MOLE VALLEY ARTS ALIVE FESTIVAL

REPORT 2018
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The 22nd Mole Valley Arts Alive Festival 2018 was a great success, with over 500 artists and creative performers based in Mole Valley entertaining approximately 20,500 visitors. The festival attracted visitors from Surrey, Sussex and the wider South East community to free or low cost events showcasing music, drama, craft, theatre, poetry, painting, creative writing and horticulture. As one participant commented, “hundreds entertained thousands... an electric ripple from end to end.”

The 97 events held over the three month Pre-Festival, Festival, and Festival Extras period – 9th Sept to 9th Dec 2018 – were all rated “excellent” or “good” by 99% of participants. Visitors reported a high level of satisfaction with the venues.

Events included craft shows, folk club evenings, a repertory theatre season, a multi-sensory pantomime aimed at children and young people with SEND, recitals by professional young musicians, five choral concerts and three events to commemorate the centenary of the end of WW1 as well as a children’s horticultural show and town centre celebrations incorporating street performers and food stalls.

A number of events gave participants the opportunity to ‘have a go’ and create for themselves, or watch an artist perform their craft. Participants who found one music recital “difficult” or “not my cup of tea” nevertheless rated the events highly and stated a high level of satisfaction with their experience.
Every age group was represented and catered for. There were four well attended and moving events celebrating the creative talents of groups serving those affected by disability, SEND or homelessness, and eight events were specifically aimed at young children and families. Feedback forms complimented events on their “very friendly atmosphere”.

A significant number of people attending events did not realise the event was part of the Arts Alive Festival (40%). Next year we will work on increasing awareness of the event, and creating a stronger brand identity.

There is an economic benefit to the festival. Out of the 417 feedback forms we received, 253 people had visited a café, restaurant or bar, taken a taxi, or visited a shop as part of their trip. Proportioned out, this would equate to over 12,000 economic transactions due to the festival.
AIMS AND INTRODUCTION

Aims

The purpose of this report is to:

- Celebrate and evaluate the successes of the 2018 Mole Valley Arts Alive Festival.
- Review the evaluations from the audience and organisers.
- Provide recommendations for the 2019 festival.

Introduction

The Mole Valley Arts Alive Festival is now in its 22nd year as one of the largest community arts festivals in the South East of England, and takes place in October. It comprises a programme of events including contemporary and classical music, theatre, poetry, creative writing, dance, the visual arts, creative textiles, sculpture and horticulture, with events for all age groups. The festival works by collating, publishing and promoting free and ticketed events put forward by individual and group artists and theatre companies, who pay a small charge per event (£20) for inclusion in the programme. Groups participating include music groups, choral societies, drama groups, textile craft groups, film clubs, children’s and adults’ theatre companies, creative writers and support service organisations showcasing artistic output. Groups are able to apply for a grant from the festival committee in order to help with their running costs. Venues range from pubs, church halls and chapels to Mole Valley’s two theatres. Mole Valley itself is the third largest district of Surrey by area - stretching from Ashtead, Leatherhead, Fetcham and Bookham in the North through Dorking down to Hookwood in the South, and incorporating rural villages such as Abinger, Brockham, Betchworth, Buckland, Boxhill, Capel, Westcott, Westhumble, Leigh and Newdigate, although the majority of the events take place in the two largest towns, Leatherhead and Dorking.

The festival is run by the Arts Alive Committee which has 10 members, and is chaired by Cllr Mary Huggins. It is funded by event fees, sponsorship and an annual grant from Mole Valley District Council, whose Arts and Communities Officer sits on the committee.
This year was another success for the festival committee, with approximately 20,500 participants attending 96 events across a three month period from 9th September to 9th December 2018. These events included two creative celebration promotion days of live music, street performers and balloons (in Leatherhead and Dorking town centres), a formal Launch evening at the Yehudi Menuhin School, and a finale event in the Show Bar at Dorking Halls, attended by the committee, event holders and friends of the festival, in which we enjoyed a light buffet and shared experiences and feedback.

Our patron this year was Rowan Coleman, author of 16 novels, including The Memory Book which was a Sunday Times bestseller and The Summer of Impossible Things, which was one of Zoe Ball’s Book Club selections.

The last patron was a painter, and before that an actor, so a patron with a literary art form provided a good balance.

We saw a new brochure format in the form of a slightly larger than A5 magazine, giving event listings, including a new events index, “Pre-season” events and “Festival Extra” events. For the first time, the magazine contained paid advertising, which was a welcome contribution to festival funds.

Due to a change in the application process for sponsorship funds for Gatwick Airport, who had sponsored Arts Alive 2017, there was no sponsor.

Although the Festival traditionally takes place in October, due to some events occurring outside of the festival period, this year’s event was divided into three parts – Pre-Festival, Festival and Festival Extras – so was held over three months, with the first on 9th September and the last on 9th December 2018.

The festival brochure, renamed the magazine, was overseen by committee member Peter Steadman, and produced by Vantage Media. It was supported by a new website www.arts-alive.co.uk which was created by the Communications Team at Mole Valley District Council.
EVENT SUMMARY

The first event was Pippfest on 9th September, which attracted 2000 attendees to Pippbrook House Grounds to enjoy live local music, an artists’ colony, craft stalls and food stalls, and the last event was Head2Head Theatre’s interactive and multi sensory pantomime “Snow White” which attracted 96 children/young people with SEND and their families/carers, and took place on 9th December.

The 100 year centenary of WW1 in November allowed us to include two events to commemorate the anniversary of Armistice Day – a Leatherhead town centre event of live music, singing and shows on 3rd November, which attracted over 1000 visitors, and “We will Remember Them,” Dorking Choral Society’s performance of Mozart’s Requiem with full orchestra, soloists and chorus, as well as WW1 poetry and music, which saw 530 people in St Martin’s Church Dorking for a truly moving evening.

The Hannah Peschar Sculpture Garden Trail on 26th September organised by MVDC’s Walk for Health co-ordinator Estelle Holmes was a free event enjoyed by all who participated, and was enhanced by excellent weather. Several of the participants had never visited the sculpture garden before.

Art for Amber, also at Ockley, showcased the creativity of young homeless people in an uplifting and memorable outside event of artwork, poetry, music and installations. Dorking Allotment Holders’ Association’s Pumpkin and Squash Show, a horticultural show aimed at families, attracted more than 350 visitors.
Literary events

We had eight popular literary events this year. Author Elizabeth Galvin’s spoke engagingly at Barton’s independent bookshop in Leatherhead on the Extraordinary Life of E Nesbit, Gigi Aboud and the Phoenix Writers’ Circle shared creative writing tips and work on 19th and 25th October respectively, and there was poetry from the Sofa Poets (8th October), Well Versed Poetry Reading Group (8th October) and Mole Valley Poets at their ‘Poetry Pub’ on 15th October. Local author Alison Jesson put forward a workshop on Writing your Family History’ although this was cancelled due to illness.

On 11 October the CEO of BAFTA, Jane Lythell, offered a ‘wine and chat’ event at Denbies Wine Estate. ‘Novel Harvest’ offered an opportunity to hear about ‘Behind Her Back’, an insight into women’s struggles in the media world.
Music

World class music was performed at the popular ‘Music on Thursdays’ Leatherhead lunchtime concerts, which incorporated performances from concert organist Hannah Parry, young Jazz pianist Elliott Galvin and talented bass baritone Samuel Lom. Dorking Folk Club’s evening sessions included an evening with Stephen Fearing, and an evening of English traditional music and song with Mary Humphries and Anahata. On 25th November, soprano Alice Bishop and pianist Simon Marlow performed ‘Songs of the Mediterranean’ to an audience of 40.

Big sounds came from Mole Valley Silver Band and Horsham Borough Band (28th October) and Mole Veterans Brass Band (9th October) whilst musicians could turn up to a “Come and Play” session with Surrey Philharmonic Orchestra (2nd October). St Martin’s Church Dorking hosted not just “We Will Remember Them” but a Music at Midday event with organist Paul Gobey (6th October).

Choral Societies put on four events – Leatherhead’s inclusive All Aloud Community Choir arranged an excellent vocal workshop with Linda Glenn on 27 October, and The Leith Hill Music Festival arranged for non-LHMF members to sing Haydn’s ‘The Creation’ at Dorking Halls on 13th October. On 17 November, Leatherhead and St John’s Choral societies came together to sing Handel’s “Israel in Egypt” to an audience of 126 in the magnificent surroundings of St John’s School chapel, Leatherhead. 1st December saw Brockham Choral Society perform “A Celebration of Christmas Music” to an audience of 208 concertgoers.

On 13 October, over 90 ticket holders enjoyed Dorking Chamber Orchestra perform works by Beethoven and Haydn, to celebrate 30 years of the DCO.

On 12th October, French trio Entre Nous performed at ‘The Dozen’, Dorking’s White Horse Hotel’s restaurant, and Phil Dyson played piano at a fundraising concert at Leatherhead Theatre. The night before, Dorking Halls hosted “From The Jam” – a band comprising members including Bruce Foxton, bassist of The Jam, performing The Jam’s studio album “All Mod Cons,” which sold 572 tickets, generating over £14,000 in ticket sales.
This year, we were delighted to have Leatherhead Rep perform a programme of three plays at Leatherhead Theatre: Waiting for God, The Railway Children and Alan Ayckbourn’s Season’s Greetings. Each show ran for six performances between 6th-24th November and the season was attended by over 1000 people. This was preceded by an Open Rehearsal for ‘Waiting for God’ on 30th October, a unique opportunity to watch a professional company of actors at work and have a first glance at the show that will be opening the following week.

Also at Leatherhead Theatre on 9th October was a live broadcast from London’s West End Vaudeville Theatre of “The Importance of Being Ernest.”

On 24th and 25th October, Damn Cheek Productions in association with Enter Stage Right put on “Sex is Another Language” a solo performance by Claire Malcomson on the life and loves of Elizabeth Taylor. 56 tickets were sold for the performance at The Stepping Stones pub in Westhumble. It was a good example of how theatrical performances can work outside of a theatre environment.

On 9th December Head2Head Theatre performed the pantomine “Snow White.”

From 25th-27th October, Bookham Light Operatic Society performed a fully-staged and costumed production of Gilbert and Sullivan’s “The Gondoliers” at Fetcham Village Hall, which was watched by 245 festival visitors. Ashtead Players’ own five performances of Arnold Ridley’s “The Ghost Train” which took place during the week of 21st November had an audience of over 100.
Dance

The Rampant Roosters Morris Dancers danced for the festival celebration day in Dorking on 2nd September, and were well received. Their event on 4th November celebrating the end of the summer dance season in Brockham attracted an audience of 60. The Le Roc Modern Jive Company, run by Colin Shaul, listed 5 events in the festival, at Dorking Halls and Ashtead Peace Memorial Hall, including a Black and White Ball on 27th October. No data is available yet as to visitor numbers.

Painting and Craft

We were delighted to have two talented professional artists in the Festival this year - Brett Lohn’s exhibition “The Secret Place” at Denbies Wine Estate ran from 1-7th October and attracted between 800-1000 visitors, whilst Tiffany Budd’s exhibition at Leatherhead Theatre resulted in a number of sales and commissions. Tiffany also exhibited Harry the Calf – a lifesize calf decorated and auctioned for charity, raising over £2,500. The calf went on tour, spending time outside Leatherhead Theatre and in the reception area of the main council offices at Pippbrook, Dorking.

Mole Valley and Dorking Quilters Groups staged an exhibition of both traditional and contemporary patchwork and quilting as well as textile art, at St Nicholas’ Church Great Bookham for the weekend of 5-6th October. No visitor numbers are available at time of writing.

Surrey Hills Artists Exhibition was held from the 15-28th October and saw visitor numbers of over 1400, whilst Leatherhead Art Club Autumn Exhibition from 20th-28th October saw a wide range of paintings for sale at affordable prices. East Surrey Guild of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers showed a wide range of craft and fibre creations at their Open Day on 20th October. There was also an opportunity for visitors to “have a go” and create for themselves in a supportive environment. ShedArt put on a weekend event on 26-27th October showcasing affordable artwork including stained glass, stitch art and cards. 95 people attended and enjoyed mince pies and mulled wine. North Weald Art Group held their Annual Autumn Exhibition between 13-25 November, attracting 1400 visitors at Denbies Art Gallery.
Film

Film Night 2018 from Freewheelers Theatre and Media attracted 94 visitors and showcased the work of this Mole Valley group who also performed at our Dorking Celebration Day on 22nd September.

Over the course of the festival, Dorking Halls and Leatherhead theatre showed a number of performances within the festival including The George Michael Story, Swan Lake by the Russian National Ballet, The Close up Show and Jamie Raven (both magic), a tribute to Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons, Cliff Richard Live (screen), The Bootleg Beatles, The Goon Show, which is the first major theatrical production of the show in its history, Sons of Pitches, The Bob Dylan Story, Screaming Blue Murder Comedy Club, You Win Again and Dirty DC.
This year saw us build on a commitment to provide more events for children and families. 350 people visited our flagship festival children’s event - the unique and amazing Mole Valley Squash and Pumpkin Show, held by Dorking Allotment Holders Association. This offers a fun alternative to the usual horticultural shows, with children’s activities, primary school participation and arts and crafts using the medium of pumpkins, squashes and gourds, and took place at St Martin’s Christian Centre in Dorking on Saturday 13th October. This number was down on previous years, but still impressive.

Leatherhead and Dorking town centres hosted three events in the towns for young visitors to enjoy. From 20th-28th October the free event Dorkers’ Spooktacular Halloween Hunt’ took place around Dorking High Street, attracting 280 participants who had to find spooky Halloween characters hidden in shop windows. 31st October saw Leatherhead’s popular “Halloween Night around the Town” organised by the Swan Centre, where over 1000 children and families enjoyed free entertainment in the town centre including street performers, a mini train, magic shows and food stalls. 1st December saw Leatherhead high street transformed into Narnia, which attracted over 1000 shoppers. 30 x 6-14 year olds attended a drama workshop provided by Dorking School of Performing Arts on 23rd October, whilst Dorking Halls sold 861 tickets to the smash hit family show “The Tiger who Came to Tea” based on the classic children’s book.
Dandelion Theatre Arts ran a two day workshop on 25th and 26th October with children learning a selection of songs and dances of the hit musical “Wicked.” Young people were attracted to “Chasing the Dream – The Reboot” at Leatherhead Theatre on 24th October, where Britain’s Got Talent dance troupe “Flawless” performed a high energy family show.

Head2Head Theatre’s adaptation of the pantomime “Snow White” for children and young people with SEND was held on 9th December at The Dawnay Primary School in Bookham and attracted an audience of 96. The performance was held in a “sensory room” and included Makaton signing and voice output communication aids to make it suitable for children affected by PMLD, ASD, SLD, VI, HI and complex health needs. This represented an event some time outside our preferred working season for the festival, but was included as it epitomises Arts Alive’s commitment to Art as a fully inclusive experience.
BROCHURE, VIDEO, LAUNCH, CREATIVE CELEBRATIONS AND FINALE

Brochure

This year saw a new format brochure – slightly larger than A5 and thinner paper so it could be folded up and put in a pocket. It was renamed “magazine” and used Ellie Hammett’s 2017 design on the front cover, as well as details of the Creative Celebrations, and the website addresses.

The magazine had a print run of 20,000 with two thirds passed to a print distributor – Harry Lamb – covering retail outlets and public venues across Mole Valley, and the remainder available at the council offices, public libraries, leisure centres and the two theatres. Committee members also handed the magazines out to commuters returning to local stations on three evenings in September.

The online copy of the magazine, available at issuu.co, was viewed 4161 times, with an average of three minutes twenty seconds spent on each visit. In addition, the Communications team at MVDC redesigned the Arts Alive Festival website – www.arts-alive.co.uk – with more images, and populated it with the event listings.

Promotional Video

This year we showcased local talent from the festival’s events by inviting participants to the Martineau Hall at Dorking Halls, to perform, and be interviewed on the questions – “What is Art?” and “What Does Art Mean to You?” There was music from the Amber Foundation, The Rampant Roosters danced, and committee member Richard Woodman promoted the Pumpkin and Squash Show. The video has had 61 YouTube views as at 20th Jan 2019. We shared it on social media and with all event holders.
Launch Party

Our annual launch party took place in the Yehudi Menuhin School, a regular supporter and promoter of the festival. The programme included the premiere of the Arts Alive promotional video, and two accomplished young musicians from the School performed three pieces each. Due to illness the Patron Rowan Coleman did not attend, so Peter Snell of Barton’s Bookshop in Leatherhead stepped in at very short notice and gave a memorable speech on Rowan’s latest novel. Mary Huggins, Chairman of Arts Alive, gave an excellent speech after which Cllr Raj Patel, Chairman of MVDC, declared the festival officially open. The party was also attended by the CEO of MVDC, Karen Brimacombe, and the Head of YM School, Kate Clanchy, who declared an interest in YM school playing a wider role in the Festival.

All event holders, MVDC Members and key festival supporters were invited as well as the Wellbeing team at MVDC, and the audience was in the region of 100.

Dorking and Leatherhead Creative Celebrations

The Creative Celebrations returned to Dorking and Leatherhead town centres to entertain all ages, give local acts an opportunity to showcase their talent and raise awareness of the festival.

The events featured face painting, a street performer, balloons and a range of different acts. The varied line-up featured Leatherhead Theatre, Charlie Taylor, Izzy Baker, Bloco-do-sul, Rampant Roosters, Freewheelers, Objayda, All Aloud Choir, Downsmen, High 5 Salsa, Izzy Croft-Smith, Emyr Thomas and Graham Russ. A full outdoor rig was supplied by each town’s theatre.

The event was well attended in Leatherhead Swan Centre, with numerous people stopping to listen. However, it rained quite heavily at the Dorking event so there were very few people except for those connected to one of the acts. At each event, balloons and the Arts Alive magazine were given out.
A Grand Finale event was planned at Dorking Halls showcasing festival acts for 2nd November, with tickets priced between £5-£10. However by 10th October, only 6 tickets had been sold, and there was some negative feedback from groups that there was a cost to the event for their supporters. The decision was made to cancel the event, and instead hold a buffet and drinks in the Show Bar. All participants and friends were invited and we enjoyed a good buffet with a pay bar. We had some valuable and constructive feedback about the festival (see recommendations).
THE NUMBERS

Approximately 20,500 visits were made to the 96 diverse creative events hosted by the Mole Valley community. This is slightly up on last year’s number of 17,000, although it should be noted that a number of events submitted very high visitor numbers based on ‘clicker’ data, which is not always reliable, due to people walking around and activating the clicker more than once, and a significant number of participants attended more than one event; for instance, members of Dorking Folk Club were likely to have attended all or most of the five events put on by the club over the duration of the festival.

We received 417 audience evaluation forms from 93 events which is down on 530 last year’s figure. This represented only 1/50th of the visitors, so it is very much a snapshot of a few events.

The questions were amended this year, to further break down the age brackets, and ask what people would like to see at next year’s festival.
Here is a breakdown of information given on the 417 forms:

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| Gender | Male | 34% | Female | 64% | Not specified | 3% |

99% of respondents thought that the events they attended were excellent or good, which is the same as last year.
96% of respondents thought their venue was excellent or good; 69% rated it excellent, with 11 respondents marking the venue as average, and only 1 rating it disappointing (Fetcham Guide Hut).

60% of people were aware that the event was part of the Arts Alive Festival, down slightly on 62 in 2017.

In terms of marketing, 55 people knew about it from the Arts Alive magazine, but 138 – the vast majority – heard about the event they attended through means other than the magazine, website or social media. Most of these (47) were via a member or contact through the group performing, and 33 by word of month or friends. Only three people heard about the festival through the banners across Dorking and Leatherhead High Street, which were put up at a substantial cost (£610). 5 heard about it via poster, and 6 from walking past the venue. 2 people booked after seeing an article or advert in the Dorking Challenger or Dorking Advertiser.
The audience comprised mainly Mole Valley residents. People came from across the UK and beyond, although the spread of the feedback forms this year gave a smaller geographical area from last year:

**Mole Valley: 76%**

Includes: Abinger, Ashtead, Beare Green, Bookham, Capel, Dorking, Fetcham, Great Bookham, Headley, Holmwood, Leatherhead, Mickleham, North Holmwood, Pixham, Westcott and Westhumble

**Rest of Surrey: 12%**


**Rest of South East: 10%**

Answers to - “What would you like to see at the festival?”

1. Lots of interaction and different sensory input.
2. All aspects of the Arts, particularly all Music, Dance, Drama & Art.
3. More workshops and community choirs singing.
4. Jazz, classical and anything in between!
5. A wide variety of music genres.
6. More music aimed at getting young people into choirs.
7. More of the same x12!
9. More events for families and teenagers x3.
10. More school involvement.
11. More concerts x2
12. School participation.
14. One or two committee members coming to events!
15. More child based events x2.
17. More artistic entries e.g. textiles
19. Crafts, street food festival.
20. Big folk names at Dorking Halls x2.
21. Products e.g. soup, bread, jam made with pumpkins.
22. More food to try!
23. Other local community events.
24. More drama.
25. More dance x2.
27. More events for young performers.
28. Involvement with twin town’s visitors.
29. Varied events relating to literature & the spoken word.
30. Morris dancing x3.
31. Trad Jazz.
32. More support for Leatherhead Theatre.
33. More music, drama, films x2.
34. More jazz x3.
35. A cup of tea or coffee after events.
36. Short films x2.
37. Plays, author events.
38. More diversity, cultural, disabilities etc x2.
Any other comments:

1. Very friendly atmosphere
2. Well done
3. Great fun, love the different theme each year (Pumpkin Show).
4. Would be welcome to see Arts Alive committee members at events.
5. Great fun, very good teacher (singing workshop) x4.
6. Great performance in a great venue (Israel in Egypt).
7. Hall less than half full – more advertising needed (Israel in Egypt)
8. A great evening and wonderful performance by Claire (Sex is another language) x5.
9. Weather wonderful – an ideal day to see outdoor sculpture (Hannah Peschar Garden Walk) x6.
10. Great concert (Israel in Egypt) x2.
11. Very well constructed – well acted – largely true interesting view.
12. Excellent high quality music gig (Dorking Folk Club).
13. Brilliant and inspirational (Freewheelers film night) x5.
14. Excellent lunch time event – a privilege to be present – yet audience is mainly retired people – something is wrong here.
15. More publicity for festival x3.
16. Enjoy variety of events.
17. A pleasant and well supported evening (Mole Valley Poets) x4.
18. Lovely evening for the whole family (Pumpkin Show).
20. Pleasant morning (Shed Art).
21. Last minute change of venue but the organisers managed to pull it off (All Aloud Workshop).
22. Very enjoyable and informative.
23. Great fun (Poetry Pub).
24. The performers were very nice (Harp / Flute Recital).
25. Lovely production, great opportunity for children to interact with the actors (Snow White).
26. Really enjoyed the show – nice community feel (Pumpkin Show) x4.
27. Just a wonderful evening, I was really moved (Film Night 18).
28. Local Council / Arts Alive to promote events.
29. Keep Music on Thursdays going! Especially the Brass ones.
30. This concert was extremely enjoyable; both musicians were excellent (Lunch time bassoon concert).
31. Thank you! x5
32. Unexpected – sounds I’ve never heard before from a piano (Elliot Galvin).
33. Interesting music outside of the box.
34. Unique – completely different from past experience (Jazz on Thursday).
35. Always high quality concerts (Music on Thursdays).
36. A very varied programme (Music on Thursdays).
CONCLUSION

The 22nd Mole Valley Arts Alive Festival was an excellent showcase for the music, drama, craft, theatre, creative writing and horticulture groups and clubs across Mole Valley, and was well attended and appreciated by event holders and participants alike. 99% of the events were assessed on the feedback form as either good or excellent.

In addition, each age bracket was represented at the festival (although 50% of the 417 participants who completed a feedback form were over 60 years of age).

Visitor numbers submitted by event holders total approx. 20,500 and as such it fully justifies the relatively small financial investment (£5,300) from MVDC to promote a district-wide Festival of the Arts, as part of its wider Art and Wellbeing in the Community remit, under Portfolio Holder Cllr David Hawksworth. The festival committee are to be congratulated on this achievement.

Venues were varied and well received, with very few criticisms and no reported accessibility issues. St John’s Chapel at Leatherhead and Dorking Halls were rated excellent in every one of their feedback forms in terms of venue satisfaction.

There is an economic benefit to the Festival. Feedback forms stated that there were 253 economic transactions in addition to the ticket price (if applicable) for an event – 112 people combined their event participation with a visit to a local café, restaurant or bar (27% of the forms, and everyone attending an event held in a public house) whilst 79 people visited shops or a sports centre whilst on their outing to an event. 43 people paid for parking, whilst 19 used public transport or a taxi (NB a number of people stated that they had visited or used more than one of the above options). No feedback forms declared that they had paid for accommodation during their visit. If this was proportioned out for all visitors to the festival, this would represent over 12,000 economic transactions.

Art was both exhibited and sold, and although it is difficult to capture the full sale value of the festival, just one piece at one event fetched £2,500.
We received a number of positive comments throughout the festival. When asked what they wanted to see more of, 12 people stated, “more of the same” (the most common comment by far), and comments about the high quality of events and ‘well done’ were common. The very friendly atmosphere and welcome at events was another popular comment. Six people wanted “more folk music” and 4 visitors commented that they would have liked a food or drink based element to the event, ranging from a cup of tea or coffee after the event to more street food events.

The boundaries of music were pushed with a number of music recitals held at Leatherhead – Music on Thursdays – one of which generated comments such as “not my cup of tea” or “difficult,” however this shows that “Music on Thursday” is not just churning out a diet of old favourites, but trying new genres. The Freewheelers Theatre Group’s Film Night event was described as “brilliant and inspirational.”

We received a number of grateful communications from event holders who received a grant from the committee for their event. This year, £2,320 was given in grants by the festival committee, from requests totalling £3,471, with the largest being £270 and the smallest £50. This represented less in each case than had been applied for, but reflected this year’s financial position for the committee, as a sponsor had not been procured.

We received very few negative complaints about the festival. One event holder commented that they ran a number of events but did not receive any visits from Committee members, which they would have appreciated, and another thought the magazine was ‘flimsy’ and not sharp enough, although they viewed this as a minor matter.
The promotional video only attracted 63 views on YouTube (as at 25th Jan 2019) so is perhaps not a good investment of time and effort. It may be better to do an “after” festival video, which would form the basis of the subsequent year’s promotion. Despite a few requests, it was difficult getting any video footage from event holders themselves, so this could be done by committee members, subject of course to the normal permissions and appropriateness. It should be noted that due to the new GDPR regulations 2018, where an increased emphasis is put on organisations to request written confirmation to hold or share personal images, it is more problematic to film events, particularly children. We are working on how this affects our output sharing visual images of our festival in action.

Most of the events took place in one of the major towns in the district, Leatherhead or Dorking. These were the best attended as well. Encouraging more events around the smaller villages of the district would be possible, but feedback form evidence showed that there were numerous participants from smaller villages attending events in larger towns without complaint. This is an issue to address as a lower priority.

50% of all event participants were aged 60 or over, with the largest group being 61-80. The next largest age group was 46-60, with over 21% of feedback form completers in this age bracket, although many of these were accompanying children to a children’s event. The festival attracted visitors from EVERY age group (the lowest representation being the 14-18 age range (1 form).

The fact we had visitors from each age bracket represents a good reach.
RECOMMENDATIONS

To maintain the groups already participating for next year – their provision is excellent.

In order to improve on this further, where and when appropriate, we could encourage groups or organisations with 4 or more events in the programme to consider a “flagship event(s)” where they offer an added provision to celebrate the festival. Examples could be: a folk group including “a pie and pint” in the ticket price, another group could include home made food stalls, or find a lighthearted festival theme “pom poms and prosecco,” “linocuts and latte.” This may further increase visitor numbers.

Tighten the festival schedule to the month of October, with agreed exceptions.

This will create more “buzz” around the festival, which is difficult to maintain over three months. 40% of the attendees did not realise the event they were at was part of Arts Alive – a figure similar to past years. We can do this through:

- Increased use of social media and a Festival tag for our Facebook/Snapchat/Instagram
- Financial investment in physical paraphernalia – Festival bunting and fun Instagram frames
- National coverage of the festival - a working group could be set up to research and implement this.
A new more modern logo – to include a children’s version - colours and typeface

To increase the appeal of the listings magazine to a broader audience, the magazine format could be further modernised, with a new logo which can be easily added to event holders’ own promotional material, a star rating for events, flagship events, and an increased emphasis on “trying something new” – an “out of your comfort zone” event. A middle “pull out” section could be included, for all the children’s events. We could consider a festival gold ticket, which entitles holders to attend multiple events with complementary event holders (the financial implications of this would have to be worked out).

To encourage more events for children and young adults. This would be on top of the current provision which is excellent. A group could be established to seek out more groups with provision for children and young people and encourage them to submit an event.

To look for a new format for the Creative Celebration Days

Most of the audience had a connection with one of the acts performing, and the Dorking event was quite impaired by bad weather. Good ideas are the Festival rocks idea, involving uniformed children’s organisations in painting and hiding rocks through the district, all promoting the festival.

To increase advertising in the magazine, and attract higher profile, complementary advertisers. More resource required for approaching local businesses.

Hotels and complementary commercial companies could be asked to give festivalgoers special rates for their products and services by quoting a festival code.

To distribute the magazines far more widely

Our events have national appeal. All “out of area” visitors to the festival rated their experience of the festival extremely highly, but did not pay for accommodation as part of their visit. We can increase tourism and increased economic activity to our beautiful district by distributing the magazine more widely across the UK.

To incorporate locally sourced and appropriate food and drink in events – the fastest growing festival theme of 2018. We have a district ideally suited to this.
THANK YOU!

Huge thanks go to all the Committee members for their hard work and to all of the groups, individuals and businesses that made Arts Alive 2018 such a success. A big thanks to the following organisations:

Committee members:

Mary Huggins
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