

SUBJECT: Monmouthshire's Events Update
MEETING: Economy & Development Select Committee
DATE:
DIVISIONS/WARDS AFFECTED: All

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide members with an update on the work and achievements of the Events team for 2015-2016 and on the progress of plans for events within 2016-2017.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To note the contents of the report and provide views and feedback as to how the function can further develop its outputs and outcomes in ways that aim to deliver financial and added value returns to the county and council.

3 KEY ISSUES

General

- 3.1 The Council's events strategy aligns us to Welsh Government's event strategy, enabling Monmouthshire County Council to make progress in ways which help optimise potential of everything our county has to offer. This paper outlines Monmouthshire's current position on events within the county and recognises in particular, the exceptional contributions of its communities in enabling the staging of well-operated events.
- 3.2 The Council's event team consists of two full-time roles; Event Manager and Event Facilitator. The roles operate across the Tourism, Leisure and Culture department, wider across the Enterprise Directorate and the rest of the organisation to coordinate and support the Council's resources in securing, staging and optimising the value of events.
- 3.3 The event team is forecast to achieve its target of a break-even position at the end of its first financial year of operation and this stands the team in good stead to generate a profit for 2016 to 2017.
- 3.4 From April 2015, the team has hosted work placements for fourteen students from Monmouthshire schools, the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama and Cross Keys College; totalling 195 hours of placement time.
- 3.5 From April 2015, the team has hosted seven long-term volunteers (those who have volunteered 50 hours or more over the 12 month period) and 244 short-term volunteers (those who have volunteered for individual or a couple of events).
- 3.6 From April 2015, the team has successfully delivered Fortress Wales, the Eisteddfod Proclamation, Monmouthshire's presence at the Royal Welsh Show, Monmouthshire's presence at the National Eisteddfod 2015, Abergavenny's Festival of Cycling 2015, An Evening with Jethro, Monmouthshire Sport Awards, a Staff Conference and Fireworks at Caldicot Castle.
- 3.7 From April 2015, the team has supported Monmouthshire Food Festival, Christmas Lights at Caldicot Town Centre, school productions and Gwent Music concerts.
- 3.8 From April 2015, the team has out-sourced its services and staff to projects such as Music for Youth at the Royal Albert Hall, Glastonbury Festival, the Welsh National Opera, BBC Wales, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, St David's Hall and Gwent Music.

- 3.9 To date, the team holds a marketing database of 12,563 email addresses of people who have attended events within the county.

Monmouthshire's National Eisteddfod 2016

- 3.10 Wales' leading festival will visit Monmouthshire and the surrounding areas from 29 July to 6 August 2016 with the Maes located at Castle Meadows, close to the town of Abergavenny. The county can expect to welcome around 155,000 visitors to the area.
- 3.11 The Council has established an internal Task and Finish Group, chaired by the Leader of the Council, which meets regularly to oversee the planning of the festival. Representatives of the group also meet separately with the Eisteddfod organisers frequently to oversee operational matters.
- 3.12 The Eisteddfod's Head of Technical Services is in regular contact with Monmouthshire's Event Safety Advisory Group to communicate plans to relevant agencies and emergency services. A number of subgroups have been established to develop more detailed plans for areas such as noise management and traffic management.
- 3.13 Planning permission has been granted for the temporary change of use of Castle Meadows, Abergavenny from agricultural grazing to outdoor leisure as a venue to host to the festival.
- 3.14 Sites are currently being contracted to serve as car parks for the park and ride provision. Byfield Lane car park will be used as the drop-off point for buses and required works to make the area fit for purpose will start imminently.
- 3.15 Monmouthshire County Council is working with Team Abergavenny, Abergavenny Town Council and other community groups to prepare the town and rest of the county to welcome visitors. We held a well-attended community working session on Thursday 14 January to discuss: Dressing the town, recruiting support and volunteers, leaving a legacy and supporting local businesses. Many of the ideas raised by the groups are being worked on and implemented, such as training evenings for volunteers, signposting from the Maes to the town, developing support packs for local businesses and drafting business cases to dress the town with the Team Abergavenny.
- 3.16 All communication in relation to the Eisteddfod is currently promoting the 'Year of the Eisteddfod'. Our 'Go Red for Eisteddfod' campaign engaged 28 schools, local businesses, youth groups, adult learning students, Male Voice Choirs, the Eisteddfod Choir and received a good response across local, regional and national publications and television.
- 3.17 Current forecasts show that this project is being delivered to allocated budgets. A copy of the current budget position is attached as Appendix 1.
- 3.18 At the time of writing this report, the fundraising appeals committee have currently raised £112,000 against their £300,000 target and progress is being made. Monmouthshire County Council agreed to underwrite the Community fund at a Full Council meeting in May 2014. Reserves have been allocated to facilitate the Eisteddfod project and will be called upon in the event that the £300k target is not met and this will not have any impact on service delivery.
- 3.19 A host of additional fundraising activities are being planned including events for St David's Day, Easter, a race day at Chepstow race course and 'Choirs in the Castle' concert at Caldicot Castle where Caldicot, Chepstow and Monmouth choirs are joining forces on 18th June for an evening of entertainment, with all proceeds being donated to the cause. Studies to determine the exact nature of the Return on Investment will be conducted in conjunction with the National eisteddfod after the event.

Monmouthshire's area at the National Eisteddfod 2016

- 3.20 Monmouthshire County Council are planning to develop an area of activity which is an engaging, exciting, hands-on experience for visitors of the 2016 Monmouthshire Eisteddfod. The space is found at a prominent area of the Maes and is designed to be a flexible and attractive hive of activity.

It will promote Monmouthshire's tourism offer that is perfect for celebrating and appreciating Welsh culture. The space showcases everything that is great about the county - from food to drink, cycling to walking, exploring castles to archery.

- 3.21 The space will consist of six main zones of activity:
- Welcome entrance: Provide a visual welcome that entices visitors into the Monmouthshire area and features BeeFriendly Monmouthshire.
 - Stalls: A space for teams, partners and businesses to promote to and inform visitors with a focus on experiential, hands-on activities.
 - Performance area: A flexible, focal space where musical acts and speakers can entertain visitors.
 - Country Kitchen: An exciting food experience which showcases the county's producers, produce and recipes.
 - Indoor activity and play: Activities that provide a hands-on flavour of the county's tourism offer to include dressing up as a knight, cycling simulators, sandpits and interactive maps.
 - Leisure and Sport: A sport-focussed space that encourages participation, challenge and leisure.
4. An internal group has been set up to coordinate the operation and planning of Monmouthshire's area on the Maes. Teams and partners who wish to work with us on the area will need to apply to ensure that their objectives meet our brief.
- 4.1. £80,000 has been allocated to this project and it is currently forecasted to be delivered on budget. The budget will cover the presence on the Maes, tickets for staff and suppliers and the leisure area.

Status Quo live at Caldicot Castle

- 4.2 Status Quo are an English rock band whose music is characterized by their distinctive brand of boogie rock. They have had over 60 chart hits in the UK which is more than any other rock group. 22 of these reached the Top 10 in the UK Singles Chart. In 1991, Status Quo received a Brit Award for Outstanding Contribution to Music.
- 4.3 The band will headline an outdoor concert within Caldicot Castle's picturesque surroundings on Saturday 6 August, supported by Steve Harley & Cockney Rebel. Two local bands are to be sought to complete the line-up. The project is currently operating on budget. At the time of writing this report, two-thirds of tickets have been sold from outlets such as Monmouthshire leisure centres, Hubs.
- 4.4 Analysis of the current sales data shows that 44% of the sales are from postcodes within Monmouthshire, 40% are from postcodes requiring an hour's drive or more. 3% are from international addresses to include Belgium, France, Germany and Ireland.

Velothon 2016

- 5 On Thursday 19 November 2015, Council agreed to support the 2016 Velothon to enable the route to travel through Monmouthshire having received assurances that the route would be amended and that extensive consultation and communication with those affected will be at the centre of their work leading up to the event.
- 5.1 The independent debrief from 2015's event recommended that:
- More detailed and documented planning was required;
 - Involve local agency in planning phase;
 - Earlier finalisation of the route;
 - Earlier and effective communication of the road closures;
 - Greater oversight by Welsh Government
 - Integrated and coordinated response from agencies;
 - A greater focus on risk;
 - Identification of locations for public viewing;

- Work with communities to overcome negative views from 2015.
- 5.2 An operational delivery steering group has been established to oversee the planning of this year's event. The group has representation from all five Local Authorities, emergency services, Welsh Government, British Cycling, Run4Wales and key delivery partners. Additional subgroups have been established to look specifically at Marketing and Communication, Race Logistics and Event Logistics.
 - 5.3 Each Local Authority has an internal group to address event delivery. Monmouthshire also has an additional 'Internal Service Disruption' group that will develop arrangements for use by MCC representatives at Velothon 2016 Event Control. The document will detail the MCC services disrupted by the Velothon, arrangements agreed in relation to service continuity, event 'Command and Control' structures, ELAPS points, key contact details and how these would dovetail into existing major incident arrangements if a significant event occurred.
 - 5.4 Run4Wales has reported that 105,891 letters will be posted out this month, 17,000 of which will be directed to Monmouthshire addresses. A copy of the letter and the road closure map has been attached to this report as Appendix 2. The letter is also available electronically on Monmouthshire County Council's website and the Velothon 2016 website. A second letter drop is expected to take place at the end of April, but exact timings are to be confirmed.
 - 5.5 Jacbee, an Event Management and Marketing Specialist, has been appointed to work with Run4Wales to deliver the business element of the communication. Engagement with Monmouthshire businesses will start on Monday 29 February. A contact from Monmouthshire Business and Enterprise team has been provided to the team and we hope to provide a list of licenced premises affected by the route.
 - 5.6 Nigel Russell, from Run4Wales, attended a meeting for community and town council members and elected members on Monday 22 February at County Hall to answer questions and share information about the route. Community council and elected members expressed thanks for Nigel coming to talk them and many expressed interest in Nigel visiting their individual meetings so that their members could hear more.
 - 5.7 The route was released on Monday 22 February and is available to view on the Velothon website. Communications will increase now the route has been released.
 - 5.8 Residents and businesses are encouraged to contact the organisers with any queries. A dedicated helpline with increased capacity has been set up, a general enquiries email and a dedicated route enquiry email. MCC's contact centre and Community Hubs have been advised to direct enquiries to these channels of communication.

Future Projects

- 6 The Events team intend to scope the feasibility of the following proposals, whilst maintaining and developing its current commitments, for 2016 to 2017 and further:
 - 6.1 Broadening Monmouthshire Sports Awards to establish a 'Pride of Monmouthshire Awards' brand to include sport achievements, volunteers and young people.
 - 6.2 Installing a temporary real ice rink in Abergavenny Market Hall to coincide with a travelling European Christmas market from November 2016 to January 2017.
 - 6.3 Extending its fireworks offer to another town in Monmouthshire.
 - 6.4 Staging a large scale concert with a major, mainstream touring artist in a venue such as Bailey Park, Abergavenny or Castle Meadows, Abergavenny in the summer of 2017.

7 REASONS

- 7.1 The measurement of return of investment both economic and social across the events that currently operate inside of the County go largely unrecognised and it is important these are measured and their true value understood.
- 7.2 Events encourage growth and economic opportunities in tourism, business and enterprise and are an important tool in building resilience and community spirit
- 7.3 The Council is committed to delivering high quality events. The Eisteddfod is already planned into the timetable and there is a need to develop a supported timetable of growth and signature events in line with Monmouthshire priorities and Welsh Government Events Strategy.

8 RESOURCES

- 8.1 The events strategy is delivered and implemented by a core events team supported by the county's network of volunteers, community groups, town teams and local businesses.
- 8.2 Any major events that require investment from the Council will carry a separate report for consideration as and when required.
- 8.3 The Events team works in synchrony with teams across the organisation such as Communications and Engagement, Leisure Services, Tourism and Attractions to ensure a coordinated and consistent approach to planning.

9. SUSTAINABILITY AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS:

- 9.1 The significant equality impacts identified in the assessment are summarised below for members' consideration .
- 9.2 As with delivery of any event there will be some unavoidable disruption to community life which could include transport, parking, noise and environmental factors. At all times the service will think about reducing impact to community life especially the vulnerable and where possible reduce disruption.
- 9.3 The team will do its best to identify and consult with communities well in advance to prepare them and help.

10. CONSULTEES

Strategic Leadership Team
Cabinet Members

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Events Strategy

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