

Civic Pride column June 2021

By Hester Hand, Friends of Abingdon Civic Society

Abingdon has a strong tradition of community events, especially in the summer months. We really missed them last year, so, as we cautiously emerge from pandemic restrictions, it is great to see them re-starting.

Big events such as Fun in the Park and the Food Festival have to be organised many months in advance and are not practical this year, but many of the groups running smaller events have come up with creative, Covid-safe plans so that we can get out and enjoy our town.

First up is the ATOM Festival on the weekend of 11-13 June. This year it will take the form of a “Sci-Cache Challenge” – not as scary as it sounds and a chance for families and friends to get out and about around town on a trail with a difference. More details from the ATOM Festival website or from a market place stall on the day.

Monday 21 June is national “Make Music Day” and Abingdon will be taking part for the third time. The first two were very successful – albeit of necessity very different: plans for this year are still a closely-guarded secret, but watch out for announcements soon.

Two weeks later, on Saturday 26 June, the Abbey Buildings will have a “Big Splash” event to mark the re-opening of the Buildings. There will be dancing, live music, theatre, historic tours, and free refreshments from 10 till 12.30. If you haven’t visited before – or even if you have – this will be a great opportunity to see this jewel in Abingdon’s crown.

In July there will be another “Splash” – of Pink this time with the Annual Fun day for Against Breast Cancer. Details haven’t been announced yet, but will be on the Town Council website nearer the time. In previous years we have enjoyed spectacular displays in many of our shops and food and entertainment in the Market Place.

September 18-19 will be Heritage Open Days. This year’s theme is Edible Abingdon on Thames – with food and drink-related events in the Market Place, Museum, Guildhall, Abbey Buildings and St Nicolas Church and interesting walks and trails to follow.

All of these events are run by volunteers, and in this national Volunteers Week we should applaud their efforts. Abingdon is lucky also to have our wonderful Museum and the Abbey Cinema, both of them now open for business and delighted to see their visitors returning. Lets give them lots of support.

We also have the regular markets – weekly Monday market, monthly Farmers’ Market, quarterly Local Excellence Markets – and a Craft market this Saturday (5 June). Sadly, one of our other popular summer attractions is not yet ready to welcome us back as there is still no date for opening the Abbey Meadow Outdoor Pool, but hopefully that will happen soon.

So, it looks as if summer has arrived – lets get out and enjoy what our lovely town has to offer, but stay safe. Further details of these and other events are on the Town Council website <https://www.abingdon.gov.uk/events>