

# RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No. 10

meeting date: TUESDAY, 7 JANUARY 2020  
title: CLITHEROE FOOD FESTIVAL  
submitted by: JOHN HEAP – DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES  
principal author: MARK BEVERIDGE – HEAD OF CULTURAL AND LEISURE SERVICES

## 1 PURPOSE

1.1 To provide an update on the 2020 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 2020 Food Festival at the last Community Meeting in October. following receipt of a report to this committee at your meeting in October, 2019.

## 3 THE 2020 FOOD FESTIVAL

3.1 This will be the 10<sup>th</sup> year of the food festival and since it first began the event landscape has changed considerably. With many similar food events being staged around Lancashire now compared to then.

3.2 The 2020 Food Festival will take place on the 8<sup>th</sup> August, 2020, based on a similar format to previous editions. The event will be 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.

## 4 ISSUES

4.1 The amount of sponsorship attracted by the festival has steadily fallen over the past 4 years. In 2019 the sum was £4k. It is arguable that for the small amount of sponsorship achieved in comparison to the overall cost of the event for the Council, the dilution of the Council's role in staging the event makes sponsorship income a debatable issue. In the past when sponsorship was more available it helped to defer the costs of the event very well, now that argument is not nearly as strong. 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. Managing sponsorship has been made difficult in recent years with some sponsors also being producers. Where they have had space at the event to sell their products, there is of course an opportunity cost to this space, which otherwise could be sold to other stall holders. This diminishes the value of the sponsorship received by the Council.

4.2 The issue of crowd safety will continue to be of paramount importance, though because it is a free to attend event, estimating in advance the numbers for the day are impossible. This translates into issues of safety on the day and the overall enjoyment

of attendees, which diminishes as the crowd density rises. Alterations to the layout have helped to mitigate this issue, but cannot remove the fact that the town has narrow streets and 1000s attend the event.

- 4.3 Attracting enough suitable people to work on the event has been an issue in recent years and will need to be closely monitored. The event requires a lot of people; staff, volunteers and paid for external help to run the event. As the numbers of the two former categories reduce the cost of the latter one rises.
- 4.4 The amendments to Clitheroe Market, with the removal of the fixed bullring stands will necessitate changes to the format of the Festival in 2020. It is proposed that the area will become the entertainment and demonstration area, which will remove the large stage area at the bottom of King Street.
- 4.5 The Bull Ring accommodates 24 stalls for the Food Festival, of which 21 were food/drink stalls last year. To help ensure we can accommodate as many as possible of these 21 stalls which will be disbursed from the Bull Ring area. It is proposed that the number of non-food stalls at the festival in 2020 is reduced from the 16 stalls in total hosted last year. The Food Festival has become increasingly popular with non-food stalls every year due to the high foot fall that is attracted to the event. We turn down more than we accept in any given year. Last year some of those accommodated included Rotary & Lions, dog treats, St Catherine's Hospice and Clitheroe Fair Trade Town. It is proposed that no more than 3 will be accepted in 2020.

## 5. RISK ASSESSMENT

5.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications:

- Resources – At the time of setting the 2019/20 budget this committee agreed to the inclusion of the net cost of holding the Clitheroe Food Festival within the council's base budget. This budget assumed that no sponsorship income would be received toward the festival. For 2019 the net budget was a cost of £14,120 and this level of budget will be carried forward with inflation and adjustments for known movements in costs and income for the 2020 event. The council hold an earmarked reserve for the purpose of supporting the net cost of the event, although funds have diminished in recent years (the balance following the 2019 event is £5,812).
- 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. RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE**

- 8.1 Note the report and agree to the number of non-food stalls being limited to no more than three.

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