

Heaton Festival

Thank you very much for supporting Heaton Festival 2019. The event was again a great success, growing by about 20% versus 2017. Through your generosity, we are able to create a strong and inclusive community in Heaton that is able to develop and support itself.

To create this growth, we continued our approach gentle expansion by experimenting with several new ideas and also continuing to develop our established areas.

As one of our funders, I wanted to give you a flavour of how the money you shared was used. In most of the sections the title is a link to our website to give you more detail if you are interested.

[Performance](#) – We added an extra stage this year moving us from 3 to 4 stages, as well as adding a 5th “A’Capella” area where some of the unamplified bands could continue to play after their main set. These stages allow for a wide range of talent from all different backgrounds to get the right setting and exposure for them, whether that be established acts or young people performing at this scale for the first time.



[Community groups](#) – We had 25 community groups across the festival (up from 20) allowing those groups which support the local community to raise both awareness, increase engagement and membership and for some to fundraise many hundreds of pounds.

[Local small businesses](#) – We had market stalls from 33 local small business helping them to get known in the community and hopefully build more sustainable business within Heaton and the surrounding area.

[Food](#) – We increased the number of food providers from 14 to 18 this year and still the vast majority completely sold out. Over 75% of the businesses were Heaton based with collective takings of over £20,000 going into the local economy and of which 10% fed back in to the festival funds.

[Sports, Health and Wellbeing](#) – We added Health and Wellbeing onto our Sportszone this time and a whole new area to the festival. The focus of this area balanced physical and emotional wellbeing with environmental based charities and encouraged attendees to get involved after the event.



[Children](#) – We continue to offer many free activities for children that at most events would come at significant cost, as a way to give families access to things that their circumstances might not normally offer. Events included Circus skills, Animal petting, Paintball target shooting, Inflatables, crafts and facepainting.



[Youth](#) – Our Youth zone developed from its first outing in 2017 to roughly double in size. We are still learning the best way to engage youth, but this time included a DJ Chillout room, an Escape Room and Football skills.

[Community Art Project](#) – We doubled our spend on Art this year, working with a local mosaic artist to create several large floor mounted mosaics which will be installed in the Park near to the children’s playground as a lasting legacy to the community Heaton is creating. We ran several sessions before the festival to engage people of all ages, and then 100s of people on the day filled out 45 Mosaic tiles according to the designs taken from the pre-work.



[Peace Walk](#) – By joining with the Jo Cox “Better Together” event we continued to build on the Peace walk idea with 100s of people walking from the Local mosque and being received at the festival. The theme of “There is more that unites us, than divides us” being exemplified in the many banners brought along from the 6 local schools that were key to the walk’s success

[Faith and Outreach](#) – Over 90% of our contributors are aware the event is organised by the Churches (up from 50% last time) and the witness of Christian love to all attendees shines as a light of Christ’s love to all of our attendees and beyond. We also try to weave opportunities to engage with the Christian faith throughout the festival. The 4th stage we added only played Christian music and offered people the opportunity for prayer, with 2 people giving their lives to Jesus. Our pan festival theme of “My place” challenged people to think about their place in the world through Art, Prayer and conversation. We have also used our developed website and facebook presence to invite people to many post festival “easy invite” events across our many churches as a way to develop contacts with the churches.

Beyond what the general public see we had significant efforts to develop our Health, Safety and Licensing efforts. Our costs in this area have risen from just over a thousand pounds in our first event in 2011, to nearly £6000 this time. A sign of times in the costs it now takes to run a large public event, but also of the events success, as we need to create a more robust underlying infrastructure.

We also have continued to develop our tracking of the consequences of the festival. 88% of our contributors tell us they would attend a similar event again, 57% say that the event organisation exceeds their expectations, and many groups tell us how their particular organisation has grown in terms of awareness, community engagement and membership.

Let me finish by thanking you again for your support. We are a not-for-profit organisation, and with your funding we wouldn’t be able to achieve all the things we did. We expect to be back again in the summer of 2021, and we hope that you will feel able to support us again, based on the way that you see your resources are used.

Mark Ridyard
Heaton Festival Coordinator and Heaton Churches Together Trustee