

Report To Economic and Community Development Overview Committee Portfolio Holder for Sport & Leisure	June 2007
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Subject:	Revival of the Basingstoke Carnival
Status:	Open
Report Ref:	n/a
Ward(s):	All
Key Decision:	No
Key Decision Ref:	n/a
Report Of:	Head of Leisure Services
Contact:	Symon Easton, Arts & Heritage Manager Tel: 01256 845597 Email: symon.easton@basingstoke.gov.uk
Appendices:	Carnival letter and questionnaire Summary of questionnaire responses Carnival consultation meeting notes Benchmarking data on other Carnivals
Papers relied on to produce this report	Questionnaire responses

SUMMARY

1 This Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on progress to date regarding the revival of the Basingstoke Carnival, which was proposed at Council on 20 July 2006 and discussed at the Economic and Community Development Overview Committee on 12 October 2006.

2 Recommendation

It is recommended that:

- 2.1 The potential implications and revival of a Basingstoke Carnival are considered as part of the options appraisal within the wider Events Review being undertaken.

PRIORITIES, IMPACTS AND RISKS

Contribution To Council Priorities

This report accords with the Council's Budget and Policy Framework

Council Plan Ref 2007-10:	AC90
3-Year Action Plan:	LE59; LE60
Other References:	

Contribution To Community Strategy

Community Strategy 2006-16:	H5
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Impacts

	Type	No significant impacts	Some impacts	Significant impacts
Impacts for BDBC	Financial		✓	
	Personnel		✓	
	Legal	✓		
Impacts on Wellbeing	Equality and Diversity	✓		
	Crime and Disorder	✓		
	Health	✓		
	Environment	✓		
	Economic	✓		
Involving Others	Communication/Consultation		✓	
	Partners		✓	

Risk Assessment

Number of risks identified:		0	
Number of risks considered HIGH or Medium:		0	
Strategic:	Already identified on Corporate Risk Register?	Yes	
		No	✓
Operational:	Already identified in Service Plans?	Yes	
		No	✓

DETAIL/MAIN CONSIDERATIONS

3 Background

3.1 The Basingstoke Carnival first took place in 1937 and ceased in 1994. Anecdotal evidence suggests that this was due to declining support from the community and local businesses, compounded by more onerous requirements relating to its operation and management, including the need to comply with increased insurance and policing costs, health and safety issues and road closures.

3.2 At the Council meeting on 20 July 2006 the following Notice of Motion, which was moved by Councillor McCormick and seconded by Councillor Hood, was put forward for consideration by Economic and Community Development Overview Committee:

1. *That this Council sets up a working party to investigate how best to bring about a return of the Basingstoke Carnival with an anticipated date of the first revived carnival being June/July 2008.*
2. *The event would be 1 to 2 weeks duration, with a procession, fairground, a big stage in the memorial park, plus a series of sports competitions organised in conjunction with local clubs and neighbouring towns to promote increased participation in sport for all age groups (but especially the young) in the run up to London 2012.*

3.3 At the Economic and Community Development Overview Committee meeting on 12 October 2006 the above was considered and it was recommended that:

- (1) *any Carnival should benefit the whole of the Borough;*
- (2) *the Carnival should be community based;*
- (3) *the Cabinet Member for Sport & Leisure should be invited to facilitate a meeting(s) of all interested community organisations to set up a Carnival Committee;*
- (4) *the Cabinet Member for Sport & Leisure should be requested to provide the initial administrative support required from the Council to set up a Carnival Committee.*

4 Current situation

4.1 To progress the motion it was proposed to hold an open meeting to discuss the proposal and gain feedback from potential supporters. To assist this process a letter and questionnaire were drawn up and sent out to over 750 local groups and organisations, including schools (primary/junior, secondary and colleges), arts organisations, local businesses (directly and via Chamber of Commerce), parish councils, village halls and community centres, youth groups, diversity groups and Council Members and appropriate Officers. The covering letter and questionnaire are included as Appendix I.

Market Research

4.2 Only 51 questionnaire responses were received. The majority of respondents indicated that they would support a Carnival. Most felt that a Carnival could help to engender community spirit, provide opportunities for inter-generational engagement and increase the town's profile. There was also a strong feeling of nostalgia for the previous Carnival. Around 20 respondents suggested that

they would be prepared to get involved with a Carnival Committee in some capacity, subject to other commitments. However, the vast majority of respondents felt that the Borough Council would need to support the event in some financial way. Summary of the feedback is included as Appendix II.

Public Consultation

- 4.3 The open public consultation meeting was held on the evening of Monday 26 March, and was attended by just 11 representatives from local organisations with 7 Officers and Members present from the borough council. The key points raised by representatives included the need to create a clear and distinct identity for the Carnival, ensuring this would be relevant and open to both the town and rural areas. Although it was not determined how this would be achieved. The potential to involve a range of groups, organisations and individuals from a variety of backgrounds was also discussed. It was also made clear that operational and logistical issues, such as insurance and health and safety developments, would need resolving and could impact on the chosen format. The meeting notes are included as Appendix III.

Wider Consultation

- 4.4 Research was also undertaken on other Carnivals within the South East region for information and benchmarking purposes. Key issues raised included the need for a clear aim and focus to the event, with activities and branding relevant to the population concerned and their needs. The need to develop appropriate skills within the local community was also highlighted. All Carnival organisers stressed the need for some local authority support, both financial and organisational. Further information is included as Appendix IV.

5 Key Issues/Requirements for organising a Carnival

- 5.1 The following issues would therefore need to be addressed prior to the revival of a Carnival event.
- 5.1.1 Format – including aim of event, style of event (floats/procession), programming, location of event/route, date of event
- 5.1.2 Organisation/Management – including committee structure, role of volunteers, role of borough council, sustainability of event
- 5.1.3 Resources – including staff, accommodation, funding (sponsorship, fundraising, core funding etc), stewarding/policing requirements
- 5.1.4 Operational/Logistical Issues – including infrastructure requirements, health and safety, legal, insurance and licensing issues

6 Summary

- 6.1 Research to date suggests that, although there is some local support for reviving the Carnival, there is a lack of evidence amongst the wider community to take the lead on this. Community representatives did not commit to setting up a voluntary Committee and were keen to see the Borough Council move ideas forward, particularly in relation to funding and/or fundraising and event management. The response rate to the letter and questionnaires was poor, and attendance at the open meeting was also very

disappointing, suggesting that considerable promotion and resources would be required to take this forward.

- 6.2 Reviving the Carnival would almost certainly have resource implications for the Borough Council, both financially and operationally, at least in the short to medium term. It would also require support from other agencies such as the police and highways authority. It would be necessary to develop relevant key skills amongst the local community, both organisational and arts-based, including costume design and float production, which have been lost since the demise of the previous Carnival. The long-term sustainability of the event would also need to be considered and an exit-strategy implemented as appropriate.
- 6.3 There is first a need to define the purpose and objectives of any future Carnival so this is clear and relevant to the Basingstoke and Deane community, makes use of the existing skills available and is distinct from other events offered locally and regionally.

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 As the borough council is currently carrying out a review of its events provision, it is recommended that any revival of the Carnival is considered in relation to this wider discussion and the available options.

Appendix I

Dear Sir/Madam

BASINGSTOKE & DEANE CARNIVAL MEETING - INVITATION

Following a motion presented at the October Council, it was recommended that the Cabinet Member for Sport & Leisure should facilitate a meeting of all interested community organisations to set up a Basingstoke & Deane Carnival Committee. Therefore I would like to take this opportunity to invite you, or a representative of your organisation, to a meeting here at the Civic Offices on Monday 26th March at 6.30pm in the Council Chamber to discuss the proposal.

Members agreed that any Carnival should benefit the whole of the Borough and that it should be community based. My Portfolio has also been requested to provide initial administrative backup to set up a Carnival Committee if the proposal is taken forward by the community.

Please do return the acceptance slip below by Monday 19th March, to confirm your attendance. If you are unable to attend the meeting, we would be extremely grateful for any observations, comments and questions you may have. I have included a short questionnaire that may help in this regard and would be grateful if you could return it (in the reply paid envelope) by the same date.

I look forward to discussing this proposal with you and other potential stakeholders in due course.

Yours faithfully



Cllr Keith Chapman
Cabinet Member for Sport & Leisure

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REPLY SLIP – please indicate your availability and return this slip by 19th March

I will / will not be able to attend the meeting on 26th March

Name.....

Organisation

CARNIVAL QUESTIONNAIRE

Please answer the following questions and return this questionnaire with your reply slip in the prepaid envelope provided. Thank you.

Name: _____

Organisation: _____

1. Do you have an opinion about reviving the Basingstoke Carnival?

I would support it

I wouldn't support it

I have no opinion

1a. If you support it, please explain why.

1b. If you don't support it, please explain why.

1c. If you have no opinion, please go to question 7.

2. What format would you like the Carnival to have (eg. procession, static event, etc.)?

3. Would you be prepared to get involved in its planning, organisation and delivery?

yes no

3a. If yes, on what level?

3b. If no, why not?

4. Would you be prepared to sit on a carnival committee?

yes no

4a. If yes, what experience do you have of committees?

chairperson

treasurer

secretary

fundraising

publicity

programmer

operations

committee member

no experience

other, please specify: _____

5. What skills and knowledge could you bring to the organisation of the carnival?

event management

project management

event legislation and licensing

health and safety

creative skills (please specify, eg. music, costume making, etc.)

community leadership

finance management

fundraising

sponsorship

marketing

risk management

other, please specify: _____

Appendix II

Questionnaire responses

Total number of responses received = 51

Do you have an opinion about reviving the Basingstoke Carnival?

- 38 (or 75%) of respondents would support reviving the Carnival
 - Of these 15 (or 39%) would be prepared to get involved with a Committee
- 3 (or 6%) of respondents would not support reviving the Carnival
- 10 (or 20%) respondents have no opinion

Reasons for support

- Opportunity for celebration
- Engender community spirit/bring people together
- Opportunities for inter-generational engagement/family activity
- Good for young people
- Increase town's profile
- Nostalgia – memories of the previous Carnival

Reasons for not supporting

- Feel this would not be relevant due to geography – based in outlying areas

Format

- Inclusive
- Involvement of all ages
- Non-denominational
- Mix of procession and static events

Suggestions for funding

- Borough Council
- Arts Council
- Lottery
- Local business
- Sponsorship
- Raffles/collections/fundraising – before and during Carnival
- Entry fee for floats

Appendix III

CARNIVAL CONSULTATION MEETING

MONDAY 26 MARCH 2007

Attendees:

- Cllr Keith Chapman, Cabinet Member for Sport and Leisure
- Cllr Mrs Osselton, Borough Councillor
- Cllr Marian Adams, Chineham Parish Council
- Paul Midgley, Drumrunners
- Mary Swan, Proteus Theatre Company
- Sandie Thomson, BATS Next Generation
- Sue King, Melrose Community Centre
- Ian Foley, Hampshire Highways
- Acting Inspector Dean Wakelen, Basingstoke Police
- Jaynie Lewis, Millennium Volunteers
- Karen Pitts, Basingstoke Silver Band
- Jayne Fowler, Street Fever Dance School
- Eve Keeble, Melrose Christian Fellowship
- Linda Cannon, Licensing Manager, BDBC
- Symon Easton, Arts and Heritage Manager, BDBC
- Andrew Grove, Events Officer, BDBC
- Heather Thomas, Assistant Events Officer, BDBC
- Daniel Garnier, Cultural Officer, BDBC

NOTES OF MEETING

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss issues surrounding the revival of the Basingstoke Carnival.

Why did the Basingstoke Carnival stop?

- health and safety regulations
- cost of insurance for floats became prohibitive
- decrease in community interest
- cultural change in Basingstoke
- road closures became too complicated to manage

General issues affecting successful Carnival presentation:

- potential Police costs
- fundraising may scare people off
- increased insurance obligations for groups
- increased Health and Safety legislation requirements
- generate enough community enthusiasm - maintain sustainability
- commitment from volunteer organisers
- need for relevant expertise and Carnival skills – has declined since carnival stopped
- promoting and selling the event
- risk of inclement weather

- sponsorship – potential double business money initiative through ‘Arts & Business’
- geography of the borough = community separation – distance between communities may be an issue
- need for successful partnerships e.g. local groups with businesses
- competition / clash of dates with other events (locally and regionally)

Other comments

- purpose and objective of any event must be clearly defined
- carnival/festival options to be looked at as part of events review and image of the Borough consultation
- different type of event – look towards future, innovative format
- run a trial event before people get involved in order to raise interest and motivation
- bring events under one umbrella to create a Basingstoke Festival
- carnival must knit community together and bring the community to the community
- Look at how other local carnivals are organised – Winklebury and Old Basing. Also speak to Popley Festival organisers
- new event must not stifle other successful events
- new event must celebrate local talent
- local BME (diversity) groups could take a lead on Carnival and offer something different
- engage Eastern European community in carnival revival
- cultural Olympiad – use sport as vehicle to promote cultural diversity
- set a target date, might be the spark to get people involved
- 2008 target unrealistic - first get idea of what could be done
- council could take the lead for fundraising rather than local organisations
- common problems may be alleviated through joint working
- share interest/showcase talent
- new event organisation must be fun but challenging
- procession could be on foot to avoid insurance problems with floats
- video link with various areas of Borough would help bring all groups together

Appendix IV

Other Carnivals

Luton Carnival

Background - First carnival started back in 1976 as a modest Victorian street fair as part of the borough centenary celebrations and has continued to develop and evolve. In 1998 Luton Carnival acquired international status.

Format – One day event - culturally mixed, includes a procession, some static sites and performance stages, floats, stalls and traders – attended by up to 150,000 people

Organisation – 11 months of planning – wholly Council run by five people who form Luton's arts development unit; large number of support staff for the event, including 160 security personnel

Funding – Council budget of £280k for 07/08, excluding £50k of staff time

Includes £65k for policing, £26k for security, £20k for road closures

Sponsorship is minimal, maximum of £40k achieved in any one year, average of £12k – sponsorship from Bedfordshire Newspapers (the Luton Herald and Post, and the Luton News) and 97.6 Chiltern FM for 07/08

Partners - The partner for carnival arts is the Luton Carnival Arts Development Trust who received the largest single lottery award for carnival arts development as well as Arts Council funding for the National Carnival Arts Centre. The Trust runs the highly successful MAS Camps, which work together to design and make the spectacular costumes for the carnival parade.

Future – have on-going support from the local authority at this stage although rising costs are an issue which may need to be addressed in due course

Link -

http://www.luton.gov.uk/internet/leisure_and_culture/parks_and_recreation/events%20services/luton%20internation%20carnival1/The%20team%20behind%20the%20carnival

Isle of Wight

Format –19 summer carnivals, 9 winter parades annually – vary in style, although most include a procession and static elements

Organisation – vast majority organised by volunteer committees. One summer carnival and one winter parade organised by Arts unit at IOW Council as showcase events. Year round training and carnival education programme is in place, with a full time Carnival Development Officer, plus a freelance outreach team and carnival truck/mobile workshop.

Funding – Council run events drawn from Arts Council England, Learning & Skills Council and European Social Fund programmes, IOW Council and other funding sources linked to community/personal development, getting people back into employment, social and economic regeneration etc. Limited sponsorship achieved.

Future - Working towards opening the first dedicated carnival learning centre in the UK in November 2007 in Ryde.

Reading Carnival

Background – Initiated in 1977. Aims to create a safe environment, with a wide range of activities for all ages.

Format – Weekend event which takes place on the second Bank Holiday in May - multi-cultural, family-friendly. Includes King and Queen Competition, Procession with

stalls and floats, stage with screen, complementary events and workshop programme over the weekend

Organisation – run by a volunteer committee, with support from Reading Borough Council.

Funding – Fundraising, sponsorship (bronze, silver and gold options available), Reading Borough Council and workshop funding from Arts Council England. Strong in-kind support from local press.

Future – Some decline in the number of floats in recent years, keen to reverse this trend

Link - <http://www.readingcarnival.org.uk/>

Eastleigh Carnival

Background - Eastleigh Carnival Association has been organising carnivals in Eastleigh for over 100 years. The Association has two main aims - to organise a week of popular activities for young and old, which culminates in the popular Saturday procession, and to raise money for local charities and voluntary organisations

Organisation - Committee is formed from a group of volunteers who give their time freely – currently 17 committee members, including Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Press Officer etc.

Format - Week-long programme of events and activities in August, ranging from Fancy Dress competitions and Children's dog show, culminating in the Grand Parade around the Streets of Eastleigh. This includes marching bands, walking tableaux and vehicle based tableaux and Carnival Court (Queen and Princesses).

Funding - Local business sponsors, Eastleigh Borough Council

Link - <http://www.ecass.org/>

Winklebury Carnival

Background – initiated in 2000 as a small-scale event with a community focus. Has developed into a much bigger event with a greater catchment area – almost at capacity.

Organisation – run by the Winklebury Community Association, with up to 10 volunteers, 6 of whom are particularly active.

Format – one day event in July, with activities from 10am to 5pm. Charity Day, with a range of fundraising activities, car boot, stalls, parade (including children on foot, vehicles and classic cars), events' arena, funfair, inflatables – range of local partners involved

Funding – self-funding, with income from stallholders, funfair, car boot sale, Sentinel (in-kind support), local business provide activities

Old Basing Carnival

Background - Initiated in 1971 as scout and guide carnival then taken on by the Parish and re-branded

Organisation – Run by a volunteer committee of 13 members

Format - One day event on the 3rd Saturday in June – events (bands and barn dance) and stalls (tombola etc) on recreation ground between 1pm and 6pm, Procession with Carnival Court. Most years are themed. Attended mostly by Lychpit and Old Basing residents (c. 2,000)

Funding – local businesses featuring in programme, some fundraising events, including a raffle. Small charge to attend event - (£1.50 adults, £1 conc., children free), small charge to those booking stalls.