



Project Evaluation

Produced by

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1. Introduction

This document pulls together information and insight to evaluate the success of CultureFest in achieving its objectives (Section 2.1).

It is an internal document that aims to support Warwick District Council (WDC) Officers to deliver similar public facing initiatives in the future and makes recommendations on how WDC can build on the momentum established by the programme.

2. Background and Context

Warwick district hosted the [Lawn Bowls, Para Lawn Bowls](#) and the start and finish of the [Road Race Cycling](#) event as part of the [Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games](#) in July and August 2022. In response to this once in a lifetime opportunity, Warwick District Council, with the support of its partners, showcased and celebrated the incredible arts and heritage venues, artists, and creatives in the area.

A month-long festival, with events and activities, took place across Royal Leamington Spa, Warwick, Kenilworth, and Whitnash from Saturday 16 July to Sunday 21 August 2022.

2.1 Aims and Objectives

CultureFest's primary objective was to encourage the people who live, work, and visit the area to discover or rediscover world-class venues and artists across our four towns and find new stories and experiences by young people and emerging talent.

It aimed to do this by showcasing and celebrating the incredible arts and heritage venues, artists, and creatives in the area by:

- Establishing 'CultureFest' as a brand for arts and cultural activity taking place in district as part of [Birmingham 2022 Festival](#).
- Raising the profile of CultureFest and associated activity with [target audiences](#).
- Growing arts audiences for organisations and artists who feature in the programme.
- Signposting captured audiences to the wealth of arts and cultural provision in the area.
- Providing [target audiences](#) with clear and accurate information about cultural activity so that they can plan their visit and have a positive and enjoyable experience.
- Reinforcing the message that Warwick District is a great place for people to live, work, and visit.
- Support featured programme to increase ticket sales and generate revenue.
- Cross-pollinate audiences across Warwick district's four towns and arts and cultural organisations.

2.2 Roles and Responsibilities

JB

Media Team

Festival Sites

Economic Development Team

2.3 Budget and Resources

Existing resources:

Parks and buildings

Budget

Zero budget

3. Executive Summary

3.1 Successes

Relationships

CultureFest created a valuable touchpoint for WDC Officers to build new or strengthen existing relationships within the sector and beyond, most notably with ...

Sector Intelligence

New sector intelligence has been captured by the Arts Section, which will inform future activity; namely the challenges the sector faces and the types of support they require. Discussions with the sector have also validated existing approach to sector development, which has been extremely useful to Officers.

Interdepartmental Working

The initiative was successful in bringing different teams together from across WDC. As a result, there are stronger working relationships between Officers in the Arts Section, Media Team, Events Team and beyond.

Brand / Trust etc

x

Programme

The size, scale and diversity of the programme exceeded all expectations. The types of organisations that presented work ranged from community groups to world-class heritage attractions and everything in between.

Application Process

x

Repositioning

x

Visibility and transparency

x

Agile and responsive working

x

Integrity

x

Challenging perceptions of WDC

x

3.2 Challenges

Managing Expectations

CultureFest's aims and objectives were ambitious, and the planning and external messages were successful in engaging the sector to take part. Managing over 70 individual relationships and the expectations regarding the levels of organisational support was a huge challenge. The professional nature in which CultureFest was presented meant that participants often believed that it was being delivered by a large team, when in fact the entire delivery was reliant on one Officer.

Resources

X

Budget

With no commissioning or marketing budget, the success of the festival was reliant on repositioning the initiative to be of value to participants and relying on limited existing resources. While this was largely successful, budget to commission small pieces of work in areas that had little or no provision (Whitnash and Kenilworth) would have been extremely valuable in broadening the programme and expanding its reach. However, that said, there was not enough resource to manage a commissioning programme or manage a high profile marketing campaign.

3.3 Lessons Learnt

Scale

Never set so continued to grow, impacting on scheduled marketing activity

Deadlines

Participants failed to meet deadlines which had a knock on effect + marketing time

Integration

There were many missed opportunities, which is understandable given the size and scale of the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games Project. The Cultural programme was seen as add on or extra, rather than being fully integrated in to wider programme. CultureFest should have been seen as an important delivery mechanism to recruit volunteers, promote baton relays, and develop and deepen relationships with stakeholders. Furthermore, the Festival Sites information desks should have been powered by the Pump Rooms Visitor Information Centre – and volunteers could have received frontline training from the Arts Section's Duty Managers.

Resources / Risk

The entire CultureFest programme was reliant on one Officer and was at risk if this person was taken ill or left the organisation. Safeguards should be put in place to manage this risk in the future.

Agile Working

X

Relationships

The success of CultureFest was largely a result of the Arts Sections' close working relationships with key members of the sector, a holistic understanding of the challenges they face, and an understanding of how they can be supported through these types of initiatives.

Trust

Autonym to work / deliver

Don't take it personally

Historic stuff / council bashing

4. The Programme

The programme was developed by working with the sector to present existing exhibitions, events, and activities from within the district, which addressed the festival's curatorial themes AND working with creatives and organisations to win funds from third parties to develop new work that addressed the curatorial themes and audiences.

X% was existing

X% was developed specifically for CultureFest

X pieces of programme were supported to get funding

Over 36 days, CultureFest presented a programme of some of the area's very best arts, cultural and heritage events and activities for the enjoyment of the people who live, work and visit Warwick District, including:

- 5 gigs and music events
- 4 festivals
- 2 dance performances
- 4 workshops
- 10 tours and trails
- 5 exhibitions
- 4 Sculptures
- 2 outdoor theatre performances
- 2 poetry events
- 2 B2022 Festival Sites
- 38 locally made films
- 4 theatre productions

- 4 talks and poetry readings
- 1 esports event

- 1 podcast
- 2 historical re-enactments

4.1 Selection Process

The original idea of showcasing and celebrating all art, culture and creativity in the district was questioned by members of Warwick District Creative Compact in the early planning phases. It was agreed that all successful festivals are curated - to ensure quality and suitability to meet the overarching aims and objectives.

A selection process was established in November 2021, which included the creation of a details '[Take Part: Toolkit](#)', clearly outlining what we hoped to achieve and what types of work we would like to feature, and a selection panel, who would oversee quality control.

Take Part: Toolkit

The Take Part: Toolkit was presented as a detailed [webpage](#), [downloadable document](#), and [audio guide](#). It was designed to be accessible by the broadest possible audience.

It included:

- [Background](#) information on what CultureFest hoped to achieve, including [aims and objectives](#).
- An outline of the [selection criteria](#), including [curatorial themes](#), [timings](#), [target audiences](#) and [locations](#).
- Instruction on [how to apply](#), with links to the [application form](#), associated [timescales](#).
- Information on the [selection process](#) and what happens to both [successful](#) and [unsuccessful applicants](#).
- Information on how Warwick District Council could support with [fundraising](#).
- And unpicked "[What's in it for you?](#)" so that participants could understand the value in taking part.

Selection Panel

The selection panel was established in November 2022. It was made up of representatives from our creative community and Birmingham 2022 Festival Producers, which ensured we presented work that represented the quality and ambition of the area.

[The panel took part in a voluntary capacity...](#)

[Feedback from the panel...](#)

Reactive and responsive when..

Incorporate other areas of work (art map / sculptures)

5. Marketing

A 'CultureFest Marketing and Audience Development Strategy (March – December 2022)' was produced by the Arts Section's Projects and Development Manager and shared with WDC's Project Board and Media Team.

The strategy was implemented in late February 2022, although sector profile-raising activity began in early 2021.

Successes

Challenges

Lesson Learnt

6. Partnerships

- Shakespeare's England
- University of Warwick
- Temperance
- Warwickshire County Council
- Birmingham 2022 Festival Producers
- Community Rail Partnership
- Better Points

7. Relationship Management

- Largely positive
- A instance of.. (Leam Soc)
- Time consuming
- Valuable
- Momentum?

8. Next Steps

x

9. Appendix

Yes please! You can simply reshare content from the Facebook Page (<https://www.facebook.com/WDCultureFest2022/>) and the Project Manager's Twitter Account (https://twitter.com/JBranson_). Here's an example of some social content you are free to share:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bhqRhH7z3xM>



QUOTES:

Barry. 8 years work being more commercial, and worked with BID and Art Trail

Reviews

Dazzling night of jazz gets the crowd jumping

Interplay: Jazz Meets Dancehall, Nelson Club, Warwick, August 6

Star trumpeter Byron Wallen raced to Warwick last Saturday to stand in for Covid-struck Claude Deppe at The Nelson Club. Fresh from his tutor role at the Original UK Jazz Summer School in Cardiff, Wallen teamed-up brilliantly with Annie Whitehead (trombone) to lift the spirits of a committed audience with a mix of reggae and vibrant South African jazz sounds, featuring works by the remarkable Dudu Pukwana and Jonas Gwangwa, with Adrian Litvinoff and his Interplay colleagues providing excellent support.

Whitehead and Wallen bring a dazzling attractiveness to a night of stunning interpretations of reggae numbers with Phoenix City, the first oppor-

tunity to entice patrons to the dance floor. Dave Brubeck's Take Five in 5/4 time became Take Five in Four in 4/4 time, as Alan Wakeman took the lead with his haunting sax playing. Soon it was time for the South African rhythms of Dudu Pukwana and Angel Nemall, Wallen striking a strong lead role and Litvinoff supplying a mesmerizing double bass solo. These fluent South African rhythms do not require a huge percussion; on this occasion dispensing with Dave Balen's contribution would not go amiss. Whitehead showed her admiration for jazz emerging from South Africa with a show-stopping tribute to colleague trombone player, the legendary Jonas Gwangwa, with her interpretation of his Hamba Ngyeza, a number Gwangwa composed at the request of the ANC whilst in exile in Angola,

at the height of the struggle against apartheid.

By this time the dance floor was packed; a good sign patrons were thoroughly enjoying the sounds. More dance opportunities followed with Don Drummond's Eastern Standard Time, a legendary work from the ska department. Keyboard player Neil Hunter took the lead with his fine introduction to Abdulla Ibrahim's The Mountain, Wakeman adding a super flute solo, before Whitehead and Wallen joined the delighted Interplay to create a memorable sound. Whitehead continued to impose her will with another Gwangwa favourite before, finally, all combined for the remarkable Litvinoff composition The Shuffle, quite a way to conclude a much enjoyed jazz contribution to CultureFest in Leamington and Warwick.

BY
CLIVE PEACOCK



Trombonist Annie Whitehead was among the musicians taking part

1. Programme Participant Evaluation Responses

Q1. In your opinion, how well do you think the aims of CultureFest were met? (Where 5 is fully met and 1 is not fully met)

Aim 1 = 4

Aim 2 = 3.9

Aim 3 = 4.5

Q2. How would you rate the following level of support you received from Warwick District Council in the run up to, during, and post CultureFest? (Where 0 is Poor and 5 is excellent. Select 'Not applicable' if you did not receive support in this area).

Q2.1. Developing your programme to fit the CultureFest selection criteria, curatorial themes, and to be appropriate for target audiences

60% of respondents rated is as Excellent, 20% as Very Good, and 13.3% as Not Good. 6.7% marked as not applicable.

Q2.2. Connecting you with spaces and places to present your work

53% of respondents rated is as Excellent, 13.3% as Very Good, and 13.3% as Not Good. 13.3%% marked as poor. 13.3% marked as not applicable.

Q2.3. Connecting you to other creatives and specialists

46.7% of respondents rated is as Excellent, 13.3% as Very Good, 6.7% as Good, and 6.7% as Not Good, 6.7% as Poor. 20% marked as not applicable.

Q2.4. Helping you to identify and apply for funding for your programme

20% of respondents rated is as Excellent and 20% as Poor. 60% marked as not applicable.

Q2.5. Selling tickets for your programme via our Box Office system

26.7% of respondents rated is as Excellent. 73.3% marked as not applicable.

Q2.6. Generally being a critical friend to help you and your organisation to make the most out of the opportunity

66.6% of respondents rated is as Excellent, 13.3% as Very Good, 6.7% as Good, and 6.7% as Not Good, 6.7% as Poor.

Q3. Has CultureFest helped raise the profile of you and/or your organisation?

60% Yes, 40% unsure

Q4. If yes, please tell us how it has helped raise the profile of you/your organisation?

- We were able to reach a large audience in a busy location at a very high profile time - thank you!
- By showcasing our work at said sites.
- By selecting our films for the big screens it exposed our business to more people
- Local and national awareness
- Attracting people who did not know of our organisation.
- Developed our audience in Leamington following previous visits to AITP
- Opportunity to display quality work in public venues
- Increased awareness of Modern Pre-Raphaelite Visionaries Exhibition.

- It helped to get some positive press coverage in the Leamington Observer.
It gave us a presence and a context within the wider cultural ecosystem of Warwick District

Q5. Please tick the most appropriate statement about your perceptions of Warwick District Council following your involvement in CultureFest.

80% think more positively about WDC following their involvement in CultureFest

20% My perception of WDC has not changed following my involvement in CultureFest

Q6. If your perceptions have changed, please tell us why

- The enthusiasm shown toward the work I produce and how it can be a part of the programme made me feel like I was a valued artist in the local area.
- It was a great programme of diverse artforms/
- Warwick seems to be a bit more of a ""happening"" place as a result of Culture Fest.
- i think reaching out to the community and encouraging engagement is important and this is what WDC has done well with CultureFest
- Easy to work with Jonathon. Very positive with a 'can do' approach.
- In the past I have sometimes found WDC unhelpful when organising cultural and other events.
- Great support from Charlotte, Jonathan and Kirsten at the licensing team on sites, logistics and permissions - as well support on the day - combined to made it a pleasure.
- The WDC staff were very visible during the culture fest events - even those taking place on weekends - demonstrating a commitment to the programme's success
- I have been impressed by some of the people I have dealt with. I am less enamoured of some of the Council's policies and procedures.

Q7. What three words best describe your involvement in CultureFest?



Q8. How would you improve our approach and delivery of this type of event if we did it again?

- Some of the events around the Commonwealth Games were hard to attend due to transport/scheduling issues. More consideration for those working full time with events planned for the evening or weekend would be great.
- I was unaware that films could be submitted until the day before the deadline. And generally it seemed that people didn't know the big screen events were going on at all. More publicity in the build up and during the duration would have been good.
- Move it to term time to improve audience attendance
- include some Augmented Reality! created by RiVR of course!
- I feel the project was well done. The ideas broke the usual mould and allowed for creative movement toward what was possible and achievable.
- More honest communication about what how WDC can support and help organisations. Regular communication with participants.
- Don't know
- For the main activity we were involved in (big screens programme), the screening schedule was only published around 5.00pm the day before the event, making it almost impossible to publicise our involvement and give interested parties the opportunity to make the time to be there for the screening. This meant most people couldn't come along and see it, and the film played to almost no audience. Such a shame as we were delighted to be involved and the film looked great on the big screen.
- It was a wholly positive experience both in terms of the organisation, sites and audiences reached.
- Less bureaucracy
- It was very smooth and well delivered.
- The Council should not embark on another event of this type without a) putting some funding on the table for programme and b) ensuring that there is adequate staffing in place.

Q9. Thinking more broadly about the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games visiting the area, we are keen to know your thoughts about the impact and value of the wider programme of sports and events beyond CultureFest.

- There seems to be genuine pride and buzz in the region - great to see Birmingham showing off its best side!
- It definitely shined a light on the local area and added an awesome buzz to the town.
- It will raise the profile of Birmingham and the West Midlands as well as accessibility to Warwick
- Loved the games, loved the energy generated. felt sorry for folks by The bowls at Victoria Park who were evicted from their parking places for many weeks.
- Exciting. Inspiring. Fun.
- well i like that we have had some roads repaired along the cycle route. Myton rd/ banbury rd roundabout used to be terrible! ;-)
- The common wealth games as a whole was well organised and showcased Birmingham and the region well. Many different cultures were represented at the games. Travel and transport for spectators was easy and well organised
- It was a unique opportunity for us as an arts organisation to connect with a sport (bowls) and a community of interest around the sport that we knew little of before. A number of audience members told us they were going to book tickets to the CG Bowls event or try the sport as a result - exactly what we'd hoped for, and significantly 50% of our audience were under 18, allowing a young crowd to have a taster. One of the elite (Silver medal-winning) players we interviewed said ""Thank you for helping to put bowls in the public eye"". Hopefully a great example of mutual gain of sports & arts activity!
- Overall I felt positive about the CG - but this only happened after I attended a Culture Fest event! It got me in the mood for the games which I had felt a bit indifferent towards beforehand.
I enjoyed the big screens and the opportunity to watch events in my town
- Good in its way, but I don't see that it attracted many visitors from outside the area. I could be wrong, but it seems to me that it was local people turning out rather than tourists.