

Link Councillor Report

ARUNDEL FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS, 2021

Planned Festival dates: Friday 20th August-Monday 30th August.

Background

Anyone planning events for summer 2021 is faced with great uncertainty. In its roadmap the government has expressed its hope that in stage 4 which will begin “*not before 21st June*” all restrictions on social contact may be lifted. However the timing and regulations applying to stage 4 will depend on the results of stages 1-3 and the level of transmission in June. Nothing is predictable. Even if the regulations permit activities, there is the question of whether events are advisable and whether residents will wish to see them take place.

‘A Post-lockdown Morale Booster’

There are grounds for not holding a 2021 Festival. However there is a strong urge that Arundel should get back to a level of normality. Having taken soundings in the community, the Festival Committee have concluded that there is a general preference that a Festival should take place if possible and that it can act as a ‘post-lockdown morale booster’ for the town.

Status

A detailed (138-page) event plan has been submitted to Arun District Council. The Festival Plan has been scaled-back compared to previous years, and there is full awareness that it may need to be curtailed further or cancelled. Public health considerations are high on the Festival Committee’s agenda (it was the second bullet point on their recent flyer).

Principles Underpinning the 2021 Festival Programme

1. Events and the promotion of the Festival will be more focused on residents and the community.
2. There will be an increased number of open air events, including a community picnic on the Castle Lower Lawns, and a number of possible events at Swanbourne Lake.

3. Many events will be accessible only through pre-purchasing tickets, and numbers will be controlled (similar to the arrangements being applied by the Castle and Wetlands). Priority in ticket allocations will go to residents. Indoor ticketed events will take place in venues where social distancing is possible, e.g. Arundel Cathedral.
4. There will be a limited programme on the 2nd (public holiday) weekend in an attempt to avoid attracting excessive visitor numbers into the town centre.
5. Events will be spread out more throughout the town, e.g. into the Meadows and Brooks Field (e.g. a mini music festival and variety evening), and the 10k run will take place through Arundel Park rather than on the roads to avoid crowding.
6. There will be significant reduction in “street entertainment” and no enclosure in Jubilee Gardens.
7. Emphasis will be given to visual displays, including banners and flags, in the town.
8. The Gallery Trail will not operate in its normal form with people going into private houses. Instead it is hoped that there will be art displays in a limited number of venues, e.g. the Victoria Institute, Arundel Museum (whom we understand plan to have a ‘lockdown art’ exhibition), the Youth Club and The Cathedral Centre.

Town Council Support

Funding will be tight, given that the biggest fundraiser from previous years-the June pre-fest event in the Castle-has been cancelled. The Festival has applied for a grant from the Town Council.

The Town Council has also supported the project by making Sue Roderick available to produce the 138-page Event Plan for ADC, a herculean task in 2021.

Tony Hunt

Link Councillor Report-Arundel Festival

16th April 2021