

REPORT TO FULL COUNCIL



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Date	21st September 2021
Subject	The Great British Rhythm & Blues Festival 2022

PURPOSE:

1. To consider if the Town Council should reinstate the Great British Rhythm & Blues Festival after the two-year break in the event due to COVID-19 and the implications on the Town Council Budget.
2. To consider the options for a different event such as the Summer Music and Food Festival instead of the Great British Rhythm & Blues Festival and the implications that this will have on the Town Council's budget for the forthcoming year.

BACKGROUND:

3. Colne Town Council took on the running of the Great British Rhythm & Blues Festival in 2016, with the first year of the event run by CTC being 2017.
4. The Council's investment in the event over the three years varied between £60,000 - £68,000.
5. Colne Town Council has been unable to run the festival in 2020 and 2021 due to COVID-19.
6. The events run by Colne Town Council are not a statutory requirement of the Town Council.
7. Colne Town Council has taken on two additional services in the period of time while the festival hasn't taken place (Town Centre Floral displays and running Primet Community Centre), meaning the staffing hours which were originally available for the festival have been reallocated to those services.
8. With Colne Town Council taking on additional services and not increasing the precept the 2020/2021 budget is very tight and with the extra services already taken, the assets transfers being considered, inflation and the Councils ever evolving role, the 2021/2022 budget is not currently in a position of being balanced, although this is being reviewed currently as the budget is set before January 2022.
9. Before Colne Town Council took on the festival, it ran a successful Summer Music and Food Festival within the Town Centre.
10. A provisional budget for the festival and/or the Summer Music and Food festival has been supplied as a supporting document to this report. (Appendix 1 and Appendix 2).

11. Officers have started to plan other events for the next 12-18 months and there has been a noticeable increase in costs of essential elements of all events.
12. The budget originally set for the festivals that had to be cancelled were £50,000 however investigating the current costs and requirements it is felt a budget of £75,000 would be required to do the 2022 festival.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

13. If Colne Town Council chooses to reinstate the festival it will need to decide what will not be done to cover the financial and staffing requirements for the event, or whether to substantially increase the precept next year.
14. If Colne Town Council chooses to do the Summer Music & Food Festival, there will be less strain on the budget and Council resources.

RECOMMENDATION:

15. That Colne Town Council does not reinstate the Great British Rhythm & Blues Festival in 2022.
16. That Colne Town Council runs a Summer Music and Food Festival on the Saturday of the August Bank Holiday weekend with an addition to the events budget of £10,000 to cover the event.
17. That the Responsible Financial Officer is instructed to include this in the 2022/2023 budget.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

18. To allow the Council to still run an event on August Bank Holiday weekend (or a different date if chosen) without putting strain on the Council's resources and finances.

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS:

19. The Town Council has an ever-evolving nature and must focus on statutory requirements when looking at the budgets and activities.
20. The Town Council is not statutorily responsible for town centre development and the events are run for the benefit of the residents. Town Centre regeneration, development and tourism is a function of the Borough Council and the Business Improvement District.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

21. Colne Town Council has taken on various assets which have statutory requirements, and these must be accommodated within the budget before the discretionary activities.

DETAILS OF CONSULTATION:

22. Various event suppliers
23. Responsible Financial Officer

24. Events Officer

SUPPORTING PAPERS:

- Appendix 1 – Budget for the Great British Rhythm & Blues Festival 2022
- Appendix 2 – Budget for a Summer Music and Food Festival 2022

FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT: Naomi Crewe