

EXETER CITY COUNCIL

**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – ECONOMY
1 MARCH 2007**

EXETER AUTUMN FESTIVAL 2006

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To report on the evaluation of the Autumn Festival in 2006, which took place between 3 and 19 November 2006.
- 1.2 To seek support for the proposal for the development of the Autumn Festival in 2007 to take place between 2 and 18 November 2007.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The first Autumn Festival took place in November 2004 following a report to Scrutiny Committee Economy in November 2003, which outlined proposals to enhance the Exeter Festivals. The aim of the Autumn Festival is:

“To showcase local cultural activity and encourage the growth and development of talent through participation, performance and creativity”

- 2.2 The key objectives of the Autumn Festival are to:
- programme events delivering complementary activities to the Summer Festival, involving local performers, groups and other producers
 - merge fringe type events that have been delivered during the festival period in July, providing the voluntary, amateur and semi-professional sector with a platform from which to showcase their work.
 - facilitate the development of locally produced activities and act in an advisory capacity to support amateur and voluntary groups in developing and managing cultural projects
- 2.3 The Autumn Festival was created in order to achieve greater focus and higher profile for participating groups whilst also providing a significant opportunity for wider participation by residents and local artistes in a new event. This also contributes further to the objective of achieving a year round programme of cultural activity in the city.
- 2.4 Following a consultation exercise with community arts organisations in 2004, a common issue that concerned most participants was that the activities of local performers and groups were too often lost or hidden from the public eye because of the high profile received by core professional events during the Summer Festival and that often community events clashed with core festival events.
- 2.5 The Autumn Festival has also contributed to the objective of the promotion of local artistes and organisations, as identified in the Arts and Media Strategy 2004-2006 by:

- investing in a capacity building programme to enable groups to create and manage their own programmes by supporting them with financial assistance and advice where appropriate.
- promoting social cohesion through a programme that is designed to empower residents with an interest in the arts and cultural fabric of the city.
- reducing barriers to participation by providing events that are accessible to those that are socially excluded such as those on low incomes, young people and those with learning disabilities
- encouraging the use of City venues and spaces whilst promoting the Exeter night time economy

3. AUTUMN FESTIVAL 2006

Overview

- 3.1 The number of organisations/groups taking part in the Autumn Festival 2006 increased from 43 in 2005 to 49 in 2006. Approximately 661 artists took part with 285 volunteers and employed staff involved in the organisation of those events. The festival was programmed by outside organisations with the Economy and Tourism unit acting in an advisory capacity, where required. The City Council collated the festival brochure, hosted the festival website and assisted with a planned promotional campaign.
- 3.2 The Festival attracted 6,304 people to ticketed events and over 15,900 people to free events and exhibitions. This compares with 6,867 people to ticketed events and over 32,000 people to free events and exhibitions in 2005. The large decrease in numbers of people attending free events in 2006 from 2005 is attributable to the very popular “Their Past, Your Future” war time exhibition in the Guildhall which was included in the programme in 2005. Some 5,065 people attended ticketed events and over 17,072 people went to free events and exhibitions in 2004.
- 3.3 A mix of 84 amateur, semi professional and professional events took place in 28 different venues. This consisted of 54-ticketed events and 30 free events compared with 105 events in 2005 made up of 46 ticketed events and 59 free events. In 2004 93 events were delivered made up of 48 ticketed events and 45 free events.

Awards

- 3.4 The Exeter Autumn Festival Awards scheme was set up in 2004 to financially assist community groups, youth groups, clubs, organisations and individuals who want to put on an event, exhibition or activity during the festival. The Award Scheme events produced by all award winners fulfilled the required criteria by:
- contributing to the range and quality of events in the festival programme
 - promoting the creative talents and activities of groups or individuals within the City
 - benefiting the local community
- 3.5 This year the number of applications made increased to 20 from 17 in 2005 and 11 in 2004. This year a total of £4750 was awarded to 12 applicants, 2 less than last year and 4 more than 2004. Grants ranged from £750 for Exeter Forum Theatre to engage a professional comedy writer to work with formerly homeless and vulnerably housed people in Exeter, to £250 granted to Magic Carpet whose activity engaged those with learning disabilities.

Marketing

- 3.6 To promote the Festival 25,000 full colour programmes were distributed throughout the City and neighbouring areas. The Exeter Citizen carried a full page feature and daily advertisements designed to raise awareness were placed in the Express and Echo. The Express and Echo also carried various features on highlighted events and printed daily listings on all festival events. An extensive press release and listing campaign was conducted targeting key Devon media organisations, including events such as Alabama 3 Unplugged which provided an international element in order to give the Festival a higher profile in the media.

4. EVALUATION

Overview

- 4.1 The Autumn Festival has achieved its key purpose as set out in the recommendations of the 2004 festivals report to committee by providing further opportunities for wider participation, whilst building on the strengths of other key cultural providers in the city and thereby adding strength to the City's cultural position on a local and national basis. This has led to more coverage in local media for individual participants, groups and organisations. Supportive relationships have also been strengthened between amateur, semi- professional, professional and voluntary groups and the City Council.
- 4.2 Questionnaires were sent to the 49 organisations and groups that took part in the Autumn Festival with 76% returned. Participant organisations said that being part of the Autumn Festival was beneficial as the marketing of the festival raised groups/organisations profile and gave them more publicity and wider coverage than would otherwise have been the case. However some organisations found the benefit difficult to quantify. Of those that returned questionnaires, 93% stated that they would participate in the 2007 festival. The remaining 7% are currently either reviewing or considering their inclusion.
- 4.3 It is also clear from engaging with some of the organisations involved that their awareness and experience of regulations and event organisation could be improved by enhancing their knowledge of legal requirements and sources of advice and information. Improvements in this area should enable organisations to avoid unnecessarily running into difficulties over legal requirements and help improve audience and participant experience of the events.

Programme

- 4.4 In its third year the festival maintained its wide-ranging and inclusive programme. The number of events in the 2006 festival decreased by 21 to 84 and comprised the following:

Music	42	Education	5	Exhibition	9
Dance	4	Theatre	15	Comedy	2
Literary	5	Film	4		

The number of events in the 2005 festival increased by 13 to 105 from 2004 and comprised the following:

Music	32	Education	43	Exhibition	14
Dance	2	Theatre	12	Comedy	1
Literary	1				

- 4.5 The main difference in the number of educational events can be attributed to the large number of individual workshops organised by the Wren Trust to prepare lanterns by school children for the Christmas Lights switch-on event in 2005. Other Council led events and initiatives benefited from inclusion in the Autumn Festival brochure including the Exeter Continental Market, The Devon Slow Food Market, Exeter Open Studios and the Christmas Lights Switch on. It is estimated that these events combined attracted in excess of 25,000 people.
- 4.6 As recommended in the March 2006 report to Committee it was suggested that consideration be given to the promotion of one or two high profile events to enhance the profile of this festival. Due to working pressures on the festival team, it proved not to be possible to achieve this.
- 4.7 For the festival website a new content management system was employed this year. A total of more than 16,000 visits were made to the website.
- 4.8 Participants were asked to comment on the quality of this year's site. Some 62% of those responding stated that they found the site satisfactory or good and 38% stated that they did not visit the site. Many perceived the site to be not exciting enough, and not what a festival site should look like. Other participants found the site hard to find and that the searchable database required clearer definitions when it came to categorising type of events.

5 FESTIVAL 2007

- 5.1 In order to further develop the content and scale of the Autumn Festival, it is recommended that:
- all groups be invited along to an awareness raising/training exercise to help understand and explore areas such as the new licensing and fire regulations, risk assessments, fund raising, data protection and the Disability Discrimination Act
 - the awards scheme be continued and organisations be invited to apply in May 2007 with priority being given to encouraging more applicants that demonstrate or engage with educational content
 - consideration be given to the promotion of one or two established acts or high profile events to enhance public awareness of the Autumn Festival and attract more regional press coverage, with the possibility of an event with a sub regional partner
 - the appearance and ease of use of the website be reviewed together with the Council's IT Services Unit

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The total costs of delivering the festival, as summarised below amounted to £24,585 leaving a surplus of £415 from an allocated budget of £25,000.

Expenditure

Marketing	£18,085
Awards	£4,800
Production costs	£1,700
Total	£24,585

<u>Income</u>	
Exeter City Council	£25,000
Surplus	£415

7.0 RECOMMENDED that

7.1 The report on the Autumn Festival 2006 be noted.

7.2 Support be given to develop proposals for the delivery of a 16 day Autumn Festival for 2007.

RICHARD BALL
HEAD OF ECONOMY AND TOURISM

ECONOMY AND DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)

Background Papers used in compiling the report:-

None

Autumn Festival Programme Analysis

In summary **49** organisations were involved in promoting **84** events attracting a total audience of over **22,000**. All award winners are shown in bold type

Event (* Number of performances if more than 1	Audience		Artists	Non Artistes/ Volunteers	Genre
	Ticketed	Free			
To Bee or not to Bee (2)	71		1	4	Theatre
The Linley Band	84		5	4	Music
Between the Worlds with Raven Tales	55		4	2	Story-Telling
Exeter Comedy Club	150		4	7	Comedy
The Photophonic Experiment	100		9	4	Music
Dreadzone	Cancelled	Cancelled			Music
City of Exeter Pipes & Drums (9)		3500	21	4	Music
Drop-In Family Print Making Day		66	3	4	Art Workshop
Christine Anne Marsden's	50		2	2	Music
Jah Wobble	250		17	10	Music
Phoenixounds	110		15	10	Music
Panacea	50		5	2	Music
With A Cup of Tea		50	4	1	Theatre
Poetry at the Palace	55		3	2	Poetry
Silver & Coppin	58		2	6	Theatre
Melosa	40		7	2	Music
Fanclub Dance (2)	165		5	4	Dance
Mitzi Maybe Goes Global	31		3	7	Music
A King Ludd Decoction	Cancelled	Cancelled			Cancelled
Quo Vadis Baby (2)	147			5	Film
Canon-A-Nouvelle	45		6	2	Music
Blazin' Fiddles	300		7	5	Music
'Phone for the Fish Knives (2)		175	5	1	Theatre
Exeter Festival Chorus Haydn	673		154	15	Music
Jazz Club (2)	60		8	2	Music
Theatre Alibi: How to Hug Trees	180		4	4	Theatre
Opera Glass	165		16	10	Music
Exeter Traditional Song Club	60		4	4	Music
Alabama 3 Acoustic & Unplugged	700		11	10	Music
Aquasky	200		6	4	Music
Magic Carpet'Fall' Into Art		22	2	2	Workshop
Exeter Symphony Orchestra	220		60	12	Music
RIP Mrs Pappadopulos	40		5	2	Theatre
Festival Ceilidh	95		6	12	Music/Dance
Dubterranea	70		9	4	Music
Klezmer - East European Dance (2)	31		5	1	Music/Dance workshop
Exeter Forum Theatre	70		9	8	Theatre
EMCo Poetry & Song	25		3	4	Poetry/music
The Passenger	101			5	Film
Society of Recorder Players	25		25	5	Music
The Guild of Fabulists	10		3	3	Theatre

Event	Audience				
(*) Number of performances if more than 1	Ticketed	Free	Artists	Non Artistes/ Volunteers	Genre
Blackdown Baroque	60		4	3	Music
Theatre Upstairs Solo Showcase (6)	67		7	4	Theatre
The Boys from Melbourne Street	50		6	2	Theatre
Ga Ga	350		4	6	Music
Hybrid Live	300		8	6	Music
Exeter Local History Day		750	17	3	Exhibition
City Steam Jazz Band	76		6	10	Music
City of Exeter Railway Band	100		25	5	Music
Eat Static, Phil Hartnoll & More	450		12	10	Music
Romantic Atlantic – Terrific Pacific	75		18	8	Music
Blowzabella	200		6	6	Music
Pets (Ramm)		9,000	1	4	
Eye to Eye (Ramm)		As above	Not known	As above	Exhibition
The Art of the Souvenir (Ramm)		As above	Not known	As above	Exhibition
This is me (Ramm)		As above	20	As above	Exhibition
Art Exhibition		5	4	7	Exhibition
Heather Tweed – Anubis		2,000	1	4	Exhibition
Suzannah Jones		As above	1	4	Exhibition
Digital Gallery III		300	11	1	Exhibition
Total	6304	15918	661	285	

Number Of Events **84**

Total Attendees **22,222**

*9,000 covers visitor figures for all RAMM exhibitions during the autumn festival period