

REPORT TO EVENTS AND TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE REFRESH KNUTSFORD



Report Reference	E-21-17
Meeting Date	8 th November
Agenda Item	9
Prepared by	Town Clerk

1.0 BACKGROUND

On September 11th, the council held ReFresh Knutsford, a community ‘freshers’ fair which aimed to connect residents with community/social organisations operating in the town. The idea behind the event was to help residents discover what organisations are on their doorstep with the intention of promoting volunteering, supporting the civil society network and simultaneously providing wellbeing benefits for the individuals involved.

Over 50 organisations participated across two venues (St John’s Church and Knutsford Methodist Church) and the event ran from 1-3pm.

Feedback from organisations which participated was extremely positive. Of the 40 respondents, 92% felt the duration was right, 80% felt it was worthwhile for their organisation and 95% would take part again if the event was repeated. Comments from organisations attending included:

- Excellent - well done for organising. Hope that it can be repeated next year. I know of several organisations who would have liked to have been there, but it was full. I think main stream political organisations and faith organisations should be included as they make an important contribution to the fabric of the community. Maybe need a third venue to accommodate everyone!
- I liked it a lot, a great opportunity to tell people about what we are doing, and to gather support, ideas and contacts, while also meeting lots of other community groups
- Good idea but footfall too low. Didn’t think it was advertised sufficiently beforehand.
- The set up was well organised, there was a large number of stalls, but poor attendance by the public. As an initiative to bring community together I think this was a great idea and I would want to see this again.
- Well attended, good range of different groups attending. Good to see what is available in Knutsford
- It was enjoyable to be there manning our stall for a bit, and there was quite a buzz there!

Constructive feedback was that refreshment should be on offer in St John’s Church like they were in Knutsford Methodist Church, that promotion of the event could have been improved, that room layouts could be improved and that more signage in the town centre directing people to the venues would be beneficial.

The event was not included in the 2021/22 committee budget as it had been agreed as an output of the COVID recovery surveys. The event was delivered for £690, primarily comprising publicity and venue hire. When setting the committee budget for 2022/23 the committee had not reviewed the event so no provision has been made.

2.0 2022 EVENT

It is considered that the event would develop well as an annual community event and that the model created in 2021 would work well.

The event would provide a focused annual opportunity for organisations to market themselves and engage with residents and for residents (both new and old whose circumstances change / seek new activity) to discover organisations.

The event would benefit from increased presence, such as advance banners and on-the-day signage to connect different venues.

The committee may consider an amendment to its draft 2022/23 budget to make provision for the event. A budget of £1,000 is recommended to cover marketing, venue hire and incidental costs. The committee could agree to the event with a sponsorship target to cover some/all costs.

3.0 DECISION REQUIRED

The committee should consider if it wishes to repeat ReFresh Knutsford in 2022.