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## **Morley Literature Festival 2009 Evaluation Report**

**Date: November 2009**

### **Executive Summary**

This report critically evaluates the fourth Morley Literature Festival (MLF). The report takes account of opinions and feedback from the Festival Director, members of the public through comments from evaluation forms, the Festival Committee, and the South East Leeds Area Management Team. It is important that lessons are learnt from this year's event and that recommendations are put in place in order to build on this experience. The report endeavours to address all aspects of the festival and discuss the strengths and weaknesses and make clear recommendations for consideration by the MLF Festival Committee.

#### **1.0 Purpose of the Report**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to evaluate the 2009 Morley Literature Festival and provide a framework to consider for the future organisation of this event.

#### **2.0 Background**

2.1 In September 2006 the inaugural Morley Literature Festival took place and following its success Area Committee agreed that the festival should become an annual event.

2.2 An evaluation report to the December Area Committee on the first festival in 2006 recommended that a locally based organising committee be established and that a Festival Director be appointed on a freelance basis to develop the programme and deliver the 2007 Literature Festival. In 2007 Paula Truman was appointed as Festival Director and delivered a successful event through the organising structure of an Organising Committee and Officers' Group.

2.3 2008 saw a continuation of the 2007 organising structure but due to new project developments Paula Truman stepped down as the Director and Jill Morris was appointed as the 2008 Director. The festival Director was supported by the South Leeds Area Management Team in conjunction with members of the organising committee and Elected Members. Paula Truman's contribution as Critical Friend added to the creativity of marketing plans. This structure and the organisation in preparation to the festival paid off and a successful third Morley Literature Festival was held.

### **3.0 The Fourth Festival Structure**

- 3.1 Jill Morris was contracted for a second year as the Festival Director for 2009. Following recommendations from the evaluation report in 2008, line management for the Director was placed with the Chair of the Festival Committee. Further changes included revision of the Festival Committee membership and the establishment of a Management Committee.
- 3.2 The Festival Committee Management Committee met monthly from February 2009. It consisted of Cllr Gettings, Chair, Shirley Varley, Vice Chair, Lesley Gettings, Secretary, Janet Harrison, Treasurer, Jill Morris, Director, Tom O'Donovan, Area Management Team. The Festival Committee consisted of management committee members plus Sarah Henderson from Area Management Team, Peter Mudge, Town Centre Manager, representatives from the Friends of Morley Literature Festival, the Library Service, Find Your Talent, Extended Services, Joseph Priestley College and Bertram Library Services.
- 3.3 A clear work programme was followed and ensured that all partners understand their roles and responsibilities.

### **Recommendations for the MLF Committee**

- I. Employ a process to commission a Director for 2010
- II. At the first meeting of 2010 the composition of the MLF committees should be confirmed.
- III. Minutes from the exec managing group should be circulated to all committee members.
- IV. The constitution should be revisited at the next AGM.
- V. The Area Committee will be asked to confirm its two nominations.

### **4.0 The Festival**

- 4.1 The content of the festival was developed by the Festival Director. The event took place over seven days from 12 – 18 October with the main events at Morley Town Hall, the Village Hotel and Morley Library. The three main events were Brian Turner, John Hegley and Stuart Maconie, plus a literary luncheon with Mike Pannett and afternoon tea with Wendy Cope. All were excellent events: 117 luncheon tickets were sold (£20 each), and the new venue proved to be a good move. Brian Turner's event attracted circa 220, which was not as high an attendance as hoped, John Hegley's event attracted around 130 (after two cancellations from other authors John's event was not going to be as busy) and Stuart Maconie 350. Wendy Cope's event saw 48 attending. Tickets for these events were £7/£5. Events were also held at Morley Library and within the Town Hall. At the library, the Ladykillers had an audience of 30, the workshop with Rommi Smith 8, the Doctor Who event for the Wednesday was moved to the Town Hall with 110 attending, Art Angels on the Saturday had a steady stream of visitors to their stand and John Byrne's workshops attracted 30 participants. At the Town Hall, Juliet Barker's event was excellent and was attended by 35, the Drighlington Parish Council event was very well attended with 50, as was Steve White's event with around 40 in attendance. The Derek Landy event at the Town Hall for schools was attended by 630 pupils from years 6, 7 and 8 and the Gildersome Parish Council event with Dulcie Lewis by around 80. Again, the schools' programme was a big success with authors visiting 15 of the Morley schools.

- 4.2 The Leeds City Council Facilities Management Team were involved in the room booking process from an early stage. The town hall staff were of critical importance in preparing the rooms for the events and in the running of the festival and Parks and Countryside did a fantastic job of decorating the town hall for the festival.
- 4.3 The audio service provided by Purple Pro was excellent and efficiently run and organised. Audio was only needed for Wendy Cope in the banqueting rooms. Provision of a projector and screen worked well for Steve White and Charlie Walduck's events. A roving mic was provided for Q&A.

### **Recommendations for the MLF Committee**

- I. Continue to provide a broad programme of activities for all ages. Sunday daytime events, however, were less well attended, and we would suggest not holding Sunday day events in 2010.
- II. Continue to promote literacy in schools and if possible secure 'big name' children's authors for Town Hall events in 2010, as schools will attend, as proved by numbers at Derek Landy's event.
- III. Continue to hold the luncheon at the Village Hotel.
- IV. Continue with the early booking format and meeting with town hall staff in advance and just before festival over room set up.
- V. A post of designated house manager is to be explored for 2010.
- VI. As the Gildersome event worked so well, continue to expand on events outside the centre of Morley.

## **5.0 The Budget**

- 5.1 The financial foundation for this year's festival was secured by the Outer Area Committee with an allocation of £15,000. Match funding was secured from Leeds Artforms, Morley Town Council, Land Securities, Find Your Talent and the Arts Council.
- 5.2 Support in kind was given by the *Morley Observer*, Morley Library in allowing free use of the Baker Room and the White Rose Shopping Centre in displaying banners and advertising the festival on their electronic screens.

### 5.3 The Budget:

<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Festival Director	£12,000
Guest speakers	£5000 est.
School authors	£3,500
Website	£573
Town Hall Hire	£380
Marketing: bookmarks/posters/programmes (plus design)	£3,341
PA/equipment Hire	£1,040
Banners	£500
Contingency	£1,200
Literary Luncheon	£1,809
<b>Total</b>	<b>£29,343</b>
<b>Income</b>	
Profit 2007	£2,441
Area Committee	£15,000
Morley Town Council	£1,000
Land Securities	£2,000
Leeds Artforms	£1,000
Arts Council	£3,800
Find Your Talent	£3,000
Ticket sales	
Carriageworks £832.50	
Morley Observer £1,277	
Director £717	
Althams £757	£3,583.50
Literary Luncheon	£2,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£33,824.50</b>

### 6.0 Sponsorship, Funding and the Arts Council

6.1 Sponsorship income remains an area of great potential. However, a number of inroads were made during the 2009 festival. £1000 was secured from Leeds Artforms, and we should be able to apply for more for 2010. £3000 was granted by Find Your Talent, which should be renewed while this pilot scheme continues for the next two years. We retained sponsorship of £1000 from Morley Town Council and £2000 from Land Securities and were also successful with the Arts Council bid for £3800.

#### Recommendations for the MLF Committee

- I. Apply for a further Arts Council Award in 2010.
- II. Apply for a Leeds Artforms grant of over £1000.
- III. Ensure further Find Your Talent funding.
- IV. Investigate further funding opportunities.
- V. Explore sponsorship opportunities with local business and commerce.

## 7.0 Marketing and Publicity

### Marketing Strategy

- 7.1 Raising awareness in Morley and surrounding areas is crucial, and articles appeared in the Batley/Dewsbury papers as well as the *Morley Observer*. However, this year's articles weren't as full as previous years' press has been due to staff cuts and lack of advertising reps at the Observer. The planned four-page preview did not happen as the paper had no rep to sell the advertising space needed to raise revenue. However, the festival was listed in the *Times* top 25 book festivals, the *Yorkshire Post* culture section and listings, the *Leeds Guide* (plus an interview with John Hegley), Radio Leeds's website and Mike Pannett was able to give a good plug on the Saturday morning show when he was interviewed, as was Charlie Walduck on ITV1's *This Morning*. There was a further mention on Radio Leeds when author Robert Endeacott was interviewed and Magic 828 announced the street market and festival on Saturday 10 October. Perhaps the biggest coup was Look North filming the Doctor Who authors in Churwell Primary School, which was a five-minute feature on the news that evening. The festival also got a mention on the Radcliffe and Maconie show on Radio 2. Various websites also carried details, including artsfestivals.co.uk and the Arts Council listings. An email and postal database was set up after the last festival and this was utilised and added to.
- 7.2 Press packs were sent to all local, regional and national newspapers and radio stations to raise awareness, as were press releases. The main benefit from these was the *Look North* news article. The festival was also on the lists for forward planning during the week, but unfortunately no one was able to attend.
- 7.3 Securing the services of Delta Design and Print for the programmes, bookmarks and posters was a huge benefit to the festival: the result was professional marketing materials delivered on time. The staff were accommodation and easy to work with and very amenable, and the Morley location made logistics straightforward. These marketing materials were delivered to Leeds, Wakefield, Kirklees and Bradford libraries, Morley schools, the Morley Observer and other ticket outlets, Tourist Information Centres, bookshops and may other suitable outlets. Certain areas of Morley were targets of hand delivery of programmes. There was a print run of 7000 for the programmes, 8000 for bookmarks, 300/200/100 for A3/A2 and A1 posters, and 6000 flyers.

### Website

- 7.4 The establishing of an independent website for the festival in 2008 was a huge boon and the website work has been updated to allow the Director to update the website. It draws many good comments. The 2007 evaluation recommended having the ability to purchase tickets on line. However, this was to prove very expensive and for 2008 the Director looked into the possibilities of tickets being sold via a website like [www.seetickets.co.uk](http://www.seetickets.co.uk), but they are not able to handle such comparatively small amounts of tickets for a short time, and the Carriageworks weren't able to help due to staff illness. However, for 2010 it would be hugely beneficial to have online ticket-buying facilities.

### Banners

- 7.5 Three banners were displayed at the White Rose Centre (two on roundabouts and one inside), one on the Town Hall, one at Morley Bottoms, one in the Town Hall.

They are low cost but reach many people and more may be useful next year. Delta Design allowed PrintServe to use the artwork, which ensured consistency.

## **7.6 Other advertising**

Last year the festival had adverts on Radio Aire and at train stations. These were costly, however, and this year's budget did not allow a repeat. Additionally, people's feedback forms after the festival this year and last suggested that the main ways in which people find out about the festival are via word of mouth, newspapers and the website. Additionally, the facebook group now has over 150 members, however, and the number of Twitter followers is growing. These will be focused on more in the coming year.

### **Recommendations for the MLF Committee**

- I. Continue to develop a marketing strategy for 2010.
- II. Continue to build and promote the website, especially online ticket sales.
- III. Continue to use professional designer with experience of working with copy.
- IV. Continue to explore media outlets for 2010.
- V. Continue to develop a range of promotional materials.

## **8.0 Town Centre Management**

8.1 Town Centre Management again played an important role in the 2009 Morley Literature Festival with the organisation of the book swap and market and street entertainment on the Saturday 10 October. TCM and the Chamber of Trade led on this event this year and the help of Beverley Towle was appreciated.

8.2 Again, in 2009, as in 2008, the commercial sector in Morley and hospitality sector/restaurants within the town only responded to the festival with limited success. Beverley Towle of the Chamber of Trade was helpful and would be a good committee member. The Bee's Knees staff were supportive with giving out programmes etc., as were Cucina's. The contribution and role of businesses, however, could be greater and this will be explored in further detail for 2010. The luncheon at the new Village Hotel was a success and perhaps this venue could be used for other events next year as well.

### **Recommendations for the MLF Committee**

- I. Establish more links within regional business and commerce, via Beverley?
- II. TCM to use MLF to promote up and coming events in Morley

## **9.0 Schools**

9.1 The success of 2008's schools' programme was increased in 2009, due to feedback from schools, the addition of Find Your Talent to the committee and the assistance of Leeds Libraries, particularly Debbie Moody, who secured Derek Landy for the Town Hall event for 630 pupils, which was a huge success. While 2007's feedback suggested that schools would prefer not to have to bring pupils to events, they will do so for such a beneficial event and big name. Fifteen of the seventeen family of schools' members received at least one visit from an author.

9.2 An author visited 15 of the 17 family of schools. In addition to the event with Derek Landy, which attracted 630 pupils, numbers for schools events were as follows: Emma Barnes (East Ardsley) 60, John Byrne (Woodkirk, Fountain and Seven Hills)

170, Penny Dolan (Birchfield and Drighlington) 120, Antony Dunn (Gildersome) 50, Every Picture Tells (Seven Hills) 60, Mark Morris and Rob Shearman (Churwell) 50, Tom Palmer (Fountain, Asquith and Newlands) 250, Dorothea Smartt (Westerton) 30, Rommi Smith (Woodkirk, Bruntcliffe, Morley High, Asquith, Drighlington and Westerton) 160, Tracey Smith, 120. Total: 1700.

- 9.3 Building on family events that promote reading outside the classroom did not have an impact: the event with Ian Billings was poorly attended despite being free and well promoted in schools and libraries. Therefore it would seem vital that home-school links are developed.

### **Recommendations for the MLF Committee**

- I. Recruit more support for and assistance with the schools' programme in 2010.
- II. Continue to build on the links created within the Morley schools.
- III. Secure funding from Find Your Talent again.

## **10.0 Library**

- 10.1 2009 saw the library's involvement increase again with a representative on the committee. The additional free-of-charge venues were very much appreciated as was the help of the library staff in assisting with their running, staying open after hours and in providing refreshments.
- 10.2 The library events were all well attended (see figures above) except for the readers' group event with Linda Green. Only two members of the group attended, which was very disappointing considering the group requested an author visit and members knew about the event weeks in advance.
- 10.3 The library was very helpful in promoting the festival, displaying posters, giving out programmes and creating displays of visiting authors' work. Programmes and posters were also distributed and taken to libraries in Bradford, Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield.

### **Recommendations for the MLF Committee**

- I. Libraries should continue to work in conjunction with the Director in securing authors that will be popular for library events, and for all ages.
- II. As mentioned above, links with Debbie Moody, the youth librarian for Leeds, were very fruitful this year, and this should be pursued in 2010.

## **11.0 Stewarding**

The stewarding at this year's festival continued to improve, with Janet Harrison and Ann Dodgson doing a good job of drawing up rotas and co-ordinating the stewards.

- I. Use of walkie-talkies by stewards could be upped in 2010.
- II. Continue to develop a body of stewards.

## **12.0 Friends of Morley Literature Festival**

- 12.1 The Friends of the festival have now been running for two years and are a great resource. However, they seem to have lost some impetus over the last year and would benefit from some thought.

## **Recommendations for the MLF Committee**

- I. Members of the committee should meet with the Friends to discuss ways forward.

### **13.0 Literary Luncheon**

- 13.1 The 2009 Literary Luncheon with Mike Pannett was a great success, with 117 guests, and is seen now as the official opening event of the festival. Many positive comments were received.
- 13.2 The new venue at the Village worked very well – the food was good, as were the facilities, and the amount of work that had to be done by the festival was much reduced.

## **Recommendations for the MLF Committee**

- I. Continue to hold the event at the Village Hotel.

### **14.0 Ticketing**

- 14.1 See above for numbers at the various events. This year there were a number of negative comments re ticket sales venues, which will need to be addressed. A few people reported that the Carriageworks on occasion reported that they didn't know anything about selling tickets for MLF, and the Observer office closing at 4pm and at lunchtime often causes issues. Althams can only handle selling the main event tickets.
- 14.2 The evaluation forms were not as numerous as last year despite having been put on every other seat at events, but show that people did enjoy the events. They also give opportunity to add to the mailing lists.

## **Recommendations**

- I. Look into other ticket sale venues for 2010, especially online selling.
- II. The library could be a further ticket sales venue?
- III. Numbers of tickets sold for each event needs to be looked at more closely with projected numbers submitted a week before.
- IV. Ensure a more proactive approach is taken to getting feedback.

### **15.0 Short Story Competition**

- 15.1 This year's competition was launched in June and the theme was childhood memories. There were four age groups: under 8, 8–12, 13–18 and adult. It was promoted via the website, the *Morley Observer* and by Find Your Talent. This year's competition received far more entries than last year, but despite promotion in all schools the only school entries were from Woodkirk and Seven Hills.

## **Recommendations**



- I. The role of the competition needs further consideration, especially as to whether it continues to run in 2010.
- II. Friends, Find Your Talent or the schools' cluster leader could take on responsibility for the competition next year if the competition is to run.

## **16.0 Hospitality and Mayor's Receptions**

- 16.1 This year's receptions were very well run and we would like to thank the Mayor of Morley, Shirley Varley, councillors and Friends of the festival for their support and input.

### **Recommendations**

- I. Seek the continued support of the mayor and town councillors/Friends.

## **18.0 Bookstall**

- 18.1 Unfortunately Bertram Library Services were again unable to supply books all events and held bookstalls for Brian Turner and Stuart Maconie. Other book suppliers were Jill Morris, Rickaro Books of Wakefield and Philip Howard of Roundhay.

### **Recommendations**

- I. Seek a book supplier that can service the needs of the whole festival.

## **21.0 Conclusions**

- 21.1 The 2009 Morley Literature Festival was a success with events, including the luncheon, smaller events and the headliners, well attended and receiving positive feedback from the general public.
- 21.2 The schools' events were fantastic and have huge potential.
- 21.3 Online ticket sales are necessary.
- 21.4 A book supplier who will take care of book sales for the whole festival is needed.