

The first of Colne's monthly artisan markets took place last Saturday and was a huge success. Lisa from Independent Street, who co-ordinates the markets, reports that traders had a very successful day, with some selling out early and needing emergency stock purchases. Feedback from businesses across the town also suggests that the increased footfall translated into more people stopping and shopping in Colne more widely. Independent Street's artisan markets will return to Parliament Street car park on the second Saturday of every month.

Preparations are well underway for Colne Food and Drink Festival on Saturday 11 July. Alongside the artisan market, the event will feature cocktail demonstrations, a man vs food competition, family activities including face painting and crafts, and representation from local charities. We are also looking forward to working with the Market Hall for the first time, with plans for it to host a cookery demonstration by a local chef.

We are currently finalising our funding application to the Arts Council to bring Winterbloom back in full in 2027 following the success of MiniBloom earlier this year. MiniBloom provided a valuable opportunity to engage with the community and gather feedback on what residents would like to see from future events. We look forward to sharing further updates on the funding application and plans for next year's festival in due course.

A new networking group focused specifically on Colne businesses will launch on 28 May at 8am. Initiated by Reece Farrar of Farrar & Farrar and supported by Colne BID, the group will meet on the last Thursday of every month at the Market Hall. All Colne businesses are welcome to attend.

Two businesses have recently taken advantage of our Fresh Lick of Paint grant scheme, which offers up to £500 to support improvements to shop fronts across the town. Any interested businesses are encouraged to contact Scott Smith at [manager@colnebid.co.uk](mailto:manager@colnebid.co.uk) for further information.

The BID is also developing a planting and public realm scheme for Craddock Road, in consultation with the County Council, to coincide with the completion of works to restore two-way traffic access.

We continue to work closely with the local policing team to address security concerns across the town and have so far held two BID-police drop-in sessions. Attendance has been limited, so we are reviewing how this offer can be adapted to better engage businesses. PCSO Neil Wallin and BID Manager Scott Smith recently visited businesses across the town to gauge interest in establishing a Shopwatch scheme amongst those most affected by these issues, and we hope to make progress on launching the scheme shortly.

Our remaining events for the year are:

- Colne Food and Drink Festival – 11 July
- 70s Festival – 12 September
- Fitness Event – 26 September
- Hallowe'en Event – 31 October

If the BID can assist any business, or if anyone would like to discuss any issues or opportunities affecting the town centre, they are welcome to contact BID Manager Scott Smith at [manager@colnebid.co.uk](mailto:manager@colnebid.co.uk).

