



Post Event Report

July 2022





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01 Setting the Scene



Bicester Festival returned for its fifth year on Saturday 16th July 2022.

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

Building on the most successful components of previous years, this one-day event combined a parade, performances and participatory workshops. There truly was something to inspire everyone, whether watching, performing or simply joining in the festival spirit.

Gwynhaff, a magnificent, pedal-powered dragon, led school and community groups on a parade through the town centre and into Garth Park.

In the park, Bicester favourite Aaron Williams seamlessly hosted both the bandstand and music stage performances. There were lots of opportunities to get creative, including arts and crafts, dance, theatre, and music making.

Just More Productions performed their vibrant comedy circus outdoor show and provided a Hula-Hoop workshop between performances. Gwynhaff posed for photos while the Festive Road team ran their dragon-themed workshop.

Live music lovers were entertained for more than seven hours with a line-up that celebrated a wide range of local bands, young artists and community groups as well as Witney-based singer and songwriter Torrin – winner of The Voice Kids 2021.

02 Partners, Sponsors & Volunteers

This year we worked hard to secure 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  ocado



FindersKeepers™



“
Jonno & the team mentioned they had a lot of fun and everything went well. Thank You.
”

James Gray
Ops Manager
OCADO

03 Preparation and Promotion

BE BICESTER
BE INSPIRED
BE CREATIVE
BE ENTERTAINED
BE SURPRISED
BE THRILLED
BE ENGAGED
BE READY

On the run up to the event, regular Festival Planning Meetings took place over Zoom. These were attended by representatives from Cherwell District Council, The Mill, Oyap Trust as well as Volunteers David Thompson and Ann Cadle. Minutes were taken and an agenda prepared for each one. Everyone had access to the Festival Spreadsheet which was an excellent way to record and keep on top of required actions.

This year saw the introduction of BE BICESTER (above). This branding allowed us to promote different activities according to what they might bring to visitors e.g. Be Creative at our Workshops or Be Entertained by our Performers.



Social Media and Bicester Festival Website

From March 2022 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. Torrin's post had a reach of 3187 individuals.

Our poster launch on 29th June had by far the biggest impact, with 46 shares and a total reach of 15,050!

60% of those who responded to the survey 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.

30% 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.

Our experience however across the two performance locations was that community groups, dance schools and primary schools brought in more spectators than the bands. There is an opportunity here for next year.



Banners, Posters and Local Press

Local print business Websmart provided 8 x A-Framed banners and 1 x large dated banner. These were 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 Mask Workshops

As with previous years, local schools were given the opportunity to take part in a workshop that would make them part of the Festival Parade. The change of date from September to July we believe helped increase footfall because there was a maximum of 2 weeks from workshop to parade rather than the extended summer holidays.



Our theme was mythical creatures, following the booking of Gwynhaff the Dragon. The children and young people created some brilliant masks, that became the highlight of the parade.



Four schools took part this year:

- Glory Farm Primary School
- Gagle Brook Primary School
- Brookside Primary School
- The Bicester School (Secondary)

The primary school workshops were delivered by Kirsten Black and Nicolette Glashan on-site and the secondary school workshop took place at OYAP, with visiting artist Simon Tipping.



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



05 Bicester Festival Parade

This was the best attended Festival Parade to date and a wonderful sight throughout the town. Led by Samba drummers and of course a fire breathing dragon who wouldn't be impressed?

We had approx. 150 people from across the community, including:

- Samba Drummers
- Gwynhaff the Dragon
- Gaggle Brook Primary School
- Brookside Primary School
- Glory Farm Primary School
- The Bicester School
- Bicester Pride
- Bicester ECU Cheerleading Squad
- Equilore (Unicorn)



Sadly, due to the anticipated hot weather we lost a few people, including the Mini Police.



06 Garth Park - Band Stand

The bandstand offered a wide range of family entertainment throughout the afternoon. 62% of survey respondents got involved here. It was opened by Deputy Mayor, Councillor Harry Knight and our wonderful host and local legend, Aaron Williams. On both public and performer feedback, Aaron was top choice and a great draw to the event.

We welcomed local dance groups: Bicester ECU, Mini Professionals and Elite Dance. OYAP Youth Theatre provided a reworking of some classics in *The Complete Slays of William Shakespeare*.

We were also joined by Oxford's Snowflake books, retelling Chinese folk tales, bringing the dragon and drums to life with the help of our audience.

Just More Productions didn't disappoint with their interactive show 'Do what your Mama told ya' and energetic Hula Hoop workshop.



“

The dragon was AMAZING!! Such an enjoyable afternoon at Bicester Festival. The team from OYAP did a fantastic job of organising the festival this year. What a wonderful, friendly community event. Absolutely loved it ❤️
Thank you

”



07 Garth Park - Music Stage

The music stage entertained the audience with a great mix of:

Community Groups: Brookside School Choir, Bicester Concert Band

Local Bands: Triskel 3, The Jerichos, Stages Theatrical, What The Funk, Bakers Treats

Soloists: Mark Burden, Molly Jin, David Thompson, Monarch, Simon Emm, Maria Merinova, Kit Goff, Grace Healey

We were also joined by Witney based singer and song writer, and winner of The Kids Voice 2021, Torrin.

Stages Theatrical were a popular choice on our survey and were active in promoting the event.



Bicester Festival What's On Music Stage

Download the schedule to your phone from the QR Code

Share your day on our socials #bicesterfestival22

12:30	Triskel 3
1:15	Brookside School Choir
1:35	Mark Burden
2:00	Bicester Concert Band
2:35	Molly Jin
2:50	David Thompson
3:30	The Jerichos
3:45	Monarch
4:05	Simon Emm
4:25	Stages Theatrical
5:00	Maria Merinova
5:05	What the Funk
5:50	Kit Goff
6:30	Torin
7:35	Grace Healey
7:30	Baker's Treats



“ It is great to see the community coming together and for families to have a day out. ”



08 Participatory Stalls

As an arts and music festival, we were keen to ensure the audience could participate in as many creative ways as possible. We welcomed 10 local arts and wellbeing businesses to Garth Park for all to enjoy. 65% of respondents took part in the activities and there were requests for more stalls next year.

- **Equilore** - Wellbeing Unicorn (Elsie the Pony)
- **Festive Road** - dragon-themed festival arts workshop and pictures with Gwynhaff
- **Snowflake Books** - Chinese dragon puppet-themed art and craft
- **Dance Creative** - dance & movement for older adults
- **OYAP Little Artists** - art, drama, and music for 4-7 years
- **Bicester Fabrics** - local fabric and craft shop
- **Laughing Giraffe** - origami workshop
- **Elite Dance** - youth dance demos/try it out
- **Mini Professionals** - youth dance demos/try it out
- **Bicester Pride/Festival** - Selfie stall



09 Lessons Learned

Comments collated from audience surveys and steering group feedback meeting.

What went well...

Planning and Organisation

- Master Spreadsheet
- Well focussed meetings
- Good working team
- Informing residents of event in advance

Marketing and Promotion

- Good Social Media presence
- Banner support from Websmart
- Posters and window in town centre
- Performer videos in advance
- Mask making workshops and school involvement
- Sharing details of stalls/performers

Sponsors and Supporters

- Building support in the community
- Repeat Ocado Volunteers
- Darcica collecting Masks

Parade

- Ocado Volunteers
- Drummers at the head of the parade
- Gwynhaff the Dragon
- 150 people took part
- Good mix of groups and ages
- The Unicorn!

Garth Park

- Band Stand
 - Aaron Williams
 - Community Involvement
 - Participation
 - Just More Productions
- Music Stage
 - Range of music
 - Quality of sound
 - Coordination
- Participatory Stalls
 - Range of activities

Areas for improvement...

Planning and Organisation

- Clear details on master spreadsheet
- Town Council rep. on the committee
- Fix the date well in advance with BTC
- Introduce theme early
- Submit road closure application as per process

Marketing and Promotion

- Signage on park barriers
- Solid banners/less detail
- Use performers to promote the event better
- Festival Bunting around town in advance
- Schools sharing events in newsletters

Sponsors and Supporters

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

Parade

- Engage More Local groups
 - Cadets
 - Brownies/Cubs
 - Community Groups
- Magic or circus group to make it more interactive

Garth Park

- Music Stage
 - Cost of sound and staging – reduce
 - Bands bring more audience
 - Guest artist suited to more visitors
- Participatory Stalls
 - More
 - Include community group stalls?
- Food and Drink
 - Less expensive offer
 - Include a bar
 - Introduce a 'Best Picnic' Competition

10 Final Income and Expenditure

The charts below provide detail on the income and expenditure of Bicester Festival 2022.

