



Organised for the community, by the community

POST EVENT REPORT 2023



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.

The 2023 Festival took place over 2 days on the 22nd and 23rd 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

The crowds loved all the performances, as did we as the organisers and we all feel it was the best show yet given the depth and breadth of the genres of music performed; and the rather damp Saturday we experienced!

It was a brilliant and hugely successful weekend that continued in spite of the rain on day one, with approximately 8,000 people joining us over the two days.

The smiles on people's faces, even when dancing in the rain, makes it worthwhile and reminds the whole team why we do it each year.

We have continued to work on our Green Policy, introduced last year, as we introduce new ways of reducing our environmental impact. This can be viewed online here: www.mheadfestival.weebly.com/green-policy.

We have worked with our food traders to stop the sale of water in single use plastic bottles and switched our diesel-using generators to Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG) which have far lower emissions; our long-term aim is to become a plastic-free event.

Acutely aware of the increase in our core costs this year, as experienced by most events and businesses, we were mindful of trying to reduce our expenditure to keep within our budgets.



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 21 voluntary, community

and charity groups had stall space at this year's Festival.

Volunteering & Work Experience

We had 14 members of the local public, an increase of 1 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 41 volunteers, adding up to 147.5 hours given in service to the community and on Sunday we had a total of 34 volunteers, adding up to 98 hours.



We were also very pleased to welcome back a young gentleman to the volunteer team who suffers from severe autism. Supported by his Mum he got stuck into various tasks around the site, including litter picking, bucket collections and generally lending a hand. This really does highlight just one of the many benefits Maidenhead Festival brings to our community.

Lastly, we were joined by a refugee who is seeking asylum in the UK, he worked with us for both days and found it to be an immensely enjoyable and positive experience. Being able to contribute something and being involved in a cultural event was very empowering for someone in his situation.

Supporting the Arts and Entertainment



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

18 acts performed on the Saturday of Festival consisting of 92 individuals; and 12 performed on the Sunday consisting of 116 individuals, 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 Opera. In addition, a couple of dance groups also performed and for the first time this year we enjoyed spoken word.

We received 78 applications, an increase of 26 from last year, of those applications:

- 31 were from people living in The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead – 40% of all applications
- 35 from outskirts (Slough/Marlow/Burnham/Wycombe/Bracknell) – 45% of all applications
- 12 from further afield (Beaconsfield/Henley/Reading/London) – 15% of all applications

Of the 30 acts confirmed (excluding headliners)

- 43% were living in The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead
- The rest were from the outskirts of the town

Here are some photos of some of the acts whilst performing at Festival <https://mheadfestival.weebly.com/gallery.html>



New Festival Fringe Events



Off the back of the very successful and loved Maidenhead Festival 2022 we made a decision to expand our programme to include 8 weeks of Fringe Events in the run-up to the main Festival in July.

Working with some amazing local venues including Off The Tap, A Hoppy Place, The Maiden's Head and Potion & Motion, our vision was to use the power of the arts to make Maidenhead a truly great place to live, work, learn and play.

Run by the Festival Team with support from Tara Deane and the town-centre venues on a volunteer basis, we collaborated with extraordinary local artists to create unmissable experiences that offered a diverse programme and a combined passion for being a platform for promoting new talent.

It is the policy of Maidenhead Festival Fringe to promote new talent within a varied programme, and to keep events low-cost or free for the public.

The Fringe included a variety of exciting events including Open Mic Nights, Battle of the Bands, Music on the Move and even Lego & Libations!

Music on the Move - Sunday 11th June: In this brand-new event to Maidenhead we invited acoustic acts to perform at our Fringe Venues on a rotation basis, moving between each one until they've played them all. Guests could either move with our bands, or stay put and enjoy the next one with another cold beer, cocktail, mocktail or glass of wine! A total of 6 acts performed and the event was enjoyed by more than 150 people.

Battle of the Bands – 7th July: Back in the Maidenhead calendar by popular demand Battle of the Bands championed the unusual and the unheard!

Open to ensembles, electronic musicians, rock bands and more, this competition showcased emerging talent at the cutting edge of the new music scene. From heart-pounding beats to soul-stirring lyrics, it was an experience none of us wanted to miss!

With a total of 4 bands taking part, each performing 4 songs, the audience then placed their votes for the band they thought was the best. We had an additional judging panel to cast the final votes made up of Lisa Hunter, Chairman of Maidenhead Festival, Tara Deane, the organiser and local promoter and Tarun Puri, owner of Sherwood Studios.

The winning band, Maidenhead-based Courtland Stories, were declared the winners and as a result took to the main stage at Maidenhead Festival on Saturday 22nd July as our evening warm-up act. In addition, they will also benefit from a professional photography shoot at Sherwood Studios!



The Courtlands Stories, winning band left and below.



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.



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 March.

We also included a 4-page Festival pull-out on 21st 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.

The use of social media was very effective this year, in particularly our Facebook Page and Twitter account. We have 1,629 followers on Twitter, 1,797 followers in Instagram and 4,000 followers 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: '[In pictures: Thousands enjoy live acts at Maidenhead Festival - Photo 1 of 70 - Maidenhead Advertiser \(maidenhead-advertiser.co.uk\)](https://www.maidenhead-advertiser.co.uk)

To view photos from the event please click on this link: <https://mheadfestival.weebly.com/gallery.html>

What the Public are saying

- **Kerri-Leigh Forshaw: Visitor:** Amazing festival, fun for the whole family! Friendly crew who took great pride in making it the best it could be!
- **A Million Dreams: Performer:** Thank you for having us to perform at your festival this year. It was really well organised, fun and with something for everyone. The extremely helpful and friendly crew worked incredibly hard making it the best festival it could be, thank you so much for looking after us, you really did think of everything! We enjoyed every minute!
- **Wear My Art: Stallholder:** Many thanks for your detailed information regarding the festival. Apart from the inclement weather we thoroughly enjoyed the event and look forward to attending next year. Please pass on our thanks to all the volunteer's who were exceptional throughout the event and especially those who assisted in carrying our gazebo, chairs, tables and stock to our car at the close of play yesterday when for safety reasons we were parked a small distance from the stall. Thanks again and look forward to seeing you in the future
- **The Joystick Club: Stallholder:** Thank you very much for all the work you and others put in for the weekends fun. We enjoyed mixing with the families and giving rides in our pedal planes and will do it hopefully for 2 days next.
- **Next Step Fostering: Stallholder:** Thank you for allowing us to be a part of your festival and from a stallholder's perspective, I was impressed by how organised it was. The information we received prior was super helpful and, on the day, getting in/out of the park to set up was very smooth and the volunteers were very friendly and helpful. 😊
- **Full Flavour: Performer:** Thank you for having us at the Maidenhead Festival. We had a great time despite the weather and managed to get a few people shuffling about and singing along. We really appreciate the opportunity and the professionalism and enthusiasm of all involved.
- **The Sepia Folk Collective: Performer:** We just wanted to thank you so much for having us play on Sunday! It was an amazing event, and we were really proud to be a part of it too. Thank you for helping keep original music live!
- **Dance Inspired: Performer:** Thank you again for letting us be a part of the festival. We always have a wonderful time. It is amazing to see the event continue to grow and be popular. The running was so incredibly smooth and your tech guys were incredible this year. Really friendly guys. The photographer was also amazing as well and a really nice touch.

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 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 24 advertisers in total, which generated an income of £1,875. This is an area we hope to continue to build on for 2024.

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) and BabyBank, and sadly this is only going to get worse with the current cost of living crisis.

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.



The 2023 Festival Team

Thank you to our AMAZING Sponsors and Grant Givers



The Prince Philip Trust Fund

