

DIDSBURY ARTS FESTIVAL



Executive Summary

The Festival in Numbers

The 2015 festival had **over 7,000 visitors**, with **5,546** counted at specific events and an additional estimated audience visiting the visual arts trail and school art work in shops

Over **180 artists** took part in the Festival

93% of respondents rated the overall **quality** of Didsbury Arts Festival as **very good or good**

38% of festival goers were new audience, not having visited the festival before

In 2015 there were **131 separate events and exhibitions** in total

32% of the programme was **Music**, with 4 choir performances, 11 classical concerts, 7 jazz concerts and 24 other music events of various genres

29% of the festival was **Art and Craft** exhibitions, including a craft fair, a visual arts trail, open houses – art in people’s homes, and art in shop windows, East Didsbury rail and tram stations, created by local high school students

14% of the programme was made up of **Walks**, guided by artists and writers, responding to Didsbury’s local history

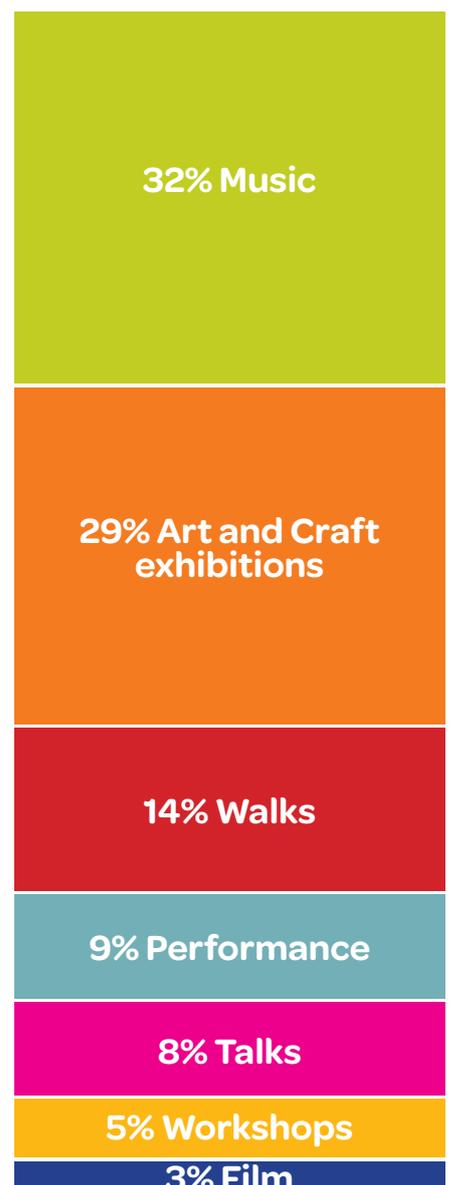
9% of the programme was **Performance**, including theatre, comedy poetry and performance art

8% of the programme was made up of **Talks**, most notably Patrick Gale’s talk about his new book, and Professor Tim O’Brian’s popular Sounds from Space talk, also significant contributions from commissioned artists

5% was made up of **Workshops**, including crafts, ‘Dreams to Writing’, art therapy and the very popular African Drumming with Jamtan in the sunshine!

3% was **Film**, including significant contributions from Cosgrove Hall and short film screening showcasing local and regional talent

OVER
7,000
visitors



13% of the programme was specific **Family Friendly events**, significantly a variety of events at the Day at the Parsonage, including the Bee Cart and The Whale 1 on 1 Theatre outside the library

73% of events and exhibitions **were Free** (96 free events in total)

27% of events were **Chargeable** (35 chargeable events in total)

75% of the audience travelled to the festival from **within a maximum 13 minute drive time.**

27% Chargeable

73% Free



Festival Theme

This year's festival theme was In-between Places celebrating Didsbury's position as an interesting and vibrant suburb or in-between place, where city and country blend.

We encouraged artists and audience to explore 'urban landscape' and the 'sense of place' in general or specifically in relation to Didsbury. The Festival questioned what it means to live and make artwork that is located on the peripheral zone or outer edge.

There was also a more liminal interpretation of the theme that links to this transitional year for the festival... In ancient mythology, in-between places were those places of transition, neither one thing nor the other, such as doorways, shorelines, the forest's edge, dusk and dawn. To some people these were the places of power, where the extra-ordinary was possible.



Festival Commissions

The festival commissioned 6 new pieces of work, all responding to the festival theme In-between Places. Most of this was funded through an Arts Council England grant. These works were:

Sean Burn – What The Dusk-Eyed Sees – a new poetry cycle and sound map
Emily and Anne – Lost in the Woods – a digital, interactive, animated painting
Memo – Didsbury Trail – designed and installed painted wooden letters around town

Sarah Butler – Walking The Edge – participatory walking and writing project

Simone Ridyard and Phil Griffin – Towards a Didsbury Sketch book – writing and drawings

Vonnegut Collective - ...tiny lights... - a new music composition and performance

Premieres

Sing Didsbury – a participatory choir workshop and performance
The Breath – Stuart McCallum and Rioghnach Connolly's new project
Cosgrove Hall – animation studio's behind the scenes talk / screening and children's event

Sounds from Space – Prof. Tim O'Brian talk / screening

Other notable contributions of new work and exhibitions included the popular Artists' Open House Trail, Lynne Duric's 'Twilight' site-specific watercolour paintings and open-air exhibition and Crystal Kershaw's NEST installations in the Parsonage Gardens.



What it cost

- The overall cash cost of the festival to DAF was £43,000
- The in-kind, pro bono and volunteer support was estimated at £16,000
- Grants (primarily Arts Council England) £13,600; Sponsorship and Donations £16,400; Advertising £4,800; Fundraising Events £5,000 and Festival revenue (primarily tickets) £4,500
- Overall income to DAF was £45,000, with the surplus invested in 2016 activity and 2017 festival



Volunteer Experience

58% of this year's volunteers were **new** and 92% also volunteer elsewhere. **92%** felt they were **clear about their responsibilities** and **100%** of those surveyed **would volunteer again**.

Overview and Economic Value

Individuals volunteered for an average of 12 hours each:
30 volunteers x 12 hours each x £15.14* = £5,450.14, constituting a financial benefit to the festival.

*The mean average wage for Manchester Withington Constituency, Department of National Statistics

Top Motives of Volunteers

- 23% - To give back to the community
- 23% - Because Didsbury Arts Festival is a good thing

Top Benefits to Volunteers

- 54% - Team / Community spirit
- 31% - Met interesting people

Didsbury Arts Festival 2017 and beyond

In 2015 it was decided that the festival should become biennial, producing a full 9-day festival every 2 years. Going forward this decision will help create a steady sustainable pattern of festival activity that people can rely on.

The main idea behind this is to create more time between festivals to develop and commission more new work with artists, develop new programming strands and build more outreach capability. Alongside this, the festival will maintain a strong network of volunteers and organisers and work on building a strong festival committee for the next festival.

Whilst the full festival will be once every 2 years, DAF will maintain a year round profile through funding the post of festival director year on year. This will help maintain the momentum and ambition of the organisation with one off annual events, fundraising events as well as the extremely popular Didsbury Lantern Parade continuing annually.

DAF 2017 : Sat 24 June – Sun 2 July

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