

Cultural and Economic Services Committee

Date: 7th September 2020

Purpose of the Report: To provide an update on the Events Programme following a period of amendments due to Covid-19.

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	√	Reduction in budget spend due to non-delivery of events programme. Re-allocation of financial resources to other programmes & projects.
Human Resources		
Operational/Service delivery	√	Non-delivery of some events, re-configuring of others.
Procedural/Legal		
Risk/Health and Safety		

1. RECOMMENDATION

Should members be minded, the proposals is:

1.1 To note the report.

2. INFORMATION

2.1 Previously, on 15/05/20, and Events Update report was presented to Committee and the following actions were endorsed (Ref Covid-19 delegated decisions):

- (a) To cancel Music in the Park programme of events in June & July and host online versions as an alternative.
- (b) To cancel Linslade Canal Festival.
- (c) To revise the programme planned for VJ Day to incorporate social distancing measures.
- (d) To cancel Big Lunch (re-scheduled for August from its original date in June)

- (e) To cancel the Business Networking Event and hold online sessions.
- (f) To cancel Living History Day in its current format

2.2 A second update report was then taken to full Council on 27/07/20 to facilitate timely decision-making on budget allocation and proposed delivery of alternative event activities. The recommendations endorsed were (Ref: 99):

- (a) To cancel the live Music in the Park programme of events in August and September, including Last Night of the Proms and host online versions.
- (b) To create a trail and online content for Living History day focussed on the shops within the Town Centre.
- (c) To re-allocate a proportion of the Music in the Park budget to facilitate a Thanksgiving event for Key Workers, NHS Staff, volunteers, and those affected by COVID-19.
- (d) To re-allocate a proportion of the Big Lunch budget to facilitate additional music and leisure offerings within the Town Centre.
- (e) To use the Christmas Festival budget to hire 3D Christmas motifs and/or Christmas props to install within the Town Centre for the Christmas season and to cancel the Friday night Christmas lights switch-on event.

3. BUSINESS NETWORKING (APRIL)

- 3.1 Due to Covid-19, the Business Networking Event due to take place in April and re-scheduled for September has been cancelled.
- 3.2 A variety of business support options provided by sponsors of the Business Networking Event was shared across social media channels to assist businesses within the town.
- 3.3 The financial loss from the cancellation of the Business Networking Event was £176.85 due to advertising costs published prior to cancellation. An alternative SME (Small to Medium Enterprise) support project utilising the annual Business Development budget is presented as a separate agenda item.

4. BIG LUNCH FOOD FESTIVAL (JUNE)

- 4.1 Due to Covid-19, the Big Lunch Food Festival, due to take place on Sunday 7th June was cancelled.
- 4.2 In the week running up to the 7th June, a number of activities were posted across Town Council social media channels enabling residents to take part in the national Big Lunch campaign. Activities ranged from making a model street from recycled materials to home baking activities.
- 4.3 Memories from the 2018 & 2019 events which took place in the high street were shared across our social media channels on the 7th June.

- 4.4 All stall holders who had previously paid to attend the event have now been issued refunds.
- 4.5 The financial loss from the cancellation of the event was £650 due to the cancellation of one of the performers. Officers are hopeful an alternative performance date will be able to be sought and are working with the artist.
- 4.6 The majority of performers and demonstrators cancelled in 2020 have been provisionally booked for 2021.

5. CANAL FESTIVAL (JULY)

- 5.1 Due to Covid-19, the Canal Festival, due to take place on Saturday 25th July was also cancelled.
- 5.2 Memories from the 2019 event were shared across our social media platforms.
- 5.3 All stall holders & canal boaters who had previously paid to attend the event have now been issued refunds.
- 5.4 There are no financial losses due from the cancellation of the Canal Festival. However, the income target for the event will also not be achieved.
- 5.5 The majority of performers and demonstrators cancelled in 2020 have been provisionally booked for 2021.

6. MUSIC IN THE PARK (JUNE – SEPTEMBER)

- 6.1 Due to Covid-19, live music in the park performances throughout the summer were cancelled, with shorter, online versions produced. Combined viewing figures show these were enjoyed by over 4000 Facebook viewers, with several weeks still to continue (at the time of writing).
- 6.2 A finale to the music in the park season is currently being prepared (at the time of writing) to be shared across our social media channels on the weekend of 12th September.
- 6.3 There were no financial losses in cancelling the live Music in the Park concerts, and the last night of the proms commission cost £300 to cover costs and time incurred by the band to produce the performance.

7. VJ DAY (AUGUST)

- 7.1 Officers had hoped to be able to produce a full programme of activity to coincide with VJ Day commemorations on 15th August. Due to social distancing measures, along with Track & Trace requirements, these were unviable.
- 7.2 An illumination of the Leighton Buzzard War Memorial, Fly Past Memorial &

Linslade War Memorial took place during the week preceding VJ Day, with the images shared across social media platforms on the evening of 15th August.

- 7.3 Comments received whilst the memorials were illuminated included “it looks really nice” from a couple walking their dog and, “pretty cool” from a small group of teenagers.

8. LIVING HISTORY (OCTOBER & NOVEMBER)

- 8.1 Officers are working with local history groups and shop keepers to determine the history of some of the shops within the town centre and create a trail which can be undertaken around the shops once launched. This will help to encourage visitors back into the town centre and is part of the Welcome Back / Keeping It Local campaign.
- 8.2 A series of short 1-2minute video’s will be produced detailing the shops past, along with information about the shops current use and its owners. Video’s will be shared across social media channels and uploaded to the website throughout October & November.
- 8.3 The Living History Day budget will be used to facilitate the creation of the online content. Some budget will be held to provide appropriate live entertainment during the launch period if permitted to do so within government guidelines.

9. THANKSGIVING EVENT (Date to be Confirmed)

- 9.1 Officers are beginning to work on a thanksgiving event to be held for key workers, NHS staff and those affected by Covid-19.
- 9.2 Times, dates and nature of the event are yet to be determined but will incorporate local community and faith groups. To ensure the service is accessible for all, the service will be streamed online via our social media channels and website.

10. TOWN CENTRE MUSIC & LEISURE ACTIVITIES

- 10.1 Officers are working on music & leisure activities to compliment the pedestrianisation of the high-street during the coming months.
- 10.2 Officers are seeking stand-alone performances & entertainments which comply with government guidelines and offer a variety of performance styles throughout the period of deployment.
- 10.3 Consideration is being given to the Christmas period to ensure a festive offering within the Town Centre throughout December.

11. CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL WEEKEND (27TH – 29TH NOVEMBER)

- 11.1 Due to social distancing requirements, along with the likely requirement for Track & Trace, it is impractical to implement a Christmas Lights switch on as previously undertaken.
- 11.2 Officers are working in conjunction with LB First to provide a programme of activity over the festival weekend which entices residents and visitors into the town but remains compliant with government guidelines.
- 11.3 Currently, it is anticipated that this will feature additional entertainment on the Saturday Charter Market, along with an additional festive market on Sunday 29th November.
- 11.4 Additional activity is planned within the town centre though the *town centre music & leisure activities* throughout December along with additional online activity for those who may be self-isolating or shielding during this time. This will include the trial delivery of Christmas music in the High Street via loudspeakers.

12. Events Programme 2021

- 12.1 Officers are currently undertaking feasibility studies for the Town Council's events programme for 2021. The aim of the study is to ensure events are able to be run following government guidelines whilst also allowing sufficient planning & delivery time for officers.
- 12.2 Where it is believed that an event will be unable to comply with government guidelines relevant to the event, or the track & trace system, alternatives will be sought to ensure a vibrant events programme for 2021 within the town.

End.