**LEISURE, WELLBEING AND HEALTH COMMITTEE**

**29 JUNE 2016**

**PART I - DELEGATED**

**10. WATERSMEET FILM SEASON (FILMSMEET)**

(DCES)

1. **Summary**

* 1. This report recommends that the Filmsmeet season be expanded to include live screening events and a greater number of films to be shown throughout the year.

2. **Background**

2.1 On the 17 September 2014, Leisure Wellbeing & Health Committee approved the Watersmeet film season trial (Filmsmeet) for January – March 2015. On the 3 June 2015, Leisure Wellbeing & Health Committee approved the Watersmeet film season to continue January – March 2016 with up to 6 additional films screened throughout the year.

2.2 In addition, Watersmeet trialled three live screenings: ‘Sing-a-long Rocky Horror’ and ‘Battle of Britain’ as part of Watersmeet 40th Anniversary, and ‘The Railway Children’ as a standalone screening with combined ticket income of £7,291.

2.3 ***Programming***

As can be seen from Appendix 1, the choice of film has had the biggest impact on ticket sales. Children’s films sold more tickets per showing, but as the ticket price is lower this didn’t result in significantly higher income. It would therefore be sensible for Filmsmeet to continue to spread the risk between a mixture of new release blockbusters and children’s films.

2.4 ***Footfall, Attendance and Awareness***

Attendance at Filmsmeet increased by 1,465 from 4,496 during the trial season 2014/15 to 5,961 for 2015/16 season. This included 762 people attending the 3 live screenings. The average attendance per film showing in 2015/16 was 130 which is down by 43 from 2014/15. This is predominantly due to four less popular films in the 2015/16 season bringing the average down and the very popular ‘Paddington’ in the 2014/15 season, which accounted for 30% of the total attendance.

The Friends of Watersmeet Film Society (FOWFS) are an established, not for profit organisation that hire Watersmeet at a reduced rate to screen one film every third Thursday of the month, with additional films throughout the year.

FOWFS attendances have increased running alongside Filmsmeet, from 1,753 in the 2014/15 season to 3,323 in the 2015/16 season.

2.5 ***Branding & Marketing***

A range of printed material was produced and distributed which included a film guide, posters, postcards, pull-up banners within the venue, district banners, included in What’s on at Watersmeet, Three Rivers Times, pantomime programme, website, social media and electronic mailouts.

In addition, children’s films were promoted via schools ParentMail or newsletters and were displayed within the What’s on section on the Netmums website.

Facebook posts were carried out for each film and live screening on a regular basis with boosts made for selected titles.

Watersmeet’s email database has grown by over 1,600 customers over the past year from 7,000 in 2014/15 to 8,615 in 2015/16.

2.6 ***Feedback***

Audience feedback has been very positive and we have received over 300 responses so far. A flavour of the feedback we have received to the question ‘What could be done to improve Films at Watersmeet?’ include:

* More films - particularly for children/families
* More films and events please
* Show more films!
* Continue to put on great films especially during school holidays. We love going to Watersmeet.
* More Filmsmeet films throughout the year on Friday-Sunday
* More films! Even if they aren't new releases. Email newsletter reminding me of upcoming films.

2.7 ***Staff and Volunteers***

Generally all film screenings are managed by staff during their contracted working hours and our regular volunteers. Based on current usage there is capacity within staff contracted hours to show more films, however with further increased usage additional staffing may be required at a cost of £71.34 per film showing for a Front of House Manager and Duty Technician.

2.8 ***Financials 2015/16 Season***

Film & Live Screening

Income £25,351

Expenditure £12,913

Surplus £12,438

Secondary Sales (Bar)

Income £5,711

Expenditure £1,999

Surplus £3,712

Total Surplus £16,150

For a detailed breakdown see Appendix 2.

There has been no loss of revenue from hires as films have been programmed on weekdays on all but one occasion. This is because the majority of bookings are between Friday and Sunday.

3. **Options/Reasons for Recommendation**

3.1 Officers’ recommendation is for the Committee to approve the expansion of the film season for the following reasons:

* To enable Watersmeet to continue to increase revenue
* To cater for the public demand for films at Watersmeet as demonstrated by the 5,961 people who attended a film showing and the survey feedback
* To continue to raise the awareness of Watersmeet venue hire and the other shows and events that take place
* To cater for all the community
* Similar venues to Watersmeet have seen success with live screenings generating additional revenue

4. **Policy/Budget Reference and Implications**

4.1 The recommendations in this report are within the Council’s agreed policy and budgets.

4.2 The purpose of this proposed policy is to generate additional usage and revenue for Watersmeet. If approved, it is anticipated that Filmsmeet will increase its surplus in 2016/2017 by circa £10,000 - £12,000.

5. **Financial Implications**

5.1This will provide Watersmeet an opportunity to continue to increase revenue.

6. **Legal Implications**

6.1 *None specific.*

7. **Equal Opportunities Implication**

7.1 ***Relevance Test***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Has a relevance test been completed for Equality Impact? | Yes |
| Did the relevance test conclude a full impact assessment was required?  The recommendation does not impact adversely on any group within the community. The screening of films which are likely to appeal to ethnic minorities and the availability of facilities within the venue to assist those with disabilities mitigates the impact of the proposals. | No |

7.2 Audio described can now be offered to users.

7.3 Filmsmeet has reached many group users including the elderly, those with a disability and those with learning difficulties.

8. **Staffing Implications**

8.1*None specific.*

9. **Environmental Implications**

9.1 *None specific.*

10. **Community Safety Implications**

10.1 *None specific.*

11. **Customer Services Centre Implications**

11.1 *None specific.*

12. **Communications and Website Implications**

12.1 *None specific.*

13. **Risk Management and Health & Safety Implications**

13.1 The Council will make a financial loss if ticket sales are low. In the worst-case-scenario, if no one attended any films the direct cost would be £6,100. However, based on current performance we believe this risk to be minimal.

13.2 The Council will lose revenue from hires if there are dates not available due to films being shown. Therefore weekends will be avoided for film programming as these are most popular for private hires.

13.3 Other than ensuring that the films are effectively selected and marketed and that the customers’ experience is of a high quality in order to bring in their repeat business, there is little more that can be done to mitigate the risk. Ongoing monitoring during the season will enable any programming adjustments to be made, should sales be lower than target.

13.4 The above risks are plotted on the matrix below depending on the scored assessments of impact and likelihood, detailed definitions of which are included in the risk management strategy. The Council has determined its aversion to risk and is prepared to tolerate risks where the combination of impact and likelihood are plotted in the shaded area of the matrix. The remaining risks require a treatment plan.

13.5 The following table gives the risks if the recommendation(s) are agreed, together with a scored assessment of their impact and likelihood:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Description of Risk | | Impact | Likelihood |
| 1 | The Council will make a financial loss if ticket sales are low. | II | F |

13.6 The following table gives the risks that would exist if the recommendation is rejected, together with a scored assessment of their impact and likelihood:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Description of Risk | | Impact | Likelihood |
| 2 | Watersmee Watersmeet will not be able to achieve a reduction in the net cost to the Council. | III | C |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Likelihood** | A |  |  |  |  |  | Impact | Likelihood |
| B |  |  |  |  |  | V = Catastrophic | A = >98% |
| C |  |  | 2 |  |  | IV = Critical | B = 75% - 97% |
| D |  |  |  |  |  | III = Significant | C = 50% - 74% |
| E |  |  |  |  |  | II = Marginal | D = 25% - 49% |
| F |  | 1 |  |  |  | I = Negligible | E = 3% - 24% |
|  | I | II | III | IV | V |  | F = <2% |
| **Impact** | | | | | |  |  |

13.7 In the officers’ opinion none of the new risks above, were they to come about, would seriously prejudice the achievement of the Strategic Plan and are therefore operational risks. The effectiveness of treatment plans are reviewed by the Audit Committee annually.

14. **Recommendation**

14.1 Leisure, Wellbeing and Health Committee is requested to approve Filmsmeet expansion.

14.2 To continue the Filmsmeet Season annually from January – March.

14.3 In addition, to have the flexibility to screen up to 30 films over the year to capture the popular market of blockbuster release and children’s films.

14.4 For Watersmeet to show live screenings of shows.

Report prepared by: Josh Sills, Venue Manager

**Data Quality**

Data sources:

Financials/Expenditure

Programme

Comment Cards

Data checked by: Wendy Stratford

Data rating:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | Poor |  |
| 2 | Sufficient | X |
| 3 | High |  |

**Background Papers**

Report to 17 September 2014 Leisure, Wellbeing and Health Committee

Report to 3 June 2015 Leisure, Wellbeing and Health Committee

**APPENDICES / ATTACHMENTS**

Appendix 1 Filmsmeet Sales 2015/16

Appendix 2 Cost Breakdown of Filmsmeet