

Title of meeting:	Culture Leisure and Sport Decision Meeting
Date of meeting:	23 rd March 2012
Subject:	Portsmouth BookFest: - The Future
Report by:	Head of Cultural Services
Wards affected:	All
Key decision:	No
Full Council decision:	No

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To update the Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Sport on the progress of Portsmouth BookFest: what has been achieved in the last two years and recommendations for future development.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The existing partnership of the Library Service, Schools Library Service, Literature Development Officer, Visitor Information Services and the Hayling Island Bookshop continues as key deliverers of the Festival.**
- 2.2 The new mission statement, which focuses on developing Portsmouth as the home of great writing by promoting reading for pleasure and inspiring new audiences, detailed in 3.2, should be adopted for future festivals.**
- 2.3 That funding options for Bookfest after 2012 continue to be explored.**
- 2.4 That BookFest consults with the local community by inviting focus groups and/or community reps to feedback on proposed events. This consultation should be embedded in the development of BookFest.**

3. Background

- 3.1 Portsmouth BookFest has run successfully for two years now and proved that there is a local – and further afield - appetite for a book related festival in the city. Over the two years, the BookFest committee has learned much about what has been successful and how we can improve the festival to continue annually into the future. We have exciting plans for 2012, including a new mission statement. This new statement recognises what was achieved in 2010 and 2011 but further develops the festival with a bold vision for the future.

3.2 Portsmouth BookFest Mission statement for 2012 and beyond:

“Developing Portsmouth as the home of great writing by promoting reading for pleasure and inspiring new audiences”

This will be achieved by:

- Hosting mass appeal events to engage Portsmouth readers and visitors with authors and support lifelong learning and book ownership, including a schools programme.
- Targeted events aimed at the local community.
- Increasing use of libraries.
- Supporting the visitor economy with a promotion campaign to regenerate the city as a destination.
- Using a wide range of accessible venues across the city.

3.3 The 2011 BookFest including the children's programme over the period of the Festival we ran eighteen events at twelve different venues across the city involving twenty different authors and attended by 2444 adults and families.

The biggest selling events were:

- Claire Tomalin: 120 at Central Library
- CSI Portsmouth: 196 at John Pounds Centre
- Roots of Betrayal: 80 at the Square Tower
- Darren Shan: 94 at Highlight, Gunwharf

The success of these events in terms of audience numbers can be attributed to the fact that Darren Shan, Claire Tomalin and the CSI authors are all well known big selling authors. BookFest was less successful this year in attracting audiences who may not ordinarily attend book events, although the way we collected evaluation and data has made it difficult to judge how much this was the case. Those that were successful in attracting new audiences - Lesley Pearse, CSI and Darren Shan - were successful because of the broad appeal these authors' books have with the wider public. Teenagers were seen at CSI Portsmouth, Darren Shan's market is older children and Lesley Pearse is a bestselling author who appeals mostly to women of all ages – mothers and daughters attended this event together.

What was an outstanding success was the schools programme, which saw local schools from Paulsgrove to Southsea engaged with BookFest and meant that children who would not normally be able to attend author events in their free time got to meet popular children's authors such as Guy Bass.

For 2012 a programme that delivers one or two mass appeal events with celebrities in larger venues over a long weekend and a programme of smaller events held in libraries and unusual venues that address local appeal (and are arranged as a result of community feedback) over a two week period (with the

weekend in the middle) will ensure that we attract local residents and visitors to the Festival and present a more cohesive more packed Festival that does not lose momentum. The Schools programme should be delivered the week before the public events.

- 3.4 We will increase use of libraries through hosting more BookFest events in library buildings, offering library members' only events, selling tickets in libraries and by retaining the previous years' £1 discount on tickets for library members. 227 people attended events at Central Library and Paulsgrove Library in 2011. We could have held more events at Central Library but use of the Square Tower and JPC proved to be very popular with audiences. Hosting events in different areas of Portsmouth also increased access but BookFest needs to have more events in the north of the city in the future. Lots of tickets were purchased in libraries and in Southsea Library in particular. We again offered the £1 discount which was taken up by most audience members and kept ticket prices as low as possible to increase accessibility but again, evidence that we attracted people to join the library service was low. In future BookFests library membership must be highlighted at all events, libraries must be mentioned in opening welcome speeches and library publicity and banners should be visible at all events.
- 3.5 In 2010 and 2011 Visitor Information Services funded a successful promotion campaign for BookFest, with large posters located at the London Underground and across the city's poster points. This should continue and the promotion of BookFest should be used to engage with visitors to the city. We must maximise use of city advertising points and try to obtain advertising on major routes into and out of the city and at railway stations. The Hayling Island Bookshop funded and set up a Portsmouth BookFest website which has ensured a visible web presence for the festival. The Bookshop also engages with and maintains relationships with publishers both locally and across the UK to spread the word about BookFest and ensure BookFest is in their author tour plans. We should also make the most of publicity through our partners. In 2011 the police highlighted CSI Portsmouth in their staff magazine and the University featured BookFest in their publicity to students and staff.
- 3.6 The 2012 BookFest should aim to host more events in libraries where possible, however, the use of other exciting local venues proved to be very popular in 2010 and 2011 – the Square Tower proved to be an atmospheric setting for a historical author and we have developed a good relationship with Aspex which proved to be a very suitable venue for smaller scale events. Using local venues is another way to promote what Portsmouth has to offer and can entice publishers and authors to the city.

4. Reasons for recommendations

- 4.1 It is vital that BookFest is an annual festival. The regularity will increase awareness of the Festival both locally and nationally and help the committee to secure big name authors and plan ahead.

- 4.2 The committee is made up of a partnership between libraries, schools libraries, The Hayling Island Bookshop and the Literature Development Officer. BookFest is only delivered because of the hard work put into it by the partners involved, time which they usually have to timetable alongside their day to day duties. Support for local independent booksellers is vital in the current financial climate. The advantage of working with a local independent bookseller is that they are able to order, store and deliver stock to all of the BookFest venues on time. The Library Service does not have the staff capacity to be able to organise the stock requirements. See Appendix B 'BookFest staffing summary' for further information.
- 4.3 This new mission statement ensures that library membership and the promotion of libraries remains at the heart of BookFest. It also places the Library Service's reading strategy in BookFest, ensuring that BookFest inspires new audiences – especially those who might not ordinarily attend book events. It also aims to develop BookFest's appeal further afield and hence references the Culture Service's Literature strategy of making Portsmouth the home of great writing, whilst engaging with local authors and residents.
- 4.4 We have applied for and been successful in securing funding from the Arts Council for 2012 BookFest. This funding is for £20,000, which will include recruiting an Outreach Community Development worker to increase engagement with BookFest. It also includes funding for books to be able to give out free to families and for celebrity author fees (see Appendix A). BookFest struggled to attract celebrity names to appeal to our target audience in 2011. This was mostly due to lack of funding (in 2010 we did have some funding from Find Your Talent – this funding stream has now finished). In order to secure big name authors and celebrities with mass appeal we need to be able to offer a fee. To be able to offer two big name authors/celebrities and schedule smaller more localised events around those will mean that BookFest generates enough in ticket sales to fund the smaller events and that we can offer both large scale events in city locations and smaller library and community based events, tailored to those communities. Funding must continually be sort in order for BookFest to continue.
- 4.5 Communicating with local residents, authors and publishers will ensure BookFest delivers a programme that is relevant and demand led. If we secure our funding from Arts Council we will be able to employ a community development worker to ensure we engage as widely as possible with local residents.

We will also utilise the community networks that culture organisations in the city work with. Engagement with local authors such as Pauline Rowson has opened up communication with big name crime authors. The Guildhall Book Brunch in 2011 facilitated engagement with local authors and gave them a chance to promote their work, helping meet the city's aspiration to be the "home of great writing".

5. Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

A preliminary EIA has been completed for this report and a full EIA is not required.

6. Head of Legal, Licensing & Registrars' comments

- 6.1 There is no statutory requirement for local authorities to provide this service. However, section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 gave local authorities a new discretionary power to 'promote or improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of their area'. The recommendations set out in this report support the social well-being of the area in addition to supporting one of the Council's corporate priorities to raise standards in English.
- 6.2 Under section 93 of the Local Government Act 2003 local authorities have a specific power to charge for the provision of discretionary services (those which we do not have a duty to provide but can do so voluntarily). In deciding whether to exercise its powers as set out within the recommendation at paragraph 2.4 of this report, the City Council should also consider its fiduciary duty to conduct its administration in a fair business-like matter with reasonable care, skill and caution, and with a due and alert regard to the interest of council tax payers.

7. Head of Finance's comments

The 2011 BookFest event generated an overall surplus of £431. This combines the expenditure and income of both Portsmouth City Council (PCC) and the HIBS.

The final cost to PCC was £1,500 which has been funded from within the existing approved revenue budget.

Funding of £20,000 has been secured for the 2012 event. The provisional budget for this is attached at Appendix A. Additional funding of £1,500 and £3,000 will be provided by PCC from the Museum service and the Library service respectively. This will be funded from 2012/13 cash limited budgets.

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Signed by:
Stephen Baily
Head of Cultural Services

Appendices:

Appendix A BookFest Provisional Budget for 2012
Appendix B BookFest Staffing Summary

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location
None	

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure & Sport on 23rd March 2012.

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Signed by: Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure & Sport

Appendix A

Portsmouth BookFest 2012 – provisional budget		
	Description	Amount £
Income		
Arts Council	Libraries Development Initiative	20,000
Museum Service	Confirmed contribution	1,500
Library Service	Confirmed contribution	3,000
Income Total		24,500
Expenditure		
	Artists Fees and Expenses	7,000
	Staff	8,000
	Making BookFest Accessible	7,500
	Publicity and Marketing	2,000
Expenditure Total		24,500

Appendix B

Appendix B: Portsmouth BookFest staffing summary

Hayling Island Bookshop:

Hayling Island Bookshop have worked efficiently with both the public strand and the schools strand of BookFest for 2 years and spend approx. 4 hours a week up to August and 12-24 hours a week from September to November each year working on BookFest. They establish and maintain relationships with publishers, manage events, help with publicity and ticketing and order, store and sell books for the events.

Library Service:

Currently the Library Service Development Manager leads on BookFest programming and publicity, using approximately 4 hours a week up to June and then approx 7-14 hours a week from July-November. This role arranges events and venues, leads on publicity production and distribution and event managing.

The Learning and Engagement Manager for the Library Service is also involved in event planning and direction, particularly with children's events.

The Library Service administration team also spends a considerable amount of time preparing tickets in the run up to BookFest and acting as the main box office contact, answering telephone calls from Monday to Friday during office hours and processing ticket requests from ticket points.

Schools Library Service:

The SLS plans, publicises and manages the schools events for BookFest.

Literature Development Officer:

The Literature Development Officer in Culture also contributes a good deal of time to BookFest, engaging authors, arranging venues and event managing. He is particularly instrumental in the arrangement of events with local authors and publishers and establishes and maintains relationships with local venues.

Volunteers:

BookFest currently utilises volunteers in the running of events. In the last two years, volunteers have helped staff events acting as ticket checkers, venue guides, assisting authors and helping with book sales. In 2012 we plan to recruit more volunteers and involve them more in the publicity of events.