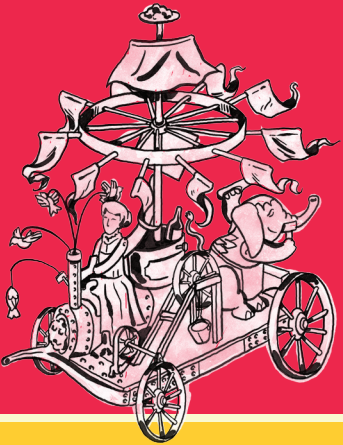


FUNNY THINGS

EVALUATION

GUFFAW



FUNNY ROOTS



TEE HEE



DID YOU HEAR THE ONE ABOUT



120k

people reached across our social media networks...

Events that cost £5 or under to attend

40



100+

The number of comedians and artists that took part

16

Wolverhampton venues partners

64

Family / children events (under 18)



£3,370

Sponsorship raised



3,299

RECORDED AUDIENCES AT STREET FESTIVAL

- Fantabulosa 785
- Spinonic 155
- Laurel & Hardy 392
- Fizzogs 411
- Orchestra of Chaos 323
- Pigeon Pals 537
- Venture 256
- Swyron 431

13,054

Total Festival Attendance/Audience recorded

69

Ticketed events programmed

10

features in local media



1 million

Readership of Express & Star coverage



9

Pre-festival outreach activities:

- One Love Community Group
- Hope Community
- Metro users
- Bilston Market
- Hanbury Primary School
- Fun Palaces @ NAC
- Arena Theatre
- Black Country Business Festival

3

brand new commissions

80

The total of Funny events to choose from



9,755
The amount of tickets sold

13

brilliant partners that came on the Funny Things journey

Number of events that were free to enter

11

2221

people had giggles and guffaws at Funny Things!

Number of sponsors this year

7

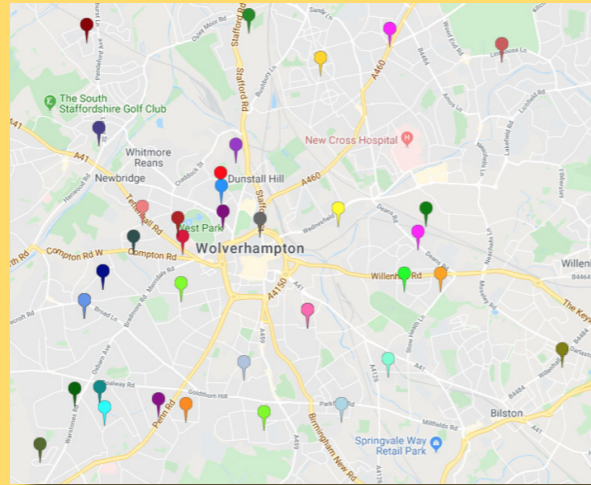
12

Lovely volunteers who helped make the festival happen

AUDIENCES

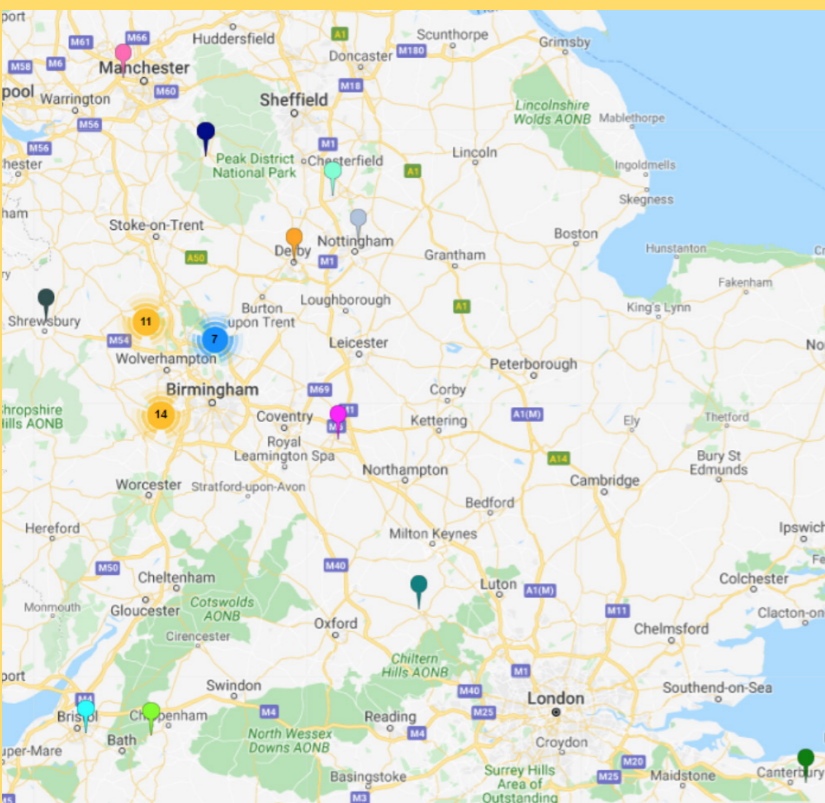
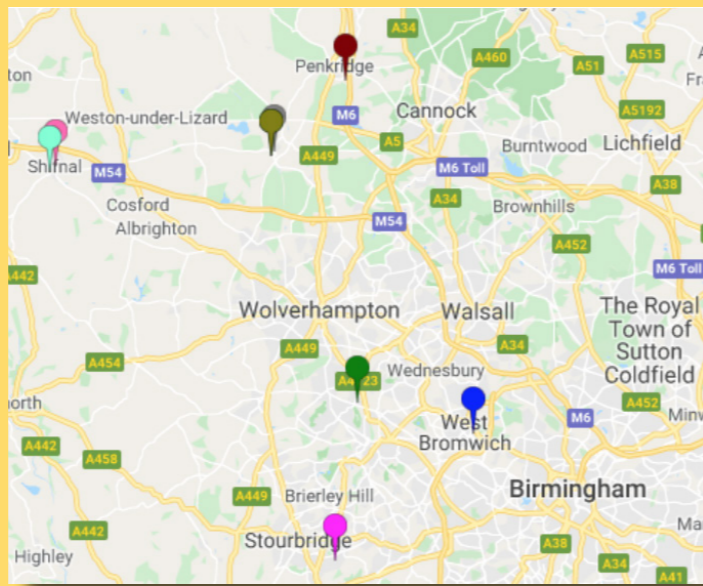
Throughout the festival week a cross section of audience members were approached and asked to participate in one to one interviews.

13,054
Total Festival Attendance/Audience recorded



The data suggests that a large proportion of audiences that attended the festival were from across the City of Wolverhampton.

Within the Midlands audiences were also travelling from Telford, Cannock, West Bromwich, Stourbridge and Dudley.



Although the majority of these audience members were local to the Wolverhampton area, the data also highlights that audiences were travelling further afield:
SW: Bath & Bristol
SE: Canterbury
Central: Aylesbury, Peak District, Shrewsbury, Nottingham, Derby, Coventry
NW: Manchester



“Fantastic fun, lots of laughs and lovely warm welcoming atmosphere. Please do it again soon!”

The data also affirms some of the informal insights that performers, staff and volunteers captured throughout the festival week, which was that local people’s previous engagement with the arts was limited.

Many of the audiences who gave feedback were keen to have more events/activities for children and expressed that they felt there needed to be more publicity and signage.

Over two thirds of audiences reported to having experienced three or less arts events in the last year; the majority of whom had experienced none.

Many audiences expressed having positive experiences of the festival and wanting similar events to happen more often.

The top five words audiences used to describe their experiences were:
Great
Fun
Love
Funny
Brilliant

When reports from the Office for National Statistics stated that Wolverhampton was the unhappiest place in the UK, locals didn't agree, and now we've proved it isn't true, with Wolverhampton's very own festival of comedy.

Black Country humour is unique, people love a good laugh and a joke, so why not have a festival that celebrates it?

About

In 2019 Creative Black Country brought together a range of partners and artists, to produce a festival that created opportunities for local people to get involved, see great acts, new talent, and experience a whole load of funny things. The programme included funny theatre, stand-up, spoken word, music, film, family activities, talks and workshops.

The festival took place in Wolverhampton City Centre between Saturday 26th October and 2nd November 2019.

Photographs by Dee Patel

PERFORMER FEEDBACK

Many performers expressed that their overall experience of the festival was enjoyable and that the preparation and delivery was well organised. Helpful and supportive staff and team was a repeated comment as was great communication.

“You made it so easy for us to do our thing.”



When asked to share what they enjoyed the most, performers unanimously expressed being part of the festival as a whole was rewarding; or as one performer described *“Being part of something amazing”*. Having the opportunity to meet other performers, engage with new audiences and build relationships with local venues also played an important part in shaping the performers' overall experience, in a positive way.

“Meeting new people and making valuable contacts.”



The performers also expressed numerous ways in which they had benefited from being involved in the festival, which included meeting new fans and connecting with old ones, increasing exposure and having the opportunity to test out new ideas in new spaces. For one performer in particular, the opportunity to partake in the festival has enabled them to network and build relationships with venue partners:

“Yes, I know it will lead to me being booked in at the future comedy night at NAC.”



SPONSOR FEEDBACK

Sponsors reported that they felt that they benefited from their involvement with the festival through promotion and exposure.

“...we were able to promote a series of city centre events delivered by another provider that encouraged positive and fun association with our city centre.”

Respondents repeatedly expressed again that it was great to be involved in a festival which offered a variety of experiences for a wide range of audiences.

“Good to be a part of. Programme suitable for all audience types.”

All sponsors who responded expressed that they would be part of the festival again.

£3,370

Sponsorship raised

PARTNER FEEDBACK

Partners expressed that they enjoyed...

“The opportunity to explore different events and content and make new connections.”

...and that they benefited from their involvement with the festival.

All partners who gave feedback would partner with Funny Things festival again.

16

Wolverhampton venues partners

13

brilliant partners that came on the Funny Things journey



“Working as a team member getting to know people from different walks of life, cool.”

12

Lovely volunteers who helped make the festival happen

One volunteer communicated: “The whole set up, in terms of training and communications, was excellent. I knew exactly what I had to do”

VOLUNTEER FEEDBACK

The volunteers played an integral role throughout the festival by ushering, chaperoning, flyering and stewarding. Many expressed that they were drawn to the opportunity through an affinity to comedy and wanting to support the local community. The feedback indicated that all the volunteers had a very positive experience; one that was “enjoyable” and “fun”.

As well as referencing several shows/activities that the volunteers enjoyed seeing, it was noted that the volunteers also enjoyed the social aspect of the role too.

One of the volunteers expressed that: *“The communications I thought was excellent. From the initial enquiry and application form filling*

to the timetable and seeing what you were volunteering for and when. Staying in touch with everyone via WhatsApp was a great idea and helpful.”

The few improvements suggested were to share the volunteering opportunities further afield in places such as job centres and voluntary groups and a consideration to deliver the festival in Spring/Summer as this could encourage “... more people wanting to go out in the evening also.”

All volunteers expressed that they would recommend the volunteering role to a family member or friend as well as consider volunteering for Creative Black Country again.

CREATIVE BLACK COUNTRY (CBC) AIMS

Here are some of the ways in which Funny Things festival met some of CBC's overall programme aims:

"Excellent inclusive, family-friendly event. Very lucky to have this in Wolverhampton and not have to go Birmingham. More please!" - Audience

"I'm always pleased to see a show by a performer I haven't seen before. There's some great material in it." - Audience



1. The aspiration for excellence is central to the activity we will support – this covers both excellence of art and excellence of the process of engaging communities:

Both performers and audience members have acknowledged that the festival has brought high quality performances and activities to Wolverhampton that have been enjoyed by a wide range of people.

One performer expressed that they particularly enjoyed: "The opportunity to be part of a festival bringing so much high-quality entertainment to Wolverhampton."

2. We will learn from past experiences and create an environment where the arts and cultural sector can experiment with new approaches to engaging communities:

The festival has provided the opportunity for three sets of local artists to create and test new work. Not only did audience members have the opportunity to engage and interact with this work during the festival week but throughout the planning stages local community groups were also involved in the creation of the work especially with *Pigeon Pals* and *The Anthinearium*.

This year the festival also partnered with *Enjoy Wolverhampton (Wolves BID)*, *Mander Shopping Centre* and *Wulfrun Shopping Centre* to bring two days of free street festival activity to animate different spaces in the city centre. As well as this being an opportunity to promote the whole festival, it provided an access route for the general public to engage and interact with the arts and cultural activities on offer; particularly for families and children. In the run up to the festival week a city centre joke trail competition took place which got 38 local businesses involved in the festival.

Making arts and culture accessible to as many people as possible can prove difficult in traditional indoor performance spaces. However, this is an example of how these barriers can start to be lifted by sharing these activities in public spaces which are familiar to a wide range of people.

"It was great to be part of it and it gave us space to test a new way of working and a new idea. We'd like to continue to develop it."

"Different. Not something you see everyday."

"Great fun & affordable for a family."
- Audience

"...we were able to promote a series of city centre events delivered by another provider that encouraged positive and fun association with our city centre."
- Partner

"It's sort of wow! Wish they did more of this."
- Audience

"A pleasure - entertaining, humorous, clever. A break from the norm."
- Audience

"It's difficult to get people to socialise these days so this makes a statement that there is community and its worth investing in. Different ages & generations all together and not just about commercialism."
- Audience

3. We will encourage partnerships across the subsidised, amateur and commercial sectors:

Funny Things 2019 was successful in partnering with a wide range of businesses, organisations and individuals across multiple sectors, these included: the local council, local voluntary council, regional travel provider, local shops and shopping centres, subsidised theatres and creative spaces, local pubs, small theatre groups, and community groups/centres to name a few.

In doing so the festival was able to provide a much more diverse programme in different spaces to a wider range of audiences.

4. Through these projects we will demonstrate the power of the arts to enrich the lives of individuals and make positive changes in communities...

"Family entertainment, good community spirit, daughter loves comedy so great to have the opportunity to come to the event."
- Audience

"[I] hope there's no charges to the organisers by the council or the shopping centre as this is a great thing for the city and it's communities and should be embraced and encouraged."
- Audience

"I think it's really good for kids to be off tablets. Initially you think it's fine but I think it really holds their social skills back. This gets them involved!"
- Audience

FUTURE PLANNING

There are always lessons to be learnt and ways to improve the delivery and outcomes of future projects/activities.

Here are some points to consider for Funny Things in the future:

- Time of year and weather implications/restrictions;
- Balance of programming local and regional artists;
- More marketing sponsorship to boost publicity and advertisement;
- Staff and volunteer presence at all shows/activities/events;
- More flyering to the public a week before the festival and during the festival;
- More schools involvement prior to the festival including workshops, flyering, potentially tour a show linked to the main festival program;
- Take more time to build partnerships for outreach activities;
- Employing Assistant Producer earlier on in the planning stages of the festival to increase team capacity;
- Partnering with local comedy groups/nights/promoters

Produced by:



Funded by:



Supported using public funding by
ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND

CREATIVE
PEOPLE
AND
PLACES



Festival sponsors:



Programme partners:



Venue partners:

