



Events

Date: 12th September 2022

Title: Events Update Report

Purpose of the Report:

To provide an update on the events planning and delivery for 2022 and plans for 2023.

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 budgets.
Human Resources	
Operational/Service delivery	Yes - Delivery of the events programme in calendar years 2022 and 2023.
Procedural/Legal	
Risk/Health and Safety	
Environmental Aims	

1 RECOMMENDATIONS

Should the Committee be minded, the proposals are:

- 1.1 To note the report
- 1.2 To endorse the dates for the 2023 series of events and allow planning to commence.
- 1.3 To endorse the re-allocation of unspent earmarked reserves to support event delivery in 2023/24 & 2024/2025 as set out in paragraph 9.

2 INFORMATION

- 2.1 Following a two-year hiatus for some events and a challenging 2021 for others, the events programme has returned to pre-pandemic levels throughout 2022.

3 MUSIC IN THE PARK (JUNE – SEPTEMBER)

- 3.1 The Music in the Park concerts have concluded with the last concert taking place on Sunday 4th September in Parson's Close Recreation ground.
- 3.2 Feedback from members of the public throughout the summer period has been good with one member of the public taking time to email the events team to say *"Firstly, may I thank you very much for all the tremendous events you have organised & provided for the town this summer. We have enjoyed so many of these - in particular the weekly music at the Parsons Close bandstand."*
- 3.3 At the time of writing, although exceptionally hot weather has been prevalent throughout the summer, no concerts have had to be cancelled due to the heat or inclement weather.
- 3.4 Also at the time of writing, our Last Night of the Proms and Picnic in the Park event is due to take place on Saturday 10th September with a live classical performance from Richard Stark, Milton Keynes Brass providing a brass band performance and the Last Night of the Proms streamed from the Royal Albert Hall following the live performances. A firework finale is due to take place within Parson's Close Recreation Ground, however, is subject to weather conditions.

4 LINSLADE CANAL FESTIVAL (30TH JULY)

- 4.1 Linslade Canal Festival took place on Saturday 30th July with 87 stall holders, 12 demonstrators and 26 boats booked in to attend.
- 4.2 Advertising for the festival included both local press (Leighton Buzzard Observer & Bee Local), county-based press (Primary Times) and advertising in specialist canal boat literature (Towpath Talk & Canal Boat). In addition to the printed media, publicity was also shared around the Town Centre and on Leighton-Linslade Town Council social media pages.
- 4.3 A small number of stall holders chose not to attend on the day of the event for various personal reasons including covid-19.
- 4.4 The paddocks area featured a mixture of food stalls, live entertainment and trade / handcraft stalls including a popular craft tent. The food stalls and live entertainment continued until 8pm within this area.

- 4.5 The Lakeside and Poplars hosted rural life demonstrations and stalls in-keeping with a rural or charitable theme. Some food vendors were also hosted in the Poplars area of the site. Both the Lakeside and Paddocks area operated until 5pm.
- 4.6 The Canal Boats moored north of the Green Bridge in 2022 with boaters being happy with their mooring location. From speaking to boaters immediately following the event their feedback was that footfall was increased from previous years (with some indicating they felt it was 2-3times as busy) but that members of the public were spending less.
- 4.7 The financial details from Canal Festival show that both the budget and the earmarked reserve allocation were both fully spent. It also shows that an income of £7,758 has been generated against a target of £10,000, a shortfall of £2,242.

This shortfall can be attributed to a slightly lower than average number of stalls taking positions this year along with less canal boats. A new bar provider was sourced for the 2022 event as the previous supplier was unable to attend which resulted in a lower pitch fee being offered to them to ensure a suitable provision was available.

- 4.8 The Paddocks area of the site has run until 8pm in 2019 and in 2022 as part of a trial for an extended Canal Festival. In 2019, inclement weather meant the majority of the audience left at 5pm, coinciding with other areas of the site closing. In 2022, whilst a worthwhile audience did remain until the end of the event at 8pm, feedback from stall holders indicated (with the exception of the bar) that little money was being spent.

To be able to sustain the Paddocks operating until 8pm, stall holders are required to be in place until 8pm within one half of the area for safety reasons. Without members of the public spending there is no incentive for them to remain until 8pm. From speaking to stall holders on the day, several wouldn't consider operating until 8pm again.

It should also be noted that the audience who remained until 8pm were part of the audience on site prior to 5pm and very few new audience members joined.

5 CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL WEEKEND (25TH – 27TH NOVEMBER)

- 5.1 Officers are currently planning for the Christmas Festival Weekend which is due to take place from **Friday 25th to Sunday 27th November**. The event will feature 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.

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

6 FUTURE EVENT DATES

6.1 To ensure availability of equipment and services for our events programme in 2023, officers are beginning to undertake procurement work for key pieces of infrastructure required for each event in 2023.

6.2 The proposed events programme for 2023 is;

Wednesday 26th April
Business Network Event

Sunday 4th June
Big Lunch

Sunday 4th June – Sunday 3th September
Music in the Park

Saturday 29th July
Canal Festival

Saturday 9th September
Last Night of the Proms

Friday 24th – Sunday 26th November
Christmas Lights Switch On

7 EVENTS BUDGETS (GROWTH)

7.1 Members should note that due to the cost of living increase and increased fuel / energy prices, costs for event equipment / personnel have increased by 10-20% across the board.

7.2 The events budgets remain viable with growth in line with the September RPI, however Members should note that prices may increase further into the summer 2023 season.

8 RECORDED MUSIC IN THE HIGH STREET

8.1 Members will recall that a project to bring music to the high street was delayed from 2020 into 2021 and further again into 2022 with a budget allocation of £5000 from earmarked reserves plus an additional £1,928.60 from a secondary earmarked reserve pot (101/CE).

- 8.2 Officers have undertaken a further feasibility survey based on the electricity points available within the High Street which would be required to undertake this project.
- 8.3 A total of 8 sockets within the 110v market supply would be required to complete the works, spanning the length of the street.

In total, of the 8 x double sockets available in total, 7 x single sockets are used on a Saturday market, 3 x single sockets are used on a Tuesday market. Of the remaining sockets, 4 x single sockets don't work or require works to be carried out to them.

A total of 1 x double socket and 1 x single socket remain un-used throughout the week in good working order which are located outside Selections and outside Wilko.

- 8.4 For sufficient coverage to be achieved across the high-street area, a minimum of 8 speaker locations would need to be used throughout the week with an uninterrupted power supply. The costs for installing speakers onto buildings and providing an electricity supply to them via the Christmas Lighting programme would be cost prohibitive.
- 8.5 On Market days, a total of 2 speaker positions would be able to be used (in the Selections / Wilko area of the High Street) providing little overall coverage.
- 8.6 Given the above and the inherent difficulties in delivering the trial, as well as the likely high cost of any permanent scheme, Committee may wish to consider alternatives uses of funds earmarked for this purpose.

9 EVENTS BUDGETS (EARMARKED RESERVES)

- 9.1 Since 2019, committee have endorsed the use of the Cultural & Economic Services earmarked reserve to fund several events and initiatives across the town's event programme.
- 9.2 The earmarked reserve for events has an opening balance (for the financial year 2022/23) of £22,453. Currently, within this budget, £3,797.25 has been spent with a further £3,300.35 as committed expenditure to deliver the Last Night of the Proms and Picnic in the Park event. A balance of £15,355.40 remains of which £5,000 is allocated to a recorded music in the high street project. £10,355 remains unspent.
- 9.3 The annual cost of delivering additional elements to the events programme is;

Canal Festival (extended hours)	£2,775
Last Night of the Proms	£2,740
Daytime films at Last Night of the Proms	£2,000

- 9.4 When originally agreed, the trial for all of the events would last for three years (2019/2020/2021). Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Canal Festival didn't take place in 2020 or 2021, and the Last Night of the Proms didn't take place in 2020. It is therefore the last trial year for the Last Night of the Proms event.
- 9.5 With feedback and visual evidence of the Canal Festival later running being mixed and the lack of new visitors joining the festival from 5pm onwards, officers believe the continuation of the trial should be considered and the funds available diverted to secure the future of the other events which have proved popular.
- 9.6 To continue with the Last Night of the Proms Event together with the daytime film screening would cost £4,740 annually and a re-allocation of these funds would secure the future of both events for the budgetary years 2023/24 and 2024/25.
- 9.7 Following this additional commitment, an additional £4,740 would be needed within the revenue budget from 2025/26 onwards in order to continue to deliver this event (subject to inflation).

10 CONCLUSIONS

- 10.1 The events programme continues to provide a varied programme of entertainment across the parish which meets the needs of the local population.
- 10.2 Officers continue to seek new acts and entertainment styles for the events programme and plan to deliver a high-quality programme in 2023.

End.