

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No. 7

meeting date: 17th OCTOBER 2017
title: BEATS FOR CANCER EVENT IN CLITHEROE CASTLE GROUNDS
submitted by: JOHN HEAP, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
principal author: MARK BEVERIDGE, HEAD OF CULTURAL AND LEISURE SERVICES

1 PURPOSE

1.1 A request has been submitted to hold a music event in the Castle Grounds for Saturday 18th August, 2018. This committee approved delegated powers to the Director of Community Services in September 2014, to work with event operators to provide a range of annual events in the borough, to achieve a positive economic impact and help to promote the area from a tourism perspective (Minute 197, No. 2, September 2nd, 2014). This report is submitted because of the nature of the event proposed and the potential impact for local residents.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities

- Community Objectives – To sustain a strong and prosperous Ribble Valley
- Corporate Priorities - To encourage economic development throughout the borough, with specific focus on tourism
- Other Considerations – To develop, with relevant partners, measures to support the visitor economy

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 The organisers are local people, who have held similar events since 2014 based in the Castle at the bandstand. The event involves DJs playing dance music; no live acts have previously played, though that is proposed to change for 2018. In the first 2 years it ran as a free to attend event and people made donations, 2016 the event was ticketed. The proceeds from the event are donated to cancer charities. In 2017 that sum was approximately £20,000.

2.2 The crowd capacity for 2017 was 3,000. This figure is proposed to be maintained for 2018. The hire period will commence in the week before the event, plus a couple of days following the event to de-rig the equipment.

2.3 An admission charge is again proposed; this will be up to £25 per ticket. To control entry organisers need to place a fence around the event area of the bandstand and the grass banking and some of the grass area alongside the bandstand for food and drink outlets, plus the labyrinth and approximately one third of the field area. Access will be limited to ticketholders to this area, for the whole of Saturday, 18th August.

2.4 The current normal hire charge for the bandstand is £98 per day (due to rise for 2018), plus any additional costs associated with any work if the Council were to be asked to help with the set up or clear out, together with a refundable deposit held to cover any damage to the site. In previous years the Council has for a fee, collected

the bags of rubbish, once the organisers have cleaned the event area, it is expected that this will happen again next year. The event uses much more than simply the bandstand, last year around half the Castle field was used along with the banking above the bandstand and the labyrinth, for which a fee of £250 plus the PRS fee was levied.

- 2.5 The organisers will need to apply for their own Premises Licence to enable them to stage the event, which will cover the sale of alcohol.

3 ISSUES

- 3.1 The central location and the impact on local residents is the most significant issue arising from staging the event. In 2017 there were 12 noise complaints from around the town. This resulted in an Environmental Health Officer being called out to assess the noise from the event on Saturday evening. The very nature of the music played which is heavily base note driven and repetitive in nature, makes it more intrusive than would be the case with an event which had more variety, though obviously once music is amplified within the confines of the Castle grounds it will impact on local residents. The children's play area has been left open through the event, although there were some users who expressed concerns that their children were uncomfortable with the music volume which cut their visit short. Reports have been requested from the sound engineers who monitored the sound throughout the event on behalf of the organisers, as part of their licence condition, however to date nothing has been received. This monitoring ought to have taken place at different times and locations to help ensure the music did not exceed certain defined limits.
- 3.2 During the 2017 event there were for four separate 999 calls made for assistance by the organisers, due to attendees at the event suffering from the effects of alcohol or illegal substances. Of these 3 resulted in an ambulance taking a young person to the Blackburn Royal Infirmary, which obviously was of great concern to the NW Ambulance Service, due to the impact on their resources for other emergency calls on a Saturday evening.
- 3.3 The bandstand area itself, together with the footpaths surrounding it and part of the Castle field would be out of use for the duration of the event, with some disturbance in the set up and de-rig periods. A fence around the space to control access is used which limits access through the grounds. Therefore public access would be restricted to the museum side of the Castle and part of the field not enclosed by the fence. Access to the Castle itself and the keep will be maintained until around 5pm on the 18th, after this time the area will be closed off to avoid any safety issues arising with people gathering there to watch the event without payment.
- 3.4 Road closures have not previously been required to stage the event; the number of people arriving would be spread across the day, although the peak load is expected in the evening. Although it is difficult to determine what the largest number in attendance at any one time would be. The event organisers will provide the stewarding and deal with litter arising from the event. Parking in the immediate area could be at a premium, because no on-site provision can be made. Although in previous years the age profile has been such that most people have attended without cars.
- 3.5 In 2017 the organisers were asked to apply for their own Premises Licence to stage the event for the period including the set up and breakdown of the area. That would be suggested again, if the event is approved and will be subject to approval from the Councils Licencing Committee.

- 3.6 The event would need to be considered by the RVSAG, if committee approve the event to be staged. The emergency services and LCC would then have their own input into the plans the organisers present for staging the event.
- 3.7 The event because of the nature of the music will attract a predominantly young audience, although the organisers are hoping to attract a family based audience during the day time as in previous years. In the evening, control of the audience and dispersal will need to be a key element of the event safety plan. Given the audience profile, this will result in a high level of alcohol consumption and carries the risk of substance abuse.
- 3.8 The organisers are local people who are doing it for charitable purposes and if significant issues arise with the event, it could be an issue as they may not have the resources to rectify them. (There are no plans to create an organisation or company to run the event). That was certainly the case this year when the emergency service had to respond to the incidents which arose.
- 3.9 The event will require some preparatory work by the organisers to facilitate staging it. This will include delivery of equipment, such as extra staging, marquees/gazebos and fencing. Due to ground conditions in the summer of 2017, the organisers were asked to provide ground protection for the grass areas, even with this it was clear an event had been staged in the area following the weekend. Given the footfall and vehicle traffic that was inevitable. Although the organisers did their best to minimise this, there has still been an impact on the field.
- 3.10 There is no specific fee for the area required, commercial use fees are set depending upon the nature of the event, the normal bandstand fee is £98 per day (2017 prices), the cost of the field is £380.70 site fee plus £142.10 per day for a fair/circus, PRS (Performing Rights Society) is £371.70. Therefore, if approved it is proposed to charge a fee of £750 for the event plus the PRS fee, which the Council is charged by PRS for the music played. In addition a refundable deposit of £1,500 will be requested to cover any damage arising from staging the event. Although the organisers may ask to provide their own volunteers to reinstate the ground, experience has shown that the final product is not necessarily to the standard we would expect, the deposit is used for that purpose.
- 3.11 If this were a purely commercial event the hire fee would be in the region of £3,000 - £5000 per day. The rationale for not charging the event such a figure is because it is for charitable purposes. Although the organisers themselves are not a constituted as a registered charity, they are staging the event to aid cancer charities.

4 RISK ASSESSMENT

The approval of this report may have the following implications

- Resources – The event discussed would not be underwritten by the Council, nor promoted as such, it would be on Council land, if required the Council would charge for any services required of it. Reinstatement following the event will need to be paid for, hence the deposit required.
- Technical, Environmental and Legal – Events by their nature have some impact; this event would need to be considered by RVSAG during the development stage if approval is granted by the Committee. In addition the organisers will need to apply for their own premises licence to stage the event.

- Reputation – Tourism is an integral part of the Borough's offer and events that are well run and of high quality will help to promote the Borough and the businesses based within it. The 2 primary risks are anti-social behaviour in the evening associated with the consumption and use of alcohol &/or illegal substances, either from ticket holders or people who go the castle and stay outside of the perimeter fence to enjoy the music played. As landowner and the body which responds to noise complaints, the Council could be criticised for the adverse impact on the quality of life people suffer from the event being staged in the middle of a predominantly residential area. This was the case this year from some of the complainants.
- Equality and Diversity - None

5 RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

- 5.1 Consider the request and determine whether to approve or reject the event being staged on the Castle field.
- 5.2 If approved, request the organisers to apply for their own Premises Licence and subject the event for consideration by the Ribble Valley Safety Advisory Group.
- 5.2 If approved, consider the recommended charge to be levied for the hire, a fee of £750 is proposed, plus the PRS fee and a refundable deposit of £1500.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

Agenda Item 5, Community Services Committee 2nd September, 2014
For further information please ask for Mark Beveridge, extension 4479.