



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

29th October 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 4th November 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 2nd September 2024 (pages 17040 to 17042), copy attached, as a true and correct record.

5 MONITORING REPORT

To receive and consider the Monitoring Report dated 29th October 2024 (copy attached).

6 COMMITTEE BUDGET

To receive and consider the Committee's budget dated to 30th September 2024 (copy attached).

7 SCORING SYSTEM DISCUSSION

To receive and consider a revised version of the scoring system. Previous version included for comparison. (copies attached)

8 FUTURE EVENTS

To consider a report on the status of proposed events and resolve, if needed, on recommendations. (copy attached, A&C events document attached as reference)

9 CHALK ABOUT IT

To consider and resolve on a report on Chalk About It (copy attached)

10 SUNNY SATURDAYS

To consider and resolve on the report about Sunny Saturdays (copy attached)

To receive the notes from the Working Party (copy attached)

11 BOOK FESTIVAL

To consider and resolve on the report on the Book Festival (copy attached)

12 DRESSING THE CHRISTMAS TREE FUTURE

To consider and resolve on the report on the future of Dressing the Christmas Tree (copy attached)

13 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, Maria Gee, Alwyn Jones and Morag Malvern.

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).

02nd September 2024

Minutes of the proceedings of the **Arts and Culture Committee** meeting held on this day in the **Council Chamber, Town Hall, Wokingham** from 19.31 to 20:40

PRESENT

Chair: Cllr B Callender

Councillors: S Cornish, P Cunnington, A Domingue, A Fraser, M Gee, A Jones and M Malvern.

IN ATTENDANCE

Arts and Culture Officer

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

There were apologies for absence from Cllr M Fumagalli.

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 A Jones and it was

**RESOLVED
30909**

that the Minutes of Arts and Culture Committee meeting held on 15th July 2024 (pages 17021 to 17024), copy attached, be received as a true and correct record. A vote was taken, which was 7 in favour with 1 abstention.

MONITORING REPORT (Agenda Item 5)

The Monitoring Report dated 27th August was received and considered.

Human Library

Funding has been approved by F&P. The Arts and Culture Officer to fill in application and continue with the project.

Book Festival Feedback from 7 – 11 year olds

Discussions on challenges for this age group have been discussed with Book Festival and school contacts, and staff with children of that age. No unexpected challenges have been uncovered. Feedback still to be achieved from School Councils, English leads and/or school librarians, and Councillors with children of that age. Feedback to still be looked for, however it is looking to inform future years not 2024's event.

Sunny Saturdays Working Party

It has been agreed that this will pause while the events are taking place.

CHAIR'S INITIALS _____



Painting Utility Cabinets

Meeting to be arranged between Amenities Officer, Cllr Domingue and A&C Officer to utilise experience and knowledge around the concept.

Diwali/Visakhi Celebration

We are starting to build a cultural advisory group to help with planning such an event.

Changes to Dressing the Christmas Tree

We have talked to St Sebastian Wokingham Band about performing at the event this year. There would be an additional strain on the budget to do this. Responses are being awaited for planning changes beyond 2024.

COMMITTEE BUDGET (Agenda Item 6)

The Arts and Culture Committee's budget dated to 31st July 2024 was received.

SCORING SYSTEM DISCUSSION (Agenda Item 7)

The Officer was thanked for the detailed scoring system.

Councillors discussed and made observations about the scoring system and what it had revealed regarding the two test events. The Arts and Culture Officer encouraged Councillors to submit those observations via email to assist with upcoming reports and ongoing work around the scoring system.

It was decided to utilise the expertise of Councillors Cunningham, Gee and Callender, alongside the Arts and Culture Officer, to improve the functionality of the scoring system from this base example. Including automating aspects of it, looking at ways to visualise the data and how we might add weighting to categories.

What categories may need weighting was also worth discussion although the determination would need to be agreed by Committee at a later date.

Councillors also considered if there should be a 'risk' category added that may cover aspects that could cancel an event; including poor weather, lack of support/partner buy in etc

ACTION: ARTS AND CULTURE OFFICER AND COUNCILLORS

THEATRE IN THE PARK (Agenda Item 8)

The Committee were very pleased that the Theatre in the Park event this year was so successful.

They agreed that a play choice similar to this year's would be preferable. Something simple and well known. The feedback from this year's event should be utilised to improve the event.

It was proposed by Cllr Gee and seconded by Cllr Malvern and it was

**RESOLVED
30910**

that the Theatre in the Park contract with Bart Lee Theatre should be extended and to request from F&P an increase in line with CPI.

ACTIONS: ARTS AND CULTRE OFFICER AND RFO

CHAIR'S INITIALS _____



COMMITTEE INFORMATION (Agenda Item 10)

- a) It was suggested to investigate a suitable PA system for Council usage, eliminating the need for certain size events to hire one. Which may save money in the long run. Cllr Cunnington offered to liaise with Officers about possible events/activities that might benefit from the provision and suggest suitable options.

ACTION: CLLR CUNNINGTON

- b) There were no items for immediate marketing.

CHAIR

CHAIR'S INITIALS _____



Monitoring Report: Arts & Culture

Date: 29th October 2024

Date Action Agreed	Item for Action (to include any resolution number)	Person Actioning	Proposed Completion Date	Progress
6 th Nov 23	Human Library (further investigation)	Arts and Culture Officer	April 2025	Application filled in in September. Now awaiting further contact.
15 th Jan 24	Book festival feedback from 7-11 age groups	Arts and Culture Officer and relevant committee members	Nov 2024	Still to get feedback from School Councils and relevant councillors. Extend where useful to English leads and/or school librarians. Will be used to inform future years.
15 th Jan 24	Sunny Saturdays Working Party	Sunny Saturdays Working Party	September 2024	Agenda Item 10
15 th July 24	Painting Utility Cabinets	A&C Officer	April 2025	Agenda Item 8
15 th July 24	Diwali/Visakhi celebration	A&C Officer	Nov 25	Agenda Item 8
15 th July 24	Changes to Dressing the Christmas Tree	A & C Officer	Nov 24	Agenda Item 12
2 nd Sept 24	PA system for Council	Cllr Cunnington		Officers shared opportunities and challenges about a PA system for the Council. Awaiting possible suggestions for models that might fit need.
2 nd Sept 24	Scoring System	Officers and Councillors	Jan 25	Councillors and Officers met to discuss and refine the scoring system. Edits have been made and will need to be reviewed. We are awaiting work from Cllrs to modify and automate the scoring system.

Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 30/09/2024

Month No: 6

Cost Centre Report

	Actual Last Year	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	Transfer to/from EMR
304 Arts & Culture							
1159 Book Festival Income	3,291	1,800	3,600	1,800			
1164 Lunar New Year income	0	0	100	100			
1253 Fun Day Income	520	756	350	(406)			
1266 Board games income	274	0	1,000	1,000			
Arts & Culture :- Income	4,085	2,556	5,050	2,494			0
4329 Website Maintenance	0	345	0	(345)	258	(603)	
4341 Concert	60,602	67,353	67,245	(108)	72,490	(72,598)	
4343 PRS Licence	0	0	600	600		600	
4345 Book Festival	5,994	192	7,800	7,608	6,497	1,111	
4346 Human Library	0	0	250	250		250	
4388 Theatre in the Park	3,701	4,202	4,000	(202)		(202)	
4389 Board Games event	359	25	1,000	975		975	
4512 Sunny Saturdays	1,695	950	3,000	2,050		2,050	
4513 Dressing the Christmas Tree	1,602	0	1,350	1,350	1,760	(410)	
4526 Lunar New Year	8,332	1,618	11,950	10,332	5,726	4,606	
4527 Chalk about it	4,050	3,676	4,320	644	170	474	
4603 Fun Day	13,487	17,327	18,100	773	420	353	
4608 Virtual Museum Upgrade	4,439	0	0	0		0	
Arts & Culture :- Indirect Expenditure	104,261	95,687	119,615	23,928	87,321	(63,393)	0
Net Income over Expenditure	(100,176)	(93,131)	(114,565)	(21,434)			
6001 plus Transfer from EMR	1,481	0					
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(98,695)	(93,131)					
Grand Totals:- Income	4,085	2,556	5,050	2,494			
Expenditure	104,261	95,687	119,615	23,928	87,321	(63,393)	
Net Income over Expenditure	(100,176)	(93,131)	(114,565)	(21,434)			
plus Transfer from EMR	1,481	0					
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(98,695)	(93,131)					

Overall scoring system

Scoring arts events is a challenging process. Some of the most key aspects to the value of the arts are not quantative. The data can be interpreted but should never be looked at without the prospective social, emotional etc value. Currently there is a limited amount of this data being collected and additionally challenges arise through it often being highly personal, difficult to articulate and sometimes subconscious for the participant.

In order to facilitate the Arts and Culture Officer has offered a narrative for each event within the larger events report. Councillors may also wish to consider with the qualatative categories, what they have heard and seen on social media, what feedback they have had when attending the specific event, and any subsequent feedback that has come up in post event reports, or any other feedback from residents that has come up when discussing Town Council work at other times.

Committee has agreed that this scoring system should act as a guide rather than a strict measure.

Cost per Head (Quantative)

This figure is calculated as: Total spend on event, divided by (estimated) attendance.

Cost per Band D (Quantative)

This figure is calculated as: Total spend on event, divided by number of band D households (figure provided by WBC once per annum). It gives an estimate of cost for each household from the town council's precept.

Staffing Impact - overtime (Quantative)

This figure covers the cost to the town council of providing staff for an event. Note this is an estimate, as it is based on an average iteration of an event and an assumed rate of pay, which will vary by staff member and day of event. Councillors should note that staff working overtime on a Saturday are paid time and a half, staff working on a Sunday are paid double time (unless either is a normal working day for the staff)

Staffing Impact - event complexity (Quantative)

This score takes account of: a) the number of different staff required to organise an event, b) the extent of additional works, meetings etc required as part of the organisation of the event.

It takes into account known major challenges but is not an exhaustive list nor a fully specific list. Listing every element is not possible as different events have different challenges, some have required broader categories. Listing everything would create a far more complicated document when it is already very complicated.

Numbers Attending/Event Appreciation (Quantative)

This is an estimate of the number of people attending the event across the duration of the event time. Large numbers would indicate that the event is appreciated to a level that would be noticeable if it stopped. This does not take into consideration any impact the event has on attendees.

Still to be considered: Good attendance more accurately identified by percentage attending. But event appreciation could be argued as being better served by overall numbers. Consider challenges associated with comparing Party in the Park and Science with Schools

Enviromental Sustainability (Quantative)

This score looks at the measures taken to limit the negative environmental impact of the event (or alternatively measure the positive impact the event has). It should be considered if the event has any challenges associated with enviromental impact.

Aim (Qualitative)

How well has this event lived up to it's core aim?
(Has this event got a clearly stated aim?)

Event Value (Qualitative)

Considering the information in the narrative for the event, any personal experience/feedback gathered, and the Council's principles of Involving Everyone, Fostering Town Pride and Enriching Community, in your opinion does this event have value?

Cost per Head and Cost per Band D

Event cost calculator sheet

Precept	1227267
Tax base	17380
Band D rate	70.61

Event	Budget from precept	Cost per band D	Estimated attendance*	Cost per attendee to Council*	notes
Party in the Park	67245	£3.87	5000	£13.45	
Book Festival just weekend	4200	£0.24	1000	£4.20	
Book Festival Outreach	0	£0.00	2000	£0.00	Sponsored portion of the Book Festival
Theatre in the Park	4000	£0.23	600	£6.67	
Tabletop Takeover	0	£0.00	240	£0.00	
Sunny Saturdays	3000	£0.17	300	£10.00	
Dressing the Christmas Tree	1350	£0.08	500	£2.70	
Lunar New Year	10250	£0.59	3000	£3.42	
Chalk about it	4320	£0.25	400	£10.80	
Fun Day	18100	£1.04	3000	£6.03	
Science with Schools	0	£0.00	60	£0.00	

Bandings cost per Band D	
0 to 24p	
25p to 74p	
75p to £1.49	
£1.50 to £2.99	
£3+	

Bandings cost per attendee	
0 to £4.99	
£5 to £9.99	
£10 to £14.99	
£15 to £19.99	
£20+	

Overtime

Event	Overtime in hours	Explanation
Fun Day	27	2 staff @ 9hrs each @ 1.5x
Party in the Park	1.5	1 hour for PT @ 1.5x
Sunny Sats	18	1 staff @ 4 hrs x 3 events @ 1.5x
Theatre in the Park	0	No staff cover on the day
Chalk About It	32	2 staff @ 8 hours @ 2x
Science With Schools	0	Done in work hours
Book Festival	24	1 staff @ 4 hours x 1.5, 1 staff @ 8 hours x 2
Dressing the Tree	9	2 staff @ 3 hours x 1.5
Tabletop Takeover	24	1 staff @ 8 hours x 1.5, twice (two events per year)
Lunar New Year	48	3 staff @ 8 hours @ 2x

Bandings:		
	Up to 10 hours	1
	Up to 20 hours	2
	Up to 30 hours	3
	Up to 40 hours	4
	Over 40 hours	5

Queries related to Overtime must be directed to the Town Clerk

These are minimum staff needs for the event and assumes appropriate levels of volunteer support for the event to run

Event Complexity

Score points for each aspect:	Fun Day	Party in the Park	Sunny Saturdays	Theatre in the Park	Chalk About It	Science with Schools	Book Festival	Dressing the Christmas tree	Tabletop Takeover	Lunar New Year
Road closure										1
Working with WBC (licencing/ SAG/comms)		1	1				1			1
Working with Charity/volunteer groups (1point up to 5 groups 2 points up to 10 groups 3 up to 15 groups)	2	1			1	1		4		1
Outsourcing to a professional provider		1								
Is it outdoor or weather dependant	1	1	1	1	1			1		1
Co-produced event							1		1	1
Over more than one day (or multiple events)			1				1		1	
Working with multiple individual suppliers (traders, sole traders) (1 point up to 5 groups 2 points up to 10 groups 3 up to 15 groups)	3		1	1	1	1	4		1	3
Event needs Councillors volunteering	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Reputational aspect / high level of risk to reputation	1	1								1
Needs above ordinary input from other officers	1	1					1		1	
Involves ticketing							1		1	
Event predicated on a certain level of external support					1	1	1		1	1
	9	6	5	3	5	4	11	6	7	11

Does not take into account adding new elements to the event

Scoring mechanism

Up to 3 points	1
4 to 5 points	2
6 to 7 points	3
8 to 9 points	4
10 or more	5

Attendance

Attendance: Very challenging measure. Events should be comparable however numbers attending is affected by external factors. On just quantity of attendees Tabletop would do very poorly however this doesn't take into account that it is a highly popular event that sells out. Inside events and outside events are not easily compared just with numbers. Councillors are encouraged to consider if this is a useful measure. Cost per head already considers the number of attendees compared to the budget allocated to it and offers an indication of value for money or proportionate spend. If this is a potentially useful additional measure Councillors are asked if it should be a direct measure of quantity and/or a measure of how popular an event is with max attendees considered. The latter also has challenges as a number of events do not have a known max number. The Officer has estimated a max number of attendees for each event based on current provision for each event. However this is a very imprecise measure in some cases.

Event	estimated Numbers attending	estimated maximum capacity	% attended	notes
Fun Day	3000	3000	100	Max capacity left at 3000, an increased number would make queue lines longer even though there is plenty of room on the field
Party in the Park	5000	5000	100	Max capacity left at 5000, the field may be able to take more but it becomes a more uncomfortable event
Sunny Sats	300	1500	20	Three events at the Peach Place. max capacity as dictated by WBC hire regulations
Theatre in the Park	600	800	75	400 at each performance, 2 performances, based on the current set up ability to support the event. (Both local Theatre venues are under 200 seats)
Chalk About It	400	1000	40	Event doesn't always fill up the collaborative piece much before the end with support from event staff
Science With Schools	60	150	40	Very imprecise calculation as assumes that either schools could offer more than one class or more schools are involved. Getting 5 schools timetables to align to allow for this event would be exceptionally unlikely
Book Festival	700	1000	70	Entirely ignores the outreach portion as the max figure here is unknown
Dressing the Tree	500	500	100	Assuming max as there is no limit for schools on number of attendees
Tabletop Takeover	240	240	100	Assuming 2 events sell out, following pattern from last event
Lunar New Year	3000	3500	85.71428571	Does have some room to grow, not sure by how much

Councillors should also consider that if resources and funds allow if any event above has room for growth.

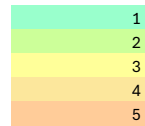
	Straight quantity	% of max capacity	Banding
Scoring options	0 to 500	0 to 19%	5
	500 to 1000	20 to 39%	4
	1000 to 2500	40 to 59%	3
	2500 to 5000	60 to 79%	2
	over 5000	80 to 100%	1

Environmental Sustainability

Score points for each risk:	Fun Day	Party in the Park	Sunny Saturdays	Theatre in the Park	Chalk About It	Science with Schools	Book Festival	Dressing the Christmas tree	Tabletop Takeover	Lunar New Year
Requires generators or engines	1	1								
Uses non local providers when local providers are an option										
Has food and drink traders at it	1	1								1
Has giveaways or other instances of single use plastic										
Creates new banners each year		1								
Event encourages significant number of people travelling	1	1								1
Produces significant amounts of waste	1	1								
Uses large amounts of water										
Resisting making changes to improve it's sustainability										
Mitigations										
Food and Drink traders required to use alternatives to certain single use plastics and others are discouraged when alternatives are available	-1	-1								-1
Event has a tailored solution to reduce waste going to landfill	-1	-1								
Event publicity encourages usage of public transport where possible	-1	-1								-1
Event encourages recycling								-1		

1 2 0 0 0 0 0 0 -1 0 0

Scoring mechanism



Overall scoring system

Scoring arts events is a very challenging process. Some of the most key aspects to the value of the arts are not physical aspects. There is a mix of quantitative and qualitative data. The facts and figures can be interpreted but should never be looked at without the social, emotional etc value. The latter is very difficult to interpret due to its very nature. It is often highly personal, difficult to articulate and sometimes unconscious for the participant. It can also be affected by bias, social structures and endless facets of the human condition. (even trying to explain this is challenging).

Councillors may wish to consider with the more emotive driven categories, what they have heard and seen on social media, what feedback they have had when attending the specific event, and any subsequent feedback that has come up in post event reports, or any other feedback from residents that has come up when discussing Town Council work at other times.

Cost per Head

This figure is calculated as: Total spend on event, divided by (estimated) attendance.

Cost per Band D

This figure is calculated as: Total spend on event, divided by number of band D households (figure provided by WBC once per annum). It gives an estimate of cost for each household from the town council's precept.

Staffing Impact (overtime)

This figure covers the cost to the town council of providing staff for an event. Note this is an estimate, as it is based on an average iteration of an event and an assumed rate of pay, which will vary by staff member and day of event. Councillors should note that staff working overtime on a Saturday are paid time and a half, staff working on a Sunday are paid double time (unless either is a normal working day for the staff)

Staffing Impact (event complexity)

This score takes account of: a) the number of different staff required to organise an event, b) the extent of additional works, meetings etc required as part of the organisation of the event.

It takes into account known major challenges but is not an exhaustive list nor a fully specific list. Listing every element is not possible as different events have different challenges, some have required broader categories. Listing everything would create a far more complicated document when it is already very complicated.

Numbers Attending

This is an estimate of the number of people attending the event across the duration of the event time.

Demographic

Councillors should consider the wider Wokingham Town Arts landscape as well as the key audience demographic identified for each event when identifying if a demographic is well or under served.

Sustainability

This score looks at the measures taken to limit the negative environmental impact of the event (or alternatively measure the positive impact the event has). It should be considered if the event has any challenges associated with environmental impact.

Longevity

When scoring this section please consider the financial sustainability of the event as well as how sustainable the event is in terms of the number of staff / councillors / volunteers required to maintain its delivery. Consideration should also include any possible reduction in supply that would stop the event happening and how likely this is to happen. For example certain cultural events are predicated on support from that particular community, some events have needs with specific kinds of charitable organisations.

Event appreciation

This score considers the extent to which those attending appreciate the event or consider it to be important to them.

This score may work in tandem with Legacy Impact. Events that draw a larger crowd are more likely to be missed if they stopped happening. Events that have a smaller audience may be less likely to be missed

Legacy Impact

Conversely to Event Appreciation, with Legacy Impact consider the depth of an impact the event has had on its audience. Smaller, more intimate events may encourage greater legacy impact because more time and energy is spent in a small group. Other events should be considered for the amount of time spent working on the event in depth, or specialist organisations involved, to understand an audience in detail and create high quality experiences for them. For events to score well they should score well in at least Event Appreciation or Legacy Impact.

Impact on locality

Consider the impact this event has on the wider town. Is it helping local businesses, is it encouraging visitors to the Town outside of event days? How wide of an impact is it having on the Town?

Are there other questions to be asked about the effect this event has on organisations, individuals and businesses not directly connected to the event in some way?

Ground breaking or unusual

Is this event ground-breaking or unusual locally? Councillors may wish to consider how much weight to put behind this category. However events that are unusual, or one of a kind locally, or are the first event of its kind is worth considering within the event scoring as it adds to Wokingham's impact on the local or regional arts scene and has contributed to the distinctiveness of the Town.

Aim

How well has this event lived up to its core aim?
(Has this event got a clearly stated aim?)

Scoring Sheet (blank)

Event:

Scale notes: Low is notionally better than high

Cost per head	cost of the event divided by anticipated number of attendees (estimate)					
	aiming to see if the event is value for money considering the number of people who attend					
Bandings (£)	0 to 4.99	5 to 9.99	10 to 14.99	15 to 19.99	20+	Notes
Scale 1 to 5	1	2	3	4	5	

Cost per Band D	cost of the event divided by Band D Households (estimate)					
	aiming to see if the event is value for money considering the residents who pay for it					
Bandings	0 and 24p	25p to 74p	75p to £1.49	£1.50 to £2.99	£3 +	Notes
Scale 1-5	1	2	3	4	5	

Staffing impact (overtime)	(please reference Overtime sheet for workings)					
	is the cost and support of this event needed in overtime proportional to the event					
Bandings	up to 10hrs	Up to 20hrs	Up to 30hrs	Up to 40hrs	over 40hrs	Notes
Scale 1 to 5	1	2	3	4	5	

Staffing Impact (event complexity)	Please reference Event Complexity sheet for workings					
	Is the complexity of the event and subsequent time cost proportional to the event					Notes
Scale 1 to 5	1	2	3	4	5	

Numbers Attending	See Attendance sheet for information, bandings are not complete due to challenges with this criteria					
Bandings						Notes
Scale 1 to 5	1	2	3	4	5	

Demographic						
	are we serving an under served (1) or a well served (5) demographic					Notes
Scale 1 to 5	1	2	3	4	5	

Scoring Sheet (blank)

Sustainability						
Is the event sustainable? Can it align to our vision to be green or does it have currently unavoidable challenges?						Notes
Scale 1 to 5	1	2	3	4	5	

Longevity						
Is the event easily provisioned, does it have longevity?						
Scale 1 to 5	1	2	3	4	5	

Event appreciation						
How important is this event to the public? Would it be missed?						Notes
Scale 1 to 5	1	2	3	4	5	

Legacy Impact						
How much of a recordable impact or potential for impact is this event is having on attendees?						Notes
Scale 1 to 5	1	2	3	4	5	

Impact on locality						
Is this event adding a substantial benefit to the Town?						Notes
Scale 1 to 5	1	2	3	4	5	

Ground breaking or unusual						
Are we offering something that is unique?						Notes
Scale 1 to 5	1	2	3	4	5	

Aim						
In your opinion how well is this event fulfilling it's aim? (1 very well & 5 not at all)						Notes
Scale 1 to 5	1	2	3	4	5	

Cost per Head and Cost per Band D

Event cost calculator sheet

Precept	1227267
Tax base	17380
Band D rate	70.61

Event	Budget from precept	Cost per band D	Estimated attendance	Cost per attendee to Council*	notes
Party in the Park	67245	£3.87	5000	£13.45	
Book Festival just weekend	4200	£0.24	700	£6.00	Attendees also need to purchase a ticket at £3 before discounting
Book Festival Outreach	0	£0.00	2000	£0.00	Sponsored portion of the Book Festival
Theatre in the Park	4000	£0.23	600	£6.67	
Tabletop Takeover	0	£0.00	240	£0.00	Attendees pay £4 per ticket barring any discounts
Sunny Saturdays	3000	£0.17	300	£10.00	
Dressing the Christmas Tree	1350	£0.08	500	£2.70	
Lunar New Year	10250	£0.59	3000	£3.42	
Chalk about it	4320	£0.25	400	£10.80	
Fun Day	18100	£1.04	3000	£6.03	
Science with Schools	0	£0.00	60	£0.00	

Overtime

Event	Overtime in hours	Explanation
Fun Day	27	2 staff @ 9hrs each @ 1.5x
Party in the Park	1.5	1 hour for PT @ 1.5x
Sunny Sats	18	1 staff @ 4 hrs x 3 events @ 1.5x
Theatre in the Park	0	No staff cover on the day
Chalk About It	32	2 staff @ 8 hours @ 2x
Science With Schools	0	Done in work hours
Book Festival	24	1 staff @ 4 hours x 1.5, 1 staff @ 8 hours x 2
Dressing the Tree	9	2 staff @ 3 hours x 1.5
Tabletop Takeover	24	1 staff @ 8 hours x 1.5, twice (two events per year)
Lunar New Year	48	3 staff @ 8 hours @ 2x

Bandings:		
	Up to 10 hours	1
	Up to 20 hours	2
	Up to 30 hours	3
	Up to 40 hours	4
	Over 40 hours	5

Queries related to Overtime must be directed to the Town Clerk

Event Complexity

Score points for each aspect:	Fun Day	Party in the Park	Sunny Saturdays	Theatre in the Park	Chalk About It	Science with Schools	Book Festival	Dressing the Christmas tree	Tabletop Takeover	Lunar New Year
Road closure										1
Dealing with WBC (licencing/ SAG/comms)		1	1				1			1
Dealing with Charity/volunteer groups (1point up to 5 groups 2 points up to 10 groups 3 up to 15 groups)	2	1			1	1		4		1
Outsourcing to a professional provider		1								
Is it outdoor or weather dependant	1	1	1	1	1			1		1
Co-produced event							1		1	1
Over more than one day (or multiple events)			1				1		1	
Dealing with multiple individual suppliers (traders, sole traders) (1point up to 5 groups 2 points up to 10 groups 3 up to 15 groups)	3		1	1	1	1	4		1	3
Councillors volunteering	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Reputational aspect / high level of risk to reputation	1	1								1
Needs above ordinary input from other officers	1	1					1		1	
Involves ticketing							1		1	

9 6 5 3 4 3 10 6 6 10

Does not take into account adding new elements to the event

Scoring mechanism	Up to 3 points	1
	4 to 5 points	2
	6 to 7 points	3
	8 to 9 points	4
	10 or more	5

Attendance

Attendance: Very challenging measure. Events should be comparable however numbers attending is affected by external factors. On just quantity of attendees Tabletop would do very poorly however this doesn't take into account that it is a highly popular event that sells out. Inside events and outside events are not easily compared just with numbers. Councillors are encouraged to consider if this is a useful measure. Cost per head already considers the number of attendees compared to the budget allocated to it and offers an indication of value for money or proportionate spend. If this is a potentially useful additional measure Councillors are asked if it should be a direct measure of quantity and/or a measure of how popular an event is with max attendees considered. The latter also has challenges as a number of events do not have a known max number. The Officer has estimated a max number of attendees for each event based on current provision for each event. However this is a very imprecise measure in some cases.

Event	estimated Numbers attending	estimated maximum capacity	% attended	notes
Fun Day	3000	3000	100	Max capacity left at 3000, an increased number would make queue lines longer even though there is plenty of room on the field
Party in the Park	5000	5000	100	Max capacity left at 5000, the field may be able to take more but it becomes a more uncomfortable event
Sunny Sats	300	1500	20	Three events at the Peach Place. max capacity as dictated by WBC hire regulations
Theatre in the Park	600	800	75	400 at each performance, 2 performances, based on the current set up ability to support the event. (Both local Theatre venues are under 200 seats)
Chalk About It	400	1000	40	Event doesn't always fill up the collaborative piece much before the end with support from event staff
Science With Schools	60	150	40	Very imprecise calculation as assumes that either schools could offer more than one class or more schools are involved. Getting 5 schools timetables to align to allow for this event would be exceptionally unlikely
Book Festival	700	1000	70	Entirely ignores the outreach portion as the max figure here is unknown
Dressing the Tree	500	500	100	Assuming max as there is no limit for schools on number of attendees
Tabletop Takeover	240	240	100	Assuming 2 events sell out following pattern from last event
Lunar New Year	3000	3500	85.71428571	Does have some room to grow, not sure by how much

Councillors should also consider that if resources and funds allow if any event above has room for growth.

	Straight quantity	% of max capacity	Banding
Scoring options	0 to 500	0 to 19%	5
	500 to 1000	20 to 39%	4
	1000 to 2500	40 to 59%	3
	2500 to 5000	60 to 79%	2
	over 5000	80 to 100%	1

Chalk About It

Event:

Scale notes: Low is notionally better than high

Cost per head	cost of the event divided by anticipated number of attendees (estimate)					
aiming to see if the event is value for money considering the number of people who attend						
Bandings (£)	0 to 4.99	5 to 9.99	10 to 14.99	15 to 19.99	20+	Notes
Scale 1 to 5	1	2	3	4	5	

Cost per Band D	cost of the event divided by Band D Households (estimate)					
aiming to see if the event is value for money considering the residents who pay for it						
Bandings	0 and 24p	25p to 74p	75p to £1.49	£1.50 to £2.99	£3 +	Notes
Scale 1-5	1	2	3	4	5	

Staffing impact (overtime)	(please reference Overtime sheet for workings)					
is the cost and support of this event needed in overtime proportional to the event						
Bandings	up to 10hrs	Up to 20hrs	Up to 30hrs	Up to 40hrs	over 40hrs	Notes
Scale 1 to 5	1	2	3	4	5	

Staffing Impact (event complexity)	Please reference Event Complexity sheet for workings					
Is the complexity of the event and subsequent time cost proportional to the event						
Scale 1 to 5	1	2	3	4	5	Notes

Numbers Attending	See Attendance sheet for information, bandings are not complete due to challenges with this criteria					
Bandings						Notes
Scale 1 to 5	1	2	3	4	5	

Demographic						
are we serving an under served (1) or a well served (5) demographic						
Scale 1 to 5	1	2	3	4	5	Notes

Chalk About It

Sustainability						
Is the event sustainable? Can it align to our vision to be green or does it have currently unavoidable challenges?						Notes
Scale 1 to 5	1	2	3	4	5	

Longevity						
Is the event easily provisioned, does it have longevity?						
Scale 1 to 5	1	2	3	4	5	

Event appreciation						
How important is this event to the public? Would it be missed?						Notes
Scale 1 to 5	1	2	3	4	5	

Legacy Impact						
How much of a recordable impact or potential for impact is this event having on attendees?						Notes
Scale 1 to 5	1	2	3	4	5	

Impact on locality						
Is this event adding a substantial benefit to the Town?						Notes
Scale 1 to 5	1	2	3	4	5	

Ground breaking or unusual						
Are we offering something that is unique?						Notes
Scale 1 to 5	1	2	3	4	5	

Aim						
In your opinion how well is this event fulfilling it's aim? (1 very well & 5 not at all)						Notes
Scale 1 to 5	1	2	3	4	5	

Fun Day

Event:

Scale notes: Low is notionally better than high

Cost per head	cost of the event divided by anticipated number of attendees (estimate)					
aiming to see if the event is value for money considering the number of people who attend						
Bandings (£)	0 to 4.99	5 to 9.99	10 to 14.99	15 to 19.99	20+	Notes
Scale 1 to 5	1	2	3	4	5	

Cost per Band D	cost of the event divided by Band D Households (estimate)					
aiming to see if the event is value for money considering the residents who pay for it						
Bandings	0 and 24p	25p to 74p	75p to £1.49	£1.50 to £2.99	£3 +	Notes
Scale 1-5	1	2	3	4	5	

Staffing impact (overtime)	(please reference Overtime sheet for workings)					
is the cost and support of this event needed in overtime proportional to the event						
Bandings	up to 10hrs	Up to 20hrs	Up to 30hrs	Up to 40hrs	over 40hrs	Notes
Scale 1 to 5	1	2	3	4	5	

Staffing Impact (event complexity)	Please reference Event Complexity sheet for workings					
Is the complexity of the event and subsequent time cost proportional to the event						
Scale 1 to 5	1	2	3	4	5	Notes

Numbers Attending	See Attendance sheet for information, bandings are not complete due to challenges with this criteria					
Bandings						Notes
Scale 1 to 5	1	2	3	4	5	

Demographic						
are we serving an under served (1) or a well served (5) demographic						
Scale 1 to 5	1	2	3	4	5	Notes

Fun Day

Sustainability						
Is the event sustainable? Can it align to our vision to be green or does it have currently unavoidable challenges?						Notes
Scale 1 to 5	1	2	3	4	5	

Longevity						
Is the event easily provisioned, does it have longevity?						Notes
Scale 1 to 5	1	2	3	4	5	

Event appreciation						
How important is this event to the public? Would it be missed?						Notes
Scale 1 to 5	1	2	3	4	5	

Legacy Impact						
How much of a recordable impact or potential for impact is this event having on attendees?						Notes
Scale 1 to 5	1	2	3	4	5	

Impact on locality						
Is this event adding a substantial benefit to the Town?						Notes
Scale 1 to 5	1	2	3	4	5	

Ground breaking or unusual						
Are we offering something that is unique?						Notes
Scale 1 to 5	1	2	3	4	5	

Aim						
In your opinion how well is this event fulfilling its aim? (1 very well & 5 not at all)						Notes
Scale 1 to 5	1	2	3	4	5	



Wokingham Town Council

A&C Officer's Report 10/2024-25

To: Arts and Culture Committee

Date: 16th October 2024

Subject: New Events update

1 REASON FOR REPORT

1.1 To advise the Committee on updates of proposed new events, changes to existing events and feedback on events that commonly fall outside the scope of reporting in time for budgeting due to their position in the year. All are for the 25/26 financial year.

- Lunar New Year
- Diwali
- Painting Cabinets

1.2 Any alternative suggestions

2 EVENTS

2.1 **Lunar New Year.** There is no specific update on this year's event, other than work is progressing well. It is too early to know what impact the changes to this event have had, however it has been advised to consider the financial position of the event for the 25/26 financial year if at all possible as it occurs after the budget setting for that year's event. See Section 3.

2.2 **Diwali,** falls in October/November and moves with the lunar cycle. This will often put it in direct clash with autumn Tabletop and Book Festival. The Committee specifically wanted Tabletop at this time of year based on resident feedback. The Book Festival is established at this time of year and requires significant cooperative working between library spaces and WTC spaces. A change in date could be considered for 2026 but not for 2025, where the Town Hall is already almost fully booked for weddings and existing events. A date change in 2026 would need to consider resourcing pressures not only for the A&C Officer but also for the Library team. As well as aiming to avoid being at the same time of year as other local book festivals.

2.3 The Town Clerk and Arts and Culture Officer met with Cllr Jamthe for an initial discussion into the concept of a Diwali event and the challenges associated with holding it in 2025. It was made clear that while it could be investigated further to get a better idea of costs, complexity, logistics and to build an appropriate cultural steering group, it would not be possible for Town Council staff to run an event in 2025. It would be with an aim to work towards holding an event in 2026.

2.4 However if there was strong desire to have a 2025 event there were funding options for an external organization to run it and apply for grant funding. Cllr Jamthe indicated she knows a charity who runs similar events and would look more into this avenue. The Town Clerk and Arts and Culture Officer noted that we would be happy to assist with the specific knowledge of working within the Market Place.

- 2.5 Conversations with Cllr Jamthe indicate that they may use Lunar New Year layout as a template. It should also be noted that as the event relies on darkness (as a festival of light) it presents an additional challenge and would need extra lighting in areas where there is very limited power.
- 2.6 Space would be further restricted as some years if Diwali falls after Remembrance there would be a Christmas Tree in situ.
- 2.7 **Painting Cabinets.** The Arts and Culture Officer and Amenities Officer have both been working to progress this through multiple avenues to get hold of the cabinet owners. It's a useful contact for the Amenities Officer with regards to Graffiti removal. Unfortunately, none of these routes have yet led to a contact.
- 2.8 Without a contact we are limited with what we can do to even progress towards getting permission or any other needed information to proceed safely for these cabinets.
- 2.9 Without further information to understand what is possible and what the offer is regarding an artist we are unable to plan for a budget. Even if the artist's work came for free and there were no significant logistical challenges or costs to manage Health and Safety around painting a high voltage electrical cabinet, there would still be costs associated with paint and similar out of pocket expenses, as well as adding graffiti protection.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND OTHER COSTS

- 3.1 **Lunar New Year (2026)** is over a year away however it will need to be considered as it is part of the 2025/26 financial year that we are preparing for. Without any information to specify needs and the knowledge that costs will not be coming down, Officers would advise at least a CPI increase at budget setting. Work is already underway to keep budgets trim and tight by utilizing more local provision for this year. While we are in final planning stages for the 2025 event there are a number of interesting and excellent ideas already being suggested for this event from the HK community. The Officer will continue to feedback on potential changes and additions that have a significant monetary impact.
- 3.2 It has been highlighted that should any Arts and Culture existing events be discontinued (see reports on Sunny Saturdays and Chalk About It) that what would the A&C officer do if they are gaining time. It should be noted that the discontinuation of these two events would predominantly affect the late spring to early summer months of the year.
- 3.3 This would coincide with the timings to investigate new ideas for the Committee, and if undertaken early enough it would not clash with the challenges associated with the difficult School Summer Holiday period. This was a challenge this year for availability of Councillors to go into more detail about their concepts.
- 3.4 It would enable time for the Arts and Culture Officer to offer stronger support to existing events and work on planning documents for longevity of these events should staffing change.
- 3.5 It would enable flex to be able to respond to emergencies and unusual queries. It would also allow some capacity to add logistical expertise for a Diwali event should any grant bid for an externally run event be submitted and be successful with less disruption to core Committee projects. It would also not stretch the Officer as much to support a new Museum role.
- 3.6 It might add capacity to support looking further into suggested alterations to Dressing the Christmas Tree.
- 3.7 Support a search for a new sponsor for the Book Festival.
- 3.8 Finally there is a new idea from Officer to extend an existing event (that was also a request of the Committee when initially looking at their events in line with the vision).
- 3.8.1 It has been suggested to do a Summer Holidays event similar to the Tabletop Takeover but exclusively for teens/Secondary school age children. While there are some caveats to this

concept it is overall theoretically reasonable to get ready for this upcoming Summer, subject to Town Hall capacity.

- It could be done in work hours which would reduce the reliance on Councillors to assist and have no overtime impact.
- If done mid-week it has more options for dates as it would avoid clashing with Weddings that take up most weekends, which make it potentially viable for 2025/26.
- It could use the Tabletop budget line and aim to at least be cost neutral like other Tabletop events. Which would avoid adding monetary pressure on the precept.
- We could explore working with schools and existing related teen groups to shape what exactly it would look like.
- The caveats are: We would still need a certain level of specialist volunteer support and access to games. We have not discussed this with any organization that already help us with Tabletop. We have some leads for new avenues of support but there would have to be time spent fostering those connections.

4 RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:

- 4.1 Request to increase Lunar New Year budget by CPI
- 4.2 Consider trialing a Teens only event in the Town Hall based around tabletop gaming as described above.

Gemma Cumming
Arts and Culture Officer



Wokingham Town Council

Memorandum

To: Arts and Culture Committee
 Date: 25th October 2024
 Re: Current and possible budget changes for next financial year
 From: Arts and Culture Officer

As a reminder, the agreed and **possible** changes to the Arts and Culture Budget for financial year 2025/26 based on existing resolutions and reports

Event	Current Budget	Budget change	New Budget	Status
Fun Day	£18,100	+£1405	£19,505	Agreed by F&P
Party in the Park	£67,245	+£6395	£73,640	Agreed by F&P
Sunny Saturdays	£3000	If cancelled -£3000	0	Decision to be made by Committee to continue or not in November meeting.
Theatre in the Park	4000	+ CPI	£4068 approx	A&C agreed an increase by CPI. F&P to consider
Chalk About It	£4320	If cancelled -£4320	0	Decision to be made by Committee to continue or not.
Book Festival	£7800 (£4200 precept + £3600 income target)	+1400 (outreach)	£7000 (£5600 precept +£1400 income target)	Proposed by Officer, to be discussed by Committee in November meeting
Dressing the Tree	£1350	+£550	£1900	Proposed by Officer, to be discussed by Committee in November meeting
Lunar New Year	£11,950	+ CPI	£12,107 approx	Proposed by Officer, to be discussed by Committee in November meeting



Wokingham Town Council

Overview

Wokingham Town Council's principles are:

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.

Arts and Culture's remit is currently:

Encouraging the delivery of Arts and Culture throughout our Town,

typically through the following means:

- Initiatives from the Arts and Culture Committee
- Directions and suggestions from Full Council
- Through support, and where appropriate, through leading voluntary and other organisations already engaged in the delivery of arts and culture to the users of the town centre

Universal Strategic considerations for event changes and new events

These have come from A&C but may have effects and implications Council wide

Sustainability

- Creation of a general leaflet or similar for use year round for events. To reduce reliance on individual event leaflets and bridge gap between events. (enacted)
- Utilising QR codes to encourage digital marketing. Aim to reduce paper waste. (enacted)

Involving Everyone

- How can we better engage with young people ages 13-25? A Youth Council or engaging with school Youth Councils for feedback?
- How can we improve use of social media?

Enriching Community

- Utilise and embrace opportunities for co-production working when possible
- Desire to work outside the Town Centre, what opportunities are there?
- Ensure we are clear about the “Why” and other questions of the event when modifying and creating events. A specific outcome desired.

Table 1: Active Events overview

Event and timing	Years run to date	Estimate audience (Multiple performances are averaged)	Budget (2024/25 precept) (WTC Budget Income target)	Notes
Fun Day (Saturday of last May bank holiday)	10+	1000 families	£18,100 (£350)	
Party in the Park (first Saturday in June)	10+	5000	£67,245 (£67,245)	Was originally International Street Concert
Sunny Saturdays (Saturdays between May and Sept)	10+	100 per performance	£3000 (£3000)	3 planned performances
Theatre in the Park (Summer Holidays)	10	300 per performance	£4000 (£4000)	2 performance, Audience based on 2024 figures
Chalk About it (Mid August)	3	250	£4320 (£4320)	Audience based on 2024 figures
Science with Schools (Sept/Oct – Schools choice)	4	2 schools and 2 classes	£0	
Wokingham Children's Book Festival (A weekend in October)	6	990 tickets sold (weekend) and 2500 pupils (outreach)	£7800 (£4200 + £3600)	Audience based on 2024 figures
Dressing the Christmas Tree (Early December – weeknight)	10+	500 (17 schools)	£1350 (£1350)	
Town Hall Tabletop Takeover (twice – Oct/Nov and Feb/March)	3	120	£1000 (£1000)	
Lunar New Year (Sunday after first weekend of LNY)	2	3000	£10450 (£10350 + £100)	

Other activities and Officer support:

- Virtual Museum and Heritage Day
- Decorated Cabinets

Fun Day

Audience Demographic: Children (ages 0 – 10 years old with their family)

Event Type: Children’s Entertainment

Reach: banners, advertising, website, mailshot and social media

Description: A long established event based at Langborough Recreation Ground for the children of Wokingham, allowing parents to bring them to an event where all the activities are free and it can be a day where parents don’t feel obliged to spend money. Activities include: face painting, magic shows, mobile farm, fairground rides, electric go karts, arts and crafts and more. All such organization/business attendees must provide a free activity for the children, not just promote themselves.



The Scouts provide a tea tent and BBQ. Commercial food and drink traders trade under agreement of 20% takings of the day. Other potential commercial ventures requesting to attend are vetted by the Committee.

<p>Sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High value for the public (free) • High proportion of attendees travelling not by car • Reducing (Traders) and removing (WTC) single use plastics • Recycling company on site for waste • Use primarily local organizations 	<p>Involving everyone</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendees appreciative that event is free • Usually accessible
<p>Fostering Town Pride</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendees do come from further afield • Using Langborough for an event • Long standing community event that spans generations • Very well linked to Wokingham Town Council 	<p>Enriching Community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi (or no specific) affiliation event – for everyone • Organisations that support vulnerable families attend

Points to consider

- Cost of event vs profile and attendance of the event
- Further improving event for Neurodivergent and disabled attendees and families

Party in the Park

Audience Demographic: Families, Youth, Young Adults, Adults, Retired

Event Demographic: Music

Reach: Flyers, posters, advertising, website, banners and social media

Description: Music Concert in the centre of Wokingham. Featuring acts with a focus on original and cover bands. Established in 2014 as Wokingham International Street Concert, it recently was moved from Broad Street to Elms Field for the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee in 2022. The new site seems to work well, eliminates the need to close roads and can accommodate more people.



The reach of the Street Concert saw it grow in audience size and scale, as such it was outsourced in full to an event management company. This event is currently under contract.

<p>Sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local suppliers used Food Suppliers using sustainable packaging Waste Collection with recycling Marketing includes travel advice to discourage driving Opportunity for the Mayors Charity to have a platform Proven concept Elms Field is a better location than Broad St (eliminates road closures) High efficiency generators 	<p>Involving everyone</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free event Dedicated accessible area Sign language interpreters Diverse acts, music and food. Reflected in the audience diversity Sounds tends to be quieter at back of field – however some have reported to like it. Everyone has different tastes and desires from the event. Wide demographic attending Afternoon to evening event
<p>Fostering Town Pride</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wokingham Town Council flagship event Event has longevity (2014 first event) Well promoted and well known Remains popular and well liked Local suppliers used Attendees come from all over Local business benefit 	<p>Enriching Community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3pm to 9pm timing is family and neighbour friendly Family and friends - community venue Local business support Brings people together Wide demographic

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Well organized• Publicises Elms Field as a great location.• Seen as a Town Council event | |
|--|--|

Points to consider

- High value to run (though the price per head attending is good). Is it financially sustainable?
- Is adding sponsorship an option (no current resource to do so, has been done in the past by Councillors)

Sunny Saturdays

Audience Demographic: Adult, retired, families with children

Event Demographic: Music

Reach: Flyers, website and social media

Description: A trial of three performances for 2022 on Elms Field was undertaken. While good they failed to attract noticeably significant numbers and felt lost on the large field. It was relocated to Peach Place. While not a space we manage, it is a space with lots of outside seating and café's and restaurants in the vicinity. This went well, when the weather didn't force event cancellation.

Sunny Saturdays started as an addition to the Market in the summer months. However post Covid, due to a busy and popular Saturday Market it was no longer fitting as well. With acts and traders not complementing each other, as well as a general lack of space.



THIS EVENT IS CURRENTLY UNDER REVIEW BY THE SUNNY SATURDAYS WORKING PARTY

The review has highlighted the aim for the event to shift to creating an uplifting atmosphere in the square and by extension the wider town centre. Work continues to address the resource challenges and look at partnership approaches with Peach Place businesses.

<p>Sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low impact on environment • Financially viable depending on acts and paying to access the public space (if applicable) • Would a flat booking rate or range of rates be a more transparent and better process. 	<p>Involving everyone</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location free for others to access • Public event • No age group as a focus • Central location with no step access • Contained venue. • Is loud music in a public space disruptive to some members of the community?
<p>Fostering Town Pride</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local groups reflecting the Community • Bring in diverse acts to increase representation • Adds something to the atmosphere of the Town Centre • Better linkage of events to Town Council • Ensuring acts reflect current and future community diversity • A Master of Ceremonies to bring some structure to the event 	<p>Enriching Community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An experience people don't always get to see • Bring people together to enjoy music/the Arts • Something for everyone • Showcases local talent that might not otherwise have a platform

Theatre in the Park

Audience Demographic: Majority families with children

Event Demographic: Theatre

Reach: Flyers, banners, website and social media

Description: Previously to 2020 this was two plays with two performances each in Howard Palmer Gardens. One in May for Cultural Month and the other in June/July often specifically for schools. One of the plays was aimed at children and the other suitable for a wide audience including families and adults. The family plays have been Shakespeare or Shakespeare influenced and children’s from original pieces to recreations of rights free works such as retellings of the Owl and the Pussycat and the Hare and the Tortoise.



Due to the static audience levels it was decided to test a single event in Summer Holidays with a move to Elms Field as it would make the event more visible. While there was an increase in audience levels it was hard to compare, as Elms field is a far larger space and data was mixed. It was decided to continue with the existing set up for Theatre in the Park in 2023 and 2024, with a request to not do Shakespeare for 2024. 2024’s Jack and the Beanstalk event significantly better attended.

<p>Sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low financial and environmental impact event • Can reuse their own kit (current contract holder) 	<p>Involving everyone</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendees tend to be families with children or older residents. Although it is open to all and free
<p>Fostering Town Pride</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free outdoor theatre is locally unique 	<p>Enriching Community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great concept that has yet to live up to it’s potential • Visible and accessible for those walking past to join in • Good location but the open space is tougher on sound. <p>Staff/Councillor attendance needed to get a better idea on the exact challenges</p>

Points to consider

- Cost of event vs number of attendees is not as good as other events including Party in the Park.
- Shakespeare, regardless of work done to make and promote the performance as accessible, may have a predetermined reputation as hard to understand.
- Is the time year good? (Involving everyone)

Chalk About It

Audience Demographic: Primarily those with mental health difficulties and those at potential higher risk. Secondarily the concept of the event is useful to all. Particularly with the documented rise in the need for Mental Health services post COVID.

Event Demographic: Visual Art and workshop as a tool.

Reach: Social Media, email lists, flyers, banner.

Description: An event in the Market Place that includes a central collaborative artwork and secondary individual areas to chalk. The chalking is led by professional artists to encourage all to draw regardless of perceived ability and the entire project aims to help de stigmatize talking about/expressing oneself about mental health. Also including resources and signposting to mental health and wellbeing resources and organisations through literature and direct presence.

<p>Sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Materials used consider the environment • Keeping the area in good shape 	<p>Involving everyone</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No booking and open to all • Aim to reduce mental health stigma • Central location, easy to get to. • Options for those unable to or less able to get on the ground (Chalk on sticks, easel painting, chairs available.) • Art/Picture led reduces language barrier
<p>Fostering Town Pride</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unique event • Collaborative Art 	<p>Enriching Community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involves everyone • Brings in mental health organisations • Reduces barriers to meeting others

Points to consider

- Encourage reducing reliance on paper media, where possible. Link to QR codes for more
- Physical barriers might be a barrier to entry: Could we have more access points
- Young people still hard to engage, they engage better when those of their age are already taking part. Aim to get young people along to engage with other young people.
- How long it stays on the pavement may not be attractive to all
- Be clear about the Why of the event in Comms

Science with Schools

Audience Demographic: Secondary School Children (currently Yr 9/10)

Event Demographic: STEM subjects

Reach: direct through schools

Description: An event since 2020. This event is a low to nil cost brokerage project to link local schools with University and Industry level lecturers to bring exciting and different scientific projects or ideas into their sphere of learning.

We are currently working with the Holt and St Crispin's. As of yet other secondary schools have been approached but not expressed an interest. It is challenging to find a time and date that lines up with multiple secondary school timetables.

<p>Sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No cost (low resource) event • Online – low environmental impact • Topics have been and can be linked to sustainability 	<p>Involving everyone</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extra educational offer • Diversity of speakers (backgrounds, industry and academia, gender, race etc) • Engages with local companies and organisations • Specifically for ages 14-16 (year9/10) who are under-engaged in other activities
<p>Fostering Town Pride</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engages with local scientists 	<p>Enriching Community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspiring young people on topics at greater depth • Brings students from different environments/schools together – how can we expand this?

Points to consider

- Schools set the guest list of students. Schools are rigid with timings. Could we increase access.
- Talk more about it. Name it and make it a thing in Wokingham.

Wokingham Children’s Book Festival



**Wokingham Children's
Book Festival**

Audience Demographic: Children (up to about age 12)

Event Demographic: Literature

Reach: Website and social media, Flyers, School visits, Wider than Town area

Description: Started in 2018 this yearly event is a partnership project between Wokingham Town Council and Wokingham Borough Libraries Service with support from ‘morearts.’ and a local independent bookseller. It occurs on a weekend in October and presents an opportunity to meet and learn from local and regional published authors of Children’s Literature. Events happen both at Wokingham Library and Wokingham Town Hall.

<p>Sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourages partnership working(WTC, schools, WBC, Libraries, morearts etc) • Value for money (low cost tickets) • Less paper marketing 	<p>Involving everyone</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age range is preschool to 12/13 but anyone can come – <i>Is this restrictive?</i> • A range of authors chosen to represent different cultures and age groups • Feedback from all stakeholders gathered – <i>change to gathering it digitally</i> • Keep free ticket provision
<p>Fostering Town Pride</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses local venues • Uses local authors • Telling people about the events we do (via marketing) • Working with nearest independent book shop (Caversham) 	<p>Enriching Community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fosters a love of reading and writing • Primary age children to come together exp authors • <i>options to expand into wards/outside town centre</i> • <i>Have a writing competition?</i>

Points to consider

- *Could we do more to encourage active travel in our comms*
- *Can anything be done to improve the reach to ages 7+ who are becoming harder to reach. Could we look at talks for older age groups.*
- *Keep disability in mind – awareness of events more suited to SEN needs – consider signing at some sessions*
- *Look at options to collaborate with Waterstones (Wokingham branch)*

Dressing the Christmas Tree

Audience Demographic: Children (schools and families)

Event Demographic: Music, Children’s event

Reach: via Schools directly

Description: Approx. a few hundred children and adults gather in the Market Place to sing carols and watch the Mayor receive schools' handmade decorations. The decorations are then placed on the large main Christmas tree a day or two later. Carols are led and sung by Wokingham Choral Society. Wokingham Town Council ensures there is a suitable stage and sound system for the choir to be heard and the decorations seen.

Amenities manages the tree and the townwide decorations.



<p>Sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourages decorations made from recyclables – Could this become standard • Scouts offer refreshments • Unopened mince pies taken to Foodbank 	<p>Involving everyone</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Songs are a mix of carols and holiday songs • Central accessible public location. • Children from diverse backgrounds • All Schools (within the Town/serving the Town) able to attend. With reasonable adjustments for particular needs.
<p>Fostering Town Pride</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People love the tree decorations, cheerful and fun • Children love seeing their/their schools decorations • Children contributing to the Town decorations – representing their school community. 	<p>Enriching Community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports creative activity and links to Town • Several hundred people come (usually via attending schools) • Brings community together and a large proportion of local schools.

Points to consider

- For Amenities: the tree is a single use are there any ways to improve this?
- Religious aspect of the event to be kept under review. – consider plurality of the event (consider the primary audience) diversity of culture, religion and language.
- Could we invite attendance from the wider community (bearing in mind safety and visibility in that space)

Town Hall Tabletop Takeover

Audience Demographic: Focus on Teen and Young Adult but will attract families. 2024 saw the largest teen contingent yet.

Event Demographic: Tabletop gaming which can include: Board Gaming, Card Games, Tabletop Role Playing Games and other associated games.

Description: Started in the 2019/2020 council year. Bringing modern board games to the people of Wokingham. The event is aimed at Teens and Young Adults due to a noted lack of provision from the Council for this age range. Families may attend, but February 2024 saw the largest number of teens (with parents or unaccompanied).



<p>Sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not Weather dependant • Financially viable at the moment • Re cycling facilities more visible and working better 	<p>Involving everyone</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendees love it • Repeat customers • Teens come to it alongside adults and families
<p>Fostering Town Pride</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Council event in the Town Hall 	<p>Enriching Community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers a range of games and is well run and people enjoy it • Brings people together • Encourages people to try something new (in a low pressure supported environment).

Points to consider

- Could we explore offering refreshments for sale at the event
- There is an interest from Teens in having more events like this – how could we maximise this interest?

Lunar New Year

Audience Demographic: All ages with a lean towards families due to the nature of the local demographics and a desire to culturally share. High proportion of Hong Kong and East Asian attendees.

Event Demographic: Cultural event with a focus on East Asian cultures. Notably those that celebrate Lunar New Year.

Description: Grew from an idea from a member of the public and committee desire to hold some sort of International Day, celebrating diverse diasporic cultures in Wokingham and the immediate area. Finding and building contacts from the local community to create an authentic event was slow, likely due to general pressures exacerbated by the pandemic. As a result the shift moved towards the Hong Kong community and other East Asian community who had shown an interest to celebrate Lunar New Year in 2022. Events since have been very well attended requiring an uplift to make the event safe and better. Still quite a new event that will take time to find the optimal provision.

<p>Sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two performances of the Lion Dance gave more people the opportunity to see • Free event 	<p>Involving everyone</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People love it and it is well attended • Community groups involvement excellent – Particularly Hongkongers • Disabled area needed tweaking mid event. The fix worked well and will be maintained going forward.
<p>Fostering Town Pride</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embracing/welcoming newer community members • Showcases/sharing culture • Advertised in schools newsletter • Self promoting 	<p>Enriching Community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involves newer Wokingham Community • Showcases/sharing culture • Bringing people together • Supporting local businesses

Points to consider

- Lion dance visibility could be improved. May require a significant financial increase to make changes to the stage to help. Risk of it being of limited return
- Lion Dance visibility was improved for the second dance however there remain challenges. Visibility may impact on the ‘Involving Everyone’ statement. What options are there to improve this? Larger/higher stage (see above), longer parade?
- Addition of screens may also help, but also adds to the cost.
- Do we need more food stalls? How could we enable this?
- Was there enough crowd/queue management.

Virtual Museum (one aspect of joint museum project with Civic)

Audience Demographic: (Currently) Adults, Retired (aiming with civic officer to expand demographic for Museum in general)

Event Demographic: Heritage

Reach: Website and App, alongside ongoing work with civic officer on Open days and museum.

A project initiated in 2013 to showcase the historical items within the Town Hall on a virtual museum in lieu of a physical one. At the same time work was envisioned to repurpose and refurbish the now Jubilee Room to be able to be used as a meeting room and display a selection of the Town's Silver.

Recognizing that there was a lack of time for the Officer to commit to this project a volunteer was sought in 2017 to help support the virtual museum, research and upload historical information, allowing the museum to expand out of the Town Hall and into collating history of the wider town. Volunteer does however require officer support and time on this project has expanded since.

Recognizing the enormous potential and scope of history in the immediate local area advice and connections with other local museums and museum services is being sought. It has become part of a wider cross Officer project on Museum work. With Civic we are working toward museum accreditation for the Town Hall.

Due to the lack of online ongoing support for the original, self-built, website the decision was made to rebuild it by a professional, to improve visually the appearance, make it simpler to add items, add in pages associated with the Open days and future proof it. Rebuild is completed. Work continues to check and improve the museum website now the rebuild is complete.

museum.wokingham-tc.gov.uk

Decorated Cabinets

Audience Demographic: Not specified

Event Demographic: Visual/decorative art

Reach: None currently

Description: A project from Amenities preCovid to engage with and encourage organisations to sponsor a cabinet and wrap it from a pre selected choice of imagery.

Available cabinets identified and broad permission noted however as cabinets are not owned by the Town Council agreeing permissions must happen. Costs for the project likely to have increased and are the full responsibility of the sponsoring organisation. Very little interest in this project pre Covid and less so now. Although the Arts and Culture Officer hasn't had any time to attempt to look for potential sponsors.

To be reviewed for viability.

Complete Projects

Erftstadt Panels

Audience Demographic: All

Event Demographic: Visual Arts and Heritage

Reach: Website, Social media

Description: A project completed in early 2023 to brighten up and dissuade graffiti in the Erftstadt Court area. Particularly the large plain panels covering windows on the gym site. It also added to the work done by Amenities with the Wokingham Mural, also nearby and added to our work with Public Art around the Town.

A local artist was chosen by the Committee and commissioned to produce three paintings. A working party was formed to work with the artist on the project. These were reproduced as weather and Graffiti resistant panels for the specified location.

The original paintings have been hung in Wokingham library on a long loan.

Mosaics

Audience Demographic: All

Event Demographic: Visual Arts and Heritage

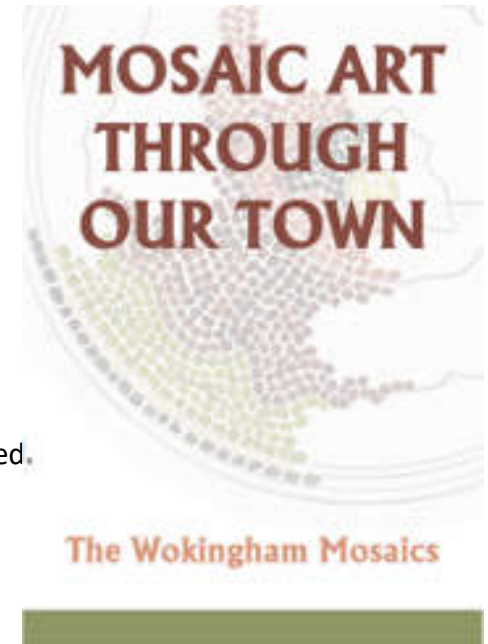
Reach: Booklets, Website, App, social media

Description: A project initiated in 2017 during the ongoing regeneration of the Town with a desire to include public art into the refurbished spaces.

A local mosaic artist was commissioned to design and create the round designs that would be placed within the pavements. The designs reflect aspects of the heritage of the Town and are sponsored by local organisations.

A further set of mosaics were completed during the 2019/20 council year and the app developed to reflect that.

The Mosaics are a completed project. But are ongoing as a piece of public art within the Town that WTC commissioned. They continue to be promoted in line with other Council activities.



Activities in development or consideration

Human Library

A concept to link into the global Human Library project. Currently under discussion.

Recycled Sculpture/Sustainable Fashion Show

Report and initial ideas went to committee in November. Held due to current workload and lack of completed vision.

Banners from lampposts

Wokingham Borough Council is undertaking a process of lamppost replacement. It has been requested that the new columns are suitable for banners and other uses by Wokingham Town Council, should we wish to utilize them for such purposes. No current indication of desire to pursue.

Sculpture Trail

Was under investigation, although should note it is a high value project that would require extensive business support and internal resources to organize. There is a desire that it should be planned to occur at a suitable point near or at completion of the ongoing Town regeneration works. However Covid and cost of living crisis have halted the project.

Graffiti/Street Art Boards

The Committee would be keen to support such a venture should suitable space within the Town become available. Unfortunately to date it is felt that of the Council owned spaces none would be suitable for a project and of identified externally owned, possibly suitable spaces the landowner is not interested.

2023 Request: investigate Southend City Jam for the concept of temporary boards over a long weekend. Report indicated it would need to be an externally run project due to the resources required as well as specialist knowledge.

Battle of the Bands Style event

Under consideration to come back to Committee when sufficient information is available about the new Carnival performance space (due early 2022) to budget and plan an event. Aim: to appeal to teen and/or young adult bands. Places for Leisure never responded to the Arts and Culture Officer however £1000 was quoted for a daytime civic event to the Town Clerk. Event would benefit from professional support.

Open Air Cinema/Film Festival

To be considered for Elms field. It remains felt that an open air cinema right next to Everyman would not be empathetic, particularly coming out of a pandemic. However a possible collaborative project that involves Everyman like a film Festival might be worth pursuing. Shelved but request to continue building relationships with the Cinema.

Themed Fun Run

Investigated, however due to a lack of usable space for such an event and no interested professional organisers currently this is on pause for further investigation. There may be a lead for further consultation with Cllr contact.

Diwali

Under investigation



Wokingham Town Council

A&C Officer's Report 6/2024-25

To: Arts and Culture Committee

Date: 26th September 2024

Subject: Chalk About It project

1 REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To advise the Committee on the execution of the Chalk About It project

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 This event came from an Australian community led project that uses drawing on the pavement to destigmatize talking about mental health. From that concept the Committee agreed on an event that brought in professional artists to both create a core piece and facilitate engagement with the public.
- 2.2 This is the fourth year of the event. It took place on Sunday 18th August 2024.
- 2.3 The primary target audience was identified as individuals whose cultural or ethnic background might discourage talking freely and without stigma about mental health. These may be men (young men in particular) and non-white ethnic groups. With the aim to have a relaxed option to start the conversation about expressing oneself. Alongside resources and support from local mental health groups to know what is available and where to go for it.
- 2.4 It was however recognized that this concept includes any local resident, as mental health affects all of us.

3 THE EVENT

- 3.1 We engaged with the chalk art provider and local mental health organizations to offer the opportunity for feedback from both the arts and mental health aspects of the project. The art provider offered a thematic link to connect art and encourage thought about mental health. There was no feedback from the mental health groups.
- 3.2 This year it was again even more difficult to bring the mental health organisations onto site. With many not even responding to the opportunity. In previous years it has been noted that they have resource challenges but the organisations in question have indicated that the summer is no worse than any other time of year and are attending other events during that time frame.

Organisation	Attended	Sent literature
Mind (Local branch of national charity)	no	no
Talking Therapies (NHS)	no	no
Cranstoun (Recovery service)	no	no
Wokingham Recovery College (WBC)	no	Yes
Friendship alliance (charities)	No	Yes
ARC Counselling service (Service)	Yes	Yes
Kaleidoscopic (Domestic Abuse Charity)	Yes	Yes
Mindset Unlimited (private limited company)	Yes	Yes
Involve Social Prescribers (charity)	No	No
Sport in Mind (Charity)	No	Yes
Depression Xpression (non profit)	No	No

- 3.3 We did have commitment from local charities ARC and Kaleidoscopic. Mindset Unlimited, also joined us as a company with similar aims, and with their wellbeing festival on Elms Field in September there was a useful connection.
- 3.4 It was recognized that how the event was presented to the public would impact those who would attend. Over the four years there have been significant discussions on tone and approach. Feedback from past years and our experience putting on this event has encouraged us to talk more openly about the purpose of the event. The intended focus demographic does attend but the majority of attendees are often families with young children. This is not unexpected as this demographic is the majority in Wokingham and often looking to attend free events.
- 3.5 Attendance at this event is a challenge to estimate. For an event of this type it is doing well as each area was busy during the day, but it was noticeable that the attendance peaked at the start and then slowed over the lunch period before picking up a little close to the end. It was commented on that on the same day was a new Family Fun Day at Dinton Pastures.
- 3.6 However, with the minimal volunteer support this event had, and the high temperatures I was glad that it wasn't very busy. There was a lot of pressure on providers and staff as it was.
- 3.7 The Chalk providers have indicated that if they were invited back they would be looking to give themselves more time to get set up, as the nature of the event has a significant set up need. I have also reiterated that they also need to be realistic with their provision. They chose a highly technical collaborative piece to line out, that took far longer to set up than they were anticipating.

4 CONNECTION TO PRINCIPLES

- 4.1 Being Sustainable:
- 4.1.1 This event does not have a big impact on the environment. The Chalks are tested and checked for their impact on human health as well as impact when entering the water system. It does not create significant amounts of additional waste and what it does is recycled and reused.
- 4.1.2 Attendance is estimated to be approximately 250 people on the day this year. Cost per attendee thus works out at approx. £13 and cost per band D is 21p.
- 4.1.3 However, the event is predicated on having an appropriate level of support from the mental health charities and organisations. Support is waning although those that are coming are willing to get involved beyond just being available for a chat.

- 4.1.4 Additionally, it was exceptionally difficult to get volunteer assistance for this event and all events in the Summer Holiday period. This is anticipated to continue to be a challenge.

4.2 Fostering Town Pride

- 4.2.1 This remains the only event like it locally and predated other local mental health and wellbeing focused events. We have also learnt from the Chalk Artists themselves that since we did the first Chalk About It other organisations around the country have started doing Chalk Art projects specifically for mental health.
- 4.2.2 There is no indication of any positive or negative impact on local businesses.

4.3 Involving Everyone

- 4.3.1 Formal feedback through forms handed out by Councillors was minimal (7 out of all attendees) so it should be treated with caution. However it was unanimously positive. Demographic data confirms what we saw on the day, young families, mostly White British with some other ethnic groups.
- 4.3.2 It should also be noted that the demographic we are aiming to attract and the one we actually get are not the same. Now on the other hand it can be argued that mental health is something everyone has and opening up conversation and acceptance around talking about mental health challenges is worthwhile to do at all ages. We are not however getting that message on a significant scale to the more vulnerable sections of the community. We may not be the right organisation to do this work.

4.4 Enriching Community

- 4.4.1 This events aim is: To use art and chalking on the Market Place to explore and destigmatise talking about mental health.
- 4.4.2 It is well known that art can be a great tool to support and explore mental health both in a mental health focussed setting and in everyday life just by engaging in your own creativity.
- 4.4.3 The art providers have been taking this very seriously to create and engage with themed collaborative artworks and individual artworks to encourage attendees to think about mental health.
- 4.4.4 Feedback this year and in past years from the mental health providers who attend has indicated that this has had an impact, that there are individuals who have made disclosures and benefitted from the event in a very tangible way. It was also clear that individuals known to or service users of the attending Mental Health organizations were coming specifically to this event because it is a mental health event.
- 4.4.5 Additionally, while attendance on the day is not as high as other events it is also important to consider the impact the chalk has outside of just the event day. Social media (primarily Facebook) has in the past shared the messaging both in advance of the event and as a result of the event. This has waned in recent years. Last year we had a 12K reach on post event photos, this year 4K.

5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND OTHER COSTS

- 5.1 Of the £4,320 budget approx. £3,846 was spent. This is an underspend of £474. Primarily due to choosing to not create a video about the event due to a lacklustre support of the previous one, not being able to source a drone operator to get overhead footage of the event and making some savings in other areas.
- 5.2 We were able to borrow barriers and fencing from Volker which are compliant for the visually impaired for free.
- 5.3 The event providers are on a one year with option to extend contract if extension is desired.
- 5.4 If the Committee wish to extend the contract we would advise the budget increases in line with CPI. While the majority of Arts and Culture events find CPI a poor measure of their particular inflationary pressures, with the underspend, the current position of the event, and little information to make a solid case for a larger increase, we cannot advocate for anything more significant.

6 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The Arts and Culture Officer is not convinced that this event will be able to continue. There seems to be a reduction in support and enthusiasm from the public as well as an increasing lack of support from the mental health groups both in the run up and at the event.
- 6.2 A weekend in the summer holidays is also acting as a minor stress point for provision and a major one for volunteer support.
- 6.3 A loss of support from the mental health organisations would be catastrophic for this event as it relies on their expertise both for the event's aim, and for a positive event.
- 6.4 It should be noted that it is possible to do a pavement arts-based event without the reliance on a mental health theme, but that can still offer impact and a meaningful experience for attendees. It would however require a complete rethink of what the Committee wishes to do with pavement art, and the audience it wishes to support. This would additionally be significantly different in scope to the existing contracted work to require a new brief and new costing.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 To consider if the event is continuing to add sufficient value to the work of the Council to continue. If yes, a consideration of any inflationary increase

Gemma Cumming
Arts & Culture Officer



Wokingham Town Council

A&C Officer's Report 07/2024-2025

To: Arts and Culture Committee

Date: 10th October 2024

Subject: Sunny Saturdays 2024

1. REASON FOR REPORT

1.1 To advise the Committee on 2024's "Sunny Saturdays" programme of events.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Sunny Saturdays is a programme of entertainment that was originally on the Market Place with the Market, in May through to September between 11am and 1pm.
- 2.2 In 2019 it was decided that the event should scale down, after feedback from users of the market that found the entertainment in conflict with the market traders both for space and for their ability to trade.
- 2.3 The pandemic halted all performances, and as we came back the Market was thriving and the space for ad hoc summer performances was no longer available.
- 2.4 After a number of years of trials of alternative ways to do this event it was agreed in September 2023 to formulate a Working Party to clarify the aim of the event and suggest an approach for 2024. It was decided that the aim should be to uplift the atmosphere of the Town with live music in Peach Place, with a focus on community acts as they were less well served than professional acts in the local music scene.
- 2.5 It was also clear after the challenges last year with support and poor weather that there needed dedicated Officer support on the day. The Arts and Culture Officer was then to be in attendance and there would need to be suitable Councillor support to assist on the day. The number of events was to remain three for this trial.
- 2.6 Councillors chose the dates for the events.

3. 2024 EVENT

- 3.1 In the organisation of the events Councillors and Officers were able to broker an agreement with Sit and Sip for the usage of the WBC 3m x 6m gazebo. It was hoped to broker a closer partnership, but it was made clear that as Saturdays are their busiest day they would have limited ability to help further. They were also undertaking their own programme of performances which we needed to avoid clashing with. The gazebo loan saved money but did add to the volunteer needs to erect it.
- 3.2 During the programming of events the Arts and Culture Officer also talked to other organisations who might have been in a position to self-run an event. Even with the potential for fee or budget for these groups, none of these avenues turned into a proposal.

- 3.3 We again worked with Vail Williams and WBC for the usage of Peach Place which came with some strict conditions. Like last year, using this external space was more challenging than using our own spaces, due to lack of familiarity and information shared by the owner or managing agent. However, it remains the best location for this particular type and scale of event. The Officer wishes to thank Harringtons for helping locate extra chairs from the service area when we needed some more seating.
- 3.4 Performances were booked for the 13th and 27th July, and 7th September. They included a local ladies barbershop choir, a local swing band and a steel drum trio.
- 3.5 Publicity was prepped for the notice boards at the Town Hall and in Peach Place alongside social media (primarily Facebook) and within the general events leaflet. A press release was created and sent to the local papers. Performers were sent the publicity material to also share with their networks. Each performance had the Town Council and Sunny Saturdays flags brought to them alongside a stack of general events leaflets and any other leaflet for WTC events coming up.
- 3.6 Councillors at each event were also given a clipboard with a QR code on it for an online feedback form. Unfortunately, that only translated to a single entry over three events.
- 3.7 All three events escaped weather related cancellation thankfully. However, it does remain a risk with this event as it does with all outside events.
- 3.8 All acts were well received with between 50 and 100 attendees at each event who seemed specifically there to see the act, and with others seated within food establishments nearby where reason for being there was less certain. It was felt that the events did achieve the aim of uplifting the atmosphere of the town. If for just the time it was on.
- 3.9 The demographic mix was similar to a summer Saturday without a performance. Younger families and older residents.
- 3.10 Wokingham Pride was on the same day as the first Sunny Saturday. It is unlikely it made a huge impact to the audience numbers but going forward the Officer would recommend avoiding that day.
- 3.11 Additionally, it was even more challenging than last year to get Councillor support for the set up and running of the events. Particularly for the 27th which fell in the school summer holidays.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 It was anticipated that this event would underspend, however at the time of budget setting there was not enough information to gauge by how much. Additionally, the work of the Working Party had only just started. Due to the usage of an external gazebo loaned to us for free, costs direct to the budget were almost all performers.
- 4.2 The budget remained at £3000 unchanged from last year. A total of £950 was spent. This event was £2050 underspent.
- 4.3 There was a cost for overtime at about 12 hours at time and a half.
- 4.4 Considering the set-up of this event it is resource heavy. Alongside the Officer who was responsible for the health and safety on the day (especially as we were borrowing someone else's gazebo) at least two others was needed to safely erect the large gazebo. Even then we were very grateful for members of the various bands and family members of Councillors who helped with it beyond the necessary three people for the Gazebo.

5. KEY PRINCIPLES

5.1. Being Sustainable:

5.1.1. Sunny Saturdays is a low environmental impact event. It uses on site electrical power and doesn't directly produce waste. It is unlikely that it significantly adds to indirectly produced waste as the audiences are small.

5.1.2. Assuming an overall attendance of 300 and using the actual spend, the cost per head for this event is approx. £3.15 and Cost per Band D is 5p.

5.2. Involving Everyone

5.2.1. Sunny Saturdays currently offers free entertainment (although attendees may feel obligated to purchase from local food and drink establishments to use one of the set out seats). It looks to draw from local community acts, with a desire for diverse representation. With three acts the ability to be diverse is limited.

5.2.2. The actual attendance demographic leans towards younger families and older residents. There is no specific demographic this event is aiming to cater for.

5.3. Fostering Town Pride

5.3.1. Sunny Saturdays doesn't draw as large of an audience as other events although those who come do enjoy themselves. It would most likely be missed more by the performers than by the general Wokingham population.

5.4. Enriching Community:

5.4.1. Sunny Saturdays has a limited ability to make a meaningful lasting impact on those who do see it, however this year there was a lovely moment when the steel band invited everyone to have a go on the pans while they took their break.

5.5. It did live up to its aim, even if it was in a limited fashion. As the Working Party have stated, for it to really live up to its aim it would need to be more often, which Wokingham Town Council does not have the resources to do. It is felt that there is an opportunity for the surrounding businesses step up more to utilise a lovely outside space that is very good for small scale events.

5.6. Musical performances in Peach Place however are not particularly unusual nor filling an obvious gap in opportunity. Sit and Sip have had a programme of similar events in the space through the Summer and many other local food and drink businesses have live music in them all through the year. There are also other events in the theatres and churches that while they are not free, they do showcase community acts.

6. CONCLUSIONS

6.1. Sunny Saturdays is a lovely little event that would best fulfil its aim by doing more. However, WTC does not have the resources to do so.

6.2. There are a number of opportunities already locally for acts to perform. Although not all opportunity is the right fit for each act.

6.3. Each individual event is already resource heavy for the return it offers.

6.4. The Sunny Saturday's Working Party summed it up very well with "Sunny Saturdays is an event that is not a strong player at achieving the mission values of the Council compared to other Arts and Culture events in our portfolio."

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1. That the Committee consider the recommendation from the Sunny Saturdays Working Party and halt the event.

Gemma Cumming
Arts and Culture Officer



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

SUNNY SATURDAYS WORKING PARTY
NOTES OF THE MEETING
Thursday 26th September 2024 AT 2pm VIRTUAL MEETING

Present: Cllrs: A Domingue, B Callender, A Fraser

Apologies: Town Clerk, Cllr Cunnington

In attendance: Arts and Culture Officer

1. To reflect on the outcome of Sunny Saturdays events:

Both Councillors Callender and Fraser were able to attend a Sunny Saturdays event as volunteer support and Cllr Callender was also able to attend one as a member of the public.

Did the event meet it's aim?

Councillors felt that while the event did achieve it's aim to uplift the town/Peach Place, it was only for the few moments it was in place. For it to make a meaningful impact it would be better to be more often and it was felt that resources were not available to do that.

To offer further feedback on the events and concept.

The Working Party was mindful that this event was not a strong player at achieving the mission values of the Council compared to other Arts and Culture events in it's portfolio. It was also seen as disproportionately resource heavy for what it did offer. It was also at a time of year where Councillor assistance is more challenging.

Work had been undertaken to see if we could spread the resource load by partnering with other organisations and while a number of avenues had seemed initially very positive none had materialized into a meaningful partnership. They either didn't get beyond promised proposals or left the bulk of the work with the Town Council.

2. The Working Party's thoughts on the future of the event

The Working Party felt there were four options for this event.

1. Make no changes and continue as is.
2. Stop doing the event entirely and free up resource.
3. Do more Sunny Saturdays.

4. Revise the event into something different.

Considering the resource challenges already in place option three would only become viable if there was someone else to take on the event. If so the Working Party would still wish to utilise community acts. The Arts and Culture Officer indicated that would remain open to exploring that even if the event was officially stopped, if the right opportunity presented itself.

Option four was seriously considered as a community act single day event like a mini version of the Party in the Park in Peach Place. However it was recognised that the aim of the event would have to be restated again as this would not fulfil the current aim of Sunny Saturdays.

Ultimately the Working Party unanimously agreed to support option 2. Recommending to stop Sunny Saturdays.

3. Next Steps

The working party recommends that, as its role has been completed, that the committee agree to its dissolution.

4. AOB

No AOB

5. Date of next meeting.

TBC

The meeting closed at 2:53pm



Wokingham Town Council

A&C Officer's Report 08/2024-25

To: Arts and Culture Committee
 Date: 24th October 2024
 Subject: Wokingham Children's Book Festival

1 REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To advise the Committee on the outcomes of the seventh Wokingham Children's Book Festival that took place on Saturday 19th and Sunday 20th October 2024.

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 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 notice of our outreach sponsor 'morearts.' ceasing operation at the end of this financial year this report has been required to have been written unusually quickly after the event. It is possible that not all feedback or data has been available to inform the content.

3 THE 2024 EVENT

- 3.1 There were 13 events over two days in both Wokingham Town Hall and Wokingham Library in Carnival Hub. We again made use of the Hub sports hall that can be shifted into a theatre style venue. The usage of this is an agreement made internally within Wokingham Borough Council between the Library Service and Places for Leisure. It worked very well.
- 3.2 The sessions all went smoothly. Ticket sales continued to improve on last year's moving from 70% to an 90% sold and the challenge we had with the 7 – 11 age range last year was almost non existent. It is unclear if there is a specific external reason for this change or if author choices worked better this year.
- 3.3 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.
- 3.4 We explored with the library service the idea of running a second session in the large venue. However in the end it was decided that the library did not have the resource to stretch to another session. The existing overtime needs for this event were being questioned and staff were struggling to be able to properly rest and manage a normal workload.
- 3.5 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 as a ticketed event it needs a little more support. Marketing this

year went very smoothly. We have been able to streamline and refine the process including removing aspects to no deleterious effect. 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:

- 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 and may depress the reach of all posts a particular page is putting out. Please share posts.
- Wokingham Town Council also used Instagram however with less than 100 followers that platform needs growth.
- Specifically for social media it seems the Library's is a key player driving the bulk of sales compared to other social media pages. There were a number of occasions during the ticket sales period where a Library post was a obvious driver of sales. We don't yet have data directly from the backend on reach but direct customer feedback is placing social media as a lower source than email, flyers, and word of mouth.
- The Book Festival also appeared in various WBC email newsletters which was driving sales.
- Printed media continues to play a part. It was noted as being the source of information. Banners and flyers in particular.
- We advertised in the Wokingham Word and sent the usual press releases to the newspapers.
- We email out to specific groups advising them of the event for their members.

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 and reactive process.

- 3.6 We continue to partner with charities and similar organisations on offering free tickets to those in need.
- 3.7 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 on Sunday. They are keen to continue to support the event.
- 3.8 We also engaged with Wokingham Waterstones to see how they could support the event this year and potentially in future years.
- 3.9 The Outreach programme was again 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 borough schools.
- 3.10 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 2024's event is made up of £4200 from Wokingham Town Council and a £3600 Income target. Commonly the Income comes from sponsorship (£1800) and ticket sales (£1800). There is no direct financial contribution from Wokingham Borough Council. Their contribution is primarily free venue and vital expertise. Which is detailed later in the report.
- 4.2 However other than portioning off the Outreach sponsorship to pay for the outreach, the Arts and Culture Officer takes cautious approach with the budget as a significant amount of it is predicated on ticket sales. £1800 worth of ticket sales is about 80% of all possible tickets sold after VAT is removed which is very high. It also doesn't and can't account for the impact of the early bird discount on tickets nor any other fluctuating element.

- 4.3 Final Expenditure for 2024 is expected to be: approx. £6935. Not all invoices are in yet.
- 4.4 Income from tickets is expected to be approx £2076 after VAT is removed.
We sold over 96% of the available seats which is very good. Income was helped by increasing the capacity for the Carnival Hub space twice.
- 4.5 Final income (ticket sales and sponsorship) was approx. £3876, £276 more than the income target. Which is primarily due to the Carnival Hub space selling out. Which at 350 seats is a high risk high reward space.
- 4.6 More Arts donated £1800 to support the outreach programme. Wokingham Library service and Schools Cluster Coordinator lead with the Outreach sessions.
- 4.6.1 5 schools from across the borough attended multiple digital sessions with multiple year groups (serving approximately 660 children). This is less than previous years and low take up considering that this offer is open to schools across the borough. The results of last year's request for feedback on why they were struggling to attend was sparse, and inconclusive.
- 4.6.2 In person sessions included four full day sessions for multiple classes. The authors did a mix of moving between schools within the Town to do sessions, and having sessions at St Crispin's for multiple primary schools. There was an offer for school years 1 through to 7. (Serving approx. 1800 students).
- 4.6.3 We had to send authors between schools more this year for the younger years rather than have the schools all come to a central point as they are too short staffed to be able to move students between sites.
- 4.6.4 The Outreach's primary objective is to put authors into schools for all students regardless of social-economic status. Which offers a provision for low income students with no stigma. A key aspect of Involving Everyone. It's secondary objective is as a vehicle that promotes the weekend events. It achieves both, although the latter needs a better method of measurement with School as a main feedback option for where you heard about the event.
- 4.6.5 However the Outreach is in jeopardy next year due to the folding of More Arts at the end of this financial year. Which is the primary driver of readying this report so swiftly after the event.
- 4.6.6 If we were to look for an alternative sponsor assistance from Councillors would be beneficial. Sponsorship has always in the past been with Councillors ability to persuade.
- 4.7 Overall Wokingham Town Council has spent £3059 on this event. Not including overtime costs. **An underspend of £1141.**
- 4.8 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.
- 4.8.1 For the Town Hall: The Arts and Culture Officer managed the budget, contracting, branding and printed publicity, populating website and ticketing platforms, managing box office, 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.
- 4.8.2 For the Library: As part of the partnership; significant staff expertise and data, to arrange and work with authors, publishers, publicise through their channels and run the weekend events in the library and lead on the outreach work. WBC comms contact helped to create some the social media designs and joint press release and utilised their channels for promotion.
- 4.8.3 This event does require significant volunteer support, mostly via Councillors at the Town Hall and the Library have a volunteer pool to support their venue.
- 4.8.4 Please note this list is not exhaustive. This is a very high resource event due to partnership working, a large number of authors and elements to put together and a large amount of data created.

5 KEY PRINCIPLES

5.1 Being Sustainable

- 5.2 Outreach works out this year at about 73p a student. (cost per head)
- 5.3 Outreach is cost per band D of 0 as it's externally funded. (10p if it wasn't)
- 5.4 Weekend event approx. £3.09 a person as a cost to Council precept (cost per head).
- 5.5 Weekend event approx. 18p as a cost to Band D
- 5.6 Environmentally this is a low impact event as it uses inside venues and does not produce waste.

5.7 Involving Everyone

- 5.8 The event aims, through multiple means, to support and cater to a diverse range of children. It's aimed for demographic is children under the age of 12 and it achieves this. Older students are less responsive but are occasionally targeted through the Outreach programme. Teen events have been trialled in the past and have not been successful.
- 5.9 Between free tickets to disadvantaged groups through appropriate charities, and the outreach programme we aim to capture students with a more challenging social-economic status. We also ensure that we represent a range of authors from other cultures and experiences.
- 5.10 We added in a relaxed session at Wokingham Library for students with SEN needs and promoted that through the charities and organisations that work with SEN students as well as signposting it on the session itself. Feedback from this event will inform other options for future events of this type.

5.11 Fostering Town Pride

- 5.12 We use many local authors, and some regional authors to ensure variety, commonly remaining within 30 miles of Wokingham.
- 5.13 We use and showcase local venues and work with our local bookshops.

5.14 Enriching Community

- 5.15 The ability to meet authors and hear from them in person is an uplifting experience that encourages creativity and inspires.

6 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 An improvement on last year's event. However 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 who can be harder to sell tickets for.
- 6.2 Carnival Hub was a positive venue which we would wish to continue to use even though finding sessions that would fill that audience capacity can be challenging and risky.
- 6.3 This remains a very difficult event to budget due to income from various sources, including highly variable ticket income alongside expenditure. It was made more complicated by a change in overall capacity in 2023 which effected both ticket income and expenditure.
- 6.4 Now we have two years of data regarding sales with the new capacity in mind we are better able to refine the budget and income target for this event.
- 6.5 At this time we are not anticipating increasing authors fees to ensure choice of authors who will attract an audience, however the Committee should expect that this will come up in a subsequent financial year.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 Consider if we wish to keep the ticket price at £3 a seat.

- 7.2 To budget £5200 for the festival weekend and drop the income target for ticket sales to £1400. This would take the portion of the **precept for the festival weekend to £3800**. This would both be a saving of £400 but still allow flexibility to manage any rising costs and give room for a wide choice in authors for the large Carnival Hub space.
- 7.3 To fund the outreach programme (in part or in full) to approx. **£1800**. The Officer would advise at least covering the in person outreach (£1300) which is more impactful than the digital sessions. With the hope that a replacement sponsor could be found to mitigate this cost.
- 7.4 If funding the full outreach amount alongside the festival weekend as described above, request from F&P an additional **£1400 to the current precept allocation** for this event. Reduce income target to £1400 and set the overall budget (including income) to £7000.

Gemma Cumming
Arts & Culture Officer



Wokingham Town Council

A&C Officer's Report 9/2024-25

To: Arts and Culture Committee
Date: 10th October 2024
Subject: Dressing the Christmas Tree changes

1 REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To advise the Committee on the current financial position of this year's Dressing the Christmas Tree
- 1.2 To consider the budgetary position of next year's event
- 1.3 To consider changes to the event over the longer term.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Dressing the Christmas Tree is a long-standing event where the schools from the town create and present handmade decorations to the Town Mayor at a weekday evening ceremony in the Market Place. Last year 17 schools presented decorations.
- 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 The event tends to last approximately 45 mins to an hour and is well loved by the schools.
- 2.4 The decorations are placed on the tree later that same week, as it requires a hi-lift to do this.
- 2.5 The presentation also includes Christmas appropriate songs and carols. This year it was requested to switch the choral group with a brass band to lead the songs.
- 2.6 This report comes in advance of the event due to:
 - 2.6.1 The position in the year of the event in relation to budget setting.
 - 2.6.2 Known pressures on the budget of this event
 - 2.6.3 A request to look into expanding the event into something larger.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND OTHER COSTS

- 3.1 The current iteration of the event is anticipated to go over budget with costs totaling approx. £1760. The budget for this event is £1350.
- 3.2 This budget has remained static since the 2022/23 financial year. It had a significant increase for that year in response to being the first event back after no in-person events for a couple of years due to COVID and a sharp increase in costs.
- 3.3 Officers have worked closely with providers to manage increasing costs with discounting the equipment fees but for this event to continue it will need an increase. Costs connected to workers have increased over the last few years.

- 3.4 It should however be noted that this overspend is more than anticipated due to the Committee's request to switch the choir (no fee) for a brass band. The Arts and Culture Officer was comfortable managing this overspend and this request knowing that other areas of the A&C budget were underspent.
- 3.5 Should the Committee wish to maintain the event as it is (including the brass band) it is advised to have a budget of £1900.
- 3.6 There has been a request for Councillor support for this event to ensure it remains safe. Especially due to the movement towards publicly advertising it.

4 POSSIBLE FUTURE ALTERATIONS TO THE EVENT

- 4.1 The Arts and Culture Officer has been making some investigations into making the Dec 2025 event larger, however has encountered some significant challenges. An obvious route would be to extend the event time and add some Christmas Arts and Crafts, Gifts and Food Stalls alongside some additional or extended performances.

The challenges include:

- 4.2 Lack of light : It would be nighttime and ambient lighting in the Market Place is currently not working. These are Wokingham Borough Council's responsibility, and have been estimated by WTC Officers as having been damaged and unreliable for at least 18 months. The Amenities Officer has pushed WBC to confirm a budget and have recently confirmed a timeline for it to be fixed by the end of November.
- 4.3 The Dressing as it is can go ahead without additional light if needed, although there will need to be sufficient volunteer support to manage the roadway edge especially as Committee have requested this be a publicly advertised event, which adds significant unknowns to final audience numbers.
- 4.4 Adding to the complexity and draw to the event will make this lack of general illumination dangerous. Illumination levels will need to be monitored for safety for such a change to this event.
- 4.5 Stall numbers would be limited to either less than a normal Market (by approx. a third) because of the staging and estimated audience space for the event. Which may be enough. Or incur a road closure cost to enable stall holders to use the other side of the Town Hall which has no power sources to allow for individual stall lighting. Stall holders would have to rely on battery powered sources in this location.
- 4.6 A road closure on a weekday early evening in that location would be very disruptive.
- 4.7 Would the changes to the event increase attendance? This is unclear, however there are a number of needs for the event's core purpose, the Dressing. Including it being on a weekday evening and early in December so the decorations are up for the month. Officers will note that the Dressing is always just after the Winter Carnival, which is a (significantly) larger but ultimately similar event to the changes being proposed. Officers can liaise with schools to ask how much of a difference it would make to move it to another day, in particular a weekend. However, staffing and volunteer support might be a challenge, as December can be a busy month for families.
- 4.8 There would be additional costs to enable this which are not yet fully clear. Extending the timing for the event moves us into a higher cost relating to staffing (both ours and providers) as well as budgetary implication of adding extra performances around the Dressing ceremony. Further unknowns include the potential for a road closure to reduce the level of risk represented by a higher attendance, and the lighting situation. We could easily be looking at around a £4000 event cost for no guarantee of a significantly increased attendance.

- 4.9 The Officer will also remind Councillors that this event has additional risk with it being outside in winter and of an evening. It is commonly close to freezing and has on a number of occasions rained heavily. The risk of ice (and to a lesser degree snow) is significant. At previous iterations of this event when it has been wet, it has still had good attendance but attendees only tend to stay until their moment on the stage is done.
- 4.10 The changes suggested make this a significantly more complex event. If other events are discontinued it might be possible however the September to January period is already very busy.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 That the Committee request an increase to the Dressing the Christmas Tree budget to bring it to £1900.
- 5.2 Currently Officers would not advise altering the event at this time, but would support more work to try to get a clearer picture of such an extended event, what makes it different to Winter Carnival, what will still work for schools, and give it a properly costed budget.

Gemma Cumming
Arts and Culture Officer