

## ***Events Committee Report September 2020***

***Chair: Cllr Matt Swindlehurst***

The committee has met regularly on the Zoom platform throughout the lock down.

**Remembrance Sunday** – A risk assessment for the wreath laying ceremony has been submitted to SMDC and has been circulated to the Safety Advisory Group for comment. Road closure request also submitted.

I have had a discussion with Nigel Irons, the Vicar at St Edwards. He is prepared to hold a service and estimates with the present restrictions a total congregation of 60 – 70.

There is a feeling that a parade may be possible, perhaps from the marketplace, down to The Monument. It could then disband after the ceremony or possibly return back up Derby St. RM has developed a risk assessment for this eventuality, and we will monitor the situation over the next few weeks.

As always, we will be directed by government rules/advice, Royal British Legion advice, and SMDC/Safety Advisory Group comments.

**Xmas lights** – We are agreeing a date with Protech for these to go up. There are no plans for a switch on event given the size of the crowds and the layout of the town centre. I have been in discussion with Cheadle who are of the same mind. Biddulph say they ‘extremely doubtful’ but may encourage a ‘front garden’ display for people to put on at home. We are going to look at this idea for Leek and will discuss it in depth at the next meeting.

**Party in the Park 2021** – Brough Park has been booked for Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> June. I am confident that we can stage a good event although circumstances may mean a significantly different format from previous years.

I am working on the assumption that social distancing will be with us throughout 2021, and therefore an innovative approach to events will have to be developed. I see a number of small scale events, with particular themes, bringing together local communities and groups. I don’t buy into the ethos of waiting for things to change before we plan. Far better to plan, based on the current situation, and make such plans flexible enough to cope with potential change.

We are moving forward with an event in October that will recognise the many artists, photographers and poets in the town, and particularly young people. Friday/Saturday 23 and 24<sup>th</sup> October will see a two-day exhibition by local artists in the newly renovated main room at The Foxlowe Arts Centre. Roy Tomkinson and I are coordinating.

Across the road, in the old Tourist Information Office, Borderland Voices will be setting up an Artist in Residence for the two days, as well as providing interactive opportunities should Covid restrictions allow.

I’m very grateful to SMDC for the use of this useful space.

Further venues are currently under discussion. All venues will be subjected to rigorous risk assessments relating to Covid requirements, and clear criteria for cancellation will be central to these. These will be submitted to SMDC. Cllr Charlotte Atkins sits on the Covid group at County and will liaise, in order to ensure that we get the best data and public health advice possible to direct our decision making.

Also planned is a town wide display of young people's art. The Trinity Church has kindly offered its large window for display. Further displays will be around the town. Leek United Building Society are kindly helping out with sponsorship.

I will keep all councillors up to date as plans develop.

Matt Swindlehurst Chair of Events