

Councillor Representation Reporting Form

Councillor: Sonia Barker and Deborah Ray

Body: First Light Festival Steering Group

Report Date: 19th February 2024

**Meetings
attended and
dates**

**First Light Festival Steering Group
8th February 2024**

**Key issues
discussed at
the
meeting(s)
(relevant to
LTC and its
constituents)**

11 in attendance, including Jo Leverett (Chair), Lizzie Hall and briefly Genevieve Christie - First Light CIC, Cllr Sonia Barker and Cllr Deborah Ray - Lowestoft Town Council, David Lawrence - Kirkley Forum, Kirkley Youth Forum, Phil Aves - Lowestoft Rising, Josh Freemantle - Access Community Trust, Mark Jackson - Suffolk Police Inspector, Kim Boundy - Friends of Kensington Gardens Vol. missed her name.

The organisers emphasised that it is a local festival for local people. They aim for 70% local attendees.

This year's theme is Cardinal Points - N, S, E, W.

This year the parade will start at the newly refurbished fountains by East Point Pavilion at 11.15am and will include the Lowestoft giant puppet Sol and two new giant puppets. Dance East will be represented as well as local children playing wind instruments. There will also be a Brass Band.

The opening ceremony will be on the main stage at midday.

Three headline acts have already been booked:
Shaparak Khorsandi - Comedian, author, speaker, and advocate for human rights.

Colleen 'Cosmo' Murphy - well known in the global dance music community

Hollie McNish - award-winning poet, writer, and the Sunday Times bestselling author

The festival will follow the same times as last year:

Saturday 22nd June - midday to 9.30 pm with ticketed events at various venues around town after 9.30pm.

Sunday 23rd - Balearic breakfast event on South Beach at dawn. Events recommence at 10am and finish at 4pm.

The footprint of the festival is changing with the main stage being at the South end of the festival site by the new beach huts facing north.

It was accepted that the bowling greens were out of bounds and The Planet Positive area which was on the bowling green will now be located on the beach. More information to follow on the festival footprint. The Power Positive site will be more interactive than last year.

One of the bands featured on the New Dawn stage which showcases new local talent under the age of 25, will be given a chance to perform at the Latitude festival in July. There is an intention to increase input from local acts alongside national acts on the main stage. The Garden Stage is based in Kensington Gardens and features local musicians.

Suffolk Wildlife Trust will be represented and there will also be a reuse hub with fashion students demonstrating upcycling of clothes.

Safety and behaviour of 'difficult' attendees was discussed and having free bookable venues in 2023 kept the festival more orderly than the previous year. There will be more pastoral care for teenagers in 2024 and efforts will be made to engage those teenagers who would not normally engage with such events by eg. providing a DJ tent where they are encouraged to practise DJ-ing. There will be several roving volunteers to look out for the youngsters. Festival organisers are working with The Junction and liaising with high schools to encourage teenagers to get involved positively with the festival.

Cllr Sonia Barker raised concerns re vulnerable attendees and SEND young people who would be attending and how to be inclusive - FLF CIC have a 3-point plan to ensure inclusivity.

An event plan and site management map will be shared with SAG - Safety Advisory Group including the police, ambulance and fire services to ensure site safety. Event control staff communicate via radio.

150 volunteers are required and there is a volunteer co-ordinator vacancy currently advertised for three and a half months at 2 days per week.

The representative from Friends of Kensington Gardens requested that this year there are no art installations in the pond as they adversely affect the wildlife.

**Any actions
required by
LTC?**

None

Signed:

Date: