



Wokingham Town Council

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

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

8th January 2024

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 15th January 2024** for the purpose of considering and resolving upon the subjects and matters set out in the agenda below.

Yours sincerely

K Hughes
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 6th November 2023 (pages 16854 to 16857), copy attached, as a true and correct record.

5 MONITORING REPORT

To receive and consider the Monitoring Report dated 9th January 2024 (copy attached).

6 COMMITTEE BUDGET

To receive and consider the Committee's budget dated to 31st December 2023 (copy attached).

7 NEW COUNCIL STRATEGY

To receive and consider how the work of this Committee aligns to the new strategy. To discuss and brainstorm potential improvements and or changes to help the work of the Committee align to the new strategy agreed by Full Council. (copy attached).

8 BOOK FESTIVAL

To receive and consider the report on this year's event. To resolve as desired on recommendations. (copy attached).

9 DRESSING THE CHRISTMAS TREE

To receive and consider the report on this year's event. To resolve as desired on recommendations. (copy attached).

10 SUNNY SATURDAYS

To receive and consider the notes of the Sunny Saturdays Working Party meetings held in November and December. (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 Barrie Callender (Chair), Susan Cornish, Philip Cunnington, Alexandra Domingue (Vice Chair), Alexandra Fraser, Matteo Fumagalli, Sally Gurney, Morag Malvern and Annette Medhurst.

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).

06th November 2023 - 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 21:37

PRESENT

Chair: Cllr B Callender

Councillors: S Cornish, A Domingue, S Gurney, and M Malvern.

IN ATTENDANCE

Arts and Culture Officer

Marketing and Communications Co-ordinator

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

There were apologies for absence from Cllrs P Cunningham, A Fraser, M Fumagalli and A Medhurst.

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 A Domingue and seconded by Cllr S Cornish and it was

**RESOLVED
30736**

that the Minutes of Arts and Culture Committee meeting held on 4th September 2023 (pages 16809 to 16812), copy attached, be received as a true and correct record.

MONITORING REPORT (Agenda Item 5)

The Monitoring Report dated 31st October was received and considered.

Amendments to Committee Projects and Events document

Subsequent to the previous meeting the Arts and Culture Officer has added in Decorated Cabinets to this document. Work continues to amend this document during the year, particularly in response to any strategic changes from Council.

Future Lunar New Years

To be discussed at Agenda Item: 12

COMMITTEE BUDGET (Agenda Item 6)

The Arts and Culture Committee's budget dated to 30th September 2023 was received.

MARKETING (Agenda Item 7)

The Marketing and Communications Coordinator outlined her experience, job role and hours with the Committee and invited questions and comments on the Marketing of the Town Council and in particular A&C events.

CHAIR'S INITIALS _____



The Committee were keen to understand what if any other marketing resources there were and how Councillors can assist. It was noted that Officers are responsible for their own marketing with the support and guidance of the Coordinator who also looks at the wider Town Council marketing. There is some limited extra personnel resource for Love Wokingham. Resources are finite, so often we have to concentrate on methods that seem to work best for the project or event.

Social media remains a key aspect of Marketing our work and events. There remain significant challenges due to the Facebook algorithm that makes choices for users on which pages to suppress, and likes to suppress free posts after any period of paying for posting (which is why we rarely pay to boost posts). Councillors are encouraged to support posts through commenting and sharing to help Facebook see them as important and worth not suppressing.

It was noted that there wasn't one place that residents got their information but through a number of mediums and digital locations. Love Wokingham was just one of many event collation digital offers. It was requested that if residents note they didn't see an event advertised it's important to find out where they look for information.

Councillors requested:

- If any work could be done on improving or identifying accessibility challenges on the website, in particular around the use of PDF's.
- Some sort of handout highlighting future events. This was noted as already being in discussion.
- To get events with a known date on as a Facebook event asap.

ACTION: RELEVANT OFFICERS

The Marketing Coordinator encouraged Councillors to engage with her if they have ideas or are looking to support the marketing of the Town Council. They are key points of contact with the residents and thus are an excellent resource to support the marketing and highlight the good work of the Council.

ACTION: COUNCILLORS

Councillors finally suggested if there was any benefit to adding young resource to the marketing offer with a placement student or similar. They requested that Town Clerk/F&P may wish to explore this to support general marketing and try to widen the Town Council's appeal to residents under the age of 35.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

SUNNY SATURDAYS (Agenda Item 8)

The Officer was thanked for the report. It was noted that recent information indicated that a local business might be a potential partner for this event. Cllr Gurney and the Arts and Culture Officer will aim to have more information on this in advance of the upcoming Working Party meeting for discussion.

The Committee were in broad support of the recommendations presented. It was proposed by Cllr Callender and seconded by Cllr Gurney and it was

**RESOLVED
30737**

to undertake the following for next year's Sunny Saturdays.

CHAIR'S INITIALS _____



1. Adopt the revised aims of 'an event that helps enliven the atmosphere of the Town to make it a fun place to visit' and 'support local community acts'
2. Acknowledge that this event requires Councillor support and Arts and Culture members will be expected to support this event.
3. Use Peach Place as a location
4. Delegate event dates and staffing implications to the Arts and Culture Officer and Town Clerk to manage and agree.
5. Investigate this new possibility for partnership in Peach Place.
6. Undertake three events, unless a partnership proves fruitful enough to revisit the possibility to support more events.

ACTION: ARTS AND CULTURE OFFICER

CHALK ABOUT IT (Agenda Item 9)

The Officer was thanked for the report. The Committee discussed the event. It was proposed by Cllr Gurney and seconded by Cllr Malvern and it was

**RESOLVED
30738**

to continue with the event and request from F&P a 6.7% increase in line with inflation (CPI).

ACTION: F&P COMMITTEE/RFO

SCIENCE WITH SCHOOLS (Agenda Item 10)

The Committee were in agreement with the recommendations to keep this event as a digital offer. There was concern that offering too wide a choice to the schools to direct the theme might make too much impact on Officer time.

Councillors were minded to help source potential speakers, should a future theme connect with suitable contacts they have in life and/or business. It was requested to create and share some kind of press release or statement to assist them in talking about the aims and objectives of the event with potential speakers. The Arts and Culture Officer also described the usefulness of creating a database of potential contacts (in Academia and Industry) if that were possible.

It was also requested to liaise back with the schools to see if there were any other time of the year where an event like this would be well placed, in order to pull it out of an already busy and awkward time just after the summer holidays.

ACTION: ARTS AND CULTURE OFFICER

NEW EVENTS (Agenda Item 11)

The Arts and Culture Officer was thanked for the report and the investigations taken place for these ideas. The Committee were mindful to ensure they were offering quality over quantity, and focus on improving existing events and projects. It was requested that the Officer continue to progress research where possible with these events or file them for future consideration, but the Committee would not be looking to enact any of them next financial year.

With regards to the Human Library, the Committee wished to enable the spend of \$250 required to commit to being a publishing partner, in order to ensure the continued research into this event. Upcoming Human Library events were noted that might be a source of finding out more.

ACTION ARTS AND CULTURE OFFICER

CHAIR'S INITIALS _____



Acknowledging the ongoing work the Arts and Culture Officer is engaged with regarding the Museum, Councillors would be interested in finding out more and potentially being more involved.

FUTURE EXPENDITURE (Agenda Item 12)

The memo on what the Committee has already resolved to request from F&P for next financial year, and in some cases already had agreed, was noted. The resolution to request increased funding for Chalk About It from earlier in the meeting was noted.

**RESOLVED
30739**

It was proposed by Cllr Gurney and seconded by Cllr Domingue and it was to request from F&P \$250 (£ equivalent at budget setting) to support further work into the Human Library project.

ACTION: RFO/F&P COMMITTEE

**RESOLVED
30740**

It was proposed by Cllr Gurney and seconded by Cllr Domingue and it was To request that Lunar New Year become an ongoing event and recurring budget for A&C (current agreed budget £9,800). With a budgetary increase in line with inflation for year 2024/25.

ACTION: RFO/F&P COMMITTEE

With regards to future expenditure two further concepts were suggested.

1. A portable PA system to support the events of the Council.

It was noted that this had been explored a number of years ago and proved to be expensive for the varied needs of and number of events it would support, and there were challenges with storing it and ensuring it was used correctly. It was suggested that it should be re-explored.

2. More notice boards in other parks and around the wards.

As both suggestions would support the wider Council not just Arts and Culture it was agreed to pass these ideas to the Town Clerk to delegate as she sees fit.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

NEW COUNCIL STRATEGY (Agenda Item 13)

The new council strategy was received for future consideration.

COMMITTEE INFORMATION (Agenda Item 14)

- a) There were no items of Committee information.
- b) There were no items for Marketing.

CHAIR

CHAIR'S INITIALS _____



Monitoring Report: Arts & Culture

Date: 8th January 2024

Date Action Agreed	Item for Action (to include any resolution number)	Person Actioning	Proposed Completion Date	Progress
5 th June 2023	Amendments to the Committee projects and events document	Arts and Culture Committee	March 2024	Noted Decorated Cabinets already in the document. Will work on in slow time to make changes and in response to any strategic changes from the Council.
5 th June 2023	Future Lunar New Years	Arts and Culture Officer	Feb 2024	Agenda Item: 12.
6 th Nov 23	Science with schools consultation with schools on date	Arts and Culture Officer	Jan 2024	St Crispin's is happy with the current timing. The Holt were more open but not Summer term. (complete)
6 th Nov 23	Human Library (further investigation)	Arts and Culture Officer	April 2024	Currently concentrating on February events and the planning for Summer events. Work yet to start.

08/01/2024

Wokingham Town Council

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Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 31/12/2023

Month No: 10

Cost Centre Report

	Actual Last Year	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available
304 Arts & Culture						
1159 Book Festival Income	2,731	3,190	3,600	410		
1253 Fun Day Income	230	520	200	(320)		
1266 Board games income	248	0	1,000	1,000		
Arts & Culture :- Income	3,209	3,710	4,800	1,090		
4341 Concert	53,251	60,602	60,000	(602)	48,319	(48,921)
4343 PRS Licence	0	0	600	600		600
4345 Book Festival	5,073	4,935	7,800	2,865	1,398	1,467
4388 Theatre in the Park	2,500	3,701	3,750	49		49
4389 Board Games event	198	43	1,000	957		957
4512 Sunny Saturdays	3,093	1,695	3,000	1,305		1,305
4513 Dressing the Christmas Tree	1,527	1,497	1,350	(147)	105	(252)
4518 Living Advent Calendar	350	0	0	0		0
4526 Lunar New Year	4,055	3,357	3,000	(357)	4,426	(4,783)
4527 Chalk about it	2,783	4,050	4,050	0		0
4528 Murals	6,503	0	0	0		0
4603 Fun Day	6,944	13,372	14,600	1,228	11,520	(10,292)
4608 Virtual Museum Upgrade	0	4,439	4,500	61		61
Arts & Culture :- Indirect Expenditure	86,277	97,690	103,650	5,960	65,768	(59,808)
Net Income over Expenditure	(83,068)	(93,980)	(98,850)	(4,870)		
Grand Totals:- Income	3,209	3,710	4,800	1,090		
Expenditure	86,277	97,690	103,650	5,960	65,768	(59,808)
Net Income over Expenditure	(83,068)	(93,980)	(98,850)	(4,870)		
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(83,068)	(93,980)				



Wokingham Town Council

Vision 2023 to 2027

Mission statement:

Wokingham Town Council embraces our past, celebrates our present and builds for our future.

Principles:

Being sustainable

Working to reduce our negative impact on our local environment and use our financial resources and physical assets as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Involving everyone

Striving to ensure the council's events, activities and democratic processes are open, accessible and welcoming to everyone in our community.

Fostering Town Pride

Protecting, enhancing and celebrating what's good about our council, our community, our town and our heritage. We will learn from our past, acknowledge where there's room for improvement, and prepare for the future.

Enriching community

Creating and supporting opportunities to bring our community together and help it to thrive.

The following items were thoughts or suggestions on what is important to residents and what is important to councillors.

Following an initial thought gathering process, they were voted for or against by Strategy Working Party members.

They have been included to act as ideas for the committees to consider how the council's vision might look to embedded into the work of the committees.

Fostering Town Pride

1	Lobby the borough council for a better Wokingham	+
2	The Council should ensure we maintain and promote things about Wokingham of which we are proud	+
3	Make sure we celebrate or make reconciliation for Wokingham's rich history	
4	Letting people know what we do	+
5	Acknowledge there's room for improvement	
6	Love Wokingham (Marketing)	
7	Make sure we look after the town and its services, that things "run well"	+
8	Be unique – different to Reading and Bracknell	

Being Sustainable

1	Thinking about the future as well as the present	+
2	Council should make sure we're accountable to the residents – data, impact, outcome and experience	+
3	Offering value for money	+
4	Engage with local organisations and charities	
5	Could take on some other town parks from Wokingham (Borough Council)	+
6	Use residents' money effectively and efficiently	+
7	Take on local bins from WBC	* *
8	Taxes being kept at an affordable rate	+

Involving everyone

1	Our residents being more involved via questionnaires	+
2	Local business awards	
3	Public toilets	
4	Have a variety of events and activities that are open to all	+++
5	Involve other marginal communities	++
6	Make sure we are welcoming to everyone, no matter our background or views	+++
7	Particularly Youth, Elderly, Lonely, Marginalised	
8	Care about them no matter who they are	+
9	Youth engagement	+
10	Bus services	* *

Enriching Community

1	Support / encourage local people and organisations to start local events	++
2	Act together for their good	

3	PCSO funding	*
4	Leverage our assets	
5	Local stories – museum of the community	
6	Free use of one asset to grant recipients	
7	Living benches	
8	Residents want to feel safe	+
9	Councillor mentor / buddying system	
10	Support those who support others	+
11	Real sense of community	++
12	To reach out to our residents	
13	Safe and welcoming to visitors	+
14	Events in other areas (e.g. one per ward)	++



Wokingham Town Council

A&C Officer's Report 11/2023-24

To: Arts and Culture Committee
 Date: 29th November 2023
 Subject: Wokingham Children's Book Festival

1 REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To advise the Committee on the outcomes of the sixth Wokingham Children's Book Festival that took place on Saturday 14th and Sunday 15th October 2023.

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 supports the schools outreach sessions.
- 2.4 We maintained ticket price at £3 a seat for the event. The outreach remained free.
- 2.5 Due to the difficulty last year selling tickets we made a number of changes. Including reducing the number of sessions at the Town Hall (which were the ones struggling to sell) and putting in place incentives for early booking.

3 THE 2023 EVENT

- 3.1 There were 13 events over two days in both Wokingham Town Hall and the new Wokingham Library. One session tested out the capabilities of the Carnival Hub large space. This space is currently given free to the Library service for this event. It worked very well.
- 3.2 We had a new lead officer for the Library side of this event. This did add to the complexity of the event as it was her first time co-running such an event.
- 3.3 The sessions all went very well. One session had to be cancelled due to Author sickness but we plan to reschedule as a one off in the library in February half term. None were cancelled due to low ticket sales. Ticket sales did improve on last year however it was notable how much harder it was to sell tickets for authors writing in the 7 – 11 age range. The younger years sold out their events a couple of weeks in advance of the event.
- 3.4 The event in Carnival Hub was very successful. Author choice remains paramount to sell such a large venue but we will be revisiting with the Library Service how to maximize this success and this opportunity they have.

Wokingham Children's Book Festival has some of the most intensive and widest reaching marketing of any event, partly because it is a Partnership Event with Wokingham Borough Council and partly because we put a lot into this event as it is a ticketed event. Feedback achieved shows that there is not one single avenue that residents use to find out information

about this event, all avenues are represented.

There were a number of things noted:

- The Marketing Coordinator would not want to increase the already high marketing resource that go into this event. There is no evidence that increasing it will lead to higher sales. They are emphasizing working smarter.
- Social media did not have the effect it has had in previous years. It was not the primary driver of sales. It is uncertain why this is, however compared to previous years our posts were shared far less often by Councillors, and into local groups. As we know, if a post does not gain traction through interaction, Facebook will depress it's reach. Please share posts.
- Printed media had a resurgence. It was noted highly as being the source of information. Banner and flyers in particular.

We will continue to work with WBC and internally to maximise what has shown through feedback to work for marketing and streamline how we do the marketing. It does tend to be a fluid process.

- 3.5 We continue to partner with charities and schools on offering free tickets to those in need. However this year there was no take up.
- 3.6 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.
- 3.7 The Outreach programme moved to a hybrid approach with some in person sessions at Wokingham Town Schools (aimed to reach as many as possible by using large school halls for multiple classes and schools to attend) and a number of digital sessions open to all schools.
- 3.8 Schools remain a key driver in creating ticket sales, either through being part of the outreach or through school communications to parents.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND OTHER COSTS

- 4.1 The budget of £7800 for 2023's event is made up of £4200 from Wokingham Town Council and a £3600 Income target. Commonly the Income comes from sponsorship and ticket sales. This budget was set at budget setting in 2022 to manage inflation and rising costs, however this was in advance of the 2022 event. The poor results for the 2022 event altered how we ran the event which has caused a discrepancy in expenditure.
- 4.2 Due to the poor sales the Committee agreed to reduce the usage of the Town Hall (which was the harder space to fill) which reduced the number of authors programmed in and lowered the expenditure.
- 4.3 Final Expenditure for 2023 is expected to be: approx. £6400. Not all invoices are in yet. An underspend was to be expected due to the changes to the event structure.
- 4.4 The majority of the expenditure of this event are the authors. However 30% of the expenditure goes towards publicity, including: On the day photography, promotional videos, banners, flyers, advertising in the local paper and similar. This is a significantly higher proportion than other events.
- 4.5 More Arts donated £1800 to support the outreach programme. Wokingham Library service lead with the Outreach sessions.
 - 4.5.1 8 schools from across the borough attended multiple digital sessions with multiple year groups. This is less than previous years, we have approached all schools for feedback on why they couldn't attend.
 - 4.5.2 In person sessions included three full day sessions for multiple classes. Two authors appeared in person at St Crispin's with primary schools from the Town attending. Another author attended two of the Town primary schools in one day.

- 4.5.3 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.
- 4.6 Income from tickets is expected to be approx £1300 after VAT is removed. We sold over 70% of the available seats which returns us to pre-covid ticket sales. The majority of events for the 3 – 7 age group sold out, the sessions for the 7 – 11 years were around 40% sold on average.
- 4.7 Final income was approx. £3100, less than the income target. However, that was to be expected as it hadn't been able to take into account the changes created by removing 4 of the Town Hall events and adding one in for Carnival Hub.
- 4.8 Overall Wokingham Town Council has spent £3300 on this event. Not including overtime costs.
- 4.9 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.
 - 4.9.1 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, feedback gathering and data analysis, 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.
 - 4.9.2 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. WBC comms contact helped to create some of the social media designs and joint press release.
 - 4.9.3 This event does require significant volunteer support, mostly via Councillors.
 - 4.9.4 Please note this list is not exhaustive. This is a very high resource event due to partnership working, a large number of elements to put together and a vast amount of data created.

5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 A significant improvement on last year's event. We don't aim to have a fully sold out event otherwise we could not take risks on authors who have a valuable message or are underrepresented.
- 5.2 It remains unclear why the 7 – 11 age group were more challenging to sell. However we do note that this is an age range where we are both selling the session to the parent and the child. It may be prudent to have more younger years sessions at the Town Hall and keep the older years sessions at the Library, unless there is a compelling reason to do otherwise.
- 5.3 Carnival Hub was a positive venue which we would like to see if we can use more in the weekend (potentially for a second event on the Saturday).
- 5.4 Marketing and publicity spend is high and will be looked at to manage resource (spend and time) based on what is working.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 Consider if we wish to keep the ticket price at £3 a seat.
- 6.2 To keep the budget at £7800 and the income target at £3600. This will manage rising costs and maintain flexibility for choice in authors for the Carnival Hub.
- 6.3 To maintain the offer at the Town Hall to just the Sunday (As the Arts and Culture Officer may be needed to support Carnival Hub events).

Gemma Cumming
Arts & Culture Officer



Wokingham Town Council

A&C Officer's Report 12/2023-24

To: Arts and Culture Committee

Date: 11th December 2023

Subject: Dressing the Christmas Tree

1 REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To advise the Committee on the 2023 Dressing the Christmas Tree and to look forward to the 2024 event.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Dressing the Christmas Tree is a long standing event where the schools of the Town create and present handmade decorations to the Town Mayor at a weekday evening ceremony in the Market Place.
- 2.2 It predates the Arts and Culture Committee and was originally done by the Town Christmas Tree, then located in the larger area of the Market Place. With the moving of the tree to the smaller triangle area as part of the Market Place redevelopment the ceremony remained where it was, as it was necessary for audience safety to use the larger space.
- 2.3 Over the years it has been improved to ensure the schools work is highlighted without the backdrop of the tree and that Wokingham Choral Society are heard through the use of a PA system.
- 2.4 The event tends to last approximately 45 mins to an hour and is well loved by the schools.
- 2.5 The decorations are placed on the tree later that same week, as it requires a hi-lift to do this properly.

3 2023 EVENT

- 3.1 The Dressing was broadly the same as last year.
- 3.2 We had 18 town schools who made decorations. 2023's event was the largest number of engaged schools ever.
- 3.3 As the event was invitation to the local schools and thus has an excellent turnout there is minimal need for marketing.
- 3.4 The 2023 event saw a completely new song sheet with a mix of carols and festive songs. This was due to a suggestion to ensure the songs chosen are ones the children are more familiar with and enjoy.
- 3.5 With 18 schools we again broke the record for most schools attending, and we have run out of space at the back of the stage for that many school boards for the decorations. We have requested feedback from the event company for any alternative method that would be possible for the event.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND OTHER COSTS

- 4.1 The allocated budget for this event is £1350. This covers the stage and structure for the decorations, the choir PA System, Gazebos, barriers, lighting and sound engineering. It also covers the Hi-lift needed to put the decorations up.
- 4.2 The total expenditure for the event was £1602. This included a one off cost of £105 to get the boards made for three new schools (the vast majority of schools now have boards that are used year on year). An overspend (ignoring the one off cost) of £147.
- 4.3 It had a significant uplift a few years ago but has not had one since. We managed to negotiate a static cost for the bulk of the event but cannot expect that to remain. It is however a small amount of overspend so can be managed.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 No major changes to this event.

Gemma Cumming
Arts & Culture Officer



WOKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL
Town Hall, Market Place,
Wokingham
Berkshire
RG40 1AS

SUNNY SATURDAYS WORKING PARTY
NOTES OF THE MEETING
Tuesday 14th November 2023 AT 1pm VIRTUAL MEETING

Present: Cllrs: A Domingue, A Medhurst

Apologies: Cllrs: A Fraser, B Callender, P Cunnington, Town Clerk

In attendance: Arts and Culture Officer

1. Update post A&C meeting:

Cllr Domingue updated the Working Party on decisions made at the Arts and Culture meeting for Sunny Saturdays. Draft minutes of the Committee meeting are due to come out to the Committee shortly.

2. Collaboration possibility

Unfortunately it was not possible to find out more about this potential collaboration that was noted at the Arts and Culture Meeting before this Working Party Meeting.

Without confirmation that Sit and Sip would be interested or that they have access to the equipment it was not possible to have a proper discussion about boundaries. However the Working Party would be looking for a partner that embraced the aims and objectives for this event already noted. It was noted that working parties can have outside of Council representation and we would keep that in mind if we are able to start building a partnership.

3. Confirmation of next steps

Cllr Domingue would liaise with Cllr Gurney to interact with Sit and Sip and confirm the following: Do they still have an interest in acquiring the equipment and putting on events in the space, would they be interested in partnership to support an event like Sunny Saturdays as it is currently defined. Or at least interested enough to meet with us to discuss what a partnership may look like.

The Arts and Culture Officer would identify a selection of dates as per the restrictions the Working Party have agreed, and confirm if they are available with Vail Williams. They will also create a list of possible acts that may fit into the definition of "Community Act". At next meeting these can be discussed and others suggested to ensure we are of one mind when considering the

type of acts we are looking for. This also may enable the Working Party to look at a more detailed scope of the event.

4. AOB

No AOB

5. Date of next meeting.

Next meeting provisionally booked in for Thursday 14th December at 12pm. It was noted that if this date was not possible for other Working Party members we may need to look at January for the next meeting.

The meeting closed at 1:35pm



WOKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL
Town Hall, Market Place,
Wokingham
Berkshire
RG40 1AS

SUNNY SATURDAYS WORKING PARTY
NOTES OF THE MEETING
Thursday 14th December 2023 AT 12pm VIRTUAL MEETING

Present: Cllrs: A Domingue, A Medhurst, B Callender, A Fraser, P Cunnington

Apologies: Town Clerk

In attendance: Arts and Culture Officer

1. Update regarding Sit and Sip:

Cllr Domingue updated that it had not yet been possible to make contact but would aim to do so and, if amenable, progress further into talks in advance of the next meeting.

2. A. Consideration of dates

Councillors were not concerned about a regular pattern. It felt more important to consider trying to balance the dates around a scheduled programme of other events and being mindful of Officer time outside of contracted hours that was in place for other events and would be necessary for Sunny Saturdays. Consideration was also given to dates that created opportunities to promote other upcoming events with some notice.

Dates preferred:

13th July *

27th July

7th September

It was also agreed to see if it was possible to arrange a reserve date of **21st September** in case any performance was washed out. The Arts and Culture Officer indicated that they could set such a date and offer it as an option to acts however they couldn't guarantee acts would use it.

* Should the 13th July be the end of term performance for the Children's theatre group meeting in the Methodist church we would shift both the July performances a week earlier.

B. Definition of Community Act

The Working Party were happy with the provided list of acts encompassing a breadth of performers they would class as Community Acts The only thing

noted was the lack of diversity which had already been acknowledged as a weak point . There were early potential contacts for Hong Kong and Ukrainian groups that may fit the definition of a Community Act but further investigation would need to happen. The Officer encouraged everyone to keep their eyes and ears open and encourage any potential act that would increase our diversity to get in touch.

It was also suggested that we should advertise that we were open to new act submissions. The Officer agreed that this would be useful, however we would need a strong process for new acts to ensure the Council was supported in decision making, including a better written definition of Community Act.

3. Any further definition of scope

On considering the choosing of acts, both for this year and for a process of engaging with potential new community acts, the following are to be considered.

- A mix of styles/type of acts across the summer
- Diversity of act, acts that represent and celebrate the varied cultures that make up the Town, especially under represented ones at Town Council events would have a higher priority. (this may have more impact for new acts and future years)
- Acts that have a stronger demonstrable connection to the Town are generally of higher priority once the first points are addressed. Then Wokingham Borough, then wider.

As always there will be logistical requirements and restrictions, budget and resource pressures at play when choosing acts.

4. Next Steps

Feedback from Sit and Sip would be needed asap after Christmas in order to work more efficiently, as a yes would change some parameters of the event, and the boundaries of such a relationship would need to be defined. Cllr Domingue will pick this up initially and engage with the Officer as needed.

There will be feedback from the next Committee Meeting on how the Council's Strategy impacts on Sunny Saturdays.

Consideration of how to define Community Act and a vetting process for new acts. The Arts and Culture Officer can pull out some old documentation and prep a base for discussion. They would also like to consult with the Marketing Coordinator on approach. However we wouldn't be looking to advertise for new acts for this year so there is currently no rush on this.

5. AOB

No AOB

6. Date of next meeting.

Next meeting to be held a few weeks subsequent to the A&C committee meeting. Will include suggested week for feedback, in email.

The meeting closed at 1:06pm