

FULL COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM X: MTC Support for European Folk Day event in Malmesbury

1. Purpose of Report

To consider MTC support for a Malmesbury Folk Festival event in the Abbey Cloister gardens

2. Background

The first ever European Folk Day will take place on Saturday 23rd September. This is the day of the Autumnal Equinox in the Northern Hemisphere.

This is a pilot project conceived and coordinated by the members of the European Folk Network (EFN) with the intention of establishing the European Folk Day as a key date in the annual calendar.

Malmesbury has a vibrant live music and folk scene but unlike other towns, no Festival to celebrate that. We are therefore proposing to hold a folk music event in the Abbey Cloister gardens to support this initiative, with the additional aim of establishing an event that will, rather like Wessex Week, MLA, etc develop its own momentum and sustainable organisation to add to our town's cultural offer and visitor attraction. This would also help develop the Cloister Gardens as a centre for more positive activity, a goal shared with the owners, Kim and Whit Hanks, the Abbey, and the Police.

The all-day event would last from 2pm until 10.30pm, featuring a mix of local and nationally recognised performing artistes. Although outdoors, the event will proceed regardless of the weather conditions. We have been in touch with the Abbey to confirm that there are no conflicting events and are engaging to seek their active support which we are confident of getting.

The organising team includes Catherine Burke, who runs the Purbeck Folk Festival, music industry professionals Stephen Kearney and Julia Olson, Steve D'Arcy who organises Music in the Cloisters for the Carnival, other local performers, and Gavin Grant from MTC. We also have the support on logistics and stewarding of 9 Regiment, Royal Logistics Corps.

3. Financial Implications & Risks

The outline finance structure of the event is as follows:

Attendees	400		
Ticket Price	20		
<i>Income</i>		<i>Expenses</i>	
Tickets sales	8,000	Equipment hire	1,000
Bar profit	1,500	Publicity	750
Food profit	250	Labour	350
		First Aid	150
		General expenses	400
TOTAL	9,750	TOTAL	2,650
BALANCE	7,100		

The Balance is used to book professional artistes, with an initial spend limit set at £5,000, any surplus is to go to the Mayor's Charity Fund.

The key financial risk is from poor ticket sales, with a break-even level being 295 sold.

4. Proposal

- A. That MTC support the event by providing the following:
- i) Use of the Cloister Gardens free of charge
 - ii) include this event in the Scott Media August/September scope of work so helping promote and publicise the festival including using our social media platforms
 - iii) Put up posters promoting the event on our public notice boards, in the TIC and around the Town Hall
 - iv) TIC support for ticket sales
 - v) Use of the MTC marquee free of charge
 - vi) Application of a TEN at no charge
- B. MTC Underwrite the event to cover costs in case of low ticket sales, which would amount to around £2,000 if only 200 tickets are sold.

In considering the significant potential benefit to both the Town and Mayor's Charities from hosting this event, along with international coverage of the European event and planned publicity to boost ticket sales, this is proposed, on balance, to be a reasonable level of risk.

Steve D'Arcy

13 July 2023