

Midfest

Report by Garry Sheret, Head of Property and Facilities Management

1 Purpose of Report

This report is presented to advise the Council of:-

- (a) Success and outcomes of Midfest 2015 festival and
- (b) Outline options going forward for the Midfest 2016 festival.

2 Background

2.1 Previous Reports

Midfest 2013

In May 2013 a joint report by Director Corporate Resources and Director Education and Community Services entitled "Midfest" initiated the inaugural Midfest Festival of Arts and Culture which took place across Midlothian during the period 21 to 28 September 2013.

Midfest 2014

Based on the success of Midfest 2013, Midfest 2014 was held from the 6 to 14 September 2014 featuring opening events and local community based events. The addition of a pop concert (Grown in Scotland) broadened Midfest's reach. Furthermore the Director, Resources oversaw the event planning under the auspices of the Legacy 2014 Active and Connected themes as approved by Council in February 2014.

The formation of the Safety Advisory Group led by the Council included key partners involved in organising events.

To fund the event costs Council agreed to utilise funding of £30,000 from Members' environmental budget.

Midfest 2015

The Council report of February 2015 outlined on the success for Midfest 2014 and detailed the resources and financial implications of Midfest 2015. The report also highlighted the opportunity to use Midfest 2015 as a means of promoting Midlothian coinciding with the opening of Borders Railway during September 2015. Additionally Council requested the Director Resources pursue external funding with the intention of reducing the level of financial support from Council, with the provision that the Council would underwrite costs to allow the necessary event planning to progress.

The opening of the Borders Railway on the 6 September 2015 coincided with the planned Midfest weekend. At the meeting of the Safety Advisory Group the Director Resources considered the potential strain on Council resources to fully support both events. Accordingly the Director Resources gained agreement from the Midstock pop concert organisers, to reschedule the event to Saturday 12 September 2015 followed by Midfest Family Fun Day on Sunday 13 September 2015. These events were the closing events of the week long Midfest 2015 and coinciding with the opening of Borders Railway celebrations which took place earlier in the same week and put Midlothian on the world stage.

Approaches were made to a number of organisations regarding sponsorship however prospective companies either had committed funding to other projects or were unable to provide sponsorship support due to a range of factors.

Additionally the Multi Agency Safety Advisory Group were of the view that the introduction of an entry charge late in the events planning stage would impair the event and lead to logistical challenges as event publicity was already in place particularly for the Midstock Saturday event.

3 Midfest/Midstock 2015

3.1 Midfest Structure:

Midfest 2015 provided 61 events via four discrete elements: -

Community Events:

- Community based events at local venues, involving 59 individual events with 2,000 people attending.
- The four Borders Railway Golden Ticket Events with an estimated 5,650 attending including 4,500 at the National Mining Museum Scotland event in Newtongrange. These events utilised separate funding from the Council earmarked to celebrate the Borders Railway opening.

Dalkeith Country Park:

- Midstock Festival – Pop music event, Saturday 12 September 2015 as a private, ticketed venture with Council support for Safety Advisory Group management and 4,500 attending.
- Midfest 2015 Family Fun Day – Sunday 13 September 2015 offering local music bands, school bands, stalls remaining from the Midstock event and additional market stalls and Community Safety Village. This was a free ticketed, event with 8,900 tickets booked on-line and an estimated attendance in excess of 7,000 on the day.

Table 1 illustrates the attendances for Midfest 2014 and 2015 and the year on year percentage increase.

Table 1: Attendance Comparison 2014 and 2015

Event	Numbers attending 2014	Numbers attending 2015	Percentage increase
Midfest Fun Day	5,500	7,000	27%
Grown in Scotland /Midstock	3,500	4,500	29%
Community Venue Events	1,550	2,000	29%
<u>Total Midfest only</u>	<u>10,550</u>	<u>13,500</u>	<u>28%</u>
Borders Railway Golden Ticket events	0	5,650	
<u>Overall Total</u>	<u>10,550</u>	<u>19,150</u>	

Overall, Midfest 2015 was a success in terms of numbers attending the various events.

Summary additional information regarding the weeklong group of events is outlined in Appendix 1: Midfest 2015 Festival 'At a Glance'.

3.2 Saturday Event – Midstock Festival

The pop concert on the 12 September 2015, formerly known as Grown in Scotland, was renamed the Midstock Festival for 2015. This was organised by Clan Caterers/The Scullery Ltd following their involvement in Midfest 2013 and success of the 2014 event.

A legal agreement was established between Midlothian Council and Midstock Festival organisers (Clan Caterers/The Scullery Ltd) setting out clearly the defined roles and responsibilities.

Staffing event guidance, planning and support were provided by the Council, highlighting the need for Emergency Services support alongside Event Management and Planning as part of the Safety Advisory Group.

Police involvement saw 2 arrests. This highlighted security and policing lessons learnt which were considered as part of the Council's Safety Advisory Group. The Ambulance Service and British Red Cross also cited this as a successful event with only minor injuries.

3.3 Sunday Event – Midfest Family Fun Day

Midfest Family Fun Day was highly successful with positive working relationships established between Midlothian Council Staff event promoters and external security all co-ordinated under the direction of the Council's Safety Advisory Group.

Stalls were placed in the main arena in front of Dalkeith Palace. This arrangement included a Market style group of twelve stalls, Community Safety Village stalls comprising 10 tents organised by the Community Safety Partnership. Tents with fun activities for children and families included:-

- Rosslyn Chapel,
- National Mining Museum Scotland,
- Messy Church,
- Midlothian Science Festival,
- Rural and Urban Training Scheme (RUTS),
- Midlothian Healthy Food Alliance,
- Esk Valley Trust,
- Esk Valley Rotary Club
- Midlothian Young People's Advice Centre (MYPAS).

Ticketing and attendance

Tickets were available online via Eventbrite and through Council Libraries and on the day at park entry points. Publicity on social media included press releases and advertising saw ticket bookings increased compared to previous years.

It is estimated that more than 7,000 attended on the day with a steady flow for the whole of the event. This represents an increase of 1,500 or 27% on Midfest 2014 figures.

Entertainment

There were 8 music acts and one children's act performing on the day as listed below:

- Royal Scots Association Pipe Band
- Lasswade High School Jazz Band
- Beeslack High School Taiko Drummers and Samba Band
- Fun Box
- Aperture
- The Domestics
- Milestone
- Skababs

According to the Survey Monkey survey undertaken on the 14 September 2015, 88.5% of respondents agreed that *'There was good variety and appropriate for a family fun day'*.

Of the respondents 61% were either very positive or no further comment made. The Fairground ground comments were mainly regarding the cost of rides, especially if there are more than one or two children in a family or group. Many suggestions were to have a wristband system in place.

Colleagues within Economic Development advise that there is increased spending across Midlothian arising from the weekend events. However this is anecdotal at this stage and is difficult to quantify without undertaking a comprehensive survey.

3.5 Community Events

The total number of events promoted for Midfest 2015 was 59 based within communities across Midlothian.

Once again local arts organisations proved invaluable in organising events and artists within local communities.

Penicuik Community Arts Association supported a programme of events during Midfest totalling 30, of which 22 were free. Attendance at these events increased from 605 in 2014 to 744 for 2015. Dalkeith Arts and Music Events promoted activities centred on the opening of the Borders Railway. Many local businesses and attractions took part offering venues for performances including National Mining Museum Scotland, Rosslyn Chapel and Crichton Collegiate Church. Activities involving schools were in the evening for school band performances, one of which included a male choir. The Battle of the Bands contest was held in Lasswade High School in June and the final held in Dalkeith Miner's Club on 4 September 2015.

Assistance was provided by Midlothian Council in the organising and planning the performers, venues, marketing, and the various sound and lighting equipment necessary for performers to deliver their acts.

4 Resource

4.1 Financial Implications

In terms of the human resource implications, organising events, venues and publicity was managed by Council staff in conjunction with partner organisations. The Safety Advisory Group led by the Council established the principal forum for event co-ordination, management and facilitation, particularly with regard to the large scale events across the Council area.

The costs of the 2015 Midfest and associated events amounted to £37,000. The Director Resources has undertaken a review of the costs and it is possible to revise the budget to less than £25,000. This is on the basis of changing the way in which the event is resourced, the removal of the additional car parking facility and the reduced security requirements associated with a Family Fun Day.

Based on a critical review of the experiences gained over the last three years it is possible to provide the Sunday Fun Day event using reduced resources and introducing entry charges and seeking additional revenue to cover the costs of providing the event.

In view of the financial position facing the Council the following proposals have been based on significantly reduced cost to the Council of providing the Sunday event.

The week long community events are well established and it is proposed that the Council role is one of co-ordination and marketing if these events are to continue.

With regard to the Family Fun Day an entrance fee is proposed as follows:-

	In Advance	On the Day
Adults	£3.00	£5.00
Children(16 and under)	Free	Free

Additionally the Director, Resources is in negotiation with a number of organisations to determine and explore the opportunities for sponsorship of the event.

It is also intended to charge concessions and stall holders an increased fee in light of the high attendances at the previous events. The promotion of the event will commence as soon as possible to ensure maximum uptake and to ensure that costs are recovered via entrance fees and charges.

4.2 Risk

Midfest 2015 Family Fun Day saw minimum disruption due to close consultation with partners from the emergency services and their involvement within the Safety Advisory Group event planning meetings.

For any future large events the proposed risk related to crowd control, safety and local disturbance will be mitigated via close consultation with the Scottish Ambulance Service, Police and Fire Services. This will continue to be overseen by the Safety Advisory Group led by the Council and resulting in the compilation of detailed Event Management Plans involving key partners. The Safety Advisory Group is co-ordinated across the Council by the Head of Commercial Operations.

There is a risk that depending on the level of entry fees replaced the costs may not be fully recovered. This will be mitigated by event publicity and promotions.

4.3 Single Midlothian Plan and Business Transformation

Themes addressed in this report:

- ☒ Community safety
- ☐ Adult health, care and housing
- ☐ Getting it right for every Midlothian child
- ☒ Improving opportunities in Midlothian
- ☒ Sustainable growth
- ☐ Business transformation and Best Value
- ☐ None of the above

4.4 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

Midfest alongside Midstock raises the profile of Midlothian on a wider stage. Major publicity surrounding the Borders Railway links will support continued promotion and marketing of Midlothian.

4.5 Adopting a Preventative Approach

Supporting the local economy by attracting visitors to the area is considered preventative and contributes to the overall well being of the Council area.

4.6 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders

The initial preparation and planning for Midstock Festival 2016 is already underway. The establishment of the Safety Advisory Group provides an essential platform for the continuation and development events such as Midfest. The Director, Resources and relevant colleagues are in regular contact with the event organisers and the owners of Dalkeith Country Park.

4.7 Ensuring Equalities

There are no Equalities Implications arising from this report. Everything possible is being done to ensure that events are accessible to all and event partners also require to comply with Equalities legislation.

4.8 Supporting Sustainable Development

This report does not impact on sustainable development.

4.9 IT Issues

There are no IT implications associated with the proposals set out in this report.

5 Recommendations

The Council are invited to:-

- (a) Note the success of Midfest 2015;
- (b) Note the resource implications particularly arising from the Sunday event;
- (c) Instruct the Director Resources to continue to explore opportunities for reducing costs and maximising external funding opportunities should the event continue in 2016;
- (d) If minded to support Midfest 2016 Council are requested to approve entry charges as set out in this report.

5 May 2016

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Tel No 0131 271 3102

Background Papers:

Appendix 1: Midfest 2015 Festival 'At a Glance'

61 Events	Music (Pop, Jazz, Classical, Choirs, Americana bands, battle of the Bands, Ska, Folk), Artwork, Workshops, Open Studios Singing Workshop, Concerts, Story Telling and Horticultural Show, Massage, Jewellery making, Meditation, Writers Reading, Poetry a History Tour.
Range of Venues	21 – Village/Town Halls, Church Halls, Churches and also schools. Dalkeith Country Park, Pubs, Libraries and Dalkeith Art Centre, The Paper Mill Restaurant and tourist attractions (the National Mining Museum of Scotland and Rosslyn Chapel). Village greens, Open Studios and 4 Railway Stations.
Opening Weekend Attendance	Battle of the Bands Event 40 Borders Railway Golden Ticket Event – 5650 across the four events Core Council Working Group provided in-kind support to facilitate venues, programme of events, funding, logistical requirements, marketing and promotion.
Closing Weekend	Midstock Festival – 4,500 (12/9/15) Midfest Family Fun Day – 7,000 (13/9/15) 8,937 free tickets had been booked by the 12 September 2015 Core Council Working Group provided in-kind support to facilitate venues, programme of events, funding, logistical requirements, marketing and promotion.
Number of Free events	32 Free Events many operated on a voluntary basis.

Events: Type and Venues

Events were hosted across a wide range of interests and skills some including many performers in one event. This included:

- 31 musical performances including, folk, blues, choral, Americana soul and drumming, singing workshop
- 32 craft workshops including arts, printmaking, and exhibitions
- 2 Historical events
- 2 Film
- 2 Horticultural

Partners, key supporters and host venue organisation:

- Midlothian Community Safety Partnership (Community Safety Village)
- Dalkeith Country Park
- Dalkeith Arts, Music and Events
- Penicuik Community Arts Association
- Middleton Village Hall
- Midlothian Tourism Forum
- National Mining Museum Scotland
- Rosslyn Chapel
- St Nicholas Buccleuch Church, Dalkeith
- Crichton Collegiate Church
- Woodburn Miner's Club
- Shottstown Miner's Club
- Midlothian Libraries
- Paper Mill, Lasswade
- Lasswade High School
- Beeslack High School
- Dalkeith High School
- Art Studios and local Artists Open Studios.

Appendix 2: Midfest Family Fun Day Survey Monkey Facts.

An e-mail was sent on Monday 14 September 2015 to all those who had booked tickets on-line for the Midfest Family Fun Day on 13 September 2015 with a Survey Monkey survey for feedback. This was to over 2000 individuals. Results were very positive from the 226 respondents. These 226 accounted for at least 1247 people within their groups attending the event, 23% being adult male, 35% adult female and 42% children under the age of 16.

The survey asked 27 questions, but only a small number of these will be represented here.

Midfest 2015 Survey Monkey:

Midfest 2016 Survey Monkey.

1.	<table><tr><th colspan="3">Overall, how would you rate MIDFEST Family Fun Day?</th></tr><tr><th>Answer Options</th><th>Response Percent</th><th>Response Count</th></tr><tr><td>Excellent</td><td>27.0%</td><td>61</td></tr><tr><td>Very good</td><td>51.3%</td><td>116</td></tr><tr><td>Fairly good</td><td>14.6%</td><td>33</td></tr><tr><td>Mildly good</td><td>6.6%</td><td>15</td></tr><tr><td>Not good at all</td><td>0.4%</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td colspan="2">answered question</td><td>226</td></tr></table>	Overall, how would you rate MIDFEST Family Fun Day?			Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count	Excellent	27.0%	61	Very good	51.3%	116	Fairly good	14.6%	33	Mildly good	6.6%	15	Not good at all	0.4%	1	answered question		226															
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	<i>answered question</i> 105	
	<i>skipped question</i> 121	
10.	Please state which FUN ACTIVITY TENTS you and your children used (excluding the Fairground attractions)?	
	Answer Options	Response Percent Response Count
	Rosslyn Chapel and National Mining Museum Scotland Tent	30.1% 68
	Messy Church Tent	34.5% 78
	Midlothian Science Festival Tent	32.3% 73
	The Smoothie Bike and Mobile Library	20.4% 46
	Chair Massage	4.0% 9
	The Seatbelt Convincer	9.3% 21
	Children's Tent at the back	22.1% 50
	RUTS Cycle Cinema	15.5% 35
	<i>answered question</i> 226	
11.	Please choose which statement you think best describes the STAGE ENTERTAINMENT on the day.	
	Answer Options	Response Percent Response Count
	There was good variety, and appropriate for a family fun day	88.5% 200
	I would have preferred other entertainment - please specify	5.8% 13
	Other	5.8% 13
	Other (please specify)	26
	<i>answered question</i> 226	