

Rugeley's Big Celebration Review

Firstly – thank you to all Councillor's who attended and supported Rugeley's Big Celebration on Saturday, I think the overall outcome was a great success.

I think that we should look at the elements of the event in sections to give a thorough audit of how each were received.

1) Set Up

Set up went brilliantly, thank you so much to Hilary and the Councillors who were up and out with the larks lugging the furniture around the town centre. Many thanks To Armitage with Handsacre Council for their kind loan of furniture for the event.

2) Artisan Market

The feedback from our Artisan Traders has been extremely positive, with one new trader making more than £600 profit on the day. To avoid congestion in Upper Brook Street, we relocated 8 of our stalls to Lower Brook Street where the closed premises are located, and this seemed to work very well. Because that area of the street is very wide and we can back up onto closed shops, we wonder whether that would be a suitable location for the additional stalls moving forwards and are considering it for July's Artisan Market.

- One element that we feel is missing from our Artisan Market is our loss of hot food outlets due to our regular participants moving on to pastures new. This is in hand, and we are in discussions with Digbeth Dining Club to supply us with new, exciting outlets.

3) Elmore Park – Inflatable Fun

We were delighted that the Inflatable company were able to provide us with 4 members of staff on Saturday rather than the original 1, as that meant that it was largely self-managing on the day, being overseen by Councillors in support. We felt that this was another successful element of the day and drew people into our lovely Town Centre Park and made use of the grass area really well. The company also went on much later than their agreed time due to large numbers of people enjoying the games on offer, so many thanks to them.

4) Street Parties

Didn't they do well! Huge thanks to our local community groups for entering the spirit of the day and really making the most of the street party opportunities. Cherishers went all out, and it was just lovely seeing everyone dancing and singing along at the top of Upper Brook Street. Churches Together were the first to pop their prosecco corks at around 10.10am. and everyone had a wonderful time.

5) The Hart School – Equality Street

We want to say a huge congratulations to the Hart School for bringing an exciting and unique element to the day with their Equality Street offering. Working on the theme of tolerance and acceptance, their street party brought us cultural guidance and information, along with Bhangra dancing, Indian Street Food, fun activities, and chat sessions. Thank you to the staff and young people who did a fabulous job.

6) Market Square Entertainment

The decision to hire in a professional stage really worked for this event and made an enormous difference to the calibre of the event. The acts which we had were fabulous, despite being let down by one at the 11th hour. The screen was lovely to have running alongside, particularly for the Jubilee.

The main band were fabulous, and it was just a shame that there weren't more people out in market square at the end of the day enjoying them. This was impacted by the Rugeley Rocks event on St. Augustine's Field.

Staff will, where possible, look at ensuring that we aren't competing with other events which are happening in our own town. Obviously, this calendar weekend is our historical Charter Fair date, and with it being the Jubilee, we had no alternative, but a meeting with the organisers of Rugeley Rocks would be beneficial to ensure that clashes like this do not reoccur.

7) Extras

The decision to offer free refreshments and to make the inflatables free were all met with so much positivity, both at the event and afterwards on social media. We had a donations pot on the tea tent which raised over £200, and we are waiting for the Chair to decide on his charity for the year so we can pass on this money. We'd like to thank Whitworth and Masons for supplying the Tea Tent with power on Saturday.

The generator has now been purchased and worked brilliantly for the band on Saturday night.

We have received a considerable amount of positivity on local Facebook groups thanking us for our efforts with comments that they would like to see the event repeated.

Moving forwards...

Which brings us on to future events and how we proceed.

A) Charter Fair

We have had many comments from the community saying that the event which we held on Saturday was the way that they would like to see the Charter Fair being developed. We have also had comments from some people saying that it's not the same as the historical Charter Fair – particularly the Parade part of that event.

Charter Fair has historically cost the Town Council between £10,000 and £15,000 to put on and we charged for the inflatable and ride attractions which recouped some of the costs.

Being placed on Hagley Field and/or Green Lane left the event open to the vagaries of the weather (eg 2019). By holding an event in town, we can protect those attending from extreme weather as the ground will not be waterlogged etc.

Stokes Fun Fair have traditionally joined us on the fields with the fun fair. This year, the fair will be taking place this coming weekend. Cllrs may want to consider the linking of these events in future.

In previous years we have found ourselves in a position where we struggled to get commitment from organisations to take part in the parades and would regularly have

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cancellations up to 1 or 2 days before the event. The bands were paid for by the Town Council.

2015 4 Bands
3 Lorries
5 Walking groups
2 cars
2 motorbikes 12 units

2016 2 Bands
5 Lorries
7 Walking groups
1 car
1 motorbikes 14 units

2018 2 Bands
3 Lorries
6 Walking groups
1 car 10 units

2019 1 Band
6 Lorries
4 Walking groups
2 cars 12 units

Organisations struggled to find the time to decorate the floats and find people to perform on them. The parades were often bulked out with walking groups collecting donations and bands. The above shows the records that we have for the parade and the units number are those in the parade excluding the bands. NB the Charter Fair in 2019 was cancelled owing to rain and no records are available for 2017.

Cllrs may want to consider approaching community groups to see if they would commit to taking part in a parade if it were offered, prior to making the decision how to proceed with this event next year?

B) National Events

Cllrs may wish to consider reserving a big screen to be able to screen the schedules of unknown national events live from London on the day? I know that there are rules from Central Government on this, but how much leeway do we have to offer this as a service to bring our community together for what will be a huge national spectacle?

C) Commonwealth Games

The Queens Baton Relay will be passing through the town on 23rd July and we are hoping that this will coincide with the opening of the Mindfulness Garden. Funding is available from the grant to allow for some entertaining for this occasion and the Town Clerk will be leading on this.

Forthcoming events

We will now be working on putting together a Welcome Event in the Rose Theatre for our Ukrainian Guests now that most of them have arrived or are due to arrive imminently, offering support from the churches, and community centre, along with job support and language lessons. We will move all the charitable donations into the Landor Suite for them to take whatever they want and then the donations will be taken to local charity shops.

We will also be working on a Wedding Fair, which will become an annual addition to the Rose Theatre to both bring in revenue, but to also offer the theatre as a Wedding Venue in its own right. Dates for this will be confirmed.