

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No 13

meeting date: 3 SEPTEMBER 2019
title: CLITHEROE FOOD FESTIVAL 2019
submitted by: DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY
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1 PURPOSE

1.1 To provide an update on the 2019 event.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:

- Community Objectives – To sustain a strong and prosperous Ribble Valley, encompassing our objective to encourage economic development throughout the borough, with a specific emphasis on tourism.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 The Council approved the 2019 Food Festival following receipt of a report to this committee at your meeting in October, 2018 (minute 377; 30.10.18).

2.2 This was the 9th edition of the food festival which historically has been delivered by the Borough Council, though until 2017, the Food Festival Company was instrumental in obtaining sponsorship and providing an overview of the preparations. That company was dissolved by the directors after the 2017 edition.

3 THE 2019 FOOD FESTIVAL

3.1 The 2019 Food Festival took place on the 10th August, 2019, based on a similar format to previous editions. The event was planned and organised by Council officers, with help from; Council staff who work on the day, undertaking various roles; volunteers; plus, external specialist assistance, e.g. first aid.

3.2 The event was staged in and around the centre of Clitheroe, closing Castle Street, King Street and King Lane, Market Place and the Market car park. The weather played a key role this year, limiting numbers attending, though this also meant that the people who came had more space to move around and browse the 100+ stalls. In previous years this has been an issue due to the high numbers of people that have packed the streets, making movement difficult.

3.3 The Clitheroe Food Festival contributes to our promotion of the area as a tourist destination and in our economic development role. Although there is only anecdotal evidence to support the economic and tourism impact of the event on the town, as there has never been an economic impact assessment of the event.

4 ISSUES

4.1 The amount of sponsorship attracted by the festival has steadily fallen over the past 4 years. This year the sum was £4k. In previous years the business contacts of the Directors of the Food Festival Company were the principal reasons why sponsorship was obtained. The return for sponsors has always been tenuous at best, with links by association through advertising and the web site, plus tickets to tastings or demonstrations. Arguably the sponsorship obtained would be more accurately termed patronage, given the value of the event to a sponsor. Managing sponsorship has been made difficult in recent years with some sponsors also being producers

therefore they have had space at the event to sell their products, there is of course an opportunity cost to this space, because it could be sold to other stall holders.

- 4.2 The festival is free to attend, with income principally obtained from stall holder fees and a small amount from tastings/demonstrations, whilst the park and ride seeks to break even. Being free, it cannot generate sufficient income to cover the cost of staging. That has always been the case and there is no way to change it, other than securing a sponsor large enough that they cover the costs currently borne by the Council, or if it were possible, relocating it to a site where entry could be controlled and an entry fee applied. The Castle field is an alternative location, but it is not viable due to the variability of the weather and the impact it has on the surface. This year, for example, the funfair was cancelled this year due to the rain.
- 4.3 The event relies on a substantial number of Council officers working to plan it and, on the day, to serve in various roles. There is a clear downward trend in the number of staff willing to on the day, and it may be necessary to look at alternative models of delivery for the future if the event continues to be supported by the Council. A more reliable and possible safer option would be to use a professional stewarding organisation to manage the crowds on the day, but that would be at considerable cost.
- 4.4 The event is only one day, which both concentrates attendance and limits the ability to spread the cost of staging it over two days. The reasons for staging it on one day is mainly the park and ride facility is only available for a Saturday. However, we also know that the staff resources of the Council would be severely stretched to run it into a second day, without a greater input from external sources and security would be a significant issue with all the stalls set up with produce and consumable items on the open street areas.
- 4.5 Due to the event being free to attend it brings with it the risks of large crowds with no easily discernible way of controlling numbers. There is an inherent safety risk in managing the crowd and further work will need to be considered to ensure that public safety is maintained.

5. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications:
- Resources – a full report showing the financial outturn will be submitted to the Committee in October.
 - Technical, Environmental and Legal - The success of the event in attracting people to Clitheroe makes safety a constant challenge given the limited street space available within the town.
 - Political – none
 - Reputation - The 2019 Festival was a well-run event which enhances the Council's reputation. The general feedback from attendees was very positive, despite the weather.
 - Equality and Diversity – The festival is located on the streets of the town and all areas are accessible. Demonstrations are located in accessible buildings.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The financial position with regard to this year's festival was not complete at the time of writing this report and a further report will be brought to a future meeting of Committee.
- 8.2 In operational terms, this year's event went well despite the weather, which limited attendances to manageable levels.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS – CFF File