

## **Dad's Army Day 2018, de-brief.**

**22<sup>nd</sup> September 2018, 11am to 3pm**

### **1 On the day**

- Dad's Army re-enactors
- Jones' Van
- Dad's Army Museum Thetford stall
- Timescape singers
- Thursford Street Organ
- Memoirs of a Desert Rat Stall
- Allied Star / Neil Tenant stall
- SSAFA stall
- 3x Jeeps (from Watton)
- 1x Austin Seven
- Children's fairground ride
- Impsons hog roast
- Fab Fudge stall
- Plowrights Place: in 40s dress for the day, displays
- Mother Hubbards: promo and doughnut stall
- Other shops: Starlings & Papworths joined in with products / window displays

#### **Visitors**

Busy between 11 and 1pm. Quieter from 1 to 3pm.

Some visitors came dressed in 40s.

Car park was full. Traffic was busy but possibly no more than usual. Police had no concerns on the day.

#### **Set up**

Road closure Market Street: a real positive for the event. Gave a great pedestrianised area and good place for stalls to go.

Red Lion: having the 'van' and DA stall over that side helped to spread the interest across to the other side of the market. Means are asking visitors to cross the road but with the traffic moving slowly it was no worse than on a 'normal' market day.

#### **Staffing**

- Rob hosted the Dads Army crew, made sure they were looked after, fed etc.
- The 'closed road' area was covered by Sue & Ruth with 2 volunteers. OK but really need to be able to run independently of the Market Supervisor who has her own job to get on with on the day. Needs at least 2 members of staff / councillors to man.

#### **Market feedback**

On the day comments from stallholders were that they were just about normally busy. Probably a mix of 'normal' traffic being down but some extras picked up from the day.

Ruth: general feedback was positive. Mostly had a 'normal' or slightly slow day. Stallholders recognise that were getting new faces & that they might come back another day.

Need to make sure that all areas get 'interest'. The Memorial area felt they were excluded & had a very quiet day. Ruth – doesn't feel it would be enough to put the 'charity' stalls down there. Need something to draw people down. Possibly another music act / singers / re-enactors doing something. Same applies to the East Side area if Red Lion weren't hosting would need something to draw people that way.

### **First Aid**

SueD was acting as First Aider for the event. Was one incident, an ambulance was called but, after 30 minutes, and having been told the wait was 4 hours, the injured party decided to carry on. Bearing in mind this response from the ambulance service it might be worthwhile having SJA or equivalent present. Would normally do so for any stand alone or larger event.

### **Stalls & Activities**

Overall worked very well. Just about enough going on, any less would have been a bit thin.

Because was arranged at quite short notice it was difficult to book stalls of all kinds (charity, re-enactors, vehicles). They all book up well in advance. Ended up with several 'open ended' promises to come along which made it very difficult to plan and promote. Also a question for re-enactors, what do they get out of it? Many don't charge so either have to be very keen to come or offer some expenses (fuel) or subsidised food etc.

**Dad's Army team:** were great, spent lots of time out and about, interacting with visitors, joined in with the singers.

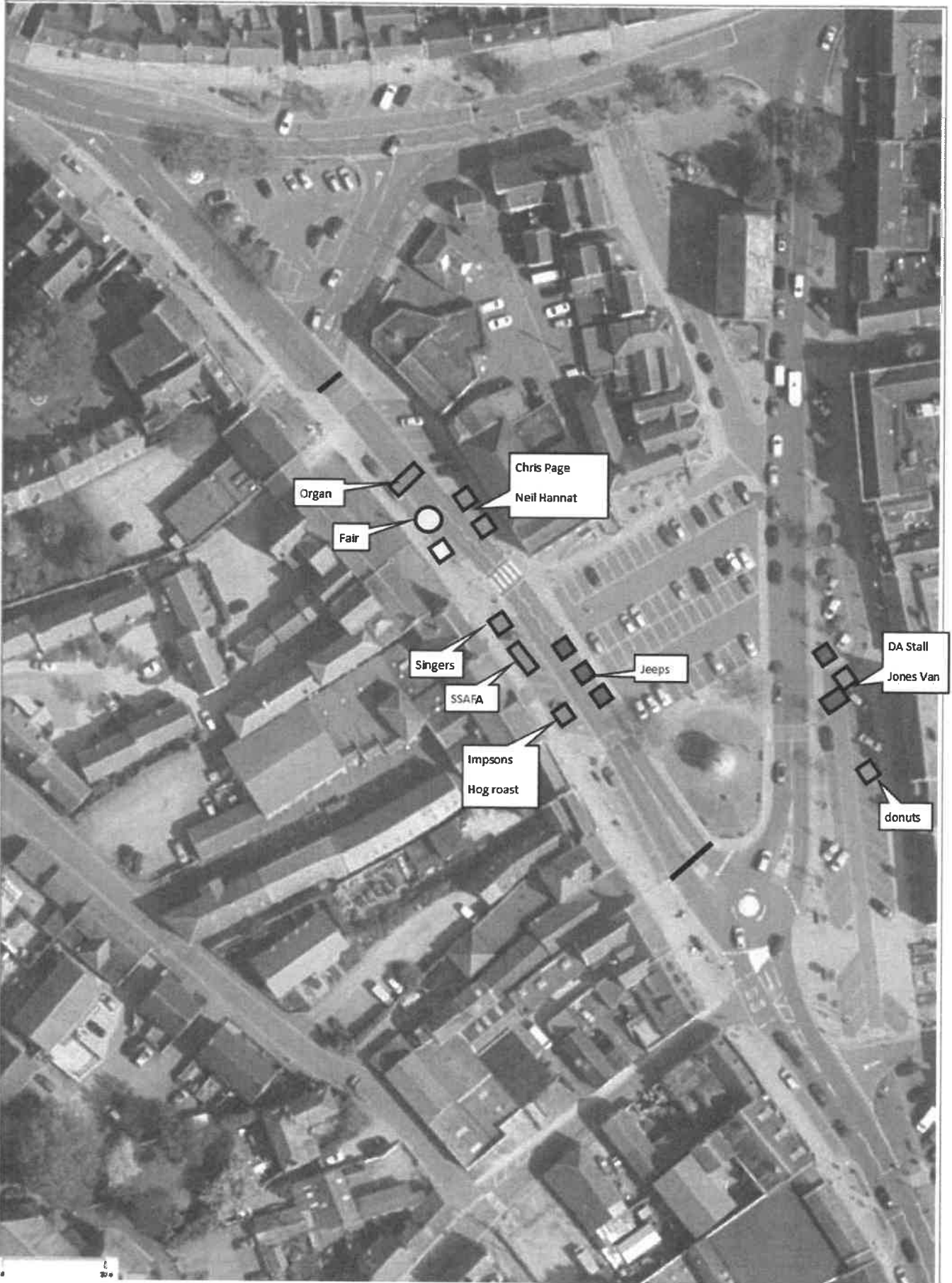
**'Timescape' Singers:** Fantastic. Were very good and created a real buzz on the day. Interacted with the audience, brought some of their own 'followers' who started the dancing etc. Also knew the DA crew and they joined in with the singing. Thursford Organ helped to fill the gaps & was well positioned so wasn't too loud!

### **Promotion**

Due to short lead in time we weren't able to secure enough additional activities to scale the event up and/or the time to put in traffic & event management plans to cope with large crowds. It was an excellent local event and was promoted on this basis. Also working within a limited budget.

Main outlets were:

- Local, posters, banner
- Social Media: facebook, twitter, web
- Press:
  - o Watton & Swaffham Times and Lynn News covered the week before the event. Also coverage following week, double spread on Market & on event.
  - o Lynn News: mentioned week before and published photos following week.
- Radio: KLFM, Radio Norfolk informed but don't know if covered.



Organ

Fair

Chris Page

Neil Hannat

Singers

SSAFA

Impsons

Hog roast

Jeeps

DA Stall

Jones Van

donuts

## 2 Budget

| What                             | £   |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| Road Closure                     | 36  |
| Dad's Army (covered by Red Lion) | 0   |
| Thursford Organ                  | 60  |
| Timescape Singers                | 250 |
| Banner                           | 35  |
| Yellow road closure signs        | 25  |
| Facebook Post Boost              | 20  |
| Impsons stall                    | -10 |
| Total                            | 416 |

## 3 Feedback

Generally very positive feedback from visitors on the day:

- Great to see town so busy.
- Haven't seen town so busy for years.

From Facebook:

- Thought it was great, ensa were brilliant. Displays were informative. Well done all.
- I had a fab day, it was great fun. We came along dressed up and entered the spirit of it all. I hope they can expand on it and make even more of it and an annual event.
- A lovely idea, very well done, nice to see everyone in the mood and hear some old classics. All looked very authentic.
- It was a brilliant day
- Looks amazing
- Thoroughly enjoyed it, glad we moved here too.
- This is lovely
- Fabulous day at Swaffham
- Hope it is back next year or in the summer would be nice.
- Dads army day at Swaffham market place today what a fantastic day well done Swaffham
- Thanks from all the team at Dad's Army Museum Thetford. We had a great time!
- What a great day. Dad's Army Day, thank you and well done to everyone involved. We are so glad we moved to this town, great atmosphere and lovely place to live.
- It was nice to see so many people enjoying this event. Thanks

Some negative comment, mainly about the lack of publicity but as the event was well attended this was largely unfounded.

## 4 Next year?

Certainly an enthusiasm amongst visitors and re-enactors (including Dads Army) to repeat again next year.

| Saturday  | Sunday  |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Pros</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This did work well &amp; have a 'core' footfall brought in by the market.</li> <li>- New visitors for the event see the market &amp; hopefully encouraged to return.</li> <li>- With the road shut have got room for a lot more displays / re-enactors than had this year.</li> <li>- Especially as will have the Buttercross open again</li> <li>- Could use the Campingland area as well</li> <li>- Feedback from re-enactors is that Saturday is better for them.</li> </ul> | <p><b>Pros</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Much more space can extend to include perhaps a 40s market</li> <li>- Also possibly activities in the Assembly Rooms.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Cons</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- If go any bigger will need to put in a 'park and ride' or similar. Might be enough to use Heygates if that is available.</li> <li>- There is a limit to what can do, only have so much space.</li> <li>- Many 're-enactors' come FOC but will need to pay for performers.</li> </ul>  | <p><b>Cons</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lose benefits to market</li> <li>- The bigger the event the greater the cost in time and money.</li> <li>- Is there enough resource to run this?</li> <li>- Bigger risk.</li> </ul> |

### Date?

- Need to make sure that miss all the established events, especially Holt and Sheringham
- September is often good weather but we were lucky to get away with it this year.
- In August / July when the main holiday traffic is coming through might be harder to close the road (may not get permission / will cause more congestion).
- Also need to make sure miss the main Town Council events – e.g. Sheep Fair.
- Advice from 'Timescape' was that July / August would hit other events & being the week after Holt / Sheringham meant that some of the visitors were still in the area.

### Suggestions for 2019

- Saturday
- September when fits in with other events
- Run an equivalent event but filling the space, could be probably 4x as big.

Then consider expanding again & perhaps switch to Sunday for 2020.

