

PROJECT REPORT - BUXTON SPRING FAIR 2nd MAY 2016

1. OVERVIEW

The aim of the Buxton Spring Fair was to fill the whole of 'Main Street' with a mix of stalls and entertainment, an 'Open Day' for the town, and a showcase for everything Buxton has to offer. The project achieved its aims and objectives.

2. DETAIL OF WHAT TOOK PLACE

2.1 Extent of the Fair

The Fair area was similar to the last two years, but without using the central section of the Crescent, which was designated as construction site - although the hoardings had not actually been erected by the day of the fair.

2.2 Stallholders

In total we had 196 stallholders registered, of these 8 cancelled in advance and several others failed to turn up on the day, we added 1 trader who turned up on spec. There was a good mix of different types of stall - 37% were not for profit entities (the University, clubs, charities, campaign groups and so on), the majority of the others were small traders (a significant number of arts and crafts businesses, but also jewellery, furniture, sweets, food, clothing) with a handful of larger businesses. There was a similar number of food stalls as last years, although two failed to turn up; there was food available in every area except the Events Field (where one of the late cancellations was supposed to be). Offers included burgers, baked potatoes, fish and chips, artisan toasties, crepes and 'fine Indian dining'. There were also stalls selling alcohol in the Crescent, Spring Gardens and on the Market Place, and the Ale Stop on Chapel Street extended onto the street. Chris Hill Community Sports planned to run the 'Traditional Sports Day' on the bowling green but had to cancel because the field was waterlogged. Other 'have a go' activities included one climbing walls (the B&L College one was booked in but failed to attend), an artificial cave, donkey rides, scooter adventure area, circus skills workshops and a canoe on a frame, as well as animal-petting and other children's activities.

2.3 Performance Venues

As a trial, we delegated responsibility for the performance venues to the University of Derby, who ran it as an Events Management module. For all sorts of reasons, we were as much involved in organising this side of things as in previous years. The programme started with an official opening by the Buxton Town Crier, assisted by the Carnival Queen, unveiling the garland on the Market Cross. There was a timetabled programme of entertainment in four separate locations (Bath Rd junction, Town Hall Front, The Crescent by The Old Hall Hotel and Hardwick Street) all with sound amplification, and a good variety of music and dance, but no street theatre or spoken word. A total of 20 groups or individuals were scheduled to take part, though there were some cancellations, and the effect of the weather and closing of several venues at lunch time meant the programme had to be completely rearranged for the rest of the day. We ran a bucket collection at each venue this year, which raised £100, to be split between the equipment providers.

2.4 Shop-front Businesses

Most of the shops in the area of the fair were open, a number of them would not have been had it not been for the Fair. Once again several of the Cavendish Arcade shops took stalls in the Turner Memorial area, and a few Spring Gardens shops took advantage of the offer to have stalls outside their premises.

2.5 Attendance

Attendance is impossible to gauge, but the fair was less busy than previous years, presumably due to a very poor weather forecast. We arranged additional parking in the University Dome, St Thomas More School and Buxton Library, a total of almost 300 extra spaces.

2.7 Marshaling

A total of 40 people were involved in marshaling the Fair on the day, with others staffing the Town Team tent. The University was in charge of the performance venues with a separate team of 10 students and four lecturers. As much setting up as possible was done the night before, with a team then starting again at 6am. The area was completely cleared by 7:00pm.

2.8 Issues that arose

The Weather - It was bad! In the morning it was very windy which caused problems with stallholders setting up, then it rained very hard between midday and 2pm. After that it was fine and the sun came out, but by that time a lot of stallholders had abandoned and three of the performance areas had been dismantled.

Illegal Traders - Only one came, to Spring Gardens, and he was expected, he has come the last two years and is aware he will be charged if he shows up.

Difficult Traders - the majority of stallholders are fine, there is a small subsection who are difficult to deal with and can be rude and obnoxious on the day. We need to record who these are.

Electrical Supplies - This year we set out the electrics and cable covers in advance and stored them in the electrics boxes, so setting out on Monday morning was much quicker than in previous years. There were no issues with electrics up on the Market Place or Sainsburys area. The food stall connected to the Turner Memorial supply had far too many units connected (as last year), resulting in the supply tripping out in the morning, but after stern words from Dave Riley, they disconnected some and there were no further problems. Getting power from the Pavilion Gardens box was also problematic till Dave showed us the hidden knobs that need turning. Having a real electrician on the team was hugely helpful.

Trader Parking - Trader parking was at The Lighthouse, the Volunteer Centre, St Johns Church, Buxton Infant School and Aiden Soaps. We had fewer problems this year with traders insisting on parking close to their stalls - this only happened on the Slopes. The problem this year was that because of the weather some traders wanted to leave early but their vehicles were blocked by others; the list we had made of vehicle registrations against stalls could not be located and in any case was incomplete. We need to address this and have a better system for next year.

First Aid Incidents - St John Ambulance treated at least one minor injury and attended a diabetic, there were no serious incidents (that we're aware of).

Lost Children - so far as we're aware, there were no incidents.

Police Incidents - we are not aware of any incidents requiring police presence.

3. ASSESSMENT AGAINST AGREED SUCCESS CRITERIA

The aims of the project were to:

- consolidate the idea of 'One Main Street'
- advertise the existence and value of the Town Team to residents, and recruit new members
- promote Buxton to residents and visitors as an interesting and exciting place to be
- enable retailers, artists, community groups to demonstrate their offer to residents and visitors
- generate a positive, optimistic feeling about the town which will last beyond the day
- increase footfall in the whole of the town both on the day and subsequently
- start the process of delegating to other organisations to assure the long term future of the event

We believe that in spite of the weather, the first five aims were met. We cannot know what the effect may have been on subsequent increased footfall in the town, but given that there were far fewer visitors than in previous years, it seems likely there would not have been much impact. We learned valuable lessons from the trial delegating responsibility to the University, but the model this year is not one we could simply repeat.

Specific success criteria were:

- **We recruit enough stalls and entertainments to fill the length of 'Main Street'.**

Achieved - there are inevitable gaps (eg the stretch of High Street which is too narrow to do very much) but the general impression was of the fair stretching from the end of Spring Gardens right through to the Bath Road junction. The link between the Fair and the Pavilion Gardens worked well again, giving the impression of a single, whole town event.

- **The mix includes traders, community groups, artists, musicians and other entertainment**

Achieved - all of these and more were present.

- **The project is delivered on time and within budget.**

Achieved - the Fair took place as planned and costs were lower than budget, generating a surplus. Full details are included in Appendix 1.

- **The event is covered in all local media outlets, including radio and TV.**

We did achieve media coverage as follows:

Pure Buxton - we had a page in the April/May edition but nothing in the June/July one.

Buxton Advertiser - a couple of minor articles, a two page spread the Thursday before the Fair, which included the Fair Map, and a two page spread on the Thursday after.

Other local press - not sure on this.

High Peak Radio - The students did do one interview with them.

Radio Derby - we did not manage to do an interview this year.

Visit Buxton Website - gave us good coverage leading up to the event.

Pavilion Gardens - we did not see any mention, in spite of an understanding they would promote it.

Facebook - the Buxton Town Team Facebook page again proved a very effective way of getting the message out with an event page set up about two months in advance. The day of the fair saw a small spike in 'Likes' but nothing like previous years - unlike previous years we didn't have any decent photos or a video to post.

Twitter - our two student volunteers Alice and Charlotte took on the @BuxSpringFair account and sent out dozens tweets in the run up to the fair and on the day. Twitter 'impressions' on the day hit 4,424.

Instagram - Alice and Charlotte also took on running the Instagram account, adding a lot of new photos - at time of writing it had acquired over 200 followers (112 this time last year).

Others - participants and shops in the town promoted it via their own websites, Facebook pages and Twitter feeds.

- **Evaluation from attendees and participants is positive, demand for it to be repeated**

Achieved - in spite of the weather, feedback from participants and attendees was positive.

- **Evaluation from established shops is positive, and they report increased footfall on the day.**

We did not have many feedback forms from shops.

- **The University and others take on more responsibility, reducing the level of Town Team input.**

As regards the Performance Venues, this was not really achieved, and it did not feel as though the level of Town Team input was any less than in previous years. The contribution made by Alice & Charlotte however was very valuable, and while the other volunteers did not join the team till shortly before the event, they then picked up jobs that we would not have been able to do otherwise, as well as helping out on the day.

4. FURTHER BENEFITS

Small Trader Contacts - Our contacts list has expanded even further, we now have contact details for over 800 traders, retail outlets and not for profit organisations who might be interested in future Spring Fairs, in the regeneration of the regular market, or in other Buxton Town Team projects.

Sales of Town Team merchandise - Maps, jigsaws and tea-towels were on sale in the Town Team tent, generating an additional income of £102, as well as £3 in joining (this is not included as Fair income).

5. LEARNING POINTS FOR THE FUTURE

A full discussion on what went well and what could be done better next time is included as Appendix 2.

APPENDIX 1 - COSTS

EXPENDITURE		
	Budget	Actual
Insurance	700	470.00
Insurance Add-Ons		410.00
Licences	150	132.96
First Aid Cover	400	422.40
Printed Leaflets/Fliers	850	613.98
Other Printing Costs	300	254.47
Equipment Hire	400	290.00
Miscellaneous items	200	77.99
Other Stationary		22.94
Other Consumables		10.99
Electrical Equipment		57.00
Transportation costs		20.00
Total	3000	2782.73
Net Expenditure		

INCOME		
	Budget	Actual
Participants Fees	2300	2990.00
Insurance Add-ons		390.00
Waitrose Fund		307.37
Other Funding	700	
Total	3000	3687.37
Surplus	0	904.64

Other Sponsorship and Support

Waitrose included us in the March Community Matters Fund, generating £307; HPBC waived all their normal events and licensing fees, except for the Temporary Events Notices, did not charge for electricity, absorbed the loss of revenue from parking and loaned us steel barriers and other equipment; Derbyshire County Council loaned barriers and cones and allowed us the use of the Library Car Park; Buxton Well Dressing Festival loaned Road Closure signs and No Waiting cones; Crescent Hotel & Thermal Spa loaned us the road barriers; the Swan Inn, Argos and Charlotte's Chocolates also provided electrical supply points; Buxton Round Table loaned us two small marquees; the Methodist Church, The Green Man Gallery, Hartington Gardens Care Home, The Bath Rd Churches Centre, St Ann's Church and the United Reformed Church loaned us tables and chairs; the University of Derby provided meeting and work space and printed and laminated road closure signs as well as allowing the use of their car park by the public on the day; St Thomas More School, Andy Howe Properties, Buxton Infants School and the Santander Bank also allowed the use of their car parking space on the day; D & J Karaoke, project team members and musicians from the various bands loaned equipment for the sound amplification systems.

APPENDIX 2 - LEARNING POINTS FOR THE FUTURE

NOTES FROM THE REVIEW MEETING ON 7TH MAY 2015.

Present: Janet, Tina, Suzanne, Richard, Kathryn

Timescale

A 'save the date' note went out in December, applications opened mid February, 8 weeks before the closing date, which seemed fine. Suggested the jobs list could usefully be amended to include the timing of each job, as well as ticking off when done. Noted this year the deadline for entries for performers was a week earlier than for stalls, this caused confusion, they should be the same. Timing for leaflet distribution was about right, earlier would be better but it is dependent on having layout and performer lists finalised in time, which in turn depends on getting commitment from participants.

The Project Team

The Town Team members were the same people as last year. This year we had three different sets of students:

- Two came to us direct (Alice and Charlotte) and were brilliant, they integrated completely into the project team and were reliable and hard-working.
- A separate set of general volunteers was recruited by the University. Although they signed up early in the year we did not get to meet them until a fortnight before the fair, which was too late for most of the jobs we had hoped they might do; that said they were a useful addition to the marshalling team and did take on the train usage survey.
- A team of students plus lecturers were to take on responsibility for running the Performance Venues, as a university module. This did not work as well as we had hoped and we ended up doing a lot of the jobs on the agreed Client Brief ourselves. The objectives of the lecturers did not always seem coincide with ours and disinterested students could not just be dropped.

Agreed that in future years we would prefer to select a small number of students, possibly by interview, and integrate them into the project team from January, with a separate list recruited specifically to just help out on the day.

Road & Car Park Closures

Road closures were fine. Car parks were a problem, with a lot of cars left parked in the closed areas (Slopes, Market Place and Sainsburys) and wardens unwilling to ticket them. Suggested we need a flier to leave on the cars pointing out the problems they have caused; photos of cars and registration numbers on Facebook (name and shame); a plea in the press beforehand not to spoil things by leaving cars in the Fair areas; ask HPBC if there is anything they can do. Noted that cars parked in closed areas are not insured.

Licensing etc

HPBC produced an extra form for us to fill in, for the overall event licence, which we need to complete sooner another time, along with all the others. Other than that there were no issues.

Insurance

Same company used, and no issues. We did not cover damage to loaned PA equipment this time.

Health & Safety

St John Ambulance attended one fall, and a diabetic at Bath Rd. The weather was a big issue, we must insist that people bring weights for gazebos, and tell them they will not be allowed to set up without them; advise storm bars as well, also encourage more people to take market stalls. Traders could also be advised to bring plastic sheeting to cover goods. The Events Field could not be used, it was waterlogged and very slippery.

Recruiting stall-holders

We had extra help entering data. There was still a problem with large numbers not applying for space till after the deadline. Janet will analyse how many were new as opposed to repeat participants.

Contact with shop front businesses

Very difficult this year, a lot of them kept changing their minds about extending their frontage, to the very last minute.

Stalls layout

The layout could not be finalised until very shortly before the event because the area available to us in the Turner Memorial was dependent on progress with the construction works. This had a knock-on effect to every other area of the town. Vinci were very helpful in liaising on this issue beforehand. Spaces generally were marked out at only just over the 3m this time, which worked well both for the look of it and enabling stalls to be tied together against the weather - the guidance note needs to be altered to reflect this. Suggested the Town Team tent be relocated to the other side of the market place, further away from the noise of the bands, also consider angling the direction of the music. Consider a better arrangement using market stalls instead of the double gazebo.

Variety of Stalls and Events

All agreed a good mix. Though we take what we can get!

Issues with stallholders

The weather was forecast to be bad, which meant that a lot of traders simply failed to turn up. Some of those that did had to adjust their positions so as to be able to tie gazebos to street furniture, even so a lot of gazebos were damaged. The rain started in earnest around midday and was torrential - many stallholders decided to pack up then, those that held out did well once the rain stopped and the sun came out around 2pm. We did have one complaint from a trader at Bath Rd that they had left their gazebo and someone had broken it, but in fact it had been abandoned in a broken condition. A few traders were unhappy about their location, in particular one martial arts group objected to their position, but they had very particular requirements and were put in the only place that matched these. Another trader tried to set up in the wrong place and when asked to move so as not to block the thoroughfare, became very abusive and in the end packed up and left. Trader parking at the Lighthouse was difficult, as we were short of space and had to cram cars in blocking other vehicles; this would not have been a problem if the bad weather had not meant many traders wanted to leave early. We need to personalise trader permits with the stall number on them. Also at the Lighthouse the builders were unexpectedly at work in spite of the bank holiday and had to be accommodated. St John's Church as a new trader parking site worked well except that someone put the rope across after they left at the end of the day, confusing the regular users on the Tuesday morning.

Recruiting performers

This worked out in the end, with some new groups joining us, but there were issues along the way. One big problem was the students being away on their Easter break at a key point in the timetable. A separate gmail address was set up, with an automated response, but the students did not always follow up enquiries, leaving performers uncertain as to what was going on. This was partly because they do not have access to telephones (except their own, which costs) and phoning performers to discuss their requirements had to be separately arranged through the university.

Performance Venues

All four venues were set up with no problems, and the new location outside the Old Hall was fine in spite of the slight slope.

Issues with performance venues

Two groups pulled out at the last minute, one because of concern about the weather forecast the other through illness. The weather also meant that all the venues, except the Town Hall, were dismantled part way through the day, so some acts were unable to perform. Students allocated to look after the performance venues were sent home by their lecturers when the rain started, leaving them unstaffed; this in part is why the bucket collection from the venues was well down on last year. Learning points:

- keep electrics high, well above the ground
- use an open fronted market stall instead of a gazebo at Bath Rd and Hardwick Street
- if the venue has to be abandoned, leave someone there to tell performers what is happening
- arrange to be able to take vulnerable equipment indoors so it can be set up again if the weather improves
- dance music needs to be given to the person operating the PA system in advance to ensure it can be played.

Advertising to the Public

Leaflets - suggested we have a single leaflet on A3, but it would not save any money, and to have as A6 pocket size when folded would make the design more difficult. Agreed though that having the performance areas more prominently marked on the map would help, possibly including post codes.

Public Parking and Access

Security at the Dome had not been told that the car park was open to the public, this was sorted but took time. The use of the Library car park seemed to be even more complicated than last year, with different personnel involved, and took some time to agree. There were no issues with parking arrangements at St Thomas More. Nestle yet again said no to the Station Road site. Students from the University did a survey of passengers arriving by train, to assess the level of overcrowding, but with the weather forecast being poor, far fewer visitors came and overcrowding was not a problem this year.

Logistics - Preparation and on the Day

We had 40 marshals, which was enough, this included the students, which we do rely on. The area leaders need information in advance regarding the layout, parking arrangements, who is on their team, any specific issues etc, and all the marshals need a basic description of what the job entails - there is too much information for them to be able to take in at the early morning briefing. We need a better contingency plan for bad weather. Stronger string on the Correx boards is needed. A lot of effort went into organising loans of tables and chairs, and delivering them to where they were needed, but no-one set out the chairs at the venues - we had expected the Performance Venue students to do this. Trailers - three flat beds were borrowed which worked well. Suggested we have a laminated copy of the logistics plan posted in the Town Team tent.

Clearing up After

No problems, there was a lot less litter than in previous years. We did borrow a litter bin key from Oliver at HPBC, but in the event it was not needed as the bins did not get overfull.

Extras

School Sports Day - this was cancelled because the Events Field was completely waterlogged.

Feedback

We had far fewer feedback forms than in previous years, because of so many stallholders leaving early before they'd been collected. Very few shop forms were handed out, this needs to be incorporated into the role for the area marshals. The performer forms were also not handed out, this was supposed to have been done by the student performance team.

Other comments

Suggested we could invest in a set of radios for communications, on the other hand these can be borrowed from other groups that use them, plus an open network with a lot of users can be chaotic.

Suggested we make more of the official opening, perhaps have the town crier, carnival queen and samba band process round the whole of the fair, not just the market place.

FURTHER COMMENTS FROM MARSHALS AND PARTICIPANTS SENT IN BY EMAIL

Charles Denton:

Unfortunately I will be unable to attend the debrief but I have 2 ideas that may make next year's spring fair a bit easier to manage the first one is something someone said on Facebook and that is to use palettes with plyboard over the top at performance venues to create a raised platform so the electrics are off the ground

The second idea is to set up a radio system so we can keep contact with various people easier. To do this I propose we contact the derbyshire scouts radio comms team who will set up a large mast and give certain people radios

John Phillips:

Despite the weather it brought a huge boost to the town, which was heaving with customers. Well done to you and all your team.

Helen Haywood:

In my area, slopes, there were 2 stall holders who took up way more space than they paid for. Luckily we had some no shows so it wasn't a problem, but could have been if everyone had turned up.

And parking! 3 cars ignored the parking restrictions. Warden was asked to ticket them but did nothing.

I think we could accommodate half a dozen parked cars in slopes area but think they should still pay. Eg climbing wall man had van and car which he insisted stay close and cave man! Was on call so also parked up at entrance to car park

A good day nevertheless, well done to everyone.

Janine Morris:

Firstly well done despite the weather. I didn't get around much but stayed on the stall for the majority of the day and I enjoyed myself. I'll give in my feedback form now that it has dried out :)

Feedback on Parking:

- Other members of the team probably did more than I did on Parking research this year, so apologies for that. I still have all the background info from previous years as to who was approached, contact numbers and their responses, although it tends to be the same people who respond the same way.

- Parking signs. I can probably put them out on my own easily enough, but note to self that having the cable ties in the signs ahead of the day would cut down the time it takes to put them out considerably. Some of the plastic signs have the paint washed away and will need repainting, but the majority are intact.

- Keys easy enough to gain beforehand, open up on the day and give back afterwards.

- Suggest the very first arrangement of the year be with the Council re the waived fee and permission to use car park. I have no idea how many people actually used the library car park in the end.

- Trader parking: assuming all the avenues approached this year were the same as previous years, then we can pretty much guarantee Library Car Park, Infant School and Lighthouse (?possibly), with back up from Health Centre, St Anne's Church as potential. Beyond that all other sources are usually a No.

Hope that is of some use. It all runs pretty smoothly and timing wise takes about 30 mins on the Friday to pick up keys, an hour to put up on the day, an hour to take down on the day, and 30 mins to return keys the next day, in case you need to know for timings for next year.

Alison Jarvis (Fudge Glorious Fudge)

Just wanted to say how much we appreciated all the effort that had gone into the Spring Fair. I lost my evaluation form and expect it was pulverised in the wet. I do have a suggestion that the vehicles in the car park (top of hill, near Sainsbury's) have the name of the stall, or contact details of the driver, displayed. Everybody was blocked in by one car in the car park and the person who had all the details was non contactable; I know several of the Town Team tried his mobile. I appreciate that the day was unusual in people trying to leave before the end of the day. However, there may have been other circumstance when people needed to leave early: illness etc.. As it was, self help prevailed and the driver was found, by those of us wanting to leave!

Naturally the person was from one of the stall still managing to trade, and not happy about being asked to move his car! I know it all worked out in the end but it would have been so much smoother if somebody had been able to walk across and ask him to come in a natural break in trade.

Having said that, and wanting to end on a positive note, it was only the weather that prevented the Spring Fair being another triumph and my boots truly are waterproof!

Yvonne Chalker (Buxtonians: a Hardy Breed)

Not sure whether you received my soggy feedback response. In the case of you didn't I would like to say that I ticked excellent for each question. Sue one of the volunteers kindly lent us her spare gazebo and another volunteer helped erect it.

I sold 35 books which exceeded my expectations. Thank you.