

REPORT TO EVENTS WORKING GROUP

FOOD AND DRINK FESTIVAL PROPOSAL

Report Reference E-21-06
Meeting Date 12th July 2021
Agenda Item 10
Prepared by Events Officer



1.0 BACKGROUND

Knutsford already benefits from a reputation as a foody town, having previously been described as the gastro-capital of Cheshire due to the concentration of restaurants and food businesses. Food festivals have formed a key part of food tourism in towns across the UK and there are a number of small towns which boast major food festival events (e.g. Ludlow and Thame). The Town Council has previously agreed that a Food Festival could be good for Knutsford, providing an additional tourist attraction to support the town centre and showcasing local businesses.

The Events Officer and Town Clerk and have discussed how a Knutsford Food Festival could be delivered and this report outlines a proposed initial event for 2022. The Events Officer undertook research into food festivals in the UK to develop an initial proposal. The initial brief for the event has been to start small with a single day event, aim for an event which does not require road closures and deliver an event which at a minimum breaks even but aims for a surplus to contribute towards the council's wider events programme.

2.0 PROPOSED EVENT

2.1 OVERVIEW

It is proposed that a one-day food and drink festival be held in summer 2022; the aim of the event would be to promote the many food and drink establishments which Knutsford is home to, as well as many local artisan food and drink traders who offer local speciality products in a combined event. The intention would be to encourage additional footfall and tourism to the town centre.

The event would be held on a Saturday, with the potential dates of August 13th or August 20th to be considered. August has been chosen to offer an attraction during a month where there are usually few events or initiatives happening; it would provide an event for local residents during the summer period and a tourist pull for those holidaying in the UK.

The event would be a free to attend non-ticketed festival and attendees would be encouraged to visit local food and drink businesses as part of the festival.

2.2 CORE OF THE INITIAL EVENT

The initial event would include a market consisting of traders selling speciality food and drink products, similar to those exhibited at the Christmas Market. The market would take place at St John's Church

which would accommodate around 30-40 traders. Holding the market indoors negates the need for road closures and limits the external equipment hire required, as traders can pitch on tables without need for gazebo cover as opposed to outdoor markets. The stalls would be charged at a similar rate to the Christmas Market which would generate income for the event to cover the costs. The market would operate between around 10am – 5pm.

A food and drink arena would be created on Silk Mill Street car park, consisting of street food and drink vendors, a small 2mx3m stage for live entertainment and a seating area with tables and benches. This will offer a festival feel and entertainment aspect to the event which will help to attract attendees to the wider event. These stalls could consist of a mixture of local businesses offering their products as well as local traders. The area would operate between 12pm to 6pm, encouraging visitors to frequent restaurants and bars in the evening.

Cooking demos and talks with chefs from local restaurants could be held at Knutsford Little Theatre, which accommodates this well with the theatre style seating. These demonstrations could prepare dishes readily available at local restaurants which will promote the restaurants and provide samples of the dishes to promote them.

Special food and drink festival Taste Knutsford tours would be organised to coincide with the event which will promote local food and drink establishments and generate footfall to the event, as well as promoting the Taste Knutsford initiative.

Food and drink related displays would be encouraged in shop windows to tie the whole town in with the event theme; displays could also be installed in empty units such as the 60 King Street window.

An event map would be produced as part of the marketing campaign which would show the locations of the various event features and promote local food businesses.

2.3 ADDITIONAL / FUTURE ELEMENTS

The following ideas may also be included or could be considered for future growth of the event.

- 1) Local restaurants, cafes, pubs and bars would be encouraged to offer tasters, either inside or outside of their restaurant or around different event venues including the food market to promote their products and services.
- 2) A special Food and Drink Festival Bake-Off competition could be organised; previously bake-off competitions had been held at Knutsford Market Hall at easter and Christmas time, which proved popular. A cooking competition could coincide, and these could be judged by local foodies or reps from local restaurants.
- 3) Children's cookery or baking workshops could be held as a way to engage local families in the event and build interest in cooking with the children as well as educating them about food. These workshops would be held at an indoor venue such as one of the churches.

3.0 FINANCE

The proposed budget for the event is as follows:

Code	Cost Line	Budget
1200	Market Stall Income	3,580
1315	Advertising Income	600
	<i>Total Income</i>	4,180
4151	Venue Hire Costs	425
4180	External Contractors	310
4255	Events Costs	1,750
4300	Marketing and Publicity	1,100
	<i>Total Expenditure</i>	3,585
	<i>Net Surplus</i>	595

The income would be derived from stall fees for the indoor market and outdoor food arena; the proposed cost would be £75 for the indoor market and £95 for the food arena. Advertising would be sold on the festival map.

The costs of the event include room hire, events costs such as performers, staging and table hirer and first aid provision. A marketing budget includes for the design of event materials, print and online social media advertising.

4.0 FINANCIAL RISK ASSESSMENT

Likelihood (Unlikely = 1, Likely = 2, Very Likely = 3) Impact (Low = 1, Moderate = 2, High = 3). Score = Likelihood x Impact.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Score	Mitigation / Explanation
Cost escalation	1	2	2	Budgeted costs are based on costs incurred from the council's contractors for similar events and allows for a degree of contingency.
Failure to attract traders	1	3	3	Council is building on the success of its Christmas Market which has a strong database of traders. Cheshire has a strong pool of food and drink retailers which significantly exceeds the number of stalls available.
Excessive Officer Workload	1	3	3	The event has been timed in consideration of other planned events and the Town Clerk believes it is achievable with efficient planning demonstrated by the Events Officer.
Injury to attendees	1	2	2	Risk assessments will be undertaken of all activity, external contractors and traders will risk assess own activity. Event will be covered under the council's existing insurance.
Coronavirus	1	3	3	It is considered unlikely that there will be coronavirus restrictions which would restrict the event in 2022.

