

Community, Leisure & Recreation Committee

Title:	Thame Fairs 2022
Date:	25 October 2022
Contact Officer:	Cassie Pinnells, Community Services Manager

Purpose of the Report

1. To receive an update on the 2022 September and October Fairs.

Summary

2. The Town Clerk and Fair Working Group worked closely with the Showmens Guild of Great Britain due to the passing of her Majesty the Queen. With the following guidance provided by Central Government:

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MAJOR EVENTS, ENTERTAINMENT & SPORTS: There is no obligation to cancel or postpone events and sporting fixtures, or close entertainment venues during the National Mourning period. This is at the discretion of individual organisations. As a mark of respect, organisations might wish to consider cancelling or postponing events or closing venues on the day of the State Funeral. They are under no obligation to do so, and this is entirely at the discretion of individual organisations. If sporting fixtures or events are planned for the day of the State Funeral, organisations may want to adjust the event timings, so they do not clash with the timings of the funeral service and associated processions. As a mark of respect, and in keeping with the tone of National Mourning, organisers may wish to hold a period of silence and/or play the National Anthem at the start of events or sporting fixtures, and players may wish to wear black armbands.

3. The Fair Working Group and Showmens Guild had investigated postponing the September Fair but operational contracts, timings, dates, and legal requirements in place made it impossible to find an alternative date to hold the Fair. Additional stipulations were agreed to ensure the town centre Fair took place respectfully and to enable the residents a democratic choice to attend or not.
4. In the absence of the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor and Chairman of the Showmen's Guild London Section placed floral tributes at the Memorial Gardens in memory of Queen Elizabeth II, held with an unofficial walk about on the Thursday afternoon of the September Fair to greet the attraction operators from the Showmens Guild. Many of the attractions were displaying photos of the Royal family visiting fairgrounds.
5. The September and October Fairs took place effectively, the partnership with the fire service, employed security firm and the diligences of councillors', officers and volunteers ensured the event was monitored efficiently.
6. The Community Services Manager will take account of all that follows in detailed planning for the 2022 fairs

Road Closure Operations / Setup

7. The marking out of the emergency lane on the Monday evening for the September Fair was effective for attraction placement and emergency access.
8. Due to both town centre car parks and on-street parking being cleared of parked cars, the Guild were able to organise the pull on of larger amusements from 5pm, slightly earlier than the agreement time of 6pm. The subsequent regimented times for smaller attraction placement worked well.

9. The professionalism of the security firm who worked with businesses, residents and Showmen ensured adequate safety conditions were upheld while setting up and dismantling.
10. The OX9ers broke all records, from monitoring the parking on Southern Road Recreational Ground (SRRG) and raised £1,400 for local good causes in Thame.

Event Monitoring / Complaints / Compliments

11. The official paperwork for both the September and October fair was late with Officers having to deal with individual showmen to obtain paperwork to open each fair.
12. The security team had to deal with an incident early Friday night of the September Fair that required the CCTV operational support and police assistance. It should be noted, that due to operation London Bridge police resources were not on site as normal. This caused a delay; however, the situation was dealt with safely without impacting the Fair.
13. The contracted medical company on site for the September Fair dealt with five people requiring medical treatment connected: one sprained ankle, one minor head injury on bumper cars, one strapping of fingers from bumper cars and two bruised knuckles from an exposed bar on the punch bag.
14. Reduced noise control was undertaken, as a mark of respect for the Queen throughout the September Fair by Councillors, volunteers, and Officers. Two attractions were given a verbal warning on Saturday evening by the security team, who immediately turned the volume down. The monitoring team noticed the difference in volume from previous years.
15. One written compliment was received for allowing the September Fair to take place. With nine complaints received expressing different reasons such as, disrespectful, the event should be held at the Showground and pollution. This year was the first-time one written and verbal complaints had been received regarding the October Fair, due to the early closure of the Upper High Street Car Park by the Showmen on Wednesday evening rather than the official start time on the Thursday morning.
16. During the September Fair event footfall was monitored by the Security Firm. Results recorded the peak number of event goers within the fairground on:
 - Thursday (at 7pm) 1,121, which is higher than the 2021 peak recorded (7pm) of 800.
 - Friday (at 8pm) 2,876, which is lower than the 2021 peak recorded (6pm) of 3,769.
 - Saturday (at 4pm) 2,156, which is lower than the 2021 peak recorded (8pm) 2021 of 3,238.
17. It was recorded by Officers and the Guild Chairman that two September attractions were too big for their plot and compromised the emergency lanes, this will be brought to the Guild's attention.
18. This year was the first time that an overview of the September Fair was monitored not only by photographs but an aerial video/photographs taken by a drone operative, which will aid the Council/Guild regarding attractions that are too large for their plots.
19. It is also hoped that the air quality monitoring undertaken during the September Fair will provide data to enable accurate data recording to take place each year.
20. The Fair Working Group will reconvene a meeting with the Showmen's Guild to commence negotiation for a new agreement.

Recommendation:

The Committee is asked:

- i) To note the report.***