

Subject: Easter Fair

Report to: EMT: 25<sup>th</sup> August 2016

Economic Development: 7<sup>th</sup> September 2016

Report by: Kate Watts, Transformation Programme Manager

#### **SUBJECT MATTER/RECOMMENDATIONS**

This paper presents a breakdown of financial information regarding the cost of the Easter Fair alongside the income it generates. Looking forwards it is likely that the cost of this event will be higher than the income it generates for the Council.

It is recommended that members

- ask officers to further investigate alternative management options
- and/or request officers to work up increased fees and charges proposals for 17/18 budget setting process

## **1. BACKGROUND**

Great Yarmouth has held its annual fair since a charter granted to the town by King Charles II in 1684. This charter allowed two fairs, or marts, each year *“for buying and selling of all goods, cattle and chattels”*. The fairs were originally held on the third Thursday and Friday in April and the third Thursday and Friday in August. By 1715 the April fair was being held regularly on Good Friday but in that year the Corporation ordered it to be moved to the Friday in Easter week, and this is the fair that has survived to this day.

In 1771 the diarist Syllas Neville visited the fair at Yarmouth on 5 April but described it as *“a fair for children, little business done in it”*. This is an indication that the fair was, at that period, beginning to change from a place where traders met to buy and sell, to an event predominated by pleasure-seekers. Since this date the Easter Fair has continued to be held in Great Yarmouth’s market place and is a tradition visited by both residents and visitors to the Town.

More recently the fair is organised through the Council working with the Showman’s Guild. Many showmen have historical pitches on the Market and in some cases have visited the Town through generations. The fair itself significantly increases footfall in the Town Centre with daily visitors numbers of over 5,000.

## **2. INTRODUCTION**

Members recently requested a breakdown of financial information regarding the cost of the Easter fair alongside the income it generates. This paper presents a four year breakdown of this information and provides members with the context of this position and some options they may wish to consider as a result of reviewing this information.

### 3. FINANCIAL BREAKDOWN

The financial breakdown for the Easter fair over the last four years is as follows:-

	<b>16-17 RPFA</b>	<b>15-16 RPMA</b>	<b>14-15 RPMA</b>	<b>13-14 RPMA</b>
Expenditure	25,068	9,367*	6,789*	10,645*
Income	(14,692)	14,665	(14,457)	(15,605)
<b>Calculated Easter Fair Costs / (Income)</b>	<b>10,376</b>	<b>(5,298)</b>	<b>(7,668)</b>	<b>(4,960)</b>

\* Expenditure figures for 15/16, 14/15, and 13/14 may be higher, however records are not clear and budget codes for these years were not specific to the Easter Fair.

### 4. EXPENDITURE

Historically areas of spend for the Easter fair have included

- Staff overtime to manage and steward the event
- First aid
- Road closures and traffic management
- Site preparation and cleaning after the event
- Advertisement of the event

However in 2015 a number of significant concerns were raised by Great Yarmouth's Event Safety Advisory Group (ESAG), documented both in their minutes and in email correspondence to officers of this Council.

Areas of concern raised by ESAG included

- The need for the Council to review its road closure procedure and employ CSAS traffic marshals. This request came as a direct result of a young child being hit and killed by a car during an Easter Fair held in Kings Lynn
- The need to improve communications. ESAG felt that the fact that staff were using personal mobile phones was not acceptable and communication should be established through a radio link
- The need to review staffing of the Easter Fair. ESAG, including the Police, felt strongly that Council staff working overtime were not appropriate in doing any more than simply helping visitors with way finding, and that to police the event SIA staff should be employed
- First Aid cover. ESAG were unclear whether the level of cover provided by St Johns was adequate for this event
- The need to review the lost child procedure to ensure that safeguarding issues were adequately addressed
- The need to put in place site evacuation procedures

As a result of these issues being raised the management of the Easter fair event in 2016 was overhauled, with correct safety plans and procedures being put in place. However this

came at cost and as a result there was an overspend for the Council to deliver the Easter fair.

Additional monies had been spent on

- SIA Security
- CSAS Traffic Marshals
- Paramedic level medical cover
- Radio system for communication during the event

Alongside monies on

- Staff overtime to manage and steward the event
- Site preparation and cleaning after the event
- Advertisement of the event

After this year's Easter fair a review meeting by officers took place, where the management of the event, a number of incidents that occurred during event, feedback from ESAG, staff and partner agencies was all evaluated.

This meeting concluded that the management of this year's Easter fair was a success and that a safe event had been run. However to maintain this level of management going forwards it is clear that there will need to be a growth in expenditure budgets to cover the increased costs that the fair in 2016 incurred.

## **5. INCOME**

Records of Easter fair rents are sketchy. Traditionally the lead Cabinet member set these on annual consultation with the Showman's guild.

However a detailed breakdown of rental charges in 1992 showed that in reality rents for the fair had hardly changed and that as a result rental income from the fair had remained fairly stable, bringing the Council between £14,500 and £15,500 per annum.

As part of the fee setting process in 2016 the rents were increased by 5%. However the number of traders was slightly lower than in previous years, so in reality no substantial increase in rental income was seen.

As a result of the new committee system and the need for Council to approve all fees, any future fees set in regards to the Easter fair will be presented to Council as part of the budget setting process.

## **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

This paper has outlined a growth in budget spend for the Easter fair to a level that currently cannot be matched by income.

Income itself could either be increased through higher rental charges, or work undertaken to encourage more traders to trade at our Easter fair.

## 5. ALTERNATIVE MANAGEMENT OPTIONS

Kings Lynn fair is operated by the Showman's guild directly, whereby they pay the Council a lump sum to hire the land on which they then hold the fair. However the Council would still need to put in place some resources to ensure that its own obligations are met under health and safety legislation.

Several meetings have been arranged with the guild to discuss this option to see if they are interested in working this way at Great Yarmouth; however the Showmen have subsequently not attended these meetings.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper presents a breakdown of financial information regarding the cost of the Easter fair alongside the income it generates. Looking forwards it is likely that the cost of this event will be higher than the income it generates for the Council.

It is recommended that members

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Area for consideration	Comment
Monitoring Officer Consultation:	N/A
Section 151 Officer Consultation:	Finance have generated the financial figures
Existing Council Policies:	N/A
Financial Implications:	As detailed regarding subsequent years budget growth
Legal Implications (including human rights):	N/A
Risk Implications:	N/A
Equality Issues/EQIA assessment:	N/A
Crime & Disorder:	N/A
Every Child Matters:	N/A