

**AGENDA ITEM**

**REPORT TO CABINET**

**19<sup>th</sup> January 2023**

**REPORT OF CORPORATE  
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

**CABINET DECISION**

**Cabinet Member for Health, Leisure and Culture – Cllr Nelson**

**2022 EVENT SUMMARY AND 2023 MEMORIAL LIGHTING CALENDAR**

**SUMMARY**

This report provides an overview of the return of the Council's 2022 Events Programme which has been successfully delivered after a two-year interrupted programme. In addition to Council run events, the report also reflects the return of those events delivered by third parties on Council land, including the extensive programme of community led street parties and events celebrating the Platinum Jubilee.

In addition, the report provides the suggested calendar for memorial lighting for 2023.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. To note the success of events programme during 2022
2. To approve the memorial lighting calendar for 2023

**DETAIL**

1. The Council's Event Programme has been significantly impacted over the past two years due to COVID 19. Government restrictions in relation to the delivery of outdoor event work and mass gatherings has meant that our much-loved programme of events has been severely hampered and some events including SIRF, have not been delivered on site for two consecutive years.
2. Although we did manage to deliver and support a reduced programme of events during 2021, which included the use of various digital platforms, the Council's event programme has now been fully reinstated and this year we have physically returned to our popular event spaces and locations. In addition to our own event delivery, we have also supported many other community-based events which take place across the Borough, which are delivered locally by external organisers such as Town Councils, BIFF and Friends Groups.
3. It has been encouraging to see that event visitor numbers have bounced back and in the main remain very high, despite the 2-year hiatus. In some cases, we have seen an increase in the number of people attending certain events (pre Covid) and events including Supercar Saturday, Stockton International Riverside Festival and more recently the Sparkles Christmas programme remain very popular with our residents and communities. This upward trend of audience figures was also apparent in other locations across the Borough,

including Friends of Ropner Park (FORP) Spring Festival and Festival of Eid, with both festivals experiencing a huge jump in attendance requiring technical support from Council teams to manage impact on the road infrastructure.

4. As we return to our full planning and delivery models, we do so under the backdrop of ongoing issues raised in 2021 in relation to the recruitment and availability of event professionals and crew. Repeated recruitment processes have been unsuccessful in recruiting experienced and fully qualified event production staff, including roles which are key to safety planning and delivery. The problem relates particularly to our high profile and large-scale events.
5. As a result, resource planning for 2022 required us plan to 'buy in' specialised technical support from external sources. However, there are limited suppliers who deliver event management support, especially to the scale, and standards, we need to deliver our event programme. A local supplier has been used extensively to deliver the safety aspects of our large-scale events, including the production of event safety plans, technical assurance and providing casual crew. Whilst service delivery has been good, this model of working is expensive and has considerable risk, as we are currently reliant on one third party supplier.
6. We are relooking at our staffing structures and resources to ensure we can recruit the right calibre of technical professional, who can drive and support our future events programme and wider culture ambitions.
7. It should be noted that whilst specialised support has been procured for a small number of complex and high-risk events, the Council's Events Team have continued to provide technical support and advice for the more numerous smaller scale community led events. These event organisers have required extra support, particularly as their event safety arrangements and plans have been below an acceptable standard. We have also noted that more organisers are wanting to deliver more events, and this has put pressure on key staff who are covering staff vacancies.
8. Internally, there continues to be a joined-up approach across Council teams in the delivery of our events programme and we acknowledge the effort and support provided from service teams including Enforcement, Traffic Management, Legal, Communications, Media, CFYA and Design Services. A great example of this collaborative working was demonstrated during the Platinum Jubilee celebrations in June, where we delivered road closures for over 130 street parties, proving 300 Jubilee packs and bunting to residents and community groups and supported beacon lighting and other community events.

### **Stockton Cycling Festival 2022**

9. Stockton Cycling Festival successfully returned in 2022, celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Building on the success of previous years, the 2022 offer included a high profile 2-day event with the aim of engaging more people into cycling, across all ages and levels of ability, and inspiring people through the delivery of elite high-level racing. The co-ordination of the event was led by Sport & Active Life, Stockton Borough Council, in partnership with Velo29 and British Cycling.
10. The 2-day festival included the Stockton Sportive with 120 participants, featuring routes ranging from 36 miles to 106 miles. There was also a main festival day with an action-packed elite racing, free fun family activities and 'RideStockton', a mass family ride on Stockton Riverside.
11. Although we have noticed a steady decline in our audience numbers, satisfaction levels from our market research remains positive, with:

96% of attendees rating the festival was the main reason for their visit to Stockton  
95% of attendees rating the festival as a **good use of council resources**  
92% of attendees rating the festival whole experience as positively  
92% of attendees rating the festival as being **good for promoting Stockton** as a place to live, work, visit.

## SIRF

12. SIRF is a long-standing Arts Council England (ACE) National Portfolio Organisation (NPO), funded to present high quality work and support the street arts sector. Our current four-year funding agreement with ACE (2018 – 2021) was extended by an additional year for 2022
13. SIRF is the one of most significant UK Festival for international programmers as we provide the biggest and most diverse showcase of work in one weekend in the UK. SIRF is a seed bed for new work for all types of outdoor work with a significant commitment to artistic development and capacity building, actively engaging and supporting the development of new UK work and large-scale outdoor events across the Tees Valley
14. Our festival has also been highlighted nationally as an exemplar of the development of sustainability in street arts.
15. The Council's application for funding beyond 2022, included an 'uplift' as part of the Government's 'Levelling Up for Culture Places'. This plan involved a commitment to prioritise and realign investment away from London to those areas where historically ACE investment had been relatively low. Stockton On Tees and the wider Tees Valley were identified as one of the priority places.
16. Although SIRF was successful in retaining its NPO status, we only received standstill investment and our application for 'uplift' was not supported. This outcome was disappointing particularly as we receive the highest possible grading on all areas of the application, with no 'actions required'.
17. Without 'uplift' the delivery model for SIRF will need to change, as we cannot sustain the current scale of programme due to inflationary pressures. This may mean that SIRF will move to a three-day festival from 2023.
18. ACE have committed to support us in our endeavours to fundraise for other potential sources of funding for our signature event and we of course continue to work closely with the TVCA as one of our main Cultural Partners.

## SIRF 2022 – Delivery & Sector Development

19. SIRF 2022 welcomed 51 companies, including 7 international groups and 168 individual performances, over 5 key event sites.
20. The response we received from artists and audiences was fantastic and it was clear that the appetite for residents to experience high quality arts remains strong. We have estimated footfall of 65,000 visitors across the 4 days and our independent market research have captured positive perceptions and high levels of satisfaction, including.

95% of attendees rating the festival overall quality as good or very good in 2022, compared with [94% in 2019] and [90% in 2018]

94% stated that the festival is a **good use of council resources** in 2022, compared with [94% in 2019] and [89% in 2018] and as one of our audiences members put it...

***“It was absolutely stunning and the best 4 days. Artists were incredible, the organisation was perfect and so so wonderful it was accessible for everyone. Brought lots of joy to us all. Very proud of our lovely town.. A massive thank you!!” Audience member***

95% of attendees stated that the festival is **good for promoting Stockton** as a place to live, work or visit in 2022, compared with, [93% in 2019] and [92% in 2018].

Spend per head was £47.99 and the total direct economic impact was **£1,729,811**

21. We also introduced a new performance indicator this year to capture the health and wellbeing impacts of cultural activities. The increased risk of isolation and mental health and wellbeing concerns due to Covid-19 are well documented. We wanted to add a new measure to try to understand our audience’s perceptions, our first-year findings are:

92% of people stated that coming to the event has a **positive effect on their health** and wellbeing [2022].

22. Our Community Carnival moved to its new Sunday spot this year and the parade was part of a day long **‘Carnival Celebration’** programme, culminating on the Riverside with a spectacular finale. Although we had slightly less groups and participants in the carnival due to remaining concerns about Covid, over 850 people were part of the procession, which was a phenomenal success, with audience lining the high street to view the parade

23. Participation and engagement work continues to be an integral part of the festival and there are many opportunities for residents, children and community groups to engage in high quality arts experiences. We delivered a series of workshops in preparation for our Community Carnival which provided our children the opportunity to work with professional artists in costume making, music and backstage production. We also engaged with 50 volunteers from across the 6 towns to develop the core themes of the Within Without show.

24. A commission to celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Tees Barrage, initially programmed for 2020, was delivered this year as part of the wider SIF programme. Working in partnership with the Canal and River Trust, an impressive installation of over 500 wind instruments and a spectacular fire show performance was positively received by approx. 3,000 visitors

25. The delivery of accessible SIF has been enhanced in 2022 resulting in a huge increase in Touch Tours, Relaxed performances and BSL interpretation across the weekend. We had the largest number of shows that offered BSL interpretation and we also produced an ‘accessible’ film that provided a guide to deaf and disabled visitors to navigate and access our festival. This type of support guide is a new best practice model within the Sector.

26. We have also delivered a complementary digital programme in 2022 which included specific commissions, works in progress and rehearsal films that enhanced the audience engagement and experiences. This was very successful, with the overall web and social media reach reported as 792,172.

27. For the past 4 years we have facilitated an international showcase in partnership with XTRAX which supports and promotes our festival across the Sector enabling opportunities for programmers and artists to pitch new ideas and network. Whilst we welcome returning to a physical delivery with delegates on site, we again continued a digital aspect to the showcase to make it more accessible.

28. XTRAX Delegates represented 15 different countries with 159 registered delegates, 156 online delegates. 98% of delegates said the showcase helped them to make new contacts

and network with UK and international colleagues. 95% of delegates rated the quality of the content as good or excellent.

## **Other Events in 2022**

29. An extensive programme of community Jubilee events and activities were support this year as part of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations, details were provided in an earlier Cabinet report, dated 21<sup>st</sup> April 2022.
30. The Council's Specialist Markets programme was delivered in full in 2022 and included two Chic Vintique Fairs, Records Fair, Kapow and a Stockton & Darlington Railway Market. We also supported JPC's Supercar Saturday event which takes place in Stockton Town Centre. Whilst audience numbers for the commercial specialist markets were very good in the first half of the year, with traders reporting positive sales and footfall, there was a noticeable decline in both attendees and spend later in the year, which coincides with rising energy and inflation costs.
31. The Fire Engine and Vintage Vehicle Rally had to be cancelled on the second day of delivery this year due to severe weather conditions. This event is delivered within the grounds of Preston Park, on its greenfield site and this, together with the number of temporary structures and fairground rides used, make the event very susceptible to poor weather, particularly high winds and heavy rainfall. The 2019 event was also cancelled due to weather.
32. The popular Preston Park Halloween Spooky Walk event was a sell out for the third year in succession. We sold 3,400 tickets, with tickets for the younger session selling out in under 2 days. Halloween is a 'park and ride' event and we offer a free bus service which covers Thornaby, Ingleby Barwick, Yarm, Stockton and Billingham. Take up for the bus service for 2022 was 67% (2,283 people) which is consistent with 2021 figures, which was recorded at 66% (2,100 people)
33. We have also supported a number of significant events across the Borough, including Tees Regatta, Ingleby Barwick Family Fun Day, Thornafest, Yarm Fair and Norton Advent Trail. We collaborated with ARC to support the popular Festival of Light & Colour, celebrating Diwali.
34. As mentioned earlier in the report, we had a huge demand from residents, community groups and organisation who wanted to stage street parties and other community events to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. The Council also continues to support Remembrance Sunday events which are growing in number and scale across the 6 towns.

## **Stockton Sparkles 2022**

35. Stockton Sparkles took place from the 24<sup>th</sup> of November to the 4<sup>th</sup> of December with a full programme of activities, including a spectacular light switch-on event which attracted an audience of approx. 4,000 people. There was a free Victorian Fair on the first weekend, which continues to be extremely popular with families and residents, the operator reporting 15,800 rides over 4 days. There was also free face painting over the weekend when the Victoria Fair was operational.
36. We held a number of wreath making workshops in our Christmas Tipi, as well as stories with Santa sessions, which were both free. These activities were very popular, and all slots were taken across the four days.
37. We significantly enhanced our Sparkles Christmas Market offer this year using our new wooden cabins, which showcased festive goods and crafts more effectively. We increased

the number of traders from 16 in (2021) to 22 (2022) and we had a reserve list of traders, who wanted to take part in this event. The quality of goods, food and crafts was high, some traders had to replenish their stock several times over the course of the weekend due to high demand. Visitor numbers were estimated at 2,000 per day over the 4 days.

38. In addition, and new for 2022, we introduced a fire show performance by 'La Flamo' on the Friday evening of the Sparkles Christmas Market. Footfall at this event was higher than anticipated (est.1,000) and although the show was well received, there were some issues with sight lines as we had only planned a modest show.
39. This was the second year of our Sparkles Lantern Parade, which takes place early evening on the last day of the Sparkles Christmas Market. This event is well attended (est.2,500) by families, with over 800 school children and community groups taking part in the parade.
40. Overall, we have delivered and supported an extensive programme of events and activities, attracting great audience numbers and achieving high satisfaction levels. There continues to be a growing appetite for event work, not only for the large-scale events but also at a more localised level. This was clearly demonstrated during the Platinum Jubilee celebrations and the many Christmas events and activities that took place across the 6 towns.
41. Moving into 2023, the Council is committed to retaining its leadership role and further developing Stockton's reputation as a creative and dynamic events Borough. We recognised that a creative arts and events programme has many benefits to both the community and economy, and can attract high levels of satisfaction, improve well-being, increase 'direct' spend in the area and generally promote the Borough as a great place for residents, businesses and visitors alike.

### **Memorial lighting calendar 2023**

42. 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 2022 memorial lighting calendar has been delivered
43. This report invites Cabinet to agree the programme for 2023, 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.
44. 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 therefore includes suggested dates for each event and may be subject to minor changes.

### **COMMUNITY IMPACT IMPLICATIONS**

45. The events programme is diverse and designed to reflect the interests of different communities. For our large-scale events we capture data about the make up of our audiences and SIRF 2022 showed that audience members describing themselves as from minority ethnic or non-white British communities represented a greater proportion of the

visitors than for the local population as a whole. Every effort is also 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.

46. 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**

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

### **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

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

### **RISK ASSESSMENT**

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

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

50. 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. Our events are crucial to our ambition to create a place that is clean, vibrant and attractive.

### **CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS**

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

### **CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS**

52. 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 its primary function is to report on the outcome of events already staged.

53. There has been consultation with the Cabinet portfolio holder for Health, Culture & Leisure in the development of the draft memorial lighting calendar.

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Education related? No

Background Papers

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors:

Property

## APPENDIX A

## DRAFT MEMORIAL LIGHTING SCHEME 2023/24

DATE	EVENT	LIGHTING COLOUR	CAMPAIGNS
Monday 16 January	Turn Blue Monday Bright	Orange	Local
Friday 27 January	Holocaust Memorial Day	Purple	National
Wednesday 1 February	LGBT+ History Month	Multi	Catch All
Saturday 4 February	World Cancer Day	Orange	Catch All
Monday 27 February	Fairtrade Fortnight	Blue-Green	National
Wednesday 8 March	International Women's Day	White/Purple/ Green	National
Thursday 23 March	National Day of Reflection	Yellow	National/ Time Limited
Saturday 25 March	Earth Hour (8.30pm-9.30pm)	Switched off	National
Sunday 2 April	Autism Acceptance Day	Gold	SBC Autism Friendly Town Centre
Sunday 23 April	St George's Day	Red/White	Saint Day
Saturday 6 <sup>th</sup> May	The King's Coronation	TBC	National
Monday 15 May	National Dementia Action Week	Purple	National SBC Awareness campaign
Thursday 1 June	National Volunteering Week	Red/Purple	National
Monday 5 <sup>th</sup> June DATE TBC	National Carers Week	Blue	National
Saturday 24 June	Armed Forces Day	Red/White/ Blue	National
Monday 4 September	World Sexual Health Awareness Day	Orange/Blue	Catch All
Sunday 1 October	Stoptober (Stop Smoking Campaign)	Red	National



Monday 9 October	Baby Loss Awareness Week	Pink/Blue	Catch All
Tuesday 10 October	World Mental Health Day	Purple	Catch All
Friday 20 October	Show Racism the Red Card	Red	National SBC Campaign
Saturday 11 November	Remembrance Day	Red	National
Tuesday 14 November	World Diabetes Day	Blue	National
Saturday 25 November	International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women	Orange	Catch All