



Events

Date: 13th September 2021

Title: Events Update Report

Purpose of the Report:

To provide an update on the events planning for 2021 and plans for 2022.

Contact Officer:

Ben Bodsworth, Town & Community Promotions Manager

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|-------------------------------------|---|
| Corporate Objective/s | LLTC Five Year Plan – Aim: 3. Vibrancy and Vitality of Town and Town Centre |
| Implications: | |
| Financial | Yes - Within existing budgets. Proposal to increase event budget codes annually in line with RPI. |
| Human Resources | |
| Operational/Service delivery | Yes - Delivery of the events programme in calendar years 2021 and 2022. |
| Procedural/Legal | |
| Risk/Health and Safety | |
| Environmental Aims | Yes – environmental aims incorporated within terms and conditions for attending traders |

1 RECOMMENDATION

Should members be minded, the proposals are:

- 1.1 To continue with the planning and delivery of the Christmas Festival.
- 1.2 To endorse the dates for the 2022 series of events and allow planning to commence.
- 1.3 To endorse the increasing of event budgets hereafter as an annual growth item in line with the Retail Price Index.
- 1.4 To endorse the allocation of previously dedicated un-spent earmarked reserves towards enhancing event delivery (Ref. 140/CE, Ref. 23/CE and Ref. 87/CE), to be spent in the financial years 2022/2023 & 2023/2024.

2 INFORMATION

- 2.1 Committee was unable to convene for its June meeting and service updates were shared via email to ensure Members were kept up to date with work. The June update is **attached** at Appendix A, to serve as a reminder.
- 2.2 At the time of writing, there are currently no restrictions on outdoor, un-ticketed events taking place within England.
- 2.3 Officers continue to undertake the forthcoming events programme within the government guidelines published at the time of the event delivery and will respond to all changes in legislation and guidance throughout the period of event planning, delivery and post-event reconciliation.

3 MUSIC IN THE PARK (JUNE – SEPTEMBER)

- 3.1 The Music in the Park series of concerts concluded on Sunday 5th September following weekly concerts held in Parson's Close Recreation Ground since June.
- 3.2 To ensure the concerts could take place safely at the start of the summer, a reservations system was undertaken for concerts taking place prior to the 21st June and extended until the 19th July.
- 3.3 Reservation uptake was good with 1163 reservations made, out of a possible 1505 reservations. Attendance at the reserved concerts varied with attendance figures varying from 50 to 120 over the course of the reservation period.
- 3.4 Since the reservation period ended, attendees have varied from 50 – 100 each week. The reduced number of attendees from previous years may be due to changeable weather conditions over the concert period and many still hesitant about attending events.
- 3.4 Due to inclement weather conditions, one concert was cancelled (4th July, Milton Keynes Brass) however all other concerts took place as planned.
- 3.5 At the time of writing, Last Night of the Proms and Picnic in the Park is due to take place on Saturday 11th September. Event Health and Safety and risk assessment documents have been circulated internally and to SAG (Safety Advisory Group).

4 FILMS IN THE PADDOCKS (31ST JULY / 1ST AUGUST)

- 4.1 Films in the Paddocks took place over the weekend of 31st July & 1st August in Tiddenfoot Waterside Park. Screenings took place at 11am, 3pm & 7pm on Saturday and 11am & 3pm on Sunday.

- 4.2 To ensure compliance with the Temporary Events Notice which the event held, attendance was by reservation only. A total of 2187 reservations were made from a possible 2560 spaces available.
- 4.3 Inclement weather during the operational days meant a reduced number of reservation holders attended. The operational dates also coincided with the height of the Covid 'ping-demic' and anecdotal evidence was passed on by attendees highlighting several people being unable to attend due to being contacted by NHS Test & Trace or the NHS App and requesting them to isolate.
- 4.4 Attendance figures were:

| Film Name | Attendance |
|---------------------------------|------------|
| Trolls World Tour | 154 |
| Mary Poppins Returns | 41 |
| Bohemian Rhapsody | 103 |
| Charlie & The Chocolate Factory | 65 |
| Beauty & The Beast | 122 |

Mary Poppins Returns was particularly impacted by the inclement weather due to a rain shower which took place immediately prior to and during the opening of the film.

- 4.5 Visitors who did attend provided very positive feedback via our social media channels;

We went to the screening of Bohemian Rhapsody last night and I just wanted to send my thanks for a really enjoyable evening. All the staff on site were very helpful but I would like to single out the two chaps at the entrance to Leighton Middle School – their cheery demeanour as we arrived and departed really added to the whole event :-)

Just wanted to commend the organisers for a brilliant event - we went to see Beauty and the Beast and loved it - very well organised and well thought-out. Hugely grateful that our local council are putting events like this on free of charge for local families. Thank you 🍷👍

Thanks for putting on such a great event! Really impressed with the organisation and your staff were excellent. The car park guys were super friendly and were waving everyone off as they left which was a lovely touch. Looking forward to more of these events in the future!

5 BIG LUNCH (21st & 22nd AUGUST)

- 5.1 Big Lunch took place in Parson's Close Recreation Ground on Saturday 21st & Sunday 22nd August with performances from Mariachi Tequila and Revolve throughout the weekend.
- 5.2 Initially planned to take place under restrictions with a reservation being required, following the relaxing of restrictions on 19th July a reservation wasn't necessary for attendance at the Big Lunch.
- 5.3 Eleven out of twelve stall holders attended offering cuisine options from around the world including Lebanese, Ghanaian and Sri Lankan alongside sweeter offerings from France and Spain.
- 5.4 Attendance was steady throughout the weekend with a lunchtime peak on Sunday where 80% of the available picnic benches were in use during the performance by Revolve.
- 5.5 Feedback from attendees was positive with one comment of *'well this looks alright'* in a positive tone received upon walking into the park and others of *'its nice to be able to get out again'* and *'We enjoyed the event and being in the park was more spacious...The live music was enjoyable'* also received.
- 5.6 Some feedback was received from residents regarding the noise generated by the event taking place both by those living close to the park and further afield. Officers provided a response to all those who contacted the Town Council and assured residents that although some noise generated by events may be audible off site, we seek to minimise the disturbance where possible. We will continue to inform residents likely to be most impacted prior to the events taking place.

6 LIVING HISTORY TRAIL / BUZZARD TRAILS APP (OCTOBER)

- 6.1 Officers continue to work on the delivery of a new Living History Trail to be made available on the Buzzard Trails app. Due to the reliance on third party providers for the information, a new trail is currently under creation but will not be ready to launch in October.
- 6.2 Officers are currently working alongside The Greensand Trust to deliver a virtual version of the Sands of Time trail on the Buzzard Trails app for those points which are in within the parish.
- 6.3 Recordings of those who feature on the trail, along with a text description and photographs relevant to the location and audio files will be available on the app from mid-October.
- 6.4 To further highlight the history of shops within the Town Centre, the Living History Business Trail (which was created October 2020) to celebrate

businesses and their owners in the town centre is also being digitised to feature on the app.

- 6.5 A period of increased publicity along with an information stall on the Tuesday market will take place during mid-October. We will invite historical societies to join our stall once the date is confirmed.

7 BUSINESS NETWORK EVENT (6TH OCTOBER)

- 7.1 Officers are reviewing the suitability of the Business Networking Event due to take place on Wednesday 6th October at Leighton Buzzard Golf Club.
- 7.2 Feedback from steering group members has been received to highlight a number of potential challenges should the event go ahead as planned.
- 7.3 Whilst there are no legal restrictions of events of this nature taking place, many businesses are still cautious about face-to-face meetings with some preventing their employees from attending.
- 7.4 The current format of the event doesn't allow social distancing to take place and the wearing of face coverings would reduce the amount of interaction which is possible at a business networking event.
- 7.5 Officers have carried out a SWOT analysis for the event and are currently seeking viable alternatives to provide support and advice for the business community within the town.

8 CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL WEEKEND (26TH – 28TH NOVEMBER)

- 8.1 Whilst minimal planning has taken place for the Christmas Festival Weekend, officers are beginning to plan for the event to take place in its original format.
- 8.2 The Christmas Festival Weekend will take place on Friday 26th – Sunday 28th November with a festive market, light switch on and firework display taking place on Friday evening.

Additional entertainment will be present as part of the charter market on Saturday, along with assisting in the facilitation of the Leighton Buzzard Fun Runners Santa Dash during the morning.

Sunday will see the return of a festive market to the high street alongside themed street performance and food outlets.

- 8.3 Several key planning milestones are required to be reached in the coming weeks and orders for equipment and staffing are required to be placed.

Due to the uncertainty around any future restrictions, members should be aware that if the event is cancelled due to restrictions which prevent our event taking place (but not necessarily events in general e.g., Test & Trace or Vaccine Passport), there may be some cancellation charges to pay.

Leighton-Linslade Town Council holds business to business relationships with its suppliers and therefore, in some instances, is not covered by the same guidance which a consumer would have. Officers will seek to minimise cancellation charges where possible.

9 FUTURE EVENT DATES

9.1 To ensure availability of equipment and services for our events programme in 2022, officers are beginning to undertake procurement work for key pieces of infrastructure required for each event. This is particularly relevant for the weekend of the Queens Jubilee.

9.2 For the Jubilee weekend, officers have had initial discussions with the Rotary Club Leighton Linslade, and it is likely that the club will run their event on Friday 3rd June. This will utilise the funding originally awarded to the club for their 2020 event which has been carried forward, (Ref. 26/CE &). Neither their 2020 nor 2021 events have taken place.

Grounds and Environmental (G&E) services will lead on an activity for Thursday 2nd June in line with direction offered by the Queen's Pageantmaster and G&E Committee will receive a report on proposed activity at its meeting on 09/09/21.

Arrangements for adding entertainment to the Saturday market are being considered and the Sunday, 5th June naturally falls on the date of the annual Big Lunch event. Given its national importance, a communication strategy to ensure maximum public exposure will be created and thereafter delivered.

9.3 It is proposed to host the Covid-19 Thanksgiving and Reflection event in early March on Sunday 6th. Mindful of Mothering Sunday on 27th March, it is proposed that a respectful distance be made between the two events to demonstrate appropriate sensitivity.

Sunday 6th March

Thanksgiving and Reflection Event

Wednesday 27th April

Business Network Event

Sunday 5th June (Queen's Jubilee weekend)

Big Lunch

Sunday 5th June – Sunday 4th September

Music in the Park

Saturday 30th July
Canal Festival

Saturday 10th September
Last Night of the Proms

Friday 25th – Sunday 27th November
Christmas Lights Switch On

10 EVENTS BUDGETS (GROWTH)

- 10.1 At the committee meeting held on 15th October 2018, committee endorsed additional expenditure throughout the events programme due to increased costs for all events without the increase in budgets across a number of years (Ref: 140/CE).
- 10.2 Throughout the last 18 months, whilst costs initially fell dramatically for event infrastructure, costs have now returned to pre-pandemic levels and in some cases, risen significantly, e.g., fuel & transport.
- 10.3 To ensure budgets, (and therefore the events programme), remain viable, growth in line with the September RPI (Retail Price Index) should be considered.
- 10.4 Budget lines affected are:

| Budget Code | Description | Current Annual Budget |
|--------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| 101/4552 | Big Lunch | £11,424 |
| 101/4513 | Band Concerts | £7,100 |
| 101/4515 | Canal Festival | £19,925 |
| 101/4511 | Christmas Street Event | £14,625 |
| | | |
| 101/4553 | Salaries (Big Lunch) | £3,000 |
| 101/4531 | Salaries (Band Concert) | £1,000 |
| 101/4530 | Salaries (Canal Festival) | £5,000 |
| 101/4408 | Salaries (Christmas) | £5,000 |

11 EVENTS BUDGETS (EARMARKED RESERVES)

- 11.1 Committee endorsed the use of community projects earmarked reserve (970/9057), to expand the events programme over a three-year period (Ref. 23/CE), to cover the financial years 2019/20, 2020/21 & 2021/22.

- 11.2 Due to the covid-19 pandemic, the expenditure of the 2020/21 allocation remains as does the majority of the 2021/22 allocation. A total of £16,999 of the original £22,500 remains unspent.
- 11.3 Committee (01/03/21, Ref: 87/CE), and Council (Ref: 108/Council), agreed that existing spend commitments from earmarked reserves are continued into financial year 2021/22. Given the expenditure of un-spent resource from the financial years 2020/21 & 2021/22 in 2022/23 be carried forward.
- 11.4 Due to the scale of un-spent earmarked reserves in 2020/21 & 2021/22, funds to enhance the events programme in 2022/23 & 2023/24 financial years exists.
- 11.5 To continue with the event enhancements made to the Canal Festival (later running of the event and associated costs) & Music in the Park programme (Last Night of the Proms including Fireworks) an additional investment of £5,515 is required annually.
- 11.6 Following positive feedback from the Films in the Paddocks events consideration should be given to a further expansion of the Last Night of the Proms & Picnic in the Park event to include a free, outdoor movie screening during the day whilst the infrastructure required to deliver the film screenings is available.
- An additional investment of £2,000 per annum would be required to cover the costs of film licensing and associated costs with a longer event running time. This would be initially for a trial year (2022/23) and if successful, would continue in 2023/24.
- 11.7 For the 2022/23 & 2023/24 financial years this additional investment (£7,500 per annum, £15,000 total) can be made from the un-spent earmarked reserves allocated to the events programme as detailed in 11.2. An unspent allocation of £1,999 would remain.
- 11.8 Following the additional investment in financial years 2022/23 & 2023/24 further investment will be required to continue to deliver the enhanced events programme in future years.

12 CONCLUSION

- 12.1 The events programme whilst looking different to normal this year continues to deliver an accessible range of free events for members of the public to attend and activities to undertake. The range of restrictions in place at the start of the year lead to some uncertainty in the planning process but a programme of music and film activities across the summer proved popular for those who attended.

12.2 Officers intend to return to the traditional programme of activity in 2022 but members need to be mindful of the possibility of restrictions returning or guidelines for events changing over the coming months.

12.3 Officers continue to work to the maximum amount permissible whilst ensuring the safety of both members of staff and members of the public alike.

End