

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Regeneration and Sustainable Development Cabinet Board

Friday 27 October 2017

Report of the Head of Property and Regeneration

S Brennan

Matter for Information

Wards Affected: ALL

NEATH FOOD & DRINK FESTIVAL 2017

1. Purpose of Report

To update to Members on the success of the 2017 Neath Food & Drink Festival organised by the Regeneration and Economic Development Team.

2. Executive Summary

The Neath Food and Drink Festival 2017, held between Friday 29th September and Sunday 1st October, is now in its ninth year and the festival is growing in significance each year.

During the 2017 festival the following outputs were achieved;

- Over 56,000 visitors came to the town over the three days of the festival.
- An additional 916 car parking tickets sold.
- Social media posts reached an audience of 38,500.
- The highest ever number of food and drink producers (68) were attracted to this year's festival.

3. Background

Set in the heart of Neath Town Centre the Neath Food and Drink Festival has become an established and high profile event in the town's calendar. The festival has seen consecutive growth each year for the

past nine years, expanding from a one day festival at its inception to a three day festival in 2015, 2016 and 2017.

The Neath Food and Drink Festival was established as part of a strategy to promote the Town Centre and assists in developing Neath as a place to visit. The event also contributes to the growth of the visitor economy across the whole Neath Port Talbot by extending the tourism season into the autumn months.

In addition to its Regeneration and Economic Development objectives the festival's key aims are to promote local food, celebrate local producers and promote Neath's thriving food and drink scene.

4. Key Achievements

- **Footfall**

A footfall count which was undertaken by the NPTCBC Survey Team has evidenced that over 56,000 people came to Neath Town Centre over the festival weekend.



2,336 car parking tickets were sold during the course of the weekend across all car parks in Neath Town Centre. The average number of tickets sold the weekend prior to the festival and the weekend after, both of which experienced much more favourable weather, was 1,420; this represents an additional 916 tickets sold, an increase of 65%.

The footfall and car parking figures are highly encouraging and highlight how the festival draws visitors into the Town Centre who go on to spend money both at the festival stalls and within local business.

- **Range and Number of Stallholders**

68 food producers and 6 non-food producers attended this year's festival; this is the highest number of stall holders in the event's nine year history. 53 of these producer's originated in Wales, of this 14 were from Neath Port Talbot.



The increase in stall holders interested in attending the event shows that the event is highly popular with food and drink producers and is well established on the Welsh food festival calendar.

- **Social Media Reach**

A more co-ordinated approach was taken to the management of social media platforms for this year's festival. There was a key focus on promoting the festival using a short video produced the previous year.

The video was extremely effective and was viewed on Facebook 17,822 times reaching an audience of 38,500 people, generating 520 engagements (likes and comments).

Social media raised the profile of the festival and assisted in attracting the 56,000 footfall to the event.



The cost of social media marketing activities was minimal and in future year's social media will be used as the main promotional tool for the festival.

- **Involvement of Town Centre Businesses**

The festival gives local restaurants, cafes and pubs the opportunity to showcase what they can offer.

As the Festival has developed, more businesses in the town have actively engaged with the event by adapting menus and offering entertainment.

This year a full programme of live bands was hosted throughout the weekend by The Castle Hotel, Moruzzi and Co, Treats of Old Market Street and Charlies Champagne Bar and Grill.

Neath Inspired also funded a street entertainer who entertained the crowds during the weekend.



5. Funding the Event

This year's festival made a small loss of just over £3,000, however this cost can be off-set by the following;

- 56,000 visitors that spent money within the town centre economy
- Overnight stays by stall holders in town centre hotels
- An additional 916 car parking tickets sold during the festival weekend which generated additional income for NPTCBC.

This year pitch fees generated approximately £19,000 which assists in covering the cost of the event. A grant of £5,000 was also secured from Welsh Government's Strategic Business Growth Grant Scheme via Food and Drink Wales.

6. The Future of Neath Food and Drink Festival

There is significant potential to develop the Festival further to attract visitors on overnight stays to Neath Town Centre.

2018 marks the ten year anniversary of the Neath Food and Drink Festival, such a milestone will assist in attracting good press coverage so it is important that we think bigger and better for 2018.

Raising the profile of the event in 2018 will generate even more visits to the Town Centre in future years. We are currently looking at options for how this can be achieved.

7. Financial Impact

Please see above

8. Equality Impact Assessment

There are no equality impacts associated with this report.

9. Workforce Impact

There are no workforce impacts associated with this report.

10. Legal Impact

There are no legal impacts associated with this report.

11. Risk Management

There are no risk management issues associated with this report.

12. Consultation

There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item.

15. Officer Contact

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