**LEISURE, WELLBEING AND HEALTH COMMITTEE**

**5 JULY 2017**

**PART I - DELEGATED**

**7. WATERSMEET FILM PROGRAMME (FILMSMEET)**

**1. Summary**

* 1. This report recommends that the Filmsmeet programme be allowed to continue without the need for Watersmeet management to request permission to show more films. Filmsmeet performance figures will be included in the Watersmeet Business Plan annual review, and therefore would not require a specific Filmsmeet annual review report going forward.

**2.** **Background**

2.1 On the 17 September 2014, Leisure, Wellbeing and Health Committee approved the Watersmeet film season trial (Filmsmeet) for January to March 2015. On the 3 June 2015, Leisure, Wellbeing and Health Committee approved the Watersmeet film season to continue January to March 2016 with up to 6 additional films screened throughout the year. On the 29 June 2016, Leisure, Wellbeing and Health Committee approved the Watersmeet film season to continue January to March 2017 and up to 30 additional films throughout the year, as well as the expansion of live screening events.

2.3 ***Programming***

As can be seen from Appendix 1, the choice of title continues to have the most significant impact on ticket sales. Children’s films sold on average more tickets per showing, but as the ticket price is lower this didn’t result in 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 from 5,961 in the 2015/16 season to 11,553 in the 2016/17 season, an increase of 5,592. This included 625 people attending the live screenings. The average attendance per film showing in 2016/17 was 114 which is down by 16 from 2015/16. This is predominantly due to increasing the number of showings per title from 2 to 3 in order to provide more opportunities for customers to attend. When comparing average number of attendees per title this has increased from 259 in 2015/16 to 350 in 2016/17.

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 remained strong alongside Filmsmeet, with 3,323 during 2015/16 and 3,045 during 2016/17.

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, incorporated within the What’s On at Watersmeet, Three Rivers Times, pantomime programme, website, social media and electronic mail-outs.

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.

2.6 ***Feedback***

Audience feedback has been very positive. A flavour of the feedback we have received to the question ‘What influenced your decision to see a film at Watersmeet?’ include:

* + - Wonderful to have a local venue
    - Enjoy adult audience – no mobiles
    - Lots of leg room, relaxed civilised atmosphere
    - Reasonable prices
    - The sound is very good
    - Good social and friendly atmosphere in a local venue

2.7 ***Staff and Volunteers***

Generally film screenings are managed by staff during their contracted working hours and our regular volunteers, with the exception of box office which on average costs £24.60 per film. In addition some films have required a casual Front of House Manager if the permanent staff member’s contracted hours had been exceeded at a cost of £69.90 per film.

2.8 ***Financials 2016/17 Season***

All figures are net unless otherwise stated.

Film & Live Screening

Income £36,962

Expenditure £19,522

Surplus £17,440

Secondary Sales (Bar)

Income £8,537

Expenditure £2,988

Surplus £5,549

Total Surplus £22,989

For a detailed breakdown of expenditure see Appendix 2.

There has been no loss of revenue from hires as films have been programmed predominantly on weekdays and around hire bookings.

**3. Options / Reasons for Recommendation**

3.1 Officers’ recommendation is for the committee to approve the continuation of the Filmsmeet programme without annual review for the following reasons:

* Since the first Filmsmeet trial season in 2015, audience figures and revenue have increased significantly and the Filmsmeet programme has been established as a popular attraction and revenue stream for Watersmeet
* Filmsmeet performance figures will be included in Watersmeet Business Plan annual review
* To enable Watersmeet to continue to increase revenue
* To cater for the public demand for films at Watersmeet as demonstrated by the 11,553 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
* Similar venues to Watersmeet have seen continued success and growth from showing films and live screening events

**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 continue to increase revenue for Watersmeet over the coming years.

**5.** **Financial Implications**

5.1The Filmsmeet programme 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 costs would be £211 per film title. 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 continue to 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 | Watersmeet 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 to approve the continuation of the Filmsmeet programme without the requirement to request permission to show more films.

14.2 That Filmsmeet performance figures be included as part of the Watersmeet Business Plan annual review.

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

Report to 29 June 2016 Leisure, Wellbeing and Health Committee

**APPENDICES / ATTACHMENTS**

Appendix 1 Filmsmeet Attendance and Financial Breakdown 2016/17

Appendix 2 Cost Breakdown of Filmsmeet 2016/17