

Maidstone Borough Council
Festivals & Events Policy 2014

Version 2
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Appendix A- Draft Festival & Events Policy 2014

INDEX

	Detail	Page
1.	The Vision	
2.	Background	
3.	Aims and Objectives	
4.	Type and Frequency of Events	
5.	Evaluation	
6.	Venues	
7.	Finance and Commissioning	
8.	Marketing and PR	
9.	Associated Policies and Strategies	
10.	How to Apply	

Appendix A- Draft Festival & Events Policy 2014

1. THE VISION

“To develop a festivals and events programme that creates a lively and vibrant place to live, work and visit, whilst ensuring the sustainable use of the Borough’s venues and;

That by 2017 Maidstone borough is recognised as a destination that hosts and develops high quality sustainable festivals and events; and cultivates community creativity for maximum economic benefit and social enjoyment.”

2. BACKGROUND

Well organised festivals and events are recognised for their ability to produce benefits for the local economy, bring life to an area, create interest in the area and reflect the place. This strategy will focus on events that take place in the boroughs parks and open spaces.

This document provides a strategic framework for events and festivals in Maidstone Borough. It recognises the fact that major events represent business, cultural leisure and sporting assets; they make a positive contribution in influencing perception of an area, in helping to stimulate economic activity and in enhancing social and cultural wellbeing.

Maidstone Borough has an established history and tradition of hosting Events and Festivals. There is a comprehensive and diverse range of activities; from music events, to community events that have direct links to the well-being and cohesion of the local community.

Due to the broad dynamics of events and festivals, which cover sports, leisure, special interest, culture, heritage and the arts they can each have a positive impact and make a significant contribution to the status and image of the Borough. Specific areas impacted by an events programme include:

- Quality of life improvements
- Community engagement and cohesion
- Economic value
- Social inclusion
- Education
- Prevention and diversion of anti-social behaviour
- Health, vitality & wellbeing
- Publicity & media exposure
- Added value to the Borough as a visitor destination
- Delivering & inspiring sporting opportunities
- Culture and artistic expression

Therefore, Events & Festivals constitute a fundamental element and vital component to the Borough; although all activities must be managed effectively and efficiently to maximise

Appendix A- Draft Festival & Events Policy 2014

opportunities (e.g. by extending the season to create economic value), they should also minimise any negative impacts (i.e. on the environment).

The Borough's Events & Festivals are an integral part of delivering core elements of the Council's Strategic Plan, Economic Strategy, Community Development Strategy and Maidstone Culture and Leisure Strategy.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The Festivals & Events policy sets out the priorities, aims and objectives for the delivery of the Council's Events and Festivals programme and ensures that any current or proposed event, whether organised or supported by the Council or as an activity held on its land, can be evaluated against the following set of guiding principles:

3.1 Aims

Each event or festival should meet at least two of the aims and five of the objectives outlined:

- i. **Economy**
 - a) Generate income for the local economy.
 - b) Help to regenerate parts of the Borough.
- ii. **Community**
 - a) To develop, generate, facilitate and support cultural, economic, community and social events for the benefit of the Borough and its residents to improve quality of life.
 - b) Interest or involve the Boroughs diverse communities.
 - c) Prevent and divert anti-social behaviour.
 - d) Increase the number of volunteers at events.
- iii. **Destination Publicity**
 - a) Maximise promotional, publicity and marketing opportunities through the Events and Festivals programme
 - b) Promote Maidstone borough as a vibrant, successful place.
 - c) Encourage people and businesses to live in, invest in and visit Maidstone.
- iv. **Education and Employment**
 - a) Provide skills & learning opportunities for the community.
 - b) Interest or engage young learners.
 - c) Provide new temporary employment and work experience opportunities.
- v. **Income opportunities**
 - a) To create opportunities to maximise Income and sponsorship for the Council.

3.2 Objectives

Appendix A- Draft Festival & Events Policy 2014

- a) Maximise enjoyment for those persons participating at an Event or Festival.
- b) Contribute towards the Council's Strategic priorities.
- c) Deliver and support cultural events in the Borough.
- d) Maximise the contribution made towards the economy of the Borough through increased visitor and participant spend.
- e) Maximise sustainable, inclusive economic growth from festivals and event activities.
- f) Contribute towards the Council's objective of creating a safe, inclusive and diverse day, evening and night time economy in Maidstone.
- g) Contribute and facilitate sporting events and activities that support healthy living and contribute towards an improved quality of life.
- h) Support volunteer schemes.
- i) Manage, develop and generate local, regional, national and international publicity for the Borough.
- j) Increase the positive image and reputation of the Council and Borough.
- k) Support & encourage social inclusion, well-being and healthy living activities.
- l) Undertake sustainable event practices to ensure the protection of the environment, ecology and wildlife.
- m) Increase and obtain sponsorship and income to sustain the Events and Festivals' programme and to generate efficiency savings and ensure value for money.

3.3 Outcomes

- a) Each event or festival maximises its economic opportunities and social benefits.
- b) Delivers recognised quality improvements from inception, management and delivery of events and festivals.
- c) Increases community involvement and civic pride in events and festivals.
- d) Reduces crime and anti-social behaviour throughout the Borough.
- e) Create a safe, inclusive and diverse day, evening and night time economy in Maidstone.
- f) Achieves greater community participation in activities.
- g) Contributes to delivering a sustainable and self-financing events programme by maximising sponsorship and income opportunities.

4. Type and Frequency of Events

To be included once research and planning has finished. This will define what we mean by a major, large, medium and small event and the type i.e. Commercial, charitable and community.

5. Evaluation

As well as balancing existing events with new ones, we want to support the expansion and development of the programme of events. Occasionally an event may arise which is

Appendix A- Draft Festival & Events Policy 2014

exceptional and will be supported even if it doesn't meet the criteria outlined above. This will be managed via the application process.

In order to ensure that all major supported events and festivals continue to meet the above aims and objectives the council has adopted the use of an Economic Impact Toolkit which all council run or funded events and festivals will be required to undertake www.eitoolkit.org.uk

For smaller events we will expect the organisers to use the event evaluation form in the Toolkit or their own equivalent evaluation questionnaire.

6. Venues

The Borough has over 30 parks and open spaces and a number of venues that have been identified as suitable for holding events. This strategy aims to ensure that the use of these venues is sustainable and that the impact of events on parks and open spaces is managed.

6.1 Mote Park

Mote Park is within walking distance of Maidstone town centre. It is 460 acres parkland site and includes a large 30 acre lake, amenity grass areas, sports pitches as well as large areas of woodland and natural grassland which are managed for conservation. Over recent years the park has hosted a number of events ranging from: Radio 1 Big Weekend in 2008, an event attended by 30,000 music fans; the CBeebies Mr Blooms Roadshow in 2013 which attracted 18,000 people; the annual Mela which is a successful multi cultural event and the Social Festival dance music event held for the first time in 2013. In 2012 a series of Lottery funded improvements took place in the park, as part of this regeneration project a programme of smaller events put on in a partnership between officers and the Mote Park Fellowship friends group was started. This partnership continues to put on events and education walks and in 2013 put on 22 walks and worked in partnership putting on a number of events attracting over 20,000 people.

The park has huge open spaces which gives it the capacity to host very large events and potentially more than one small event at a time. There is limited infrastructure for larger events such as number of toilets and capacity and availability of power supplies but these can be overcome and brought onto site.

Whilst large areas of the park are set aside for conservation the amenity areas are of such scale that festivals and events can easily be accommodated.

6.2 Whatman Park

This 25 acre park was created as part of the Millennium River Park. The park has great potential for hosting festivals and events as it is located within walking distance of the town centre; it is surrounded by the railway line and the River Medway and has only three entrances which eliminates the need for fencing for an event; the River stage in the park provides a covered performance area as well as

Appendix A- Draft Festival & Events Policy 2014

having a substantial electricity supply and is designed to host medium sized events. Currently the only event which has been regularly hosted in the park is Proms in the Park which has taken place every May. This has been a free event which attracts up to 1,000 people.

6.3 River Park Amphitheatre

This was built in 2000 as part of the same project as Whatman Park. It is located near to All Saints Church. Because it is located near to residential property it has limited scope for amplified music events and is more suitable for open air theatre type events. This area has a capacity of up to around 150 people.

6.4 Cobtree Manor Park

This park forms part of the Cobtree Estate which also includes Kent Life, Cobtree Manor Golf Course and a large field located between Forstal Road and the M20. There is currently an event plan for the park but this is limited to mostly educational and informative guided walks. A new visitor centre will open in this very popular park in spring 2015, which will provide much needed visitor facilities. There is limited capacity in the park for hosting larger events but these could be potentially located elsewhere on the estate.

6.5 Brenchley Gardens

These gardens are located within the town centre of Maidstone. It is a traditional town centre park with flower beds, ornamental trees and a bandstand. It has the capacity to host small events but due to the proximity of residential property these will be limited to non amplified events. The gardens are also located next to Maidstone Museum providing the potential for joint events.

6.6 Jubilee Square and Lower High Street

Jubilee Square is a large open public space in the middle of Maidstone Town Centre. It was created as part of the High Street Regeneration scheme and is conveniently located on Maidstone High Street, in-front of Maidstone Town Hall. The space has access to event specification power and water supplies and has the capacity for both small and large events. As the site is located adjacent to the High Street, and the site is accessible by loading vehicles before 10.30am and after 5.30am, all events will need to consider how these vehicle movements will be managed.

The Lower High Street XXXXX

6.7 Maidstone Museum and Bently Art Gallery

The Maidstone Museum & Bently Art Gallery's multi-layered history and award-winning modern architecture provides a totally unique environment for a range of events.

Available for hire are 3 unique meeting rooms and 2 gallery spaces suitable for 2-130 delegates. Each meeting room has natural daylight and Wi-Fi. The Glass room is

Appendix A- Draft Festival & Events Policy 2014

equipped with automatic blinds, air conditioning and hearing loop. Interactive TV and other AV equipment are available.

The Museum boasts an experienced events team with dedicated staff who are on hand to make sure your event runs smoothly, along with caterers offering a selection of locally sourced, freshly prepared produce.

The Museum and its collections can be incorporated into your event offering private viewing of current exhibitions, guided tours through its galleries and viewing of artifacts stored behind the scenes. The Museum is perfectly positioned to Brenchley Gardens allowing the possibility of joint events. Exclusive hire of the Museum can also be offered.

Located centrally within the town the Museum is a 2 minute walk from the Maidstone East train station or 5 minutes by car from junction 7, M20. Various bus routes stop outside, there is limited parking onsite with a multi-storey car park located opposite.

The Council will also consider requests for events in parks, open spaces and other venues that are not listed above. As with all requests, permission for events is based on suitability and considered on an event by event basis.

7. Finance and Commissioning

Event and festival organisers should undertake to self-finance activities through income and/or sponsorship opportunities. Subject to the Borough Council's annual budget review the Council may have limited financial support available to assist charity and other not for profit community groups to deliver and develop a range of events and festivals that meet the aims and objectives of the events & festivals policy. The Council will also commission a number of festivals and events through a procurement process.

An application form together with the associated terms & conditions will be available from XXX. Each application will be considered against the aims and objectives of the Festivals and Events Strategy.

7. Marketing and PR

The Council will maintain a Festivals and Events Diary on the Visit Maidstone website and will encourage all events organisers to provide information on their events in order that the website can be kept up to date.

The Festivals and Events programme will be promoted via social media and organisers will be encouraged to cross promote events and collaborate on marketing activity.

Appendix A- Draft Festival & Events Policy 2014

All organisers of Festivals and Events that will potential impact on the community surrounding the venue, as assessed by the application process, will be required to inform the community affected in advance about the nature of the event and when and where it will be taking place.

8. Associated policies and strategies

8.1 What policies underpin Maidstone Borough Council's strategy on festivals and events in the borough?

There are a number of key council policies and strategies that relate to all cultural, leisure, sporting, recreational or community activity and to the delivery of events in the borough as a whole.

8.1.1 Strategic Plan

Maidstone Borough has many attractive urban and rural places, a relatively robust economy and diverse communities. With both a rich heritage and an ambition for growth we want to make the best of our past and the future to support people, strengthen the economy and develop the public realm to build vibrancy and prosperity.

The Strategic Plan is a four-year document produced by Maidstone Borough Council, written for residents, staff and partners. It sets out clear priorities and expected outcomes by 2015.

In order to provide focus to our efforts we have identified three priorities for the Council:

1. For Maidstone to have a growing economy.
2. For Maidstone to be a decent place to live.
3. Corporate & Customer Excellence.

The Council's refreshed [Strategic Plan](#) is available on our website and a new Strategic Plan is being developed for 2015/16 onwards.

8.1.2 Green Spaces Strategy 2005

This strategy document is currently being superseded by a new Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy which the council is currently developing. Once this new document is completed a decision will be made as to whether an additional Parks and Open spaces strategy is required.

8.1.3 Community Development Strategy

Community development is at the heart of the Council's aim to enable a vibrant and economically stable community. Engaging local people on a range of issues, so that they can influence the decisions affecting their local area and the development of services to meet local need will be at the heart of our approach. This strategy encourages strong partnerships between the Council, other agencies and residents

Appendix A- Draft Festival & Events Policy 2014

and promotes good working relationships internally between councillors and council officers, in order to achieve better outcomes through more effective and targeted allocation of scarce resources.

The Council's full Community Development Strategy is available on our website.

8.1.4 Equalities Policy

As a public authority, we believe we have a leading role to play in the promotion of equal opportunity in the community, both as employer and provider of services to the population of Maidstone and its visitors.

We would expect all events and festivals organisers to:

- Recognise their duties under legislation and be committed to meeting them.
- Take action to combat direct and indirect discrimination in all areas in respect of disability, sex, gender reassignment, race, age, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief, and sexual orientation as far as is permitted by statute law and associated Codes of Practice.

The Council's full Equalities Policy is available on our website.

8.1.5 Environmental Policy

All events are opportunities to communicate environmental messages to the public. The Council aims to actively work with organisers to ensure that best practice is introduced at all stages of event management.

8.1.6 Health and Safety

9. How to Apply

There will be a single point of entry for all festivals and events in the Borough via the Council's website. The website will provide all the relevant information on running a festival or event in Maidstone in the form of a toolkit which will include information on:

- Event Classification
- Application Timescales
- Do I need to apply for any other licences?
- Legislation
- Pre Planning
- Detailed Planning
- Final Preparations
- Health & Safety
- Help with your Risk Assessment
- Road Closures
- Stewarding

Appendix A- Draft Festival & Events Policy 2014

- First Aid and Medical Cover
- Insurance
- Contingency Planning
- Counter Terrorism
- After the Event
- Event Notification Form
- Road Closure Notification Form
- Event Application form: Public Open spaces
- Event Risk Assessment Form

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