



REPORT FOR DECISION

Item No:- ME23/015

Committee:-	Markets and Events Committee
Date:-	4 th October 2023
Author:-	Martin Hammond, Clerk
Report Title:-	Collaboration on Events in Kettering
Wards Affected:-	All

1. Purpose of Report

To seek members' views about ways in which the Town Council can bring together key organisations providing events or venues to improve collaborative working and potentially to share resources.

2. Recommendations

Members views are sought on the proposals below

3. Information

- 3.1. The Town Council has developed a programme of events in 2023 which has been broadly successful, but it has done so at the limit of its capacity. Further events are being considered for 2024, which will require some increase in capacity and this is reflected in reports to Finance and Governance and Council this autumn addressing next year's budget.
- 3.2. However, the Town Council has largely acted in isolation in developing its event programme and has been reactive when others have approached it for support. The prime example of that is Kettfest but there are other events, - the Literary Festival provided by the Civic Society, events run by the St Andrews Arts centre - which compete for space with ours, and sometimes bump into each other in scheduling terms.
- 3.3. One of the other funders of events activity to date has been the Kettering Cultural Consortium (KCC). That has funded a number of events and projects over the last three years by using money originally provided by English Heritage as part of a package of town centre revitalisation secured by the former KBC. This money has

been curated but not controlled by NNC. It has, in 2023, for example, funded Kettfest and the Literary Festival. That funding expires in March 2024.

3.4. It is also fair to say that the KCC has a small active membership, which currently comprises the Civic Society, The Friends of the Art Gallery and Library, Wicksteed Park, and Picture the Difference CIC, and which is supported by NNC through a post which also ends in March 2024. It is likely in this scenario that the KCC would expire at the same time.

3.5. The opportunity exists to revitalise and widen the membership of the KCC so that it becomes a more proactive body, able to bring together venues and events organisers and to develop a collaborative approach between providers, and potentially to share resources.

3.6. A new set of objectives or terms of reference could include the following:

- To share information about events planning across town
- To collaborate on the provision of events and co-design events and/or programmes of events
- To make bids for external funding
- To promote events and venues
- To support specific projects

3.7. A refreshed membership could include:-

- Kettering Town Council as convener and, if agreed, as chair
- NNC as a venue and event provider (maybe represented by Cornerstone or the Library/Gallery teams)
- Civic Society as event organiser and promoter
- Lighthouse Theatre; venue and event provider
- Wicksteed Park, venue and event provider
- BVHA as potential venue and event provider
- St Andrews Art Centre as venue and event provider
- Kettering and District Arts Society as event organiser and provider
- Friends of the Art Gallery and Library as event organiser and provider
- Picture the Difference as event organiser and promoter
- ISM Music Academy as an event promoter and organiser

3.8. If the Town Council was to convene this group, then there are some resource implications discussed below, but the main gain would be to widen the opportunity for engagement with organisations across town with the same objective, and join up what is currently silo working on events. Some pooling of effort would increase capacity but also enable the Council to be less reactive and more proactive in planning events.

4. Consultation and Engagement

Exploratory conversations are being held with potential new and existing members of the KCC to gauge the support for this idea and a more formal consultation could take place if members supported the idea.

5. Finance, Legal and Resource Implications

There is a financial gap created when the cultural consortium's money disappears in March 2024. The KCC had a £100,000 budget spread over three years. To maintain events like Kettfest and a literary festival therefore requires someone to step in. If the Town Council was to provide a sum of money to support the KCC that would provide some leverage and part replace the monies the town has enjoyed to date. A figure of £10,000 is proposed. The new KCC would need to seek external funds to top this up.

6. Climate Change Implications

Local events and activities which occur on people's doorsteps reduces travel and improves social cohesion, circulates money within the local economy and can also enable local messages about greener outcomes to be better circulated.

7. Policy Implications

The Council's policy is to support the economic vitality of the town centre, and to provide a range of events and activities for local people which not only support the town centre but provide interest, physical activities, social cohesion, improved mental health and which gives local artists, entertainers and businesses and traders opportunities to expand their reach.

Background Papers

none

