

FALMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Cultural Services and Leisure Committee held on 4th December 2023 at 7:00 pm in the Atherton Suite, The Old Post Office, The Moor, Falmouth TR11 2RT.

Present: Councillors E E Seiler (Chair), L D Coley (Vice Chair), K J Edwards, G F Evans MBE, and Z Young.

Also Attending: Councillors D E Clegg, S D Eva, J C Robinson, and A L Rowe.

Attendance : A M Williams (Town Clerk)
M Lewis (Cultural Services Director)
M C Palmer-Williams (General Manager, Princess Pavilion)
M Bennett (Administrative Assistant)

A964 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received and approved from Councillors D V Evans (holiday), Chin-Quee (ill) and Spargo (ill).

A965 INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

None received.

A966 MINUTES

It was proposed by Councillor G F Evans and seconded by Councillor Coley

RESOLVED that the part I minutes of meeting held on 11th September 2023 be confirmed as a correct record of the proceedings and signed by the Chair.

A967 TOWN MANAGER REPORT

The Town Clerk presented the Town Management report. Further he updated on environmental initiatives around events which included discussion with South West Bars and Events (SWBE) on the principles of a more sustainable delivery of events, SWBE had drafted a sustainability statement for review and communication to attendees and others, and a feasibility study into the use of composting toilets.

The Chair acknowledged the safe and successful delivery of the Tallships event, and that the Council should be cognisant of the findings in the Debrief Report, and that the reported Councillor behaviour was not indicative of the overall councillor contribution to the event.

It was proposed by Councillor Coley, seconded by Councillor Edwards and

RESOLVED that

- (i) the report be noted;
- (ii) the Tallships Debrief Report (as attached) be accepted and forms the basis for future major events planning;
- (iii) it be recognised that the identified poor councillor behaviour in the Debrief Report was not indicative of the majority of councillors who had supported the event and engaged positively with it. The Council also recognised the vast number of volunteers who had participated and enabled the event success.

There was a brief adjournment of the meeting due to a fire alarm evacuation.

A968 CULTURAL SERVICES REPORT

The Cultural Services Director presented her part 1 report, including an update on strategic development and the Municipal Buildings conditions survey where Community Capacity Fund support had been sought for feasibility and viability reporting. As well as the Youth Services update.

It was proposed by Councillor Seiler, seconded by Councillor G V Evans and

RESOLVED that the

- (i) the reports be noted;
- (ii) funding applications to facilitate the Municipal Buildings work be identified as a priority;
- (iii) the Finance and General Purposes Committee be recommended to approve the continuation of the Visitor Services Officer as there was an operational requirement;
- (iv) future objectives reporting and progress be incorporated into the Cultural Services Director reports and did not require a stand-alone agenda item, nor did Income Generators which would also be incorporated into the reporting.

A969 PRINCESS PAVILION REPORT

The General Manager, Princess Pavilion presented his report and updated on the mailing list compliance matters, that over 1000 events had taken place in 2023 a 800% increase. Key performance indicators were being developed for 2024 and the Community Ownership Fund application was being considered.

It was proposed by Councillor Seiler, seconded by Councillor Edwards and

RESOLVED that the report be approved.

A970 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was proposed by Councillor Seiler and seconded by Councillor Edwards and

RESOLVED that in view of the confidential nature of contractual matters and personal information, it is advisable, in the public interest that the press and public, be excluded from the meeting.



Debrief Report - 2023

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1. Introduction

Falmouth hosted the start of the prestigious Tall Ships Race, Magellan Elcano from the 15 – 18 AUGUST 2023.

It was the first time in nine years that the tall ships race had taken place in Falmouth and it was secured once again, thanks to extensive behind-the-scenes work by the award-winning Falmouth Town Team – the partnership between Falmouth Town Council and Falmouth BID, Perfect Events Group and Falmouth Tall Ships Association. This was the sixth time Falmouth had hosted the prestigious regatta and race, with the inaugural one for the town being held in 1966.

Tall Ships Falmouth 2023 was underwritten by Falmouth Town Council, with financial support from its key partners: Falmouth Business Improvement District (BID) and Falmouth Tall Ships Association. There were also numerous opportunities for sponsors to engage with this historic event.

The event was organised by the Falmouth Town Team – the nationally commended partnership as highlighted, between Falmouth Town Council’s town management function and Falmouth Business Improvement District (BID), as well as Falmouth Tall Ships Association, Perfect Events Group (PEG) and Falmouth Harbour Commissioners.

2. Debrief Structure

Debrief aim:

To review the Tall Ships event planning and delivery to identify issues and recommendations for consideration when planning and delivering future events.

Aim

- To provide the opportunity to review Tall Ships 2023
- To establish any lessons to be learnt
- To identify good practice
- To prioritise resources

Ethics

The debrief will;

- Be conducted openly and honestly
- Pursue personal, group and organisational understanding and learning. It's not about blame
- Respect the rights of individuals
- Value equally all those involved

Format

The debrief provided participants with the opportunity to review the event and consider any recommendations for future events. The debrief process was facilitated by Kevin Instance from Gull Rock Events. It consisted of a questionnaire circulated to key contributors, a face to face debrief session held at Falmouth Town Council offices and one to one feedback sessions with those that could not attend on 13th September.

This report provides some attributable comments and observations for individuals and organisations. It also provides some observations from general conversations during the process. The sections below cover the main themes discussed during this debrief.

There are recommendations listed at the end of the report.

Participants and Contributors:

Sam Groom	PEG
Mike Ward	PEG
Richard Wilcox	Falmouth BID
Richard Gates	Falmouth Town Council
Mark Williams	Falmouth Town Council
Kirstie Edwards	Falmouth Town Council
Demelza Shankland	Falmouth Town Council
Martyn Addinall	Cornwall Fire
Tim Vigus	South West Bars and Events
Luke Tudor	Coast Medic
Kim Phillips	Infinitus Security
Miles Featherstone	Falmouth Harbour
Miles Carden	Falmouth Harbour
Dave Nicoll	RNLI
Rob Farr	MCGA
Drystan Jones	AP Group
Trevor Brookes	AP Group
Rhona Gardiner	Excess Energy
Vanessa Mori	Sail Training International
Paul Bishop	Sail Training International
Chris Vincent	D&C Police
Richard Hockin	D&C Police
Steve Hole	D&C 4x4
Heidi Channell	Volunteer Cornwall
John Shallcroft	Liaison Officer
Anne Oliver	Liaison Officer

3. Pre-Event Planning

Positives

- 3.1 The general consensus was that the process followed through steering group and functional meetings was successful and was able to achieve its aims. The key personnel were fully engaged in the event via an established governance structure with a number of sub-working groups meeting on a regular basis. Notes and actions were recorded. An overall event plan was produced and working documents allocated as Appendices. These plans were shared with all members of the Steering Group, the SAG and emergency services prior to the event for feedback and sign off.
- 3.2 The appointed representatives of each organisation were professional and largely experienced in previous tall ships events and other large scale operations.
- 3.3 As the remote partner in the planning, STI were very comfortable with the planning team who were, in their opinion, very strong and always available. The quality of document sharing and submission was excellent and they were given ample opportunity to challenge and test the plans. They acknowledged that the degree that they were involved in the pre event planning process surpassed anything they had experienced at previous events and they were very appreciative of this level of engagement.
- 3.4 Whilst the other big events happening during the summer in Falmouth stretched the planning team, there were some parallels between the events that assisted with the planning, such as the traffic management plan. There was considerable help from Cornwall Council allowing the Traffic Regulations to be placed via Notices rather than published Orders – this saved time and money.
- 3.5 Falmouth would not have chosen to do 2 significant one-off events so closely together but Tall Ships was delayed twice due to the pandemic in 2020 and 2021. This meant that the normal 2-year lead was not available as planning stopped and restarted on several occasions. Despite the considerable challenges of time and available resources, the team still managed to achieve the event which has received fantastic feedback from those attending.
- 3.6 Recruitment for volunteers was combined with AFDNE23. This was an efficient process and resulted in 169 volunteers being signed up and 123 being deployed over the 3 days of the event.
- 3.7 Physical event control meetings on site each day were invaluable. Governance and compliance matters were observed.
- 3.8 The 2 Chief Liaison Officers worked closely and met frequently in the planning. At least one attended each of the larger steering group meetings where necessary.

- 3.9 Engagement with Roseland was much improved, and agreements were put in place in plenty of time based on learning from previous events.

Areas for Improvement

- 3.10 Falmouth Town Council and many of the other representatives from other organisations were involved in the planning and delivery of Armed Forces Day National Event. The timescales for the planning of these events overlapped and conflicted meaning that there were resilience issues for the small teams.
- 3.11 D&C Police reviewed their decision to deploy a full command team based on their risk matrix. This was amended to deliver a local policing support to the event. Based on the profile and threats to the event this decision was not questioned but it did create a gap in effective communications both during the planning and event delivery. Several organisations commented that more detailed information at an early stage would have been beneficial.
- 3.12 STI were concerned about the late change in accommodation available within the docks and the availability for the fleet to come alongside. This appeared to be a late change to them for the accommodation to be reduced. They would not want such a late change to happen at any future events. In terms of accommodation, STI required a larger space for their race office. STI only had one site visit and in hindsight would have paid more attention to the space that was offered to them and would be more prescriptive on their needs in future.
- 3.13 This was the first time that a Tall Ships event had adopted a 'pay to enter' policy. As things developed during the event it became apparent that greater planning and communication of how this would work operationally needed to be considered.
- 3.14 STI understood the rationale for having 'pay to enter' in order for the host to meet the costs - they would, in future, want the host port fee to be paid upfront.
- 3.15 The Harbour Authority felt that there was a lack of understanding of the Statutory Harbour Authorities regulatory role for events and the potential conflict of interests that arose from this position. It was felt there was an expectation on the Harbour Authority to organise elements of the event where these would typically sit with the event organiser.
- 3.16 To assist the deployment of the volunteers an earlier visit by the co-ordinator to the deployment areas would have really benefitted to give a full understanding of the roles they would be required to do.

- 3.17 A decision was made to hold the volunteer briefing before the summer holidays to ensure maximum attendance. Many of the roles then changed for the actual event which could have been negated if the briefing was closer to the event.
- 3.18 More time and commitment from partners in the planning would have enhanced the event offer and visitor experience.
- 3.19 There was some frustration at the late changes of site plans within the docks on behalf of the police and security, in particular. Whilst the reasons for this were understood, an earlier lockdown of what was going where would have been useful.
- 3.20 There was a strong recommendation from the police and the National Vehicle Threat Mitigation Unit for the deployment of hostile vehicle mitigation as part of their threat assessment. There was insufficient budget to accommodate this and the police CT SECCO was not satisfied with the protective measures deployed. Regarding CT planning, there was an offer for earlier engagement with appropriate police resources – this offer was not suitably taken up.
- 3.21 It was felt that some councillors were not fully cognisant of the contractual and budgetary commitments that the council had signed up to. This needed to be better reinforced to ensure that there are no ambiguities.
- 3.22 Councillors would have benefitted from a simpler digest in terms of regular updates throughout the period of the event.
- 3.23 Emergency Services felt that an early tabletop exercise within the planning cycle may well have indicated the need for contingency plans for some occurrences that played out during the event i.e. the Parade of Sail disruption.
- 3.24 Consideration may be given to having a dedicated individual to plan the maritime aspects of the event and to ensure the role of the Statutory Harbour Authority as a Regulator of Events is fully appreciated. Ensuring that permissions are sought for any elements of an event that may impact on navigational safety at the earliest possible stage, for example, fireworks, laser displays and use of smoke effects.
- 3.25 There were challenges on who was responsible for what due to there being several lead roles. There were some assumptions made on who was responsible for what and some areas of the delivery that needed a lead person that didn't have one due to the lack of personnel, capacity, budget restrictions or understanding of requirements e.g., there was a need for a site manager from the event for the docks.

4. Command and Control

Positives

- 4.1 The structure of event control and the resources deployed there were widely seen as appropriate and worked extremely well. Some of the operational decisions that were discussed later bore out how well the command, control and communication structure was designed and implemented. STI remarked that the decision making around Parade of Sail was the best they had seen at any event they had been involved with.
- 4.2 The Port Health building was an ideal location for event control in terms of size, location and facilities.
- 4.3 Command and Control was very effective and adapted to the requirements and challenges of the event.
- 4.4 Utilising the established relationships from working on previous events as a team worked well.
- 4.5 Whilst it was very disappointing that the Parade of Sail was cancelled, everyone involved in the decision making around that, because of the weather conditions, felt their point of view was considered and undoubtedly the right decision was reached. This is a good indication of how well established the command and control protocols were.

Areas for Improvement

- 4.6 The decision by D&C Police to reduce their level of command resource left a void within the event control structure. This gap was closed by utilising existing senior contacts and the CT SECCO within the police which caused frustration to the police community bronze who felt that he was unsighted on some decisions and developments.
- 4.7 Earlier confirmation from the Resident Naval Officer that all formal protocols are being met by foreign naval vessels would be advised in future.

5. Event Delivery

Positives

- 5.1 There were many positive comments and feedback provided about how great the event was. A selection of these are recorded at section 7 below.
- 5.2 The Sports Day received great feedback from all of those involved in partaking and participating. There were some minor logistical observations for improvement that have been captured in the yellow debrief.
- 5.3 Police and Fire resources on the ground took positive action to resolve some operational issues such as supporting closure points and enabling queueing. The Fire Bronze communicated a willingness to do this through the event control structures and their involvement was especially welcomed and appreciated.
- 5.4 With the challenges around planning time, budget and capacity, this meant the Falmouth team needed to manage the project more innovatively. This included selling tickets for the first time. A ticketing site was set up on See Tickets.com. Strong marketing, public relations and social media comms backed up the ticketing campaign to drive advanced online sales. This helped influence operation planning, crowd management and cash flow. 95% of those attending had prebooked.
- 5.5 Over 150 volunteers acted as “games makers”, their roles included supporting queue management and working alongside the 60 experience ships liaison officers. Welfare provisions, such as water and toilets, were well planned along the queue lines.
- 5.6 A full debrief at the end of day 1 led to significant improvements for days 2 and 3. These included:
- improved volunteer briefings
 - fire, police and security providing extra effort on crowd management
 - more diligent corrects to ensure correct tickets being held
 - improved queue management and queue lane design
 - effective comms through local and social media advising people to turn up at allotted times only
 - improved welfare provision
 - synchronising opening hours on the ships
 - improving pedestrian flows in the docks by operating a one-way system at pinchpoints
 - enhanced briefings with STI to keep them apprised of the days progress.

Areas for Improvement

- 5.7 The media team took on lots of additional queries from often angry customers when dealing with the 'crisis management' around the queues for the docks. This crisis comms took the media team away from their core role. This extra work was happily carried out by the professional team and the extra social media response management turned around Q&A's remarkably effectively. This was an unexpected resource requirement that could have been factored in earlier and budgeted for. They suggest having a satellite press office in the docks to be considered for future.
- 5.8 As in the planning, there was insufficient resilience and resource within the core team. This was exacerbated by the shortness of the planning cycle and resulted in everyone working many extra hours.
- 5.9 The key observations that were made that would have further enhanced the operational delivery were longer planning lead time, increased team size, increased budget, more wharf space within the docks meaning more ships for the public to visit. The increased budget and planning cycle would have enhanced branding, ticket information and signage.
- 5.10 The biggest problem encountered was the very large queues and the public's adverse reaction to these on the Tuesday. Lessons learnt were:
- ensuring an earlier opening of the ships in advance of public attendance,
 - having the official opening at a different time to when the public are arriving in the docks
 - enhanced communications to give the public the times when they could enter the docks
 - enhanced branding and signage
 - a more robust barrier queueing plan with resources to oversee and manage including spotting and dealing with anybody having difficulties within the queues
 - careful management of ticket sales with the ability to turn off sales robustly either online or on the door.
- 5.11 There were some areas such as Church Street Car Pak Marquee that were not well attended due to the lack of time to promote.
- 5.12 Councillors need reminding of their role and responsibilities, they are not entitled to any special recognition because of their position. Instances were reported of inappropriate behaviour in public and to others which was damaging to the operational delivery and potentially damaging to the reputation of the council. Behaviour such as this is highly likely to put volunteers off volunteering at future events hamper such events being resourced.

- 5.13 Huge numbers visiting put a strain on capacity in the docks. Ticket checks impacted on this and led to longer waiting times, some frustrations and complaints on day 1. Queues were exacerbated by only 4 gangways being available .

6. Resources

Positives

- 6.1 Partners and supporting agencies came together and delivered the event.
- 6.2 There was a lot of experience in the Chief Liaison Officer and Liaison Officer team. It was felt that unless you had been a Liaison Officer for Tall Ships in the past you would struggle to perform this role.
- 6.3 The budget allocated for the Liaison Officer role was only 50% spent.
- 6.4 There were resource challenges, however the volunteer and Liaison Officer system worked extremely well to support the delivery of the event. Some key volunteers were exceptional and other individuals stepped in to help outside of their agreed roles.

Areas for Improvement

- 6.5 The Town Council has insufficient resilience. This is the first event of this scale that the Town Council has solely been responsible for and underwritten. Comms for Councillors and greater resilience for future events are takeaway learnings for the Town Council. It is important that the expectations of others reflect this.
- 6.6 Some last-minute issues with wharfage contracts and insurance should have been resolved earlier in the planning. Part of the shoreside offer was reduced because of that.
- 6.7 There were some last-minute notifications around attending dignitaries. With better notification, it was felt that some of the arrangements for these dignitaries could have been better observed.
- 6.8 The electronic version of the cadet manual was of limited use due to shortage of phones and phone signal – a printed manual would have been more practical.
- 6.9 Police, Fire and Volunteer resources were used to good effect on operational and logistical matters, however this could be viewed as an indication of a lack of dedicated resources to the event.

- 6.10 The Harbour Authority felt the event placed inordinate time and resource burden on them. They had to rely largely on volunteers and partner agencies to support ‘on the water’ activity which was much appreciated but may be unsustainable in the future. Falmouth Harbour received no direct contribution towards their time spent in planning or resourcing on the day of the ship departures. Whilst they recognise the wider benefit to the Port and community again this may not be sustainable in the future.
- 6.11 The recruitment of volunteers was excellent however more could always be used. The shifts in the docks were quite long at over 8 hours and more volunteers would have been useful to facilitate breaks. The impact on these resources was further stretched with additional requests for volunteers at the last minute for areas including Ships and Castles car park and the Media Centre.
- 6.12 The resource request, at times, didn’t meet the operational requirement, for example volunteers being requested for road closures an hour before the road closure came into effect.
- 6.13 Communication on volunteer roles and responsibilities could have been improved and the support structure around this area from the organisers and event control could have been enhanced. Volunteers and staff on the ground were at times left in isolation to make their own decisions.

7. Other considerations

I have used this section to record some of the direct quotes that show how good the event was and how much people valued delivering it;

Positives

- 7.1 Absolutely hugely successful and enjoyable in terms of spectacle and reputation for the Town and Town Council.
- 7.3 Our ability to deliver in partnership and with volunteers was impressive.
- 7.4 Mostly councillors embraced the event and recognise its importance. They need assurances that it was successful and that it was the right thing for the Town Council to undertake and stage. A separate economic analysis of the event would prove useful.
- 7.5 From my point of view as a newbie volunteer I was struck by the warmth of the team and the welcome I received. The organisation was impressive, each volunteer was able to use their particular strengths and skills to resolve the inevitable challenges that arose.

- 7.6 A fantastic event which needs to be recognised as another jewel in the Town Council Planning Team’s crown. Considerable pressure from its own success was absorbed and all challenges were met in an honest and professional way. I felt really proud to be part of the whole event from the initial planning to final delivery and I relish the opportunity to be involved in the next major event Falmouth seeks out for the coming years.
- 7.7 The core team were outstanding. The Falmouth team punch well above their weight. What they achieve is greater than some of the big cities that the event visits. The passion for the event in Falmouth is clear to see.

8. Conclusion

Tall Ships in Falmouth in 2023 was an event that was very much enjoyed by the people that attended and the people that were involved in the planning and event delivery. Safety is often an unseen measure of the success of an event when it goes well. The fact that police, medics, and security have reported very low levels of activity is testament to it being a safe event.

Shortage of time, budget and resource were factors outside of the control of the core team of organisers. All other host locations are large cities that are provided with much larger budgets and teams of people to deliver the event. The last time Falmouth hosted the event, a whole team from within Cornwall Council was dedicated to it. There is clearly a strong affection for Tall Ships in Falmouth. The town has hosted more than any other venue and STI confirm how much they love coming to this iconic location. It is also clear that some key considerations need to be taken for the event to return in the future. The recommendations below seek to outline the key factors that need to be put into place to make a future bid and event delivery successful.

9. Recommendations

Reference	Recommendation
1	Understand required financial and social indicators of success. Identifying these indicators in advance and reporting on them post event should be considered.
2	Ensure adequate lead time for the planning is allocated. Do not attempt two such large and high profile events are allocated within the same summer.
3	Establish adequate funding to adequately resource the event and in particular to cover port fees in full and up front.
4	Ensure sufficient resilience is established for the key roles and ensure that suitably experienced people are in key roles. Having regard for selecting people in key roles that have experience of working at this event.
5	Ensure all contingencies for reasonably foreseeable circumstances are adequately thought through, recorded and tested through tabletop exercising.
6	The counter terrorism measures must be identified and established early. The budget to implement proportionate measures must be established.
7	Port protocols and costs need to be agreed early and as far as is possible, ensure that no last minute changes are made.
8	Councillors need to be kept informed of event developments in a simple digest that make them feel fully engaged. They must have their roles and responsibilities laid out and fully understood so that there is no inappropriate interference.
9	Ensure that lines of communication are robust and sustainable with key partners and emergency services that are not represented within Event Control.
10	Establish plans and resources to accommodate emergency comms and social media enquiries that do not impact on the provision of media comms and liaison.
11	Ensure the plans for 2023 are retained and made available for future planning teams.
12	The learnings from day 1 that were implemented on days 2 and 3 must be considered and implemented for future events in the docks (as outlined in 5.6)

*Report completed by Kevin Instance CMIOSH, OSHCR
10th October 2023*