

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000

Your request for information has now been considered and the Council's response to your questions is shown below.

You asked:

**I recently read in the news about Leicester's Mayor wanting to bring back the Abbey Park Show.
Why it may have closed down originally?**

ANSWER

The Abbey Park show was a very popular event but unfortunately the costs associated with these types of major events began to spiral. Many large shows across the country have been reduced in scale, or discontinued as was the case with the Abbey Park show.

How much money would it bring to the city now and how much would it cost to hold?

This would greatly depend on the content, duration and location, and the business model, and so we have no figures available in response to either question, the budget would be significant, but the cost to the council would depend on the nature of the event

How many jobs would it provide and how much security would be needed in order to keep it safe?

Again, this would depend on the nature and scale of the event

Why would/should it be brought back now after so many years away and what included in the show would be different to how it was when it first closed in 1995?

There is clearly some interest amongst Leicester residents in holding an event that had the same benefits as the old Abbey Park show. One of the things that seems to be particularly valued is the way that it brought lots of people from different communities together. Any "Business case" for "bringing it back" would include consideration of the social and economic benefits balanced against the overall cost to the council of the event and any risks.

If a new "Abbey Park Show" was introduced, the content would need to reflect the time that we live in and people's interests today, so some of it could probably be similar and some could be different. It is very unlikely that an exact replica would ever be reintroduced.

Is it something that was ever considered to be brought back earlier, and would it also be an annual thing or a one-off special?

We have not considered bringing back the “Abbey Park Show” previously. In 2007 a major event was held in Abbey Park to celebrate its anniversary but unfortunately the weather was very poor and it was “washed out”. In 2012 we held the torch relay evening celebration in Abbey Park. This was very successful and may have been a contributor to the current interest in having an event on Abbey Park.

Further to your questions, we would like to make the following comments: We are very grateful for your interest in this idea. It is one of a number that have been raised as part of our current festivals and events review, which has shown that there is considerable interest in our festivals, which bring pleasure to many thousands of people each year and support Leicester’s economy and profile. The review’s recommendations are currently being finalised, and whatever the outcome, the stimulating debate it has engendered has been very beneficial and will help us to shape our future festivals programme.

Sarah Levitt
Head of Leicester Arts and Museums Service

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