

CELEBRATE WOKING 2022-2023 REVIEW & FORWARD PLAN

Executive Summary

The key objectives of the 2022 Celebrate Woking Programme were.

- To create a programme to celebrate The Queen's Platinum Jubilee.
- To create a community spirit, especially post Covid
- To leave a legacy (outcomes of the community projects).

All the objectives were delivered and went above and beyond to deliver additional events after the passing of The Queen, namely The Proclamation of King Charles III and The National Moment of Reflection. Both these events were well attended in Jubilee Square.

This has all been captured and archived at the Surrey History Centre for future generations.

This was followed by the successful Victoria Place event, Summer in the Square event with the Big Screen and garden games creating a social area for everyone to enjoy. This was well received by the public, despite the anti-social behaviour issues that had to be dealt with during this period and added additional cost to delivering this event.

Woking as a destination benefitted from this event in:

- Attracting residents and visitors to the town, supporting local economy.
- Increasing media interest, helping longer-term tourism in an interest in Woking as a place to work, live and play.
- Bringing community groups together on creative projects such as the planting of the trees, community choir and the knitting group from Byfleet who knitted over 80 Queen's guards for bollards.
- Getting local businesses involved and be part of the local community spirit.

This event brought people together to celebrate our heritage and marked an occasion of collective significance that will cultivate a sense of community whilst adding fun and colour to encourage civic pride.

The King's Coronation will take place in 2023. A small event is being considered for the weekend of 5-8 May with the Coronation taking place on Saturday 6 May and Monday 8 May being a bank holiday. The **Summer in the Square** event is proposed from 3 July to 3 September 2023 (dates tbc) managed by Victoria Place and supported by Woking Borough Council.

Recommendations

The Committee is requested to:

RESOLVE That the report be noted.

The Committee has the authority to determine the recommendation set out above.

CELEBRATE WOKING 2022-2023 REVIEW & FORWARD PLAN

Background Papers:

Jubilee Report in Appendix A

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CELEBRATE WOKING 2022-2023 REVIEW & FORWARD PLAN

1. Purpose

To feedback to O&S Committee on the 2022 Celebrate Woking (CW) programme, and to seek views on the proposed programme for 2023. Approval for a funded 2023 programme will be with the Executive.

2. Background

Celebrate Woking - Be proud, be part of it!

Celebrate Woking is a well-established annual cultural programme of events across the Borough, with an active events calendar published online, in the Woking Magazine and a leaflet posted to all residents accompanying the council tax bill in February of each year. This year The Queen's Platinum Jubilee event was delivered across the borough, followed by the Proclamation of King Charles III event and The National Moment of Reflection event with the passing of the Queen.

3. The factors driving the project

The Council benefits from these events taking place on several levels, including: - using them as a catalyst to celebrate Woking's diverse culture in support of the objectives set out in the Council's Corporate Strategy.

- raising the profile of sport, art, green spaces, and cultural activity across the borough
- enthusing and stimulating individuals into life-long engagement in health and wellbeing activities
- strengthening communities through developing volunteering opportunities
- and further developing 'pride of place' in Woking.

The celebration of significant events such as the King's Coronation in 2023 has the potential to attract local, national, and international interest, and, in turn, interest in Woking's history and heritage.

4. The Programme

The programme is supported by a wide range of projects, activities, and smaller events throughout the year and across the borough, which highlight Woking's rich heritage, community spirit and a place to be proud to live in.

The Council supports and promotes a calendar of events, which typically includes the following:

- Chinese New Year – Jan/Feb
- Woking Young Musician of the Year – Jan/Feb
- Surrey Half-Marathon – March
- Sport Relief/ Children in Need - March
- Earth Hour – March
- Woking in Bloom –April
- Basingstoke Canal Rally – March/April (Easter)
- Summer Sounds, Woking Park Bandstand - May to Sept

CELEBRATE WOKING 2022-2023 REVIEW & FORWARD PLAN

- Peace Garden Commemorative Service - July
- Heritage Open Days - Sept
- Living Well Week – Oct
- Woking Drama Festival – Oct
- Poppy Day Appeal in Jubilee Square - Oct
- Woking Park & The Vyne Field Fireworks - Nov
- Diwali – Oct/ Nov
- Woking Music Festival - Nov
- Remembrance Sunday -Nov
- Christmas Light Switch-on – Nov
- Pantomime - Dec

A website hosts all the information about the events, which serves as a point of information for the community where organisations can also add their own events. In addition, it hosts information for visitors as well as Woking's heritage.

www.celebratewoking.info @celebratewoking,

To date, the programme has incorporated unique legacies for Woking, such as the connection to the London 2012 Olympics, The Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012 and Platinum Jubilee in 2022, WW1 celebrations county-wide, the 150th anniversary of H.G. Wells, the Suffrage Movement and the 100th anniversary of women getting the vote, and the connection to Dame Ethel Smyth. In 2022 the Council also delivered the local event for the Proclamation of King Charles III and The Moment of National Reflection for The Queen.

It has honoured former residents and WW1 heroes with statues and blue plaques, such as The Bedser twins, Ken Wood, H. G. Wells, Rick Parfitt, Paul Weller, Dame Ethel Smyth, and others. Woking is evidently an inspirational place, as many famous people were born, schooled, or worked in the Borough. More can be found here in [The Hall of Fame](#).

It has celebrated the launch of the first [Muslim Heritage](#) Trail in Britain, which was nominated for an International Tourism Award and showcases the Shah Jahan Mosque, Brookwood Cemetery, and the Peace Garden.

5. Engagement with stakeholders and local partners

The following organisations are key to being part of the diverse annual programme in hosting their own events and add to the cultural offer in Woking:

- Ambassador Theatre Group, including Nova Cinema and The Rhoda McGaw Theatre
- Basingstoke Canal Society
- Brookwood Cemetery
- Buzz Theatre
- Chinese Association of Woking
- Dance Woking
- Friends of Byfleet Parish Day
- Hindu Cultural Association

CELEBRATE WOKING 2022-2023 REVIEW & FORWARD PLAN

- Malayalee Association
- Phoenix Culture Centre/Fiery Bird
- Pride in Surrey
- Pyrford & Wisley Village Show
- Sayapatri Nepalese Association
- Radio Woking
- Surrey Area Teluga Association
- Surrey History Centre
- Surrey Libraries
- The Lightbox
- Victoria Place Shopping Centre
- Woking Borough Council
- West Byfleet Events Representative
- Woking Beer Festival Representative
- Woking Drama Association
- Woking Fire Works Representative
- Woking History Society
- Woking News and Mail
- Woking Library
- Woking Music Festival
- Woking Palace
- Woking People of Faith (Refugee Week)
- Woking Sport
- WWF (The Living Planet Centre)

6. Vision and aims of the Celebrate Woking Programme

Woking Borough Council's vision is to continue creating a *community spirit* involving all residents in Woking through participation in cultural and sporting events.

- To continue to have a diverse programme of events to promote the Borough to residents, businesses, and visitors
- To encourage the community to participate in local events
- To bring together Woking's diverse communities
- To raise the profile and promote a positive image and develop a sense of *Pride of Place in Woking*
- To maximise the economic development opportunities, including the tourism offer

7. How does it contribute to the Council's priorities?

It contributes to the health and wellbeing and Economic Development priorities, as detailed below in the Woking for All Corporate Strategy document:

CELEBRATE WOKING 2022-2023 REVIEW & FORWARD PLAN

- Recognise the distinctive identity of our towns, villages, and neighbourhoods, ensuring they have vibrant centres that support community life, wellbeing, pride and identity.
- Encourage and increase active lifestyles and participation through the provision of varied cultural and sporting opportunities and amenities.
- Work with partners to embed health and wellbeing into all that we do.
- Create a vibrant town centre, bringing together a compelling offer of high-quality leisure, retail and sustainable living opportunities.

8. How does it relate to the Council's strategies and improvement plans?

It relates to the Health & Wellbeing Strategy (2021 to 2031).

It also relates to the Economic Development Action Plan under the following priorities:

- **Woking the place to be:** continuing to attract investment and deliver transformation, including digitally connected Woking, green and healthy Woking.
- **Destination Woking:** developing Woking's identity, cultural and leisure offer and its desirability as a location for businesses and people.

9. Review of the 2022 Programme

A successful 2022 Platinum Jubilee event was delivered the weekend 2 to 4 June as well the continuation of the summer activities in Jubilee Square until the 4 September.

Please see attached report in Appendix 1 which focuses on the delivery of the Platinum Jubilee which was a WBC responsibility.

The delivery of the Summer in the Square Programme and content was the responsibility of Victoria Square. The infrastructure for the square was booked and delivered by Woking Borough Council.

Two further events were delivered in Jubilee Square by a team from WBC. It was well attended by the public.

- Proclamation of King Charles III (11 September)
- National Moment of Reflection for HMQ (18 September)

Partners delivered the following events

Dance Woking – Encounters

Location: Victoria Place

Date: Saturday 11 June 2022

Involved: 320 school groups, dance schools and professional dancers

Approx. 200 participants in a parade and up to 500 people watching parade and taking part in demonstrations put on by Folk Dance Re-Mixed.

CELEBRATE WOKING 2022-2023 REVIEW & FORWARD PLAN

Summer Sounds

Location: Woking Park

Dates: Saturday 11 June – Saturday 27 August 2022.

Involved: 13 Musical groups, over 300 musicians performed weekly from 2-4pm in Woking Park. Audience approx. 1500 over the season.

Pied Piper Theatre company performances 'DIG' for Jubilee

Location: BUZZ Studio Theatre, Woking town centre

Dates: Wednesday 8 June 2022 – BUZZ

Involved – 'DIG' - As the sun comes up on a new day, the garden wakes up!

This was a gentle first theatre experience, perfect for the very young with music, rhythm and singing. The story brings to life a world of growing plants, busy bugs, wriggling worms, and ever-changing weather! Suggested age range 6 months to 2 years.

Pied Piper Theatre company performances 'DIG' for Jubilee

Location: St. Mary's Community Centre, Byfleet and Woking Leisure Centre

Dates: Thursday 16 June 2022 – St Mary's Community Centre

Involved: Nicola Norman hosted the performances for the playgroups at St. Mary's

As the sun comes up on a new day, the garden wakes up!

This was a gentle first theatre experience, perfect for the very young with music, rhythm and singing. The story brings to life a world of growing plants, busy bugs, wriggling worms, and ever-changing weather! Suggested age range 6 months to 2 years.

10. Resources

In 2022 the programme was supported with a budget of £100,000 from the Investment Programme and delivered within budget supported with a £5000 sponsorship from The Marches and £16,000 from the Government's Welcome Back Fund.

11. The constraints to continue delivering these events are as follows:

The following factors need to be considered in delivering future Celebrate Woking Events.

Financial constraints

- The Council's current financial position and residents view on value for money.
- Increased costs of infrastructure, emergency services and security for larger events.
- Due to current economic challenges, it will be difficult to get companies to part with their money for sponsorship.
- The risk of delivering future events will be high due to the uncertainty of the current economic challenges and cost of living crisis.

Staff constraints

- The Community Services Team started in 2010 with the stakeholder engagement phase, shaping the programme, managing the project, and delivering of the overall programme and key events. A website was also designed to host all this information for residents. The programme management moved to The Business Liaison Team in 2015.

CELEBRATE WOKING 2022-2023 REVIEW & FORWARD PLAN

- During 2022 one officer spent 6 months of their time managing and delivering the Jubilee Programme which left limited time to focus on core business engagement. This included liaising with Victoria Place, AL Marketing and taking over a lot of the responsibilities once Moyallen went into administration. Other responsibilities included the monitoring of the CW inbox, updating the CW website, liaising with community groups across the borough and planning the marketing and promotion. There was not enough resource support available from the marketing team or the health and wellbeing team.

Since Covid and the current economic challenges, business engagement is important, more than before, in supporting our business community, to ensure they have all possible means to grow and prosper and currently survive the challenging economic situation.

- The key priority should be to engage with all the cultural and sporting organisations and manage the website as a point of information for all the cultural and sporting and health and well-being events for the Borough. Currently an officer in the Business Liaison team checks the inbox frequently and approves all events for the calendar of events. There is currently no marketing plan, budget, or support in place to promote the programme.
- No meeting has taken place yet with cultural organisations across the borough to gauge their plans for 2023.
- It needs to be recognised that the Council has limited resources in delivering large scale events. Events take a huge amount of staff time over a long period of time. Many other departments across the Council get involved to deliver the key events such as Neighbourhood Services, EH, Parking, Licensing, Insurance, Health & Safety and Serco etc.
- Management of expectations of members who would like to see these large-scale events take place.

12. The positive impact of a Cultural Programme

- Attract more visitors to the town, supporting the local economy.
- Increase media interest, helping longer-term tourism and identifying Woking as a destination to visit.
- Increase levels of professional artistic collaboration - people working together on creative projects such as the proposed Surrey Short Film Festival planned for October 2023.
- Showcase the rich arts and cultural sector in Woking.
- Work with local organisations to ensure the future of art and culture.
- Create 'pride of place' and sense of belonging for residents and visitors.
- Showcase local cultural organisations and how to get involved.
- Evident community spirit, even more so post-pandemic #WeAreWoking
- Local businesses/ key partners involved.
- Opportunities to come together with others to celebrate, enjoy, participate, and create, to value our joint heritage, to be inspired by great art and culture.
- A considerably higher interest in culture/ increased engagement than before.
- Culture enhances our quality of life and increases overall well-being for both individuals and communities.
- Arts and culture have the power to transform older lives.

CELEBRATE WOKING 2022-2023 REVIEW & FORWARD PLAN

- Diversity is crucial to the vitality of arts and culture.

13. Future of the Celebrate Woking Programme beyond Covid and the current economic challenges

- Woking Borough Council will want to continue to promote Woking as a significant Cultural Hub in the Southeast with key partners such as the Ambassadors Theatre Group, The Lightbox, Italia Conti, and other local organisations. Woking already has an annual Music Festival, Drama Festival and Dance Festival in place with the possibility of a new Short Film Festival planned.
- Promote a positive image of Woking: a “Place of Pride” for residents, businesses and visitors who live, work, and play here; a modern and vibrant environment for everyone to enjoy and aspire to spend time within; a lifestyle choice fit for the 21st century. #WeAreWoking
- Promote the rich and varied cultural programme of Woking to UK visitors. As 68% of UK Adults plan on taking an overnight domestic trip at some point in the next 12 months. (Results from research conducted by BVA/BDRC for Visit England – October data).
- Increase awareness about Woking and Surrey’s rich heritage. 80% of visitors are local. Promote ‘what’s on your doorstep’.
- Continue to highlight the people who have lived in Woking and left a legacy of arts, music, sport, and literature to inspire future generations.
- Increase cultural awareness and participation amongst all community groups.
- Increase awareness about Woking’s excellent connectivity and the cultural experience on offer.
- Strengthen the link to national occasions and promote Woking’s cultural hub, further afield.

14. Proposed Programme for 2023

This will require the following resources. A decision to fund and deliver the 2023 programme will be with the Executive.

- Dedicated resources to coordinate and monitor the overall programme for the year and liaise with the community groups i.e., Arts Development Officer, Sports Development Officer, Health and Well-being officer, Green Infrastructure resource, Neighbourhood Officers and a resource delivering Remembrance Day.
- A resource to coordinate the celebration activities of The Coronation of His Majesty the King.
- A resource (i.e., WBC’s Commercialisation manager) to work in partnership with Victoria Place to deliver the Summer in the Square Programme.
- A resource to monitor the CW inbox and approve events and deal with queries.
- A marketing resource to assist in updating the website and coordinate a marketing plan to promote the community activities regularly, including promotion in the Woking Magazine and other local publications and on social media platforms.
- A proposed budget of circa £100,000.

CELEBRATE WOKING 2022-2023 REVIEW & FORWARD PLAN

Draft proposed Celebrate Woking 2023 programme:

Date	Event	Support Option	Comment
22 Jan	Chinese New Year – (Year of the Rabbit)	Promotion	Rose Blackley liaises with Chinese Association
TBC	Woking Young Musician of the Year	Promotion	
17 Feb – 17 Mar	Sport Relief	Promotion	Supporting the National Programme. Sports Development Officer
17 March	Red Nose Day		Part of Sport Relief. Sports Development Officer Health and Well-being
12 March	Surrey Half Marathon	Promotion	Sports Development Officer to liaise
TBC	Woking Festival of Dance	Promotion	Arts Development Officer to liaise
25 March	Earth Hour at 8.30pm local time	Promotion	Take the lead from WWF
April	Woking in Bloom (tbc)	Promotion	Neighbourhood Team
Easter	Basingstoke Canal Rally (TBC))	Promotion	Organised by The Basingstoke Canal Society
Easter	Lark in the Square	Promotion	TBC – organised by Christ Church
29 April	Dance Woking – Coronation Event	Promotion	Dance Woking in the process of planning the event.
5 - 8 May	The Coronation of His Majesty the King on 6 May	Delivery and Promotion of the National event.	The Coronation Ceremony will take place at Westminster Abbey. Detail to be confirmed how Woking will celebrate this historical occasion as this will require additional resources.
May	Wild about Woking (TBC)	Promotion	Contact: Tracy Haskins & Surrey Wildlife Trust. Natural Woking Strategy. TBC
May – Sept	Summer Sounds at Woking Park Bandstand	Promotion	Rose Blackley to program
3 June	Big Lunch 2023	Promotion	Organise a Big Lunch Eden Project Communities
24 June	Armed Forces Day		Armed Forces Day takes place on the last Saturday each June. Celebrations will begin on Monday 20 June when the Armed Forces Day flag will be raised on buildings and famous landmarks across Surrey and around the country.
June	Dance Woking – Encounters Date tbc	Promotion	Dance Woking to confirm plans.
3 July to 3 Sept	Summer in the Square	Victoria Place to deliver with support from WBC	In partnership with Victoria Place.
July	Peace Garden Commemorative Service	Promotion	Resource tbc
Sept	Heritage Open Days	Promotion	Resource tbc Giving support to local organisations participating in the national scheme.

CELEBRATE WOKING 2022-2023 REVIEW & FORWARD PLAN

September	International Peace Day	Promotion	WPOF organisers
September	Interfaith Cricket Tournament	Promotion	WPOF organisers WBC resource tbc
October	Surrey Film Festival hosted in Woking (tbc)	Promotion	Organised by a local Woking business and hosted at The Nova
Oct	Woking Drama Festival	Promotion	Part of the National Drama Festivals Association. Woking has also hosted the British All Winners Festival in previous years.
Oct	Poppy Day Appeal in Jubilee Square	Launch	
Oct	Diwali	Support Programme and Promotion	Arts Development Officer
Nov	Woking Park & The Vyne Field Fireworks	Promotion	Woking District & Rotary Club
Nov	Woking Music Festival	Promotion	Arts Development Officer to Liaise
Nov	Interfaith Week	Promotion	WPOF organisers
Nov	Remembrance Sunday		WBC delivers event
Nov	Christmas Light Switch/ Carol Singing	Promotion	Victoria Place
Dec	Pantomime	Promotion	ATG

Other events not on the list above.

- The Lightbox programme
- Italia Conti Programme
- A programme of activities organised by WBC's Commercialisation Manager and Victoria Place shopping centre across town in the following locations: Victoria Square, Jubilee Square, Henry Plaza, Wolsey Place Square, Commercial Way, and Mercia Walk.
- Pride in Surrey
- Other Cultural "pop ups" in the town square including buskers, singers, dancers etc.
- Knaphill Village Fair (either at The Vyne Field or Mizen's Railway)
- Horsell Village Show (Horsell CofE Junior School)
- Pyrford and Wisley Village Show
- Old Woking Summer Fair
- Byfleet Parish Day Event

This also needs to be referenced against the open space bookings managed by Arran Henderson's team.

CELEBRATE WOKING 2022-2023 REVIEW & FORWARD PLAN

Draft outline of The Coronation of His Majesty the King

No official programme has been announced for The Coronation of His Majesty the King. However, there will be an official scaled back event of the Coronation on Saturday 6 May 2023. The Coronation Ceremony will take place at Westminster Abbey, London, and will be conducted by the Archbishop of Canterbury. The Ceremony will see His Majesty King Charles III crowned alongside The Queen Consort.

The following is a proposed programme.

- Deliver a scaled back programme in the town centre with a screen and some entertainment for the weekend of 5 to 8 May.
- Encourage community groups to plant Coronation Meadows across Woking. [Coronation Meadows](#)
- Encourage residents to have a street party the weekend of the Coronation.
- Encourage residents to get involved in [The Big Lunch](#) on 3 June in the summer.
- Encourage Centres for the Community to have an afternoon tea, celebrating the Coronation of The King.
- Encourage local businesses, restaurants, and pubs to embrace a weekend of celebrations of The Coronation.
- Launch an art competition amongst schools, colleges, and the public to enter and then display the winning entries later in the year. This will be a legacy of Woking recording the Coronation of the King like it was in 1953. [The Coronation works in the Collection - Government Art Collection \(culture.gov.uk\)](#) This is dependent on the availability and workload of the arts development officer.
- Encouraged schools and community groups such as churches and other cultural groups to embrace the National event and incorporate it into their activities like the Platinum Jubilee events.

Draft outline of the Summer in the Square Programme

- Similar infrastructure i.e., grass, big screen, deck chairs, sports activities.
- Summer in the Square Programme run from Monday 3 July to Sunday 3 September. (Dates tbc)
- Screening Wimbledon from Monday 3 July to Sunday 16 July. Remove Big Screen after Wimbledon.
- Screen family friendly films if time permits.
- Garden games and other entertainment to be confirmed.

Victoria Place to deliver the summer in the Square Programme with the support of WBC.

END OF REPORT