retrospect.

3.2 Events for 2021

As the lockdown eases it is becoming possible to plan for events later in the year. There will still probably need to be adjustments for Covid-19 precautions and always the risk of last minute cancellations.

Some local events have already been cancelled for the year, such as the Wayland Show.

Swaffham expect to go ahead with their annual Classic Car Day and Xmas events, the current plans are show below.

Both towns still have grants from NCF which have been carried forward from the VE Day celebrations in 2020.

Swaffham are also starting to plan for 'Carter 22' in collaboration with Swaffham Heritage.



Events Calendar 2021		
Date	Watton	Swaffham
May	Great British Spring Clean – litter pick.	
Sat 12 / Sun 13 June	Open Gardens & Yard Sales	
Sunday 4 July	Antiques & Collectables Street Market	
Tuesday 27 July	Norfolk Day	Norfolk Day
Sunday 29 August		Classic Car Show & Family Fun Day
Sat 30 Oct	Fireworks Night	
Sunday 7 Nov	Remembrance Sunday	Remembrance Sunday
Sunday 28 Nov	Festive Market	
Sun 5 December		Christmas Light Switch on

4 Market Stalls Project

Swaffham TC successfully bid to Breckland Council to use the 'underspend' on the original MTI grant to purchase:

- 6 more stalls (complete with tables)
- Gala offered 5 free replacement canopies and the grant covered a further 3
- A smaller mesh sided trailer for transport rather than storage of up to 8 stalls.

This means that each Council will have 8 complete stalls, Swaffham will have the new trailer and Watton will retain the original one. Going forward the 2 towns will work independently but have agreed to share the stalls if they are needed for events.

Watton are going to continue with the storage and transport contract for the time being, Swaffham will manage inhouse.

5 Projects, Grants and funding

5.1 Projects in development

- Watton Tiny Forest
Liaising with Watton Junior School and Breckland Council (for location) to see if it is possible to develop a 'Tiny Forest' in Watton. The scheme is led by Earthwatch who may have funding available for projects with school involvement.
- Both. Reviewing grants for suitable opportunities in both towns.

5.2 Swaffham – Orford Road Open Space



The initial community consultation on the management of the Open Space has been completed.

Work has started on developing plans for improved play on the area. Four companies have now produced initial proposals for:

- Replacement of the existing under 8s play area
- A new over 8s play area.
- 2 examples of the proposals are shown below.

These plans will be used as the basis of a further consultation with families and young people to inform a Tender process to select the final designs.

A grant application has been made to the FCC Communities Foundation (formerly WREN) for £75k which would cover the costs of the 2 play areas and an adjacent picnic area. A decision is expected in early June.





5.3 Swaffham – Tree Council Branching Out Grant

A grant of £1000 was obtained from the Tree Council for tree planting around the town. The aim of the scheme is to involve young people in planting and looking after trees. This is tricky this year due to Covid-19 so the planting of the larger trees has been postponed until autumn when, it is hoped, youth groups can be involved. The project includes:

- Planting 60 trees in 8 groups, 6 at the Recreation Ground and 2 at Merryweather. These are trees that the Works team had kept over from last year. Now complete.
- Planting more mature standard trees, in autumn 2021
 - Swaffham Recreation Ground
3x Black Walnut to fill gaps in the avenue
Also remove 3x old stumps
Working with Swaffham Guides.
 - Swaffham Cemetery
8x Rowan to create 'avenue' along one of tracks
Working with Swaffham Guides
 - Campingland
8x Whitebeam to create avenue alongside road
Working with Teenie Icenies Nursery
 - Merryweather
6x Norfolk Apple varieties to compliment the existing old apple trees.
Working with Swaffham Guides
- The grant covered the costs of: 25 trees, biodegradable guards with stakes, bark mulch and the stump grinding.



Tree groups at Recreation Ground



Position for new Rowan trees at Cemetery



Tree group at Merryweather



6 new Norfolk Apple trees will be planted at Merryweather.

5.4 Watton Youth & Community Centre

The Centre has been closed for the whole quarter but work has continued on improvements including:

- Installation of new Rear Fire Door
- Contract let for installation of window openers in Rear Hall, work due in April.
- Contract let for new blinds, installation in April
- Contract let for refurbishment of Rear Hall Floor, work due in April.
- Getting quotes for decoration of Rear Hall.
- Two small office spaces have been decorated and refurbished so can be used as an office and a meeting space.

The Trustees have agreed a 3 year Project Plan for the Centre to create a new Community Hub for Watton. The centre will be 'rebranded' as the Watton Community Hub.

The Watton Family Hub have continued to run their Holiday Kitchen from the centre offering free food boxes to those who need them. Also working with the Family Hub to set up and run the Watton Community Fridge.

5.5 Watton – Good Neighbour Scheme



Continuing to support the Watton Good Neighbour Scheme which is now up and running with support from Community Action Norfolk.

Sue Dent, 22 April 2021