

## **FULL COUNCIL 9<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2021**

### **WALL2WALL JAZZ FESTIVAL**

#### **1. PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT**

- 1.1 To approve a sponsorship arrangement with Black Mountain Jazz (BMJ) to support the Wall2Wall Jazz Festival.

#### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Town Council has supported the Wall2Wall Jazz Festival on a yearly basis for many years. Until 2020, support was offered to enable the Jazz Alley event to be free of charge and open to all.
- 2.2 In 2020, a £1000 small grant was offered in support of the virtual Wall2Wall Jazz Festival
- 2.3 In May 2021, BMJ applied for a further small grant to enable them to take forward an enterprise to produce and sell CDs in order to recoup some of the losses from the 2020 festival. At this time, Council agreed to discuss with BMJ a longer term funding arrangement.
- 2.4 The rationale for entering into existing sponsorship arrangements with Town Festivals was to formalise annual funding applications received year after year for roughly the same expenditure. This was considered to be an ineffective way of supporting the festivals and a three year sponsorship arrangement was taken forward. This approach enabled festival organisers to plan with some certainty and to use the Town Council's financial support to lever in additional funds. At the time of entering into agreements with festival organisers, the Council's decision was predicated on an understanding of what the Festivals deliver and the benefits they bring to the town in terms of attracting visitors and offering different activities to residents. Festival organisers were not asked to enter into partnering agreements and commit to a list of project outcomes as the sums involved were in some cases considerably less than made available through partnering agreements. For example current festivals are supported with annual funding from between £500 to £4500. Festival organisers have however been asked to consider how they can contribute to the wellbeing objectives and to acknowledge support of the Town Council in all promotional literature.
- 2.5 Up until 2020, the Wall2Wall Jazz Festival had been running since 2013 following a similar format with benefits to the town in line with other festivals. The festival and its organisers are therefore familiar to Councillors and to be treated on an equitable basis to other festivals it would be unfair to request a detailed business plan. However, it is appropriate that the Festival should seek to contribute to the wellbeing objectives.
- 2.6 The proposal below is the result of discussions with BMJ.

#### **3. PROPOSAL**

- 3.1 It is the intention of BMJ to provide an annual Wall2Wall Jazz Festival. This is usually held in October. The wall2wall Jazz Festival this year will follow a similar format as

2020, being filmed in the summer months at the Melville and streamed in September and October. Locally based 47Studios & Productions will again provide the film, sound and video services. All musicians will be paid their normal fees. The one addition is that they hope to introduce some live gigs as part of the filming programmes. All videos feature the host town Abergavenny as they did last year. The Jazz Alley event usually supported by the Town Council will not be included but once Festivals can return to a more traditional format this will be reintroduced into the programme.

- 3.2 In 2020, the virtual festival produced nine full length videos and sold 330 tickets. However, it is estimated that the audience was some three times that, as all musicians and their families had complimentary viewing and sales average 4 viewers. It is also the case that, to attract sales, virtual ticket prices need to be lower than for live events. By comparison, the 2019 festival attracted about 500 sales and ticket prices were considerably higher. Being a live event, there was also the added benefit of the bar. It is known that people travel to Abergavenny for the festival and many book overnight accommodation. Also, musicians and their crew stay overnight and we have booked many over the years into local accommodation. Both live and virtual festivals have a wide reach and both are reviewed nationally. Virtual festivals have the added benefit of international reach and last year's festival was viewed in many other countries, including USA, South America and Australia.
- 3.3 As a general guide, each event in a festival programme will cost £500 to £900 for musicians fees, £750 for filming and editing and £250 for rent, PRS. marketing, etc. That comes to between £1,500 and £1,900. If the programme is limited to a couple of higher cost headline acts and another seven acts at the lower rate, the budget for the Festival will be £14,300. With the help of sponsorship and grants, this budget level is manageable.
- 3.3 BMJ has received notification that the sponsorship received from a local businessman of £6,000 will be reducing in 2021 to £2,500. This leaves a shortfall of funds available to deliver the mainstream Festival. The Town Clerk has provided BMJ with the contact details for GAVO fundraising officers together with details of a number of grant opportunities.
- 3.4 BMJ is keen to introduce jazz to new audiences including young people. They are proposing to develop a youth programme in 2021 Two projects under consideration and requiring funding would be delivered as live workshops. One of these projects would be aimed at introducing jazz music to primary school ages, as well as some of the instruments used. The other would be for high school children, with a series of videos that talk about the genres of jazz, associated history and music to listen to. A third project under consideration is building a library of 'Jazz for LittleUns' videos, which can be made widely available via Vimeo. All of the above three projects would be led by younger musicians - many of who are Wales-based or studied at the RWCMD in Cardiff.
- 3.5 BMJ is seeking sponsorship of £4000 a year which would contribute towards a youth programme with some support to the main Festival. The funding available would determine how extensive the youth programme could be as this element is not able to generate income unlike the main festival. BMJ would seek to use the Town Council

funding as match funding for additional funding. BMJ would be grateful for the support of the Town Council over a period of three years. Budget provision has not been made for this funding stream so should Council agree funding this would be vired from the Council events budget into the sponsorship of events budget.

- 3.6 This festival can be supported under the power to encourage tourism Local Government Act 1972 s45 (1)(b)
  
- 3.7 BMJ is keen to reintroduce Jazz Alley at future physical festivals and will seek to promote this event across generations and promote intergenerational integration.

#### **4. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 To approve annual sponsorship of the Wall2Wall Jazz Festival at £4000 a year for three years subject to satisfactory annual feedback report.