

# REPORT TO EVENTS AND TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE EVENTS UPDATES AND FORWARD PLANNING



<b>Report Reference</b>	E-21-11
<b>Meeting Date</b>	13 <sup>th</sup> September
<b>Agenda Item</b>	9
<b>Prepared by</b>	Events Officer

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## 1.0 PUMPKIN PATH

The Knutsford Pumpkin Path has traditionally been held on Halloween evening, 31<sup>st</sup> October. In 2021, Halloween falls on a Sunday; feedback from local businesses has suggested that Sunday would not be a preferable date for the event, as many shops are closed. It is also the last day of the half term holiday and as such some parents may not want to bring their children out on this evening.

The Events Officer put together a small focus group to discuss the event and potential changes, including the date change, and to ascertain what it is about the event that is most attractive. Feedback from local parents suggested that the entertainment during the event is a big draw, as well as the trail itself. As the event has grown in popularity, the trail has become harder to complete as large crowds make it difficult to see the pumpkins in windows if those businesses are handing out sweets. It was suggested that separating the pumpkins out in some way would be beneficial, and some signposting to help identify where the pumpkins are would also be helpful as many non-pumpkin hosts also have pumpkins in their windows as part of Halloween displays. Designated goody stations may work, though feedback suggested the trick or treat element of the event was also popular as it was a replacement to going trick or treating in the community. Better signposting of the performance times would be helpful around the event site. A small charge to attend the event would most likely not put off most attendees. The date change was mentioned and there was support for the event being held on a Saturday instead.

As such, the event will be moved to Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> October, so that the event can continue to better support our town centre businesses and cater better to parents. The Events Officer will explore some potential changes to the event to better signpost the pumpkins and entertainment timings. A small charge could be trialled to help recuperate income for the event and to potentially help control numbers attending the event. Forms could be purchased from the council in advance to help reduce queues on the event evening and the committee's view on this is invited.

## 2.0 KNUTSFORD MUSIC FESTIVAL

Feedback from the music festival has been extremely positive. Positive comments were received by the Events Officer, Civic Events Officer and Cllrs Gardiner, Malloy and Power during the festival weekend. Attendance numbers at the music on the moor event were slightly lower than usual, though this may be due to the poor weather. Attendance at both folk evenings at St Johns Church were fantastic, with 110 on Friday evening and 130 on Saturday evening.

The Events Officer has discussed 2022 dates with Mark Radcliffe and Cllr Houghton, and these have

been agreed as 10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> June 2022. Initial arrangements for the 2022 event will begin over the winter. A tender for the production side of the event will be prepared for release shortly with aims to agree a flexible three-year contract period for the production of the event to offer price stability.

### **3.0 LANTERN PARADE & CRIB SERVICE**

The Lantern Parade and Crib Service have been moved from Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> December to Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> December due to a clash in the Town Mayor's diary. The events will be organised as previous with the parade leaving from Moorside at 5pm and arriving outside the Crib at approx. 5.20pm. The Crib Service will follow at approx. 5.35pm. City of Chester Brass Band will lead the parade and accompany the following service.

### **4.0 KNUTSFORD ART TRAIL**

Feedback from the Art Trail was positive and there is support for the event to be held again in 2022. It is proposed that the event include a small market area either in the town centre or at an indoor venue, and more businesses would be encouraged to install window displays to add more attraction to the event. Walk-in exhibitions may also be organised for the event subject to interest and availability.

It is proposed that the event is held as a one-day event on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> April 2022 (rather than a two day event as in 2021). The event would run across the whole day for example from 10am – 5pm.

### **5.0 FOOD & DRINK FESTIVAL**

The committee previously agreed plans for a one-day food and drink festival to be trialed in 2022. The proposed date for this event is Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> August 2022. No other events currently run in August so this would help to draw people to the town in an otherwise potentially quiet month and would be appropriate in terms of officer resource to organise the event. Plans for the event would be confirmed early 2022.