

EVENTS REPORT

REVIEW OF APRIL - OCTOBER 2022 &
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2023



REFLECTION ON 2022

- In 2022, visitor purchase pattern trends are showing that many people book tickets at the last minute. Furthermore, "Out-Of-Hours" events were less lucrative.
- Some theatre performances were cancelled last minute, to avoid making a loss.
- There was an unproportionate amount of time spent on coordinating some events, compared with previous years.
- In 2021, we believe the figures reflected coming out of Lockdown, where people were happy to spend money they had saved.
- This year, post-Covid, Brexit, the Ukraine war, and a wide range of free activities in the local area, have impacted our ticketed events.
- However, on a positive, family events, especially the school holidays, targeted towards families have increased visitor numbers, as shown in the table below.

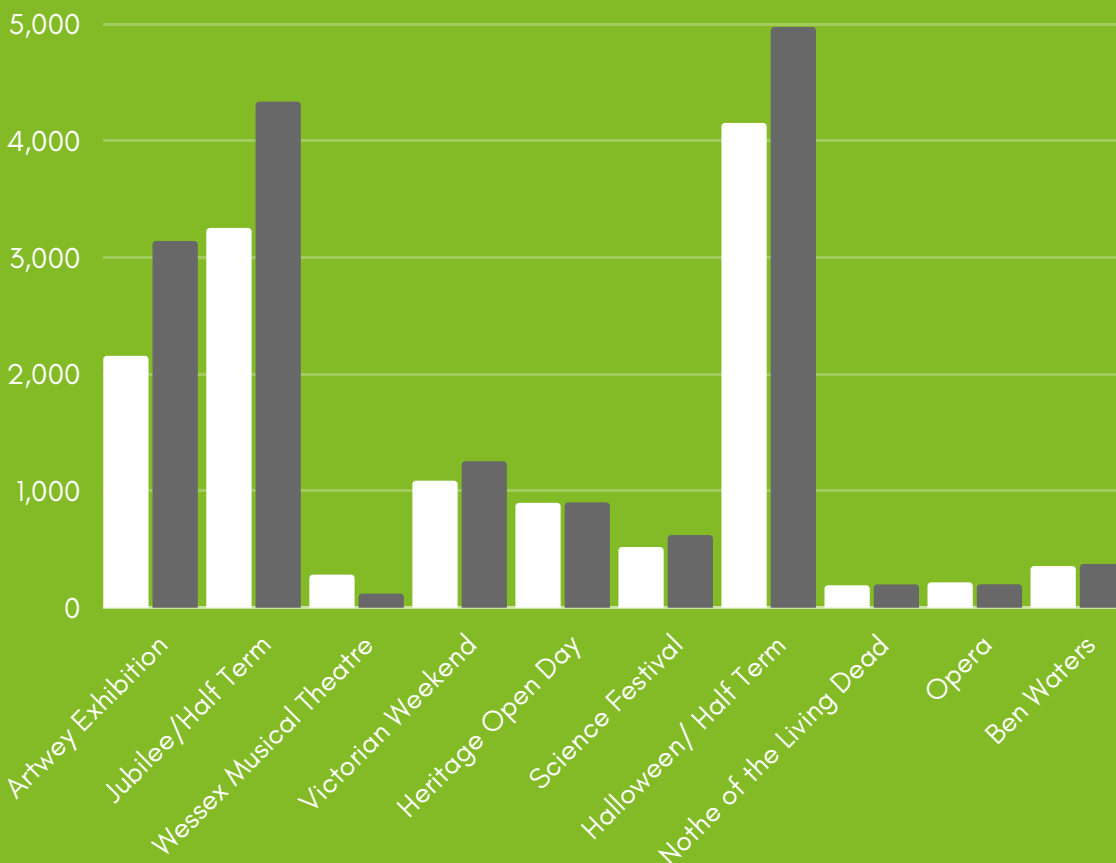


FIGURE 1.

This bar chart shows the numbers of attendees from 2021 (in white), compared with 2022 (in dark grey).

REFLECTION ON 2022

Month	Date	Event	Visitor Numbers	(Average)	Last Year	Difference
April	NA	NA	NA		NA	NA
May	16-29	Artwey	3133		2152	981
	28-05 Jun	Jubilee/Half-Term	4327		3247	1080
June	11	South West Climb Ultra Run	110		NA	NA
	17	Alice in Wonderland	38		NA	NA
	30	Wey Valley Prom	120		NA	NA
July	1	Wessex Musical Theatre	117		275	-158
	9	The Mikado	193		209	-16
	16	The Shodyssey	NA		NA	NA
	20	British Sailing Team Premiere	150		NA	NA
	23-24	Victorian Weekend	1246		1081	165
August	15	Ben Waters	250	366	349	17
	22	Ben Waters	350			
	29	Ben Waters	500			
September	11	Heritage Open Day	894		890	4
	25	Paws 4 Fort	477		NA	NA
October	2	Weymouth Family Science Festival	614		513	101
	28-29	Nothe of the Living Dead	191		184	7
	22-29	Halloween Half-Term	4967		4146	821

DORSET ART WEEKS

An art exhibition featuring work from people within the local community, with a private viewing before opening to the public.

What went well?

The recorded visitors to the Fort increased over this period by around 981. The organisers of Artwey recorded an average of 153 per day, compared with last year which was recorded at 107 per day. There were less artists in 2021, which meant overall a higher profit for the artists individually.

What could be improved?

The organisers of Artwey observed that members of the public were reluctant to spend money on higher priced artworks, due to factors such as Brexit, Covid and the war in Ukraine. There is some tension around visitors to the art show paying General Admission to the Fort.

Recommendations for the future?

This event showed us it was important to coordinate adult targeted events in the early season.

It has also developed a new concept of events such as Artist Residencies and youth projects. We also plan to develop a marketing campaign to promote Annual Passes, which would cover this type of event.



**+£100 per artist,
compared with
2021**

JUBILEE / JUNE HALF TERM

Corgi Hunt, photobooth, Jubilee Artwork (Ian Cox & Keith Holdaway), cream tea, Royal Memorabilia Exhibition, private civic event in partnership with Weymouth Town Council.

What went well?

Visitors numbers increased by over 981, with great feedback about the activities. The activities organised appealed to a wide range of demographics, for example the Jubilee Artwork, family activities, cream teas and so on. Some Jubilee posts reached over **16,000 people**. We worked with the Weymouth Town Council to link the events of the town (beacon lighting and fireworks), and positioned ourselves as a leader, creating a community feel and buzz. The live stream of the civic event reached over **20,000 people**.

What could be improved?

We applied for funding but were unsuccessful this year. The artwork was really well received, and reached a vast online audience (over **8,000 people**), but this could have gone even further.

Recommendations for next year?

For future projects of a similar nature, we have identified the value of pioneering in the cultural activities, and taking a lead.

"Our children loved hunting for the Corgi pictures during the Jubilee weekend."
Tripadvisor Review



WESSEX MUSICAL THEATRE

A musical theatre performances, with members from the local community.

What went well?

This event had a good local community following, and enjoyed by both attendees and performers alike. The theatre company were pleased with the event and felt it was worthwhile.

What could be improved?

Ticket sales were slower and less than previous years, which meant there was less profit for both parties. They performed at the Pavilion only a week before, which we believe would have impacted sales.

Recommendations for next year?

Next year, the theatre company would like to perform slightly later in the year, when the weather is warmer as it was thought this may have been a contributing factor for the low sales. Next years marketing may need to start earlier next year, with a focus on the charitable aspect of the event. We would also like to ensure we are the first performance of their season.

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ATTENDEES



OPERA: THE MIKADO

An opera produced in partnership with Dorchester Arts.

What went well?

The audience gave lots of positive feedback upon leaving, and the theatre company were overall happy with the outcome of the event and audience. Ticket sales were higher than other theatre performances in 2022.

What could be improved?

Ticket sales were less than expected, by comparison with previous years, meaning we could only just cover our overheads. This performance was part of the Dorchester Arts programme, so we weren't very involved in selecting the performance.

Recommendations for next year?

A different approach to the marketing campaign may be idea for a similar event, such as competitions and more video content. Evidently, theatre sells better with a well-known play, so it may be sensible to ensure next year's plays are well known by the local community. We would like to work with Dorchester Arts to ensure a 'popular' play is agreed.



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ATTENDEES

VICTORIAN WEEKEND

Living History weekend with re-enactors, demonstrations, stalls, music, Victorian games and Punch & Judy.

What went well?

This year, the event was redirected at being 'fun for the family', rather than solely about living history. This was received very well by members of the public, especially the Punch & Judy performances, and Victorian Games.

What could be improved?

More stands would have worked nicely to increase dwell time in the Parade Ground. The days could have started earlier to prevent conflict in demonstrations and to allow for more to take place throughout the day.

Recommendations for next year?

Next year, we can develop the aspect of fun and family entertainment with more games and activities. We can also hold more demonstrations by utilising the North Terrace, and add more types of demonstrations including steam engines, and types of music. We would also like to partner more with similar events, for example the Sutton Poyntz Victorian Fair, and work with them to create promotional material to reach a wider audience.



"Loved the costumes... We liked the variety of things including all the demonstrations."

Tripadvisor Review

JAZZ ROCK N BLUES

3 concerts spread out over 3 Monday's, two of which coincided with the Weymouth Summer Fireworks.

- Robbie McIntosh
- Courtney Pine
- Ben Waters

What went well?

The final event had around 500 people in attendance, which was better than last year, and on average over all three nights, there was higher attendance.

The audience gave good feedback during all three events.

We were able to partner with new business for catering, developing our relationships with businesses in the local area.

What could be improved?

Marketing could have been better directed towards audiences. Ben was overseeing the majority of the forward planning, and with limited communication between both parties, some of the overhead costs were not agreed upon and ended up costing more than anticipated. The spread of the events over 3 weeks, as the costs were repeated and not shared. We only needed to have one bar.

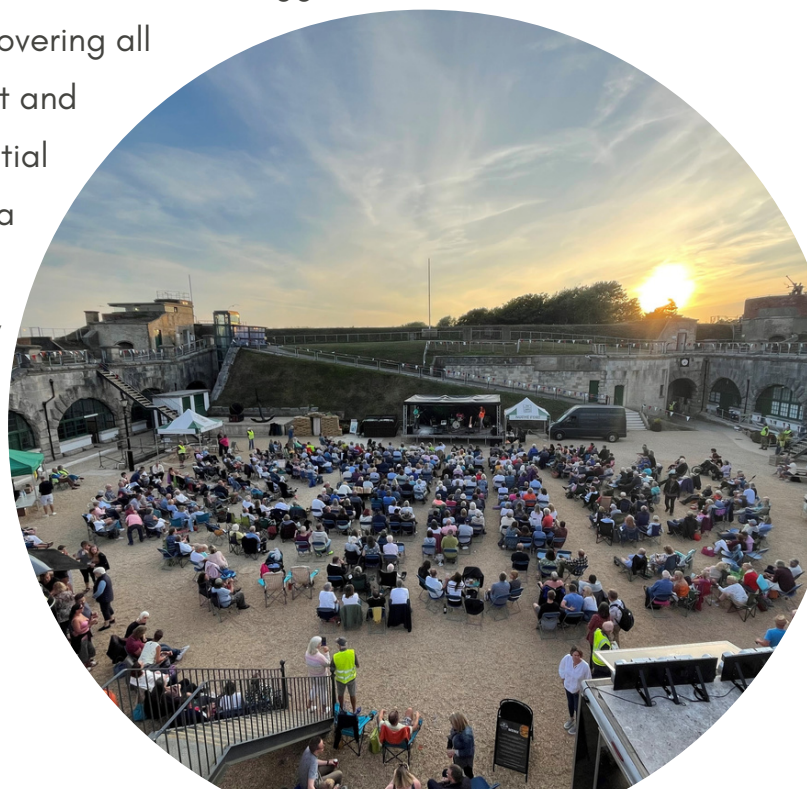
Recommendations for next year?

Ben has offered a free gig next year, with his band. We have suggested that Nothe Fort takes the lead in the planning of the event, covering all aspects so we have more control over budget and costings. The link to the fireworks is not essential next year and we think if the event runs over a weekend and for a longer night, the caterers may earn more, as people may be more likely to spend.

What did you enjoy most about your visit and what do you feel could be improved?

"Ben Waters. Bigger stage and more events like this."

Customer Survey



SCIENCE DAYS

20 March - Nothe Fort Family Science Festival (focused on the science of Nothe Fort)

2 October - Weymouth Family Science Festival (general science event with local businesses and charities participating)

What went well?

- Timing - both science events were in should season at attracted large numbers.
- Subject - Science is very popular with families. It is a very appropriate link for the Fort and for Weymouth which has so many industries.
- STEM volunteers - We are able to attract 6th form volunteers who want to have relevant work experience for their UCAS applications.
- Influence - It gives us an opportunity to try new activities for the Fort which can be developed into hands on displays.

The timing of the Science Festival in March linked to the National Science Festival, and we did not wish to clash with Dorchester's Science event and therefore planned a low key event. We used the event to test out different hands on activities around the Fort, some of which we introduced into displays. e.g. senefor flags and morse code machine.

We were delighted to have CEFAS, Wessex Water, Institute of Physics, Dorset Litter Free Coast, Wessex Astronomy Portland Museum participate in the October Science Festival.

Recommendations for next year?

Next March 2023 we will develop a large Family Science Festival and link to the National festival. We shall also link with Weymouth Library's programme. We would like to fundraise for a marquee in the Parade Ground so that we could have larger demonstrations with bangs and bubbles!

**+101 people in
October 2022**



HALLOWEEN HALF TERM

9 days with a wide range of activities including a ghost hunt, photobooth, make and take activities, mini golf, games room and shows.

What went well?

We positioned ourselves as a leader for Halloween activities, as there was little competition in the town. Our marketing campaign was able to reach and engage a high amount of people. We were able to provide a range of low cost activities, which increased dwell time, and due to the amount of activities, visitors were more likely to purchase annual passes and many returned in the same week.

What could be improved?

Our booking system did not offer a simple customer journey, and many people struggled to book online, which took up a lot of human resources to. We may have also lost bookings through this process.

Recommendations for next year?

Plan and deliver a wide range of activities for all ages, including hard-to-reach audiences, such as 16-18.

We are looking to resolve the booking system faults over the winter and improve the customer journey.

"There were things for the whole family to enjoy (there were 8 of us, the children's ages range from 7 - 15) and we could really see how much hard work has been put into decorating the castle for Halloween."

Customer Feedback



NOTHE OF THE LIVING DEAD

What went well?

This year, there was an increase in the amount of tickets sold, with good feedback from partners and visitors. We took charge in the marketing campaign to access the appropriate audience, and boost ticket sales. Some participants from travelled as far as Surrey and Bristol to attend the event.

What could be improved?

The ticket prices were reduced this year to reflect the cost of living, but this meant profit was less despite having sold more tickets. The marketing campaign was slightly delayed due to the passing of the Queen, meaning there was less time to build awareness of the event. Ticket sales also took a lot resources to pick up, and the public were purchasing at the last minute.

Recommendations for next year?

Next year, the marketing campaign needs to start slightly earlier, with content specific for the target audience. We will work with ICA and Epic Games, to create a more varied marketing campaign to attract a different audience, achieve higher engagement and increase ticket sales.

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VOLUNTEERS
FROM THE
LOCAL
COMMUNITY



NEW EVENTS



110
VISITORS

South West Ultra Run (11 June)

38
TICKETS



Alice in Wonderland (17 June)

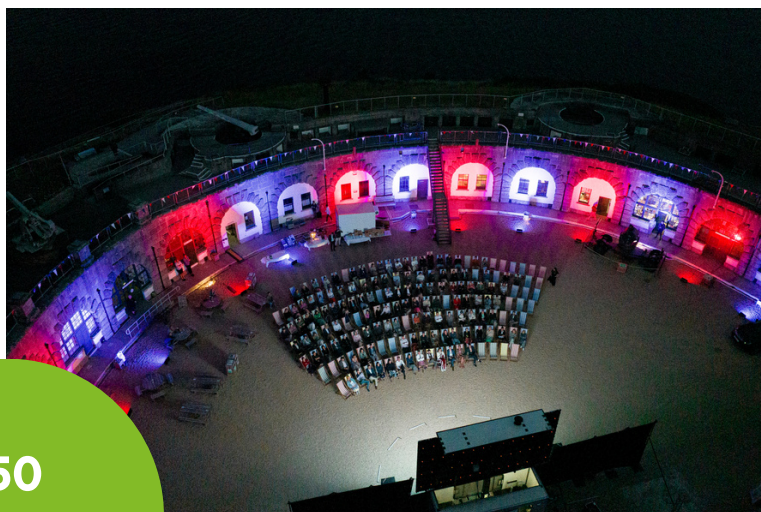
NEW EVENTS

120
STUDENTS



Wey Valley Prom (30 June)

150
VISITORS



British Sailing Film Premiere
(20 July)

NEW EVENTS



477
VISITORS

Paws 4 Fort (25 Sept)

Concluding 2022

- It is clear that the most successful events this year took place where there was added value to a General Admission ticket price.
- There was a higher risk and loss with events where Visitors had to pay extra, which is a result of the current economic climate, post-Covid, Brexit, and the Ukraine war which has made people more cautious. This is compared to last year, where people were eager to attend events and spend due to the confinements of Covid-19.
- There is a clear demand for fun family activities.

LOOKING TO 2023

- Add value to Annual Passes, to increase sales, resulting in more profit.
- Utilise a flat fee and hire packages for out-of-hours events (charitable and non-charitable).
- Funding applications to build the range of cultural events. Add new events to access hard-to-reach audiences.
- Consult volunteers and stakeholders, to assess the want and demand for events/types of events at the Fort.



LOOKING TO 2023

Evidence suggests that visitors will be more inclined to go to places where there are free activities. We should be focusing on organising events and activities for locals and holidaymakers to attend, where they won't have to pay any additional costs.

This also suggests that Annual Pass Holders may be more likely to visit more often, therefore, we should be able to provide them with exceptional value for money with the activities held at the Fort.

As a result of the 'cost of living crisis', 33% of UK adults say they will 'choose cheaper accommodation' for their UK overnight trip and 32% will 'look for more free things to do'. 11% will not go on an overnight trip.

Figure 13a. 'Cost of living' impact on UK holidays and short breaks, Percentage, October 2022, UK, Full list



2023 PROPOSED EVENTS

February

- Nothe Fort during WW2 (*9 days*)
- 1940s Day
- Nuclear Shelter Weekend

March

- Wedding Fayre
- National Science Festival
- Springtober Fest

Utilising a marquee, which we hope to get sponsorship towards.

April

- Easter Holidays (*2 weeks of activities*)
- Vintage Market

Coordinated in collaboration with Weymouth College students, after consultation with the select demographic.

May

- Coronation Street Party
- Nuclear Shelter Weekend
- Gig Rowing

June

- Half Term (*Pirate Week* more details to be confirmed*)
- Silent Disco (*Natural England, celebration of coastal paths*)
- Ultra Run 2023

2023 PROPOSED EVENTS

July

- Victorian Weekend
- Barn Dance/Ceilidh
- Car Show
- Wessex Musical Theatre

August

- Open Air Cinema
- Big Gig (TBC)
- Ben Waters

Additional

- Projection (project funded by application)
- Themed School Half Terms (with family friendly activities including crafts, shows, photobooth, mini golf and so on)
- Artist in Residence Programme

To ensure the success of these events, we will begin to promote at least 3-months prior to the event date.