



Wokingham Town Council

Town Hall, Market Place, Wokingham, Berkshire RG40 1AS
Tel: 0118 978 3185 www.wokingham-tc.gov.uk
Town Clerk: Mrs J. Nowecki

**This Council Meeting is open to the Public and Press
Please notify the Officer or Chair if you wish to record the meeting**

8th November 2022

Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend a meeting of the **Arts & Culture Committee** to be held in the **Council Chamber, Town Hall, Wokingham** at **7.30pm** on **Monday 14th November 2022** for the purpose of considering and resolving upon the subjects and matters set out in the agenda below.

Yours sincerely

J Nowecki
Town Clerk

Contact Officer: Gemma Cumming, Arts & Culture Officer
Direct line: 0118 974 0889 Email: gcumming@wokingham-tc.gov.uk

AGENDA

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

To receive any declaration of interests from Members on the business about to be transacted.

3 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL OR PUBLIC

The Chair to answer questions raised by members of the Council or public.

This is an opportunity for the people of Wokingham to ask questions of, and make comments to, the Town Council. Members of the public are requested to restrict their questions and comments to three minutes. Questions which are not answered at this meeting will be answered in writing to the person asking the question. To ensure an informed response, please send your questions to the Town Clerk at least three working days prior to the meeting.

4 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

To receive and resolve upon the Minutes of the proceedings at the meeting of this Committee held on 12th September 2022 (pages 16590 to 16592), copy attached, as a true and correct record.

5 MONITORING REPORT

To receive and consider the Monitoring Report dated 8th November 2022 (copy attached).

6 COMMITTEE BUDGET

To receive and consider the Committee's budget dated to 31st October 2022 (copy attached).

7 MARKETING

- a. To receive and consider on a report on Marketing from the Town Clerk (copy attached).
- b. To ask any questions of the Marketing and Communication Coordinator

8 SCIENCE WITH SCHOOLS

To receive and consider a report on the Science with Schools event (copy attached).

9 SUNNY SATURDAYS

To receive and resolve on a report on Sunny Saturdays (copy attached).

10 BOOK FESTIVAL

To receive and resolve on a report on this year's Book Festival (copy attached).

11 COMMITTEE INFORMATION

- a) To receive information items raised by members.
- b) Identify any specific items for marketing purposes.

Arts & Culture Committee: Cllrs Jane Ainslie, Elizabeth Bishop, Philip Cunnington, Matteo Fumagalli, Sally Gurney (Chair), Peter Hornsby, Tim Lloyd, Morag Malvern and Abby Tebboth (Vice Chair).

In order to comply with the Data Protection Act 1998, all persons attending this meeting are hereby notified that this meeting will be recorded. The purpose of recording proceedings is that it acts as an aide-memoir in assisting the clerk of the meeting in the compilation of minutes. The recordings are held in a secure location and deleted once it has been resolved that the minutes are a true and correct record.

In accordance with The Openness of Local Government Bodies regulations 2014, persons attending this meeting may make their own recordings of the proceedings subject to the Council's Policy on Filming, Recording & Reporting on Council and Committee Meetings (copy available on request).

12th September 2022 - DRAFT

Minutes of the proceedings of the **Arts and Culture Committee** meeting held on this day in the **Council Chamber, Town Hall, Wokingham** from 19.30 to 20:52

PRESENT

Chair: Cllr S Gurney

Councillors: Cllrs J Ainslie, P Cunnington, M Fumagalli, P Hornsby, T Lloyd, M Malvern and A Tebboth.

IN ATTENDANCE

Arts and Culture Officer

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

There were apologies for absence from Cllr M Gee (The Mayor).

MEMBERS' INTERESTS (Agenda Item 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL OR PUBLIC (Agenda Item 3)

There were no questions from members of the council or public.

ARTS & CULTURE COMMITTEE MINUTES (Agenda Item 4)

It was proposed by Cllr S Gurney and seconded by Cllr P Hornsby and it was

**RESOLVED
30497**

that the Minutes of Arts and Culture Committee meeting held on 11th July 2022 (pages 16560 to 16562), copy attached, be received as a true and correct record.

MONITORING REPORT (Agenda Item 5)

The Monitoring Report dated 6th September was received and considered.

Erfstadt Panels

To be considered under Agenda Item 10.

Benchmark Concert costs

To be considered under Agenda Item 9.

Sunny Saturdays

Due to current extraordinary circumstances, the Committee were requested to decide if the planned Sunny Saturday event for Saturday 17th September should go ahead? Considering it would be taking place during a period of national mourning.

The Committee voted: 3 abstentions, 5 in favour of it going ahead.

The Arts and Culture Officer was instructed to go ahead with the event, subject to the band still wanting to play and the event being modified to reflect public mood.

CHAIR'S INITIALS _____



COMMITTEE BUDGET (Agenda Item 6)

The Arts and Culture Committee's budget dated to 31st July 2022 was received and noted.

THEATRE IN THE PARK (Agenda Item 7)

The report was received and considered. There was some concern regarding whether the event was attracting a large enough audience in comparison to its cost to continue being value for money.

The Committee acknowledged that there had been some improvement in attendance due to performing on Elms Field. It was agreed that it should stay there and as such would benefit from the increase in funds to ensure it was properly amplified in the larger space. This would be an uplift request of £1250. It was not felt that this was the time to increase the number of performances.

It was requested to look at more options for marketing this event. Including banners by the old library site and on Elms Field. A sign on the Market Place on the day of the event advertising "event, time and location" was also suggested.

ACTION: ARTS AND CULTURE OFFICER

CHALK ABOUT IT (Agenda Item 8)

The report was received and considered. It was agreed to:

- extend the contract for a third and final year
- to request additional funds of £1050 for the inflationary uplift and extra artist support
- to maintain the August date for the event

It was noted that the easel-based provision, intended to ensure that individuals who could not get on the ground to chalk could be involved, was very busy with children wanting to take part. It was requested to consider ways to rework or manage that area to ensure that it was used by the intended audience.

ACTION: ARTS AND CULTURE OFFICER

EVENT BUDGET INCREASES (Agenda Item 9)

The report was received and considered. There was discussion around who might else be able to support the Book Festival with the concern around the potential loss of Outreach sponsorship in mind. Wokingham Borough Council was suggested as an alternative funding source. The Arts and Culture Officer agreed that they could be asked. However, the library service was undertaking a significant move at the moment among other pressures this summer.

The budgetary increase for Fun Day to extend the provision was discussed. It was agreed to ask for the full amount of £4,000, in addition to the £2800 uplift agreed at last meeting.

It was proposed by Cllr Gurney and seconded by Cllr Malvern and it was

**RESOLVED
30498**

to request from the F&P Committee the following in this order of priority.

CHAIR'S INITIALS _____



1. **Wokingham Children’s Fun Day: an uplift of £6,800**, taking the total for this event to £14,600
2. **Concert on Elms Field: an uplift of £5,780**, taking the total for this event to £60,000
3. **Wokingham Children’s Book Festival: and uplift of £1,200**, taking the total from the precept for this event to £4,200 and the overall budget to £7,800.
4. **Chalk About It: an uplift of £1,050**, taking the total for this event to £4,050
5. **Theatre in the Park: an uplift of £1,250**, taking the total for this event to £3,750

ACTION: RFO AND ARTS AND CULTURE OFFICER

The suggestion to enable the Arts and Culture Officer to choose the provision for the aspects of the Fun Day and Theatre in the Park from supplied quotes was considered.

**RESOLVED
30499**

It was proposed by Cllr Gurney and seconded by Cllr Ainslie and it was

to delegate authority on choosing providers for Fun Day and Theatre in the Park to the Arts and Culture Officer.

ERFTSTADT PANELS WORKING PARTY (Agenda Item 10)

The notes of the proceeding of the Ertstadt Panels Working Party held on the 5th July 2022 were received and noted.

It was noted that there was a planned meeting for September. It was reported that that was cancelled due to a lack of business but we would be looking to have one in October.

COMMITTEE INFORMATION (Agenda Item 11)

There were no individual items from Committee.

Marketing requests:

There was a request to have an Agenda Item around Marketing at the next meeting. It was felt that, for some events, more could have been done with regards to marketing with some concerns over the Love Wokingham website and how WTC presented events on its own website. It was queried why the Book Festival wasn't on the WTC website as yet. The Arts and Culture Officer noted that it was due to be launched the previous Friday but had to be postponed due to the Queen's death on the Thursday evening. The postponed date was to be reviewed this week. The Arts and Culture Officer would talk to the Town Clerk on how best to approach this request.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK AND ARTS AND CULTURE OFFICER

CHAIR

CHAIR'S INITIALS _____



WOKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Monitoring Report: Arts & Culture

Date: 8th November 2022

Date Action Agreed	Item for Action (to include any resolution number)	Person Actioning	Proposed Completion Date	Progress
26 th July 21	Erftstadt Panels	Working Party	Jan 2023	The paintings are finished and due to be delivered to R Young Art Gallery for scanning and reproduction. It is estimated that the panels will be ready and with us by the end of November. We are currently arranging installation of the panels with Volker and finding a home for the paintings.
January 21	Decorated Cabinets	A&C Officer		To note currently no active interest. Given the current economic climate for WTC to seek sponsorship would not be advisable.

02/11/2022

Wokingham Town Council

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Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 31/10/2022

Month No: 7

Cost Centre Report

	Actual Last Year	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available
<u>304 Arts & Culture</u>						
1159 Book Festival Income	2,315	2,731	3,600	869		
1253 Fun Day Income	0	230	150	(80)		
1266 Board games income	0	0	1,000	1,000		
Arts & Culture :- Income	2,315	2,961	4,750	1,789		
4341 Concert	0	53,251	54,220	969	1,488	(519)
4343 PRS Licence	121	0	600	600		600
4345 Book Festival	3,973	1,970	6,600	4,630	4,157	473
4388 Theatre in the Park	2,513	2,500	2,500	0		0
4389 Board Games event	23	0	1,000	1,000		1,000
4512 Sunny Saturdays	1,000	3,093	3,000	(93)		(93)
4513 Dressing the Christmas Tree	1,361	0	1,350	1,350	1,347	3
4518 Living Advent Calendar	1,087	0	1,100	1,100		1,100
4526 International Day	0	0	3,000	3,000		3,000
4527 Chalk about it	2,765	2,783	3,000	217		217
4528 Murals	0	1,971	6,000	4,029	2,582	1,447
4603 Fun Day	0	6,694	7,800	1,106	250	856
Arts & Culture :- Indirect Expenditure	12,842	72,262	90,170	17,908	9,824	8,084
Net Income over Expenditure	(10,527)	(69,302)	(85,420)	(16,118)		
Grand Totals:- Income	2,315	2,961	4,750	1,789		
Expenditure	12,842	72,262	90,170	17,908	9,824	8,084
Net Income over Expenditure	(10,527)	(69,302)	(85,420)	(16,118)		
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(10,527)	(69,302)				



Wokingham Town Council

Town Clerk's Report 14/2022

To: Arts & Culture Committee

Date: 2nd November 2022

Subject: WTC Marketing

1 REASON FOR REPORT

Following discussion at the Committee's September meeting to offer some context around the marketing activity undertaken for the Council.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 WTC has a Marketing Officer who works 12 hours a week, term-time only.
- 2.2 Given the limited number of hours her expertise has to be deployed with care. She works with colleagues to offer her advice and support and this spans the totality of the business, with the aim of raising the profile of the Council as a whole. Hence, she will consider anything from the market through to the Mayoral role and of course A&C events form part of that. Specifically, she is heavily involved in the Town Council's annual newsletter and this year has taken a strong lead on the Residents' Survey. It was understandably, therefore, never the intention that she could have full practical responsibility for all WTC's marketing activity.
- 2.3 Individual officers are tasked with ensuring that they also take ownership of the marketing aspect of their work whether this be Wokingham in Bloom, installation of new play parks or individual events etc. Where feasible within her hours, the Marketing Officer helps create marketing plans, writes, or helps draft press releases, creates various assets and content for social media etc.
 - 2.3.1 The Town Clerk has been discussing with officers the need for everyone to refresh their project management training. This will support the incorporation of the marketing aspects of any project.
- 2.4 Most recently it has been decided that in addition to the above, the Marketing Officer will work with the supplier on the marketing for the Annual Concert, creating all social media assets and content to ensure this is delivered to best effect given the profile and cost of the event.

3. CURRENT POSITION

- 3.1 As the Committee is aware, this year we undertook a Residents' Survey for the first time which was overseen by the Strategy Working Party and reported through to Full Council. The survey sought views across the whole of WTC's activity and there was a clear section in relation to A&C events. There was a disappointing response but within those replies there was messaging about the need for us to market the Council more and that included the potential return to more conventional marketing such as hard copy press, physical assets etc within the local area.
 - 3.1.1 The Council had moved away from some of these approaches given that social media is a powerful tool and also is very cost effective.

- 3.1.2 Additionally, as the Committee is aware, due to COVID events did not take place and physical assets such as flyers etc were moved away from and that remains the case for many organisations.
- 3.1.2 Given the above officers need, and are already, responding to the messages given and will be re-looking at hard copy marketing etc, especially for events.
- 3.2 Please refer to A&C Officer's summary reports on the current agenda together with additional information as attached. **Appendix 1.**
- 3.3 Also attached is a table indicating the type of activity currently undertaken with the acknowledgement that approaches will be tailored according to the activity. **Appendix 2.**

4. FOR CONSIDERATION

- 4.1 The need to balance the understandable ambition of Council with the resources available. The Town Clerk has discussed with Council previously, in particular through the F&P Committee, that a council of this size would not ordinarily command for example a full time H&S Officer or in this case a Marketing Officer.
- 4.2 The need to balance officer resource according to the scale of spend. For example, £120k refurbishment of a play park should command more resource than a small event with budget of £3k. Alternatively the balance could be considered in terms of numbers of residents benefitting from a particular service or event.
 - 4.2.1 Unlike other services or projects the time sensitive nature of events also needs to be recognized as once they have happened the opportunity to impact on residents' experience is gone whereas an allotment, play park for example is there for long term.
- 4.3 Physical restraints, particularly in respect to assets such as banners, 'on-street' publicity. There are legal requirements both in terms of landlord responsibilities together with licensing requirements for advertising. These often fall within the remit of WBC.
- 4.4 The balance between the Council's principles eg it is not very supportive of the sustainability principle to produce large numbers of paper assets or plastic banners but it is critical to effectively market the Council's activity when it is spending significant amounts of money on events and services for its residents.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no immediate implications. Depending on the views of the Committee this discussion is likely to be referred to the Strategy Working Party which will take an overview of the whole position and make any recommendations to Full Council. Where there are likely to be financial implications these will need to go to F&P.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 For the Committee to identify any points it wishes officers and/or the Strategy Working party to consider in the round.
- 5.2 To note that the Town Clerk will be working with her successor to identify appropriate project planning training for relevant officers to attend. In addition, officers may welcome a refresher on social media and this can be organized.
- 5.3 To note that the Town Clerk has suggested, and it has been agreed, that her successor will focus on Community Engagement of the Town Council overall. This will undoubtedly lead to consideration of how WTC can further develop its approach to marketing.

Appendix 1

Marketing Activity – Summer 2022

Event	Marketing	Comments
Sunny Saturdays	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FB event page (Y) • Low level banner (N) • FB & twitter posts on LW and WTC (Y) Post achieved 9,846 reach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner support 	Ref to A&C Officer's report
Theatre in Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FB event page (Y) Achieved 10,373 reach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Press release (N) • Leaflets (N) • Banner (N) • FB & twitter posts (Y). Posts had limited reach • Advertised on big screens at Platinum Jubilee concert 	Within existing contract, the provider to drive and manage marketing. This has not proved effective. New contract indicating joint approach with WTC taking lead.
Dual Marketing of Sunny Saturdays and Theatre in Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Posts on both WTC & LW FB and twitter Posts achieved 25,286 reach	With the switch of a few events to Elms Field this summer, the Arts and Culture Officer's plans were supplemented by the Marketing Officer with both Theatre in the Park and Sunny Saturdays promoted as a group of events online. The marketing was placed across the social media pages (twitter & FB) of both the Town Council and Love Wokingham during July and early August. Examples below

What's On Elms Field This Summer

Sunny Saturdays
Blue Sky Big Band
Jazz Swing
11-1pm
30th July



Theatre in the Park
Bobby's Dream
11am & 2pm
11th July

Sunny Saturdays
Rachel Hayward
Steel Pan
11-1pm
6th August



Sunny Saturdays
Lorraine Abbotts
Cornet Ensemble
11-1pm
17th September







Saturday
July 30th
11am - 1pm

Sunny Saturdays
Live Music - Elms Field





Saturday
August 6th
11am - 1pm

Sunny Saturdays
Live Music - Elms Field





Saturday
Sept 17th
11am - 1pm

Sunny Saturdays
Live Music - Elms Field



Appendix 2

CURRENT & POTENTIAL MARKETING OPPORTUNITIES

Cross Street Banner	Limited availability & no more to be added due to infrastructure problems
Street Level Banners	Single banner spaces in Cockpit Car Park, by the Library. Extra official banner sites need to be increased - Marketing Officer in discussion with WBC
Flyers	Few town centre retailers/businesses prepared to hold & report limited take-up. Dispersal wider afield would require further resource
Posters	Few town centre retailers & businesses prepared to hold. Are placed in noticeboards: Town Hall, Woosehill, Emmbrook Village Hall, allotments notice boards as appropriate. Send to Tesco and schools as relevant.
Facebook posts	Used widely and multiple times per event
Facebook event	Created for all relevant events
Twitter posts	Used at varying levels.
Mailing list	Was intention to develop, building on Residents' Survey but limited response. Must be GDPR compliant.
Love Wokingham	Events etc are profiled and shared.
Partner support	Marketing and Social media posts shared with Partners for them to put up/ share with their mailing lists
Sharing by Councillors	Sharing social media posts and marketing to own feed/ mailing lists and to local community groups. Inconsistent responses.
WTC Website presence	Activities of Council are profiled.
Event website/ other external websites	Nature and scale of the event will decide if it needs it's own space. Currently only Book Festival
Press release	Used for relevant activities
On the day signposting	For example, flags
On the day filming/photography	Increasingly using videos etc. For WTC records & future promotion
Newspaper/ local magazine advertising	Gain some advertorial space. Reduced use of hard copy advertising in recent years
Other	For consideration launch/opening events, giveaway incentives, external venue displays, outreach programmes, stage screens advertising upcoming events
Councillor Word of Mouth	Potential support from Councillors when canvassing.



Wokingham Town Council

A&C Officer's Report 6/2022-23

To: Arts and Culture Committee

Date: 4th October 2022

Subject: Science with Schools

1 REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To advise the Committee on the outcomes of the Science with Schools event that took place in September 2022.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 This event was envisioned to be a brokerage project to engage schools with universities and industry, and expand knowledge on the range of STEM based careers there are. To frame STEM subjects wider than secondary learning and to engage with specialists who can bring a new light onto STEM subject matter.
- 2.2 All Town secondary schools were invited this year. The Holt and St Crispin's again took up the offer.

3 THE EVENT

- 3.1 There were no ongoing costs associated to this event.
- 3.2 As per last year the Arts and Culture Officer liaised with the schools and Cllr Fumagalli to set up and run the event.
- 3.3 Again even with just two schools, no known Covid disruption and a session only 1 hour long, it was not simple to find a time that worked for all. But much easier than last year. Happily there was an option where both schools had science at roughly the same time.
- 3.4 The Holt and St Crispin's were involved and in early conversations talked about options for best dates and times. They were also involved in discussing what topics might be of most interest to their students. We reached out to Emmbrook but did not receive any reply.
- 3.5 Cllr Fumagalli organized the speakers. Speakers this year came via the Digital Environment Research Institute (DERI) at Queen Mary University of London. Artificial Intelligence was chosen in conjunction with the schools and speakers from businesses including Amazon and Five. They talked about machine learning and programming Amazon's Alexa and driverless car technology. Both speakers had alternative routes into working with AI.

4 FEEDBACK

- 4.1 The event was well received by all. Schools were very grateful for the opportunity.
- 4.2 The digital session continues works best for the majority involved, saving time and coordination to be able to stream into the classrooms and increasing choice in speaker.

- 4.3 It remains very difficult to coordinate a session between multiple secondary schools. We have experienced this not only with Science with Schools but also with other events like the Book Festival.
- 4.4 Cllrs with existing Industry and academia contacts and expertise makes this event easier to organise. Losing this may disrupt the event.

5 KEY PRINCIPLES OF THE COUNCIL

5.1 Distinctiveness:

- 5.1.1 The only event of its kind in the Town that we are aware of. It has potential to be expanded to other schools.

5.2 Inclusivity:

- 5.2.1 This event included a variety of speakers, across gender and ethnicity. It remains important to maintain diversity within this event.
- 5.2.2 It could in the future look at scientific studies relating to areas that feed into our definition of inclusivity. One aim being to encourage female students into STEM fields.
- 5.2.3 The digital offer has the potential to reach students across the Town without having to travel, and include STEM based academics and industries around the country.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 We look to maintain this as a digital offer
- 6.2 Consider if the Committee wish to suggest a focus for a future year that feeds into one of the key principles. Or remain content to leave that organizational level to the Officer in conversation with the schools.
- 6.3 As we are at the end of the council term. The Officer would recommend the Committee considers any advice for the new Committee on the future of this event. A commitment from the new Committee on continuing the event and support from Councillors, as Cllr Fumagalli has been doing to find speakers for 2023 would be useful.

Gemma Cumming
Arts & Culture Officer



Wokingham Town Council

A&C Officer's Report 07/2022-2023

To: Arts and Culture Committee

Date: 27th October 2022

Subject: Sunny Saturdays 2022

1. REASON FOR REPORT

1.1 To advise the Committee on 2022's "Sunny Saturdays" programme.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Sunny Saturdays is a programme of entertainment that was originally on the Market Place with the Market, in May through to September.

2.2 In 2019 it was decided that the event should scale down after feedback from users of the market that found the entertainment in conflict with the market traders both for space and for their ability to trade.

2.3 The pandemic halted all performances, and as we came back it proved that the Market was thriving and the space for ad hoc summer performances was not available on the Market Place any longer.

2.4 Alternatives for performances were explored including a single performance event. With officers advising that performances would require a certain level of support that was not available in house. The Committee resolved that three separate events should go ahead on Elms Field in 2022.

3. 2022 EVENT

3.1 These were the first Sunny Saturday's performances since 2019.

3.2 We worked with Yes Events to set up a minimal stage, cover and oversight for each event. Located by the power source on Elms Field near the play area.

3.3 Due to overwhelming return to events nationally and the late decision on actually staging the events, the optimum dates were not available with many performers and infrastructure was challenging to source. Hence dates did not follow a specific pattern.

3.4 Acts were Blue Sky Big Band (swing band), Rachel Hayward (steel pan player) and BWCB Liquorice All Sorts (Clarinet Ensemble)

3.5 Publicity was mostly achieved through Social Media. Facebook only keeps so much data but the latter two performances managed a reach of close to 5000 for each. Individual Facebook events for all three had their own reach of between 1200 and 1500 per event.

3.6 Feedback from the events was limited, received from any Councillors who attended, the acts and Yes Events. What was noted that while the events were well received they didn't attract large audiences. Excellent feedback from the 6th August Rachel Hayward performance noted

- Attendees averaged 15 at any one time at the stage. There was some movement and there were some who would have been enjoying the music from benches under the trees
- There was a variety in audience members from older ladies, families and in particular a Trinidadian Family
- Due to two of the events being in consecutive weeks there were some attendees who had come expecting a series of events rather than the intended spread.
- A number of the attendees reported that they knew about and would be attending the Peach Place evening entertainment also going on.

3.7 Sunny Saturdays best fits into the Key Principle of Distinctiveness. Inclusivity also fits by looking for local acts from our cultural and ethnic diversity.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Expenditure for 2022 is expected to be £3093. This is an overspend of £93.

5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1. Elms Field is a large space for small acts and stages to have a strong presence in.

While not our space, the Marketing Officer has now reached an agreement with WBC which should streamline the process for booking Peach Place. A similar size to the Market Place, with multiple reasons for an audience to visit and stay to watch, may suit these small scale events better.

5.2. Starting organising this event late on the same year as a significant national celebration created unhelpful time pressure. Agreeing a position for this event now will ensure organisation starts asap.

5.3. Marketing was lighter for this event than it had been in the past. Social media reach was very good but it wasn't reflected in the actual audience numbers. The strong reflection on the marketing of this event alongside feedback from the Residents Survey has shown potential areas to improve and expand which will be added into planning for next year.

5.4. Marketing an event that happens 3 times in a 5-month span is difficult. It eventually leads to trying to market 3 separate events. Marketing them as a consecutive series would simplify the messaging.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. We trial using Peach Place for performances.

6.2. We run the Sunny Saturday performances as a series over consecutive weeks.

Gemma Cumming
Arts and Culture Officer



Wokingham Town Council

A&C Officer's Report 8/2022-23

To: Arts and Culture Committee
 Date: 28th October 2022
 Subject: Wokingham Children's Book Festival

1 REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To advise the Committee on the outcomes of the fifth Wokingham Children's Book Festival that took place on Saturday 15th and Sunday 16th October 2022.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Wokingham Children's Book Festival was envisioned in the July 2018 meeting of the Committee.
- 2.2 We continue to work with Wokingham Borough Council's Libraries service and the Extended Services Cluster Co-Ordinator for Wokingham East for to their expertise and support.
- 2.3 More Arts continued this year to support the event. Their funding was focused on the schools outreach sessions.
- 2.4 We maintained ticket price at £3 a seat for the event. The outreach remained free.
- 2.5 We livestreamed the Saturday at the Town Hall.

3 THE 2022 EVENT

- 3.1 This was the first year since 2019 where we moved back to a pre Covid model. There were planned 16 sessions over two days in both Wokingham Town Hall and the new Wokingham Library.
- 3.2 There was increased pressure on Wokingham Borough Libraries service due to the move of the entire Wokingham Library in September and a change over in their main Officer for this event. They handled this professionally and extremely well.
- 3.3 We had difficulty getting the event ready in time due to exceptionally slow responses from publishers. The Outreach sessions in particular had less authors than anticipated due to this.
- 3.4 The sessions all went very well. One session had to be cancelled due to an Author's personal circumstances, 3 others were cancelled due to poor ticket sales. Selling tickets was notably difficult this year.
- 3.5 Commonly most tickets are booked in the last two weeks. This year it was in the last five days before the event. This makes it very difficult to know if an event is worth going ahead with. In the debrief we identified ways to encourage and incentivize early booking, including:
- A discount for early booking
 - An in-person launch event in the Summer Holidays
 - A book giveaway

- 3.6 Wokingham Children's Book Festival has some of the most intensive and widest reaching marketing of any event, because it is a Partnership Event with Wokingham Borough Council. Feedback achieved shows that there is not one single avenue that residents use to find out information about this event, but all avenues are represented. Social Media and Mailing List both come up top when looking at cost vs results. However, the marketing for this event will continue to use the full spread of available avenues and add, where reasonable, to them.
- A number of factors were also identified as making publicity harder. The media pause during the mourning period for the Queen, and the Library moving location requiring a short closure. Both happening within our most active marketing window. Latterly there seems to have been a change to Facebook algorithm and priorities, that reduces our exposure there.
- 3.7 Again, the hybrid (in person and livestreamed) sessions at the Town Hall on Saturday did very poorly with regards to digital attendance. Those who attended did appreciate it, but the sessions only had between 1 and 3 guests booked on and some did not attend.
- 3.8 There is anecdotal evidence that other Book Festivals around the country are experiencing difficulty selling tickets. All data we have available indicates that the Marketing is reaching our audience and that the festival is good value for money compared to nearby and similar events. It is possible that the significant national economic turmoil has made an impact.
- 3.9 We have already started conversations with other charities and services who may be able to assist with getting the word out to their service users. We also identified in the debrief potential charities that we could work with in regards to tickets for disadvantaged families.
- 3.10 We partnered with independent bookshop Fourbears (Caversham). They were very knowledgeable and were able to support running book sales at both the library and the Town Hall all weekend. They are keen to continue to support the event.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND OTHER COSTS

- 4.1 The budget of £6600 is made up of £3000 from Wokingham Town Council and a £3600 Income target. Commonly the Income comes from sponsorship and ticket sales.
- 4.2 Final Expenditure is expected to be: approx. £5300, accounting for authors who cancelled. Not all invoices are in as yet.
- 4.3 Morearts donated £1800 to support the outreach programme.
- 4.4 Income from tickets is expected to be £900. This is half the income target for ticket sales. We sold 450 tickets out of a maximum of 960. Most of the library sessions (40 seats) were well over 50% full, with one sold out, however the Town Hall (80 seats) was mostly around a quarter full, with one sold out. Prior to Covid we would sell 70 – 80% of tickets.
- 4.5 Final income was approx. £2700, less than the income target. However, expenditure was also less than the budget. Overall taking income into account, Wokingham Town Council spent approx. £2600 of its precept money on this event. Which is less than was allocated. If we hadn't had the author cancellations we would have overspent.
- 4.6 Approx £1400 was spent on the outreach sessions. Wokingham Libraries lead with these, starting about a month in advance of the main event. Due to last year's success these were maintained as majority digital events so they could reach multiple schools and classes with one session.
- 4.6.1 11 schools from across the borough attended multiple digital sessions with multiple year groups. That works out to approx. 2400 individual views. This is less than last year however we had less outreach authors than last year and schools were very slow to book. Some booking only on the day of the event. The ongoing impact of Covid being cited as a stumbling block.
- 4.6.2 One author appeared in person at St Crispin's with some primary schools from the Town attending. Another author attended two of the Town primary schools in one day.
- 4.6.3 Feedback from the schools on the Outreach sessions was overall very good.

- 4.6.4 The Outreach's primary objective is to put authors into schools for all students regardless of social-economic status. It's secondary objective is as a vehicle that promotes the Weekend events. The reduced numbers here may also have had an effect on weekend ticket sales.
- 4.7 It should also be noted that Staff time was an additional implication both supporting the event on the run up and on the event day.
- 4.7.1 For the Town Hall: The Arts and Culture Officer managed the budget, contracting, branding and day to day publicity, populating website and ticketing platforms, event oversight and official partnership communications. Additionally running the Weekend sessions in the Town Hall. The Marketing Coordinator advised on publicity and liaised with Wokingham Borough Council Comms team and the Press.
- 4.7.2 For the Library: As part of the partnership; significant staff expertise and data, to arrange and work with authors, publishers, publicize through their channels and run the weekend event in the library and lead on the outreach work.
- 4.7.3 This event does require significant volunteer support, mostly via Councillors.
- 4.8 The Committee has requested additional funds from F&P for the first time, due to escalating costs and to support extra publicity options.

5 KEY PRINCIPLES OF THE COUNCIL

5.1 Distinctiveness:

- 5.1.1 The only event of its kind in the Borough and intentionally servicing Wokingham Town, Borough and the wider area.

5.2 Sustainability:

- 5.2.1 The event has a teaching aspect, there were a number of events in both the Weekend and the Outreach programme that touched on environmental topics.

5.3 Inclusivity:

- 5.3.1 This event has, since it's inception, aimed to be diverse and inclusive. This year:
- We maintained a few of the weekend events as hybrid events, which were open to both those who specifically bought online tickets but also those who bought in person tickets. This is positive as if the ticket holder is ill or otherwise unable to attend they can still view the session. Additionally digital sessions can be inclusive to the disabled/neurodivergent community, allowing individuals to watch live, or at a later date more suited to their situation and within their own comfortable and familiar space.
 - We offered free tickets via the schools for students they felt would benefit but wouldn't be able to come due to financial pressures.
 - The library put on a free drop in Saturday Storytime. Aimed at the younger ages it was an opportunity for local authors to give a short reading from their books.
 - The outreach sessions were very powerful at reaching all children regardless of their socioeconomic status as they were streamed directly into classrooms.
 - There was a strong mix of authors for both the main weekend and the outreach sessions. Including sessions with Black authors from a variety of backgrounds, authors from East Asia and Indian subcontinent. We also had authors who talked about their dyslexia (Jane Elson), Cara Mailey, who has achondroplasia and Talan Skeels-Piggins who is a Paralympian.
 - Full list of digital outreach sessions at <https://wokingham-tc.gov.uk/bookfest/authors-into-schools/>

6 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 Outreach via a digital platform highly inclusive, reaching classrooms around the Borough. Increases reach of the festival.
- 6.2 There remains a massive preference for in person over streamed events. It costs around £250 to stream the event for one day in the Town Hall as the infrastructure and expertise to do so has to be brought in.
- 6.3 The diversity of the authors remains important.
- 6.4 Ticket sales were down on previous years, the 80-seat space was hard to fill.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 That a hybrid approach for the Outreach is still very valuable. However, the Committee may wish to consider if the hybrid for the Weekend is good value for money.
- 7.2 That we cut down the number of sessions by not doing the event on Saturday in the Town Hall as the 80-seat venue is proving harder to fill. This will hopefully minimize cancellations. This will mostly save on staff time, as savings in author fees will be offset by a reduced ticket income.
- 7.3 To offer an early bird discount as an incentive for booking early.

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