



CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL TAKES A BREAK

Organisers of the highly successful **Bridgnorth Children's Festival** have announced that they will be taking a break in 2010.

After 4 years of exceeding all their hopes and dreams for the annual August Bank Holiday weekend extravaganza held at Oldbury Wells School they are taking time out to consider the future development of the event.

Stephen Derges, Chairman of the charitable company that organises the Festival, says,

"In just 4 years we have made the Bridgnorth Children's Festival the largest free entry event of its kind in the West Midlands. We have been overwhelmed by the way local residents and visitors from all over the country have supported us but it is time for us to evaluate the past, take stock of what has happened and develop future activities."

Back in 2005 when my wife Rosalyn and I had the idea of a family based Festival little did we realise that it would grow to such a popular event. We started with nothing except a dream but in the first year, despite all those who thought it couldn't work, over 1,500 visitors arrived and we managed to break-even financially. In fact each year we have managed to cover our costs and in 2009 we had over 5,000 visitors coming along to enjoy the fantastic array of activities."

The event has been backed financially by Bridgnorth Town Council, the former District Council and the new Shropshire Unitary Authority as well as a host of local businesses, charities and trusts as well as numerous individuals.

Organisers of the event are quick to pay tribute to way the community has been involved.

Justin Shinton, who oversees the Festival's financial activities, says,

"I have been amazed how many people have backed us. It's not only the local Councils and in particular the Town Council that helped fund the Festival from the very beginning, but also local traders and other businesses."

In the current economic climate we understand it has been extremely difficult but it has been wonderful to see how much local companies have contributed. Without them we could not have provided such great entertainment and value for money."

... making more memories

Children's Festival (Bridgnorth) Limited
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One of the key aims of the Festival has been to include as many entertainers and activity providers from the area as possible.

Mark Gibbons, who as Festival Co-ordinator has been responsible for the on-site activities, comments,

"Wherever possible we've tried to use local providers for all the activities such as PA & Sound, catering and other facilities. On the entertainment front we've provided opportunities for local youth bands to showcase their abilities and many of the sporting and other activities have been provided by local clubs and organisations such as the Youth Centre, Cubs and Guides.

And of course we could not have done it without Bridgnorth's very own Disco Daddy (Nick Dodd) who has been such a tremendous support and has been fully involved by acting as compere in the Entertainment Zone.

We are so grateful for the many people who have made each Festival possible especially the scores of volunteers who gave up their time freely to help us out."

As for the future Stephen Derges comments,

"We know our decision to take a year out will disappoint many families but we're confident this is not the end of the Children's Festival. We have been approached to assist with other events in the area and we will consider these. And we're also looking at possibilities for a re-launch in 2011.

I would like to pay tribute to the members of the Organising Team especially my fellow directors on the charity – Mark & Karen Gibbons and our Financial Director, Mark Anderson, as well as Justin Shinton and Ray & Val Gill. Obviously as Town Mayor Val is still very involved with community activities.

In addition I'd like to thank the Oldbury Wells School Head Sarah Godden and Alan Colburn their Site Manager who has been of great assistance to us on the Organising Team.

We are looking to strengthen the Organising Team and would be delighted if anyone wishes to get involved and assist us plan for the future. Just use the links on the Festival website to contact me."

[ENDS]

Notes for Editors

The Children's Festival has taken place annually over 2 days on **August Bank Holiday weekends** at **Oldbury Wells School** since 2006. Estimated attendance figures for each year have been:

• 2006:	1,500	• 2008:	4,500
• 2007:	3,500	• 2009:	5,000+

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In 2009 the cost of providing the Festival amounted to just over **£20,300** which was covered by income generated from donations, grants, fundraising and on-site events and activities. The Festival has always been **“free to enter”** with all the sports, entertainment, arts and many other activities being free. Where appropriate the cost of chargeable activities has been capped to a maximum of £2:50.

The Children’s Festival is organised by a charitable company – **Children’s Festival (Bridgnorth) Limited**.

The Organising Team includes senior teaching professionals, members of the business community, youth workers and advisors. All the Directors of the Charitable Company and Members of the Organising team are volunteers and receive no remuneration for their services. Audited Accounts are available for inspection on request.

The Festival website is www.childrens-festival.co.uk. Photos from the website may be used by the media on condition that they accompany Festival reports.

Individuals working directly with young people as part of this initiative comply with CRB checking processes.

Who to contact:

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