



Evaluation – Our Place

Festival 2018: Balloch Loch Lomond

Additional information to the commissions report submitted August 2018

The bullet point questions were posed by Theresa Foerster, Glasgow 2018 European Championships.

The information in response was provided by Carol Matthews, Visitor Experience Manager, Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority

Did you match the funding that was provided by G2018?

We matched the funding. The two grants awarded by G2018 (£15K operational and £10K community cultural organisations) levered £5K from the National Park's annual budget; a £5K donation towards the festival; approx over £6K of in-kind support from West Dunbartonshire Council (staging and technical equipment support; waste management and disposal, mounting and de-rigging of Euros event branding); plus a further estimated £12K of skills support time from the wider NP team including design and artwork; project management and marshalling. A local shopkeeper donated 300 bottles of water and quantities of snacks to the festival for the parade participants. The event itself on the day was largely delivered by volunteers.

The National Park estimated that the G2018 funding and support had delivered an event with a total cost value in excess of £55,000.

Did all the projects take place as planned?

Yes, all the events took place as planned. The festival programme comprised four key elements, which were:

- (1) Five national performing arts companies including promenade drama and street theatre, which liaised in advance over site visits and their company's performance needs and they each delivered 100% on the day;
- (2) 14 local community groups and individuals, who between them created 42 stage performances and because of their local connections they brought a core audience with them;
- (3) A carnival parade of 160 community participants who were guided and coached by the professional carnival parade co-ordinator, Noel Bridgeman, supplied by G2018. This was an incredible, additional and highly valuable investment made by the G2018 project because it resulted in the first-ever carnival parade in Balloch. The parade was of unexpected quality because of the Bridgeman Arts support. It was heralded by residents, local businesses and visitors as being one of the most enjoyable aspects of the cultural festival. It also attracted special mention by the police who 'chaperoned' the 45-minute parade route from Loch Lomond Shores, up the main street and across Balloch Bridge to Moss O' Balloch, who stated afterwards what an enjoyable atmosphere it had brought to the town and how they would like to see more of that type of community event being developed.

(4) Evening music entertainment across the town took place in bars, restaurants, hotels and clubs from 6pm until late. This took place as planned and although there is often music in the local bars on a Saturday night, the festival's special performance schedule benefited from the additional marketing and the town 'was jumping' until 1am. The police report confirmed it had been a lively, happy night with many festival revellers and no trouble reported.

How many visitors/participants did each event have?

(1. Participants) The parade comprised over 160 participants. The National Park estimated a further 120 delivered the stage, street, promenade and mobile theatre performances, bringing the day-time performance participation total to 280.

A further 73 people delivered the crafts, gifts, food and beverage stands.

We secured 35-40 volunteers to support the events venues, direct visitors, provide programme information and to collect litter continually throughout the day.

(2. Visitors) The most accurate figure is from the count at the main festival site of 3,500 people.

In addition, there were approximately 1,000+ at Loch Lomond Shores, half of whom would have remained there to watch the Open Water Swimming championships and several hundred parade spectators, many of whom followed the parade to the main festival site. We do not have figures from the evening music events.

It would be conservative to say that around 4,500 residents and visitors attended the festival.

Did the projects involve any form of digital activity (website, social media etc.)?

Yes. Festival 2018: Balloch Loch Lomond was well promoted with a button link from the NP's Home page to the festival programme. We appointed and commissioned a local young ambassador to represent the Year of Young People to support the social media strategy. Our Communications team gave him social media training to develop his skills.

Did the projects use any social media platforms? If so which?

Facebook; Twitter; Instagram @lomondtrossachs. We also posted on the Glasgow 2018 #festival2018

Have the individual projects done any kind of information gathering (evaluation, photos, film)?

We have photography of the festival day; local press cuttings; and we completed a commissions report for G2018.

Our own evaluation included staff feedback (lessons learned session); follow-up phone calls to 11 local businesses who found that on the day of the festival trade increased significantly and attracted bigger than usual audiences for evening entertainment; Police Scotland and our First Aid unit. In addition 38 returned visitor feedback questionnaire forms provided the key finding that people most enjoyed the music and entertainment, the good atmosphere of the event and the nice crowd, and had a good family time.

How many a) artists b) cultural organisations c) producers did the projects involve?

As above, approx (a) 280 artists (b) 14 Local cultural organisation and 5 national organisations. Each cultural organisation nominated its own producer. The NP tourism events team of 2.5 staff was supplemented by two external consultant co-ordinators.

Did the organisations do something new or different due to the funding which they wouldn't have been able to do otherwise?

Yes. It is true to say there would not have been a cultural festival in Balloch if it had not been for the G2018 funding. The local community benefited and is asking if one can be held every year!

What impact did Our Place have on the organisations?

This is the key question because the impact on the local cultural organisations which took part and the potential legacy for Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority itself and for its communities across the National Park are diverse in scale and value.

For example, at grassroots level, small but important differences were made: several of the community groups were able to recruit new members and one set up a new youth club via the festival; a local painter and the local photography club found that the festival provided a platform for them to share their work and skills more broadly and both created training workshops and exhibitions; Haldane youth services created a permanent mural; our social media youth ambassador wrote to us afterwards to say that the experience was great and he had been encouraged to purchase a desk for future college studies to continue his skills development.

On a higher level, Our Place presented an opportunity for the community to create something which complemented the European Championships but that was also unique to Balloch, bringing activity into the town and not just focused on Loch Lomond. After the event, the National Park held an Events & Festivals seminar, which Glasgow 2018 attended and delivered a presentation, ensuring the event experience was shared. About a dozen local businesses attended but the real value is that the seminar is being developed into an event model to be shared as an online resource with businesses and other communities across the National Park.

The local cultural festival also gave the National Park an opportunity to engage well with a variety of local organisations where connections had not been made before and to stimulate engagement with local businesses. These are relationships which will be cultivated for the future benefit of the Balloch community.

This was an entirely successful project. The Our Place fund achieved more for our area than raising the cultural profile, developing social awareness and boosting the local economy - it also generated civic pride and a great deal of enjoyment. Our community is keen to figure out a way of doing it all again.