

STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Date: Monday, 11 July 2022

Title: Third Party & Large Events

Contact Officer: Venue & Events Officer, Tomas Smith

Background

The Town Council operate and manage outdoor spaces 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.

The majority of these events are held on the designated 'events' side of the Leys Recreation Ground.

Current Situation

Following a hiatus with no events during the Covid-19 Pandemic, the Council is currently in the middle of a busy third-party event year and so far, the following events have been welcomed:

- **Hatwell's May Fair**, which was held on the Leys in May
- **Witney Pride** Festival and march which was held on the Leys in May
- **Witney Music Festival** which was held on the Leys in June
- **OPA Play Day** which was held on the QE11 Field at Burwell in June
- **Jay Miller Circus** which was held on the Leys in June
- **Oxford Playhouse** Animal Rocks Touring Tent which was held on the Leys in June.

The Council has received positive feedback regarding all events held so far. A report on the Play Day at Burwell Hall is attached as an appendix to the report.

There was also encouraging feedback from Oxford Playhouse - nearly 600 people visited the tent on the Leys over the two days and organisers advised that people of Witney were really engaging and positive about the experience. They have expressed interest in coming back next year for three days as well as arranging a meeting with the Venue and Events Officer to work on other projects which could take place in the Corn Exchange.

There are also upcoming events running up to the end of October

- **Witney Carnival** which will be held on Saturday 9th July with the carnival running through town and culminating on the Leys showground.
- **Got2b Activity Days** – the summer at The Leys & Burwell QE2 field (as agreed by the Parks & Recreation Committee on 27 June.
- **Witney Feast** which will for two consecutive nights Monday 12th and Tuesday 13th October on the Leys showground, with the Sunday Golden Gallopers Service.

- **Circus Ginett**, returning this year after a successful first year, they will be on the Leys showground 17th - 30th October

All the events that have run or will run this year have expressed interest in returning next year.

In addition, the last ever **Libfest** will be held on the Leys showground from June 23rd – June 25th, 2023. This is the only confirmed booking for 2023 and will result in the circus having to move.

Members should note that due to a previous recommendation and assurances to residents, events should not be held on back-to-back weekends and the Venue & Events Officer will be contacting organisers shortly to ensure early communication on the schedule of events.

The Town Council has also been approached by BBOWT (Berks, Bucks, Oxford Wildlife Trust) who would like to run an information pop up stand on the Leys on Sunday 31st July and Sunday 7th August. This would be a free non trading stand with the purpose of education and information.

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

- Continued maintenance and upkeep of the Town Council run parks and recreational areas.

Recommendations

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

1. To agree that 2022 events can run again next year, if required, providing they can be accommodated.
2. To consider the request from BBOWT to hold a free pop-up education stand at the Leys Recreation Ground during the summer.