

STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Date:	Monday, 12 June 2023
Title:	Events Report
Contact Officer:	Venue & Events Officer - Tomas Smith

Background

The Town Council operate and manage outdoor spaces at the Leys, Burwell, Oxlease and St Georges Field, which can be hired by third parties to host their own events. These make up a crucial part of the community engagement for the people of Witney and is intended to offer entertainment throughout the year.

Current Situation

We are currently in the middle of the external events run and supported by Witney Town Council.

- **Hatwell's May Fair:** 15th – 22nd May on the Leys
- **Witney Pride** Saturday 27th May, procession through town centre followed by event on the Leys.
- **Witney Music Festival:** Friday 9th and Saturday 10th June on the Leys
- **OPA Play Day:** Thursday 3rd August on Oxlease
- **Oxford Playhouse outreach tent:** 1st – 2nd July (TBC) held on the Leys.
- **Witney Carnival:** Saturday 8th July with the carnival running through town and culminating on the Leys showground.
- **Witney Feast:** 11th – 12th September on the Leys
- **Circus Ginett,** returning for a third year, they will be on the Leys showground 16th – 22nd October.
- **Remembrance Sunday:** 12th November 2023 Annual Civic Event run by Witney Town Council Officers and staff, supported by Town Councillors and local groups.
- **Civic Reception/Citizen of the Year:** TBC 2024 – usually a Friday in March.

Playhouse Outreach Tent

The Town Council has been approached by Oxford Playhouse to part fund and host their outreach theatre run for children in August. This was supported last year, and the Venue and Events Officer is working to build a relationship with the Oxford Playhouse and their outreach programme which looks to bring additional touring productions to Witney. The Venue and Events Officer is awaiting confirmation from the playhouse to ascertain exact requirements.

Music at the Leys

The Venue and Events Officer has received a request from The Coffee Shed to play live music every Thursday through the summer between 17:30 and 19:30. They ran this event last year, but within Council terms and conditions this is a chargeable event held on the Leys and every booking should be £82.00 as per our agreed charges. This was waived last year with the remit they refrain from using any additional area other than the space currently being used for tables and chairs. This area is on WTC land but historically not charged.

Environmental impact

Having declared a Climate Change Emergency at its Council meeting on 26 June 2019 – with this in mind Councillors should have due regard to the environmental impact of any decisions they make with regard to its facilities and services it operates.

Financial implications

Described here or as stated in the report above.

- Continued maintenance and upkeep of the Town Council run parks and recreational areas.
- Commercial events on Town Council land brings income to the Council while community events (including Witney Music Festival) are supported by the Council due to their wider benefit.
- In 2022, the Playhouse was paid £1,000 for 2 days of performance. This was short notice as they wanted to fill a gap in their calendar so the request could be higher in 2023. The event was funded from budget line 4141/408 – this year the budget is allocated for other community engagement events.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and consider the following:

1. The potential Playhouse event and whether members would like to seek an additional budget of £2,000 towards it and,
2. Allowing the Coffee Shed to promote live music at the Leys at no additional charge.