

Review of Council-funded Festival & Event activities in 2017/18

1. Residents' Weekend: 31 March – 2 April

This aimed to increase the popularity of the GL Card (formerly the Residents' Card), celebrate all things local to Gloucester, encourage residents to become tourists in their own city and improve trade for local businesses. Heritage attractions offered free or reduced entry/ local businesses offered discounts to people with a GL Card. MGL secured and collated over 100 offers and published 30,000 promotional leaflets, which were distributed by the TIC and by hand in the week leading up to the event. It also promoted the event through social media, local media, posters, banners, and bollard covers. And it provided an entertainment programme over the two weekend days to help create an atmosphere in the City centre.

Almost 3,000 people signed up to the new GL Card over the course of the weekend and there were hundreds of card uses. One trader reported over 50 sales directly related to Residents Weekend and the use of the card.

2. Tall Ships Festival: 27 – 29 May

Tall Ships 2017 took place against the background of the terror attack in Manchester, which happened only a few days before. The UK remained on its highest level of security alert for the first two days of the event and the BBC reported it was the first large outdoor event after this terrible tragedy. The MGL marketing team worked hard to create positive news flow that built public confidence about the event being safe, reducing the adverse impact of the terror attack on footfall. Pre-sales ensured the event was still able to break even on a Gross Profit basis (excluding staff and company overhead costs). The total cost of the event was £170,000.

FEI evaluated this event as part of the Review of Major Events & Festivals in Gloucester (see paragraph 3.3). The MGL team's own review recognised a need to keep evolving the quality and breadth of the Tall Ships offering to prevent it feeling tired. MGL is planning a significant refresh for the 2019 event, with more family-based and experiential activities.

3. Sea Shanty Festival: 27 – 28 May

Folk and shanty music performances in various pubs in Gloucester City Centre and at a temporary outdoor venue MGL set up in Kings Square. The festival is independently organised and was once again sponsored by Kings Walk. MGL provided funding, staff time and marketing.

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4. Henson Pig Sculpture Trail: launched 3 June

Funded completely by sponsorship, the Royal Three Counties Henson Pig Trail consisted of 40 pigs painted by artists from around the country, dotted around the city and country. MGL printed and distributed over 100,000 brochures; others were distributed online. Local press promoted the trail.

5. Cityfest – Park Fun Day: 9 July

Once again, MGL provided sponsorship and assistance towards One Church's Cityfest event in Gloucester Park. This is a family fun day with bouncy castles and music, and starts at the same time as the annual 10K race in the Park. As usual, it was very well attended.

6. SoMAC: June - August

MGL used the SoMAC brand, which it introduced in 2016, to promote all festivals taking place in the city over the summer. The overarching SoMAC programme included: the Blues festival; 'free to enter' classical music festival; Art in the City; Retro festival; and Urban Weekender "Kings Jam".

MGL helped to fund artists and programmes, and provided the stage in Kings Square and marketing and branding to promote the events throughout the City and further afield.

The week-long entertainment programme on the SoMAC stage ran between 11am and 3:30 pm every day and showcased work by local artists, both amateur and professional. It included music, dance, theatre, and spoken word and gave the general public easy access to cultural performances,

MGL promoted 179 events under the SoMAC brand over the course of the summer, compared to 300 events in 2016 when the festival benefited from ACE funding. And it successfully used the brand to lever £139k external funding from 40 different sources, including monies from the Henson Trail.

7. Art in the City: 15 – 16 July

Year two of a weekend-long festival that celebrates all genres of art. Activities included: an art competition with 60 participants; 72 free art classes covering 12 different activities, held in Kings Walk, Eastgate Shopping Centre, Gloucester Cathedral, The New Inn, and The Paint Pot in Eastgate Street; art

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demonstrations and drop in workshops in the Gate Streets and Kimbrose Triangle; art themed performances; street artists painting live in Kings Square and art exhibitions in The Fountain Inn, Kings Walk, Blackfriars and Eastgate Shopping Centre. This year's event was not supported by an Arts Council grant but benefited from sponsorship for the SoMAC festival and specific sponsorship from WSP.

FEI evaluated this event as part of the Review of Major Events & Festivals in Gloucester. MGL's own review noted a drop in community-based activities.

8. Rugby in the Park: 15 July

Organisers, Longlevens RFC and Old Cryptians RFC were unable to run this due to a lack of staffing.

9. Stunt Shows: 22 – 23 July

Organised and promoted by MGL. Four different circus-themes and stunt shows – a total of eight performances. Audiences ranged from 100 – 2000; the variance was down to the weather.

10. Gloucester Carnival: 29 July

MGL works with the Carnival Committee to deliver this event. The carnival procession started in Westgate carpark this year and travelled to Gloucester Park. MGL acted on behalf of the Committee to recruit a carnival artist that taught local artists how to make carnival costumes and models; this resulted in improved entries in the procession. This approach also enabled local artists to develop skills and increased capacity for developing future carnival entries. There were 36 carnival entries this year, nine more than in 2015 and two more than in 2016, and city centre footfall sensors (installed in 2017) showed approx. 10,000 people lined the streets.

MGL worked as part of the Carnival Arts Partnership to secure £10k from Gloucester Culture to support this year's Carnival. This allowed many more community groups to be involved and supported the professional development of Partnership members.

FEI evaluated this event as part of the Review of Major Events & Festivals in Gloucester.

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11. Music in the Park/Summer Sound: 29 July

MGL provided funding, infrastructure and staffing for this event, which took place in Gloucester Park immediately after the 2017 Carnival procession ended. But audiences drifted away, detracted by the funfair at the same location. This event should be dropped for 2018.

12. Gloucester International Rhythm and Blues Festival: 22 – 30 July

Blues promoter, Tim Porter booked acts into the City and MGL worked with him to promote these. The closing event at Café Rene's outdoor stage was, as ever, well attended. The weekend-long Blues Festival is a regional event and Gloucester audiences mostly come from the South West and the South Midlands. MGL provided funding for the programmer, printed programmes and promoted the event via social media and the MGL website:

thecityofgloucester.co.uk

FEI evaluated this event as part of the Review of Major Events & Festivals in Gloucester. MGL's own review noted the event was slightly smaller than in 2016 and attributed this to changes in management at a number of pubs.

MGL's other observations are that the festival: widely benefits the local pubs and cafes who host bands during the trail; has high attendance; and increases dwell time in the city.

13. Fireworks: 5 August

Organised and promoted by MGL since 2015, this breath-taking firework display, delivered by the company behind the London Eye fireworks and. set to music, fell, as usual, on the final day of the two-week summer festival. Local dance groups opened the show with a variety of dance performances; this was followed by music. A bar, catering and acoustic music added to the ambience. There was an audience of about 14,000, the highest ever. The growing audience and growing trees are impacting on Health & Safety costs, which are steadily increasing.

14. Classical Music Festival/Folk Festival

MGL provided marketing support and some staffing for the 2017 'free for all' Classical Music Festival. Attendance was good with audiences of up to 200 for the fourteen events.

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MGL is organising and promoting the 'Gloucester Get Folked' trail on behalf of the BID. It will be happening between 23 and 25 February 2018.

15. Gloucester Goes Retro: 26 August

A display of classic and vintage vehicles in the Gate Streets, organised by Cllr Colin Organ. Re-enactors and members of the public dressed in retro clothing and there was 'all day' entertainment on the SoMAC stage. A retro bar and stalls added to the event. Prizes were awarded for best vehicles and retro outfits.

2017 was hugely successful event and drew bigger crowds than ever. MGL's support included staff resource leading up to and during the event, producing website, PR (including posts on Facebook and other social media channels), competition prizes, and the organisation of events in Kings Square.

FEI evaluated this event as part of the Review of Major Events & Festivals in Gloucester.

16. Gloucester Day: 2 September

As part of its support for Heritage Open Days and the History Festival, MGL made an annual contribution of £2k to the Gloucester Day parade. Gloucester Day is organised by Alan Myatt and supported by MGL which provides stewarding, licensing, road closure arrangements, and PA and general support. The day involved two processions through the City centre, one to celebrate the official 'mayor making' of the Mayor of Barton and another to celebrate the Gloucester Community. The City was filled with stalls and music performances.

17. Christmas Lantern Procession: 19 November, and Tree of Light: 26 November & 9 December

MGL provided promotional, organisational and marshalling support for these community events. Six schools from across Gloucester each partnered with one of six artists to make beautiful paper lanterns based on a 'Pantomime' theme. The lanterns were then used in a procession through the streets of Gloucester. As the parade passed through, the Christmas Lights were switched on. This event concluded with a free carol service in Gloucester Cathedral.

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The Rotary Club of Gloucester organised performances that took place around the Tree of Light on 26 November and 9 December, with our Mayor and Sheriff, The Mayor of Barton and BBC Radio Gloucestershire all supporting the ‘switching on’ activity. These events raised money to support Rotary Club charities and helped add to pre-Christmas activity in the City centre.

FEI evaluated the Lantern Procession as part of the Review of Major Events & Festivals in Gloucester. MGL’s own review noted different formats of this established community-based event have been trialled over a number of years and 2017’s event was as popular as ever.

18. Local Community events

MGL provided sponsorship for the Gloucester Battle of the Bands contest, a collaborative venture between Café Rene and Gloucester Guildhall. The winning act was given a place at the Guildhall’s Underground festival.

MGL also sponsored the 2017 [Believe in Gloucester](#) Awards jointly with the City Council.

19. Additional Events organised and/or supported by MGL

Event	Lead organisation	MGL outputs/ support for event
Gloucester Quays Spring Fest, Food Festival and Victorian Market	Gloucester Quays	Marketing
Gloucester Beer Festival	CAMRA	Marketing and GL Card offers
Dragon Boat Race	Rotary	Marketing
Chaplin’s Circus	Chaplin’s Circus	Licensing
Gloucestershire Pride	LGBT+ community	Advisory/Licensing
Race 4 Life		Licensing

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Gloucester 10K	Davies and Partners	Licensing/ promotion
Classical Music Festival	Sebastian and Vicki Field	Promotion/ sponsorship/ staff/ licensing
Jamaican Independence Day	Tyler Atwood	Sponsorship/ mentoring/ staff / provision of infrastructure
MSB Dance Battle		Staff
Diversity Festival	Valerie Simms	Marketing and GL Card offers

20. Additional Funding committed by MGL

MGL spent £412k, excluding staff and other operating costs, on its Festival & Event activities in 2017; this is likely to rise to approx. £427k by the end of March 2018. MGL's total expenditure for 2017-18 is expected to be £710k and includes approximately £283k on overheads, the provision of other services such as tourism, maintaining city websites, social media, and supporting the successful launch of Gloucester BID. This expenditure was partly covered by the City Council's £348k grant payment and MGL successfully raised the £362k difference through commercial income and sponsorship.

21. History Festival: 2 – 17 September

This year's programme featured 201 events, including the Gloucester Day parades and workshops on family history, city history, old handwriting and calligraphy. Also talks and tours on local places of interest, musical recitals, drama, a family day and nine days of Blackfriars talks, some by prominent experts: Tony Robinson, Dan Snow, Ken Clarke, Roy Hattersley and the festival president, Janina Ramirez.

24 organisations/ community groups were involved in organising the City Voices (local history) part of the programme. A total of 3829 people attended these events.

The Civic Trust organised the Heritage Open Days part of the programme, which benefits from English Heritage's national marketing campaign. Gloucester came 3rd in the country for numbers of events this year, beaten only by Oxford and Norwich.

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The Blackfriars Talks were very successful and there was a 153.5% increase in ticket sales, compared to last year. For the first time, eight talks sold out and two talks had less than ten tickets left.

The History Festival board, chaired by Richard Graham MP, employed 3 members of staff this year: a festival coordinator; a fundraiser and sponsor manager; and a curator for the Blackfriars programme, funded by Festival income and Great Place.

MGL provided promotional support for this event.

Work is already well underway for the 2018 festival.

A full report is available on request from mhairi.smith@gloucester.gov.uk

FEI evaluated this event as part of the Review of Major Events & Festivals in Gloucester.

22. Three Choirs Festival

The Council set aside £5,000 as an annual contribution towards the development of this annual touring festival, helping to ensure it is bigger and better each time it visits Gloucester.

MGL staff met with organisers to ensure the festival will be promoted more locally than in previous years.