

Arts Alive Festival 2005 Evaluation Report

Overview

In 2005 Arts Alive enjoyed its ninth successive year as a District-wide community arts festival. Since it began in 1997 Arts Alive has developed in many ways; it has a successful education and youth programme, distinctive literary and heritage events and is delivered through partnerships with a variety of individuals, community groups, statutory organisations and local businesses. Although it has expanded significantly, from just 22 events in 1997 to 87 events in 2005, it has never lost sight of its local origins and remains very much a festival that is owned and enjoyed by the local community. Attending events is by far the most effective means of judging the overall quality and success of the festival and as such the organising committee were unanimously impressed by the effort went to by local organisations to attract audiences and achieve a good level of artistic quality.

A significant achievement was the development of a youth arts programme in the half term holiday, which was made possible by a successful 'Awards for All' grant for £2200. The taster sessions, which took place in various youth facilities in the District, were well attended and successful at building the festival's appeal to young people. Complementing the informal arts activities was a comprehensive programme of workshops and author visits, which benefited fourteen primary and secondary schools in the District.

Despite its achievements, Arts Alive also faces some major issues as it enters a landmark year. In 2006, the festival will be ten years old, which is worthy of an extra special celebration. Our ambitions for its anniversary are however restricted by the level of core funding available and the amount of sponsorship we receive from KBR. ***As it relies on a mixed economy, the organising committee will need to concentrate its efforts on attracting additional sponsorship and public funding for the festival from other sources.*** The Council's partnership with the Arts Forum has already proved to be useful vehicle for making applications to grant giving organisations that do not support local authorities such as 'Awards for All'.

Whilst the festival enjoys a good reputation locally, it is still proving difficult to attract well-known names to give talks or attend launches. Attempts at inviting BBC radio 4 programmes to do live recordings at local venues such as Dorking Halls has been unsuccessful so far but the committee feels the BBC is worth pursuing for the tenth anniversary year. ***The festival committee is also committed to finding a big name celebrity or arts company to raise the profile of the festival and to attract national press attention.***

The festival is co-ordinated and promoted by a small team of officers, volunteers and councillors who are likely to be placed under more strain next year due to the festival celebrating its tenth birthday. ***Gaining an additional member to the organising with fundraising expertise and good business contacts would be an advantage in attracting more funding for the festival.***

Outcomes of Arts Alive 2005

For the first time in its history, Arts Alive took place throughout the entire month of October so that it could accommodate the many activities and events taking place. This was used to good effect as an angle for the local press to report. The extra two weeks did not significantly stretch the organisation of the festival but the additional events in the programme did increase the cost of printing and mailing the brochure. ***In 2006 the festival will be held throughout the month of October.***

There were 87 events this year compared to 57 the previous year. Taking into account the run of exhibitions and performances, this amounted to 248 opportunities for the public to either see or take part in arts events, which averages out as eight activities per a day. The festival presented a wide range of art forms including music, drama, visual arts and crafts, photography, participatory activities and talks.

The total attendance at events was 19'262 and 1350 people participated as performers, exhibitors or facilitators. The average audience size was 225 people per an event. In addition to the many people who directly took part 382 volunteers helped organise events behind the scenes.

124 people returned audience evaluation cards, which is less than last year despite their being more events. The audience evaluation cards indicate that the public is highly satisfied with the quality of festival events. 76 percent of responders have rated events as excellent and 24 percent have rated them as good. The range of positive comments on the cards reflects an overall level of high satisfaction. The following are examples from a full list of quotes on page 7; 'Congratulations on the comprehensive programme; looking forward to 10th year', 'Festival gets better and better – arts being developed well in Mole Valley', 'Came over from Reigate most weeks – Dorking best!' and 'Very stimulating programme of events. Many thanks'.

For the majority of community and professionally based arts groups in the District, Arts Alive plays a very important role in profiling their work, as it enables it to reach a wider audience base. Several event organisers commented that their groups had gained increased credibility through the positive association with a well-regarded festival name. They also appreciated being part of a wider network of artists and arts organisations as this helps to create a positive environment for testing new ground.

In addition to achieving cultural aims the festival makes a direct contribution to the delivery of the Council priorities by providing an extensive range of activities for and by young people. Over 1000 young people benefited from school workshops, 80 participated in the half term taster sessions, and a total of 3592 either took part in or attended youth events such as the Youth Voice Band Night.

The festival also has an impact on the local economy for example 44 percent of the people who completed audience evaluation cards either visited a café or bar, paid for car parking, stayed in overnight accommodation or combined going to Arts Alive with a visit to a local amenity.

The festival invests in individuals by encouraging people to participate in events that aid personal development, lifelong learning and skill development. It also promotes social cohesion by bringing communities together. For example Leigh Village Hall hosted a performance by Third Space, a professional touring theatre company which creates work for village halls. The performance was a sell out due to the hard work of a local promoter who ensured that people from the village knew about and supported

the event. The village hall committee was so pleased with the event that they would like to hold regular film screenings and performances.

The Literature Programme

The literature programme was relatively successful this year. It featured a local writer, three biographers, three creative writing workshops, including one by the well known scriptwriter Simon Brett, three poetry events and a schools programme built around the 200th anniversary of the birth of Hans Christian Anderson.

The biographer events were well attended; (38 for Mr Disraeli's Rattle, 19 for Pope John Paul II, 45 for Picasso's Guernica and 75 for Madame de Stael). The poetry events were also relatively successful but the creative writing workshops did not attract as many participants as the organisers would have liked (9 for Simon Brett and the Mole Valley Poets cancelled a workshop with Marie Ann Fife).

The literature programme would benefit from having a tighter focus and a well-known name from the literary world.

Young People's Events

2006 was our most successful attempt at co-ordinating a dedicated programme of youth arts events both in-and-outside of formal education.

This year our artist-in-residence was Lisa Boyce, a local resident who for many years was an art director at Walkers Books where she designed pop up books for children. Lisa visited nine schools where she combined a talk about the process of making and illustrating children's books with a workshop in book making and pop-ups. The teachers at the schools gave very positive feedback about Lisa's visits; they felt that the children benefited from a 'real' artist bringing a wealth of ideas and knowledge into the classroom, which gave the children a view of books they didn't have before. Several schools were also celebrating book week, so the workshops and talks were highly relevant to them.

In addition to Lisa's visits, Alan Durant worked with small groups of boys at The Priory and Therfield School to encourage and motivate them with their creative writing skills. Alan is a well-published writer of teenage fiction who has written a popular series of books on football.

Sal Yusuf, a storyteller and puppeteer spent two days at Newdigate Infant and St Michael's First school where he facilitated shadow puppetry performances involving the whole school retelling Hans Christian Anderson stories. The storyteller, Mr Tallstory also visited Leatherhead library and St Paul's school to teach the children about Hans Christian Anderson, who is the subject of a national celebration to mark the 200th anniversary of his birth.

In total, artists and writers visited fourteen schools and worked with 1000 children and young people in educational settings. Giving schools the opportunity to book artists at discounted rates appears to be the most effective way of encouraging them to take part in the festival.

A successful 'Awards for All' application enabled the committee to put together a programme of youth arts taster sessions in the half term, utilising youth facilities around the District. The programme included cartoon drawing at The Theatre, Animation modelling at B Free Youth Café, fashion at The Bridge and hip-hop dance at Dorking Sports Centre. The funding also paid for the commissioning of a graffiti artist to work with hard to reach young people at The Bridge Youth Club. The taster sessions were very popular and encouraged 80 young people to expand their creative skills.

As well as the activities organised by the committee, community art groups put on a wide range of events that appealed to young people:

Jurassic to Jazz – the evolution of brass
The Point – performance with a children's choir
I Spy - walk for children
DAPA – dance and drama workshops
Pictures from Palestine – exhibition of artwork by young people from Palestine
Youth Voice band night
Applause Youth Theatre
Band Nite at B Free Café
The Family Brass
I'm telling you they're Aliens - play

In total, approximately 3592 young people benefited from Arts Alive.

Marketing and Publicity

£5961 was spent on marketing and publicity, which is a saving of £1358 compared with last year. This was mainly due to a reduction in the print run of brochures from 30,000 to 20,000. Making a PDF poster template available on the Council website for the community groups to download and insert their own event details created further savings. As did working with the in-house graphics department at KBR who designed the youth flyer, literature flyer, banner graphic and posters in-kind.

The marketing budget was spent on:

- 20,000 full colour brochures
- 5000 literature event flyers
- 5000 youth arts flyers
- 2 free standing banners
- 8 roadside banners including 1 over Dorking High Street
- brochure distribution and mailing
- audience evaluation card

Arts Alive received more exposure in the press this year especially in the months leading up to the festival. A press release emphasising the size and scale of the festival was particularly effective and there was excellent photo coverage of the youth events throughout the month. The Guide entertainment supplement continues to be very supportive, dedicating a page for weekly event listings. BBC Southern Counties Radio aired a live telephone interview and one of the artists in the festival was a featured guest on National Poetry Day. ***In 2006 we need to focus our energy on the creation of a more attention-grabbing launch to attract more press coverage.***

The postage of an individual brochure exceeded the cost of a 1st class stamp, which several groups doing large mail outs objected to, preferring to have sent out a generic flyer with their own event flyer.

Sponsorship

KBR reduced its sponsorship of the festival from £5000 to £2000, which was a considerable set back. However the company maintained its interest in the festival and the Communications Manager attended the launch event whilst KBR staff attended the Dorking Prom and Red Army Dance Ensemble. The in-kind support offered by the KBR graphics department helped reduce our marketing and design costs. ***A summary of this report has been sent to the Communications Manager and a meeting should be set up in the early New Year to ascertain whether KBR will sponsor the festival in 2006.***

Attracting more sponsorship is a major challenge for 2006 and the 10th anniversary will be used as a unique selling point to get local businesses on board. ***A list of local companies that were established 10 years has been obtained from Arts & Business and they will be the first to be targeted for sponsorship.***

Audience Evaluation

124 audience evaluation cards were returned which is less than one % return rate. The evaluation cards were handed out at festival events and returned by free post and the schools and youth work was evaluated separately.

Audience profile

Gender

67% female
29% male
4% no answer

Disability

5% of respondents have a disability

Ethnicity

90% of responders were British
2 responders were French
1 responder was Danish
1 was Japanese
1 was Caribbean
7 responders did not answer our questions about race.

Age

2% under 25 years
22% 25 to 45 years
34% 46 to 60 years

45% 60 years and over

Quality of programming and events

87% of the responders attended one event
4% of the responders attended two events
9% of the responders attended three events or more

The evaluation cards confirm the continually high standard of Arts Alive events. Customer satisfaction was very high. Most events were rated as excellent by responders (76%); a further 24% were rated as good. Two people found an event average and one person found an event disappointing.

Reasons for attending

42% of responders were attending Arts Alive for the first time. This indicates that while established audiences remain loyal, the festival continues to reach greater numbers of people.

Of the 124 audience members who returned evaluation cards:

36% attended because of a connection with the artist or organisation
33% attended because they simply wanted to be entertained. These responses mainly referred to dance, music, and theatre events
31% attended as a social outing with friends
26% attended events because they were curious. These mainly referred to exhibitions, talks, and literary events
12% attended for reasons of personal development. These mainly referred to workshops and literary events
9% attended as something to do with the family
3% attended because they were on holiday or visiting for the day

*People gave multiple reasons for attending particularly if they attended more than one event.

Marketing and publicity

The majority of people found out about Arts Alive by picking up or receiving a brochure 35% or through word of mouth 25%.

16% saw a poster or leaflet about an event
10% saw adverts or posters
9% read about it in the local press
4% saw publicity by Leatherhead Theatre

Contribution to the local economy

44% of responders contributed to the local economy

25% combined going to Arts Alive with a visit to a café/bar
9% paid for car parking
8% combined going to Arts Alive with a visit to a local facility e.g. sports centre
2% stayed in local visitor accommodation
3% did two or more of these

Quality and satisfaction levels

Congratulations on the comprehensive programme; look forward to 10th year.
Please visit more often
Excellent evening for the village – really good (Leigh Born to Run)
Very good acting and scenery (Born to Run)
Exhibition – Afoot and Light Hearted, beautiful pictures badly displayed on side of bookcases from top to floor level, unable to view pictures properly, nor read the text which was about waist level.
I am interested in all forms of cultural events thanks.
Festival gets better and better – arts being developed well in mole valley. Literature weakest – need less specialised writing workshops and better known writers/novelists speaking. Spread of four weeks better than two – can get to more things.
Came over from Reigate most weeks – Dorking best!
As many classical music concerts as possible!
Please can we have some arty films/talks (cultural) at Dorking Halls?
More of the same
Excellent idea
I hope we will see more production here in Leigh (Born to Run)
More in villages away from town centres
Extra performance as sold out (Born to Run)
The Madame de Stael session was frankly not worth £6, albeit informative, could also have done without tea.
Very good initiative – keep going in future years
More classical music please
Not aware of Arts Alive (Dorking group of artists' exhibition)
This was a really enjoyable exhibition (Dorking group of artists' exhibition)
Next year plug it more
More please
Very stimulating programme of events. Many thanks.
I am sorry that "Anderson for Adults" was cancelled
It is good
It's a good idea – wish I could attend more events

Event Organisers' Evaluation

18 event organisers returned evaluation questionnaires, of which 13 had received a festival grant with the majority of monies being spent on materials, publicity, or venue.

The event organisers were asked to rate the festival team for the communication and promotion of the festival as well as the help and advice they offered organisers.

Communication:	72% excellent 24% good 6% satisfactory 0% poor
Promotion:	39% excellent 39% good 11% satisfactory 5.5% poor

5.5% not rated

Helpfulness: 72% excellent
24% good
6% satisfactory
0% poor

83% of organisers raised more income than they had expected or met their targets

The majority of audiences came from within Mole Valley

95% of organisers felt that their event had been successful due to high attendance, positive feedback from audiences and the high artistic integrity of their events

Organisers made positive comments on the benefits of participating in Arts Alive. The main benefits they saw were:

Wider publicity

Financial support to do something different

Increased credibility through positive association with the festival

Publicity for the organisation beyond the festival; increase in membership

Building up a performance portfolio with a well-regarded festival name

Being part of a network of wider arts events

A good, positive atmosphere

Establishing contacts with other artists through the arts development officer

The capacity to test new ground

Encouragement

Issues connected with putting on a public event:

Amnesty International and Dorking Concertgoers felt that clashes with other events in the festival may have decreased their audience sizes.

The Mole Valley Poets were unable to attract enough people for creative writing workshop and had to pay a cancellation fee

The Leigh Village Hall committee found the procedure of obtaining a public entertainment license lengthy and off putting

The Freewheelers found seating hire expensive. Our grant covered some of the cost, and they made no loss but no profit. They have since made a contact with a school providing cheap seating hire, which means that they will not face this problem in later years.

When asked which art forms organisers would like to see more of in the festival the response was:

Flower arrangements should be used as backdrops to enhance festival events.

Urban music and arts

Art films - comedy - song and dance - in village halls

Theatre workshops, 'getting more from your digital camera or camcorder', classical or silent films, a musical or operetta from scratch.

The festival team attended, and reported on the resoundingly high quality of many of the events. There was widespread consensus that the events were well organised and successful.

Table of event attendance

Event	Volunteers	Participants	Audience
M.V Poets poetry pub	2	20	34
Amnesty 'Light a Candle'	4	14	130
Surrey Figurative Artists	2	17	15
Vivaldi by Candlelight	1	60	360
Simon Brett Scriptwriting	1	1	9
Born to Run	3	3	90
Pictures from Palestine	3	18	15
Jurassic to Jazz	1	5	120
The Point	2	16	140
Samuri	2	16	100
Storytelling Open Workshop	8-10	9	3
Dorking Group of Artists Exhibition	4	55	3000
The Poet and the Harp	0	2	30
'Enchanted'	2	2	3000
'Jam-Packed Berth Place'	2	2	3000
Penny Readings	1	6	50
Pearls for 'earring	14	5	450
Music Hall Memories	2	1	20
Antti Siirala Piano Recital	12	1	173
Faith in Creation	10	15	300
I Spy Local Churches	6	1	20
The Voice of Melody	6	10	80
Noises Off	51	10	581
Nomad Workshop	3	1	16
Star Inn Poetry Night	2	12-14	40
Shed Art 'Imagine'	2	58	100
Studio RT	3	3	Under 100
Mr Disraeli's 'Rattle'	1	1	38
Anderson for Adults	Cancelled	-	-
Dorking Prom	10	40	320
Cabaret at The Star	2	14	50
Combined Choirs	10-20	70-80	150-200
Cultural Quiz at The Star	1	2	24
Universal Father	2	1	20
Les Barker	6	1	32
Light a Candle	4	14	130
Afoot and Light Hearted	3	1	Library had 5-600 each day
Colour Colour	2	3	250
Jam Packed Berth Place	2	1	3000
Enchanted	2	1	3000
St John's Lunchtime recital	1	8	25
Peter Spence	5	1	153
Orchestral Workshop	5	76	96

Sensation	4	6	Workshop 20 Service 70
Animation		1	34
Cartoon Workshop		1	12
Customise your Clothes	2	1	8
Dance Workshop	0	1	18
Wayward Council	2	3	60
Picasso's Guernica	1	1	45
Born to Run	3	3	90
Red Army		40	461
My Heart is Rent	12	40	130
DAPA	2	2	48
MV Silver Brass	3	54	196
Pictures from Palestine	3	18	90
Youth Music Band Night	5	25	470
Moles Storytelling	9	9	3
Jamie Munroe	2	1	30
John Renbourn	8	1	116
Annie Caulfield	Cancelled	-	-
Rachmaninov	22	21	120
Madame se Stael	1	1	65
Applause	3	21	125
FOSPAL lecture	3	1	48
Band Nite at B Free	5	16	80
Harvest	15	350	500?
The Family Brass	5	30	120
Alan Barnes	5	5	122
Dave Newton	5	3	
I'm Telling you.... Aliens	3	5	450
Voulez Vous	2	4	380
Shirley Valentine	11	1	509
Art in Myriad forms	3	15	32
Open Day at The Grange	12	20	400
Le Roc	5	6	190
50's Showtime	15	28	240

Arts Alive 2005 Financial Statement

Confirmed income

MVDC	10,000
Arts Forum	2,500
Awards for All	2,200

KBR	2,000
Advertising	500
School workshops	1,100
Ticket sales	684
Youth workshops	348
TOTAL	19,332

Expenditure

Marketing (including design & print)	5,961
Arts grants	3,500
Schools workshops	2415
Youth workshops	2383
Literature	1279
Hospitality	736
Evaluation cards	150
Miscellaneous	80
Distribution?	
TOTAL	16,504

Conclusions and recommendations

Approximately 19,500 people attended Arts Alive 2005

Approximately 1,350 people contributed to or participated in events

The average audience size was 225

Approximately 3,500 young people benefited from Arts Alive

The 87 events were constituted of 248 opportunities for the public to see or take part in events, which averages out as 8 per each day of the festival

382 volunteers were involved behind the scenes in addition to those performing or exhibiting

76 percent of people who completed audience response cards rated events as excellent and 22 percent rated events as good

42 percent of people who completed the audience response cards were attending Arts Alive 2005 for the first time

44 percent of people who completed the audience response cards contributed to the local economy

95 percent of event organisers rated their events as successful stating the benefits of participating as wider publicity, increased credibility and public awareness, increased membership, encouragement and funding to try out something new, networking and being linked to a well regarded festival

The festival came within budget

To celebrate the 10th anniversary of Arts Alive, the organising committee will

- attempt to attract additional sponsorship and public funding to maximise the budget
- attempt to attract a well-known celebrity or guest speaker to attract national press
- continue to pursue BBC for live recordings of Radio 4 programmes
- tighten the focus of the literature programme and include at least one well-known figure from the literary world
- create a more headline grabbing launch
- continue to develop the youth arts programme
- consider a special 10th anniversary marketing campaign

Arts Alive 2005

Evaluation Report

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