

The Council agreed a budget of £63,000 for Events, Community and Engagement. This was based on the desire for more, and bigger events, but plans had not been formulated and individual budgets had not been agreed.

The summary below shows those budget amounts agreed later in the financial year, once plans had commenced and opportunities to work with others became available.

Event	Agreed Budget	Budget Moved In/Out	Costs	Income	Remains
Fair Day 2023	£12,000.00	£0.00	£13,420.62	£1,300.00	-£120.62
Miner's Picnic 2023	£10,520.00	£0.00	£10,769.80		-£249.80
Pride Picnic 2023	£1,000.00	£1,900.00	£2,469.08		£430.92
Family Fun Day 2023	£3,000.00	-£210.00	£2,790.30		-£0.30
Summer Activities 2023	£2,000.00	-£690.00	£1,310.00		£0.00
GBGW 2023	£2,200.00	£1,310.00	£1,206.80		£2,303.20
Recruitment/Engagement	£600.00		£504.56		£95.44
Football Festival tba	£1,000.00		£0.00		£1,000.00
Christmas Lights 2023	£2,500.00		£0.00		£2,500.00

Miners Picnic

Additional spending on the picnic was entirely in regards the banner competition that we facilitated. We have requested all costs and income associated with the event from Woodhorn.

Ashington Fair Day

The event overspent slightly, but the budget was large in the first place. From a financial point large costs are attributed to closing roads and car parks. Notices and closures cost £2,296.

Another significant cost are the market stalls, which were offered to community groups for free, so they could publicise the work they do. As a community event this is important, but a less expensive option could be explored, and an increased cost for traders.

The income from food vendors and amusements is something to be negotiated in the future. The Council can charge a higher cost and not have any say on the charges to the public, or negotiate a lower cost to attend, in favour of a lower cost being passed on the residents. The Council purchased ride tickets to give out but could look towards agreeing a maximum cost for some rides if the event grew.

Another significant cost is staff time and paid overtime. This is relevant for all events, but particularly Fair Day as we control the set-up, are present throughout the day, and clear-up (*note Mangers are not paid overtime but take TOIL*). It would be unmanageable to expect officers to take TOIL during the busy summer period with annual leave also, and working weekends would not be attractive without the financial incentive.

Pride Picnic

This event has grown from the original idea and the suggestions put forward for inclusion determined that it would be necessary to seek the support of Cllr Grimshaw to move money from underspent events to bolster the spending power for this event. The budget at £3,000 was far more realistic which in the main has been spent on a variety of attractions, as well as staff time.

This event could grow much bigger with more planning and budget available. At the time of writing the event has not happened, but the weather forecast is very good which is a great start.

Additional Spending

In addition to the events listed in the summary, we have purchased event t-shirts, walkie-talkies, and consumables that have been costed to events.

The funding for the Ashington and Hirst Fell Em Doon, as well some of the pledged funding to Northumberland Community Bank is costed to events, as is the Town Twinning trip costs.

Where we have sought the support of Ashington Camera Club to attend cheque presentations, we have donated to the club from this heading also.

Underspend

Looking at what is planned from now to the year end, it is likely that there will be a balance of around £20,000 that could be moved elsewhere if spending plans are not forthcoming.

The Council may want to increase the budget for the Christmas Lights, but any additions would need to be properly planned and potentially bought-in as there is little additional capacity.

The Council may want to consider doing something linked in with the Halloween event that usually happens in Hirst Park, or buy something in for the Easter school holidays, to be committed from this year's budget.

It is recommended that there is greater emphasis on setting this budget in 2024/25, considering staff time and the capacity to deliver events during the year. If larger or more events are the goal, it may be appropriate to consider sub-contracting this to an events provider.

This budget is also about Community and Engagement, which is not necessarily events based. A report on engagement will be brought to a future meeting.