

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

DECISION

meeting date: 19 OCTOBER 2021
title: CLITHEROE FOOD FESTIVAL
submitted by: JOHN HEAP – DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
principal author: MARK BEVERIDGE – HEAD OF CULTURAL AND LEISURE SERVICES

1 PURPOSE

1.1 To provide an update on the event and seek approval in principle for the 2022 layout.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:

- Corporate Objectives – To sustain a strong and prosperous Ribble Valley.
- Community Objectives - Provide an opportunity for local businesses to develop their market share with exposure to new consumers.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 The food festival is scheduled to take place on Saturday, 30th July 2022, which avoids a clash with other major events around that time. The option of a two day event is still being explored, though there are some significant obstacles to overcome to achieve that currently.

3 ISSUES

3.1 At the time of writing there has yet to be a response from the Clitheroe Auction Mart about the availability of their site for the park and ride. This is an integral part of the traffic management plan to avoid the town becoming completely gridlocked on the day. Alternative options are being explored, however, there is no site in Clitheroe which offers the same amount of space in one place. Over 800 cars are parked at the auction mart on food festival day. Staging the event takes out 2 of the primary car parks in the town at Railway View (for exhibitor parking) and The Market (for stalls), which is 137 pay and display spaces and 61 p/d spaces and 6 disabled respectively, giving a total of 204 spaces lost. The 6 disabled spaces at Railway View are kept open for visitors to the town. There is no on street parking on the streets closed to traffic.

3.2 The option of tendering the organisation, management and running of the event on the day out to an independent company is being explored. The increased time commitment required to run this major event for Council staff who volunteer has led to a year-on-year reduction in numbers available. Supporting it to the extent now required is impossible to achieve within existing staff resources.

3.3 The safety requirements for running events have increased significantly in recent times and although Council officers keep the risk assessments under review, some aspects are presenting a challenge to resolve. Crowd management and security requirements increased significantly following the Manchester Arena bombing when all event organisers were required to assess the threat level and act accordingly. The festival following that tragic event, saw the use of security industry accredited (SIA) staff for the first time. The issue of crowd management is now a critical factor. In the case of the town this is exacerbated by the layout of the streets, which when set out with stalls reduces the space for people to circulate. The HSE and the Purple Guide (the industry standard against which all plans are gauged), both emphasise the need to have a

crowd management plan. This places the safety of the attendees as a priority and means that capacity of venues/locations is of paramount importance.

- 3.4 In the past the food festival has been run on the principle that it is free to attend and there were no physical controls on the numbers attending. When Castle Street and King Street especially, were at their busiest the crowd density meant any issue that would require the crowd having to be dispersed would be difficult to manage without an elevated risk of injuries occurring. From an organisation perspective, the Council is the body accountable for both running the event and potentially acting against organisers who flout their responsibility and cannot simply ignore this critical issue. The proposal outline later in the report seeks to address this.
- 3.5 Whilst some other events operators in the borough fly post the area with banners and signs on fences and street furniture without permission, this is illegal and so is not something the Borough Council can condone for its' own event. In recent years the use of banners has been restricted to the Council's own car parks and buildings in the run up to the event that is proposed again for 2022.
- 3.6 The marketing of the event is focused on providing a high-quality product which is accessible and promoted well. It is not as may be assumed, simply advertising, although that is part of the marketing mix for the event. A marketing plan will be drawn up for the event which will include an advertising schedule. Previously the advertising has used many different channels, both paid for and free. Residents of the Borough ought to be most aware of the event due to targeted marketing via mailing out details with Council tax bills, the Council newspaper, our website, and banners on our car parks. Therefore, if promoting the Borough is one of the major objectives of the event, attracting people from beyond the Borough boundary must be a focus for the overall marketing plan and in particular any advertising. This will be considered when drawing up the channels to be used for advertising.

4. PROPOSAL

- 4.1 A plan is attached which shows a revised layout which seeks to address the responsibility placed on the Council for crowd management. The road closures of previous events would still be used, Castle Street, Market Place, King Street and King Lane, plus New Market Street. However, the focus for stalls will be New Market Street and the Market car park. Forty-three stalls can be accommodated in the car park, with up to a further eight on New Market Street. This facilitates the crowd management of the event.
- 4.2 In previous years vendors using the Bull Ring open stalls was 25. That number maybe less next year, because of the amended use of these stalls for the normal Saturday Market following the pandemic.
- 4.3 The number of stalls on the streets was 35. This included 6 which were existing businesses in the town, with shops that are on the closed streets. It proposed that those businesses which previously enjoyed a presence of the street are retained.
- 4.4 The original ethos of the event which has been diluted over time, was to provide a showcase, principally for the makers and suppliers from Ribble Valley. This was supplemented by others from around Lancashire who offered produce of the highest quality. Although that principle has been followed to some extent, in the past few years the growth of street food stalls has significantly expanded the footprint of the festival. Those street food sellers, although popular, present the major safety issue because of the congestion which they create on the two main streets, Castle and King Street.

- 4.5 The absence of demonstrations and food related talks, makes the event more of food market than a festival (despite the name). By having fewer street food stalls, we can create more circulation space and the opportunity to consider the use of free to attend demo events (though of course this is not without additional cost to the staging of the event).
- 4.6 Following issues in the past with the exit from Castle Street to Moor Lane an enhanced traffic calming arrangement was implemented in 2018. This was principally to ensure the safe passage of people from the closed streets of the event to the bottom of Moor Lane. This will be maintained again next year, as part of the Council's duty of care in running the event.

5. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications:
- Resources – To date the Council has underwritten the cost of staging the Food festival. With limited sponsorship and being free to attend, the event cost has risen sharply is likely to rise further as the demands of staging it safely increase. The budget from the event staged in 2019 is attached (appendix 1).
 - Technical, Environmental and Legal - The success of the event in attracting people to Clitheroe makes safety a constant challenge given the limited street space available within the town. The Council as the event organiser is legally obliged to run a safe event and would be held accountable by the Health and Safety Executive if an incident occurred leading to injuries or worse.
 - Political – none in the context of the report
 - Reputation - The Council has a high reputation for delivering an excellent event according to the feedback from stall holders and many attendees. That is based on the professional approach taken to the planning and delivery of previous food festivals, The Tour of Britain Cycle Race and The Freedom of the Borough March.
 - Equality and Diversity – The festival is located on the streets of the town and all areas are accessible. Demonstrations if staged, are in accessible buildings.

8. RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

- 8.1 Approve the revised layout proposed.
- 8.2 Agree that costs be sought for external professional support for the management of this event.

MARK BEVERIDGE
HEAD OF CULTURAL & LEISURE SERVICES

JOHN HEAP
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

BACKGROUND PAPERS – CFF File
Appendix 1

Clitheroe Food Festival	Actual 2018 £	Original Estimate 2019 £	Actual 2019 (as at 15/10/19) £
EXPENDITURE			
EMPLOYEE RELATED			
Staffing Costs Before, During and After the Event	6,821	6,710	5,115
<i>total employee related</i>	6,821	6,710	5,115
PREMISES RELATED			
Marquees, Stalls and Staging for Town Centre Entertainment	8,583	8,730	8,790
Demonstration Venues	900	920	880
Portable Toilets	475	500	630
Park and Ride Facilities	670	830	1,070
<i>total premises related</i>	10,628	10,980	11,370
TRANSPORT RELATED			
Park and Ride Coach Hire	1,820	1,950	1,890
<i>total transport related</i>	1,820	1,950	1,890
SUPPLIES AND SERVICES			
Advertising and Promotions Online and in Print	4,034	4,500	4,966
Printed Leaflets and Posters	2,043	2,080	2,073
Postage	167	170	122
Volunteer T-Shirts	232	200	149
On Street Entertainment	2,165	3,760	3,865
Two Way Radios for on the Festival Day	480	500	480
First Aid Provision	1,568	1,700	1,610
Festival Site Security	1,628	1,800	1,701
The Mad Science Funstations	550	650	940
Refreshments	405	410	220
AA Signs within Clitheroe and Perimeter	1,284	1,400	1,310
Traffic Management Signage and Coning	1,606	1,900	1,727
Other Miscellaneous Items	265	270	642
<i>total supplies and services</i>	16,425	19,340	19,804
<i>Total Gross Expenditure</i>	35,695	38,980	38,178

Clitheroe Food Festival	Actual 2018 £	Original Estimate 2019 £	Actual 2019 (as at 15/10/19) £
INCOME			
CUSTOMER AND CLIENT RECEIPTS			
Park and Ride Income	-4,140	-4,490	-2,113
Chargeable Events - Demos/Tastings	-485	-500	-324
Charges to Exhibitors	-14,305	-14,590	-18,265
<i>total customer and client receipts</i>	-18,930	-19,580	-20,702
GRANTS REIMBURSEMENTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS			
Grant from Ribble Valley Borough Council	-5,000	-5,000	-5,000
Overs/Unders	75	0	0
Fair	-250	-280	0
Total Sponsorship	-8,500	0	-4,000
<i>total grants reimbursements and contributions</i>	-13,675	-5,280	-9,000
<i>Total Gross Income</i>	-32,605	-24,860	-29,702
Actual (Potential for 2019) – (SURPLUS)/DEFICIT (added to)/taken from earmarked reserve	3,089	14,120	8,477
Opening Balance on Earmarked Reserve	-17,736	-14,647	-14,647
Closing Balance on Earmarked Reserve	-14,647	-527	-6,170

Appendix 2