

**AGENDA ITEM**

**REPORT TO CABINET**

**17 DECEMBER 2020**

**REPORT OF CORPORATE  
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

**CABINET DECISION**

**2020 EVENT SUMMARY AND 2021 MEMORIAL LIGHTING CALENDAR**

**SUMMARY**

The COVID pandemic has had a major impact on the Council's outdoor events programme and continues to present uncertainty for events scheduled for 2021. This report provides a brief overview of the event related activity that has gone on in 2020 and on the work of our Independent Safety Advisory Group (ISAG). The report also provides the suggested calendar for memorial lighting during 2021.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. To note the success of the SIRF@Home and other events during 2020 that were delivered in COVID-secure ways
2. To approve the memorial lighting calendar for 2021

**DETAIL**

1. The national lockdown in the spring and early summer of 2020 necessitated the cancellation of all Stockton Council events. Decisions were taken within the Major Incident Response framework to initially cancel events up to September and this was later extended to include largescale events like the annual Fireworks display and the Christmas lights switch-on. The ongoing affects of the pandemic and associated national guidance necessitated the further cancellation of events during the autumn, including small events.
2. Our event programme is extensive, it involves large numbers of staff and partners and takes many months to plan and deliver. In the face of pandemic restrictions we moved quickly to explore the potential for some events to be reshaped to be consumed by remote audiences via the internet and social media. This involved a fundamental shift in thinking and the rapid development of skills and tools.
3. We're proud of how good the resulting events were and how many people they reached at a time when many of our counterparts simply assumed that it would not be possible to stage their events in any form.
4. Successful COVID-secure events included SIRF@home, Stockton & Darlington Railway 195<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations, Halloween Fright Night and Remembrance Sunday.

## **SIRF at Home 2020**

5. SIRF is an Arts Council National Portfolio Organisation (NPO), funded to present high quality work and provide strategic support to the street arts sector. Although it was accepted that largescale events such as SIRF could not take place this year, there was a determination to celebrate and stimulate community creativity and support artists and the wider Culture Sector during this difficult year.
6. 'SIRF at Home 20' delivered an ambitious programme of digital performances, shows and events that people could access and participate in directly from their homes. This level of digital work had never been attempted before and needed to be of a quality commensurate with the reputation and prominence that SIRF enjoys across nationally and internationally.
7. SIRF at Home delivered 51 films which equated to 12 hours of footage and included international work/shows that had never been seen before and which were adapted for the digital platform. In addition to the shows, there were a series of documentaries, activities, workshops, interviews, audience voices and pieces of archive footage from previous festivals. All films were accessible and provided subtitles, with the majority having the option of several languages.
8. SIRF @home also aimed to reach people who have little or no online access. The 'Poems down the phone' initiative by the The Merry Maker was particularly well received. This project delivered bespoke poems to 28 nominated audience members who were self-isolating and clinically vulnerable. Participants were from across the UK.
9. The Community Carnival is one of SIRFs most iconic moments, connecting a wide range of community groups from across the Borough and beyond. Under normal circumstances groups spend weeks making costumes and other carnival items before parading through Stockton town centre. This year, unable to deliver a physical event, the SIRF Virtual Carnival used a mixture of past carnival footage together with video clips submitted by members of the public and community artist groups who were keen to get involved in this new digital approach. There was a series of 'how-to' workshops, tutorials delivered by local artists, which spanned an 8 weeks period and which were uploaded to all the SIRF social media channels.
10. The overall reach of SIRF@Home was a phenomenal 329,573 including video views, comments, likes, shares and website visits. This reach included audiences from 24 countries.
11. SIRF plays an acknowledged role in brokering and supporting street arts internationally. In 2020 we continued our partnership with XTRAX and delivered an international showcase which reached 185 delegates from 24 countries, including 49 overseas delegates.
12. Work is on-going with Arts Council England to understand funding levels for SIRF for the remainder of 2020 and for next year, 2021. A financial model is currently being developed to carry forward a percentage of any unallocated ACE funding and matching unused budget to avoid any loss of grant income. Unallocated funding includes a sum received from our partners at the Canals and Rivers Trust and will be used to support the Council's commitment to deliver a show connected to the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Tees Barrage, alongside other SIRF 2021 commissions.

## **Other digital Event Delivery 2020**

13. Support has continued in celebrating and promoting the run up to the Stockton & Darlington Railway bicentenary in 2025. Although the planned 195<sup>th</sup> Anniversary event on Stockton High Street could not be delivered, on-line activities, soundscapes and footage of the A1

Class Tornado taking Stockton Council's Mayor, Cllr Javed, alongside the Darlington and Tees Valley Mayors, on a celebratory steam journey, was promoted on both the Council's Heritage website and through social media channels. Overall reach for this online event was 30,083, which included views, shares, likes and comments.

14. The popular Halloween Fright Night event, usually held at Preston Park, was also delivered digitally in 2020. The production of an online spooky quest which included a spectacular animation, three film challenges a spell that participants unlocked was delivered to a high specification and received positive comments. The content was promoted through the Museums website and social media channels. Digital media reach including views, shares, comments and likes were 5,531
15. Other successful on-line events included Remembrance Sunday and Festival of Light and Colour.

### **Stockton's Independent Safety Advisory Group (ISAG)**

16. Stockton's Independent Safety Advisory Group (ISAG) was reinstated in July 2020, following the end of the first national lockdown period. At this time, the Council had already cancelled its large-scale events programme however, there was an expectation that some smaller scale events such as specialist markets may be able to take place later in the year.
17. ISAG representatives developed a set of COVID-secure Event Management criteria and safeguarding processes that were designed to support event delivery post lockdown. ISAG's approach/criteria was aligned to and translated Government guidance for Outdoor Events, which was vague, open to interpretation and changed on a regular basis. ISAG also incorporated an additional assurance overlay with Public Health colleagues, to ensure that event proposals were in line with outbreak control measures and viewed in a local context.
18. During the summer period, ISAG assured several event management plans and confirmed that many of the proposed events could be delivered in a COVID-secure way. However, sadly, none of these events were able to be delivered due to the worsening national position.
19. Formal ISAG meetings have been cancelled for the rest of 2020, however ISAG representatives remain vigilant of national guidance and advice in their respective work areas.

### **Memorial lighting calendar 2021**

20. The use of coloured lights in Stockton Town centre and on selected buildings and structures continues to provide the Council with an opportunity to acknowledge and support a range of good causes and important anniversaries. This memorial lighting programme is very popular and generates significant social media activity. The 2020 memorial lighting calendar was interrupted by the first COVID lockdown and reinstated in July when lockdown restrictions were lifted. However, the full impact of our lighting systems could not be appreciated for much of the year due to the social restrictions.
21. This report invites Cabinet to agree the programme for 2021, as listed in Appendix A. The list incorporates campaigns that might encompass a range of individually narrow issues/interests. The dates nominated in each case are those which are believed to be the subject of a meaningful campaign by others, such that when the lights are switched on the general public may have some understanding of the significance of the event/colour.

22. Where a campaign lasts for a period of days or weeks, the normal procedure will be to mark the start of that campaign by turning our lights on for the first day/night. However, where a campaign promoter wishes to use an alternative day within the period to align with specific activity designed to raise the profile of the campaign, we may change the date on which we turn our lights on to fit with the organisers promotions. The calendar listed at Appendix A therefor includes suggested dates for each event and may be subject to minor changes.

## **COMMUNITY IMPACT IMPLICATIONS**

23. The events programme is diverse and designed to reflect the interests of different communities. Every effort is made to make our events physically and financially accessible, they are presented in public spaces and are almost always free to watch or participate in.

24. Many of our events are specifically designed, in whole or in part, to raise awareness of the needs or characteristics of specific groups, including those with protected characteristics.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

25. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

26. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

## **RISK ASSESSMENT**

27. All events presented by the Council or approved for Council land are subject to a full risk assessment.

## **COUNCIL PLAN POLICY PRINCIPLES AND PRIORITIES**

28. The events programme and memorial lighting contributes to a number of Council Plan priorities, including the economic objectives and those relating to community cohesion and wellbeing. In particular, our events are crucial to our ambition to create a place that is clean, vibrant and attractive.

## **CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS**

29. Many opportunities to participate in or enjoy our events are targeted at our looked after children.

## **CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS**

30. There is frequent consultation with Councillors over events before, during and after the events are staged. There has been no consultation with Councillors in relation to this report as it's primary function is to report on the outcome of events already staged and to allow Councillors and others to plan for any campaigns associated with the memorial lighting calendar.

**Name of Contact Officer: Reuben Kench**

**Post Title: Director of the Environment, Culture, Leisure & Events**

**Telephone No. 01642 527039**

**Email Address: reuben.kench@stockton.gov.uk**

Education related? No

Background Papers

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors:

Property

**MEMORIAL LIGHTING SCHEME FOR 2021/22**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>EVENT</b>	<b>LIGHTING COLOUR</b>	<b>CAMPAIGNS</b>
Wednesday 27 January	Holocaust Memorial Day	Purple	National
Monday 1 <sup>st</sup> February	LGBT Awareness Month	Multi	Catch All
Thursday 4 February	World Cancer Day	Orange	Catch All
Monday 22 February	Fairtrade Fortnight	Blue-Green	National
Monday 8 March	International Women's Day	White/Purple/ Green	National
Saturday 27 March	Earth Hour (8.30pm-9.30pm)	Switched off	National
Friday 2 April	Autism Acceptance Day	Gold	SBC Autism Friendly Town Centre
Friday 23 April	St George's Day	Red/White	Saint Day
Monday 4 May	Maternal Mental Health Awareness Week	Purple	Raindrops To Rainbows Local Campaign
Monday 17 May	National Dementia Action Week	Purple	National SBC Awareness campaign
Monday 31 May	National Volunteering Week	Red/Purple	National
Monday 7 June	National Carers Week	Blue	National
Saturday 26 June	Armed Forces Day	Red/White/ Blue	National
Saturday 4 September	World Sexual Health Awareness Day	Orange/Blue	Catch All
Friday 1 October	Stoptober	Red	National
Saturday 9 October	Baby Loss Awareness Week	Pink/Blue	Catch All
Sunday 10 October	World Mental Health Day	Purple	Catch All
Friday 15 October	Show Racism the Red Card	Red	National SBC Campaign
Thursday 11 November	Remembrance Day	Red	National

Sunday 14 November	World Diabetes Day	Blue	National
Thursday 25 November	International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women	Orange	National
Friday 3 December	Child Sexual Exploitation Awareness Day	Purple	National