

Classification: Public

Key Decision: No

Gravesham Borough Council

Report to: Community & Leisure Cabinet Committee
Date: 25 November 2019
Reporting officer: Assistant Director (Communities)
Subject: Outdoor and Town Centre Events Programme

Purpose and summary of report:

To provide an overview of the council's major outdoor and Town Centre events programme during 2019.

Recommendations:

1. That the Committee notes the range of larger scale events organised by the council and in partnership with others and makes known its priorities for consideration in future events programming.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The council organises a large number and variety of events directly or, in some instances, in partnership with local groups and organisations. The majority of these are managed or facilitated by staff within the Communities Directorate.
- 1.2 The council's events programme is aligned with the strategic objectives of the Corporate Plan relating to Objective #2 Place – *A vibrant economy and connected community*.
- 1.3 This report summarises the main events that have taken place since April 2019, giving an indication of the scale of commitment that the council makes to this programme.

2. Outdoor Events Programme 2019

St Georges Day School Parade, Tuesday 23 April

- 2.1 The annual Schools St George's Day parade is a partnership event organised through the Kent Equality Cohesion Council, part funded by Gravesham Borough Council and Arts Council England. The event has run for a number of years and participant numbers remain high each year with around 900 school children taking part. Each school gets to work with the arts organisation, Samesky, to create the parade mascots. This year the parade gathered on Community Square and wound its way down Windmill Street, High Street, Jury Street, New Road, Thamesgate returning to Community Square. The parade is well received by the

Town Centre shoppers, businesses and parents/guardians, many of whom come out to cheer the children on.

Scouts St George's Day Parade, Sunday 28 April

- 2.2 Organised in Partnership with the Scouts, this event was supported by around 200 young people from the local Scouts, Guides, Brownies, Rangers, Rainbows, Cubs and Beavers. The group paraded from the Old Town Hall to Community Square for a short Service and Promise renewal.

Fusion Festival, Saturday 15 June

- 2.3 The annual Fusion Festival organised by Cohesion Plus was held in the Town Centre and at Gravesend Borough Market. An array of music, dance and visual art was provided throughout the day in various locations. Acts included No Limits Street Band, Chinese Lion Dancers, Living Statues and this year's highlight, the launch of the Dancing Maharajah's with animatronic elephant parading through the streets.

Gravesham Riverside Festival, Saturday 6 July

- 2.4 This year's event saw a return of the good weather experienced last year, with large crowds enjoying the wide variety of activities on offer. This year there were four main zones – the Main Stage, Active Zone on Gordon Promenade, Vintage Fayre in Fort Gardens and the Funfair at Ordnance Road.
- 2.5 Headlining the Main Stage were 00s pop band superstars Liberty X, along with a mix of local bands and top tribute acts throughout the afternoon. The Vintage Fayre included music since the 1940's, vintage traders, cars, barbers and retro sweets. Children's entertainment included Punch and Judy, Fizzpop Science, Sky Birds of Prey, Drogo the interactive dragon, donkey rides and vintage fairground rides. The active area included a climbing wall, assault course, virtual reality sports game, wipe-out sweeper and rugby tackle to coincide with the rugby World Cup in which two rugby clubs advertised their sessions to increase participation.

Gravesham Riverside Fringe Festival, Sunday 7 July – Saturday 13 July

- 2.6 This Riverside Fringe Festival, which received £15,000 in funding support from Arts Council England, was packed full of some really exciting and varied activities and events. Building on the success of last year's one day extravaganza, this year's Festival raised the bar by several notches and ran for a whole week from Sunday 7 July to Saturday 13 July. Local artists performed throughout the week at a cornucopia of exciting events, from award winning drama to Bhangra dance; comedy to a drop-in poetry shop at Gravesend Borough Market. The venues for the festival were equally diverse including, LV21, The Woodville, Café No.84, Northfleet Central, The Gr@nd and St Andrew's Arts Centre to name but a few. The Riverside Fringe Festival was organised by Gravesham Arts Salon (GAS), which is a group of artists and creatives living and or working in Gravesham. The group was formed in 2016 and is now a constituted organisation initiating and delivering projects under the GAS banner. Independently, many of the group are developing programmes for families and wider audiences, but GAS has given the opportunity for lots of local organisations and individuals to come together to support each other and promote the arts.

Summer Events at the Promenade

- 2.7 A number of organisations organise events on council land with a varying degrees of assistance from the council:
- 2.7.1 Gravesend Regatta took place on Saturday 15 and Sunday 16 June on the River, with organised skiff rowing races on the Thames and on-shore events along the Promenade, including a fun-fair, organised by the Gravesend Regatta Committee.
 - 2.7.2 The Hope & Glory event in Fort Gardens was organised by Wartime Relived and took place on Saturday 28 September 2019. Unfortunately, the events planned following the Drumhead Service on Sunday 29 September had to be cancelled due to the deteriorating weather conditions. Attractions included a mixture of stalls, related musical acts, memorabilia and re-enactments.

Outdoor Theatre, Sunday 28 July and Tuesday 13 August

- 2.8 The council has worked with the Changeling Theatre Company to present outdoor theatre within the borough since 2007. Two performances were held at Nurstead Court, Meopham - Jessica Swale's *Nell Gwynn* and Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*. These are ticketed events and are designed to cover production costs year on year. The first show attracted a large crowd of just under 200 people and the second attracting around 150. These outdoor shows are very popular, especially if the weather is good.

Fireworks Festival, Friday 1 November

- 2.9 This year's fireworks event at the Promenade returned following last year's cancellation due to Gravesham's temporary resident, Benny the Beluga Whale. As in previous years the fireworks were co-ordinated to a musical theme and were launched from a barge on the River. Smith's Funfairs provided a funfair based primarily on the Ordnance Road site, which also included a Halloween night special on Thursday 31 October. Indications are that in excess of 10,000 people attended the event.
- 2.10 Funding from Swale Heating made this year's fireworks event possible and it is this type of social funding that has the potential to help fund the events programme in the future.

Remembrance Services, Sunday 10 November & Monday 11 November

- 2.11 The council, including the officers of the Leisure Team and Communities Directorate, provide support to a number of memorial services held during this time, primarily at Windmill Hill and Northfleet. These events are managed in conjunction with a range of organisations, including the main event partners, the Royal British Legion. Around 900 people attended the annual service at Windmill Hill Memorial Gardens; 300 people at the memorial at The Hill, Northfleet; and 400 people at Community Square on the Monday. The lead of representatives of the services and other organisations is critical to these services taking place.
- 2.12 As part of Remembrance, the team has for a number of years co-ordinated a crocheted and knitted poppy installation, this year the installation takes the form of Poppy Chandeliers in Gravesend Borough Market together with a 'garden of reflection' display and the poppy carpet on Community Square.

Other future events

- 2.13 The annual General Gordon Memorial Service is to be held in Gordon Gardens by the Gordon Statue at 11am on Friday 24 January 2020.

3. Town Centre Events

Shrove Tuesday – 5 March

- 3.1 A pancake flipping challenge was held throughout the Town Centre with shop staff invited to see how many times they could flip a pancake within a minute. The winner was presented with a trophy. There were 31 entrants in total.

Dino Day, Saturday 10th August

- 3.2 The aim of this event was to increase footfall in the Town Centre and Gravesend Borough Market during the Summer school holidays. The event consisted of 4 shows with animatronic dinosaurs and actors, providing a dinosaur educational element to young people. The shows held in New Road attracted approximately 1800 people. Gravesend Borough Market hosted sessions with creepy crawlies, educating young people about various species, together with arts, crafts and face painting, attracting footfall of 1555 people.

Super Gravesham - Saturday 17th August

- 3.3 This event also aimed to increase footfall in the Town Centre and Gravesend Borough Market with a Superhero theme. The event comprised a Bat Mobile and a Batman actor which proved very popular throughout the day. 50 families completed the superhero trail around town which led to participants visiting a variety of independent businesses in the Town Centre. Businesses also organised activities for families, including free gaming, arts & crafts activity. Approximately 3000 people participated in the event.
- 3.4 The Superhero theme was complemented by a 'Princess Sing-a-long' in Gravesend Borough Market, working with Bustle and Breeches. This proved extremely popular generating footfall of 2469 people.

South East England's Strongest Man - Sunday 1 September

- 3.5 Held in conjunction with 'Strongman Galaxy' 'Roar Lifting' and Rebel Strength, Town Centre Management hosted the fifth running of this contest to find South East England's Strongest Man 2019 – across both Novices and Overs. In excess of 2000 spectators gathered on New Road throughout the event which increased dwell time and additional spend to cafes, bars, and shops.

Gravesend Halloween - Thursday 24th and Friday 25th October

- 3.6 Halloween was marked in the Gravesham Borough Market and High Street with the aim of increasing footfall and promoting local businesses in the High Street and Market.
- 3.7 On a rainy Thursday 24th October we had Harry Potter themed Shows, Spooky Stories, Slime Making and Owls which attracted a footfall of 1196 people. On Friday 25th October we supported the Demelza Children's Hospice Pumpkin Hunt in which 130 families took part working with independent businesses and Gravesham Borough Market with Living statues, face painting, magic mirror,

pottery class, slime making and arts and crafts. This attracted a footfall of 1397 people, with a Total footfall for the Halloween events of 2593 people and 166 likes on Facebook.

Christmas Programme

- 3.8 Preparations are in place for a programme of Christmas activities in the Town Centre and Gravesend Borough Market as follows:
- 3.8.1 Friday 22 November – Christmas Lights Switch-on
 - 3.8.2 Saturday 23 November – Young Traders Christmas Market
 - 3.8.3 Sunday 24 November – Vintage Christmas Market
 - 3.8.4 Wednesday 27 Nov, 4, 11 & 18 December – Pop-up Cinema at Gravesend Borough Market
 - 3.8.5 Saturday 30 November, 7 December, 14 December – Christmas Markets
 - 3.8.6 Saturday 7 December - Small Business Saturday
 - 3.8.7 Saturday 14 December - Live Nativity
 - 3.8.8 Saturday 22 & Sunday 23 December – Christmas Music in Town Centre

4. Community Expectations

- 4.1 The council has a duty to demonstrate active promotion of the equalities agenda and the council's events are a core element in that work. Council staff have undertaken equality impact assessment training for events with the aim of assessing against this duty, particularly in relation to whether events are accessible to all.
- 4.2 Consultation on the Corporate Plan elicited views on the contribution that events make to strengthening the local community, as follows:
- Gravesham council have always made an effort to put on great community events. Christmas, fireworks, the summer party on the prom etc.
 - I do believe that bringing communities together is a good way of helping people to feel satisfied with their town and council. Such as the Riverside Festival, the carnival etc.
 - I think the more the council get people together the better as people can feel very isolated.
 - Creating a better sense of love for Gravesend - there is far too much negativity among residents. Get people to take more pride in their town.
 - I've always found that Gravesham Council are better than other councils at providing events and celebrations throughout the year than other councils.
 - Keep up the wonderful job you have been doing with community events in the square, especially the Christmas programme - it is worth every penny.

- Events like Fort in the Forties are a prime example of how we can draw people from other towns to us.
- The events that the council put in throughout the year are fantastic with the prom and the gardens being great places to hold fetes and fairs etc.
- Gravesham council have really stepped up the community spirit especially events in the market and the square, I have found the events welcoming for all ages.
- The council used to use the promenade for local charities to have stalls at various events through out the year. I would like this re-instated.
- Gravesham seems very proactive with community events such as events at prom, Christmas events and the light parade / St. George's parade - much better than other councils.
- More river use for social events.

5. BACKGROUND PAPERS

5.1 There are no background papers pertaining to this report.

Anyone wishing to inspect background papers should, in the first place, be directed to Committee & Electoral Services who will make the necessary arrangements.

IMPLICATIONS	APPENDIX 1
Legal	Event Management Plans are put in place for all major events, including risk assessments, licencing involvement and Police/Safety Advisory Group support/guidance where required.
Finance and Value for Money	<p>The events programme is funded from the council's leisure events budget. A number of events receive partnership funding via the Kent Equality Cohesion Council through Arts Council England grant funding. Income is also received through concession food stalls, funfairs and circuses.</p> <p>This Riverside Fringe Festival £15,000 in funding support from Arts Council England.</p> <p>Social value funding from Swale Heating covered the costs of the fireworks display.</p> <p>The main cost centre is G205 – Major Outdoor Events.</p>
Risk Assessment	All major events have Event Management Plans and these are submitted to the Safety Advisory Group for comment.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	<p><i>A data protection impact assessment (DPIA) should be carried out at the start of any major project involving the use of personal data or if you are making a significant change to an existing process.</i></p> <p>a. Does the project/change being recommended through this paper involve the processing of personal data or special category data or criminal offence data? A definition of each type of data can be found on the Information Commissioner's Office website via the above links.</p> <p>b. If yes to question a, have you completed and attached a DPIA including Data Protection Officer advice?</p> <p>c. If no to question b, please seek advice from your nominated DPIA assessor or the Information Governance Team at gdpr@medway.gov.uk.</p>
Equality Impact Assessment	<p>a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community? If yes, please explain answer.</p> <p>b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper make a positive contribution to promoting equality? If yes, please explain answer.</p> <p><i>In submitting this report, the Chief Officer doing so is confirming that they have given due regard to the equality impacts of the decision being considered, as noted in the table above</i></p>
Corporate Plan	Objective #2 Place – <i>A vibrant economy and connected community.</i>
Crime and Disorder	Event Management Plans in place for all major events, including risk assessments, licencing involvement and Police/Safety Advisory Group support/guidance where required.

Digital and website implications	Use of social media and website are key to the promotion of all council events for pre-promotion and live updates.
Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults	All major events are risk assessed, all 1-2-1 interacting events require staff to be DBS checked, photo consent forms are carried out where necessary, all large scale events will have a lost children point and nominated member of staff.