

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

INFORMATION

meeting date: 8 SEPTEMBER 2022
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 staged in July 2022.

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

1.3 The food festival was staged on Saturday, 30 July 2022, and around 100 businesses and organisations attended. In size it was as large as the 2019 event, with even more entertainment this year.

1.4 Although the weather on the day was generally wet, large crowds visited the event and stall holders reported brisk business, many sold out of their products and at least one town centre business told the Council it had been their busiest ever trading day.

1.5 This was the first event staged follow a break of two years following the pandemic, but the absence appeared not to have diminished the demand by residents and visitors alike for the mixture of food, drink, and entertainment on offer.

1.6 The event is organised and managed by Ribble Valley Borough staff and together with volunteers on the day from Rotary and the Lions. Because it is a free to attend event it is not intended to cover its costs, it is staged to attract people to the Borough as well as providing a day out for residents to attend.

1.7 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. Many stall holders regard the event as the best organised of the ones they attend, which is testament to the planning and work of Council staff that goes into staging the event.

3 ISSUES

1.8 The event this year proved to especially difficult to organise because of the problems in getting suppliers for the services used to stage the event, such as buses and first aid for example. In addition, the costs associated with all these services and supplies was significantly higher in some cases than in 2019.

1.9 Park and ride was due to be staged solely from the Auction Mart site, however a sale was planned for the same day after the event had been planned so parking was split

between that site and Hanson's Cement who kindly let the Council use their staff car park on the day.

- 1.10 With less than a week to go before the event was planned to be staged, the marquee company which had been booked earlier in the year, informed the Council that it could not fulfil the order. The Council had to find a replacement at the very last minute, which in turn caused issues with Clitheroe Market traders on the Thursday before the event, because the replacement marquee company needed to set up earlier in the day. This meant the Market car park was unavailable for the whole day instead of from 2pm.
- 1.11 Although the weather was damp the crowds attending were higher than would have been predicted in advance. The issue of safety was not a concern this year, but that will be a consideration in future years especially if the event is held during fine weather. Because it is free to attend no tickets are sold and therefore predictions of crowd density cannot be made in advance, although provision for crowd safety must be made.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The staging of the 2022 was a success for the Council and the Borough as a whole. A review of the event will be carried out by officers as is the norm for such events, to learn from what worked and what did not this year.
- 4.2 The options for the event being staged over two days or on a Sunday to extend the trading week for the town, will form part of that review.
- 4.3 The outturn costs for the event will be available for the October cycle of meetings, when it will be taken to the Economic Development Committee, because the event in future will move from the remit of Community Services Directorate to Economic Development and Planning.

MARK BEVERIDGE
HEAD OF CULTURAL & LEISURE SERVICES

JOHN HEAP
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

BACKGROUND PAPERS – CFF File