

Leader Final Report

Dumfries & Galloway Arts Festival: A Sense of Place.



Liminal at Cardoness Beach



One Day in June Dalswinton

Background to the project

1. The project took place between January 2013 and December 2013. The project idea was to involve more local producers in the 2013 Dumfries & Galloway Arts Festival. It was developed in conversations with Pam Pumphrey the Festival Chair and Peter Renwick about how the Festival could reshape itself to better support the work of the artistic community in D&G.

2.

3. The Six Stages involved the Festival Board in selecting six different projects. Sid Ambrose producing Liminal. Greyfriars Concerts, producing the London Soloists Ensemble in Residence. Moffat Book Events producing Hearts and Minds Book day. The Bakehouse producing the Big Lit Day. Kirkcudbright Festival Committee producing the Kirkcudbright On Song.

Peter Renwick, produced a new Youth Festival strand called Fringe 4 which involved several different organisations. Including the National Trust at Threave, the RBCFT, The Buccleuch Centre, The Summer Hill Centre, Youth Alive, Greyfriars Concerts, The Dumfries Community Choir Moffat Books, The CatStrand and Burnsong.

324 participants were involved in running events, or attending learning workshops. These separate projects had a total audience of over 1700.

4. The ambition of the project was to develop six distinct micro Festivals within the main Festival that would create distinctive events that reflect distinct artistic visions of producers based in our region. In doing so the Festival would support the work of these individuals and organisations.

4, The events were funded through the Festivals core budget, with many of the organisations providing match funding. LEADER part funded the development officer's post over this period, and contributed towards associated office and travel costs, Dumfries & Galloway Arts festival match funded this through its core budget.

The project experience

6. The project took place between January 2013 and December 2013. Key events were the Six Stages as part of the Festival in May and Fringe4 in October.

7. We engaged and worked closely with the Six producers who each created very distinctive events and contributed to what has been described as most successful Festival to date. Contributing to increase in ticket sales and very positive audience feedback. In total over 4000 tickets were sold for the main festival and 980 for fringe 4. 90 events and workshops took place in 50 venues. See Q2. Each event had a small group of volunteers who were supported by the Festival organisation to deliver their project.

8. The project was delivered by the hard work of the Festival its volunteers and partners. Who programmed and promoted a great series of events.

9. Extensive marketing took place including production and distribution of print, web and digital marketing, press and PR work. The Festival was hard to miss in the region and had national reach. This included web activity, social media, and e-mail marketing. Distribution of 12,000 Brochures and 10,000 what's on guides, 300 posters. Regular press releases and radio interviews, and engaging with locally connected individuals who were able to use three contacts to deliver local support.



The Big Lit Day in Gatehouse

10. The Festival had a net benefit of just over £100,000 to the economy of Dumfries & Galloway. It provides direct income to a wide range of small organisations involved in the event industry, and adds to the tourist offer. 22% of our audience are visitors to the region, 97% are likely to return. Each of our partners benefited by being able to deliver their programme. Audiences and workshop participants from across Dumfries and Galloway benefited from access to a high quality arts programme.

The project itself provides a mechanism to support six organisations to curate and produce six unique events. 60 volunteers were involved in organising and developing events.

11. The project had a budget of £16,836, with a leader contribution of £8193. Development officer's wages came in under budget so the leader contribution was £6022.22.

12. Over this period the festival undertook an organisational review, which has given a clear plan for the festival organisation 2014-2018. The main lesson learnt was that we are overstretching as an organisation and to bring the focus of the work of the organisation back into its May festival. This will renew the Focus on quality of programming, and improved communications and PR.

13/ 14 We hope to be able to continue this work with support from Dumfries & Galloway Council , Creative Scotland the Holywood and Robertson Trusts. The idea of the Six Stages will continue in the context of a more extensive supported satellite programme. This will open up the invite to the regions creative community to take part in the Festival. In this context it is being mainstreamed and has a sustainable future.

15. The project addressed the Issue of "Strengthening community spirit & civic pride" by curating distinct micro festivals that were curated run and



The London Soloists residency played in Gatehouse, Annan and Dumfries.

attended by local people. While have the capacity to bring in national and international artists, often playing alongside local artists and children. Each of these events had a something unique and special to offer. This came from being curated by individuals and organisations based in small rural communities.



Giants in the Forest in in Threave Gardens part of Fringe4