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**Report of the Director of Neighbourhoods & Housing**

**Outer South Area Committee**

**Date: Monday 17<sup>th</sup> December 2007**

**Subject: Morley Literature Festival – Evaluation Report**

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**Electoral Wards Affected:**

Morley North

Morley South

**Specific Implications For:**

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Council  
Function

Delegated Executive  
Function available  
for Call In

Delegated Executive  
Function not available for  
Call In Details set out in the  
report

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**Executive Summary**

This report critically evaluates the second Morley Literature Festival. The report takes account of opinions and feedback from the Festival Director, members of the public through comments from evaluation forms, the organising committee, and the South Leeds Area Manager. It is important that lessons are learnt from this years 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 organising committee.

**1.0 Purpose of the Report**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to evaluate the Morley Literature Festival 2007 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 A report to the December Area Committee 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.
- 2.3 For the 2007 festival, the Festival Director was supported by the South Leeds Area Management Team in conjunction with Elected Members, The Morley Observer and the organising committee. Financial support was provided by Outer South Area Committee, Education Leeds, the Library Service and sponsorship from among others Manning Stainton, Bertram Library Services and Land Securities.
- 2.4 The event took place over five days from the 10<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> October with the main events at Morley Town Hall. Morley library, The Woodlands Hotel, The Borough Café and the White Rose Centre also played hosts for events. It is generally felt that the event was a success and enjoyed by all and attracting over 1000 participants.

### **3.0 General Organisation**

- 3.1 The organisation carried out before the event had a significant impact on the delivery of the festival this was highlighted last year as an area to improve. One of the positive impacts of the Festival Director was the creativity brought to the planning and marketing activities.
- 3.2 The success of the festival was largely due to the input of a wide range of partners. Area Management worked with the Director, local Councillors, Education Leeds, Leeds Libraries and community representatives to organise the festival. A clear work programme was followed and ensured that all partners understand their roles and responsibilities. The number of local people recruited as volunteer stewards and the 38 people who have become 'A Friend of Morley Literature Festival' are important factors and should help ensure the success of future events.
- 3.3 Recommendations from last year suggested creating links between the schools and local businesses for funding and to assist in meeting shared objectives. In response, this year a Schools Day was arranged and proved a great success with 163 pupils attending. Although commercial sponsorship generated more than £3,000 towards festivals costs, it is felt that the business and commercial sector has potential to generate further financial support. A 'Meal Deal' was promoted through town centre management by local restaurants with limited success. The contribution and role of businesses, particularly the hospitality industry in the town could be greater and provide the festival with an aim of increasing the vitality and viability of the town through furthering the local economy.

### **Recommendations**

Future events should:

- I. Capitalise on the interest generated through recruitment to the Friends of Morley Literature Festival by strengthening the local organisation of the festival.
- II. Continue to build on the links created with the schools, business and commerce.

## **4.0 Publicity, Marketing and Sponsorship**

- 4.1 The festival promotional brochure drew very positive comments and praise; the colourful and professionally produced piece of print was good for the image of the festival and Morley.
- 4.2 The demands of delivering a marketing strategy for the festival are high. It is such a crucial and time consuming aspect of the event yet essential for its success. Raising awareness in Morley town centre alone was labour intensive with staff out on the streets spending time talking to the public and explaining the festival. The design of a new logo enhanced the marketing of the festival and provided a strong brand but did delay some of the advance marketing.
- 4.3 Feedback from the public suggested that there will still a number of people in Morley who were unaware that the festival was taking place even though there was a huge amount of local press coverage in the Morley Observer and on street promotions which was broadcast by BBC Look North.

### **Publicity Material**

- 4.4 Nearly 40,000 pieces of promotional material were distributed. An initial print run of 5,000 festival programmes, 10,000 A4 flyers and 100 A3 posters were initially ordered. A further 20,000 A5 flyers were subsequently ordered as the initial supplies, especially of the festival brochure were quickly exhausted. Brochures and flyers were distributed to libraries, council venues, ticket sales venues, book shops, museums and galleries. Direct mailings of brochures were made to members of book groups, press and media contacts and a database of local people who had been involved in the Rothwell and Morley Town Centre Management Summits. The further print run of A5 flyers were used to distribute to all Morley school pupils (10,000) and the remaining were used to distribute to other library authorities including Wakefield and Bradford and in the Morley branch of Wm Morrison's supermarket.
- 4.5 Business sponsorship provided a promotional banner free of charge. Following its success, two additional banners were commissioned. The banners were placed outside the Town Hall, at the White Rose Centre and Borders Book shop at Birstall and were high impact and low cost.
- 4.6 The organising committee recognised that a website to promote the festival would be an important marketing tool. However, due to a lack of time, a quality independent site could not be tendered, commissioned and completed. As an alternative, Leeds City Council created a page on their website providing details of the festival. The main LCC homepage also promoted the festival. Morley Town Council, Manning Stainton, Dig Yorkshire and Celebrate Leeds 800 all had information and contact details on their websites.
- 4.7 The 2008 festival would benefit from having an independent website and, depending on cost, could offer the facility of reserving and purchasing tickets online.

## **Recommendations**

- I. Develop a Marketing Strategy in the early planning stage that outlines what and when marketing activities should take place and the audience they will be targeting.
- II. Create an independent festival website.
- III. Consider placing more banners in highly visible areas in and around Morley
- IV. Produce a range of promotional material in sufficient number to satisfy a detailed distribution strategy.
- V. Ensure that posters are visibly displayed in all Morley shops and businesses, consider an incentive say, 2 complimentary tickets in exchange for display of the poster
- VI. Develop a longer timeline for the development, production and distribution of all promotional material.
- VII. Include more booking information on the promotional material
- VIII. Investigate other marketing opportunities through Leeds City Council
- IX. Engage more local groups to take ownership of the festival and help promote it within their own communities and consider staging events.
- X. Recruitment to the Friends of the Festival should be ongoing through Morley Library while encouraging friends to act as ambassadors

## **Media**

- 4.8 Morley Observer were excellent media partners, providing excellent coverage for several weeks in the run up to the festival, that said coverage in sister papers was disappointing. The timing of the festival; clashing with other Yorkshire literature festivals; Ilkley, Beverley and Sheffield made it difficult to obtain coverage in Yorkshire Post and Evening Post. Listings were obtained in national press such as the Sunday Times. TV coverage on BBC Look North helped to raise the profile of the festival and Morley.

## **Recommendations**

- I. Review press contact list with Media Section Leeds City Council.
- II. Through the Marketing Strategy develop 'quirky' themes as the best way of obtaining media coverage including TV
- III. Develop contacts and build relationships with other regional papers in the catchment area and offer tickets as prizes etc
- IV. Investigate radio promotional opportunities
- V. Consider changing timing of festival so does not clash with other Yorkshire literature festivals. Would suggest Spring/Easter time.

## **Sponsorship**

- 4.9 Sponsorship income was increased significantly this year but remains an area of great potential. Land Securities and Manning Stainton provided £2,000 and £750 respectively. Education Leeds funded £500 towards educational workshop, Libraries funded a workshop session with Mary Turner held in Morley Library and Schools 'Gifted and Talented Funding' paid for the Annapurna Dance Company performance on the Schools Day.
- 4.10 It is envisaged that the 2008 festival would benefit from focusing on securing further sponsorship. Funding could be raised through a range of hospitality packages, e.g. bronze, silver, gold and platinum. Each level requiring a higher degree of sponsorship and in return the level of marketing and benefits would also increase. The provision of hospitality rooms providing refreshments with the potential for sponsors to mix with performers offer a unique selling point.

## **5.0 Content of the Festival**

- 5.1 The content of the festival was developed by the festival director in conjunction with the Organising Committee. The festival theme was 'Every Picture Tells a Story'. This theme was promoted well through the Short Story Competition, creative writing workshops and storytelling sessions. It was used on all publicity and offered an identity and focus for the festival events.
- 5.2 The Friday evening event benefited from having a schools music group perform beforehand. The main events also benefited from the services of Steve Smith (Education Leeds) and Councillor Terry Grayshon as comperes on alternative nights. Both provided a thoughtful and light hearted link to performers.
- 5.3 The 22 events that made up the festival programme provided something for a variety of ages. This number of events demonstrated the progress of the festival as an event and illustrated the creativity of the festival director.
- 5.4 Town Centre Management played an important role in the 2007 Morley Literature Festival. Street Entertainment was provided for Friday, Saturday and Sunday during the event by town centre management. This provided a focus and excitement in the centre of town and highlighted that an important event was being held. The Town Centre Manager liaised with local restaurants to pilot a 'Meal Deal' where tickets for the festival would be included in a set menu on each of the main evenings.
- 5.5 Siobhan Mac Mahon was booked to perform at the Lime Bar on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> October, however, following its closure, the Town Centre Manager assisted in identifying and agreeing a new venue in the town. This is an example of the key role the TCM has in involving the local businesses with the festival and should be expanded in 2008.
- 5.6 Support from Education Leeds highlighted the potential to develop activities around adult learning. The theme of the festival seemed to strike a chord with many and entries to the short story competition exceeded 200. The partnership with Education Leeds is something that could be explored in the future and possibly generate additional funding.
- 5.7 The creative writing tutors engaged were all well experienced in running adult workshops and this was demonstrated in the excellent feedback from participants.

- 5.8 2007 saw the first Literary Luncheon held as the opening event of the festival. 57 people enjoyed a three course meal supplied by a local caterer. Positive comments were received on the venue at Morley Town Hall and Sally Kettle, the inspirational speaker that followed.

### **Recommendations**

Future events should:

- I. Expand the role of local businesses involved in the festival through the Town Centre Management and continue with the street entertainment provision.
- II. Continue to provide a broad programme of activities for a range of participants and include adult learning based events.

## **6.0 Participation**

- 6.1 Attendance at the festival over the five days was estimated at over 1000. As expected the three headline events on Friday, Saturday and Sunday evenings attracted the largest audiences. Participation at workshops was particularly good and family events were all well attended. Audience levels at the main evening events could look to be improved next year through a longer marketing campaign before the event.
- 6.2 The evaluation forms have shown that almost half of the people who attended were from Morley but some people travelled from as far as Scarborough and Liverpool to attend specific events.

### **Recommendations**

- I. The range of venues used should receive detailed consideration. The Alexandra Hall for example is a big venue to fill. It is worth noting that the capacity of the largest venue used by Ilkley Literature Festival is just over 500 and used only for artists of international standing.
- II. Events at alternative venues to the town hall such as The Woodlands Hotel and The Borough Café attracted good audiences and positive feedback. It would be worth considering using a variety of alternative venues in the town centre in future years; local businesses benefit from the activity and they have the potential of attracting broader audiences in more sociable settings.
- III. Continue the positive relationship with Leeds City Council Parks and Countryside for the 'dressing' of the town hall which was very impressive and drew many positive comments from audience members.
- IV. The provision of a bar for refreshments during intervals and before and after the performances proved to be a welcome addition and enhanced the social side of the events. In future years this facility should be promoted in the programme.
- V. Events and workshops at Morley Library were well attended with the exception of the 'blogging' workshop. The library has huge potential for attracting audiences and it would be mutually beneficial to programme more events there in the future.

## **7.0 Evaluation**

- 7.1 Evaluation forms were available at events and attendees were encouraged to complete them at the time; they could also be downloaded from the website.
- 7.2 Over 100 evaluation forms were returned. The questions asked included what people had liked best and least and suggestions for improvements.
- 7.3 Responses to what people had liked best ranged from the majority which stated 'all of it' to people identifying particular events and acts. Workshops drew particularly high praise. Other comments were that people had enjoyed the wide variety of events and wished they could have attended more.
- 7.4 The least popular aspects or 'what people liked least' were warm beer and hard seats in Alexandra Hall!
- 7.5 Areas for improvement or suggestions for the future were for more marketing, especially outside of Morley, tickets should be available in surrounding towns such as Wakefield. More events for the 10-16 age range and that the festival should not coincide with Ilkley Literature Festival. Another suggestion was that there should be more local areas and something on local dialect and/or traditions.

## **8.0 Budget**

- 8.1 The financial foundation for this year's festival was secured by the Outer Area Committee with an allocation of £10,000 from its Wellbeing Fund.
- 8.2 An application to the Arts Council was successful, achieving the maximum grant at the time of £5,000.
- 8.3 Over £3,000 commercial sponsorship was also received towards the cost of the Festival.

8.4

<b>Expenditure Item</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Festival Director	£8,000
Guest Speakers	£5,270
Luncheon Catering	£1,155.00
Room Hire	£2,492.00
Marketing Leaflets/posters/programmes/stickers	£2,105
PA equipment Hire	£770.00
Dig Yorkshire	£187
Banners	£94
T-Shirts	£146
Fancy Dress Hire	£130
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>£20,349</b>
<b>Income</b>	
Area Committee	£10,000
Arts Council	£5,000
Ticket Sales	£2,000
Sponsorship	£4,650
Morley Town Council	£1,000
MICE	£146
Friends of Morley Literature Festival	£190
Raffle	£74
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>£23,060.00</b>
<b>Balance</b>	<b>£2,711.00</b>

8.5 Feedback from the Arts Council has been positive and suggests that a higher award could be available next year. They suggest that a future application must clearly demonstrate how the festival will promote community involvement and social inclusion. A good example of this work is the Sheffield 'Off the Shelf Festival' where they provide community groups with small grants for projects that promote community involvement and social inclusion. The 2008 programme could see events in community settings in addition to the town centre. This would promote community cohesion as well as making the festival more financially efficient as artists would charge a lower fee for a second performance in the same area in addition to the original performance in the town centre.

### **Recommendations**

- I. Develop a full project proposal including budget
- II. Apply for an Arts Council Award in 2008.
- III. Investigate further funding opportunities
- IV. Explore sponsorship opportunities with local business and commerce.
- V. Provide advertising space in the programme
- VI. Identify and recruit a major sponsor
- VII. Identify and recruit a major bookshop as a sponsor or key partner.



## **9.0 Implications For Council Policy and Governance**

9.1 There are no direct implications for the above as a result of this report.

## **10.0 Legal and Resource Implications**

10.1 There are no legal implications from this report.

10.2 The £10,000 commissioned by the Area Committee towards the cost of the festival has been spent and accounted for. Area Management officer time will be required to assist in the preparation and will support the development of an independent organising committee.

## **11.0 Conclusions**

11.1 The 2007 Morley Literature Festival was a success with events well attended and receiving positive feedback from the general public.

11.2 The employment of a freelance Director was a significant improvement and contributed considerably to the creative elements of the festival and providing a balanced and full programme of events.

11.3 Marketing activities and achievements were excellent and should be used as a foundation for a marketing strategy next year to promote to all of Morley residents and a wider regional audience.

11.4 The event was much bigger this year and required the continued support of Area Management to organise. A good level of sponsorship and funding was secured from both the public and private sector.

## **12.0 Recommendations**

Members of the Outer South Area Committee are requested to:

- (a). Note the contents of this report and consider any actions
- (b). Congratulate the Festival Director and the Morley Literature Festival Organising Committee on the success of the event.
- (c). Support in principle the continuation of the Morley Literature Festival