



Events

Date: 13th June 2022

Title: Events Update Report

Purpose of the Report:

To provide an update on the events planning for 2022 and review recent events.

Contact Officer:

Ben Bodsworth, Town & Community Promotions Manager

Corporate Objective/s	LLTC Five Year Plan – Aim: 3. Vibrancy and Vitality of Town and Town Centre
Implications:	
Financial	Yes - Within existing budget
Human Resources	
Operational/Service delivery	Yes - Delivery of the events programme in 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 proposal is:

1.1 To note the report.

2 BUSINESS NETWORKING EVENT

2.1 The Business Networking Event took place at Leighton Buzzard Golf Club on Wednesday 27th April and was attended by over 100 local business people keen to expand or re-connect with their network of contacts within the town.

2.2 Sessions were delivered on the topics of 'are you busy or effective' and 'have you ever felt the client / buyer has the upper hand' which were well received by those attending, prompting further conversation with the speaker during the question-and-answer session following the talk.

2.3 Blendology was commissioned to facilitate on the night registrations. The electronic IT software allows people's names and business contacts to be shared between businesses by tapping one card against another when people meet. Over 1000 unique business connections were made on the night of the event, with the average attendee connecting with 9 other local business people.

2.4 75% of those completing our feedback survey hadn't been to the Business Networking Event before with 98% of attendees stating that the event met their expectations, that they would attend the event again in future years and that the event is useful to them and their business. Some of the feedback on the night included an email from one attendee who said:

'Thank you! It was a lovely event, I've followed up with my connections. Look forward to the next one'

2.5 The Business Networking Event relies on sponsorship and the sale of stand space to ensure its viability and thanks must be given to Bee Local, Hascat Safety, Central Bedfordshire Council, Bedfordshire Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses and Alpha Marketing for their support at the 2022 event.

3 MUSIC IN THE PARK (JUNE – SEPTEMBER)

3.1 Music in the Park returns to Parson's Close Recreation Ground from Sunday 5th June and takes place weekly until Sunday 4th September. Performances take place from 3pm and last between ninety minutes and two hours with a short interval.

3.2 At the time of writing, the first concert is yet to take place. The season will be opened by Chiltern Hills Brass Band performing on the Band Stand where we are also joined by visitors from our twin-towns of Coulommier in France and Titisee-Neustadt in Germany. Performances from South Beds Concert Band, Luton Concert Band and RAF Halton Voluntary Band continue to take place throughout June. A full listing of performing bands is available on the Town Council's website.

3.3 Refreshments for the concerts will be available from Parson's Park café for the duration of the summer season.

4 BIG LUNCH FOOD FESTIVAL

4.1 At the time of writing, final preparations are being made for the Big Lunch Food Festival which takes place on Sunday 5th June from 11am–4pm.

4.2 The Big Lunch has 30 vendors booked in to provide foods from around the world including delicacies from Lebanon, Ghana, Mexico, Turkey, Sri Lanka

and Indonesia along with cooking demonstrations from British Food Ambassador Anne Harnan.

- 4.3 Tables and chairs will be available throughout the day within the High Street to ensure those visiting the Big Lunch are able to sit within the High Street and enjoy the entertainment programme which is being provided. Alongside street entertainment from The Strolling Gardeners and street art from The Hexagon, a full stage programme has been created.
- 4.4 Performers on stage include Tess and the Durbervilles, Big in Brazil, Revellers Steelband, TFG All Stars, Glee Club and Eve McGrath & Harry Bagnall. Leighton Buzzard Better Speakers have kindly agreed to comper the stage programme again for us.
- 4.5 The advertising and marketing for the Big Lunch has been tied into the publicity for a wider programme of events to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations. It has included a 6-week social media campaign along with posters, banners and printed articles within the Leighton Buzzard Observer.
- 4.6 A verbal update following the event will be provided at the meeting.

5 CANAL FESTIVAL

- 5.1 Preparations for the Canal Festival on Saturday 30th July are well underway. Currently 60 stall holders have returned their forms and reminders will be sent to stall holders who have previously attended shortly.
- 5.2 The use of the venue, canal area and school car parks has been agreed for the day and the Canal & River Trust is kindly re-opening the towpath for us on Saturday 30th July to allow access on foot from the town centre.
- 5.3 A full programme of entertainment has been booked for the day which includes performances from Chasm, Wayland Smithy, Stampede, Milady Clare's Musicke, Fiona Harrison, Ukietoones and Funk Odyssey.
- 5.4 An advertising campaign for the Canal Festival is due to start shortly with advertising also placed in Canal Boat and Towpath Talk. Advertising around the town will be incorporated with advertising for the Children's Trail Birthday Party.

6 BUZZARD TRAILS

- 6.1 Work has been completed by our third-party contractor to provide updates to the Buzzard Trails app, which includes the new Sands of Time Trail.
- 6.2 The lead officer role for the work undertaken on the app is being undertaken by the new Cultural & Economic Support Officer. Additional promotion has been completed on market days to highlight the new trails within the app.

- 6.3 Works have been undertaken on the Children's Trail to renovate the way-points along the route to ensure the trail is fit for use and can be enjoyed for the next 10 years.
- 6.4 A children's party for the 10th Birthday of the Children's Trail is planned to take place in Linslade Recreation Ground on Wednesday 5th August which will incorporate Children's Authors, storytelling and craft activities. It will also coincide with the launch of the Trail in the Trees, an initiative between Leighton-Linslade Town Council and Cedars Upper School.

7 HIGH STREET PROMOTION

- 7.1 Throughout the easter weekend, a 'Hide & Squeak' trail took place in the High Street & Town Centre area. 14 shops within the area took part and placed mice in their boxed houses within their shop windows.
- 7.2 Prizes were given for the winners of the trail which included a book and some children's trail goodies. Shops were very happy with the interest in the competition created and officers have been asked to continue similar initiatives in future.
- 7.3 Some of the feedback which has been received from members of the public has been;
- "I am so looking forward to meeting you tomorrow and collect my prizes, I have been asking Mummy every night how many sleeps left to bring the mice home. I am very excited"*
- "What a wonderful organisation and competition you have set up. Myself, my children, husband, mother, and dog were all walking around the high street on the lookout for mice in windows!"*
- "Thank you for organising this amazing trail over the weekend, the mice are beautifully made".*

8 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 Officers are confident events will be able to take place as planned this year and will be well attended, however are mindful that members of the public, stall holders and exhibitors have had a 2-year hiatus of the majority of events.