



Organised for the community, by the community

POST EVENT REPORT

2018



About Maidenhead Festival



Maidenhead Festival is the biggest, regularly organised, free, public event in Maidenhead and has many benefits for our community, including building community spirit and goodwill. It helps to strengthen the charities and other organisations which take part by providing a platform for publicity, fund raising and recruitment. We also aim to generate footfall for businesses in the town by bringing more people to the centre. In 2017 over 5,000 people came to Maidenhead Festival.

The 2018 Festival took place over 2 days on the 21st and 22nd of July in Kidwells Park and was organised by volunteers from our community. It is a not for profit

organisation and none of the volunteers were paid.

The Results

Yet again we built on the success of previous years, taking onboard feedback from visitors, stallholders and sponsors.

With this in mind we made significant changes to the stage layout, installing a new catwalk section so that performers can connect more with the audience, and to allow us to have an acoustic act perform out front whilst we changed over to a new band behind, increasing the overall number of performers that could entertain the crowds in 2018, at the same time as giving up and coming local artists a greater opportunity to be selected.



It must be said that we were very lucky with the weather and this, along with the increased amount of pre-event publicity we did, we had record numbers attend over the two days. It is predicted that between 12,000-15,000 people from in and around Maidenhead enjoyed the two days of entertainment, an increase of more than 7,000.

Supporting the Voluntary Sector



Maidenhead Festival is incredibly supportive of the Voluntary Sector as the lifeline to our local communities. We want to bring every sector of our communities together so that our society, the families, networks, neighbourhoods and communities that form the fabric of so much of our everyday lives, can be bigger and stronger than ever before.

We achieved this by offering reduced pitch fees to the many local charities and volunteer groups so they can fundraise for

their own charities and recruit volunteers so they can continue the great work they do. A total of 36 voluntary, community and charity groups had stall space at this year's Festival.

Volunteering & Work Experience

We had 9 members of the local public, an increase of 6 compared to last year, volunteer to lend a hand over the 2 days, helping to get stallholders setup, bands setup etc.

We couldn't organise Festival without an army of volunteers to help at the event. Festival isn't just about the 2 days it takes place, we are onsite on Thursday getting suppliers in, on Friday a team of 7 are onsite doing stall markings, getting more suppliers on site etc, Saturday & Sunday are full-on from 6am – 1am, then a small group return 8am on Monday to do a site-wide tidy-up.

On Saturday we had a total of 45 volunteers, adding up to 81.5 hours given in service to the community and on Sunday we had a total of 54 volunteers, adding up to 95 hours.

We were pleased to welcome back the work experience student who supported us backstage last year, to help again this year. He has just completed a BTEC National Diploma in Stage Management and relished the opportunity to work with our team again. Adding to his skill-set working at an outdoor event, being taught about screen displays, lighting set-up and a new soundboard system. We also gave him the extra challenge of being our stage manager on the Sunday of Festival, which he did with professionalism and enthusiasm. This is just one way in which we are supporting young people to reach their dreams.

In addition, we also offered work experience to students at Berkshire College of Agriculture and young people being supported by local organisation Look Ahead.

Supporting the Arts and Entertainment



The event provided the opportunity for local musicians and performers to showcase their talents and develop their art.

19 acts performed on the Saturday of Festival and 14 performed on the Sunday – a total of 33 acts, all gaining experience of performing in a live music environment. All performers had excellent publicity to large audiences. The music performed covered a variety of genres including cover bands, originals, folk music, rock, pop, choirs, big band and for the first time this year

Opera. In addition, a couple of dance groups also performed, as well as a Chinese Lion dance.

- We received 66 applications, of those applications
 - 27 were from people living in The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead – 41% of all applications
 - 17 from outskirts (Slough/Marlow/Burnham/Wycombe/Bracknell) – 26% of all applications
 - 9 from further afield (Beaconsfield/Reading/Bracknell) – 14% of all applications
- Of the 33 acts confirmed (excluding headliners)
 - 53% were living in The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead
 - The rest were from the outskirts of the town

Here are some videos of some of the acts whilst performing at Festival

- <https://www.facebook.com/pg/MaidenheadFestival/videos/>





We were very pleased to be able to book Circus Sensible for this year's Festival who brought a baby big top tent and performed circus shows throughout both days of the event, another first for 2018.

Outside of the tent, the 'drop-in' Circus skills workshops, which ran on both days, proved to be very popular with all ages. Visitors learnt how to juggle, plate spin, and beginners' stilts, diablo, Hula Hoop, Chinese ribbons and much more. All of which was completely free of charge for everyone to enjoy.

Circus skills offer a huge range of benefits to children and adults of all ages and abilities. Perhaps the greatest benefit of having a go at Circus skills is that almost anyone can achieve so much in such a short time. Learning Circus skills also offers great benefits in terms of physical co-ordination and physical fitness, at the same time as helping develop and improve concentration skills.

Promoting Open Spaces & Community Cohesion

Festival promotes the fantastic open spaces in our town and is a great opportunity for members of all sections of the community to come together, regardless of race, social background, religion etc, and enjoy free entertainment in their town.

The smiles on the faces of people in the park was testament to how much fun everyone was having. Those attending were from many different backgrounds in terms of age, gender and ethnicity. Our project brought communities together, as demonstrated by the fact we had different faith groups attending festival, promoting community spirit and cohesion.



Promoting Pride in Maidenhead

This year we wanted to showcase just how amazing Maidenhead is and instil a bit of pride in our town and therefore invited the community to share on social media photos they've taken of their favourite places in Maidenhead, along with a sentence of why you love Maidenhead.

Lisa Hunter, Chairman of Maidenhead Festival is very proud of our town and wanted Festival to showcase just what is on our doorstep. She commented "I love living in Maidenhead and it makes me sad when people dismiss the town without appreciating the great things about it. There are so many brilliant events all year round, organised by people who volunteer their own time and who are passionate about the local community in which they live. Maidenhead Festival is a great opportunity for the community to come together and celebrate all the wonderful things about Maidenhead, to feel part of something special and to share how much we love the town where we have chosen to live."

We teamed up with Jodie Humphries of Maidenhead Mum to help judge the photos and pick the winners Jodie is a blogger and photographer living in Maidenhead. In 2016 she started a hashtag on Instagram because she wanted to challenge herself to get out and explore Maidenhead. She started tagging her photos with #lovemaidenhead so that others could find them and share theirs too.

Jodie commented "I think we live in a town to be proud of, but I also know that photographing it can be a challenge as you have to really look around you to find the beauty. Whether it's down by the river, around town, or in the neighbouring countryside, there are lots of photogenic places but the challenge comes in showing how they are 'uniquely Maidenhead'. I tried to use this as a benchmark for judging the images which showcase the varied lives we all lead in this town. It's an honour to be asked to be the judge for the competition!"

We received more than 134 entries to the competition, which made judging them very difficult. All entries were displayed in the cinema screen at Festival over the course of the two days and shared on social media. The winning photos were:



Device Category: Andrew Scotland: Maidenhead High Street on 4th April, Taepa's Tump - Morris dancers in action.



Professional Category: Bruno Leao, "Autumn by the river"



Under 16 Category: Liz Bailey, December 2017 at Cookham Lock

Press Coverage, Publicity and Photos

Pre-event Publicity: we are very fortunate to have great support from our local newspaper The Maidenhead Advertiser and we have been running weekly articles since the 19th February.

We also included a 4-page Festival pull-out on 19th July which included the full programme and an opportunity for us to recognise all our very generous sponsors and donors. This has been sent with this report.

Adverts were placed in the Advertiser, Along the Thames, The Primary Times and Families Magazine in advance to promote Festival and on all adverts our sponsors are recognised. New this year we were also able to get posters up inside Courtney Coaches, the local bus service.

Another first this year was arranging several radio interviews with our Festival Chairman, Lisa Hunter. She appeared on Marlow FM twice, BBC Radio Berkshire and Wycombe Sound. This is certainly an area of publicity we will be trying to expand for 2019.

The use of Social media was very effective this year, in particularly our Facebook Page and Twitter account. We have 1,493 followers on Twitter and 2,458 (an increase of more than 300 followers compared to 2017) likes on our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/maidenheadfestival>). All of which have been retweeting, sharing and commenting on our news, reaching a vast audience and giving exposure to our Festival sponsors.

Post Event Article & Photos: The Advertiser have taken some fantastic photos, which can be viewed via the following link, along with an article rounding up the event: <https://www.maidenhead-advertiser.co.uk/gallery/maidenhead/133939/picture-special-maidenhead-festival-2018.html>

To view photos from the event please click on this link:

https://www.facebook.com/188624341288231/photos/?tab=album&album_id=1134354080048581

Other press coverage:

- Cox Green parish newsletter
- White Waltham parish newsletter

What the Public are saying

- **Tabitha Beaven, Performer – 5 stars:** We had a great time at the festival yesterday - thank you for putting on a wonderful community event. Hopefully there were no bleeding ears after our singing - with love from the Tuneless Choir!
- **Johnny Mack, Performer – 5 stars:** Such a well-run festival we were made to feel so welcome from arrival and their hospitality for the acts was first class would happily return one day and do it all again
- **Simon Jacob, Visitor – 5 stars:** Worked the Festival for the Advertiser both days and have to say the vibe for the whole weekend was fantastic. All amenities were spot on & the organisers did a terrific job. Well done from me.
- **Sharon Cartwright, Visitor – 4 stars:** Excellent event that caters for everyone. We attended with our young family and loved the music, stalls, beach, entertainment show and fair ground rides. We look forward to coming next year.
- **Dean Feltimo, Visitor - 5 stars:** Superb festival. Lots for everyone to do. Great entertainment. Great location. It's nice to see something done in town for the people of the town, and not being charged the Earth. Well done all involved.
- **Jacqueline Hudson, Performer – 5 stars:** Absolutely fantastic event as both a performer & viewer! The most professionally run festival we have been to, really great work to everyone! It was such an enjoyable experience, would be honoured to play again next year!
- **Jane Titine LaVoix Ward, Visitor – 5 stars:** The best family festival I've ever been too! Catered well for the whole family. Will definitely be back next year and we came from the Midlands!
- **Heidi Pickering, Visitor – 5 stars:** Well done to all the organisers for this year's festival. Me and my 3 children plus all their friends even thanked me for such a great weekend. I have to say it was the best one I've been to so far. I think having Jonny Rocks as the host on Saturday was a good choice. He did a great job of keeping the adults and children engaged and entertained with his games and banter. The bands were fantastic we all had a good sing and dance from 1pm right up until the end of the night on both days. 10/10 for such a fantastic free event. Looking forward to next year!
- **Virginia Holmes, Visitor:** Thanks for yet another brilliant festival! Was there Sat evening for the Beatles tribute and they rocked. My parents loved the Sunday afternoon sets with the choir and opera. All great stuff.

Future Sustainability

We are always working hard to find ways to make Maidenhead Festival sustainable for the future, in particular, ways we can generate our own income so that we are not so reliant on grants and charitable donations. The ways in which we generated our own income included:

- Charging commercial stalls for pitches in our market area
- Charging food vendors for pitches in our street food area – we increased the number of pitches in 2018 from 15 in 2017 to 16 to generate more income
- We continued to push the advertising on our cinema screen this year, giving businesses the chance to purchase time on the screen to showcase their products and services. We had 18 advertisers in total, which generated an income of £2,230 (an increase of £500 compared to 2017). This is an area we hope to continue to build on for 2019.
- New for 2018 was a mocktails bar which generated an additional £300 for Festival. This is something we need to review and see if it is an area we can improve on to generate more funding to make Festival even bigger and better for 2019.

Whilst we are always looking for ways to generate income and increase our corporate sponsorship Maidenhead Festival will always need the support of grants and charitable foundations to be able to fulfil its objectives. This is because it is a free to attend event and we would never consider charging an entrance fee or turning it into a ticketed event as it goes against the purpose of Festival and why it was formed in the first place.

Whilst Maidenhead may come across as an affluent town, there is a high percentage of the local population that is struggling, as proven by the increased number of families using Maidenhead FoodShare (the food bank). Sue Brett, FoodShare Founder, says there has been a 40% increase in the number of people using the service. Beneath the affluent ambience of our area, some families are really struggling. This is a great video talking about the FoodShare work: <https://youtu.be/L-fwrh1xkN4>

Maidenhead Festival's top two objectives are:

1. To provide a free public event that is open to all no matter of social background, race or religion
2. To build community spirit and goodwill

We are proud to provide an all-inclusive event for young and old in our town, and we want to continue to be able to do this.



Thank you to our AMAZING Sponsors and Grant Givers

