

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Executive Director of Educational Services

Corporate Cultural Sub Committee

Date: 9th December 2008

Subject: West Dunbartonshire Literature Festivals

1. Purpose

- 1.1** To advise members of the successful development of Adult (Festival of Words) and Youth (BooXFactor) literature festivals across the authority and to seek financial support for the festivals in 2008/09 and 2009/10.

2. Background

- 2.1** West Dunbartonshire Libraries have delivered an adult literature festival for the last eight years. In 2008 this was rebranded as a 'Festival of Words' to include 'words' in their broadest sense, written, spoken or broadcast in a variety of media. Events have taken place in a number of different venues including the Millennium Hall, Gartocharn; Denny Civic Theatre; Various Libraries, Schools, Community Centres, and private venues such as the Kilted Skirlie restaurant, Dumbarton Golf Club, Auchentoshan Distillery and the set of the BBC television programme River City.
- 2.2** Festivals for young people have also been a feature of provision and this year the youth festival 'BooXFactor' has been scheduled for the first two weeks in December 2008 to avoid clashing with SQA examinations when the adult festival runs during May.
- 2.3** The rebranded 'Festival of Words' proved to be extremely successful in 2008, with improved attendances, a wider geographical spread, more 'first time' attendees and very positive evaluations from participants.
- 2.4** Authors/Contributors are reimbursed at a rate of £150 per session plus travel and accommodation (if required). This rate is the standard rate approved by the Scottish Book Trust who contribute 50% of the sessional rate. Travel and accommodation costs are required to be met from our own budgets or funds raised. These costs can vary greatly depending on the location of the contributor.

3. Main Issues

- 3.1** The vast majority of festival events are free to participants as a main aim of the festivals is to broaden participation amongst all sections of the community. Some special events, with additional costs, occasionally require an entry fee. It is intended to continue to offer events free of charge wherever possible as attendance figures and evaluations have shown this is a key factor in developing wider community participation.
- 3.2** As stated in para 2.1 above, a range of venues are utilised for the festivals. However, there is a recognition many locations are geographically located at the Dumbarton/Vale of Leven end of the authority, and this is reflected in those attending. In line with our aim to maximise participation by all sections of the community we are keen to identify appropriate venues in and around the Clydebank area. Clydebank College, with whom we work in partnership in the Adult Learning sector, has kindly offered free use of its Cunard Suite for an event in the 2009 Festival of Words. Other venues are being investigated; however, they may incur a rental/hire charge.
- 3.3** The attraction of 'high profile' contributors (e.g. Sally Magnusson in 2008) has proved to be extremely positive, not least from a marketing perspective, and has resulted in improved attendance at events. Whilst many contributors are comfortable with the 'going rate' of £150, (in fact recently some contributors have offered their services free or asked for their fee to go to charity), our ability to attract the 'higher profile' type of contributor is constrained by the remuneration we can offer.
- 3.4** The costs associated with both festivals including publicity/marketing, venue hire, contributor's fees/expenses, catering etc amounts to a total of around £13 – 16K per annum. Funding support is sought each year from the Scottish Arts Council (S.A.C) who have previously contributed around £4K. However, this is not guaranteed and notification of a successful bid is usually not received until April/May which is some time after all aspects of the programme require to have been confirmed. In addition, support was previously received from Scottish Enterprise Dunbartonshire; however we are advised this is now unlikely to be received for future festivals.
- 3.5** Assuming an award of circa £4K from S.A.C. there is a potential shortfall of £9 – £12K in the funding of the festivals and whilst offers of support 'in kind' from partner agencies like Clydebank College and other sponsors are welcome, they do not offset the real financial costs of the festivals. In the current financial climate there is also little or no flexibility within departmental budgets to absorb additional costs.

4. Personnel Issues

- 4.1** There are no personnel issues in relation to this report

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1** Additional support available from mainstream budgets is limited. It is intended to attempt to raise the profile of the festival and West Dunbartonshire Council

with higher profile contributors. Should additional support not be available, there is a potential impact on mainstream budgets/service delivery, or festival programmes will require to be curtailed.

6. Risk Analysis

- 6.1** There is a risk to the reputation of the Council should the previously successful programmes be curtailed with a consequent reduction in provision. There is also a risk of financial commitments being entered into should S.A.C support not be forthcoming in April/May 2009.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1** The adult (Festival of Words) and Youth (BooXFactor) literature festivals are a proven success and contribute greatly to the quality of provision for residents of West Dunbartonshire as well as attracting visitors from outside of the area.
- 7.2** Financial support is sought in financial years 2008/09 and 2009/10 as outlined below to ensure the continued success and future development of these events.

2008/09 - £5000 to cover marketing/publicity/leaflets and preparatory costs for the 2009 Festival of Words

2009/10 - £15000 to cover part operational costs for both festivals in 2009 and marketing/publicity/leaflets and preparatory costs for 2010.

This total contribution of £20000 over two financial years (towards a total projected cost of £26/32000) will provide a basis of financial security and will greatly enhance the ability to seek match funding from other agencies to enhance/expand the festivals in the future.

8. Recommendation

- 8.1** The sub-committee is asked to note the success of both adult and youth focussed literature festivals within the authority
- 8.2** The sub-committee is asked to agree to allocate £5000 in 2008/09 and £15000 in 2009/10 as per paragraph 7.2 above to provide a measure of financial support and to ensure the continued future development of the events.

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Wards Affected: **All**

Appendix: **None**

Background Papers: None

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