

LIVERPOOL IRISH FESTIVAL

Bringing Liverpool and
Ireland closer together



FESTIVAL REVIEW 2016

CONTENTS

.....	3
Overview	4
What does it take to make a festival?	6
Participants and visitors*	6
Audience attendances	6
BASIC FESTIVAL Facts and figures	6
FESTIVAL FIGURES.....	7
Average ticket price.....	7
Average audience survey respondent age.....	7
Ethnicity information.....	8
Gender and audiences	9
Audience gender breakdowns	9
Audience post code breakdowns and analysis.....	9
Audience post code breakdowns.....	9
Cultivating and inspiring audiences	11
The <i>Creative Case</i> : Performers, volunteers and Board members	12
Sexual orientation	13
Ethnicity.....	13
PR FACTS, FIGURES & TRENDS.....	14
Social media growth summary	14
LIF website.....	15
Website acquisition (or 'where visitors come from').....	15
Press achieved	16
Distribution campaign breakdown	17
Testimonials.....	19
Descriptors.....	19
Suggestions.....	19
Focus for the future	20
Strategic objectives for LIF, the organisation.....	21
Thanks	24
Liverpool Irish Festival	24

Cover image: Guests enjoying Irish Stew at *Scadán, Liverpool Irish Festival 2016*
Detail of image © Mark McNulty. 2016

★ ★ 2016 ★ ★

LIVERPOOL IRISH FESTIVAL'S

HEADLINE

ACHIEVEMENTS

These are just some of the things
we want to shout about!



8,812 visitors to 53
events & 4 exhibits,
showcasing 107
artists over 10 days



LIF2016 received visits from
every Liverpool post code +
many (inter)nationally



LIF2016 worked with
over 30 partners,
including venues,
sponsors & funders



94% of visitors rated
LIF2016 as 4 out of 5
or more!



96% of visitors are quite
or very likely to
recommend LIF!



LIF2016 had a press
reach of 15.5m

OVERVIEW

Liverpool Irish Festival 2016 developed from following up positive conversations and creating and using strong partnerships, in a short amount of time, trading on reputational warmth. From discussions about 10 events over 10 days the organisers achieved much more by calling on existing relationships, re-developing existing friendships and by strategically delivering the programme under the banner of “conviviality”. In the spirit of creating warm and positive touchpoints, with partners and audiences, the 2016 *Liverpool Irish Festival* team were able to deliver an expansive, broad and accessible festival, which generated a nexus of activity and a critical mass of debate, exhibits and connections, focussing on both historic and contemporary practices, debate and creativity centred on Irish culture and its relevance to Liverpool.

With a view to creating a deep evaluation, we have managed to generate a considerable amount of data (557 hard copy feedback forms and 49 digital). This evaluation has not come easily – the paper feedback forms collected by a strong team of volunteers offer a solid start point. The more expansive digital form was harder to engage participants with during ‘rich media’ times (Brexit, US elections, local hurricanes and foreign tsunamis); *LIF* had a hard fight for digital space, generating limited responses. This will be important for *LIF* to consider in future. Even so, we’re pleased to report that audiences deemed *LIF2016* ‘fun, interesting and informative’. In future years, we will survey our volunteers, artists, collaborators and partners to provide a 360° view of what *LIF* means to people.

LIF2016 took place in a mix of high end cultural spaces and community level venues, adding variety and depth to the programme, and atmosphere. Something *LIF* aim to build on in future is our public realm work and high profile work, which was impossible in 2016. Ideas include generating impact and interest via projects such as *Meta-Perceptual Helmets* (2015), but with greater resonance and a legacy that truly underpins the festival and a large-scale show, such as the *Irish Sea Sessions*. With short lead times and no commissioning budget in this round, this was not possible, but the festival is working to secure a high profile, annual performance spectacle and artist commissions. With longer lead times and greater strategic application, we will fundraise for and commission such works, enriching the artistic integrity and reputational value of the festival.

That said, 2016 expanded the number of channels used for discourse, including in-conversation events, family days, seisiúns, essays and blogs, which allowed us to engage deeply with certain audiences, whilst working with multiple arts collaborators and agents (i.e., *Bido Lito*, *Liverpool Comhaltas*, *Alsop Drama*, *Museum of Liverpool*) enabling high numbers of people to engage; developing considerable local interest. The multi-disciplined programme meant visitors attended for 3.4 days each (from digital reports) across the period. 2016 also proved to us that ‘closed events’, specific to individual relationships (i.e., lecture given at the *John Moore’s Film School*), brought many added benefits, including volunteers, knowledge sharing, artist interactions and event attendees, but it was in the free, social events where the festival felt its warmest and most effective.

Leading with an expectation that we would build relationships not only for 2016, but with longer-term collaboration in mind, allowed *LIF* to work with more artists, more venues and develop more connections than anticipated when the new lead took office in July. Anecdotally, we understand that 100% of those involved want to be again, but only time will tell. In 2017, *LIF* will aim for 80% of artists and collaborators a) wanting to work with *LIF* again and b) believing *LIF* to be an important cultural contributor to the city and its festival programme. We hope that this will help us evidence the value *LIF* brings to the UK arts and culture offer and its value to Liverpool’s international position and its ‘cultural excellence’.

LIF’s ability to work with relationship building in mind, means we quintupled our original ambition of developing 10+ events; additionally developing ten written commissions (including a playlist and a number of essays), initially unpredicted. We worked directly with 107 artists (25 local, 19 national and

63 international) and showed work from many more with whom we do not have direct contact for monitoring (i.e., two dance schools, *Comhaltas*, *Melody Makers*, play performers, etc). We generated an in-house volunteer team and intern platform; developed 81 exhibition days and achieved many more goals besides!

Digesting feedback from the audiences, artists, stakeholders and the Board, *LIF* understands that the route taken for *LIF2016* directly engaged a greater number of people than ever before – in all ways – audiences, artists, venues, partners and collaborators, providing positive opportunities for people to engage and a strong platform for 2017.

We believe *LIF*'s delivers something unique to its field, primarily because it is *of* and *for* Liverpool and its multiple communities, but also because it addresses Irishness and its diaspora (as populations and cultures) as a spectrum of ideas and abilities rather than pigeonholing 'Irishness' as a singular notion. Its focus on the distinct cultural stories rather than specific societal cultures 'on the Island' gives it dynamism. *LIF* engages audiences in the artistry of Irish culture without being elitist, though finding room to include elite work. It invites audiences to join as makers and co-creators, whatever their experience and it develops friendships – artistically, professionally and personally – in a way that people experience deeply. For these reasons, *LIF* is a compelling festival of note that has a bright future in engaging audiences (new and old), developing rich connections and providing meaningful, long-lasting experiences, which people can take with them around the world. There is an appetite to import stories, but also 'export' the *Liverpool Irish Festival* to the Island to tell Liverpool's stories there. In this way, we hope to create deeper connections, develop opportunities for exchange and truly 'bring Liverpool and Ireland closer together'.

We'd like to thank our artists, partners, sponsors, collaborators, volunteers, organisations and venues, friends along with each and every visitor and audience member for helping to make *LIF2016* the success it was. Thank you! Please, join us again for *LIF2017*. It's going to be even more remarkable!



Emma Smith, Director
Liverpool Irish Festival



Families watching the *Family Céilí* at *Bluecoat*, *LIF2016* © Bob Edwards, 2016

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO MAKE A FESTIVAL?

Participants and visitors*

	Events	Exhibits
Expected	3,608	975
Achieved	5,569	3,243
%>	154.4	332.6

*All these figures are derived from audience counts taken at events or calculated extrapolations from automated door counts.

Audience attendances

Workshops	5	1046
Performance	14	2124
Event	27	2052
Other	7	347
Exhibitions	4	3243
Total	57	8812

Arts Council England defines audience engagement in these categories to help determine depth of engagement versus passive exposure. *LIF*'s workshops and 'other' (including walks, tours, etc) show a high rate of firm engagement.

Between 13 July 2016 (the *LIF2016* lead's first meeting) and 13 October 2016 (day 1 of *Liverpool Irish Festival 2016*) the new festival lead worked for 51 days...

- attending 54 individual meetings
- sending 2,433 emails (48 per day), arranged across 239 inbox folders
- sending a further 361 emails across the festival, as well as attending (in part or whole) 33 (of 53) events and all 4 exhibition spaces
- delivered 3 Board meetings, including strategic direction documents, brand guidance, a new website and all the festival print.

LIF2016 delivered 53 events, across 83 sessions* over 11 days, as well as 4 exhibits, generating 81 exhibition days.

* It is worth noting that *Arts Council England* determine a session to be a morning, afternoon or evening, so if an event spans a number of hours, it may be worth more than 1 session, hence 53 events totalling 83 sessions.

BASIC FESTIVAL FACTS AND FIGURES

Live programme build:	No of each	% of live prog	Visitors/ participants	% total audience
Workshops (ceílí classes, family day, student lecture)	5	9.43	1046	18.78
Performances (<i>Liverpool Lambs</i> , Damien Dempsey)	14	26.42	2124	38.14
Events (talks and musical seisiúns)	27	50.94	2052	36.84
Other (walks, materials library)	7	13.21	347	6.2
TOTAL	53	100.00	5569	100.00

FESTIVAL FIGURES

Total audiences were 54.4% above anticipated figures based on original programme predictions. Higher yielding events included the *Family Day* at *Museum of Liverpool*, social seisiúns at *Everyman* and festival led exhibits. *LIF* received 35% more event attendees than anticipated, made up of gains across the live programme portfolio, but especially interest in theatre, *St Michael's* events and the film programme, originally believed a difficult sell based on complex content. We will increase our confidence in attendance in future!

Sell out events took place at the *Liverpool Philharmonic*, *St George's Hall* and *St Michael's Irish Centre*, proving partners benefitted from the cross promotional platform. *Alsop Drama's Three Plays* performed substantially higher than anticipated and conversations are already underway about how to reignite audience attention for their work.

Exhibition figures are - in the main - extrapolations of building figures. In the case of the *Vide* at *Bluecoat*, we have used the total *Vide* peel off rate of 5% as *Homo Gestalt* was the only exhibit. For *Central Library* we have taken a 0.5% building peel off rate, based on 67,000 visits in October (multiplied as a day rate for the duration of the exhibit). *16 Box Set's* figures are calculated against till

Average ticket price*

No of tickets paid for	Total raised
2714	£45,373.00
Average price of paid event ticket	£ 16.72
Av across all events (including free events)	£ 4.25

* Based on the average price of tickets (the value between full and concession prices, multiplied by the number of purchases made). Does not account for comps or free events.

flow rate to judge the number of customers who paid and therefore (most likely) sat in the café. For the *Display Centre*, the evaluator has used a 15% visitor rate, based on the necessity to pass the window display within the shop. However, this does not account for those who look in to the display from outside and so is believed to be a conservative estimate for those who stopped to enjoy Catherine Keenan's eye-catching work.

Average audience survey respondent age

		Digital	Paper	Total
Age	(Av)			
Under 16	8	0	7	7
16-19	17.5	0	10	10
20-24	22	0	46	46
25-44	34.5	4	115	119
45-54	49.5	8	78	86
55-64	59.5	20	152	172
65+ (<i>Life expectancy = 81*</i>)	73	16	123	139
Prefer not to say	36.5	1	1	2
Completions		49	532	581
% answering question		100.00	95.51	95.87
Total form fillers		49	557	606

* *The Global Burden of Diseases, Injuries, and Risk Factors Study 2013* (GBD 2013)

Of 53 events programmed, 27 were ticketed (paid) and 26 remained free. The estimated income against every ticket sold, based on average prices only – not till receipts – amounts to £45,373. During *LIF2016* *LIF* did create some %split deals with venues, such as *PictureHouse* and *A Small Cinema*, from which small income generations have been made. In future, *LIF* should consider these approaches more often, as there are profits to be made against strands of the programme, though it is important to remember that free events must feature to drive engagement and fulfil *Liverpool City Council Cultural Investment* obligations, as well as maintaining our egalitarianism.

Using the approximate average ages ('Av' shown in table above) multiplied by the number of people selecting these options we can see from the paper survey respondents that our average audience member is 51. Differing from expectation, our digital users average an age of 60. Across the total of respondents, this gives us an average audience age of 52 years per person, based on the number responding to each category. This plays very much in to the trend of the sort of people that see value in responding, have time and recognise feedback as an asset, so shouldn't serve as solid guidance that this the average age of an audience member. That stated, *LIF* ought to perhaps think of more contemporary ways of collecting information from the young and whether or not we feel this is an accurate representation of those present at the festival. Events such as the *Family Day*, *Family Ceilí* and use of the dance schools ought to reduce this figure, as it is highly unlikely that those participants figure within the survey respondents.

Ethnicity information	Digital	Paper	Total	Digital	Paper	Total
	Actual responses			% breakdowns		
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	0	0	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Asian or Asian British - Indian	1	2	3	2.04	0.36	0.50
Asian or Asian British - or other Asian background, not otherwise listed here	0	1	1	0.00	0.18	0.17
Black or Black British - African	0	2	2	0.00	0.36	0.33
Black or Black British - Caribbean	0	0	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Black or Black British - Other	0	0	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Chinese	0	4	4	0.00	0.72	0.66
Mixed - White and Asian	0	2	2	0.00	0.36	0.33
Mixed - White and Black African	0	0	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Mixed - any other mixed backgrounds	1	4	5	2.04	0.72	0.83
White - British	25	339	364	51.02	60.86	60.07
White - Irish	19	118	137	38.78	21.18	22.61
White - any other White backgrounds	1	4	5	2.04	0.72	0.83
I would prefer not to say	0	0	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Other	2	16	18	4.08	2.87	2.97
Completions	49	492	541			
% answering question	100.00	88.33	89.27	100	88.33	89.27
Total form fillers	49	557	606			

'White British' and 'White Irish' audience generate 82% of our audience. This figure would be higher if we account for the fact that over 10% of people did not answer this question. Ways of addressing this in the future include targeting non-Irish communities to share in Irish culture, considering programming for multiple-histories and identities and thinking about the Irish as a complex global diaspora with Mexican-Irish, African-Irish, Asian-Irish heritages and many more besides.

Gender and audiences

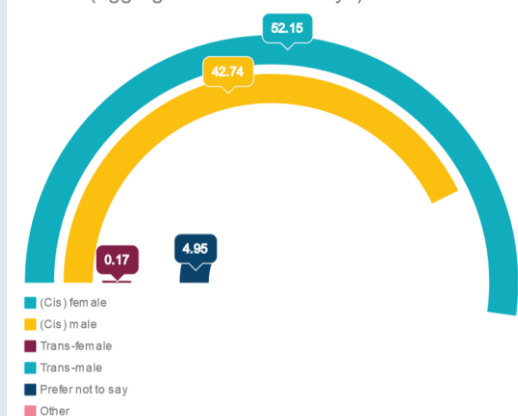
Our audience gender figures show we are attracting similar percentages of men and women, but have a very low non-cisgendered audience. This may be representative of *LIF* lacking content for cis/transgendered audiences, but a lack of evidence is not a compelling argument for radical change. However, it is something to be noted, particularly as advocates for the Creative Case (see below) and work with the Irish diaspora. It is hoped future feedback will show a shift towards matching national trend figures in 2017 (at least).

Audience gender breakdowns

	Digital	Paper	Total
Gender			
(Cis) female	24	292	316
(Cis) male	25	234	259
Trans-female	0	1	1
Trans-male	0	0	0
Prefer not to say	0	30	30
Other	0	0	0
Completions	49	527	606
% answering question	100	94.61	95.05
Total form fillers	49	557	606

30 people did not answer the paper question and have therefore been included in 'Prefer not to say'

Gender (aggregated across surveys)



What our post code data shows us is that we have a high percent of audiences traveling regionally and nationally, but a low international travel rate for audiences.

Anecdotally, this seems at odds with our experience of audiences 'on the ground', but it could be argued that much of the Liverpool audience *is* from Ireland and have short and long term bases in Liverpool which they use during their stay.

That said, a study of Liverpool travel (extrapolated across 5,441 visitors) shows an incredible spread of visits from **every** Liverpool post code! This could form an interesting part of *LIF*'s audience development, programme strategy and marketing considerations.

Audience post code breakdowns and analysis

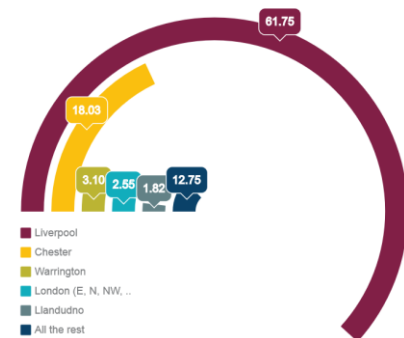
Post code breakdowns are a good indicator for understanding where your marketing might have reached and where your audiences are coming from.

Audience post code breakdowns

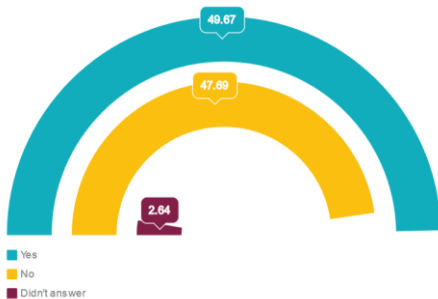
All responses	No	%
Liverpool	339	61.75
Chester	99	18.03
Warrington	17	3.10
London* (E, N, NW, SE, SW & W)	14	2.55
Llandudno	10	1.82
Preston	9	1.64
Wigan	9	1.64
Belfast	5	0.91
Manchester	5	0.91
?	4	0.73
Crewe	3	0.55
Blackpool	2	0.36
Dublin	2	0.36
Edinburgh	2	0.36
Ha/L/Fax	2	0.36
Inverness	2	0.36
Nottingham	2	0.36
Stockport	2	0.36
Torquay	2	0.36
Birmingham	1	0.18
Blackburn	1	0.18
Derby	1	0.18
Glasgow	1	0.18
Gloucester	1	0.18
Guildford	1	0.18
Lancaster	1	0.18
Northampton	1	0.18
Norwich	1	0.18
Oldham	1	0.18
Paisley	1	0.18
Plymouth	1	0.18
Portsmouth	1	0.18
Queensland, Australia	1	0.18
Shrewsbury	1	0.18
Southend-on-Sea	1	0.18
St Albans	1	0.18
Stoke-on-Trent	1	0.18
Sutton	1	0.18
Total	549	100.00

	Location	Authority	Attendees	% of respondent s	5441 Liverpool visits
L1	<u>City Centre</u>	<u>Liverpool</u>	13	3.83	209
L2	<u>City Centre</u>	Liverpool	1	0.29	16
L3	City Centre, Everton, Vauxhall	Liverpool	14	4.13	225
L4	Anfield, Kirkdale, Walton	Liverpool	8	2.36	128
L5	Anfield, Everton, Kirkdale, Vauxhall	Liverpool	5	1.47	80
L6	Anfield, City Centre, Everton, Fairfield, Kensington, Tuebrook	Liverpool	8	2.36	128
L7	City Centre, Edge Hill, Fairfield, Kensington	Liverpool	18	5.31	289
L8	City Centre, Dingle, Toxteth	Liverpool	32	9.44	514
L9	Aintree, Fazakerley, Orrell Park, Walton	<u>Liverpool, Sefton</u>	3	0.88	48
L10	Aintree Village, Fazakerley	<u>Sefton, Liverpool, Knowsley</u>	2	0.59	32
L11	Clubmoor, Croxteth, Gillmoss, Norris Green	Liverpool	7	2.06	112
L12	Croxteth Park, West Derby	Liverpool	10	2.95	161
L13	Clubmoor, Old Swan, Stoneycroft, Tuebrook	Liverpool	20	5.90	321
L14	Broadgreen, Dovecot, Knotty Ash, Page Moss	Liverpool, Knowsley	4	1.18	64
L15	<u>Wavertree</u>	Liverpool	19	5.60	305
L16	Broadgreen, Bowring Park, Childwall	Liverpool, Knowsley	8	2.36	128
L17	Aigburth, St Michael's Hamlet, Sefton Park	Liverpool	45	13.27	722
L18	Allerton, Mossley Hill	Liverpool	30	8.85	482
L19	Aigburth, Garston, Grassendale, Mossley Hill	Liverpool	9	2.65	144
L20	Bootle, Orrell and Kirkdale	Sefton, Liverpool	3	0.88	48
L21	Ford, Litherland, Seaforth	Sefton, Liverpool	5	1.47	80
L22	<u>Waterloo</u>	Sefton	4	1.18	64
L23	Blundellsands, Brighton-le-Sands, Crosby, Little Crosby, Thornton	Sefton	11	3.24	177
L24	Hale, Speke	<u>Halton Liverpool</u>	2	0.59	32
L25	Belle Vale, Gateacre, Hunts Cross, Woolton, Halewood	Liverpool, Knowsley	9	2.65	144
L26	<u>Halewood</u>	Liverpool, Knowsley	2	0.59	32
L27	<u>Netherley</u>	Liverpool	3	0.88	48
L28	<u>Stockbridge Village</u>	Liverpool, Knowsley	1	0.29	16
L29	Lunt, Sefton Village	Sefton	0	0.00	0
L30	Bootle, Netherton	Sefton	5	1.47	80
L31	Maghull, Lydiate, Melling, Waddicar	Sefton	4	1.18	64
L32	<u>Kirkby</u>	Knowsley	0	0.00	0
L33	<u>Kirkby</u>	Knowsley	4	1.18	64
L34	Prescot, Knowsley Village	Knowsley	3	0.88	48
L35	Prescot, Whiston, Rainhill	<u>Knowsley, St Helens</u>	3	0.88	48
L36	Huyton, Roby, Tarbock	Knowsley	4	1.18	64
L37	Formby, Little Altcar, Great Altcar	Sefton	5	1.47	80
L38	Ince Blundell, Hightown	Sefton	2	0.59	32
L39	Ormskirk, Aughton	<u>West Lancashire</u>	11	3.24	177
L40	Burscough, Mawdesley, Scarisbrick, Rufford, Holmeswood	<u>West Lancashire, Chorley</u>	2	0.59	32
			339	100	5441

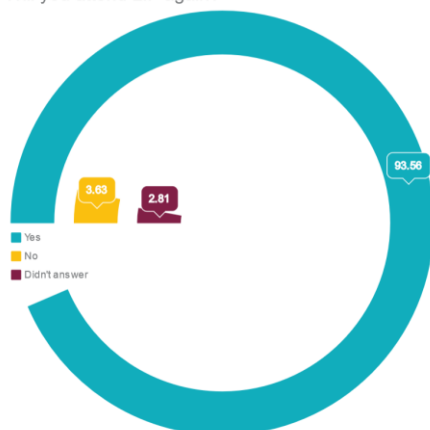
Top 5 post codes travelled from



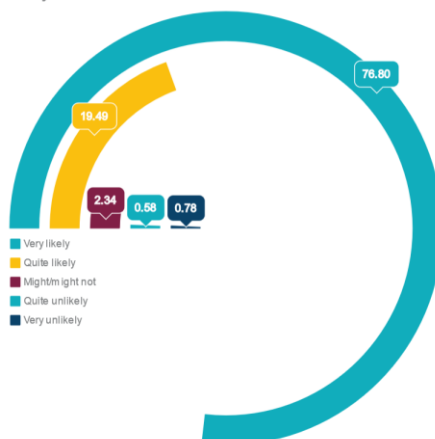
Attended LIF before?



Will you attend LIF again?



Likely to recommend the festival?



In simpler terms, to the left is a diagram of the top 5 places (nationally) that people came to *LIF* from, aggregated from both the paper and digital surveys. *LIF*'s post code breakdowns show we received over 60% of our audience from Liverpool, with a further 27% coming in from the North West. Almost 11% travel nationally to visit and the festival receives 0.5% of visits from the rest of the world.

Extrapolated across the festival, the figures suggest that *LIF* welcomed 48 international visitors, 2,376 non-Liverpool North West visitors, 5,441 Liverpudlians and 947 national visitors.

Based on a city visit multiplier of 0.4% this means we generated 13.48 overnight stays. Using our festival day attendance rate of 3.4 days this suggests that each overnight resident stayed in the city for 3 nights and therefore, using the [Liverpool Hotels Update 2016](#), *LIF* believe we have encouraged a minimum hotel income of £2,832.81.

Cultivating and inspiring audiences

Just under half of *LIF2016*'s audience self-identify as being new to the festival across the two survey types and over 93% say they will come again. A higher percentage of those completing the digital survey claimed to be re-attenders, enforcing the notion that the digital respondents were warmer to the festival, felt more invested and understood the relevance and requirements of surveying.

A return rate of 93% is very high, given the number of attendees that travelled nationally.

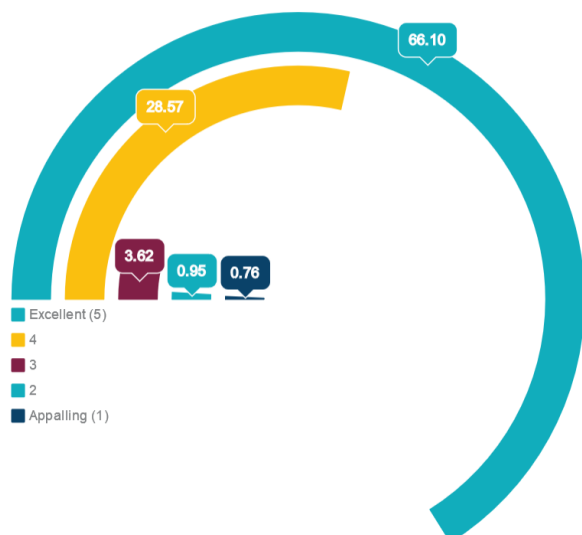
A strong gauge of how audiences feel about their experiences is whether or not they would recommend it to others. *LIF*'s survey respondents were asked to mark their answers according to a

- very likely (5*)
- quite likely (4*)
- might/might not (3*)
- quite unlikely (2*)
- very unlikely (1*) range.

96.29% of those who responded to the question across the two surveys said they would be 'very' or 'quite' likely to recommend the *Liverpool Irish Festival*! This is excellent news!

Although only asked in the digital survey, 83.7% of the audience stated that their main reason for travelling that day was to attend *Liverpool Irish Festival* events, with only 16.3% stating no. From a tourism perspective, extrapolated against visits, this could mean that *LIF* inspired/instigated 7,375.6 journeys!

Overall experience/festival ranking



Another encouraging sign that *LIF* is pleasing audiences, are the overall experience generated, aggregated from both the digital and paper feedback forms. Respondents were asked how they would rate the festival/their overall experience on a scale of 'Excellent' (5*) to 'Appalling' (1*). These show that 94.67% of audiences rated their experiences as 4* or higher! This is staggering, especially when you consider the lateness of the programme announcement, the varying qualities of customer service and repair of venues, the late development of the theme and the political sensitivities present in some of the programme content.

The digital survey also asked questions rating services the festival provides, such as the quality of the exhibits, events, welcome, venues, publicity and promotion, signage and signposting, venue locations, festival hub, social media website, enewsletter, etc, but with so few respondents it is difficult to scrutinise these to any great effect. Nothing in the figures suggests extreme negativity towards any of the items listed and – as always arises in such surveys – signage could be improved.

The Creative Case: Performers, volunteers and Board members

Artists		%		%	
Female artists	39	36	Local	25	23
Male artists	68	64	National	19	18
Paid	7	7	International	63	59
Unpaid	100	93	Total	107	
Artists & non-artists		%		%	
Female artists	50	38	Local	45	34
Male artists	82	62	National	23	17
Paid	10	8	International	64	48
Unpaid	122	92	Total	132	
Non-artists		%		%	
Female non-artists	11	44	Local	20	80
Male non-artists	14	56	National	4	16
Paid	3	12	International	1	4
Unpaid	22	88	Total	25	
Relationships		%		%	
Artist shown	89	67	Technician	0	0
Board members	4	3	Producer	10	8
Curator	0	0	Volunteer curator	0	0
Partner	4	3	Volunteer	17	13
PR	1	1	Staff	0	0
Speaker	7	5	Total	132	

The *Creative Case* is an important initiative being led on by *Arts Council England* to readdress diversity by creating deeper inclusion in to *ACE* funded work. *LIF*'s figures in this area are notional, but do show us some interesting areas that we could look to improve on. *ACE*'s aim is not simply 'equal opportunities repackaged', it fundamentally alters how we consider diversity within our work, embed positivity for diversity in our organisational philosophy and conduct our work by creating meaningful content. Of the 132 artists and non-artists we worked with, we can show certain trends, i.e., we have worked with more male artists than female, higher proportions of 'international artists' than 'regional' and that we don't monitor sexual preference well enough (see table and information that follows).

It could be argued that because we don't know an artist's or non-artist's sexual preference, we are not discriminating, but a core tenet of the *Creative Case* is that we "need to talk about it, until we don't need to talk about it". As sexual preference is still widely discriminated against, *LIF* needs to demonstrate that it is working positively to drive the 'creative case' forward.

The lack of a commissioning budget this year accounts for the majority of artists we worked being unpaid. However, these figures do not reflect the day rate of artists who may have been paid by our partners under reciprocity agreements (i.e., programme in exchange for affinity/promotion).

Sexual orientation	Artists	Non-artists
Lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT)	3	0
Heterosexual	39	15
Other	0	0
Not known	65	10
TOTAL	107	25

This short table demonstrates that less than 2.3% of our artists and non-artists self-identify as LGBT, whilst 41% are heterosexual. That said, we don't know the preference of 56% of our practitioners and this is something *LIF* can change with content inclusion and improved monitoring. The *Office of National Statistics* believe c.1.7% of England's population self-identify as LGB today, though other sources suggest as high as 10% (*Kinsey Report*). Our figures should reflect this as a minimum

Ethnicity	Artists	Non-artists
White British	30	19
White Irish	75	4
White other	2	1
White & Black Caribbean	0	1
White & Black African	0	0
White & Asian	0	0
Mixed other	0	0
Asian British	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
Asian other	0	0
Black British	0	0
Caribbean	0	0
African	0	0
Somali	0	0
Yemeni	0	0
Nigerian	0	0
Black other	0	0
Other ethnic minorities	0	0
Not known	0	0
TOTAL	107	25
Grand total		132

We have undertaken no disability monitoring and therefore cannot provide details on this. This is an area of work we must address in future, but has not been raised as an independent issue to date. However, to fulfil our belief in tolerant working thinking about how disability is managed in our city, the venues that we use, content we commission, partners we work with and the language we use, *Liverpool Irish Festival* is committed to working with disability.

Another consideration for the *Creative Case* is where *LIF*'s practitioners come from. Access to aspiration and working across areas of deprivation as well as wealth are important factors to recognise and considering how this is supported in future will be a concern. This should relate to our work on dovetailing work to multiple audiences and post codes.

Peculiar to *LIF*, its work and the city trends (though unsurprising given our connections) are *LIF*'s scores for working with 'White Irish' (almost 60%) as opposed to 'White British'. However, what we are clearly failing to attract – across our artists, Board members and volunteers – are non-White practitioners. This is marginally less obvious in our audience feedback, but certainly worth considering when commissioning work, content and multiple-histories/futures for later festivals. Considering Ireland's and Liverpool's multiple identities this is a concern and suggests that we are not working (or monitoring is perhaps the key) in these communities enough. Certainly, projects such as *#AmIrish* and *#At Home Abroad*, should help to address this imbalance, but it is worth noting.

PR FACTS, FIGURES & TRENDS

Social media growth summary	Aug 2016	Today	%>
Facebook	3,777	4,007	6.09
Twitter	3,470	3,656	5.36
Instagram	132	185	40.15
Mailchimp*	1,727	1,650	-4.46

* LIF spent time cleaning their existing data, de-duplicating data and improving the quality. Current open rate = 38%, beating the industry open rate of 23.7% (a 14.3% variance). In addition, our newsletter performs 4.6% better in clicks than the industry average.



Twitter: 3,660 followers (300+ versus 2015). In September 2016 LIF delivered/received:

- 70 tweets
- 1396 profile visits (a 14% increase from 2015)
- 68 mentions
- 63.8k tweet impressions (a 101% increase from 2015)
- 70 new followers.

Compared to October 2016:

- 114 tweets (a 19% increase on 2015)
- 3178 profile visits (a 5.7% increase)
- 121 new followers
- 383 mentions
- 107k tweet impressions (50% increase on 2015).

The **@LivIrishFest** Twitter account now has 3,660 followers. It remains the key social networks for engaging with press and artists, if not consumers as much as other channels. The top mentions remain those by either partners or media outlets.

The top tweet in October, during the festival, was Stuart Borthwick's essay linking with *66 Days*, a film screening at *FACT*.

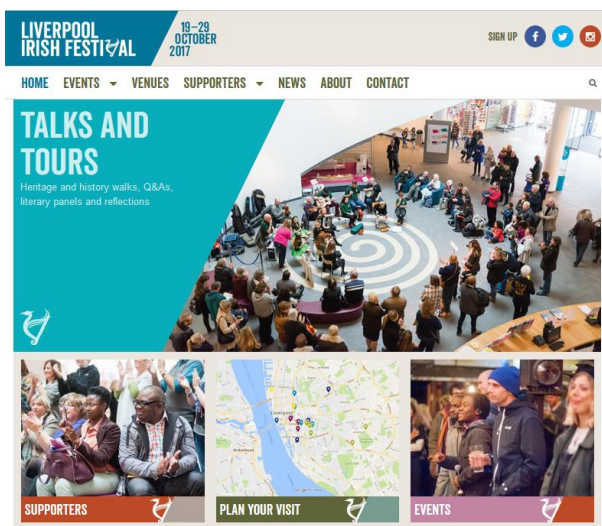
Twitter – as a media stream - is more content rich/heavy than Facebook, based on more for updates and news. For Twitter, the content has to be richer and more engaging, which means the essays worked well in terms of reaching a new online audience. Twitter is populated by more 'opinion formers' who raise profiles, even if they don't necessarily attend events.



Facebook: 4,018 Likes (291 increase on 2015). During October 2016 LIF gained a reach of 46,025 (24% increase on 2015). Top sources for page the **@LivIrishFest** Facebook page include: Facebook, Google, *Liverpoolirishfestival.com*

Rich content performed best. LIF's Facebook live posts had excellent engagement. It's worth remembering Facebook had only just launched Facebook Live, so it's likely they tweaked their algorithm so it would appear more frequently in people's feeds to raise its profile, but this did work to LIF's advantage. The media pieces (web based essays, playlists, etc) continue to form good content, largely because of their profile and how many times they can be shared, thus reaching more people.

On Facebook our audience is built of 56% women, 43% men with the majority aged 25-34. 3,002 are UK based; with 623 in Ireland. We have 1,141 Facebookers in Liverpool; 257 in Dublin and 111 Belfast.



Thumbnail of the new website, first presented Sept 2016

- A 14.75% increase in unique sessions
- 8.23% more users

LIF website: LIF launched its new website (and programme) quite late (end of Sept-start of Oct), which means comparing year-on-year (YOY) figures is tricky. Sept/Oct 2016 and Sept/Oct 2015's activities layer differently, so measuring growth/run up creates unstable statistics. That said, initial activity comparisons look positive, but there could be additional determining factors, such as user competencies, web trends, etc..

We know that LIF has encountered far more web traffic and web interaction in 2016 compared with 2015. This includes:

- 60.59% more page views
- 39.94% more pages viewed per session
- Average session duration increase 27.53%
- Bounce rate drop off of 19.32%

These latest statistics demonstrate that the website is simply performing better. This is proved by the fact that people are spending longer on it (reading essays, finding more events and using more pages). LIF can therefore extrapolate the new site is working harder for the festival than the previous one, providing a successful central resource for the festival, reinforcing the work done elsewhere.

Website acquisition (or 'where visitors come from')

Most popular landing pages:

1. Events
2. Plan your visit
3. Scadán
4. In My Liverpool Home essay
5. Volunteers
6. Launch event page
7. Hunger Strike essay
8. The Logues event page
9. About us.

Most popular exit pages

1. Events
2. Plan your visit
3. Music and song events
4. Scadán
5. In my Liverpool home essay
6. The Logues
7. Launch event page

In 2016 LIF's acquisition breakdown shows visitors are finding the website via

- 31% referral (partner site or media)
- 27.4% organic search
- 23.3% social
- 17.4% direct.

In 2015 the comparators indicate

- 16% referral
- 40% organic search
- 23% social
- 18% direct.

The important difference YOY is the drop in organic searching, for which there could be multiple reasons. Users have become more technically proficient and may be finding it easier to locate the information they need by going straight to the website, where LIF is providing a more comprehensive performance. However, in 2016 LIF did not

run any Google Ads, as it did the previous year, which would have raised the organic search profile. This noted, Facebook, Twitter and Visit Liverpool remain LIF's most important referees. This tells us its key for LIF to continue to drive items and content through the social sites to push users to the website.

Best performing page: Events (accounting for 61% of website traffic; 27, 873 page views and 21,008 unique views).

Press achieved

- 20+ pieces of individual coverage (30 pieces less than 2015 reflecting the drop in local support, trailing and wayfinding and interest pieces the media will support today)
- Profile raising and providing engaging content on social media
- Draft reach of press 15.5m
- A selection of cuttings follows
 - clickliverpool.com/culture/7688-liverpool-irish-festival-to-return-in-october/
 - visitliverpool.com/whats-on/liverpool-irish-festival-2016-p390691
 - artinliverpool.com/liverpool-irish-festival-returns/
 - liverpoolecho.co.uk/whats-on/arts-culture-news/10-things-you-wont-want-11981728
 - theguideliverpool.com/liverpool-irish-festival-2016-top-5-events/
 - liverpooletc.com/liverpool-irish-festival-2016-damien-dempsey/
 - getintothis.co.uk/2016/09/liverpool-irish-festival-announces-ten-days-october-events/
 - getintothis.co.uk/2016/10/liverpool-irish-festival-2016/
 - liverpoolconfidential.co.uk/entertainment/irish-festival-jigs-back-into-liverpool
 - liverpoolconfidential.co.uk/entertainment/spirit-of-kazimier-set-to-rise-again-on-the-dock-road



MailChimp

Mailchimp: 10 x newsletters sent out between Wed 24 Aug and Fri 11 Nov

2016. Over that period the subscribers dropped from 1,681 to 1,633, after the list was cleaned and subscribers were asked to check their data. List engagement started very high and reduced, from a high of 17.5% clicks down to 2.7% in the last eshot, which is anticipated. In the first eshots, *LIF* were the main producer of news about the festival coinciding with the excitement and enthusiasm connected to what is happening. By the time the festival is in flow *LIF* are not the only organisation telling people about the festival. The best performing eshot was the initial programme announcement, which gained 845 opens and 297 click throughs.

During the festival we receive good (31%) open rates, based on a Saturday mailing and a direct focus on the audience as possible consumers/punters. It's inevitable *LIF* receive more interest from event announcements as we habitually use the newsletter as a driver for engagement rather than a news service. *LIF*'s lived-experience shows the former tends to perform better with our list. That said, *LIF*'s list average of opens exceeds the industry average - 35% vs 23% - with a click rate of 6.8% versus an industry average of 3.3%. Whilst we do well, we should make this list work harder.

Compared with 2015, *LIF*'s open rates are higher, but the lists used are smaller. *LIF* have taken to using *Mailchimp* primarily as an invite tool, rather than a solid communications tool.

When comparing YOY launch emails (both sent in August) we can see the development:

- 2015: 778 subscribers, 434 opens, 29 clicks
- 2016: 1,681 subscribers, 791 opens, 269 clicks

The launch email worked far more successfully in 2016 with a higher list, better data, greater interaction and pushing more people to the website.

Distribution campaign breakdown

		Brochures	Listings	Posters
Print total		7000	20000	500
Number allocated		7000	20000	500
Distribution through <u>LIF staff and vols</u>				
Delivered to: LIF office		1000	1000	50
Distribution through <u>participating venues</u>				
Delivered to: <i>Middle Distance</i> (split by the box)	Arts Club	50	200	4
	Bluecoat	500	1000	4
	Bluecoat Display Centre	50	200	2
	Institute of Irish Studies, University of Liverpool	200	300	4
List with contact details provided to <i>Middle Distance</i>	Everyman Theatre, Street Café	750	1000	4
	FACT	500	750	4
	Invisible Wind Factory	50	100	4
	Kelly's Dispensary	50	200	4
	Liverpool Central Library	50	500	4
	Liverpool Philharmonic, the Music Room	50	1000	4
	Museum of Liverpool	750	1000	4
	St Michael's Irish Centre	250	350	4
	The Bagelry	50	200	4
	The Caledonia	50	100	4
	The Edinburgh	50	100	4
	World Museum - NML	50	1000	4
	Irish Community Care Merseyside		50	4
	University of Liverpool	50	100	4
	Department of Continuing Education		50	4
	Liverpool Hope University		250	4
	Tate Liverpool	50	200	4
	Liverpool Hope Irish Society	50	100	4
Distribution through <u>potential partners / advocates</u>				
Delivered to: <i>Nonconform</i>		10	20	
Split and fulfilled for <i>Royal Mail</i> posting with covering letter	Derry Tourist Information	10	20	
	Embassy of Ireland, London	10	20	
	Guinness Factory	10	20	
	Irish Museum of Modern Art	10	20	
	Irish World Heritage Centre	10	20	
	National Gallery	10	20	
	Old Jameson Factory	10	20	
	Queens University	10	20	
	The English Market	10	20	
	The London Irish Centre	10	20	
	Titanic Belfast	10	20	
	Trinity College	10	20	
	Camden Irish Centre	10	20	
Distribution through <u>Middle Distance bespoke run</u>				
Including the following		2260	9,970	364
Delivered to <i>Middle Distance</i> (distribution runners)				
3k x brochures - Culturebox and top cultural sites				
9k x listings - across entire campaign (see below)				
A3 posters x 300 - across entire campaign + strong presence in Liverpool centre & South Liverpool, + top ups:				
- Culture box venues				
- Pubs /Bars/ Music venues (see below)				
- Tourist information centres				
	Culture Liverpool			
	Empire Theatre			
	Epstein Theatre			
	Floral Pavillion, Wirral			

- Shops	Lady Lever Art Gallery, Port Sunlight
- Libraries	Liverpool One Visitors Centre
- Cafes	Mansion House, St Helens
- Theatres	PictureHouse
- Galleries & art spaces	Playhouse Theatre
- Youth Centres / Services (where possible)	Royal Court Theatre
- Community Centres (where possible)	St Helens Theatre Royal, St Helens
- Hotels (where possible)	The Arts Centre, Ormskirk
Additional focus in the following areas:	The Brindley, Runcorn
- Liverpool City Centre including Ropewalks and Baltic Triangle	Tourist Information Centre, Albert Dock
- South Liverpool	Unity Theatre
- Key sites Wirral, St Helens, Runcorn, Knowlsey, Sefton, North Liverpool	Victoria Art Gallery
University sites	Waterfront Arts, Southport
- City College, Liverpool	World of Glass, St Helens
- Edge Hill University	
- LJMU	
- Hope University	
- University of Liverpool	

Pubs, including the following:		
Dovedale Towers	The Belvedere	The Lion Tavern
Flanagan’s	The Blackburn	The Lisbon
Frederik’s	The Bridewell	The Philharmonic
Liffey	The Brink	The Post Office
Ma Egerton’s	The Cambridge	The Railway
Molly Malone’s	The Casa	The Roscoe head
O'Neill’s	The Clove Hitch	The Ship and Mitre
Pen Factory	The Dispensary	The White Star
Penny Lane Wine Bar	The Edinburgh	Tribeca
Peter Kavanagh’s	The Flute	Ye Cracke
Pogue’s	The Font	3345
Shipping Forecast	The Globe	
Slaughterhouse	The Grapes	
The Baltic fleet	The Hope and Anchor	

Our distribution shows a good range and proves it was worth targeting some of our further afield 'friends', on the Ireland, in London and other Irish Community centres. Feedback shows that we need to send more print to Manchester and Wirral, Birkenhead and the North West region and perhaps more to North Liverpool areas, to improve attendance.

It is also important to consider the timing of these. Undertaking one drop off is the most affordable option by far. However, staggering a campaign, for instance with posters initially, may peak interest. Dropping collateral as early as possible gives people both the opportunity to plan, but also to become bored of print, so it is important to get this as close to 'right' as possible. Articles extend the usability of the print in advance and beyond the 'calendar' aspects of the print, but late dispatch allows for last minute programming. Perhaps a balance between the two can be found. *LIF* should aim to get print in to locations four-to-five weeks ahead, as a minimum, and six weeks would be better. Thus, core programme should be signed off no later than June/July (for positive marketing campaigning and PR trailing) with final programme signed off by mid-August for copy sign off, print and dispatch in early September.

TESTIMONIALS

All descriptors	1690 Occurrences	in total % of total use
"Fun"	265	15.68
"Interesting"	159	9.41
"Informative"	135	7.99
"Entertaining"	120	7.10
"Good"	111	6.57
"Lively"	102	6.04
"Educat"	100	5.92
"Excellent"	92	5.44
"Friendly"	86	5.09
"Music"	71	4.20
"Inspir"	69	4.08
"Cultural"	61	3.61
"Brilliant"	60	3.55
"Fab"	45	2.66
"Inclusive"	33	1.95
"Thought Provoking"	15	0.89
"Lovely"	12	0.71
"Very Good"	8	0.47
TOTALS	1544	91.36

Descriptors

All survey respondents were offered the opportunity of describing the festival in three words or 'descriptors'. Of the 1,690 entries 18 phrases stood out, accounting for 91.36% of the total phrases used. Where words are incomplete, they have been searched as the start point, e.g., 'inspir' will refer to all instances of 'inspired' and 'inspirational', while 'educat' searches against 'education', 'educational', 'educate' and 'educated'.

Suggestions

The digital respondents were offered an opportunity to make one suggestion to improve the festival, the following are a direct transposition (unexpurgated) of those suggestions:

- Hard to give an answer
- More of it
- A return of the "Sea Sessions"
- More music
- More support from people
- I would have bought merchandise, did not see any for sale. Also programme is out far too late. If you live outside Liverpool you might not be able to go to all events, so you have to pick and choose. That is to get time off work.
- More local involvement
- More events linked to North of Ireland
- More musical acts
- A lot of events in a fairly short space of time at a busy time in the city. Logistically and financially not possible for everyone to attend lots of events in this time period.
- Have artists play more in the city centre St Michaels is a bit far out if you do not drive and are not from Liverpool
- I come Glasgow and we have a St Patricks day festival. The buzz is unreal and the crowd is packed. They have people selling merchandise. Raffles taking place. I just found when we attended the family day it didn't have the same buzz maybe being where it was. People at the door were standing talking to each other.
- Some P.A. for some of the acoustic venues.
- Preferred the family ceili to be in the Sefton Palm house or the music room at the Phil. The Bluecoat venue was too small
- this year for the amount of people that attended
- Better parking facilities, as a woman travelling alone, who has to use a car as there is no public transport from where I live, I found public parking difficult around the university.
- Earlier publicity and better directions to less well known venues eg Small Cinema
- Much better publicity in Wirral. No leaflets to be had over here. Would have liked to go to more events if I'd known about them in time.
- bigger crowds!
- a bit more heat at the invisible wind factory
- More advertising in city centre areas maybe some street posters in main shopping areas.
- More Irish theatre
- Change to spring or summer month, especially for outdoor events
- More Irish Music Bands from Ireland, England and America.
- No
- more publicity

- another week (of gigs, music, poetry, Irish history)
- Earlier website so could plan better
- Longer
- earlier setup on website o event information.
- I only managed to catch last the last sat of this year's festival. I was a little disappointed in everyman cafe session as it was nice joining in with group on my bodhran but couldn't hear the solo singers.
- Possibly some form of P.A.equipment @certain venues?!.e.The Everyman Sessions.
- Although not able to produce a full list of events you need to advertise what events you have booked, I booked accommodation and travel nearly a year in advance. It is difficult getting time off work and get good accommodation and travel deals. By doing this visitors canplan events they would like to see.
- "I attended the ceilidh with my family (three kids, husband, and my parents) and would suggest a different venue from the Blue coat. We came to watch the Irish dancing in the courtyard and had pre-booked tickets for the ceilidh. I didn't find the staff at Blue coat helpful on the desk and it wasn't explained to us that the upstairs cafe was open and could wait there until the ceilidh was ready, there was quite a large gap between the dancing outside to the start of the event.
- The room in which it was held, did feel a little squashed and not enough seats for everyone. I will definitely be going along to future events and I found it fun and something my whole family could join in and enjoy. The music was excellent and the dance instruction was fun."
- "Clearer layout and dating on website"
- Better advertising
- More use of the local talent give them a chance to shine to a wider audience. And maybe extend people's interest in the local scene beyond the festival weeks.
- Seems pretty good already!
- More poetry reading and storytelling
- More posters around city and local areas, highlight free events to help draw in people who may not be in the habit of attending events
- No
- BBC regional news 6pm
- "Better co-ordination between Venue/Time/local transport!!!! eg, ""Invisible Wind Factory"" impossible to find, especially at dusk, and located off local bus routes (especially after 6pm) on a wet and cold evening!!!
- Also location/timing of film at Small Cinema and mis-info re start/finish time! "

FOCUS FOR THE FUTURE

Based on the feedback above and our findings using this data analysis the recommendation of this evaluation is for the festival to focus on the following six points to improve festival delivery:

- Creating a festival headline show – a 'tent pole' event around which other festival events hang and from which we can make a lot of media noise. This may include working with a large name or concept, that helps us generate something on par with or excelling the *Irish Sea Sessions*
- A large, family friendly space in which to hold a ceilí, that satisfies the needs of those engaged in the dancing and passive participants, sitting out dances. This may require an enhanced ticket price and a different concept, such as dancing on the stage at the Epstein or Empire and viewing from raked seating. This would require considerable promotion and would alter the previous incarnations considerably, but would elevate the nature of the event and offers a slightly different experience
- Signing off, marketing and promoting the programme in August/September ready for media circulation and profiling. This allows people greater planning time for attendance, takes the pressure off the team to fulfil planning, marketing roll out, PR and volunteer training at the

same time and sets us on a slightly different calendar cycle that spread the weight of work across the year more evenly

- A public realm commission that furthers the core values of the festival and has a legacy lasting beyond Year One. This should be seen as an ongoing festival project, rather than something which is simply bought in and must also serve to galvanise interest in the festival whilst it is being created and when it is being shown. Its outcome must not only last for the festival, but should leave an impression that carries the festival's name beyond the festival period
- Additional technical support for the social seisiúns to improve the way in which performers can interact and audiences can hear the music produced. This will be an important part of raising the expectation, interaction and professionalism of the festival's work offering genuinely interesting experiences for the musicians and building on the core quality and integrity of festival commissioned work and spaces. This could be a truly original strand of the festival's work, which elevates itself above the seisiúns run weekly in pubs across the city
- Strategically underpinning the festival with a 30 year plan. This plan must include funding, income stream generation and expertise, plotted on an objectives cascade and with a considered infrastructure to develop the festival more thoroughly for the future.

It should be noted, these points are festival delivery specific and are not quite the same as the organisational strategy, which needs to be developed in line with the existing objectives cascade and business plan. These recommendations, should help to inform the artistic elements of those plans, not replace them. See *Festival priorities to improve delivery* on page 22

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES FOR LIF, THE ORGANISATION

In line with the business plan and the resulting objectives cascade, *Liverpool Irish Festival* have determined six annual objectives and three futureproofing objectives, which are the main focus of all none-festival programme or delivery work. They span developing an artistic core of events and exhibits; improving reputational positioning, fundraising and income stream generation; organisational development, aspiration raising and marketing (incorporating audience development). See figure *Strategic objectives to improve the organisation* on page 23

★ ★ 2017 ★ ★

LIVERPOOL IRISH FESTIVAL'S

FESTIVAL PRIORITIES

TO IMPROVE DELIVERY

Having reviewed our work, measured the successes of LIF2016 and evaluated the feedback, LIF have determined that these are the six things we want to focus on improving...



Large family friendly venue & event set up for landmark ceili



30 year plan, importing & exporting talent



Public realm commission with real legacy



Early programme release to start the conversation



Tech support to improve acoustic sessions



Headline show LIF can shout about

STATISTICAL AIMS

5* rating for exhibitions



5* rating for events



5* to "I will recommend the festival"



★ ★ 2017 ★ ★

LIVERPOOL IRISH FESTIVAL'S

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

TO IMPROVE THE ORGANISATION

Having reviewed the brand, festival feedback & the funding landscape (locally & nationally) the Liverpool Irish Festival believe these are the objectives we must focus on to survive...

YEAR-ON-YEAR



Create & deliver an artistic & organisational vision for LIF



Develop & deliver a curated events programme, linking YOY



Develop, curate & deliver a robust exhibitions programme



Use each year to grow momentum for the next



Develop the team (capacity, skills & reputation)



Develop marketing/PR campaigns to support/represent artists, the festival & the city

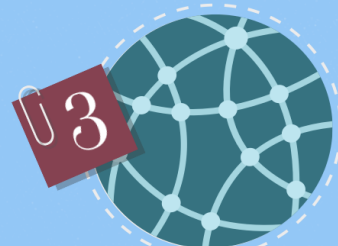
FUTUREPROOFING



30 year plan for ambitious growth & strong position in the cultural landscape



Formulate cohesive strategy for future years income



Ensure LIF is positioned effectively to achieve its goals & gain influence

THANKS

The names of those involved in *Liverpool Irish Festival 2016* are beyond listing. They include our partners and their staff; our venue hosts and their teams and volunteers; our own volunteers and Board members, artists and collaborators. They are found in our networks and our supporters, sponsors and friends. In addition, they are those who came before today's team and many that we have met during and since this year's festival. We thank them – and you – all.

FUNDERS



AN ROINN GNÓTHAÍ EACHTRACHA AGUS TRÁDÁLA NA hÉIREANN
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE OF IRELAND

PARTNERS



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