

**LEISURE, PARKS AND WASTE MANAGEMENT
(OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY) COMMITTEE**

3 OCTOBER 2017

PRESENT:

Councillors Matthews (Chairman), Rayner (Vice-Chairman), Miss Fisher, Mrs Pullen, Salter, Mrs Tranter and B.W. Yeates

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Councillors Mrs Allsopp, Mrs Bacon and Mrs Banevicius (Vice-Chairman).

(In accordance with Council Procedure No. 17 Councillors Eadie, Pritchard and Wilcox also attended the meeting).

ALSO PRESENT: James Leavesley – Chairman of the Lichfield Garrick Trust
Karen Foster – Executive Director of the Lichfield Garrick Trust

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Eadie declared a personal interest in Item 5 – Lichfield Garrick as his son has participated in performances by the Walsall Operatic Society and Lichfield Operatic Society. His daughter was also a member of the Lichfield Choir

Councillor B Yeates declared a personal interest in Item 5 – Lichfield Garrick as his company has dealt with the Garrick Theatre.

MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 26th June 2017 were taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 26th June 2017 be approved as a correct record

WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD PLAN

The committee considered the work programme and the Chairman requested that any further suggestions be sent to him. It was requested that a further report on commercial opportunities in the Parks be brought to the January meeting.

It was also asked if there would be a report on fees and charges in light of the leisure review and it was noted that the proposed charges for 2018/19 identified by the LOPS team would now be discussed with the Outsource operator.

RESOLVED: That the Work Programme be noted.

LICHFIELD GARRICK

The Committee received a presentation from Mrs Foster and Mr Leavesley the Lichfield Garrick Trust on the achievements of the Theatre over the past year and forthcoming plans.

The presentation centred on a number of areas including the financial aid they were receiving through Cultural Exemption from HMRC and Theatre Tax Relief although the latter was funded through the EU and there were uncertainties of its continuation post Brexit. They also reported that they had two sources of funding which were the District Council and the Arts Council for England. It was noted that the Arts Council only funded additional events and not every day running costs and overheads. Members sought clarification of the actual value of cultural exemption but the Garrick were unable to provide this information because of its fluid nature.

Amateur Dramatic Groups was then discussed and it was reported by the Theatre that the price had been increased as the hire fee was below the operating costs and there was a need to maximise revenue. The Garrick also reported that they had supported the groups as best they could by freezing prices during quieter periods and as a result, only two groups had chosen to go elsewhere.

The final part of the presentation was the impact of the Friarsgate development and the Garrick believed that in the long term, it would be a great opportunity for the Theatre with increased footfall to the area. However they had concerns that business would be effected during development especially with the loss of car parking. They requested that the Council work with them to find solutions especially with parking for visitors with mobility issues along with a general communications plan to help advertise that businesses would still be open within the city centre.

The Chairman then invited questions from Members of the Committee.

Funding and tax relief was discussed further and when asked, it was reported that there was no further information regarding the situation post Brexit, however it was hoped that Theatre Relief would be a low priority in the Governments Bill and so one of the last to be dealt with. It was then asked what relief was being received by the Garrick and it was reported that it was proportionate and around 16% of what was eligible however all claims could be challenged and so never a fixed amount but it would be a contribution to the bottom line. It was also noted that last year, due only to the grants received, the Theatre broke even on their accounts.

The work of the newly created fundraising officer post was discussed and it was reported that they were currently building up relationships with potential funding streams. It was noted that the Officer had secured the Arts Council funding for the new in house production of Letters to Emma which had just opened.

Community work was considered and Members felt that the Garrick contributed a lot in this area. It was suggested that funding could be sought from the Office for the Police and Crime Commissioner as well as Staffordshire County Councillor Community Funds. It was also asked whether much work was done with schools and it was reported that it was difficult to get information through to the teachers but they were going to extend the duration of this year's pantomime into January which many schools preferred.

The Garrick Theatre trust was thanked for their attendance and presentation.

RESOLVED: That the submissions made by the Garrick Trust be noted.

(The Meeting Closed at 7.10 pm)

CHAIRMAN