

Context of the Harbour Festival

The floating harbour was designed and built in the early 1800s and the docks became a vital part of Bristol's economy. In the 20th Century its prominence began to fade and it was proposed in the 1960s that the docks be closed. Local groups took up the fight to save the docks, and the first Harbour Festival was organised in 1971. The event grew in size and importance as the years passed, and even when plans to tamper with the docks were shelved, the festival has continued and grown ever since.

In 2022 the Bristol Harbour Festival celebrates its 50th anniversary. Arguably one of the country's largest, annual maritime festivals, the Harbour Festival has developed and grown into a multi-arts based event in the heart of Bristol – its floating harbour.

Having recently been awarded Attitude is Everything's Gold Award for accessibility; the team have high aspirations to make sure the festival is truly reflective of the diverse communities that make up Bristol, whilst being a leader in event sustainability. In addition, the narrative of the city has taken some interesting twists and turns in recent years, and the role the Harbour has played in Bristol's past, present and future is now a story the festival team want to help shape.

Perception

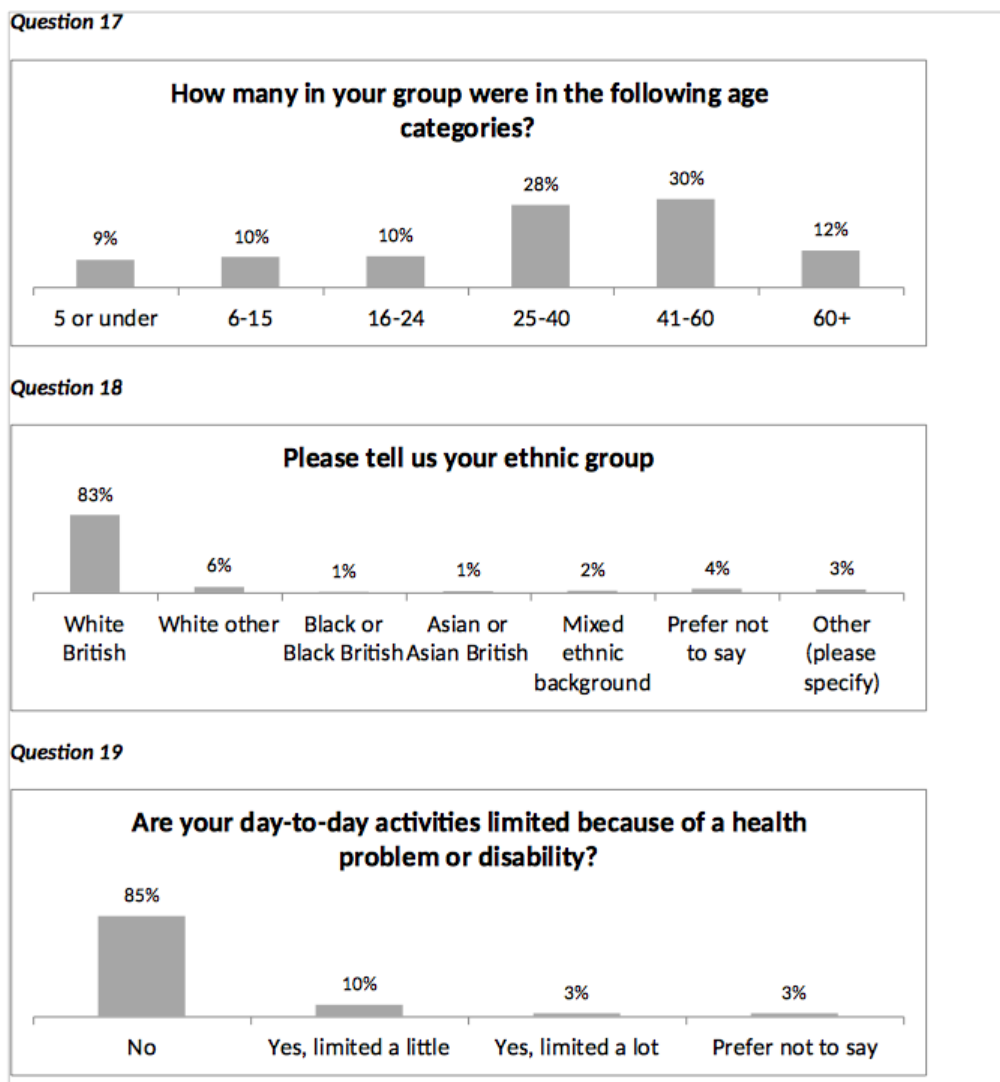
The Harbour Festival is perceived in many ways depending on the demographic of the person being asked. As this consultation was about talking to those groups under-represented in the 2019 evaluation many of the perceptions were negative. However there were also many of those who participated in the consultation who were very positive about the festival citing the atmosphere, the range of events and the showcasing of the harbour as highlights.

The perception of Harbour Festival is problematic. The overwhelming perception is that it is crowded which some people love and some people find unappealing. There is confusion as to what it is, as its roots stem from the Harbour Regatta many people still think it is just a celebration of boats and therefore complain about the loss of events such as the Tall Ships and more activity around the maritime elements of the harbour. Others think it is predominantly a food festival or a music festival due to the programming at the amphitheatre and extensive food offer. Generally there is a feeling that it has become commercialised, with big brands monopolising the food and drink offer. Very few people see it as a 'community' festival.

Many people talked about the focus on alcohol and that as the evening progresses the drinking culture takes hold of the harbour putting a lot of people off.

There is a sense that it is white, middle class and therefore some areas of society feel that it is not a festival for them. Indeed, data from the 2019 survey highlights the majority of those

attending the Harbour Festival are white British, able bodied and of comfortable means. Unfortunately the video supplied by We Are Plaster upholds this image.



Data from Harbour Festival Evaluation Report 2019

This consultation focusses on those groups who were under represented in the 2019 survey – young people ages 14-24, people living with a disability, older people aged 60+ and those from global majority groups. The consultation highlighted barriers that exist for them attending but also explored solutions and ways that would make attending easier or the festival more appealing.

The consultation also explored ideas for the 50th Harbour Festival, what communities would like to see, how they could be involved and ways that the Harbour Festival could be more accessible and inclusive in the future.

Groups consulted are as follows:

Filwood Fantastic – a community group based in Filwood
Southmead Community Group via Local Learning
St Paul's Community – SPLC

WECIL Listening Partnership
WECIL WAIT group
Young and Free

Filwood Young people (Streetspace)

City of Bristol College media students
Hillfields Young people
Docklands Youth Group St Paul's
ACE young people
Rising Arts Agency

Refugee Festival
Somalian Community

Bristol Old people's Forum

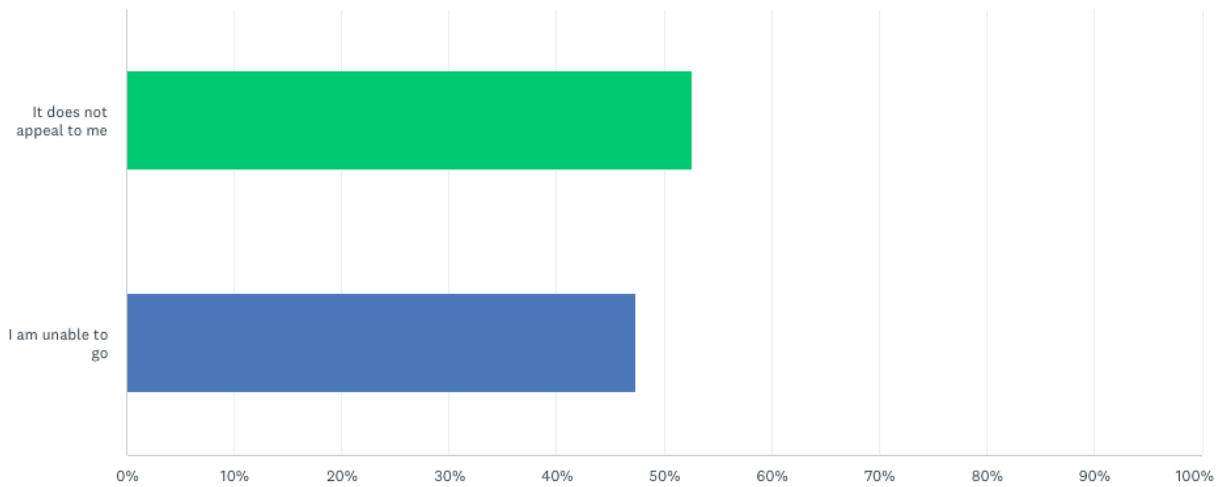
Harbour Forum
The Matthew

All of the groups consulted wanted to continue to play an active part in the shaping of the festival, communities seek a sense of ownership with it.

Barriers

If you do not go, what is the reason?

Answered: 19 Skipped: 49

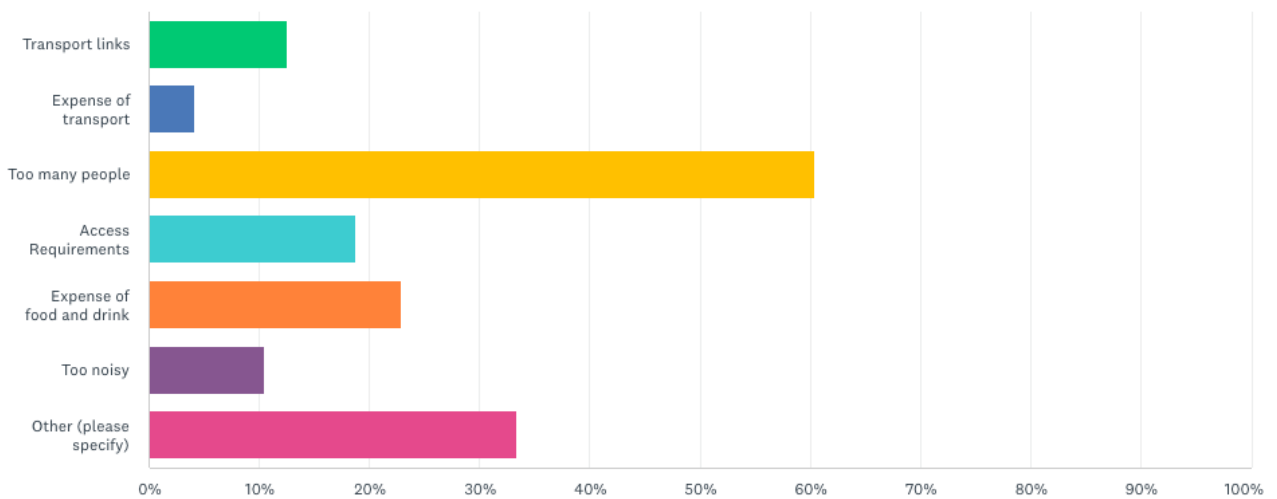


Harbour Festival Consultation

🔍 (0)

What are the barriers preventing you from attending?

Answered: 48 Skipped: 20



Harbour Festival Consultation

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Other barriers:

- not enough appealing content or events programmed
- no interest in the events
- because it does not reflect my culture or ethnicity
- I am disabled and need to sit down and there is not enough seating
- access to clean and accessible toilets
- cobbles
- excessive use of alcohol from the start of the festivals
- no longer appeals to me now that I am older and slower
- it is just stalls of food
- my husband is a blue badge holder so access is an issue

Too many people

The main barrier as illustrated in the survey but also one that came up time and again in the consultation were the crowds. This is particularly a barrier for those groups who have lived experience of a disability or mobility issues, but also those with an invisible disability who find the crowds overwhelming.

“it can feel very intimidating especially if you are lower to the ground and not particularly visible – it feels like you are being pushed around.”

“too busy to move especially in a wheelchair”

It is also important to recognise that there will still be COVID caution especially amongst those who are more vulnerable.

With more people, comes more rubbish and quite a few of the older people found the level of litter and rubbish unappealing.

‘I was horrified and really ashamed – the pathway between the two buildings was full of rubbish – ‘This is what Bristol is like is it?’ I heard people say. Keep the rubbish under control. ‘

Many of those within the groups living with disability or mobility issues talked of a lack of seating or areas that were quieter and away from the crowds.

With the large crowds also comes the need for more toilets, accessible toilets, bins and stewarding.

Expense

Even though the festival is free there is a barrier to access the food and drink stalls especially if bringing a family.

Expense of the transport and parking to access the festival was also a barrier to those coming in from Filwood, Knowle West and Southmead.

Accessibility

The harbour is not particularly accessible for those in a wheelchair due to the cobbles, if you add in the crowds as well – it becomes completely inaccessible.

The market in Queens Square is very difficult for a wheel chair user – there is a gutter between you and the stall – for someone sitting down at a lower height it is very difficult.

The little green toilets are not accessible.

Representation/ programming

In the 2019 evaluation it was reported that 76% felt that the festival represented the diverse nature of the arts and culture of Bristol however this does not correspond to the diversity of audience figures and an audience member of white British origin may have a different experience to an audience member of African heritage for example.

The harbour and the centre holds certain connotations for communities from different heritage – the festival currently has the perception of being a ‘white English festival’ for some of those consulted.

That being said there is also a lack of knowledge and understanding of what does happen at the Festival from more diverse communities. Many people in St Paul's did not know that Ujima radio runs a stage and programmes black artists.

However there was a feeling of exclusion from many I spoke to from communities from the global majority.

‘Not seeing other people like me’

‘We feel left in the dark and not included – A party in the city and we are left out – when we have a party everyone goes to St Paul's – and there is a huge police presence – but when there is a party in the city there is a lack of police presence and we don't feel safe.’

‘Cultural perception of food – in our culture food is about sharing – at the festival it is about commerce and business. For us food is how we show that we love one another.’

‘It feels like there is an invisible wall’

Transport

The transport in to Bristol is not bad during the festival – as evaluated after the 2019 festival. However for those with blue badges there is an access problem around how near parking is to the events. As there are now more roads shut to cars it will be interesting to see how this affects the roads and flow of traffic.

Communication

One of the barriers is understanding what is going on and where. Many of those asked missed half of the festival as they were not aware of the offer.

“I watched the boats, had a couple of rums and went home”

There is a lack of awareness of the diverse offer that already exists within the festival. Some of the older responders to the consultation find the festival confusing and don't know how to find out about it.

For those living with invisible disabilities – there is a desire to plan their visit so that they feel safe and in control, this is difficult to do with current comms.
Many people still expect the Regatta – they are not sure what the festival is.

“I struggle with the whole concept of it as a festival for the city.”

Drinking Culture

Over the last few years there seems to have been an increase in the drinking culture as part of the festival with many seeing the festival as an opportunity for drinking and anti-social behaviour. This has led to more people staying away or limiting their stay to the day time and poses questions around safety towards the evening. The drinking culture also has a detrimental affect on attracting participants from different cultures and the older community.

What would make it easier or more appealing?

Manage the Crowds

The issue of too many people is a difficult one, as many who were consulted understand that the festival needs the crowds in order to make it financially viable and for many it is the crowds which add to the atmosphere, excitement and sense of occasion.

- Having more ways to access the festival could make it more appealing for those who find crowds overwhelming. Spreading the festival over more days, especially for the 50th festival. There could be scheduled events, spread out across the city a bit more into other venues with better accessibility. A month of activities rather than everything all at once.
 - The weekend festival could have more ticketed areas, more fringe events or using parts of the harbour that are currently not used such as a return to Castle Park, The New Cut and Redcliffe Wharf. – spreading the festival and therefore the crowds.
 - The inclusion of quieter spaces with seating for those with mobility issues or who find the crowds overwhelming. These spaces could be applied for in advance and a wrist band provided to gain access to these spaces.
 - There was also a popular idea of having quieter hours – such as 10-12 on Saturday and Sunday for those who find the crowds too much.
 - Other ideas such as more stewards and an accessible lane were also popular ideas
 - Performance areas for musicians, acrobats and performers to calm the constant flow of people.
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- Water refill points!! if we are to still claim to be a **green city** its time to ban single use bottle sales at this event and install refill points. Venues who refill could sell chilled new refillable bottles and fill them up, maybe even more profit for them.

The barrier of crowds overlapped with some of the solutions around accessibility.

- Many of those consulted within WECIL, Young and Free and BOPF welcomed the idea of a VIP area for them – where they could still feel part of the festival but had places to sit, be less overwhelming but still have access to a bar and still treated them like punters. Perhaps having a group of young people living with disabilities to help with the design. Priority passes for communities and their families who need access.
- WECIL have a partnership with We The Curious and Inclusive Curious City – the aim is to showcase We The Curious as a beacon of inclusivity within the heart of the city, they have so many assets there such as the big screen and also the space on the roof. We The Curious is an underused space during the festival – offering a quiet space as a space for those people who are feeling overwhelmed would be a really good asset. It is such a good space and staff are aware of adjustment. We The Curious need to be included in the planning as a hub for those people living with disabilities – incorporate promotional campaign but potentially involving Extraordinary Bodies – disabled people descending on the area – Changing Places is there and it is a facility for them.

Access

The groups I consulted with acknowledged that a lot has been done with Attitude is Everything, some had not attended the festival in recent years so some of these things may well already be in place. Some of the things that came up were about anxieties of big crowds post COVID.

- Clearer programming in advance as a neuro-diverse member of the community I would like to make a plan and know exactly what is going on.
- Clear communication around COVID policy for next year if possible for people to do a test before attending the festivals – to calm anxiety particularly within vulnerable groups
- Somewhere to report ASB, More bins to reduce the amount of litter
- Level access/trackway around harbour especially cobbles
- Lower window for bar and food stalls for wheelchair users
- Higher platform for wheelchair users at performance sites
- More use of BSL and audio description
- Consider getting Bristol Community Transport involved.
- I would like to be able to go to one place and stay there, how can different parts of the festival come to me?
- More disabled toilets – please note that the small green ones are not accessible.
- A walking bus for local elders

Digital and Virtual Access

Following the pandemic where we have all consumed culture in different ways there were ideas of ways to engage with the festival without actually being there.

- A virtual reality 360 tour which individuals or communities could access, be in control of and engage with the festival as with Glastonbury in 2020.
- A historical virtual tour of the harbour of then and now and how it has changed.
- Post festival – an audio tour capturing the sounds and featuring audio description of some of the events of the festival – could be accessed by those living with visual impairments.

When things can't be achieved in the short term, a commitment by the festival to continue to evolve and develop ideas. Accessibility and inclusivity is at the core of the festival – a manifesto that runs through and a commitment – informed by the consultation. WECIL keen to be involved in access and training for staff.

Community Involvement

The Festival mission -

'To celebrate, with all the communities of Bristol, the heart and soul of the city in the unique setting of its harbour'

None of the communities were aware of the festival's mission, but welcomed it and thought it was good. Communities are very keen to be involved.

There was a general feeling that more engagement with local schools and community groups – to work in true partnership with communities was needed to build trust and encourage engagement. There could be a transactional learning relationship where communities learn from organisers and organisers learn from communities- providing a festival that is responsive and empowering.

In Bristol there is a strong legacy of community festivals and markets – ie Red Fest, Knowle West Fest, St Pauls Carnival, Refugee Festival – more coordination between Harbour Festival programmers and community programmers to showcase local talent and be truly representative of communities.

A more ambitious idea which came out of the Filwood consultation was for different communities to take on different parts of the festival so that community groups get training in different aspects within the Festival Team. In involving the community much more the festival becomes more representative of the people of Bristol, this is especially true for the young people. Many of them responded to the consultation saying that they wanted to see more of their age group performing. Rising Arts Agency, City of Bristol College and ACE all expressed interest in taking part in the festival at an organisational level.

There could be a model for different stakeholders to work with community groups or young people from the community to up-skill and offer training but also for those groups to assist with the programming and for each to have a platform for local performance. Bristol is a collaborative city and the Harbour Festival could be fostering artistic and creative partnerships that can feed into work beyond the festival for example Trinity centre and Refugee festival, Cirque Bijou and St Paul's carnival and community, Amphitheatre or Bristol Beacon and ACE etc etc.

There was a desire to see more local businesses featured and the possibility of local businesses having cheaper pitches to promote and support local economy.

Many of the communities under-represented talked about food and the cultural significance food has in order to communicate love, hospitality and community. Could there be a designated picnic space to come and eat with communities, possibly share food? Involve Fairshare or Square Meal, Community Lunch – perhaps free food vouchers as rewards to be used at Harbour Festival. In the panel discussion around Arts and Culture post pandemic there was also a call for a re-discovery of sharing and an investigation in to how that would intersect with the economy.

Also to include a family zone where food is cheaper for families

Improve Representation

The perception of the festival is that it is very white and that there is nothing for communities from different cultural heritage – therefore they have no reason to attend. The festival is very white but the advancements that the events team have put in place are not being communicated to the different communities so therefore this perception has not changed.

Community Connections – identifying Allies who can communicate with various groups to bring together a paid advisory board, there needs to be more inclusion within the festival team and more opportunities for young people. - (See recommendations below). There needs to be a sensitivity with this as there is animosity and weariness within some communities of colour as they do not feel heard. Working with communities and laying out a commitment beyond the 50th festival.

‘More black people on panels, more black people - they don’t go out enough to introduce more black people in to things, there are loads of things out there for people to do but we don’t know – not enough black people are distributing it because they made us feel that they don’t want us to join it – you know its deep it goes deep you know. ‘

Working closer with communities can inform the programming to ensure that the festival’s programme is representative – linking up with LARA and the Refugee Community, with ACE and Ujima, there needs to be a recognition of different cultural needs and experience. Then ensuring that this is communicated to those communities to be reached.

Meaningful engagement with different communities – looking at the harbour as an urban space and what it means to different people. For the refugee community boats and the harbour will have a different resonance than the Afro-Caribbean community who will have a different experience to the Somalian or Polish communities. Could there be a commission for different artists to respond to the Harbour space?

‘Make it more about the communities than the harbour to lure people in.’

More opportunities in schools around the harbour festival – its always difficult as harbour Festival is always the first weekend of the Summer Holidays, so possibly thinking of how they are involved.

Providing a meaningful platform for young talent – that showcases but also provides a step up particularly with young musicians and exposure to the Trinity or Bristol Beacon. Harbour Festival can be an annual performance platform but also the opportunity to involve young people from different communities at every level of the event.

“It would be great to create job opportunities or work place opportunities for disabled people so that they’re involved in a meaningful way. “

There needs to be an inclusion of quieter cultural spaces as well as alcohol free spaces, spaces for communities to inhabit where they can be with each other and the wider Bristol community.

“It needs to feel familiar – I need to see people who look like me.”

Start building relationships with refugee support organisations such as Refugee Women or Mohammad Elsharif – its about building trust through workshops and relationship building – outreach in to communities. It takes time to form these relationships and build the trust – a longer commitment is required.

In brief:

- More info in community magazines
- More outreach and in-reach
- More connections with community and schools
- Sharing stories of the harbour cultural, bi-cultural, historical
- Stuff that happens in the community, bespoke methods – doorstep culture.
- Community connections – big link with Carnival, Refugee Festival
- Opportunities for young people from different communities
- Reduced rate or a sliding scale for pitches for community groups i.e. Somali Kitchen
- Ask ourselves who is not at the table and contact Interculture to get them there....

Communication

Generally people felt that communication around the Harbour Festival is weak. There was a consensus that people didn't know what was on unless they stumbled across it. In some cases people didn't know about it. The more nuanced communication around what the festival is and why it happens is completely lost. Therefore there is a confusion – is it a food festival, is it a music festival, is it a boat festival?

The mission statement was new to everyone I spoke to and was welcomed across the board.

*'The mission statement which you read out sounded good for appealing to Bristolians but..... the bigger picture might be added to promote trade and visitors. Thus: national press coverage would be just as important as local. I guess **Visit Bristol** could start this coverage right now this year for it, and I expect you have already asked them.'*

However there is a potential tension between what communities want and what the harbour forum wants. Handled well this could be a real opportunity as the mission suggests. Either way the mission statement needs to be more broadly advertised.

Communication before the festival about what the festival is, what is happening and how it can be accessed. Send out programme with local papers in the same way it used to go out with Venue magazine use Radio Bristol, Points West, Ujima. Local Community newsletters, community allies and school newsletters as well as social media.

Better Communication about who is involved – where the community partnerships and collaborations can be showcased and seen.

During the festival put up NFT signs to scan and find out what the programme is.

Extend offer

Alongside a feeling of excitement that the Harbour Festival will be back again post COVID there is also a feeling of the need of extending the offer, that sometimes it can feel a bit 'samey'.

Extending the offer over a longer period could also be a way to manage the crowds but also increase inclusion if the festival really is going to meet its mission of *All the Communities*. In

the recent panel discussion considering How arts and Culture can prosper after the pandemic there was a discussion around place-making and the evolution of events such as Carnival in to different spaces as well as a lean towards celebrating communities and grass roots.

- More diversity of food offer
- Different entertainment that has more cultural awareness
- More community involvement that begins earlier – perhaps taking a page out of lockdown projects and going out into communities and doing doorstep performance in the run up to the festival.
- The offer is in direct response to a more diverse planning and infrastructure team.

Role of Young People

Young people I spoke to were in themselves very diverse and there needs to be a recognition that not all young people are a homogeneous group and more recognition given to the sub-cultures within. Therefore thinking about music programming; one young person talked about having a similar model to Glastonbury with different zones, with different styles of music.

Many of the young people talked about more meaningful opportunities for them such as a platform for Bristol based bands and an open mic night so that young people can support their friends. But also there is a hunger for organisational, even leadership opportunities. Harbour Festival could be an annual event for young people to get involved in at a meaningful level – one that could produce a step change in inclusion and role modeling for other cultural organisations in Bristol – (See Recommendations below).

How do we get the intergenerational mix with the people.? In Bristol – the Docks at night is populated by the under 18s. Is there a way to cater for everyone – create a relaxed feel rather than contrived excitement – how do we create a different vibe – so that all of the older generation can feel comfortable to go down at 7-8 o'clock rather than the feeling of us and them?

The 50th Harbour Festival

Clarity on this is important – what are we celebrating exactly?

Many people consulted felt that this is a great opportunity for the city to come together after the pandemic and the events in Bristol Harbour in 2020; an opportunity for healing and looking to the future together. Others want to celebrate the history of the harbour from it being a working docks to present day. I have also been approached by the Western Docks development to do something about the future docks as well as the Long John Silver Trust and the Radical History Group. It is also the 40th Birthday of the Watershed, the 25th Birthday of the Matthew and 2020 was the 50th anniversary of the SS Great Britain being brought back. So it could become quite messy and unfocussed.

There needs to be an overarching thread for the 50th – I was struck by this comment as a useful lens.

'The demonstration of the harbour being a place of 'landing' of the many many different cultures and people that have passed through and settled over the centuries. Also a real homage and public apology regarding the many enslaved people who also landed here and a demonstration of respect to how the people of Bristol have stood up to this and created a world wide conversation. Something Huge! Welcoming in refugees and asylum seekers of the current day – a City of Sanctuary.'

Popular Ideas:

Historical

Each community celebrating 50 years of their own communities

Projection of old harbour photos on to the water or existing buildings – Limbic Cinema

Intergenerational element – learning from elders

More history in the M Shed – or embellishing those historical hoardings already in place – it would be good to have a guided walk using satellite technology to download information via smart phone. Open Doors day audio guides around the harbour.

Recognition of the The Twinning – Bordeaux Quay, Porto Quay etc.

The Harbour starts in Avonmouth – how can we involve the whole of the harbour Port of Bristol Authority – Colin Momber

Moored vessels with History

A look back to the 50 years and a thank you to the people who have helped over the years – hyper local

Invitation of living memories of the harbour – stories and personalities remembered

An oral history event maybe filled and watched on a loop in a quiet space in a tent between the live music events. (local learning)

*'Bristol's relationship with the slave trade starts in the harbour....There might be empty council properties where teams such as the **Bristol African Caribbean Culture Space** team could sponsor events. (they want to have a large barge one day, and they are on Facebook.) Publicity could move on since the Colston statue toppling to become more positive about the heritage that has resulted in Bristol being a mixed community. I live next to the Georgian Museum. Only one room informs visitors about the slave compensation money that allowed Pinney to build it. The biggest house in Bristol resulting from Slave Trade Profits was actually not a trader. It was the ship building family, which brings us back to the relationship with the harbour. M shed houses Colstons statue and could be a focus of events outside . Thus improving on the food and music emphasis.'*

Harbour or Water Specific

Projection of old harbour photos on to the water or existing buildings – Limbic Cinema

Carnival of boats with different communities

Celebrate the water – dragon racing, sea cadets, pirate race, synchronised swim, include the ferries.

The twinning – Bordeaux Quay, Porto Quay etc.

The Harbour starts in Avonmouth – how can we involve the whole of the harbour Port of Bristol Authority – Colin Momber

Moored vessels with History

Dedication to those who have lost their lives.

Tall ships

A Water show – dancing fountains with the John King and Aquatik

Zoobs

Boat Glow

Highlight skateboarding and rollerskating – all that was happening on Millennium Square during lockdown

Highlight Pero's Bridge

New technology and Environmental Sustainability

Western Harbour Consultation

Spectacle/Programming

Partnership between Extraordinary Bodies and We the Curious to perform in Millennium Square.

Performances by Refugee Musicians and Performers – LARA connection

Celebration of the diverse cultural talent in Bristol

Son et Lumiere over the harbour

Aquatique in the Harbour

Music from the 5 decades

Disco and Glam Rock element from the 70s

Bristol Celebrities – Josie Gibson, Love Island – Jake, Laid Black, Gibesy, Stephen Merchant

Open Air Cinema

Music Concert of 1971 music – dancing cranes

Drone show

Red arrows

Fireworks

Community/ Participation

Represent culture of All Communities

More engagement, keep communicating and allowing voices to emerge.

Need to feel run by the community rather than done to the community. Allow them a space to create a space for their community involving food, music

Importance of stories – how to get those stories out there in inclusive and accessible ways.

Deliberately inviting people to invite different foods.

Not a Refugee event but a Sudanese event, or an Iranian event etc.

50 stalls around Bristol that celebrate the voluntary sector

Carnival of boats with different communities

50 experiences in Bristol in different communities

Give the 50th a theme – is it gold or hats?

A 'Takeover' Element
Community Performance
Parade of dancers – para orchestra Harbour Smoosh.
Workshops
Highlight culture and the multi-cultural nature of Bristol
Dressing Up
Games

Socio/Political

Healing Ritual/moment of reflection
Society has been shaken up by recent events so Harbour Festival to include values that have not been explored.
Initiate conversations about the future - Forward Looking with cultural activities.
Involve communities in planning and delivery
More acknowledgement of Bristol's history and slavery – more stuff around racism, ally-ship and belonging.
Interculture CIC would like to be funded to run workshops, panel event, activities around ally-ship or belonging – post COVID, BREXIT, FLOYD
Highlighting life for all communities – pictures, stories, videos and news reel.
Displays of people's pictures of Bristol 50 years ago plus news-clips and videos.
Recognition of Bristol's history and the involvement of The Harbour
African and Caribbean contribution to Bristol shown in the event speeches music food exhibitions etc. Involvement of Micheal Jenkins

“Because we live in a time of social change the harbourside should have a responsibility of embracing the truth”

Trails

Harbour trail – Wallace and Gromit
Smoosh stenciling
Art Trail
50 Treasure Hunt – History of Bristol away from the busy area that was accessible for disabled people

Food

Big Clarks Pie!
Community picnic

Logistics

Extend over a few more days – involvement of schools
Idea of involving Avonmouth and Portbury

Conversations that did not happen:

Micheal Jenkins

Recommendations

Recommendations and subsequent actions need to be seen in the context of a matrix of idea outcomes from the Harbour Festival itself, Bristol City Council and the Arts Council. Although this consultation is split in to two areas – the first being the barriers facing under-represented groups and the second being the 50th Harbour Festival, the two need to be seen together as the 50th is an opportunity to address many of those barriers through logistical tweaks and imaginative programming for 2022. There is also an opportunity for a commitment to address barriers in future festivals and a potential step change in its focus.

The aims of Bristol Harbour Festival are:

- To showcase Bristol's talent and heritage
- To be accessible to Bristol's diverse communities
- To showcase Bristol as an attractive place to live or visit
- To boost Bristol's economy
- To be economically and environmentally sustainable.

The Bristol City Councils values are:

- We are dedicated
- We are curious
- We show respect

- We take ownership
- We are collaborative.

The outcomes from the Let's Create Strategy are:

- Creative People
- Creative Communities
- A Creative and Cultural Country

The Harbour Festival could be a beacon of good practice in achieving all of these outcomes, in the same way that it has achieved gold standard from Attitude is Everything. There is a huge appetite from communities to get involved especially from young people who are seeking opportunities for developing leadership skills or showcasing their talent.

The first aim of the harbour festival is to showcase Bristol's talent and heritage. Bristol's heritage is complex and needs to be addressed by a diverse team. I recommend that Harbour Festival involves Micheal Jenkins, St Paul's Carnival and Rising Arts Agency in navigating how the Harbour Festival celebrates its 50th year.

In consultation with Rising Arts Agency there is an opportunity for Harbour Festival to create a real step change in how the festival is run – the ideas that came up in that consultation align with all of the Arts Council's outcomes, all of the Bristol City Council's values and the top two of the festival's aims around talent, heritage and diversity.

Consultation with young people at Rising Arts

- Deeper investigation in to the context of the festival – History of harbourside, intersection with Project Ruth – re-imagining of that history and other strategies within the city
- What are the big questions socially and politically?
- What is working already – what do we want to duplicate or spread?
- How to spread the offer of the Harbour Festival and the place making/ setting of the harbour?

Based on the consultation undertaken by Rising 'Whose Culture?' Harbour Fest is an opportunity for be modeling this engagement or committing to responding to the report.

Rising have the skills to do meaningful consultation around a deeper investigation with young artists about the festival and how the festival could provide opportunities for leadership for Rising Community.

Building on the work we have been doing on Our Culture – working with different groups – put out to Co-Creating Change Network – trying to work with and empower those young people to decide and work out ideas to get funding for. Support other groups and collective to get the

funding that they need. There is an opportunity to bring in other community groups. It could be really exciting there will be difficult conversations so it's important we feel safe and supported to go there.

There is an opportunity to explore what it could be – to hold a lab of what it could be – create ideas – concentrated within the Rising community. What are the intentions – set the intentions – develop a process with the people we want to involve and then see what the outcomes could be.

Not time to do this for this consultation – however this report recommends Rising as a potential partner or collaborator to involve Young Artists of Colour and young people in the planning stages and to find ways to elevate some of the young people into positions of leadership for this and future festivals.

Ideas for 50th Festival

- Opportunity here is not just being a one off thing for the festival but how it strategically changes or alters what the future could look like; building those deep relationships and building those spaces where the change can actually happen and young people and POC as leaders are given a chance to showcase their leadership but also supported and wellbeing upheld. BCC modeling best practice to the rest of the city. Not being tasked with the impossible so support is an important element. Opportunities to lead, to work as a collective or to work with other collectives derived from Rising. Pilot a way of modeling that could inform ways of working in the future.
- To be part of the conversations where decisions are being made and to be around the table. To be heard – when young leaders are in the strategic positions, what comes out of it is incredible. Inclusion in those spaces – need to be supported and fostered in that space, but still able to be their authentic self.
- Intergenerational aspect is really cool. Can see a lean to intergenerational work. There is a need for elders, importance. Sense of Continuum could be lost so re-connecting with elders is really important.
- Thinking about the Rising Community which is such a great creative pool of talent – visual and digital artists and analogue. Campaigns that are important to us – Whose Future? Whose Harbour?
- Lots of performers and musicians and photographers, film makers poets and digital artists – huge crew – Rising would be able to find the right people to lead on it. Showcasing the work on our terms – make the change – how can the process of it begin to contribute to the change that we want to see happen.
- Diverse Collectives to do stuff and be resourced properly to do the work – resourced and supported. Showcase work on their terms – young artists to take on space on their terms – POC get tokenised or pigeon holed we want to talk about what we want - not ethnicity. Widen that ask of people but deeply consider the positionality on their work. Genuinely lifts up the work through curatorial framework.
- Example of the Junction 3 library – consultation around the library space. – off the back of that consultation artists did immersive and art work for libraries - also this led to responses or events that re-imagined the space. There is a model here for re-

imagining Harbour Festival, or part of it – a model of going wide but then also have opportunities for positions for leadership within the festival which are well resourced and well supported, **to shake up representation in the city's events** – model and shape what it could be – re-imagine making it tangible and test out what it could be. How do we want to talk about these things – who might come?

The idea of involvement of young people from diverse backgrounds at all levels was welcomed by all the young people I spoke to whether it be at a performative level (ACE @ Docklands), planning (City of Bristol College), consultation and design (WECIL Listening Partnership) and leadership, curation and creative production (Rising).

It is only through involving young people from grass roots organisations that the profile of arts and cultural organisation can change and the Harbour festival is a great high profile platform to do that.

Action

- free up some of the budget or fundraise to consult with Rising and their part which could be two fold – 1. exploring opportunities for leadership within the festival team 2. Creative responses to the 50th Festival from the Rising community and beyond

Access

The idea of having quiet hours was very popular for both older people, those living with an invisible disability and mobility issues.

Having a VIP area for people and their families or friends which was still part of the festival but away from overwhelming crowds. We The Curious was mentioned and possibly the top floor as a quiet space where you can see over the whole festival.

Quiet areas to still have a bar and performance element

Easily accessible viewing platforms

Lower counters at bars and food and craft stalls for wheelchair users

A digital virtual offer which you can control but could also include some of the heritage.

Involving WECIL and WTC in the planning

Taking in to consideration those living with invisible disabilities and neuro-diversion.

Action:

Inventory as to what is already in place and what can easily be put in place for 2021.

Investigate the logistics of having 'quieter hours'

Begin the conversation with WTC about quiet spaces

Involve the Listening Partnership at WECIL and Young and Free in the design of the quiet spaces.

Community Involvement

As this consultation was focussed on those communities who are less represented at the Festival, the focus was on ways in which they could become involved. Many communities felt that the festival was not for them. So I recommend that there is more outreach done in to communities before the festival and more work done within schools and community groups. Many people from these groups were unaware of the festival and so working with schools in areas where there is less take up will also serve as an invitation for them to be a part of the festival – a similar model to the mass camps before carnival. The 50th Festival is a great opportunity to do this.

“The public has said how much they value opportunities for children to take part in creative activities, and that they want to see more of our funding directed at widening and improving these opportunities.

However, for most young people, access to high quality creative and cultural opportunities outside of the home is too dependent on their social background and their postcode.” Arts Council Let’s Create Strategy

Communities want to be involved but in a way that feels authentic – for the festival to work with communities so that they don’t feel ‘done to.’ Bristol City Council’s values include being collaborative and curious so there is an opportunity for reverse mentoring. It will be imperative that the creative producer works with communities in a sensitive and respectful way, building trust so that communities can feel a sense of ownership and belonging. This may happen at more fringe events and going out to the communities before the big weekend.

“When the cultural sector works closely with community partners, the activity itself is richer and more relevant, resources go further, and greater civic and social benefits are delivered. We believe that cooperation between cultural organisations and local partners is particularly effective when it is aimed at supporting children and young people.” Arts Council Let’s Create Strategy

There is also an opportunity for stakeholders in the festival to team up with a community group – having a ‘takeover’ part of the programme widening the offer and also bringing other members of their communities with them.

“And we will support towns, cities and villages to use culture to connect, nationally and internationally, and to reflect the diverse influences, experiences and knowledge of their diaspora communities in building and understanding collections and creating and presenting work.” Arts Council Let’s Create Strategy

Action

To truly engage with communities it feels alongside the creative producer should be a community producer who can bring communities alongside and develop a community strategy not only for the 50th but for future festivals to celebrate vibrant and diverse nature of Bristol – possibly links with the One Bristol Curriculum in schools, the Refugee Festival and other local

communities or agencies. A role that can also look at the logistics of making the festival more inclusive in terms of the time and spaces the festival inhabits.

Community Connections – identify community allies who can communicate with various groups to bring together a paid advisory board – which can also communicate with communities what is happening and the changes that are being made.

Economy

Even though the festival needs to be economically sustainable, explore ways in which it can benefit the Bristol economy by affordable pitches and promoting Bristol businesses, especially food vendors.

Programming for the 50th Festival

The 50th festival is a celebration of the last 50 years of the festival, however this needs to be more than power boat racing and tall ships. There was an over-riding sense of coming back together but potential tension between the old Harbour Regatta demands and the Harbour as a 'Community' Festival as outlined in the mission.

In concentrating on the last 50 years – a focus on oral histories, the industrial past and the changing face of the harbour from working docks – wasteland – revival – water activities and Colston. Projections, audio tours, schools projects, involving Avonmouth and Portbury could all play a part in this vision.

As well as a vision for the future – sustainable and technological innovation.

Alongside this is the idea of a Harbour as a safe place and Bristol as a City of Sanctuary now, but that this hasn't always been the case – acknowledging the past by weaving in opportunities to have those conversations and events that recognise the harbour's part in the slave trade but also celebrating our diversity.

The two elements could be brought together by either a community flotilla or carnival on water starting in Avonmouth, being greeted in the Harbour by an amazing light show or performance (tightwire across the harbour???)

This could encapsulate many of the smaller, local ideas that were gathered through the consultation and leaving space for surprises.

'I don't know – Surprise us!'

Action:

Recruit Creative producer

Develop a vision that encapsulates all that is good about the festival and finds ways to celebrate the 50th festival as well as responding to the consultation

Fundraise and recruit from the community.

Urgency

Allies

City of Bristol College	Ali	ali.grant@cityofbristol.ac.uk
Creative Youth Network	Emily, Natty	emily.bull@creativeyouthnetwork.org.uk natty.peirson@creativeyouthnetwork.org.uk
Streetspace Knowle	Sam Burrett	samantha.burrett@streetspace.info
Full Circle	Charmaine	youth@fullcircleproject.org.uk
Bristol Old People's Forum	Ian	bopf@ageukbristol.org.uk
Imayla	Fiona, Sylvia	fiona@imayla.co.uk sylvia@imayla.co.uk
ACE	Darren, Andre	darren@acecicteam.com
Interculture	Lisa Whitehouse	lisa@interculture.org.uk 07740008654
Somali Kitchen		
Refugee Festival	Danny Jules	dannyvincent@bristolrefugeefestival.org julesolsen@bristolrefugeefestival.org
LARA (Lorraine Ayensu Refugee Arts) fund	Danny	danny@bristolrefugeerights.org
Filwood Fantastic	Makala Cheung	makala@filwoodcentre.org.uk
Local Learning (Southmead, Hillfields)	Ruth Myers	root@locallearning.org.uk
WECIL Listening Partnership	Jo Philip	jo.phillip@wecil.co.uk
WECIL Wait	Kinny Chinangwa	kinny.chinangwa@wecil.co.uk
Young and Free	Laura	
Harbour Forum	Carol Griffin	carolg@ssgreatbritain.org
Rising Arts Agency	Euella Jackson Roseanna Dias	roseanna@rising.org.uk euella@rising.org.uk
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