



End of Project Report

29 September 2009

Culture Night Belfast 2009 End of Project Report

Culture Night Belfast 2009 took place on Friday 25th of September in Cathedral Quarter. Galleries, artists studios, venues, cultural organisations, historic buildings, churches and creative businesses offered over 100 performances, talks, tours, presentations, films, exhibitions and workshops for audiences of all ages, highlighting Cathedral Quarter as a thriving cultural hub and giving the public the opportunity to meet the artists and learn about what they have to offer throughout the year.

To complement the core activities programmed by participating organisations and businesses and to create a warm and welcoming atmosphere, the Culture Night organisers animated the streets and public spaces of Cathedral Quarter with live music, walk about performers, exhibitions, circus performances, giant puppets and more. An estimated 15,000 people attended.

Background

Over the past several years, Kieran Gilmore, Open House Festival and Sean Kelly, Cathedral Quarter Arts Festival had been exploring, with BCC officers and others, the possibility of initiating a Culture Night event in Belfast. In November 2008, the Cathedral Quarter Steering Group, working in partnership with Belfast City Council and the Arts Council, invited arts organisations and local funders to a meeting at Belfast Circus School to hear the Culture Night team from Temple Bar Cultural Trust in Dublin describe their highly successful event. A Culture Night Committee (CNBC) was formed to pursue the matter which includes: Kieran Gilmore, Sean Kelly, and Conor Shields, New Belfast Community Arts Initiative and Patricia Freedman, Cathedral Quarter Development Manager representing the Cathedral Quarter Steering Group.

CNBC's aims were to:

- raise public awareness of the Cathedral Quarter as a thriving cultural hub
- attract positive media coverage
- drive footfall into Cathedral Quarter and Laganside area
- raise the profile of individual arts and cultural organisations, and give them a platform to showcase their work to new audiences
- encourage partnerships between cultural organisations, hospitality sector and other local businesses
- encourage arts organisations to look at new ways of engaging with audiences which could be included in new and on-going tourism initiatives
- generate spin-off economic activity for local businesses.

In May 2009, with agreed funding from Belfast City Council and the Arts Council, CNBC engaged a Culture Night Manager to:

- create a programme of interior and exterior events for 25.09.09
- promote the event to Cathedral Quarter organisations to encourage participation
- broker partnerships between the hospitality industry, businesses and local practitioners – pairing venues with artistic product

- develop and carry out a marketing campaign including an event launch, website, posters, programmes and maps
- execute budgets, calling down income from all external bodies and approving expenditure
- oversee project management (to include health & safety, necessary signage, approval from relevant statutory agencies, contractual issues and legal matters) ensuring the event is within budget, on schedule and achieves the key objectives
- source, coordinate and manage necessary volunteers.

Implementation of the Programme

The CNB Committee and CN Manager met weekly. The Culture Night Manager's key responsibilities included:

- Working closely with the Culture Night Belfast committee to programme the event.
- Liaising with organisations in Cathedral Quarter to coordinate and facilitate participation.
- Liaising with Belfast City Council on the licensing, planning and public safety of the event, including risk assessment and event manual.
- Ensuring council-approved health and safety requirements are met
- Engaging and managing a team of volunteers.
- Liaising with contractors and suppliers
- Finding and booking suitable venues
- Arranging other facilities, e.g. catering, toilets, entertainment, and insurance cover/production
- Developing a marketing strategy for the event
- Securing print material and managing distribution.
- Arranging advertising and other publicity.
- Managing the event budget and ensuring value-for-money
- Preparing financial and artistic reports for the Culture Night Belfast committee
- Dealing with the public and participants in person and by telephone
- Organising additional facilities, e.g. hospitality/press areas, first aid, car parking or police traffic control
- Reporting to key stakeholders post event

Working closely with the Cathedral Quarter Development Manager, the Culture Night Manager re-convened arts organisations to inform them of the plans and processes for Culture Night and encourage participation. CN Manager continued to liaise with organisations and businesses throughout the planning process to assist them with their events.

The CNBC proposal submitted in March 2008 to Belfast City Council projected a minimum of 50 participating organisations and 15,000 attendees. Between June and the August brochure deadline, the CN Manager succeeded in engaging over 100 participating businesses and organisations to programme activities for the 25th of September. It is estimated that 15,000 people attended over the course of the evening in varying densities throughout the Cathedral Quarter - including Custom House Square - and Waterfront Hall areas.

The following businesses, venues and organisations participated in events:

| | |
|--|--|
| 1 Giant Leap | Golden Thread Gallery |
| Acitore Artezione | Green Shoot Productions |
| Adapt NI | Homely Planet |
| Adhoc | Joanna Karolina |
| Aisling Ghear | John Hewitt |
| Artery NI | Kabosh |
| Arts and Disability Forum | Kev Largey |
| Arts Ekta | Lagan Boat Company |
| Bbeyond | Live Music Now |
| The Beat Initiative | M - Productions |
| Belfast Book Festival | Mac, The |
| Belfast Cathedral | Maiden Voyage |
| Belfast Childrens Festival | Marcus Music |
| Belfast Community Circus | The Merchant Hotel |
| Belfast Exposed | Motion2Music Ltd / Beyond Skin |
| Belfast Film Festival | New Belfast Community Arts Initiative |
| Belfast Pride Festival | New Lodge Arts |
| Belfast Print Workshop | NI Environment Agency |
| The Black Box | NI War Memorial |
| The Black Box Cafe | Nick's Warehouse |
| Brown and Bri | North Belfast Interface Network |
| Cahoots NI | Northern Ireland Music Industry Commission |
| Catalyst Arts | Northern Visions |
| Cathedral Quarter Arts Festival | Oh Yeah Music Centre |
| Cathedral Quarter Steering Group | Open House Festival |
| Celina Balderas Gusman | Open House Festival - Chilli Fest |
| Clements - Rosemary Street | Opera Theatre Company |
| Clements - Royal Avenue | Orbit Dance |
| The Cloth Ear | Paperjam Design Ltd |
| Committee on the Administration of Justice | Potthouse, The |
| Community Arts Forum | Premier Inn |
| Craft NI | Prime Cut Productions |
| Cusp Ltd, St Anne's Square | PS2 Gallery |
| Dance Resource Base | Ramada Encore Belfast |
| Dance United Northern Ireland | Ransom Productions |
| Deer's Head | RAOB (Head Office) |
| Duke of York | RBA arts group |
| ESC | Replay Productions |
| Factotum | Safehouse Artspace Gallery |
| Flax Art Studios | SHAC Residence |
| Forum For Alternative Belfast | Source N.I |
| Friends Of The Earth | The Spaniard |
| Gathering Drum | St. Georges Parish Church |
| GBL Productions | St. Patrick's |

Start Together
Streetmonkey, Ltd.
Tinderbox Theatre Company
Todd Architects & Planners
Trans Festival
Truth Unit
Ulster Architectural Historical Society

Ultach Trust
Unite Against Hate Campaign
University of Ulster, Cultural Events & Dev.
Waterfront Hall
Westland Supergirls
WWF

Programming:

Street animation activities programmed by the CN Manager included:

- The Literary Walking tour, The Late Night Art Tour, Terri Hooley's Music Tour, Historic Monuments Tour, Belfast City of Sin (provided by Open House), Lagan Boat tours with live music culminating in a Guerrilla Lighting Tour highlighting some of the historic and modern buildings in the Cathedral Quarter.
- CNB facilitated a stage in Writer's Square which provided a space for groups to present work, including the Indian Community Centre, Orbit Dance, Boomwhackers Drum Circle and the Beat Carnival band. Compere's Grimes and McKee ensured the smooth running of proceedings and the night culminated with a set from Irish Rock band Breagg (supported by Foras Na Gaeilge)
- 'A Chorus of Choirs' – featured a programme of three unique choirs – Open Arts Community Choir, Feile Women's Choir and Cor Loch Laoi. Each choir performed 30 minute sets in three locations: The Foyer of the University of Ulster, Cotton Court and Lower Garfield Street.
- Rosemary Street was the home of live music and interactive dancing featuring some of the best of the local acoustic musicians including Geoff Gatt, Flamenco Brothers, Louisiana Joyride and participatory dancing including Salsa, African, Flamenco and Swing.
- Cotton Court was alive with the 'Chorus of Choirs', the Barren Carousel Family Slideshow and the Armagh Rhymers.
- From Donegall Quay to Canal Quay and throughout the streets of the Cathedral Quarter stilt walkers, jugglers, hula hoop artists, giant puppets, small puppets, Black King and White Queen and a variety of other walk about performers entertained people as they passed. Note: All street performers work on contracts of two hours. All were engaged and on a rota of two hours. However, on the night they all discarded their contract and performed for the duration of CN. This cannot be guaranteed in future years and it is suggested that an increase in budget for walk about performers would need to be considered.

Event Management

- CN Manager met with and maintained regular communication with PSNI, DRD, BCC Building Control and G4S Security regarding public health and safety and the planning of crowd management of the event. An Event Management plan was prepared in conjunction with BCC Building Control and the PSNI. (See attached)
- CN Manager worked with a volunteer coordinator to recruit and train volunteer CN Guides.

PR and Marketing

- CN Manager oversaw all aspects of marketing and media. The Press and Media were slow at picking up on the breadth and scale of the event to begin with. A series of press releases was

then released highlighting the varied elements and news stories of Culture Night including: cultural and community events; Irish language events; participation of businesses and churches and politicians. The media coverage soon increased. Full media report included in the Marketing report (attached)

- A team of 5 were employed to distribute 50,000 CN programmes and 500 posters throughout Greater Belfast, and in arts, cultural and tourist’s organisations throughout Northern Ireland.
- CN Manager worked closely with BCC Cultural Tourism Officer and representatives of Belfast Welcome Centre and NITB to promote the event through existing tourism information vehicles.

Changes in the Nature and Scale of the Programme

Between March 2008 when application was made to Belfast City Council, and June 2008 when operations began, CNBC realised the need and opportunity for additional revenue from advertising, sponsorship and in-kind services to supplement the marketing and programming lines in the budget. CNBC also felt additional assistance would be required to handle the media and volunteers. Media and volunteer coordination services were contracted on an ad hoc basis.

The following revised budget was submitted to the Arts Council in June 2008:

| Item or Activity | Total Cost |
|---|---------------|
| Event Manager, fixed price contract, mid-May to mid-October | 10,000 |
| Overheads inc. insurance and accountancy costs | 2,500 |
| Marketing & Publicity, print costs | 20,000 |
| Distribution | 2,500 |
| Equipment: lighting, projection | 5,000 |
| Programming, outdoor events, street animation | 17,500 |
| Materials, volunteer costs | 2,500 |
| | |
| | |
| Totals | 60,000 |

In the course of liaising with businesses in Cathedral Quarter and programming the street animation features CN Manager succeeded in attracting approximately 7K in additional support through sponsorship, in-kind support and advertising from the following:

- Foras Na Gaielge – Irish language events
- Saint Annes Square – sponsors of Culture Night Belfast guides
- Marcus Music – provided backline for Writer’s Square and equipment for the press launch
- Univeristy of Ulster provided space, wine, tea and coffee for the press launch
- Ultach supported Cor Loch Laoi (Gaelic Choir)
- Loftsound provided PA, staging and lights for Writer’s Square
- Third Source provided screen, projector and PA for Paris Church of St. George

Outputs, Impacts and Expenditures

Figures below represent actual Culture Night spend to date. Remaining invoices will be paid upon final draw-down of funding.

| Culture Night Belfast 2009 | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------|---------------|-----------|---------------|-------------|------------------|
| | Budget | subtotal | Rev. Sept | subtotal | Actual | subtotal |
| REVENUE | | | | | | |
| Arts Council Development Fund | 15,000 | | 15,000 | | 13,500.00 | |
| Arts Council Small Grants Programme | 10,000 | | 10,000 | | 10,000.00 | |
| Belfast City Council | 25,000 | | 25,000 | | 22,500.00 | |
| Sponsorship and In-Kind Support | 10,000 | | 5,250 | | 2,750.00 | |
| Advertising | 0 | | 1,650 | | 1,500.00 | |
| Revenue Total | | 60,000 | | 56,900 | | 50,250.00 |
| | | | | | | |
| EXPENSE | | | | | | |
| Project Management | | | | | | |
| <i>Event Manager</i> | 10,000 | | 10,000.00 | | 9,400.00 | |
| <i>Overheads</i> | 2,500 | | 3,445.00 | | 2,393.33 | |
| <i>Materials/signage</i> | 500 | | 500.00 | | 100.00 | |
| <i>Security</i> | 0 | | 855.00 | | 822.60 | |
| <i>Volunteer costs</i> | 2,000 | | 2,433.65 | | 1,388.65 | |
| Project Management Sub Total | | 15,000 | | 17,234 | | 14,104.58 |
| Marketing | | | | | | |
| <i>Print costs</i> | 19,500 | | 10,000.00 | | 9,309.50 | |
| <i>Other marketing</i> | 0 | | 7,000.00 | | 5,902.85 | |
| <i>Distribution</i> | 2,500 | | 3,000.00 | | 2,327.00 | |
| <i>Website</i> | 500 | | 800.00 | | 900.00 | |
| Marketing Sub Total | | 22,500 | | 20,800 | | 18,439.35 |
| Programming | 17,500 | 17,500 | 13,702.00 | 13,702 | 13,490.28 | 13,490.28 |
| Equipment | 5,000 | 5,000 | 3,000.00 | 3,000 | 1,547.00 | 1,547.00 |
| Other Costs | 0 | 0 | 2,000.00 | 2,000 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Expense Total | | 60,000 | | 56,736 | | 47,581.21 |
| | | | | | | |
| Profit/Loss | | 0 | | 164 | | 2,668.79 |

- The inaugural Culture Night Belfast event was extremely well-received by both participants and by the attending public. The event demonstrated a tremendous appetite for cultural exploration and experimentation, as well as the potential of Cathedral Quarter to function as a thriving cultural hub.
- The event included over 100 activities programmed by local arts organisations and businesses and attracted 15,000 people.

'For the first time Belfast felt like a European city' Paperjam

- In addition to the core events programmed by participating organisations, the streets and public spaces in Cathedral Quarter were brought to life through extensive programming of outdoor and street activities.

- The profile of Cathedral Quarter as a thriving cultural hub was enhanced through identification with a successful Culture Night.
- Many new relationships were forged amongst participating organisations and businesses through joint programming and sponsorship.

Evaluation

Two surveys were carried out to evaluate Culture Night, a participant survey and an audience survey (see attached Survey Report). The returns for both surveys demonstrate great enthusiasm for this style of event and the hope that it will be repeated. The participant survey demonstrates a high level of overall satisfaction with this year's event but also flags up the importance of meeting the needs and expectations of contributing partners. Results from the audience survey, which we can compare with similar surveys conducted in Dublin over several years, tell us that Belfast's event succeeded in attracting a higher percentage of families with children and that navigation through signage and volunteers is something that can be improved. A more detailed analysis of the results is contained in the Survey Report.

How will Culture Night be developed in the future?

CNBC proposes a gradual and careful expansion of Culture Night Belfast in years 2 and 3. In initial conversations with BCC Development officers in March 2008, concern was expressed that Cathedral Quarter may not have the capacity to accommodate the large crowds we were projecting. In retrospect, the most successful aspect of this year's event was the density and intensity of activity in and around the narrow back streets of Cathedral Quarter while some of the outlying areas were under-populated.

In order to more fully establish the identity of the event, CNBC proposes that:

- Culture Night 2010 maintain the same geographic footprint as the 2009 event;
- Expanded participation from other organisations and parts of the city be accomplished through imaginative joint-programming in Cathedral Quarter;
- Geographic expansion of Culture Night to areas outside Cathedral Quarter take place in year 3 and beyond.