

LINK COUNCILLOR REPORT

ARUNDEL FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS

20th-30th August 2021

2021 Plans

Barring any further change in government thinking, the signs are that the festival will proceed as planned in August. This is on a reduced scale compared to pre-Covid years and has taken account of peoples' health concerns by increased focus on outdoor events, with indoor activities being run on an all-ticketed and (as far as possible) pre-booked basis, in venues with plenty of space. A TXGB ticketing system for all events will sit on the Festival and Love Arundel websites, though no tickets will go on sale before the expected government announcement on the 12th July.

The Festival focus in 2021 has been more directed on activities for the local community, and the goal is described as being to:

“Deliver a welcoming, quality, professional, fun and accessible Festival, primarily aimed at local residents, businesses and community groups, with a strong focus on open-air and “big space” events with enhanced health and safety measures”.

The opening of the festival is scheduled for 4.00pm on Friday 20th August, with pupils from both Arundel primary schools participating in a procession with flags that they are making in a special art project (the Town Council is contributing to the cost of the materials).

The gallery trail will take place in 23 venues, compared to 57 venues in 2019. These will primarily be churches, public buildings, galleries and retail spaces, with only 7 private homes being open to visitors. As a new initiative there will be a Sculpture Trail, including a 'Zoo Trail' with large wooden animals created by Simon Groves, the chain-saw artist. As in 2019 there will be a willow sculpture on the Priory Wall at the top of the High Street.

There are plans for the Arundel Museum and Cllr. Mark Phillips to stage a 'Heritage' exhibition and tours in the Town Hall on the 23rd-25th August, which will be a step towards the Council's objective of increasing resident footfall through the building.

Looking Forward

The Arundel Festival has now been running for over 40 years and has gone through many different phases during that period. Once the 2021 event is delivered the Festival Committee are planning to initiate a consultation on the kind of Festival that Arundel residents would like to see in future (this consultation was originally planned for 2020 but was postponed because of Covid).

From the Council's perspective, the questions that may need to be considered include:

1. What is the purpose of the Arundel Festival? Where should it lie on the spectrum between being a local carnival and being an internationally-celebrated "Festival of the Arts" (in the 1980's artists of the caliber of Derek Jacobi, David Hockney and George Melly featured in the festival), or how can it be both?
2. Can a festival on this scale be delivered by volunteers without a full-time coordinator? The Arundel Festival has a huge and ever-increasing amount of regulatory form-filling to manage, but there is also a major task in finding, retaining, and delivering value for sponsors-in addition to organising the event itself.
3. What is the role of the Town Council in relation to the festival? At present the Council is providing an annual cultural grant (£5,000 in 2021) but this has been supplemented by many hours of work from our Community Events Manager which have effectively been a further donation 'in kind'.
4. How can the festival be funded in future? Where will sponsorship come from, and why will individuals or organisations choose to sponsor the Arundel Festival?

Tony Hunt

Arundel Festival Link Councillor Report

1st July 2021