

Classification: Public

Key Decision: No

Gravesham Borough Council

Report to: Community & Leisure Cabinet Committee

Date: 11 November 2021

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 2021.

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 primarily since April 2021, as well as forthcoming events in the coming months, giving an indication of the scale of commitment that the council makes to this programme as well as the complexities and restrictions placed on the programme due to Covid-19 over the last year and beyond.

2. Outdoor Events Programme 2021

Estuary Festival 2021

- 2.1 The council worked with Cement Fields and Metal Culture to deliver the Gravesham Element of Estuary 21 – a festival originally planned for 2020 to bring international artists to the Estuary locations.
- 2.2 The council co-commissioned Golden Years by Sadie Hennessy which was installed in St George's Shopping Centre. The artist invited local residents to

exhibit their collections in empty shops in the centre and in addition a golden ice cream van broadcast every weekend playlists developed from community engagement.

- 2.3 Gravesham also hosted Marcus Coates' *Our Time* – an installation in the Clock Tower which played the bird song of different local endangered species on the hour.
- 2.4 St Andrew's Arts Centre was the space for *Unctuous Between Her Fingers* a moving image work that explored the efficacy of seaweed as a curative through history.
- 2.5 The council supported Gravesham Estuary Fringe Festival in which over 30 events both live and online took place between 4th and 12th June.

Woodville in Fort Gardens, May – August

- 2.6 The Woodville hosted 4 comedy nights throughout the summer in Fort Gardens which sold out as well as an evening of West End performers and a family comedy event in July.

Outdoor Theatre, Sunday 18 July

- 2.7 The council has worked with the Changeling Theatre Company to present outdoor theatre within the borough since 2007. Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was held at Nurstead Court, Meopham. To fit in with guidance at the time, the events capacity was reduced to 120 and tickets sold out.

Fun in the Fort Gardens – 4-5 September

- 2.8 This was a new event designed to be family orientated but low key so as not to attract very large numbers. It ran alongside of the annual Gravesend Town Regatta. Over the two days, various music acts were programmed along with interactive entertainment such as the circus skills workshop, crazy golf, various arts and craft making stalls and heritage characters as part of Milton Chantry 700. In the region of 500 visitors per day.

Summer Events at the Promenade

- 2.9 A number of organisations organise events on council land with a varying degrees of assistance from the council:
 - 2.9.1 The Gravesend Town Regatta took place on Saturday 4 and Sunday 5 September 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.
 - 2.9.2 The Hope & Glory event in Fort Gardens was organised by Victory Events and took place on 25 and 26 September 2021. Attractions included a mixture of stalls, related musical acts, memorabilia and re-enactments.

Fireworks Festival, Friday 5 November

- 2.10 The fireworks event returns to the Promenade following last year's cancellation due to Covid-19. As in previous years, the fireworks are to be co-ordinated to a musical theme and will be launched from a barge on the River. Smith's

Funfairs provide a funfair based primarily on the Ordnance Road site. In previous years this event has attracted approximately 10,000 people.

- 2.11 Funding from Swale Heating supports this year's fireworks event and it is this type of social value funding that has the potential to help fund the events programme in the future.

Remembrance Services, Thursday 11 November and Sunday 14 November

- 2.12 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, Northfleet and Community Square. These events are managed in conjunction with a range of organisations, including the main event partners, the Royal British Legion. As in previous years, it is anticipated that just under 1000 people will attend the Sunday service at Windmill Hill Memorial Gardens, with 300 people at the memorial at The Hill, Northfleet; and 250 people at Community Square on Thursday 11 November. The lead of representatives of the services and other organisations is critical to these events taking place.

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 21 January 2021.

3. The Queen's Platinum Jubilee

- 3.1 The Queen's Platinum Jubilee is being celebrated with an extended bank holiday from Thursday 2nd to Sunday 5th June 2022. A series of public events and community events are being planned nationally as opportunities for communities and people throughout the United Kingdom to come together to celebrate the historic milestone. These include:

Thursday 2 June

- 3.2 The Queen's Birthday Parade (Trooping the Colour)
- 3.3 Platinum Jubilee Beacons will be lit throughout the United Kingdom.

Friday 3 June

- 3.4 A Service of Thanksgiving for The Queen's reign will be held at St Paul's Cathedral.

Saturday 4th June

- 3.5 Her Majesty The Queen will attend the Derby at Epsom Downs
- 3.6 Platinum Party at Buckingham Palace to celebrate The Queen's seven decade reign.

Sunday 5th June

- 3.7 The Big Jubilee Lunch - encouraging communities to celebrate their connections and get to know each other a little bit better through a street party or picnic, tea and cake or a garden barbeque.

- 3.8 The Platinum Jubilee Pageant - featuring over 5,000 people from across the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth will take place against the backdrop of Buckingham Palace.
- 3.9 The Council has confirmed participation in the Platinum Jubilee Beacon lighting event on 2 June and will encourage services of thanksgiving in local churches.
- 3.10 Communities will be encouraged to host their own Big Jubilee Lunches within their streets and gardens on Sunday 5 June.
- 3.11 The Council is also working on a scheme around the Queen's Green Canopy and encouraging tree planting in the Borough.

4. Town Centre Events

- 4.1 On 19 December 2020, the country was taken back into Lockdown. We were fortunately towards the end of the 2020 Christmas promotional events and markets in the Town Centre, but from thereon in, all gatherings and public events were either cancelled or postponed. This included the January "Winter Lights" festival; Valentines promotions and Pancake Day, all in early spring 2021.
- 4.2 Covid 19 restrictions were slowly lifted from 8 March when schools re-opened; the "Rule of Six" was re-imposed from 29 March and shops & businesses re-opened on 12 April 2021. This also ruled out any events for Easter 2021 and due to restrictions and uncertainty re- people gathering in vast numbers, we also had to cancel the annual St George's Day parade.
- 4.3 Footfall in the town has slowly recovered week on week, month on month, but even now (October 2021) figures are still 25% down on 2019 numbers.

Street Promotions

- 4.4 From mid-August 2021, the council re-opened the diary for commercial street promotions in town and we have already had approaches and campaigns with two local gyms, and a national utility company. These bookings are now coming back in so we should start to see some additional income.

Dressing the Town

- 4.5 Regardless of the lack of organised events within the town centre, we have managed to "Dress the Town" throughout the Summer with the "Bloomin' Lovely" floral campaign which ran from end of May to October 2021.
- 4.6 With businesses having struggled throughout the pandemic- fewer were able to financially sponsor floral troughs/baskets this season, which is understandable, but through the council part funding some items and donating others, we managed to get a floral impact in the town centre gated area this summer – and added to the scheme with six of Town Centre Planters and maintaining one of the former boats at Stone Street.
- 4.7 We also brought in artificial floral arches on some shops & businesses that were unable to accommodate hanging baskets. We also commissioned local art groups to produce new installations including at the Heritage Arch, and street art on old shop hoardings to brighten the town scene.

Welcome Back Funding

- 4.8 We also now have a significant amount of funding from the Government's Welcome Back Funding to introduce new entertainment, street furniture and local training for small businesses to bounce back and are planning to spend by the end of March 2022.

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 received £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	<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>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>
	<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>
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.