KEYNSHAM MUSIC FESTIVAL ASSOCIATION LTD
MUSIC & ARTS POLICY

1. Introduction

Keynsham Music Festival has been running very successfully since 1998. A wide variety of events have taken place over this time, mostly music related. The Festival was initially a one-day event on a Sunday but has expanded into the preceding week in recent years so that different types of music can be made available to Keynsham residents. Arts have since become a mainstay of the festival in recent years.

The Festival now seeks to be a weeklong community event where all levels of the Keynsham population, from children to the elderly have an opportunity to experience quality music events as both audience and, where possible, participators. The aim is to encourage the involvement of as many people, schools, community organisations, venues and businesses as is possible. The week culminates in a Festival Day for all in Keynsham Memorial Park.

It has always been the policy of the Association to provide opportunities to local performers of every type providing that there is some level of entertainment and competency for at least one section of the community in their performance. Since the Festival now attracts performers on a national (and international) level the Association seeks to engage the best possible performers available after the local preferences and considerations have been exhausted. Selection is organised by volunteer members of the Association alongside the Festival Coordinator and a further opportunity for local residents to express their opinions is via local radio and by use of social media.

Where feasible, certain areas of the Festival program will be offered out to community groups to organise and develop – supported by the Festival organisation. For example some weekday events will be organised and hosted by community groups. The Festival's aim is to encourage and logistically support as many community groups to take part as possible.

2. Music Festival weekend

As agreed with Keynsham Town Council, the climax of the week will take place on the first Sunday in July in Keynsham Memorial Park where there is capacity for an audience of 10,000 people. There is ample space for this number of festival goers but an audience in excess of this is discouraged by the police and would put a strain on the park and detract from attendees' enjoyment. 10,000 attendees at any one time will be the 'ball park' target, which provides great opportunities for a variety of music and arts.

The Saturday before the festival climax has evolved to be a family event. Whilst music is still a big part other entertainment will be offered such as circus skills and crafts. It may be necessary to make some aspects ticketed and/or charged.

The main focus on Sunday will be on music, and four stages will be available:

The primary purpose of the Community Performance stage is to provide an opportunity for local performers and musicians to entertain the public. In this context 'local' primarily means Keynsham and the immediate area, and it provides an excellent opportunity for school and adult groups to perform. Whilst one of its aims is to stage music, other types of performance work well there.

The Top stage, which is the largest, is primarily used by bands that can hold a large audience. Auditions for this stage are thorough and are accomplished by listening to CDs, viewing websites, attending gigs and assessing previous performances at the festival. Bands

from near and far are welcomed, and some are pleased to travel quite a distance even though the directors of the company have decided not to pay performers but may reimburse those travelling long distances.

The Bandstand stage has two main functions. It provides the opportunity for Keynsham's Brass Band to perform in front of a large audience and is also ideal for more acoustically focused bands and world music. Seating can be provided here.

The Abbey stage is primarily for young groups to perform for younger audiences. By its nature, it is bands that are fairly local to Keynsham, Bristol and Bath that perform and bring their regular followers. The directors also welcome other groups of youngsters to take on the organisation of elements of the Festival themselves and are keen to include the town's Youth Club.

When finances allow, arts activities will take place. For many years a Creative Arts Arena has been run and attracts many youngsters who make things and have their faces painted in a safe environment. It particularly attracts younger children whose parents know that they are enjoying themselves whilst they can relax nearby.

Performance artists who walk around the park entertaining the crowds also add to the festival atmosphere but are again subject to available finance.

The Festival also allows for non music or arts activities. There are two types; commercial, such as licensed premises, food outlets, wellbeing etc., and community stalls. The former is an additional form of income that is essential for the running of the Festival whilst community groups can run stalls and use the occasion as an opportunity to raise awareness of their activities and meet with similar-minded groups. The directors are aware that performances that do not fall under the heading of music and arts cannot be included in the festival as they are not within the company articles.

3. Weekdays

Sunday's music primarily has to reach out to large audiences and create a Festival atmosphere. The week beforehand provides the opportunity for smaller venues in Keynsham to be used where music can be listened to, sometimes in a concert environment, and at other times in pubs and coffee shops. Different genres of music can therefore be organised for people to enjoy. It is also possible to stage non music items such as talks by well-known people.

The erection of large marquees for Sunday's performances provides an opportunity for it to also be used on some weekday evenings and the whole of Saturday. First refusal is given to the Keynsham Orchestra for a 'last night of the proms' type of classical music concert on Saturday as the venue is more suitable for such music rather than for quieter pieces or choral music. Dances can work well during the week either in a marquee or in a venue in the town. Larger events such as opera or musicians who are well known may perform to a paying audience. It is the organisers' aim not to put on the same type of music as the Sunday.

There are many venues in Keynsham that are suitable for various types of music. The largest are school halls whilst churches and The Space also provide opportunities for larger audiences. Other venues such as coffee bars, private clubs and pubs can cater for smaller audiences. There is therefore the opportunity to widen the types of music and also cater for people who are unable to go to the Festival on Sunday or prefer other types of music.

Choral music fits in well on Friday evenings. The policy is to vary the type of such music each year from popular choirs, barbershop style and more highbrow concerts. Keynsham's churches are ideal for this.

In some years, an outdoor showing of a musical film in the park took place when it gets dark and proved to be popular. Costs and small income has meant that it is currently not viable but can be reinstated if demand and costs can be met. 'Sing-a-long' versions have been particularly successful.

Other musical events will be organised in various venues during the week leading up to Sunday's big Festival Day. Some will be organised by the venues themselves with the Festival programme providing the publicity. Others will be organised through the Festival committee depending on performers and availability of venues.

Ad hoc events may be organised during the year to promote the Festival. They may be organised by Keynsham Music Festival Association Ltd or by other parties and promoted by the Company.

4. Ticketing

No charge is normally made for Saturday's and Sunday's Festival but a donation is asked for from each adult. Other events are either ticketed, payment at the door or by donation.

This policy will next be reviewed by 1st January 2024