

**BRENT FESTIVAL STRATEGY REVIEW**  
**CONSULTATION WITH KEY STAKEHOLDERS**

**DATES OF CONSULTATION**  
**27<sup>th</sup> February – 6<sup>th</sup> March, 2008**

**CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT AND REPORT WRITTEN BY**  
**Annie Grundy**  
**on behalf of LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT.**

**COLLATED RESPONSES**

**Dated: Monday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2008**

# **BRENT FESTIVAL STRATEGY REVIEW**

## **CONSULTATION WITH KEY STAKEHOLDERS**

# **COLLATED RESPONSES**

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# INTRODUCTION

Brent Council Libraries Arts and Heritage team are carrying out a review of their Festival strategy and want to ensure that the opinions of stakeholders are reflected and considered in that review.

The consultation that has informed this report was intended as a short targeted piece of research designed to inform an internal report to the Council's Executive. At a later date a full public consultation will be carried out.

The consultation targeted 45 key stakeholders of Brent's Festival Programme, as identified by Brent LAH. The consultation took the form of a questionnaire that was devised by Vashti Waite of Brent, with input from fellow Council officers, her Manager and the consultant Annie Grundy.

Turn-around time on the consultation was tight, so the key stakeholders were offered the choice of completing either digitally and emailing back to Annie Grundy, by telephone interview either with Annie Grundy or her colleague Sarah Morton, or by completing and returning by post.

The process of carrying out the consultation raised some difficulties with a few of the questions – these are set out in the 'reception' part of the RESPONSES to questions within each of the sections.

To note:

*Annie Grundy and Sarah Morton who carried out the consultation are experienced Festival organisers but this report does not reflect their opinions or views.*

*Should there be any queries or questions on the report or any sections, or appendices within, Annie Grundy can be contacted at [anniegrundy@clara.co.uk](mailto:anniegrundy@clara.co.uk) or on 07980 337951.*

# CONSULTEES

**Who was consulted:**

45 key stakeholders were consulted  
(please see Appendix 6 for details.)

**Who responded:**

32 responses received in total - 27 of these people were on the list and replied directly, plus there were 5 replies from people not named individually on the list but who were presumably forwarded the questionnaire by people on the list to reply on their behalf.

**Who did not respond:**

Of those who did not respond, ...

1 was Arts Council

2 were residents

7 were community

9 were Brent officers

(Please see Appendix 7 for full details)

# RESPONSES:

## SECTION A

### Events currently on offer in London Borough of Brent

#### Question 1

**Are you particularly involved with any of Brent's Festivals?**

Reception: Question was well received and understood.

Responses as below, in order of larger number of people involved

|                               |    |
|-------------------------------|----|
| Brent Respect                 | 15 |
| Brent Diwali                  | 9  |
| Brent Eid                     | 8  |
| Brent Christmas               | 7  |
| Black History Programme       | 7  |
| Brent Holocaust Memorial Day  | 7  |
| Brent St Patrick's Day Parade | 7  |
| Gladstonbury Festival         | 6  |
| Brent Navrati                 | 6  |
| Brent Chanukah                | 6  |
| Wembley World Flavour         | 4  |
| Countryside Day               | 3  |
| TriUnity                      | 3  |
| Queen's Park                  | 3  |
| Roundwood Guy Fawkes          | 3  |

#### Question 2

**Which Brent events are you aware of?**

Reception: Question was well received and understood.

Responses as below in order of larger number of people aware.

|                               |    |
|-------------------------------|----|
| Brent Respect                 | 28 |
| Brent Diwali                  | 28 |
| Black History Programme       | 27 |
| Brent St Patrick's Day Parade | 26 |
| Brent Holocaust Memorial Day  | 25 |
| Roundwood Guy Fawkes          | 24 |
| Brent Eid                     | 23 |
| Queen's Park                  | 22 |
| Brent Chanukah                | 20 |
| Gladstonbury Festival         | 19 |
| Brent Navrati                 | 19 |
| Brent Christmas               | 16 |
| Countryside Day               | 15 |
| Wembley World Flavour         | 14 |
| TriUnity                      | 9  |

#### Question 3

## Which of Brent's Events have you attended?

Reception: Question was well received and understood.

Responses as below in order of larger number of people who have attended.

|                               |    |
|-------------------------------|----|
| Brent Respect                 | 22 |
| Brent Diwali                  | 14 |
| Roundwood Guy Fawkes          | 12 |
| Black History Programme       | 11 |
| Countryside Day               | 11 |
| Brent Navrati                 | 9  |
| Brent Christmas               | 8  |
| Brent St Patrick's Day Parade | 8  |
| Brent Eid                     | 8  |
| Queen's Park                  | 8  |
| Brent Holocaust Memorial Day  | 7  |
| Brent Chanukah                | 5  |
| Gladstonbury Festival         | 5  |
| Wembley World Flavour         | 5  |
| TriUnity                      | 3  |

## Question 4

### Which do you consider to be religious festivals / celebrations?

Reception: Almost 25% of respondents did not tick any of these. Should have had an option to say 'none of the above' as difficult to tell whether they chose not to respond or whether they do not consider any of the events to be religious.

It was also difficult to tell whether people were ticking an event as religious because they knew the essential event to be religious or whether because they considered the Brent celebration of that festival to be religious.

A number of the people who completed the questionnaire waived considerably in their responses – particularly to Brent Christmas and Brent St Patrick's Day parade.

Responses as below in order of larger number of people who considered the festival to be religious.

|                               |    |
|-------------------------------|----|
| Brent Diwali                  | 25 |
| Brent Eid                     | 23 |
| Brent Navrati                 | 21 |
| Brent Christmas               | 18 |
| Brent Chanukah                | 17 |
| Brent St Patrick's Day Parade | 7  |
| Brent Holocaust Memorial Day  | 3  |
| Roundwood Guy Fawkes          | 1  |
| Brent Respect                 | 0  |
| Queen's Park                  | 0  |
| Black History Programme       | 0  |
| Countryside Day               | 0  |
| Gladstonbury Festival         | 0  |
| Wembley World Flavour         | 0  |
| TriUnity                      | 0  |

### Question 5

**What festivals could you consider attending which do not relate to your personal religion or ethnic background?**

Reception: Many of the respondees interviewed by telephone said they would need more information about the content of the events in order to answer this question. Many of those who returned the questionnaire by email left this section blank, indicating that they felt the same.

A small number indicated that they would not attend events that they considered to be religious as they did not feel these festivals were targeted at them. Those interviewed by telephone indicated that they would be more inclined to attend a festival that had religious associations if it were outside rather than within a building.

|                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Gladstonbury Festival         | 9 |
| Brent Respect                 | 9 |
| Queen's Park                  | 8 |
| Countryside Day               | 7 |
| Brent Diwali                  | 7 |
| Black History Programme       | 7 |
| Roundwood Guy Fawkes          | 6 |
| Brent Christmas               | 6 |
| Brent St Patrick's Day Parade | 6 |
| Wembley World Flavour         | 5 |
| TriUnity                      | 5 |
| Brent Navrati                 | 5 |
| Brent Eid                     | 5 |
| Brent Chanukah                | 4 |
| Brent Holocaust Memorial Day  | 4 |

### Question 6

**On a scale of 1-5 is Brent's current event programme inclusive and accessible?**  
*Please circle (1=very inclusive / accessible – 5=not inclusive / accessible)*

Reception: Question was well received and understood by all.

Over 33% of respondees felt Brents festival programme to be very inclusive and accessible and gave it a 1.

A further 50% gave a 2 or 3 and those that were telephone interviewed and gave this indicated that though they considered the programme inclusive and accessible, there was room for some improvement.

Less than 12% gave a 4 or 5 to say they did not feel the programme was inclusive and accessible.

Numbers who gave a 1: 11                      2: 9                      3: 8                      4: 3                      5:1

### Question 7

**On a scale of 1-5 does the event programme celebrate the diversity of Brent's ever changing community?** *Please circle (1=very inclusive / accessible – 5=not inclusive / accessible)*

Reception: Question was well received and understood by all.

Over 30% of respondents felt Brent's festival programme does celebrate the Borough's diversity and gave it a 1.

A further 60% gave a 2 or 3 and those that were telephone interviewed were very positive that Brent's programme was definitely a good one but felt there is room for some improvement.

Only 6% gave a 4 or 5 to say they did not feel the programme celebrated the Borough's diversity.

Numbers who gave a 1: 10                      2: 12                      3: 8                      4: 2                      5:0

### **Question 8**

**Please add any comments you wish to add on the current programme and previous events that Brent has delivered.**

60% of respondents added comments here.

#### **POSITIVE**

Brent's festival programme reflects a sensitivity to the diverse nature of Brent's citizens,

As compared to the other councils, I feel the Brent Council does a great job

As a relative newcomer to Brent, I am quite impressed by the breadth of festivals offered, spanning so many different communities – and most importantly the care with which each festival aims to focus upon as many audiences as possible (something for everyone).

Brent is progressive and programme reflects wide group of people. They also have family events. Excellent programme.

Overall an effort has been made to try to have diverse programmes. Various faith events is a good thing.

In the past youth and festivals were almost mutually exclusive.

Vashti's involvement has been great - have started to join up and feed in to programme.

Brent has a population change over of around 30% a year so it will always be a challenge to hold secular events for each specific communities. Integrated events like Respect allow for changes in the community. Diwali is a very successful event, with the most attendees and has a history of 14 years support from the community.

#### **AREAS PEOPLE FEEL NEED TO BE IMPROVED**

Generally it's hard that it's all so split up. If break down festivals into religions and ethnicity, someone is going to feel left out. Not particularly a supporter of having a St George's Day – but then why have a St Patrick's Day? If do break down into ethnicity then why not an English day – but not just morris dancing and folk music! Events that celebrate living in Brent are better – that focus on the area or themes that all ethnicities and religions can relate to.

Can be hard to involve everyone if, as Queen's Park event is, you are over-subscribed.

EG: used to put a lot of effort into bringing in henna hand painters. Indian food stalls etc – have eased off on this since have reached maximum capacity on stalls, attendance etc.

NB: involving community takes a lot of work – encouraging, informing, hand-holding through process of being part of a festival. But is ultimately worthwhile.



Need to look at growing the programme of Arts

Lack of publicity for overall programme and some of the events.

Don't know how the success of events is measured – needs to be looked at.

There is nothing specific for the Afro-Caribbean community

Appears to be bias towards some events more than others. Communities don't carry same weight: eg: more towards muslim and Indian events than African / Christian. This alienates some people.

Difficult to know who is responsible for each of the different festivals – what is Council and what is not, and if Council which department organises it.

Involve young people in planning an event.

Would like broader participation to be supported through more outreach activities in schools to prepare for event e.g. music, arts, dance, poetry workshops

Bring different groups together to plan the same event

I feel that Brent have tried very hard to make the festivals accessible and inclusive with the intention of celebrating the diversity of Brent. But I just feel they have lost their way with it. We have discussed this at BMFF and are not clear of the aims of the Festivals of the strategy behind it.

BMFF are liaising with Nick Lane, LBBrent as we wish to be involved in developing the strategy that is needed by the people of Brent, reflecting the diverse communities, in particular the faith communities and working towards Community Cohesion.

Please ensure that ALL festivals are multicultural. I am concerned that religious groups should not be funded out of the public purse

I think the scale of inclusively and accessibility changes with each culturally specific event. The different cultures currently represented and celebrated through the current festivals programme are majority Faith based and secular events.

It has been highlighted by members of the Brent's community that faith based events often means members who do not belong to these specifically targeted groups do not feel represented whether it be through age, faith, culture ect. Another concern that has been highlighted by members of Brent's community is that the faiths based events receive larger amount of resources/support from Brent council and some are not even represented i.e. St Patricks Day is St Georges day is not or Jamaica day is not supported by Brent council. Diwali is a large scale event that is highly assessable to members of Brent's Hindu and non Hindu Community, Brent Christmas Senior citizens Christmas Lunch involving volunteers and performances from young people accessible to only Brent's Senior citizens from the Christian and Catholic community.

Consider working more closely with local community organisations and regional agencies to deliver events

To be inclusive and accessible it is essential that events are popular at the grass root level like local schools and community associations in the area., however I feel that the initiatives at the grass root level could be improved. We also need to explore ways that we could increase the attraction for people from other ethnic backgrounds and faiths to ensure they are willing to join in, better still contribute as well.

## **FESTIVAL SPECIFIC COMMENTS**

Instead of getting agencies to organise why not let community organise it. Lots of things lacking of the cultural aspect that is important to people who get angry. Doesn't feel all festivals are in the hands of people who know / understand the cultures. Community could organise for free. Gist of programme is 30-40% authentic only – rest superficial diwali. Hindu community receiving more and more complaints – hindu festival needs to be organised by hindu community under instruction and supervision of Brent.

Festivals are the only opportunity to get everyone together. Diwali is a hindu event but everyone takes part – though would be good to encourage more of the hindu organisations to take part so would be more popular (eg more people attending)

Better to focus on cultural festivals than religious festivals. Festivals with a religious origin often have a cultural nature.

Respect Festival is a highly assessable inclusive event which represents the thriving and diverse community within Brent through a variety of exciting art forms. It involves a range of departments across the council to maximise resources which is something that Brent Christmas, BHMday could benefit i.e. Collaboration between Town Centre managers, diversity team, Arts & Festivals team LAH.

We tried to be involved in the RESPECT Festival last year but the Company managing the event did not get back to us to confirm arrangements etc until it was too late. They were also very distant. Some of our members attended the Respect festival anyway to hopefully prepare for 2008 involvement and were very unclear what the point of the festival was. People seemed to be having fun, which is good and needed. We had thought/hoped that BMFF being involved in such an Event would be a fun way of helping with Community Cohesion, but this was not apparent to those who attended.

In particular being involved with the advisory group associated with Holocaust Memorial Day I am aware how the events department has developed plans for HMD that gives me confidence that the work will be carried forward in the future.

## QUESTION 2

### What do you think are the benefits of a festival programme to Brent and its residents?

Reception: Question was well received and understood.

- 31 Community showcase for performers, local businesses and information services.
- 23 Connects Brent residents to the work of the council
- 27 Fun day out
- 29 Improving cohesion through an understanding of different cultures & backgrounds.
- 26 Local ownership and sense of belonging to a neighbourhood.

The above shows how many people agreed that the above were benefits of a festival programme. There were also some qualifying and additional comments related to the benefits...

#### RE CONNECTING BRENT RESIDENTS TO THE COUNCIL

To qualify responses – connects to Council – to an extent but depends on the festival/event and what Council involvement is. EG: difficult to get Council departments to Queens as it is on a Sunday and the park is run by corporation of London not Brent

Re connecting residents to Council – people don't know what is Council led and what is not. In many ways the festivals program is the way of council engaging with residents on their terms rather than other way round. Main point of contact for council and residents is about finances in some shape or another – festivals take this away from the equation and allow a better, more holistic relationship to be developed

It demonstrates support from the local authority and that it values its diverse population.

#### RE IMPROVING COHESION

A number of people wanted to give emphasis to the benefit of improving cohesion and the fact that the programme celebrates diversity and brings people together. Some people 'double-ticked' cohesion as a benefit.

Cohesion is the most important thing – a community that celebrates together can live together in harmony.

The most important benefits of a festival programme are improving cohesion through understanding and creating a sense of local ownership. Parades / carnivals are good for this – need to feel they have something to parade and be proud of.

Improves cohesion – depends whether event is monocultural or multicultural – mixed events do have this benefit.

#### RE LOCAL OWNERSHIP

Festivals should involve LOCALS. Local ownership is possible through festivals but not achieved at present.

Helps people find place in locality, makes a locality distinctive. Festivals offer a shared collective experience of a positive event.

#### ADDITIONAL BENEFITS IDENTIFIED

Good for business and local economy

Understanding and respect between faiths

Could provide opportunities for local people to learn new skills eg: organisational – start as volunteers. Encourage. Support.

Brings higher quality events to community

Makes the members of the different communities feel part of a bigger community

Provides healthy day out in the open air

Builds on Arts activity and supporting creativity throughout the borough and raising awareness or current issues/social issues/factors through the an variety of arts forms.

### **QUESTION 3**

#### **In what way could we involve Brent residents in the festivals and events programme?**

*Please number (on dotted line) the order of priority (1= important – 6= least important)*

.....Active involvement e.g. Performing or running a stall

.....Advisory / programming role, e.g. steering groups

.....Community outreach projects, eg schools, youth clubs, voluntary organisations

.....Paid work, eg stewarding, stage managing

.....Voluntary work, eg mentoring

.....Other

Reception: This question caused some confusion for quite a few people, who found it hard to put ways of getting involved in order of importance. Many, instead gave a tick or 1 to all those they felt were important and no mark to those that they felt were not important at all.

The results (*See Appendix 2, Question 3*) do however show quite clearly that the vast majority (60%) felt the two most important ways of involving residents are through community outreach projects and active involvement through performing, holding a stall etc.

The next most important (42% thought it of importance) was for residents to have an advisory role, although conversely a relatively large number of people – (21%) gave this little or no importance or did not mark at all indicating they do not think it is a good idea.

33% of people felt that voluntary and paid work were of importance although again conversely 36% of people gave paid work little or no importance and 30% gave volunteering little or no importance.

### **ADDITIONAL / QUALIFYING COMMENTS**

#### **RE ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT**

Re stalls and providers – keep business local using local companies for entertainment, costume hire, musicians etc wherever possible.

#### **RE ADVISORY / PROGRAMMING ROLE**

Advisory and steering groups are good but can be a nightmare – possibly consult with and take advice from communities but not decision making – as too many different ideas.

Decision makers must be impartial and that must be seen – possibly based on evaluation.

#### **RE COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROJECTS**

Community outreach very, very important but must be out of school hours as children and young people need more activities to do – children tend to have a set regime when younger, that fades. NEED TO CATCH KIDS at 7 years old – 10 and give them activities to do that will engage and divert them and make them feel valued and teach them about

working in harmony with others. Need to 'reward' participants – pay people, give them new skills, make them take responsibility AND feel part of festival/s.

I think resident buy in is integral to success. The outreach projects esp related to faith based events where some people might know very little about a particular faith's celebration is a non threatening and fun way of teaching people about that celebration and that faith thus allowing for more social understanding and cohesion.

### **RE PAID WORK**

Paying hard to reach young people who can feel part of the festival and learn a skill e.g. setting up stalls/stages; roping off areas; stewarding

### **RE VOLUNTARY WORK**

Gave a 5 to voluntary work and mentoring as not sure what means

Yes good to get people involved in voluntary work at festivals but at some festivals this is difficult as many people want to go to the festival as audience etc.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS ON RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT AND ADDITIONAL IDEAS**

Involve as organisers, but also as supporters of the events.

Involve companies / businesses in publicity – give a higher profile to the events – current publicity not representative of all the communities or diverse events

Festivals are the only real way to bring people together. Need to involve more organisations so more people come.

Brent is not good at engaging local groups and getting them involved eg: the voluntary organisations. Should be more networking opportunities with BRAVA (though their list of orgs in their directory appears to be very ethnic/health based – not many of the vol orgs that are sports or arts based.

Festivals can greatly help local vol orgs to recruit – especially sport and arts vol orgs.

Should involve residents and local people in all ways possible.

Festivals help local economy and are also social. Would be good to have community workers on patrol (throughout year) who know how to inform people about events and how to get involved.

Individual: Through Brent Magazine inviting ordinary residents to participate in organising, or to join in various activities or competitions held at the festivals (e.g. winning road – most people from that road register at the special tent, then some benefit for that street e.g. tree/flowers/wheelie bins/free entry to something/councillor visits on Sat am, for local people to express concerns????

Associations: Through residents' associations being given tables free (renting tables is expensive when they have little funds) and all together so they meet up. Having a focus for the residents' associations e.g. local issues, green, supporting social networking in their areas.

Creating 'Get involved' awareness campaign via libraries, local schools and brent magazine and local church, mosque, synagogue, temple etc

#### **QUESTION 4**

**Have you attended events outside of Brent that you particularly enjoyed? If so which event and what made it successful?**

**Harrow County Show & Green Festival in Regents Park** – large, lots to do, quirky, involves arts, good acts and entertainment. Themed around something that relates to all so can attract a diverse attendance and participation.

**Thames Festival, Greenwich and Docklands, Notting Hill Carnival** – all have good quality programmes that are free and accessible.

**Summer Mela in Ealing** brings people together – culture event open to all.

**Leicester Diwali** – partnerships between businesses, Council and voluntary groups

**Notting Hill Carnival and Reading Festival** – lots of people with specific themes, good performances and good organisation

**Notting Hill Carnival.**

Brent group major role – top in carnival often wins prizes – not known / valued by Brent.

**Nice (the place) in France** – 13 parades, lots of international groups. Capitalises on touristic attraction of festivals. Their festival of 13 parades contains different sorts – some very gentle and target families and some paid – others free and a bit more full-on where everyone can attend. Very well publicised, creates a big income for the town. Each parade isn't overly long – 2 hours.

**Harrow** – is on a smaller but more multicultural scale. It's run by an organisation and could see the authenticity of the programme. To organise ones own 'thing' is not a duty or work as its organised from the heart.

**Lewisham People's Day** – scope enormous. Was there in 2005 just after the bombings in London – amazing event as so inclusive – eg gay and lesbian event sponsored by the police, kids and teenagers participating in all as so cool – half village fete feel but also cool. Felt like everyone could go – good atmosphere, safe for toddlers amongst all else happening. Beautiful flags and environment.

**Bedford River Festival** - engulfs the town, involves everyone. Big engagement from schools and groups such as rotary club. River good setting with carnival boats etc.

**02 Hyde Park** – quality of music and food and stalls and fair trade

**"Praise in the Park"** – Christian event with authority support. Well received and attended, not in your face or offensive.

**Children's Festival in Perth, Australia.**

Exactly as the name sounds a festival by for and about children so everything was developed with children's use and engagement in mind (heights, colour, fun factor but also education etc etc) Interestingly it helped the child in all of us to come out. Spontaneous and natural.

**Chinese New Year** – was successful for me as there were no religious tensions.

### **Chinese New Year in Trafalgar square and Festivals on south bank/Gabriel's wharf**

- large group who displayed the culture and encouraged others to join in / eat the food etc  
Good music / dancing / show – quality worth watching  
Large crowd focusing on the same thing i.e. a big stage / event, not just a lot of more mediocre things to see. Lots of food and other stalls linked to the theme.

**'Breaking convention'** - Showcase of young talented dancers allowing them to perform in venues and large audience also allowing attendees to participate in breakout sessions and workouts overall this event was successful understood its target audience and how to make the event accessible to all.

### **Mega Mela – Ealing, Liverpool City of Culture Launch events, Zee Carnival**

Exciting events that have something for everyone and involved people of all ages and culture

**Edinburgh Festival, Brick Lane Festival and the Chinese New Year Celebrations in London & Manchester.** All of these festivals are very different in terms of their settings and objectives, however what makes them stand out are factors like high energy levels, a huge variety of acts showcased, high quality, active community involvement and a superior ambience that is organised and managed with impressive precision and suave.

**Scripture Union Missions in London Parks** - a lot of good prep

**Ealing Jazz Festival** - Friendly, professional, lots to do

**Pride** - Style of event and range of activities

**Respect** as had a varied programme (presume misunderstood question and thought was re festivals in Brent)

**Green Gathering:** There were a lot of engaging activities and workshops that participants could try

**PLAY:** There was an extensive outreach programme with nurseries, schools, shopping centres to encourage play with all family members, which culminated in a festival aimed at families with children.

**Music festivals** eg: Irish Festival in Haringay – Fleagh

**Music and drama festivals** that have a common theme and bring people together