

Little Seagull's Children Festival

Impact Report – Lowestoft Town Council

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to outline the impact of the 2024 Little Seagulls Children's Theatre Festival. This was supported by funding from Lowestoft Town Council.

The event

The event was held on 17th August 2024 and delivered the following outcomes:

- 5 hours of free entertainment for Lowestoft families
- 2 Stages
- 4 Pop Up spots
- 19 different performances
- 22 stalls and vendors
- Over 200 hundred free books given out (in collaboration with the National Literacy Trust)

The event included the following performances:

- Riki Cycle – A specialist recycling themed song and drama show for small children.
- Adventures in Moomin Valley – A literature based show for small children which encourages reading
- Captain Calamity- A fun children's performance for all ages featuring science experiments and story telling
- Tommy J – A juggling and variety performance
- Dan Hanton's Traditional Punch and Judy Show
- Paul Preston Mill's Victorian Flea circus show – a fun sideshow event
- Peachy and Me – A traditional clown act
- Dot Collective – An aerial acrobatic act – who also offered direct experience for children using their equipment.

In addition to these there were 22 stalls and food vendors present who were all drawn from local businesses and residents.

Attendance

Whilst judging attendance is tricky – simple head counts were taken at several points during the day. These indicate that around 500 people were present at the busiest points, with as many as 1000 visitors overall during the 5 hours of the event. There was also a high level of sustained attendance with many families staying for several hours.

Measuring Impact

During the event we sampled 25 families to obtain basic information and demographics. Although the sample is small, we feel that these give us an indication of the likely overall make up.

Of the 25 families sampled, 18 provided post codes which fall within the 10% most deprived parts of the town – if this carried through the entire attendance it would equate to 72% of attendees coming from those areas of Lowestoft. This feels a little high – but still suggests that the majority of those attending were drawn from the most deprived areas.

We asked some basic questions about their experience of the event and found that

- 100% declared that they enjoyed the event
- 100% wanted the event to happen every year
- 96% said that the event has improved their wellbeing. (The 4% relates to one person who said that “nothing improves their wellbeing”)

Much harder to demonstrate is the impact on theatre attendance or access to performing arts more generally. However, in the weeks since the event we have held a Summer School for local children and relaunched our Youth Theatre and dance classes, here we have asked how many of the attendees attended the Little Seagulls event and found that on average around 70% of young people who were in these groups had attended the previous event.

Whilst we cannot say that their attendance at the Theatre festival led directly to their attendance at the later summer school or youth theatre – it is fair to say that the event definitely raised the profile of the opportunities offered at the Seagull.

Conclusion

The funding provided by Lowestoft Town council was a key factor in allowing the event to happen. Taken alongside other funders, the Council supported the delivery of over 200 free books, 5 hours of free entertainment and supported the work of 11 local creatives. It also provided an opportunity for 22 small businesses/local people and delivered an event which provided high levels of enjoyment, satisfaction and improved wellbeing. Lastly the support of the council has ongoing impact improving the take up of arts opportunities in the town and the consequent improvements in wellbeing and skills acquisition which arise thereafter.

Des Reynolds

18th September 2024