

REPORT TO EVENTS COMMITTEE

RECENT AND UPCOMING EVENTS SEPTEMBER 2024

Report Reference E-24-04
Meeting Date 30th September 2024
Agenda Item 6
Prepared by Events Manager



1.0 INTRODUCTION

Since the previous committee meeting (July 2024) the following events have taken place:

- Heritage Open Days – 6th – 8th September
- Picnic in the Park – 22nd September

The current planned events in the 2024 calendar year are:

- Remembrance Sunday – 10th November
- Christmas Market Weekend – 30th November/1st December
- Crib Service – 7th December

Outline plans for the upcoming events will be provided in the report below to brief committee members.

2.0 REVIEW OF RECENT EVENTS

2.1 HERITAGE OPEN DAYS

Whilst there have been some Heritage Open Days events in Knutsford for a number of years, this year saw the Town Council lead a coordinated programme of activity and marketing for the event as a town-wide initiative.

A working group was set up to bring together the interested facilitators of the events. This worked very well, and the plan would be to advertise the working group earlier on next year, springtime. This will enable the facilitators to have enough time to plan the individual events and to ensure that we have enough time to get the loaded onto the system.

The marketing for the event received additional funding which meant that we were able to create a stand-alone brand with assets and collateral which can be used in the future, reducing the event cost significantly for the future.

The council was supported in the delivery by Knutsford Hosts and we had a great mix of events with many being fully booked -

Event	Number of attendees	Bookings
Booths Park Fri am	14	Fully booked

Booths Park Fri pm	14	Fully booked
Our Streets Through Time	31	Booking not required
Knutsford Tales of War Fri am	8	Not fully booked
Knutsford Tales of War Fri pm	12	Not fully booked
Courthouse Sat am	12	Fully booked
Courthouse Sat pm	12	Fully booked
Courthouse Sun pm	12	Fully booked
Old School	28	Fully booked
Coaching Inns Walk 11am	10	Fully booked
Coaching Inns Walk 1pm	10 (a couple of last minute drop outs)	Fully booked
Brook Street Chapel	180-200 (3/4 times the numbers they usually get for HODs)	Open over 2.5 days
Tabley House	150 (they would usually expect around 15 visitors over Fri & Sat)	Open over 2 days
Cross Town Tour	11	Not fully booked
St Johns Church Tue	7	Not fully booked
St Johns Church Thur	2	Not fully booked
Heritage Centre	Awaiting numbers	Booking not required

Feedback was positive with several people making suggestions for events and hoping to join the working group next year.

- *“Really nice event, lots of information to take in, very enjoyable. George was a fantastic host”*
- *“Well organised and informative”*
- *“The event was fantastic. George was a brilliant host, very passionate about the subject and history of Knutsford”*
- *“It was very insightful to learn about Knutsford’s social history”*
- *“Very interesting, lots of variety, guide very informative. Lovely weather!”*
- *“An enjoyable afternoon. The volunteers were very friendly and knowledgeable”*
- *“A lovely day out learning about local history”*

2.2 PICNIC IN THE PARK

Picnic in the Park, a community focused event, took place on St Helena’s Field in Longridge. There was a weather warning for the day however strong winds were not forecast so the event went ahead.

The open theatre actors were resourceful, and we managed to ensure that the performances could go ahead, which were well received by those in attendance.

We had several local community groups showcasing and we also raised money for the Mayor’s Charities alongside 19 stalls featuring Everybody Leisure, Manchester Airport, NWAA. Friends of St Johns Wood and many more.

Unfortunately, the bug hotel was vandalised and set on fire on Friday night which meant we were unable to go ahead with the activity. This was also made difficult as we had to use the tent which had been allocated to this for those watching the theatre performances.

Despite the weather conditions, people came out and the Events Manager was approached by members of the public who thanked the council for putting the event on at the site and said how good it was for the area. The aim of the event was to create events in the green spaces of the town which are not in the town centre, and this was achieved.

We received positive comments from community groups and public who have all said they would like to attend/participate again. Despite the weather, the BBQ went well! As a team we have looked at ways to 'weatherproof' us for future events which includes the proposed purchase of some marquee style tents which could be used as seating areas out of bad weather.

It is proposed that this event feature in the 2025 calendar and the plan is that it will remain on the field in Longridge.

3.0 FORTHCOMING EVENTS

3.1 CHRISTMAS MARKET WEEKEND

Plans for this year's Christmas Markets are well underway and we currently have two full weekend stalls and nine Saturday stalls available.

The Events Manager has met with the team from Buddha Group and we have discussed improving our sustainability via battery options for part of the lighting system, changing to biodiesel and not providing any of the traders with electricity. This will also help us to reduce costs.

Following feedback from several sources and our own research we have increased the price of the stalls this year. This will increase the surplus for the event. We have not had any negative feedback from any returning or new traders, and no one has refused to apply for a stall based upon the price increase. We are confident that this increase keeps us competitive with other markets.

We have had some difficulty this year with traders stating that they have been advised by councillors that they do not need to apply and that they will 'sort' a stall for them. All traders are advised that this is not the case and unless we have an application no stalls will be allocated without exception.

Silk FM have been contracted to compere the stage for us for the Christmas Light Switch on and this will hopefully mean that staff can concentrate on the market and also will increase advertising of the event.

4.0 DECISIONS REQUIRED

Report for information, no formal decisions are required. Feedback/ideas on recent and upcoming events is invited.