AIMS

The intention of the Springboard Project is to tackle the D&G LEADER issue of ‘developing a diverse and dynamic business base’ through:

• Building Spring Fling’s capacity to generate earned income and becoming more independent of public subsidy by investing in organisational development and new technology;
• Developing the impact of the Spring Fling brand year-round by undertaking new marketing initiatives and promotions aimed at building year-round audiences for products and events linked to Spring Fling;
• Refreshing the core of the Spring Fling ‘product’ by attracting young artists to take part in the event supported by a bursary and mentoring scheme that will encourage them to become the experienced Spring Fling artists and makers (and potential board members) of the future;
• Developing our audiences by forging much stronger links between Spring Fling artists and makers and their local communities and building on the fledgling Spring Fling Friends scheme;
• Making the most of the celebratory opportunities offered by Spring Fling’s 10th anniversary, which coincides with the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee by extending the event to four days and testing the potential for longer Spring Fling events in the future.

PROGRESS

ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Having employed a full time project manager and a part time administrative assistant, the new model has allowed Spring Fling to begin to have a presence out with the core event through the marketing of year round activities, digital developments, schools and community outreach programmes and partnerships with local organisations and businesses, in addition to the management and administration of the core event. The existing voluntary Board members have taken on an advisory role and through careful discussion and a skills audit, work alongside the project manager on key projects and tasks that suit their own specific skills. Having undertaken an in-house Board review of skills we have identified where there are gaps in knowledge and skills within the voluntary Board and once we have recruited additional members in September 2012, we plan to attend ‘Making the Most of your Board’ with Arts & Business. The vice-chair and project manager will have attended the Arts & Business ‘Introduction to Sponsorship’ and after receiving a proposal from a sponsorship consultant, it was decided by the Board that the project manager should take the lead in sponsorship developments. The project manager secured a meeting with Barclays Wealth in Glasgow in July 2012 with a view to them becoming Spring Fling’s principal sponsor – we await the results of this.

NEW TECHNOLOGY

In March 2012 we launched the Spring Fling webshop and smartphone app. With steady sales of Spring Fling products, tickets for events and brochure postage requests in the webshop between March and June we aim to further increase the number of artists selling products over the coming months and run a Christmas gifts marketing campaign. In part due to the webshop, we saw an
increase of 102% in web traffic in the period of March to June 2012 compared to the same period in 2011. We had over 25,000 visits to our website in the year 2011/2012. The project manager worked closely with the digital development agency DEKO to ensure that the smartphone app would compliment and enhance the core event but would also have year round relevance by becoming a year round guide to what our artists members are doing throughout the year. We have achieved this goal. The smartphone app was positively received and well used. Over 300 people downloaded the app between April and June 2012 and we saw over 350 instances of users interacting with the app by using the ‘I've Been Here’ button over the Spring Fling weekend.

YOUNG ARTISTS BURSARY MENTORING SCHEME

The first year of the Young Artists Bursary Mentoring Programme ran between February and June 2012. Having advertised the bursary scheme at art schools around the UK we had strong applications from recent graduates who had a connection to Dumfries and Galloway and in many instances had left to study elsewhere. The panel selected Coral Beattie a textiles graduate from Glasgow School of Art and Sally Hogarth a film and video installation artist who graduated from Central St Martins and Goldsmiths in London. Feedback from both the mentors and young artists has shown that the first year of the project was hugely successful with both young artists creating new bodies of work for Spring Fling, forging lasting relationships with their mentors, local communities and the venues and organisations with which they interacted. We plan to work with both young artists in the future and to welcome them both back to work with Spring Fling and local artists, and will sustain communication with them to enable this.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The first year of the community outreach programme in line with the stated objectives: ‘to attract more young people as audiences to the Spring Fling and other associated events, to realise the positive impact of Spring Fling for learning in the schools and college context, and to build lasting partnerships between Spring Fling artists and the communities they live in’, has resulted in Spring Fling artists and makers holding workshops, talks and demonstrations in venues and events such as The CatStrand, A’ The Airts, Wigtown Book Festival, Lochinch Castle Art Fair, The University of Glasgow and The Sulwath Brewery. We worked closely with tutors and young people at Dumfries College to set up an exhibition-mentoring project, which involved a Spring Fling artist working with final year art & design students on the planning, design, promotion and execution of a professional exhibition. These exhibitions became part of Spring Fling and we hope to see a number of these (now) graduated artists applying to take part under the new Spring Fling graduate scheme for 2013. The Creative Learning Network has been a great resource for enabling access to upper secondary aged children and in early 2012 we set up a joint project Transitions, with a clear focus on using visual art and craft as a vehicle to get 15-18 year olds to focus on what comes next. Through Transitions three Spring Fling artists worked with secondary schools in Lockerbie, Dumfries and Moffat and the work created was shown in exhibitions, which ran over the Spring Fling weekend and were promoted under the Spring Fling brand, giving local young people a sense of involvement and pride.