



Cultural and Economic Services Committee

Date: 7 October 2019
Title: Community Events update report
Purpose of the Report: To provide a progress report on community events
Contact Officer: Ben Bodsworth, Town & Community Promotions Manager

Corporate Objective/s	LLTC Three Year Plan – Aim: 2 - To continue to support a vibrant town through partnership working and initiatives including management of the street market, support for local businesses, town and community promotions and town centre enhancements.
Implications	
Financial	√ Big Lunch Event incurred a slight overspend. Canal Festival expenditure is within budget (with additional expenditure previously agreed), however, the income target hasn't been achieved. Music in the Park is on budget (with additional expenditure previously agreed) Living History remains on budget and is due to incur a small underspend. Christmas Festival weekend expenditure remains on budget.
Human Resources	
Operational/Service delivery	
Procedural/Legal	
Risk/Health & Safety	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

Should members be minded, the proposals are:

- 1.1 To note the report.
- 1.2 To continue to deliver the later finishing time for the Linslade Canal Festival for a further two years using earmarked reserves (9057/970) as per Committee endorsement Ref. 140/CE.
- 1.3 To continue to deliver the Last Night of The Proms for a further two years using earmarked reserves (9057/970) as per Committee endorsement Ref.140/CE.
- 1.4 To continue to hold earmarked reserves (9057/970) for three years to fund a Live TV Screening event when a significant national event occurs as per Committee endorsement Ref. 140/CE.
- 1.5 To endorse the event dates for the 2020 Events programme.

2. BIG LUNCH FOOD FESTIVAL

- 2.1 The Big Lunch food festival took place on Sunday 2nd June to coincide with the national Big Lunch initiative, organised by the Eden project.
- 2.2 46 food and food-related stall holders registered to attend on the day along with cooking demonstrations, walkabout entertainers and children's activities throughout the day. All entertainment and activities provided throughout the day by Leighton-Linslade Town Council are free for members of the public.
- 2.3 Have-a-go workshops were commissioned to be provided by a local children's cookery school where participants were able to make fruit kebabs for consumption on site.
- 2.4 Printed material advertising (newspapers, posters, flyers) was reduced for the 2019 advertising campaign due to costs and limited outlets for display. A well-structured social media campaign across Facebook (Town Council's main page & Big Lunch specific event page) and Twitter aided by photographs from previous events was a primary source of advertising. A reach of 44,000 people was generated by the event on Facebook.
- 2.5 Budget (101/4552) –The budget for the Big Lunch Food Festival in the financial year 2018/19 is £10,000. A further £3,000 is allocated from 101/4553 for salaries. Income for the event is generated by the sale of pitches (circa. £3,000) which is also spent on the event to enhance the activities on the day. A total of £12,967.55 was spent on the event, covered by an income of £2,950 through the sale of trade pitches at the event.
- 2.6 Stewarding for the event was undertaken by a mix of internal and external staffing to ensure the safety and security of members of the public attending the event.
- 2.7 The Mayor was joined on stage by the new Town Crier for his inaugural outing as part of the opening ceremony.
- 2.8 Feedback following the event (both from members of the public and internal members of staff) has been largely positive with some suggestions for improvements and additions which could be made for future years.



3 LINSLADE CANAL FESTIVAL

- 3.1 Linslade Canal Festival took place on Saturday 27th July with 118 stall holders, 17 demonstrators and 35 boats booked in to attend.
- 3.2 Similar to Big Lunch, the advertising campaign for Canal Festival consisted a mix of digital and printed materials, utilising the same outlets for printed copy (Primary Times, Leighton Buzzard Observer & Bee Local) plus an additional specialist Canal newspaper (The Tillergraph). A reach of 79,000 people was generated by the Canal Festival event on Facebook.



- 3.3 A number of stall holders and boaters chose not to attend on the day of the festival due to predicted weather conditions – the lead up to the festival had been dry and hot, with the forecast for the day to be showers throughout the day and into the evening.
- 3.4 For the most part, the weather held off and those stall holders who attended have provided feedback to say that despite the weather, their takings for the day were either good, or satisfactory given the weather conditions.
- 3.5 A mixed team of internal and external stewards provided support to the festival, with good collaborative working throughout the day and into the evening. Members of staff commented that the internal / external mix worked well across all areas of the site.
- 3.6 Car Parking takings were down significantly on previous years due to the weather, with £2,034.20 taken in 2019 against £3,407 in 2018 which will have a significant impact on the overall income for the event.
- 3.7 The Paddocks area featured a mix of live music, demonstrations, food and trade stalls with a significant number remaining open until 8pm this year for the first time.
- 3.8 The Lakeside and Poplars areas of the site incorporated demonstrations of yesteryear alongside registered charity stalls (in keeping with the event) with some food vendors and a smaller bar being present in the Poplars area.
- 3.9 The annual fun dog show returned in partnership with HULA Animal Rescue and Pet Stop who sponsored the prizes for each category.
- 3.10 The evening entertainment was well received by those who stayed with feedback stating people enjoyed “The live music and bar. There was a good atmosphere” with others saying it was “a great event, well done!”.
- 3.11 Attendance figures for the evening were; 287 at 1745hrs, 203 at 1830hrs and 96 at 18:54hrs and 28 at 1945hrs. Considering the weather conditions experienced during the late afternoon and into the evening, the turn out shows the later opening of the festival is popular. Many people commented at the information tent that it was great to see the event running later into the evening, but it was a shame about the weather.
- 3.12 This pilot year for the late evening opening was a success. Committee had endorsed a three-year period of funding for event delivery enhancements. The first year was to be the pilot year which would then release the remaining two years of finding. Officers recommend that the enhanced event continues for the remaining two years utilising earmarked reserves as previously endorsed. (Ref. 140/CE).
- 3.13 Budget (101/4515) –The budget for the Canal Festival in the financial year 2018/19 is £18,000 of which £17,200 is committed. A further £5,000 is allocated from 101/4553 for salaries, of which £5,200 has been spent. An additional

£2,775 from earmarked reserves (970/9507) used to support the additional evening activity as approved at 15th October 2018 Cultural and Economic Committee meeting of which £2,800 has been spent. A slight underspend of £600 has been generated across the budget codes allocated.

- 3.14 Income for the event is generated by the sale of pitches, bar takings split and car parking sales. An income target of £10,000 has been placed in the budget with £500 in sponsorship. £5,719.50 has been generated through the sale of pitches (including funfair and bar pitch), £600 through the sale of Narrowboat moorings and £2,034.20 in car parking income. The total income at the time of writing this report is set at, of £8,353.70.

We are still awaiting details of the financial split with the Bar provider and also the pony rides provider. Currently we are £1,646.30 down against our income target which can mainly be attributed to a quieter car park due to the weather conditions experienced on the day.

4 MUSIC IN THE PARK

- 4.1 The Music in the Park series of concerts began on Sunday 2nd June and lasts until Sunday 8th September. There is an additional “Last Night of The Proms” screening on Saturday 14th September (15 concerts in total).



- 4.2 The concerts begin at 3pm and last approximately 90minutes with a 15minute interval.
- 4.3 The café in the park will be providing refreshments for the Band Concerts, along with the toilets within the park being open throughout the concerts. This replaces the provision offered within the day-centre adjacent to the park.
- 4.4 Feedback to this provision has been mixed. However, the Café in the Park has adapted its offering to ensure customers are able to make purchases close to the Band Stand and continues to inform people of its community lead status.
- 4.5 The Last Night of the Proms screening began at 6.30pm featuring a live band and singers until the finale of the Last Night of the Proms from the Royal Albert hall.
- 4.6 Over 500 people stayed for the entire evening to enjoy the music and entertainment, with feedback on the event being excellent – ranging from a simple thank you to “by far the best Leighton—Linslade Town Council event I’ve ever been to”.
- 4.7 Budget (101/4513) – There is an expenditure of £4,820 for the band performances, with an expenditure of £1,140 to support the additional live screening. An overspend of £105 within the budget can be attributed to the programmes which were printed for the concerts along with some additional publicity materials earlier in the year.

- 4.8 Additional expenditure of £2,760 from earmarked reserves (970/9507) was agreed to be used as approved at 15th October 2018 Cultural and Economic Committee meeting to support the development of the evening event.
- 4.9 As per previous years, during the course of this year's concerts, visitors have been asked to complete a short evaluation form, with feedback monitored throughout the summer.

5 LIVING HISTORY EVENT PREPARATION

- 5.1 Living History Day will take place on Saturday 5th October in the High Street alongside the market as per previous years.
- 5.2 Working with Historical Promotions, officers are working on a programme of activities themed around the Victorian Era. Activities will include Queen Victoria & her private secretary, a roast chestnut seller and a Victorian cavalryman accompanied by their horse. In addition to this, Victorian characters portraying crafts and life from the Victorian era will be present.
- 5.3 The Living History Trail will launch as part of Living History Day and will feature live characters from the trail in their respective locations around the town centre.
- 5.4 Advertising for Living History day is due to begin at the beginning of September and will feature a mix of digital and printed advertising.
- 5.5 Budget (101/4516) - The budget for this year's event is £10,000 with an additional £1000 for stewarding (101/4003). It is expected that circa £9,000 will be spent on the event.



6 CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL WEEKEND

- 6.1 Officers are beginning more detailed plans in conjunction with LB First for the 3-day festival which will take place on 29th November - 1st December.
- 6.2 The festival will feature the switching on of the Christmas Lights alongside a funfair, food court and stalls on Friday evening between 4pm and 8pm, with the switching on of the lights and a firework display at 7pm. A local headline band – Funk Odyssey have been booked for the Friday evening following the fireworks.
- 6.3 The Charter Market will be embellished on Saturday with live entertainment throughout the day. It is anticipated that the Kids Out Santa Dash will take place on the Saturday morning from Church Square. Our event facilitates the Santa Dash by allowing them to utilise our road closure. Granny Turismo have been booked as additional entertainment for the Saturday with further enhancements to follow.
- 6.4 On Sunday, a Christmas market alongside street theatre, live music and have-



a-go activities will fill the high-street between 11am and 3pm to conclude the event.

7 Event Dates 2020

7.1 Officers are beginning to plan for the 2020 events programme and seek Committee's confirmation of the following dates;

- Big Lunch: Sunday 7th June
- Canal Festival: Saturday 25th July
- Living History: Saturday 3rd October
- Christmas Festival: Friday 27th – Sunday 29th November
- Band Concerts: Sunday 7th June – Sunday 6th September
(No concert on Sunday 30th August)
- Last Night of the Proms: Saturday 12th September

8 Live TV Screenings

8.1 Committee has previously endorsed (Ref. 140/CE) the delivery of Live TV Screening events utilising earmarked reserves (9057/970). No specific national event or high-profile TV programme suitable for screening occurred this year, therefore the committed budget as not been allocated from earmarked reserves. Officers recommend that Committee continue to set aside the budget for such occasions for the Council to be in a position to respond, e.g. 2020 European Football final.

9 Health & Safety Review

9.1 An ongoing review of Health & Safety at our community events continues and is providing constructive feedback for officers and managers throughout the planning and delivery processes. Living History Day and Christmas Festival are undergoing review currently and feedback on both events will be gained following the delivery phase.

10 Conclusion

The continued and additional investments in the Leighton-Linslade events programme are proving to be popular with members of the public and have been well received so far. There continues to be improvements made to our events programme through on-going learning and development following each event undertaken.

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