



Evaluation

Introduction

The Shelley Gardens Community Food Festival has been a fantastic project that really has brought the community together to celebrate the cultural diversity of the area through the medium of food. Key to the success of the project (apart from the sunny weather) was the enthusiasm and involvement of the local community (both residents and businesses) during every stage of the project. The event was managed by Roath Residents Action Group and Green City Events with the support of Cynefin Cardiff, the Big Lunch, Communities 1st and the Big Lottery.

Aim of the Festival

The aim of the festival was to bring the community together through the celebration of food.

Festival Objectives

- To help strengthen community cohesion through the selling, eating and cooking of food from cultures represented in the local demographic
- To promote healthy eating - through a series of workshops and classes
- To improve fresh food cooking skills
- To promote food budgeting
- To show the benefits of reducing food waste, to promote home composting and to highlight the councils food waste collection service
- To promote food growing and community garden projects



Process

The initial concept came from a community visioning event held by Cynefin in June 2013 where residents expressed a desire to celebrate the cultural diversity of the area.

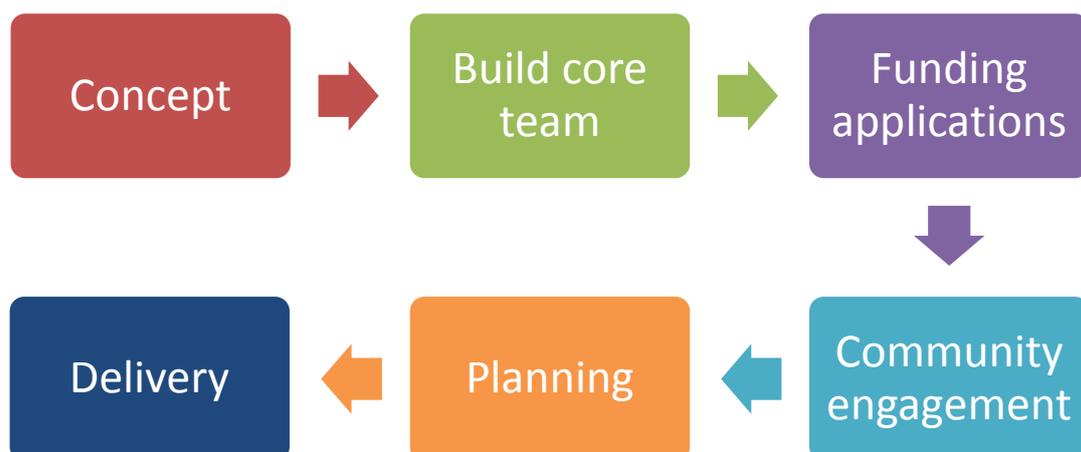
The next step involved building a core team of people who would coordinate the planning and delivery of the event. For this festival Roath Residents Action Group, Green City Events and Cynefin were the driving forces but many other people and organisations contributed at various stages.

Communities 1st provided some funding but the majority came from a Big Lottery grant. The funding application process took longer than expected so if this festival is to be repeated more time will need to be allocated to take this into account.

As soon as the funding had been secured we started the community engagement element. Firstly, we started drumming up interest from local food businesses. This activity was very difficult for a variety of reasons but we managed to get initial interest from 5 or 6 businesses. We then called a community meeting where residents, businesses and other interested parties could discuss ideas and commit to getting involved in the festival. This meeting was vital as it built up excitement, provided us with a platform to progress and importantly it generated ideas and contacts.

The planning stage involved some necessary form filling and lots of unnecessary form filling. Some food sellers, in particular, needed a lot of support through the process. Some people dropped out and we had some last minute additions. The weather forecast was checked regularly throughout.

The event took place on the 1st June 2014 and was perhaps the most relaxing and definitely the most rewarding stage of this project. Nearly all of the people/organisations who said they would turn up turned up (with the police community support officers being the exception). This is testament to robust planning.



Positive Outcomes

An estimated 700 people attended the festival which provided an opportunity for local residents to engage with each other, local businesses and service providers. People from all backgrounds came out to enjoy the day and the event contributed towards a strengthening of community cohesion. In addition, it was an opportunity for Roath Residents Action Group to showcase their community garden, attract more volunteers and to fundraise.



All the food sellers came from within a mile of the park and sold food that represented the cultural variety present in the neighborhood. Although there was a multicultural flavor to the event some of the food was sourced and processed in Cardiff. Furthermore, traders were asked to sell products at different price points to ensure affordability and accessibility with prices starting from 50p. The festival helped support the local economy and provided an opportunity for these local, independent businesses to promote their products to a wide audience. Most of the food sellers had sold out by the end of the festival and were really happy with the day. They also donated some money to the community gardens.



Local entertainers including: Circus Funksters, Studio 22 (music), the Peddle Emporium (bubbles), the Safe Foundation (face painting) and a belly dancer got great exposure and an opportunity to showcase their talents. Safe Foundation raised £150 towards a variety of projects and Studio 22 raised £80 which will help their youth music club.



Workshop providers including: Science Burp, Free Range Learning, We Love Bites and Love Food Hate Waste had an opportunity to entertain, engage and educate audiences about a variety of food related topics.



Lastly, a selection of service providers had stalls including: Cardiff Council, The Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens, Food Cardiff, Public Health, Food co-ops and Communities 1st. The stalls offered information about recycling food waste, healthy eating, community gardening, setting up a food co-op and volunteer time credits.

Those who attended had an opportunity to engage in food related activities from growing to disposal and everything else in between.

A summary of positive outcomes in numbers

- Attendance: **Est. 700+ people**
- Volunteers: **20+**
- Food stalls: **9**
- Workshops: **5**
- Service providers: **5**
- Entertainment acts: **11**
- Healthy eating visitors: **74**
- Food co-op interest: **15**
- Food waste bags distributed: **100**
- Recycling bags distributed: **65**
- Money raised for good causes: **£450**
- Money entering the local economy: **Est. £2k - £3k**
- Festival recycling rate: **60%**



Changes for next time

Considering this was the first time many people involved have been part of a festival like this it can be viewed as a success. This view is shared by the other core participants: Roath Residents Action Group and Green City Events.

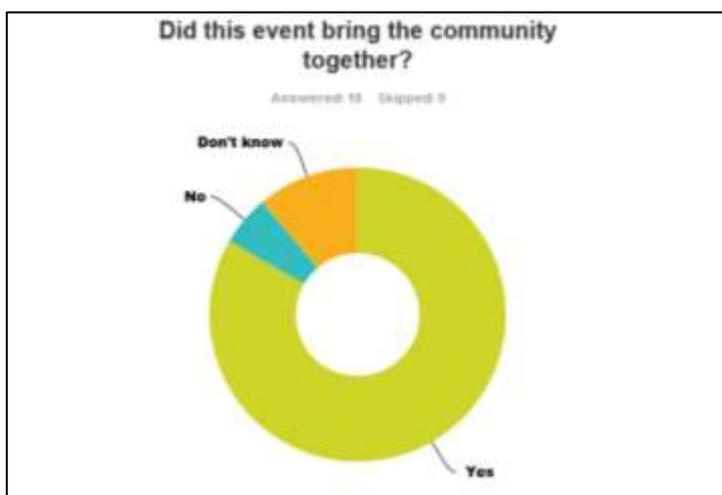
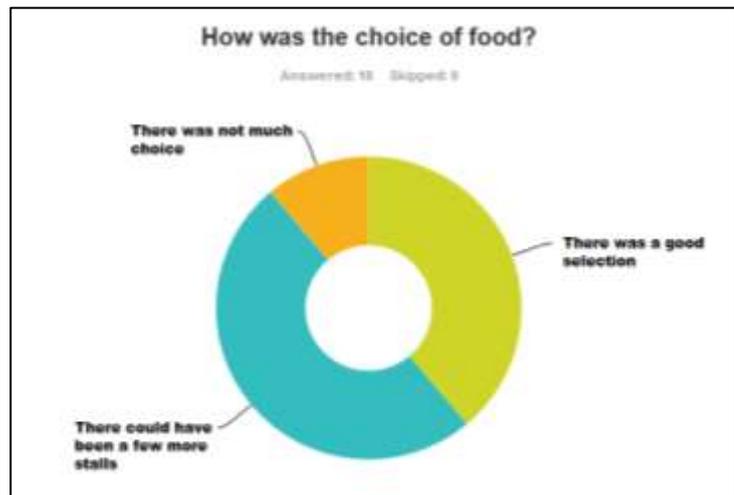
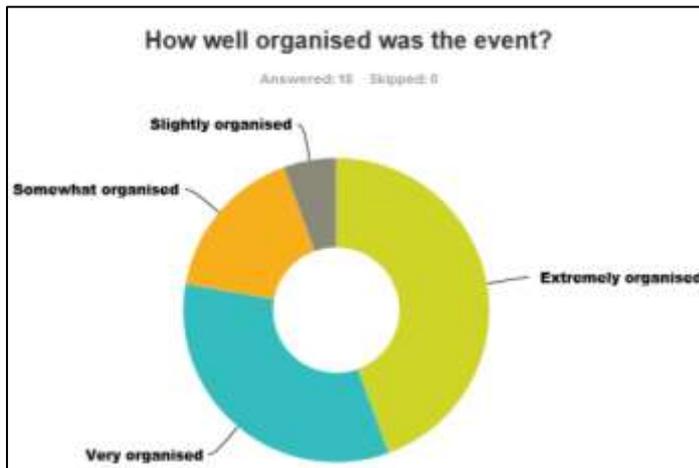
However, there is always room for improvement and next year we would like to include:

- 2 – 3 more food stalls
- Ensure traders have a restocking plan
- An ice cream vendor
- Quality coffee
- Local beer (subject to debate)
- Additional workshops
- A workshop coordinator
- A baking competition
- Toilets inside the park
- A wet weather strategy

Survey results

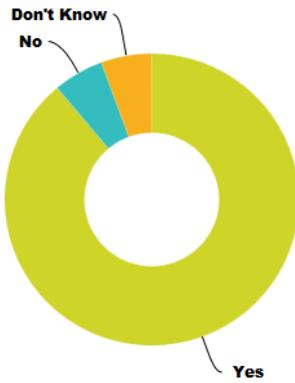
A survey was sent out via email and social media with 18 attendees and 5 food traders responding (at time of writing). Although the response rate is low the answers provides some useful evaluation information. The first four charts are the responses of attendees and show a desire for the event to continue. The final four graphs show the positive responses of the food sellers who were involved.

Responses from attendees:



Should the food festival be an annual event?

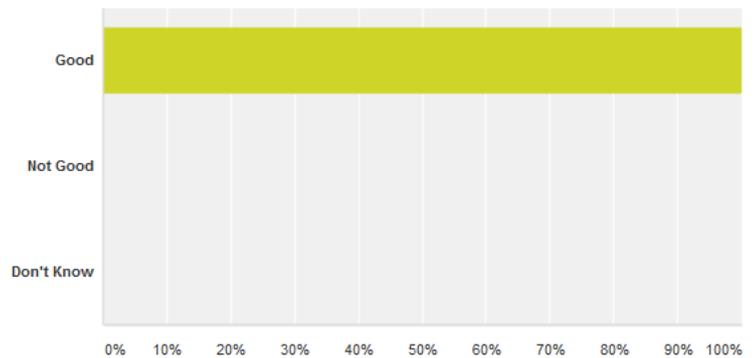
Answered: 18 Skipped: 0



Responses from food sellers:

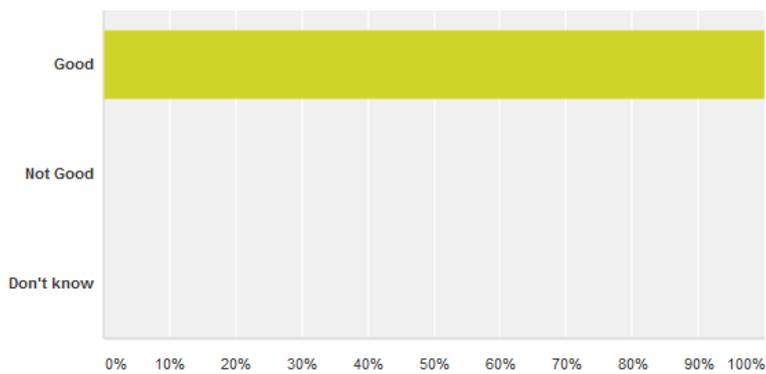
How was the organisation PRIOR to the event?

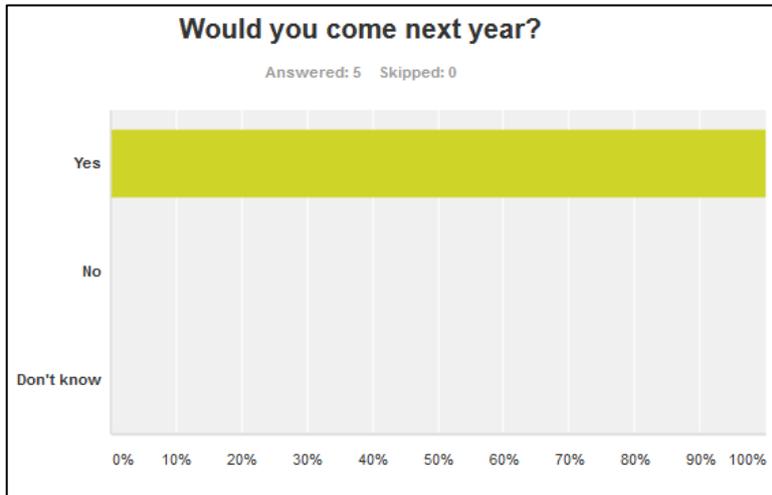
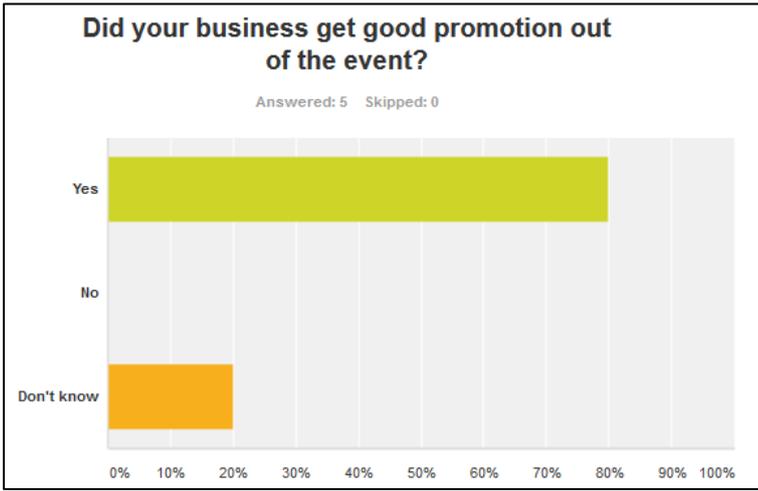
Answered: 5 Skipped: 0



How was the organisation on the day?

Answered: 5 Skipped: 0





Author: Luke Rice

Date: 10/06/2014