

## STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

---

**Date:** Monday, 21 March 2022

**Title:** Third Party Events

**Contact Officer:** Venue & Events Officer - Tomas Smith

---

### Background

The Town Council has several outdoor spaces which can be hired for the purpose of various events and community engagement. Every year there is a lot of interest in the different events that the Town Council support and put on.

### Current Situation

There are currently nine third-party events either booked or in the process of being booked which will ensure that there is an event almost every month for the remainder of 2022, with the majority of these at the Leys Showground. Below is a list of confirmed bookings the Council has received.

Having liaised with the Maintenance and Environmental Services Officer, except for one Circus booking in September, the Leys Showground will be able to sustain all the applications. The previous administration set a policy of allowing a set amount of time between bookings to ensure the ground had time to recover.

Event Plans and documents relating to all the events will be passed to the Council's Health & Safety consultants to review.

### **May Fair Monday May 16<sup>th</sup> – Monday May 23<sup>rd</sup> Leys Showground**

- Hatwell's Funfair have submitted an event application to run their popular May Fair, there are no problems with this, and the Council looks forwards to welcoming them back to Witney with the fair being run the same as it was in 2021.

### **Witney Music Festival May 27<sup>th</sup> – June 11<sup>th</sup> Culminating on the Leys Showground**

- After a 2-year absence due to the pandemic, Witney Music Festival are looking to return to their annual event. Officers have met with the organisers and the group will be waiting an outcome of a funding request before submitting a formal event application. Please see Appendix A.

### **Witney Pride March and Family Day Saturday May 28<sup>th</sup>, Leys Showground**

- Witney Pride have applied to hold a march down the High Street, over Church Green ending up on the Leys. They have chosen this date so not to clash with Oxford Pride. The event will be marketed as an inclusive day out for all to enjoy with family friendly events being held, music and dancing.

### **OPA Playday Wednesday June 1<sup>st</sup>, QE11 Field Burwell**

- The return of the popular family friendly playday, OPA have agreed to return to Burwell QE11 field to help mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations, which the Council is happy to support. Burwell Hall will also be made available for toilets and fresh water. There is potential to open the bar if deemed appropriate.

### **Jay Miller Circus Monday 20<sup>th</sup> June – Friday 25<sup>th</sup> June, Leys Showground**

- The Council have received an application to hold a new Circus on the Leys, this doesn't present any problems with any other events clashing. All paperwork has been submitted and officers are in the process of reviewing.

### **Witney Carnival Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> July, Leys Showground**

- Witney Carnival wants to return with broadly the same event as was held in 2019 except for a donkey derby. There is already much enthusiasm for carnival floats and the booking of stalls has been made easier and ensures all relevant paperwork is captured at the time. Organisers met with Officers and Witney Carnival Committee will be submitting a full event plan and risk assessment shortly.

### **Witney Feast Monday 12<sup>th</sup> & Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> September, Leys Showground**

- Wilson's Funfair returns with the ever-popular Witney Feast. The event will be run the same as it was in 2021.

### **James Richards Circus Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> September – Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2022**

- An application has been received to hold their Circus on the Leys showground, as the event is a circus not a fair it won't be in violation of agreements on events in the vicinity of Witney Feast. However, the Maintenance and Environmental Services Officer has suggested that this date will be too close to the end of the Witney Feast in order to allow the ground to recover if the ground is in poor condition.

### **Circus Ginnett Monday 17<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> October, Leys Showground**

- Circus Ginnett held their circus on the Leys in 2021 after being let down by another venue, they are keen to make this an annual event. All paperwork has been submitted and officers are in the process of reviewing.

The third-party events bookings are strong for the coming year, and with the bookings coming in, with exception of the established fairs, it would be beneficial to operate on a first come first served policy for people looking to hire the Leys. This will allow for a swift and efficient booking policy and ensure we maximise all new enquiries without having to delay and run the risk of losing the booking.

### **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.

## **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 implications**

Described here or as stated in the report above.

- Witney Music Festival are seeking a Town Council contribution of £10,000 to facilitate the event, which would be paid back afterwards.
- Witney Carnival will be seeking additional funds towards the event, on top of the funds already allocated.

## **Recommendations**

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

1. Confirmation of a first come, first served basis regarding event requests for the same or periods of time which are too close together.
2. The request from Witney Music Festival for a financial contribution and whether a grant application should be presented to the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee.