

# Maidenhead Festival

## Organised for the Community, by the Community



Statement Chairman of Maidenhead Festival, October 2024

It is with a heavy heart that I share the news that the 2025 Maidenhead Festival, as we have come to know and love it, will not be going ahead. This decision has been an incredibly difficult one, but it reflects a combination of factors that have made it increasingly challenging to host the festival in its current format.

One of the main issues is funding. Year after year, securing the necessary resources has become more difficult, especially with rising costs and inflation. As we have always endeavoured to keep the festival free to attend and accessible to everyone, the financial burden has grown significantly.

We've also faced additional pressures from changing legislation implemented after the Manchester Arena attack, which have increased our health and safety obligations. Alongside this, our venue, Kidwells Park, has seen increased development in the surrounding area, and there are concerns over car parking availability and the potential for additional charges. We also face the prospect of the park's alcohol covenant being lifted, which would introduce new security challenges and additional costs to maintain a family-friendly atmosphere.

Despite our ongoing appeals for public support, the load on our dedicated volunteers has grown each year, and many of them are simply fatigued. The commitment from our volunteers has been the heart of Maidenhead Festival, and without more support, it is no longer sustainable to run such a large-scale event. Lastly, the slow degradation of some festival features, such as the fireworks display due to limited safe firing areas and cost constraints, means that the event may not reflect the quality the community has come to expect and deserve.

We could not have come this far without the generosity of our sponsors, grant-givers, and stallholders, who have provided critical support over the years. I would also like to express heartfelt gratitude to our incredible volunteers who have given their time, energy, and passion to make every festival possible, and to the public, whose loyal attendance has made all the hard work worthwhile. I would especially like to thank my fellow festival team organisers, whose dedication and shared vision have made it a privilege to work alongside them year after year.

However, I want to emphasise that this is not an end; rather, it is an opportunity to reimagine Maidenhead Festival's role in our community. The festival team remains deeply committed to making a positive impact and will now shift our focus to supporting grassroots arts programs, empowering local venues, and organising smaller, more frequent events throughout the year that celebrate our town's creativity and community spirit.

The reserves we will draw from were built up in the years before the pandemic. They have helped us cover costs as we've worked tirelessly to sustain the festival through challenging times, including the financial hurdles of recent years.

I urge everyone to view this as a new beginning rather than a closure. We will continue to foster arts and culture in Maidenhead and leave a lasting legacy that brings our community together in new and exciting ways.

Thank you all for your support and for the memories we've shared over the years. It has been an honour and a privilege.

Let's look forward to what we can build together for Maidenhead's future.

Thank you.

Lisa Hunter, Festival Chairman