

HALLS, CEMETERIES & ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE

Date: Monday 8 July 2024
Title: Corn Exchange Business Report
Contact Officer: Deputy Venue & Events Officer

Background

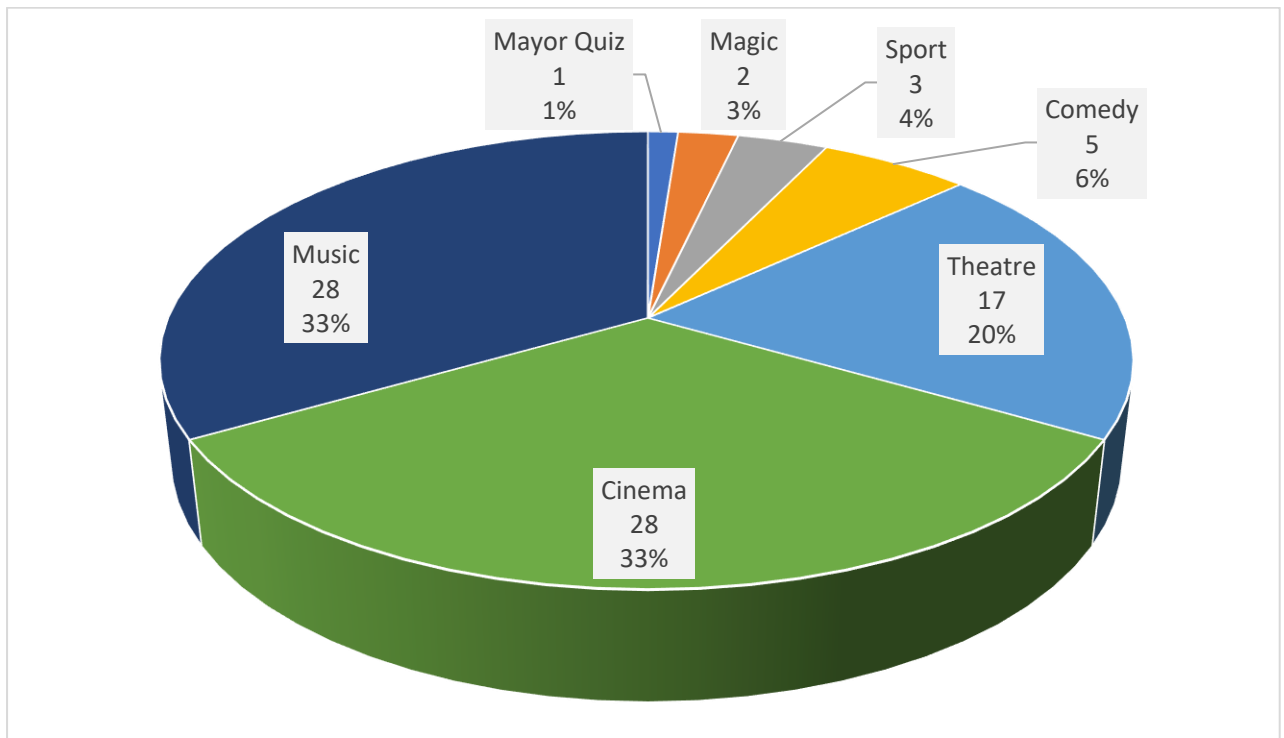
Witney Town Council has an obligation and objectives to provide an affordable, sustainable, inclusive and community arts facility that is valued and supported by the people of Witney and West Oxfordshire.

This includes providing availability to and encourage involvement from the entire community through offering a diverse range of music, arts and cultural events in the Corn Exchange.

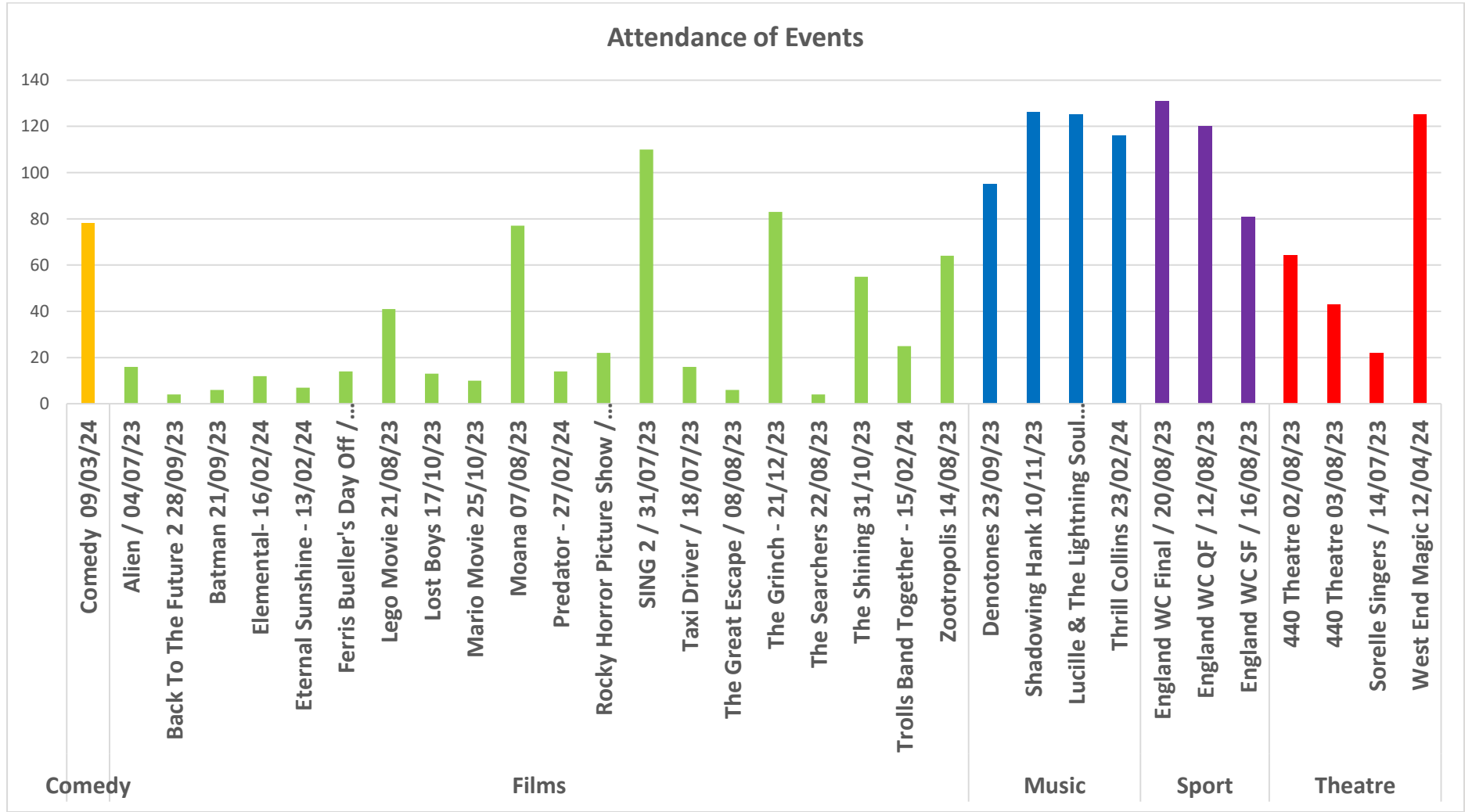
The Council will provide a professional, well-maintained and run hireable space for private events including parties, weddings and conferences.

Current Situation

Over the previous 12 months the chart below demonstrates the usage of the main hall with volumes of events.



The attendance figures of the events are in the table below.



Recent events

England EURO 2024 Screenings

Screenings of England's EURO 2024 matches on The Corn Exchange Cinema Screen were organised targeting local youth football clubs and families. Witney Vikings Football Club were fully engaged advertising directly to their members and publicly on social media and have shown their appreciation for WTC delivering these screenings.

Lots of people have attended The Corn Exchange for the first time due to these screenings, which will help our public awareness going forward.

Excellent social value for the town aligning with the purpose of the Corn Exchange and business plan. Officers have worked hard to ensure that these screenings are delivered to a high standard with improvements made to provide a higher quality picture. The hall contained England flags and a EURO's playlist was created for the bar pre-match to enhance the exciting atmosphere.

University of Gloucestershire Student Project

This project has been completed, with some impressive work submitted by both groups of students. Some of this work, including design and event programming ideas will be considered for use by officers. An invite to attend a council meeting to present their work has not been taken up, but may be an option when they return to university for their final year in September.

Weddings

The Corn Exchange hosted another beautiful wedding reception on Saturday 29th June with a busy evening behind the bar, (£2,500 in bar takings).

Officers have been working alongside Bride & Beautiful events to promote a Wedding Fair at The Corn Exchange on 31st August. 50% of stall holders are booked already and the event will make use of the Main Hall, Gallery Room and 1863 Café & Bar. Revenue streams for this event is via stall holder fees and café & bar sales.

Up-coming Events

- Witney Jazz 1st Friday Every Month
- Golden Era Show 19th July
- Witney Jazz Special 20th July
- Live Music on Square – 12th & 26th July, 9th, 16th, 23rd and 30th August
- Open Mic first Thursday every month (returning in August after general election)
- Over The Hill 26th August
- Wedding Fair 31st August
- Disco Inferno (Buttercross Theatre) 5th – 8th September
- Witney Jazz Special 14th September
- Fistful of Mondays 24th – 28th September

Live Music Outdoors

As covered in the last report, officers are organising music for outside The Corn Exchange for Fridays on evenings where this can move inside if the weather is bad. This is to avoid late cancellations and loss of revenue where cancellation fees could be owed to the artist, as well as preventing a bad reputation for cancelling with late notice. The first dates will be 12th July and 26th July, and acts are being finalised this week.

Smarts fish and chips have agreed to equally share the cost of the live performer (£150) and to co-advertise.

Golden Era Show

The Corn Exchange has a live music show coming up on 19th July with Justin Daish (founder of the popular Shadowing Hank show from last November). Ticket sales have been slower than we hoped at this stage, therefore, Officers will be increasing the focus on targeting the marketing of this show over the next couple of weeks. As mentioned, in previous reports, we are finding ticket sales are coming later than ever, creating an unpredictable environment for ticketed live events.

This show is working on a ticket split with the artist.

Cinema

The classic film club took a forced hiatus due to the screenings of the EURO's, however attendance was starting to pick up. Officers had found that weighting the promotion closer to the date of the screening saw more success and higher attendance. Therefore, plans are in place to do this when the screenings start again.

In the meantime, a one-off special screening of Grease Sing-a-long addition is booked in for 12th July to coincide with Fizzy Friday and Live Music.

Autumn Events Program

The Autumn/Winter season is getting booked up and officers are looking forward to an increased number of live music, theatre shows, and private functions booked in.

Environmental impact

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

The council will encourage people to walk or cycle to these events and noise levels will be kept to a level where not to cause annoyance to neighbouring businesses and residential.

Risk

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

Financial implication

The Corn Exchange is operating to budget with no forecasted risk of annual overspend.

All events will be monitored to ensure any risks associated with financial loss are immediately identified to enable to action to be taken.

Recommendations

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

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