Tourism and Visitor Economy Scrutiny

DATE 25/01/2024

REPORT OF Carolina Borgstrom, Director of Environment,

Economy, and Infrastructure

SUBJECT North East Lincolnshire Provisional Events Calendar

2024

STATUS Open

CONTRIBUTION TO OUR AIMS

Tourism and the Visitor Economy are important sectors for North East Lincolnshire (NEL) and fundamental in their contribution to place-making and achieving a Stronger Economy and Stronger Community. Place-making is one of the four cornerstones of NEL's Economic Strategy, and at the heart of the council's commitment to ensuring that our towns are great places to live, work, visit and stay. A key objective is to enhance the visitor experience and promote civic pride. This is achieved by creating a year-round tourism offer through marketing activities and offering a diverse events and cultural programme for local people and to attract more people to visit and stay.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report includes an update regarding the events season for the Meridian Showground (MSG) during 2023 and includes the NEL provisional events calendar 2024 including notable local anniversaries.

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

The Provisional Events Calendar 2024 is presented to the Tourism and Visitor Economy Scrutiny Panel to provide an outline of the value of events and activities in helping to deliver NEL's Tourism Action Plan and for panel members to provide feedback.

1. BACKGROUND

The key strategic tourism objectives, which include extending the traditional tourism season, are aligned with the Economic Strategy and the Council Plan and focus on strengthening the tourism offer in NEL. Although the council does not have a dedicated budget or team to deliver events, it is recognised that events and activities play an important role in achieving some of these objectives. We therefore work with private and third-party event organisers, utilise external funding wherever possible, and carry out effective marketing and promotional campaigns to ensure that there is a year-round programme of events for local people and visitors.

The traditional tourism season falls between April and September. Businesses tend to work to this, but it presents both a challenge and an opportunity in terms of adding value to the resort and sustaining businesses, especially given the context of the current cost of living crisis. To try and address this combined challenge and opportunity, the council is seeking to facilitate a broader and extended tourism season through a few initiatives including a comprehensive events programme. This helps to attract more out of area visitors, and indeed the local community, over a longer period which in turn generates more footfall and increases local spending.

Other key strategic tourism objectives include:

1.1 Increasing overnight visitor numbers.

Events, such as the Orsted Grimsby 10K, the Gathering Fest and the Armed Forces weekend attract people from outside the area to stay overnight, which leads to an economic benefit for local restaurants, bars, taxis, and accommodation providers.

As an example, the Gathering Fest is a popular event held at the MSG with over 3,200 people attending in 2023. Importantly, this event attracts many people from out of the area and the map below shows the location of tickets sales for 2024 during the first 2 weeks of their release. This is a good example of the geographical reach of such events and where people are travelling from to attend. With the event ending at 11pm, it is likely that people are staying over in NEL and if people stay overnight, then not only do accommodation providers benefit, but so do other hospitality and tourism businesses.



The Gathering – Ticket Sales for 2024

1.2 Raising awareness of NEL as a visitor destination.

By promoting events, it is possible to raise awareness of NEL as a visitor destination and for those visiting for the first time, we hope that they will be encouraged to return in the future. In terms of the promotion of events, a hard copy 'What's On' guide was produced and distributed during 2023 to highlight the events and activities taking place in the MSG and throughout the borough. An events calendar detailing up and coming events has a dedicated space on a 'What's On' section on the destination website www.discovernortheastlincolnshire.co.uk (DiscoverNEL). Events have also been promoted for the last 12 months via the DiscoverNEL newsletter which has risen from zero to over 3,000 subscribers since its creation in January 2022.

To ascertain if, for example, visitor numbers to NEL are increasing, the council receives an annual report, the Scarborough Tourism Economic Assessment Monitor (STEAM). Used by many Destination Management Organisations and Local Authorities, the STEAM report provides annual statistics and information to give an indication of the key tourism economic impacts and reveals trends which help highlight areas of growth, or in need of support. The key headline trends are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Visitor Numbers	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
NEL	10.20	10.34	10.30	4.68	7.52	8.59
	million	million	million	million	million	million

Visitor Days & Nights	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
NEL	12.66	12.83	12.83	5.88	9.635	11.04
	million	million	million	million	million	million

Economic Impact	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
NEL	£589.28m	£622.09m	£642.26m	£308.95m	£506.01m	£636.23m

A key tourism statistic is the number of overnight staying visitors, and the following information is taken from the STEAM data, the most recent report being from 2022:

2019 = 625,000 people

2020 = 297,000 people

2021 = 500,000 people

2022 = 609,000 people (+21.7% vs 2021)

The 2022 figure demonstrates a 21.7% year on year increase, and this in turn equates to 7.1% of the total visitor numbers for NEL in 2022. Although not back to pre-COVID levels, there was a 100,000 person increase in overnight stays from 2021 to 2022.

Alongside the data provided by the STEAM reports, the tourism team continues to build relationships with local accommodation providers to encourage them to share their occupancy rates with us. The team also monitors social media channels and keeps up to date with contacts regarding any local intelligence which helps gives a feel for how the sector is doing.

1.3 Supporting tourism businesses.

During the pandemic the council was able to build stronger communication channels with local tourism businesses. As well as providing regular Government and sector updates, we offer businesses the opportunity to have their events and activities promoted free of charge through the DiscoverNEL social media channels and the monthly newsletter.

Our digital strategy, which is critical to our marketing approach, is guided by the fact that approximately 98% of the UK population (Statista.com 2023) uses the internet. In May 2021, we launched the new Discovernortheastlincolnshire website as we recognised the need to have a strong online presence to promote our area to visitors. We continue to improve the site in terms of useability and new content and to drive traffic through our social media activities and promotional campaigns. We monitor statistics monthly such as web hits, social media follower numbers and reach of our unique content. As demonstrated by the statistics in Table 2 below, there has been a positive upward trajectory of followers for the DiscoverNEL website and social media channels over the last few years, including Instagram and Facebook.

Table 2

2020	2021	2022	2023
5,164	11,509	32,406	108,392
4,001	6.414	8,126	9,725
1	1	1,043,071	1,421,086
2.150	2.558	2.951	3,246
2,100	2,000	·	574,720
	5,164 4,001	5,164 11,509 4,001 6.414 	5,164 11,509 32,406 4,001 6.414 8,126 1,043,071

2.0 Meridian Showground Review for 2023

2.1 Background and statistics for MSG

The MSG, which is managed and operated by the council, was hired out for 86 days across a total of 19 events in 2023, as shown in Table 3. In 2022, we took the opportunity to trial an event in February, but unfortunately because the weather was very wet, it was concluded that it is not viable for events to take place at this time of year unless significant measures are put in place by the event organiser to protect the ground from being damaged.

Table 3

Meridian Showground	2022	2023
Hire Days	94.5	86
Number of Events	13	19

Examples of the range of events which hired the MSG in 2023 include, the Gathering Fest, Fake Fest, the Funfair, the Outdoor Cinema, Race for Life, North Lincs Flyball Team, Harbour Learning Trust, and a new Fireworks Fantasia & Halloween Spooktacular event in October.

The 2024 season is already looking positive with 15 events booked to date. A notable and new event for 2024 is Docksfest. This major live music festival at MSG featuring The Lottery Winners, Feeder, Frank Turner, and headliner Razorlight, is a significant event for the borough. This event will highlight the potential use of MSG and help to put Cleethorpes on the map.

Table 4 gives a comparison of the number and range of events held at the MSG since 2019.

Table 4

	2019 (pre Covid)	2021 (July onwards)	2022	2023	2024 (provisionally booked to date)
Number of events hosted (inc private hire)	10 (18- cycle,AFD,ABP)	7 (8-cycle club)	13 (15-ABP, AFD)	19 events (5 private)	15
Event variety	Fair/circus – 4 Music – 2 Sport – 2 (+1 ABP) Cinema - 1 Culture/Arts – 1 Private hire – 6 Community – (1 AFD)	Fair/circus – 2 Music – 3 Sport – 1 Cinema – 1 (2 nights) Culture/Arts – 0 Private hire – 1	Fair/circus – 4 Music – 3 Sport – 1 (+1 ABP) Cinema – 2 (5 nights) Culture/Arts – 0 Niche – 2 (CleeW, scooter) Community – 1 Pride (+1 AFD) Private hire – 0	Fair – 2 Sports – 2 Cinema – 3 nights Music – 6 Culture/arts/communi ty/niche – 3 Private hire - 5 Cadets – 2 Armed Forces North Lincs Flyball Team Harbour Learning Trust	Music – 7 Sports – 1 Culture/arts/communi ty/niche – 3 Fair – 2 Private – 1 Film - 1

2.2 Social Media Statistics for MSG

Social media, which is managed in-house by the council's tourism team, has played a developing role over the last few years in promoting events and gathering interest in events hosted within the MSG. Since 2021, the number of followers on MSG's Facebook platform has risen from 5,818, to 8,142 in 2023 which is a 29% increase. There are currently 1,452 followers on Instagram.

Plans are in place to produce a MSG website to help promote the facility to event organisers. We are also proactively looking at an opportunity to expand the MSG's capacity to be able to appeal to even more event organisers.

3.0 Provisional Annual Events Calendar 2024

The NEL Provisional Events Calendar 2024 attached at Appendix 1, lists events, activities and notable anniversaries scheduled to take place across the borough, including the MSG, Auditorium, council public spaces, and private venues. Smaller scale community and business events are included in the monthly DiscoverNEL newsletter and the weekly 'Hello Weekend' Instagram and Facebook posts.

3.1 Larger Scale Events

Some larger scale events for next year include the Orsted Grimsby 10K organised by Tape to Tape, the Armed Forces weekend run by the Armed Forces Team, the Festival of the Sea by North East Lincolnshire Creates, and a brand new event for 2024 which is Docksfest at the MSG.

3.2 Key Local Anniversaries in 2024

Other notable dates include some important forthcoming anniversaries as follows:

Greenwich Meridian Line was chosen as the Prime Meridian of the World in 1884 (140 years old)

- > RNLI's 200th anniversary
- No 3 fish dock opening 1934 (90 year anniversary)
- Duke of York Gardens opened in 1894 (130 year anniversary)

4. RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

- 4.1 There is an opportunity to positively promote NEL's events and activities to visitors from outside the area, encouraging them to visit and stay, thus creating economic benefits for businesses and the local community.
- 4.2 There is a risk that because of the cost-of-living crisis people will not be able to afford to attend ticketed events. These risks could have a detrimental effect on the recovery of local businesses and event organisers. However, as mentioned in the report, there are already a healthy number of bookings for 2024 and so organisers have confidence in demand.
- 4.3 Events are expensive to deliver and often include significant infrastructure and set up costs to ensure public safety measures are in place. It is therefore important that sufficient budget is built into event management plans and programmes to ensure sufficient and suitable artistic content is included.

5. REPUTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATIONS

The promotion of the tourism and visitor economy, events and activities will positively enhance the status of NEL as a place to invest, work, visit and stay. We will engage and consult as required, with key stakeholders, businesses, and the public to ensure that their aspirations for the future of NEL have been fully considered in our projects, events, campaigns, and promotional activities.

6. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Although the council does not have an events budget or a dedicated events team for the delivery of events across the borough, it utilises funding from external sources whenever possible, for example the Government's 'UK Shared Prosperity Fund', National Lottery Heritage Fund and the Arts Council. All promotional activities and campaigns are financed through an annual tourism revenue budget. By increasing visitor numbers to NEL there will be economic benefits for the whole area, including businesses and third-party suppliers, event organisers and accommodation providers.

Through the hire of the MSG and other council owned facilities, such as the Grimsby Fishing Heritage Centre, there are income generating opportunities for the council.

7. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct or material implications arising from this report for children and young people. The activities outlined in this report support the council's overriding priorities and will provide further health and well-being, social, and economic opportunities for young people. By enhancing the place, our objective is to make NEL a more attractive area for children and young people to work, live, visit, stay and engage in cultural events and activities.

8. CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

The place agenda, and promotion of tourism and the visitor economy for NEL, including the delivery of a year-round event schedule, considers the council's published commitments on climate change and the environment, particularly within the context of the resort and beach areas having special ecological designations such as the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

Consideration is given to the green agenda and recognition of the council's nature stewardship obligations as documented in the Draft Cleethorpes' Habitat Management Plan. From a tourism and visitor economy perspective we seek opportunities to improve green spaces and connectivity between sites to promote walking and cycling, promotion of biodiversity, natural habitats and integrating energy and water efficiency into conservation management.

9. MONITORING COMMENTS

In the opinion of the author, this report does not contain recommended changes to policy or resources (people, finance, or physical assets). As a result, no monitoring comments have been sought from the council's Monitoring Officer (Chief Legal Officer), Section 151 Officer (Director of Finance) or Strategic Workforce Lead.

10. WARD IMPLICATIONS

All Wards in NEL will benefit from the promotion and delivery of events and activities, thereby making the area one that is attractive to work, live, visit and stay.

11.BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

12. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – North East Lincolnshire Provisional Events Calendar 2024

13. CONTACT OFFICER(S)

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Carolina Borgstrom Director of Environment, Economy and Infrastructure

Provisional NEL Events Calendar 2024



Date	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
1st	New Years Day	Docks Beer: Red Herring Comedy Club	Jo Whiley – 90s Anthems Show, Grimsby Auditorium	The Little Bank Mix Show, Grimsby Easter Auditorium Monday		MSG: Fake Fest				Lincolnshire Day		
2nd		Docks Beer: Fresh Catch 4	Caxtons: Game Show until 9 Mar			Orsted Grimsby 10k						
3rd		Common Ground at Docks Academy by lowercase theatre						MSG: Everyone Loves the Sunshine				
4th			The World According To Anniversary Kaleb – Kaleb Goes On Tour, Grimsby Auditorium							Big Girls Don't Cry, Grimsby Auditorium		
5th			Carmen Docks performed by Academy: The Ukrainian Tom National Opera, Meighan Grimsby Auditorium	LLoyd Ben Portsmou Baroque & th: This is Academy			MSG:Docks fest			Edible Grimsby	Bonfire Night	
6th	Evil Scarecrow - Yardbirds Rock			LLoyd Griffith: Baroque & Roll, Docks Academy	Bank Holiday		MSG: Docksfest		Heritage Open Days in Grimsby & Cleethorp es until 15 Sept			
7th			Jim Davidson – Docks Swimming Academy: Against The Tom Tide, Grimsby Auditorium Meighan			National Pink by Fish and Vicky Chip day Jackcon, Docks Academy			Heritage Caxtons: Open The Days in Grimsby until 14 & July Cleethorp es until 15 Sept			
8th			Lloyd Griffith: Central Hall: Baroque & Roll, Matbe Dick Docks Academy			The Caxtons: Gathering Hens Fest - until 15 Meridian June Showgro und			Heritage Open Days in Grimsby & Cleethorp es until 15 Sept			
9th		Tribute to the Carpenters, Gallery, Grim & Academy: Geoff Norcott Havelok & Carbitton: the Geoff Norcott Exhibition: the Greatest Story Never told by the Equality Practice (runs until 24th March 2024)	LLoyd Griffith: Baroque & ROII, Docks Academy									

10th			UKSPF Love Your Town event Grimsby			Mothers' Day			SJM Concerts Presents Fisherman's Friends, Grimsby Auditorium			Cheesy Bingo Par Grimsby Auditoriu	ty ·			
11th			Finding Nemo by Sensory Cinema CIC (offshoot of Cineshow)			Grimsby Charter Day										
12th	Hello Again – The Neil Diamond Songbook, Grimsby Auditorium	of Lyon vs the UK Strokes							Immingham Pilgrims Day Cleethorpes 10k - Race for Life							
13th	Megaslam Wrestling	Cleethorpes Leisure Centre: Roller Disco Night				Docks Academy: Open House		Cirque – The Greatest Show, Grimsby Auditorium			MSG: Konigswi CleeW nter civic visti		Heritage Open Days in Grimsby & Cleethorg es until			Sarah Millican: Late Bloomer, Grimsby Auditorium
14th	Michael starring Ben, Grimsby Auditorium	Docks Beer Brewery tour	Valentine's Day	Docks Academy: Open House		Snooker Greats Clash of the Titans, Grimsby Auditorium				Heritage Skills Event	MSG: Konigswi CleeW nter civic visti	Classic MSG: cars by Funfair un the sea - 26 Aug central prom	MSG: N Lincs Flyball (private) Cleethorp es until			
15th						Shaun Williamson's Barrioke, Docks Academy				Heritage Skills Event			MSG: N Lincs Flyball (private)			
16th			Limehouse Lizzy - Yardsbirds Rock			Robert Temple - The hypnotist: RED RAW, Docks Academy	(matinee and evening						(private)			
17th			T.Rextasy, Grimsby Auditorium	Justin Moorhouse: Stretch & Think, Docks Academy	UKSPF Love Your Town event Immingham				UK Foo Fighters, Docks Academy							
18th	Freelancing and Life as a Creative Producer at GFHC				UKSPF Love Your Town event Cleethorpes									Jive Talkin' Bee Gees Tribute Band, Grimsby Auditorium		
19th				'						Lincolnshi re Show	Muriel Barker Grub Fest Sporting lower Heroes Exhibition (until 19 Dec)			MSG: Caxtons: The Dresser until 26 Oct		
20th	The Grimethorpe Colliery Band - Grimsby Auditorium	Caxtons: Educating Rita until 27 Jan						Top Secret – Caxtons: The Magic of Science, Grimsby Auditorium Train Auditorium Train April		Lincolnshi re Show	Caxtons: Great Geezers Grub Fest until 22 lower July Kingsway					
21st						Madagascar The Musical, Grimsby Auditorium				Lincolnshi re Show	National Great Ice Cream Grub Fest Day lower Kingsway					
22nd			Waterloo – A Tribute to ABBA, Grimsby Auditorium			Madagascar The Musical, Grimsby Auditorium	LLoyd Northern Sou Griffith: Weekender - Baroque & Beachcomber Roll, Docks Academy				Festival of the sea					
23rd			Gareth Gates in the Best of Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons, Grimsby Auditorium			Madagascar The Musical, Grimsby Auditorium	LLoyd Northern Sou Griffith: Weekender - Baroque & Beachcomber Roll, Docks Academy						Cleethorp es Charter Day		Possibly Grimsby Communi ty Light Switch On TBC	

24th		Total REX - Yardbirds Rock	Madagascar The Musical, Grimsby Auditorium Northern Docks Soul Academy: Weekender - Buzzard, r Buzzard Buzzard	Sari Schorr plus Matt Pearce and The Mutiny, Docks Academy	MSG: N Lincs Flyball (private event)						
25th					MSG: N Lincs Flyball Flyball Flyball Flyball Flyball						
26th	Showaddywaddy, Grimsby Auditoriun			Clinton Baptiste: Roller	(private event) MSG: N Lincs Flyball (private		Internati onal Market		MSG: Fantasia Fireworks Spooktacular		Christmas Day
27th	Tom Stade: Naural Docks Beer: EM			Ghoster!, Docks Academy	event) Bank Holiday	Sarah	Lower Kingsway until 4 Aug MSG:				Boxing Day
	Born Killer - Parkway Cinema	a Murderer, Grimsby Audiorium				Millican: Late Bloomer, Grimsby Auditoriu m	Seaside weekender				
28th	Docks Beer: Circa Waves		MSG: Funfair until 14 April			Armed	MSG: Seaside				
29th	circa waves		Bank Holiday -			Forces Armed	weekender				
30th			Good Friday Bank Holiday - Easter			Forces Armed Forces		National Beach day		Switch on until 7	Possible Cleethorpes Community Light Switch on TBC
31st	Docks Beer: Little Comets		Bank Holiday - Easter					MSG: Meridian Rocks	Halloween		New Years eve