



Post Event Report

July 2023



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01 Setting the Scene



Bicester Festival returned for its sixth year on Saturday 15th July 2023.

This year's festival was led by OYAP Trust with the support of Cherwell District Council, Bicester Town Council, The Mill Arts Centre and volunteers.

Building on the most successful components of previous years, we planned a parade, performances and participatory workshops, ensuring everyone planning to attend could enjoy the festival spirit. We mixed performances across the two stages, encouraging the audience to move around the park.

Sadly the weather was not on our side this year. For the safety of everyone involved the majority of the activities in Garth Park were cancelled due to severe weather warnings.

However, we did have a wonderful parade and family activities at OYAP.

Lobster a la Cart, a huge, red inflatable Lobster, led school and community groups on a colourful parade through the town centre and back to OYAP.

Fam Jam didn't disappoint with lots of great games and giggles at the Family Disco, while our Lobster friend posed for photographs. There was also Face Painting, a Paper Sculpture Workshop and Ceol Creative joined us to deliver some excellent drumming workshops. We even had a visit from a Giant Ring Master!

Everyone was thankful that Loras Ice-cream had decided to join us despite the change in plans, meaning a well-earned treat for those on the parade!

02 Partners, Sponsors & Volunteers

This year we secured support from local businesses as well as local volunteers. The event would not be possible without their support and we know they enjoy taking part of much as we do.

Organising Partners



Sponsors



FindersKeepers™



03 Preparation and Promotion

- BE BICESTER
- BE INCLUSIVE
- BE CREATIVE
- BE ENTERTAINED
- BE SUPPORTIVE
- BE TOGETHER
- BE ENCOURAGING
- BE READY

On the run up to the event, meetings were held with collaborators in different areas of music, performance, operations etc. These were attended by representatives from Cherwell District Council, The Mill, Oyap Trust and Volunteers. Charneh Watson, a student on placement while completing her MA in Applied Anthropology & Community Arts at Goldsmiths University, was key in coordinating the event, in particular the performance elements.

BE BICESTER (above). Was updated to promote an inclusive message in all activities. This allowed us to promote different activities according to what they might bring e.g. Be Encouraging when supporting some of our younger, first time performers.



Social Media and Bicester Festival Website

From May 2023 each of the sponsors, performers or participatory stall holders were celebrated on socials and on our website.

We noticed that external reach was significantly improved if other parties were fully engaged in promoting the event.

Our 'one week to go' post had by far the biggest impact, with 27 shares and a total reach of 11,993!

Currently, 60% of survey respondents said they heard about the event on our socials.

Word of Mouth

As with any local event, it has to have the backing of the local population.

Currently, 20% of those attending did so because of information from friends/family or word of mouth.

The benefit of having the workshops and local community groups involved means they naturally promote the event as they want to support the young people involved. 60% of respondents were school/community based.

This was the first year we worked with the Otmoor Guiding division, providing workshops for Rainbows, Brownies and Guides. They were very supportive of the event and future participation.

Banners, Posters and Local Press

Last years banners were updated and distributed around Bicester.

All posters were printed and put up in the Town Centre, Garth Park and Crown Walk. Smaller posters were shared in local businesses and community centres.

The festival was also featured in the Bicester Garth Gazette.



04 School/Community Workshops

As with previous years, local schools were given the opportunity to take part in a workshop and an invitation to be part of the Festival Parade. This year we also put a call out to local community groups and were contacted by the Otmoor Guiding Division.

Our theme of Near and Far, celebrating all the reasons why Bicester was a positive place to live and work was well received. After talking about what makes Bicester great, we explored how would you travel here? We made trains, planes, cars, scooters, canal boats and some less obvious options including submarines, hot air balloons and diggers! Primary schools made cardboard vehicles and older groups made flags and banners.

Five schools and five community groups took part this year:

- Glory Farm Primary School
- Southwold Primary School
- Bure Park Primary School
- The Bicester School
- Whitelands Academy
- Otmoor Division
 - Rainbows
 - Brownies
 - Guides
- Creative Minds
- OYAP Art and Craft Club

The workshops were delivered by Kirsten Black, Nicolette Glashan and Janine Shutter either in the schools, community centres or OYAP Art Room.



Our local sponsor, Darcica, kindly collected and safely delivered all completed creations back to OYAP in time for the parade!

05 Bicester Festival Parade

Despite the last minute changes to plans, we once again surpassed previous Festival participant numbers and brought a smile to everyone involved or who came across such a wonderful sight.

We had approx. 200 people from across the community, including:

- Lobster a la Cart
- Glory Farm Primary School
- Southwold Primary School
- Bure Park Primary School
- The Bicester School
- Whitelands Academy
- Otmoor Guiding Division
 - Rainbows, Brownies and Guides
- Creative Minds
- OYAP Art and Craft Club
- Bicester Pride



06 OYAP Trust - Family Activities

The coordinating team acted quickly as the changing weather reports and subsequent warnings became clear. It was not safe to proceed with our original plans with storms and 40mph winds in an open space.

Following the parade we welcomed Fam-Jam to OYAP. The children and their families enjoyed games and fun in a proper disco atmosphere, including lights and smoke machines!

The central space was a hub of activity with face painting, games, a Giant Ringmaster and our visitors from The Mill Arts Centre.

We enjoyed a Paper Sculpture Workshop and followed this up with Ceol Creatives Irish Drumming Workshops.



“ It was a shame about it being cancelled but the ladies with the parade did an awesome job to carry on. ”



07 What We Lost...

We would like to recognise and thank the coordinating team and organing partners for the months of hard work that goes into pulling together a Community Arts Festival.

Cancelling the performances was heartbreaking, especially knowing we had such a great day planned. This is what we lost:

- 21 performances from local favourites including bands, soloists, dance performances and theatre.
- 14 community and participatory stalls. This included participatory activities from the Indian Block Print Co, Snowflake Books, Laughing Giraffe, Ceol Creatives and OYAP Little Artists. Alongside local craft businesses such as Glory Bee, Celine Beaugrand and Little Bear Cake Stands. Not forgetting our community groups: Bicester Pride, Wild Bicester, The Mill and the Oxfordshire Beekeepers Association.
- Our first bar, courtesy of Woodthorpe Wines! As well as delicious treats from Savour Fare, Oxford Crepes and Lorasso Ice-cream.

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Saturday 15th July

Town Centre
1030am Bicester Festival Parade
With Lobster a la Cart and local community creations
Meeting from 1000 at OYAP, The Old St Eburg's School, Cemetery Rd, Bicester OX26 4BB

Garth Park
Get Creative Midday - 430pm
Participatory Stalls, Local Artists and Community Awareness
The Indian Block Print Co. Snowflake Books Wild Bicester Art by Celine Beaugrand
Laughing Giraffe Glory Bee Ceol Creatives (Drumming) The Mill Bicester Pride
Little Bear Cake Stands OYAP Little Artists Oxfordshire Beekeepers Association

Performances Midday - 8pm
Local Musicians, Professional Artists, Dancers, Theatre, Drumming, Soloists and More...

Puppet Pedlar - The Cycle Helmet Troll & Three Bicycle Goats Gruff
Fam Jam - Family Disco Stages Theatrical Mini Professionals
OYAP Youth Theatre & The Missing Marmalade Bert Honour
Molly Jin The Flaming Keys Maria Merinova The Oscillations
Elite Dance Bicester Different Wavelengths Bradley Pullen
Bicester Concert Band Ceol Creatives - Drumming Bicester ECU
Boogie Woogie Bellas Just Dance John Jackson OYAP Masters

Find out more [bicesterfestival.org](https://www.bicesterfestival.org)

Organising Partners: OYAP, Mill, Cherwell
Sponsors: ocado, First Choice Medical, Bicester Village, FindersKeepers, Darciqa

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What's On & Where

Band Stand	12:00	Fam Jam - Family Disco	Scan the QR Code to download the schedule to your phone:
Stage Bus	12:15	Stages Theatrical	
Lawn	12:45	Mini Professionals	Piano Competition Winner
Stage Bus	13:00	The Oscillations	
Stage Bus	13:30	Bert Honour	The Cycle Helmet Troll & Three Bicycle Goats Gruff
Lawn	13:45	Bicester ECU	
Band Stand	14:00	Molly Jin	The Missing Marmalade
Stage Bus	14:00	Lin Juncheng Sun	
Lawn	14:15	Just Dance	
Band Stand	14:30	John Jackson	
Band Stand	14:45	Maria Merinova	
Lawn	15:00	Wild Boor - Puppet Pedlar	
Band Stand	15:45	OYAP Youth Theatre	
Stage Bus	16:00	Turk	
Lawn	16:15	Elite Dance	
Band Stand	16:30	Bicester Concert Band	
Lawn	17:00	Ceol Creative - Irish Drumming	
Stage Bus	17:30	Boogie Woogie Bellas	
Stage Bus	18:15	Different Wavelengths	
Stage Bus	19:00	Bradley Pullen	
Stage Bus	19:15	The Flaming Keys	

Share your day on our socials #bicesterfestival23

Organising Partners: OYAP, Mill, Cherwell
Sponsors: ocado, First Choice Medical, Bicester Village, FindersKeepers, Darciqa

08 Lessons Learned

Comments collated from audience surveys and feedback meeting.

What went well...

Planning and Organisation

- Master Spreadsheet
- Area focussed meetings, rather than larger steering group.
- Good working team
- Date and them fixed well in advance
- Road closure application submitted in good time.

Marketing and Promotion

- Good Social Media presence
- Banners out on roadsides
- Banners on Park Railings
- Posters and window in town centre
- Creative workshops, school involvement and now Guiding Group too.
- Schools/Guides sharing in their newsletters
- Sharing details of stalls/performers

Sponsors and Supporters

- Building support in the community
- Ocado Volunteers
- Darcica collecting creations
- New community volunteers

Parade

- Ocado Volunteers
- Otmoor Guiding Group joined us
- Lobster a la Cart
- 200 people took part
- Good mix of groups and ages

Garth Park

- Reduced staging costs by 50%
- Inclusion of community groups and local crafters with participatory stalls.
- Booked a bar following feedback
- Spoke to caterers about ensuring prices were not too expensive.

Areas for improvement...

Planning and Organisation

- Have a 'bad weather' back up plan e.g. purchase a TENS for OYAP or similar, in case of bad weather so the majority of the event can be moved last minute.
- Share on the day details further in advance

Marketing and Promotion

- Posters in town taken down prior to event
- Solid banners/less detail
- Use performers to promote the event better

Sponsors and Supporters

- Talk to more large local Orgs. early
- Include Housing Associations

Parade

- Expand community group engagement:
 - Cadets
 - Scouts
 - Community Groups
- Drummers dropped out late in the day, worried about the weather. Ensure there is a music alternative, this was missing.

Garth Park

- No events took place in the park 2023

09 Final Income and Expenditure

The charts below provide detail on the income and expenditure of Bicester Festival 2023.

