

## Midsummer in Wem

**Background**

There has been an interest in adding to the events currently on offer in the town throughout the year. Events can be a useful way of bringing people into the town and can help support the businesses in the town centre.

Currently the key events in Wem in 2024 are;

April – Spring Market / RBL 100 years

May – Wem Fest

June – Beacon Lighting D Day

July – Sweet Pea Show / V01

Aug -

Sept – Carnival / Harvest Market / Wem 10km

Oct -

Nov - Fireworks

Dec. Christmas Festival

June and October have been identified as months where there is currently not a larger event taking place in the Town. A meeting between the Town Clerk and representatives from Wem Town Hall Trust has been held to explore the idea of supporting a Midsummer in Wem event on the evening of Friday 21<sup>st</sup> June.

**Purpose of the Event**

- To develop an evening to support the traders in the town and celebrate mid summer.

This event would at its core take the form of a late-night shopping evening which would also comprise of an evening market on the Jubilee Square and in Wem Town Hall.

Early ideas for Midsummer in Wem include;

- asking the pubs/ restaurants and cafes whether they would be interested a) opening in the evening, b) putting on a themed menu / offers for the evening.
- inviting Tim Ashton to display his research on Wem's links with Shakespeare.
- inviting Stage Door to give adhoc Shakespeare performances during the evening linking with the theme of A Midsummer's Night Dream. Possible involvement of Thomas Adams drama students also.
- inviting the Taiko drummers to perform on the Jubilee Square.
- possible road closure of Wem High Street to allow community stalls on the High Street and some street based entertainment which would encourage people to come out for the evening – this would add a complication to the evening as we would require a road closure and volunteers or security to cover it.
- Wem Library to be invited to become involved adding to the Shakespeare theme for the evening.

The event will only work with the support of traders committing to open late that evening and generally support the event. It is proposed to set up a meeting with traders in March to see whether they would be interested in working together to develop an event like this. Wem Town Hall have agreed to put together a flyer to invite traders to a meeting to discuss ideas and identify what support there is for it. If there is no interest then the event may not happen or it may need to change subject to suggestions put forward by traders.

**Future events**

Subject to how successful the Midsummer evening is a Wem based Oktoberfest could be planned for October with a focus more on Oktoberfest food / craft beer.

**Cost**

In the first year costs other than staff time for this event will be kept to a minimum, first aid may be required. If a road closure is required then costs will increase unless volunteers can be found. Set up and promotion costs could be funded through the events budget.

**Way Forward**

If this evening is to be run by Wem Town Council and covered by our insurance and entertainment licence then the event should be managed in the same way previous events have been organised, via the events liaison group. The Town Council would have overall control but would then ask representatives from traders and Wem Town Hall to sit in on meetings to provide essential input. This has worked very well with Christmas Lights and Remembrance, however if traders decided that they wished to setup a standalone group Councillors could be co-opted onto that group to provide the Town Council link.

**Decision needed**

**Whether the Town Council agree to support the development of a Midsummer in Wem event.**

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**Wem Welcome**

Summer in Wem is a time when the Town can look its best with the floral displays and it is important to build on this period of time when visitors come into the town. Regardless of whether the Midsummer in Wem event happens decoration of the town is something that can really lift the High Street and provide a warm welcome for visitors

**Welcome Banner**

A specialist banner has been purchased that can hang across the High Street where the Festive Frame hangs. It is proposed that this is positioned in this space between June and mid September.

**Welcome Sign**

A Welcome to Wem sign has been commissioned and produced by a local artist – this will be displayed in Wem town Hall.

**Bunting**

The Town Council purchased a considerable amount of bunting for the Jubilee with grant funding and it would be useful if this could also be erected over the summer months. This would save the Carnival Committee a job and expense and ensure that the bunting is properly erected to Shropshire Council's regulations. An application has been submitted to Shropshire Council for permission to hang the banner and bunting over the summer months and the outcome of this is awaited.

**Cost**

The banner and bunting are already purchased. A quote for installation and removal is awaited. The installation cost will be higher in the first year as proper fixing bolts for the bunting will be required. This could be funded by earmarking any underspend in the events budget from 2023-24 and using the Town Centre Improvement budget code for 2024-25.

**Decision needed**

- **To approve a £50 contribution towards the bespoke welcome sign has been requested by Wem Town Hall.**
- **To approve quote for erection of bunting.**