

Positive Images Festival 2018 Report

Background information about the festival:

The festival, which started in 1995 as a one day Multicultural Book Fair, celebrates diversity, showcases local talent, promotes partnership working, disseminates information about services of partner organisations and offers volunteering opportunities.

Message from Laura McMillan, Director of Operations and Legacy, City of Culture Trust



“Winning UK City of Culture 2021 is a game-changer for Coventry – and it’s about much more than just one year’s worth of events. The build up to 2021 and the legacy it leaves are just as important and events such as the Positive Images Festival are a key part of that. Celebrating Coventry’s heritage and its diversity were cornerstones of our bid and they form the basis of this fantastic event which I am sure will, once again, be a massive success.”

Pre-Festival events:

Sunday 3 June

Multicultural Big Lunch

Brilliant sunshine, culinary delights from different cultures, conversations about recipes, good organization and an interesting icebreaker were ingredients which contributed to the success of the Multicultural Big Lunch at the War Memorial Park. It was wonderful to see new friendships being struck. Attendees played scrabble in mixed languages. One of the attendees had recently arrived in the country from Brazil. Before the event, a couple had started talking to him whilst shopping and invited him along as he was looking a little ‘lost’. He spent the afternoon in conversation with many different attendees. He said he had had an amazing afternoon, where everyone had been friendly and kind. Languages represented were Gujarati, Portuguese, Catalan, Spanish, German, Hungarian and English. Attendees’ homelands were Spain, Hungary, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Mexico, Brazil, Grenada, Guadeloupe, UK.

Visitor comments:

- *Very enjoyable afternoon and lovely to meet people from so many different countries.**
- *It is great to meet people from different cultures, from all over the world and have the opportunity to practise my language skills.**

Wednesday 6 June

Peace Picnic (Normandy Day UK)

The 74th anniversary of D-Day (6th June 1944) was marked on 6th June with the formal opening of Coventry Peace Orchard by the Lord Mayor of Coventry. Three local schools – Cardinal Newman



The Lord Mayor of Coventry and a war veteran at the Peace Picnic

School, Coundon Court School and Kersley Grange School helped to plant the Orchard in Coundon Hall Park. The 300 attendees, including pupils from Cardinal Newman School and children and families from Kersley Grange School, gleaned a lot of information about Normandy Day through a presentation by a war veteran, who recounted some of his experiences. Live vintage singers provided music.

9 – 10 June

Coventry Pride Festival

A record number of people attended the annual Pride Festival, comprising an exhibition, a Walking Parade, entertainment programmes, a Family Fun Fair and Health & Wellbeing Information Day. Festival organisers were delighted with the outcome.

Sunday 11 June

Styvechale Open Gardens

Visitors were able to view 10 lovely suburban gardens, including the 2017 Daily Mail National Garden Competition winner. The atmosphere was very relaxed and friendly. Visitors enjoyed sitting in gardens and having refreshments.

The organisers were delighted about the record number of visitors (over 500!) and the handsome amount raised for charity - £7,000. This year there was an increase in family groups, several with young children. Also encouraging was representation from different backgrounds – Asian, Cypriot, Turkish, French and White British. Costcutters on Daventry Road, run by a Sri Lankan family, has been a staunch supporter over the last two years.



A participating garden

Visitor comments:

***I have been coming for many years and always look forward to this event.**

***This is the first time I have been to the gardens and it has been lovely to see what people have achieved in their gardens.**

***I have been amazed at the standard.**

***I have visited these gardens for the past few years and love seeing how they have developed. I'm pleased that there are some new gardens added this year.**

***The gardens are stunning! I'm inspired to go home and work in my garden.**

Monday 11 June
Gender Equality

The seeds of women empowerment were sown at a superbly organised presentation on Gender Equality, organised jointly by Ekta-Unity group and CRASAC. It was very encouraging to hear women talk frankly, freely and fearlessly about perceived gender inequalities. The video clips used during the presentation were very stimulating and thought-provoking. The event ended with attendees writing messages about steps they would take to promote gender equality.

Friday 15 June
Farmers' Market

The Farmers' Market returned, offering a variety of locally sourced seasonal produce.

Saturday 16 June
The Festival is launched...

*Unexpectedly good weather, brilliant performances, interesting stalls and a record number of visitors made the **Multicultural Craft & Food Fair 2018** the most successful Multicultural Fair to date. For the very first time some interested participants had to be turned away as the fair was fully booked.*

The festival was officially launched by the Deputy Lord Mayor of Coventry, Councillor Linda Bigham, and Pru Porretta, Lady Godiva.

Volunteers from Hillz FM Radio station went round and interviewed stallholders as well as members of the public.

The fair was also filmed by a crew from M&C Saatchi, who are liaising with us, subsequent to our success in the second round of BSBT (Building a Stronger Britain Together) in kind support.

Our volunteers made an excellent job of staffing the Positive Images stall. We have now had an offer from one of our volunteers to help us with Twitter.

*The **entertainment programme**, showcasing the diverse heritage of our city, proved to be exceedingly popular with city centre visitors. It was wonderful to see the audience participate.*



Juliet Mamajay



Sahyadri Friendship Group

Our thanks are also due to stallholders, without whom the fair would simply not take place.

Here are the findings, based on evaluation forms filled in by stallholders.

***Arrangements for the day** – 1 stallholder found these to be **good**; the remaining found them to be **very good**.

***Receipt of information prior to the event** – A resounding **yes** from all.

***Suitability of the venue** – All rated it to be **very good**.

***Usefulness of the event** - 2 found it to be **useful** and the rest **very useful**.

***Participation next year** – All bar one indicated their willingness to participate in 2019.

***No of visitors** – 1 stall did not provide visitor numbers. The number of visitors ranged from 15 to 272. 3 stallholders recorded more than 200 visitors each; 4 stalls received in excess of 100 visitors each and the rest received under 80.

Comments from stallholders:

***Just perfect. We are very contented with your services.**

***Excellent event. We all enjoyed it very much.**

***Great opportunity to network, raise awareness and catch up with colleagues and friends. Really positive reaction from the public and big crowds by the stage.**

***Thumbs up! Really lovely. Very friendly neighbouring stallholders. Thanks to Simon for sorting out our marquee with side covers. It was also lovely to speak with Councillor Bigham.**

***People participated very well in writing Positive Posts about the city. Wonderful day.**

***I have really enjoyed the day. Thank you. Look forward to doing more events with you.**

***People were interested in viewing but did not buy anything.**

***Thank you, it was great!**

***Very positive feedback from visitors. Quite a few who did not know what we did. Also interested in joining The Guild.**

We thank Hillz Radio Station's young volunteers who went round and interviewed visitors. Here are some sample comments:

***I think it's brilliant for people to talk and meet, explore different avenues, different cultures.**

***It's been a good event and I've really enjoyed it. I think everyone who's come has enjoyed it too.**

***We tried food from different cultures and I enjoyed that. Also the music has been really good. There was a bit of poetry too. Everything's been fantastic.**

Organisers' verdict: The fair was hugely successful. Our visitors found the event easy to reach, hard to leave. There was a lot to see and do."

For future Multicultural Fairs: The space between the PA Marquee and the glass front of the Central Library needs to be increased.

Community Information Fair 2018

The Community Information Fair, held on 22nd June, enabled visitors to obtain information about services available from different organisations. This time the fair was heavily subscribed and some organisations had to be put on a waiting list.

Here are the findings based on evaluation questionnaires completed by stallholders:

***Arrangements for the day:** 18 found these to be very good and 4 described them as good. 1 pointed out that car couldn't be brought in as bollards were up.

***All except one organisation indicated that they had received enough information prior to the event.**

***Suitability of the venue:** 17 rated it as very good and 5 good.

***Usefulness:** 14 found it to be very useful and 8 useful.

***All organisations indicated their willingness to participate next year.**

****No. of visitors:** 2 organisations received under 20 visitors; 8 received 20-35 visitors; 6 organisations received 40-50 visitors; 1 organisation received 85 visitors; 3 organisations received over 100 visitors. 1 organisation did not indicate numbers. And another one, which did not supply numbers, pointed out that it had been busy.*

Comments from stallholders:

- Great idea for free tea and coffee for stallholders.
- It was great.
- Positive comments received about the Refugee Week reading list. All leaflets about cancer were collected. There was considerable interest in Books on Prescription and Dementia leaflets.
- Pleased that some younger people were interested and took our booklets, etc.
- The marquees were very sturdy.
- It was rather difficult having the tables the “wrong way” to the foot traffic.
- I loved the gazebos.
- Excellent event, very informative and inclusive. Visitors were pleased to discover what all charities present did as organisations.
- We are always pleased to support Positive Images Festival.
- Thank you for all your hard work.
- Good event for all organisations to get together and exchange information.
- Talking to other organisers was very useful.
- Very important and interesting venture. 3 very influential persons offering help with future events and website.
- Great especially when weather is ok.
- Saturday was a busier day, so higher footfall – would prefer to Friday. Also caused problems in manning our stall.
- A little more space between stalls as we felt a little squashed.
- We had a number of people enquire about volunteering for us. Also gave out a lot of information about our services.

What worked well:

- *Smart-looking stalls*
- *Stalls were put up in good time.*
- *Good weather*
- *Provision of tea/coffee by Sunrise Community Solutions Ltd*
- *We were able to use our custom-made marquee, as well as our new banner for which we thank BSBT and M&C Saatchi.*
- *Excellent opportunities for networking*

Some thoughts for the future:

- *Pop up banners need to be secured. Perhaps this needs to be mentioned in the final instructions for stallholders.*
- *We need 1 volunteer to be solely responsible for guiding stallholders to their stalls as in spite of slips being stuck on tables, some stallholders were in the wrong place.*
- *Once all the stalls have been booked, this info needs to be circulated to prevent organisations from turning up without booking and paying the stall fee.*
- *Some stalls were staffed in 2 shifts and information about the completion of the evaluation questionnaire was not passed on.*

- The festival stall needs to rethink about an activity. Our mehendi artist was brilliant but there were few takers on a weekday.
- Organisations will need to be reminded on the day about recording visitor numbers.

Community Lunch/Great Get Together

This year saw a welcome increase in events bringing diverse communities together.

The Community Big Lunch in Prior Deram Park was a family-friendly event with a lively and fun atmosphere. Vanny Radio had people dancing and singing along to their music. The tug-of-war was very popular. Activities included arts and crafts sessions hosted by Warwick University Volunteers, Malaysian foot volleyball, Indian dancing, building bird boxes with Coventry Park Rangers, Last Chance Coventry Ferret Rescue's exhibitions and Dr Bike's advice on bike maintenance and repairs. Attendees had delicious free noodles, cake, apple crumble and tea/coffee. People's views about Canley were collected under 3 headings – what has got better, what has got worse and how things are different.

Organiser's comment:

- We had an increased attendance from people living on Queen Margarets Road and Gerald Avenue. It demonstrated that knocking on people's doors and inviting them face-to-face encourages people to join in.
- The craft stall run by Warwick staff was hugely popular.
- Visitors praised the Indian dance performance and have requested more cultural performances.

Visitor comments:

- We had a brilliant afternoon.
- I made an effort to get here today, after seeing it advertised and it has been worth it.
- What a friendly event!
- This event brings together people with similar passions for making a difference in Canley.

At the Warwick University stand, people put comments on post-it notes:

- Great way to bring the community together and provide a positive space.
- It gets people to the park, not stay at home.

Positive Images Festival congratulates Canley Popup Café on receiving an award for Outstanding use of Active Citizens Fund.

The Great Get Together for Jo Cox:

Coventry Priory Community Interest Company arranged a medieval themed lunch in the cloisters and gardens. Attendees enjoyed music from Coventry busker Jimmy Kemp and The Precinct Violin Man. During tours of the undercrofts, the resident Deep Fact Friar informed visitors about the 1404 and 1459 Parliaments that took place in Coventry.

Friends of Spencer Park brought communities together through a picnic, games and refreshments.

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Green Hearts for the Environment Workshops were arranged in three schools and for 2 community groups by Gabrielle Back (NAEE/SAVERS/Rotary). The exhibition of the delightful craftwork of participants was launched on 27th July at Holy Trinity Church. The exhibition clearly showed how passionate young people are about the need to combat pollution, global warming, etc.

Poetry Extravaganza:

*In the free **Poetry Workshop** on the last Sunday of June, attendees enjoyed writing poetry in a relaxed and friendly environment. In a second workshop, poetry enthusiasts joined published poet **Emilie Lauren Jones for an around the world trip – poetry style.***

Further poetry workshops were delivered by award-winning poet, Antony Owen. This is what some of the participants said:

- Antony's poetry workshop was very helpful. We were given recommendations and pointers about a range of literary magazines to submit work to; some of these publications I hadn't heard of before, so that information was very useful. Antony read a section of our portfolios/collections and offered advice on crafting our voice and coaxing out images/themes. It was good to talk to poets at two different stages in their careers: ones who had already published collections of their work, and poets putting together a manuscript for publication. I would recommend Antony's workshops to other poets looking for one-to-one feedback and knowledgeable advice on how to improve their work and send it out into the wider world.
- The workshop by Antony Owen was deeply moving and very enlightening. The theme of war, loss, and coping with grief was conveyed via a video testimony by an atomic survivor, followed by photographic and artistic depictions of both Hiroshima and Nagasaki after the atomic blasts. Antony provided historical details and also reflected upon his own reaction when meeting with a survivor in Japan. The workshop inspired the writers in attendance to compose a series of haikus which touched upon the themes that had been discussed during the workshop. This was a profound session and it left everyone contemplating the fragile and transient nature of existence.

Multiple events arranged by participating organisations:

***Archery** sessions arranged at the Ricoh Arena by **ACTIVITY CLUB COVENTRY** were enjoyed by all. 2 of the participants were visitors from London.*

*2 **BANDS – Meridian Dance Orchestra and Dene River Jazzmen** entertained visitors at Allesley Hall and Nauls Mill Park respectively.*

***Central Galaxy Coventry Trampoline Club** arranged discounted sessions.*

COVENTRY LIBRARIES:

Events aimed at children:

***Code Club** meetings, a first for the festival, were held at Foleshill Library. The response was fantastic.*

***Craft sessions** in libraries seemed to be popular. Colouring sessions, aimed at all ages, were arranged at 4 libraries. **Word Art Fun** was so well attended and enjoyed at Cheylesmore Library that library volunteers are considering running this event again in the future. At Bell Green Library, children made **Father's Day cards** from different nations.*

*The **Eid Celebration** at the Central Library attracted a record 160 visitors, including children and adults. Councillor Kamran Caan highlighted diversity as Coventry's major strength and made a passionate plea to everyone to take full advantage of the range of services available in libraries. Children enjoyed badge making, mehendi demonstrations, face painting and a quiz arranged by libraries. The event was featured in a television programme on GEO TV and Channel 44.*

Some visitor comments:

- **First time ever seen an Eid celebration at the Central Library. I feel included.**
- **It was great to see people from different faiths coming together.**
- **Love the sitar. It is very soothing and calming.**
- **Badge making was my favourite activity of the day.**

Homework Club sessions, during which children obtained help with their homework.

Children aged 4+ played with toys, built plastic blocks and socialised with other children at **Make Music Day UK**, a free celebration of music around the world on 21st June. This was marked in libraries through Rhymetime. Children aged 0-4 sang songs and enjoyed playing a variety of musical instruments.

Stay & Play sessions at Foleshill Library.

Storytimes: To celebrate the city's success in being named UK City of Culture 2021, Coventry's community libraries arranged themed storytimes reflecting the cultures of Sri Lanka, Ireland, the Caribbean, Poland and Kenya. At Aldermoor Library, children enjoyed making masks and flags during **Caribbean**-themed storytime. At Willenhall Library too the **Caribbean** storytime was well-received, with children getting involved in activities and requesting more stories the following week.

80 attendees from different backgrounds attended **Kenya Day** at the Central Library, which arranged interactive storytelling, an exhibition and a music workshop in which youngsters and adults learnt a Swahili song. Children enjoyed dressing up in Masai costumes. Staff were delighted with the compliments about the Kenya exhibition and the Karaoke session with musical instruments. Requests have been received for more events like this one and for the celebration of Madaraka Day (commemorates internal self-rule in Kenya).

Events for adults:

Afternoon Tea at Cheylesmore Library turned out to be an engaging afternoon, with delicious cakes and tea enjoyed by all attendees. One lady was introduced to the Home Library Service and two new library members were enrolled.

At Bell Green Library, people were able to give their spoken English language skills a boost by attending **conversation groups**, where sport and cooking were discussed.

In the session entitled **Vintage Voices**, Beatrice, a regular member of the Earlsdon Library-based **Age UK Friendship Group**, shared details of an unsolved murder. Very knowledgeable in history, mystery and scandal, Beatrice based her account on **White Mischief**, a British film about the murder of the Earl of Errol in Kenya in 1941. Beatrice came across as an excellent storyteller.

25 people used the opportunity for **Healthy life style checks** at Foleshill Library.

At a **Knit & Crochet** Session at the Central Library attendees worked on their projects and also had a natter.

Mindfulness & relaxation sessions were held at 2 libraries. As a result of the phenomenal success of the session at the Central Library, a decision has been made to hold them on a regular basis – by public request. At the Central Library, a notice regarding the relaxation event was handed out to library visitors as they came in. This resulted in unexpectedly high attendance figures.

At the **PCSO workshop** at Foleshill Library, people were able to have a friendly chat with the local police team about safety in their area.

Poetry: Foleshill Library, in association with **Godiva Trust**, arranged a reading of **Poems Around the World**. The spectacularly successful event began with a stimulating presentation by Dr Afiniki Akanet, who spoke about her journey and her book **Life Without Coffee: Choosing happiness over stress** (For details visit www.afiniki.co.uk) The event had very wide representation from diverse groups. Brief English translations were provided for poems recited in Asian languages. The relaxed atmosphere, the cosy setting of Foleshill Library, flawless organisation and the opportunity to network made it a very enjoyable and informative event for all.



Poetry at Foleshill Library

Cheylesmore Library hosted **Coventry Live Poets**.

Other activities included **Mosaic** workshops at Foleshill Library and **colouring activities** for adults.

Tile Hill Library marked its 60th anniversary, attracting 95 visitors. Activities arranged on the day included henna and face painting.

CONVERSATION GROUPS:

In the cosy setting of The Esquires Café at Coventry Transport Museum, members of **The Coventry Language Café** polished their French and Spanish spoken skills and had interesting chats about surnames, languages and travels in foreign lands.

The **Spanish conversation Group**, meeting at Earlsdon Methodist Church, was delighted to welcome two newcomers. Attendees had fun locating Spanish cities on a map of Spain. People exchanged information about places they had visited, how they had travelled, what they had eaten, etc. By the end of the session, members had augmented their Spanish conversational skills. A treat for all was a Flamenco dance performance.

French snacks were enjoyed by one and all at the **French Conversation Group's** evening. A decision has now been made to bring French food on important days such as Bastille Day.

Creative Non-Fiction Writing and Reading were promoted at 2 workshops. It was felt that a customer-friendly descriptions of the events might have attracted more participants.

EKTA-UNITY GROUP arranged health awareness, knitting and singing sessions, a Health Awareness Fayre and a yoga event in the park. The extremely well-supported **Health Awareness Fayre**, held jointly with Hope in the City project, included speakers, information stalls, therapeutic remedies displays, demonstrations of fitness techniques, a mobile diabetic unit, on-site health checks, fun & games, quizzes and refreshments. The brilliant weather permitted outdoor activities, which in turn, attracted passers by. Visitors to the event felt that this was the best way to provide information.

The number of participants in **Yoga in the Park** is steadily increasing as regular participants have started bringing their friends and family members. Even other visitors to the park are beginning to join in. 12 young people from The Challenge facilitated games and craft activities, assisted people with mobility difficulties and helped to clear up. Thanks are also due to park staff, who made chairs and tea making facilities available to the group. Organisers' comment: **It was good to see people mingling, enjoying eating, sharing different foods, playing games, singing songs and joining in craft activities.**



Yoga in the Park

The **Singing for Pleasure** sessions continue to reduce social isolation and loneliness, caused by ill health, loss of partner, etc. Attendees found singing mentally stimulating and an effective remedy for the development of self-confidence.

The **Knitting Club** provides women an opportunity to get together in a friendly atmosphere and learn and share their skills. Many of the women came as non-knitters, but with the support of a volunteer tutor and by teaching one another they have become confident knitters, who got ready several items which sold briskly at the Health Fayre. Organisers' comment: **This has boosted their confidence and made a positive impact on general wellbeing.**

FWT arranged **Basic IT Sessions, Coffee Mornings, Antenatal Course** and a **Cancer Support Group meeting for Asian women**. It is encouraging to know that joint working with Coventry Refugee & Migrant Centre resulted in take up of coffee mornings by women from new communities. The roll on effect is that some of them have enrolled for ESOL courses.

Free taster sessions for **Indian Head Massage**, proved to be exceedingly popular at the Central Library, where participants enjoyed a relaxing head massage from an expert – Kate Hills. Queues formed for this popular event. The facilitator was asked if this would be arranged on a regular basis! Organiser's comment: **I had 2 people return for the second session as they had enjoyed the first session so much!**

KING HENRY VIII SCHOOL

Our first time partner, King Henry VIII School, participated in the festival in a big way, arranging:

*An **Open House**, at which 35 families from different ethnic backgrounds got a feel for the positive atmosphere of the school. Visitor comments were very positive.

***Open Morning**, attended by 135 families. Visitors were also able to view the annual A-Level Art & Design Exhibition, which made interesting viewing. Pupils had selected concepts and interpreted them very imaginatively.

**The Little Mermaid, King Henry's annual summer theatre production. The standard was incredibly high.*

**Music Away Day Concerto*

*Refugee Week 2018, now 20 years old, was marked enthusiastically in Coventry. Under the able stewardship of Positive Youth Foundation, event organisers were brought together and a whole week's events took shape – Eid Celebration, Nations Football Cup & Health Fayre, Fusion Festival of Art, MiFriendly Cities' Drop in Cafe and Open Mic. Positive Images Festival felt honoured to be invited to be a member of this steering group. The week was publicised in our festival booklet. The only individual event that made it into the booklet was **Coventry Welcomes** – Coventry Refugee & Migrant Centre's party in Primrose Hill Park, which was very well-attended and supported enthusiastically by diverse communities. Food was a very big draw. We very much hope that all organisers will be able to meet our deadlines for the 2019 festival. It was encouraging to see the festival included in the Refugee Week evaluation exercise. The week's events held at Fargo Village resulted in 600 attendances and the involvement of 50 volunteers.*

ST PETER'S CENTRE's Just4me Women's activities included cooking, knitting, sewing, cake decorating, card making, etc.

VALLEY HOUSE arranged Football sessions, Wellbeing sessions and Coffee mornings.

WATCH Ltd:

Coffee & Chat sessions introduced participants to training and services available and enabled attendees to socialise and further their spoken English language skills.

*16-24 year olds attended **Music Leads to Work** - a unique 6 week radio and employment training course, covering interview techniques, broadcasting, planning and writing of scripts, jingles and adverts. Organiser's comment: Throughout the session, we had the chance to see each individual build their confidence and abilities to accomplish new challenges. This was evident in the final part of the session when each of them had to plan and create their own recorded show that would be played on air. Participants appreciate the wellbeing support that comes along with the programme. It's great to see them staying a bit longer than 6 weeks and joining the organisation as mentors and volunteers.*

*WATCH Ltd's **Job Club** attracted a record 31 customers over a 4 week period. A number of referrals were received from Coventry Job Shop, CRMC and VAC. Areas covered in the sessions were: CV, interviews, application forms, local job opportunities, etc. One customer has registered to become a WATCH volunteer. The age range of participants was 18-55.*

***Young People's Sessions** offered a fun, safe and interactive environment, where young people came together and learnt new skills. Organisers' comment: The sessions provided an opportunity for young people to express their creativity through a mixture of media such as the radio and arts and crafts. Throughout the sessions, young people were able to go live on air for their regular shows and use interview techniques. The sessions also covered planning, writing a script and structuring a radio show. Overall, we had a positive outcome and the young people involved really did enjoy it.*



Young People's session at WATCH

14 stallholders took part in the **Hillfields Community Festival**, attended by more than 210 children and adults. The entertainment programme comprised performances by Bollywood and African dancers, Soulful Choir, local bands and musicians such as The Clinks. Children enjoyed face painting, badge making and games. In attendance were the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress of Coventry and former 2-Tone band member of the Specials, Neville Staple. Organisers' comment: **The excellent weather and atmosphere made this event a huge success, with a cross section of communities socialising together with food and refreshments. This event gives volunteers event planning experience and skills. Hillfields residents look forward to the festival, which brings different organisations with information projects and services to the local community. Local businesses supported the event, providing donations. Having this community festival provides an opportunity to celebrate the positive side to Hillfields and the neighbourhood's rich, diverse culture.**

WEA arranged two taster sessions: ***It and English & Mixed Media & Art Workshop.***

Individual events:

COVENTRY AGAINST RACISM arranged the **screening of Stephen Graham's *I'm a Gun***, which analyses gun crime and the reasons behind the rise of violent crime in the black community. The screening was followed by an animated discussion.

COVENTRY EARTHSPIRIT invited people to learn about Paganism through a simple ***Solstice Ritual*** in a park.

Coventry Green Drinks event was held at Drapers on a day when England was playing in the World Cup Tournament. Despite this competition, the number of visitors increased this year. Very complimentary comments were received:

- **Green Drinks is a welcoming, informal, inclusive event which allows people with a broad interest in matters environmental to meet in a relaxed setting.**
- **Very friendly group. Great for networking, learning about people's different opinions and views and discussions. Great for learning about events in the city.**
- **I have met wonderful people. Learning about each other's cultures and passions has been a great eye opener. I like the fact that park runners from Coventry park run come along too. So it's a fantastic way of being part of our wonderful Coventry community.**
- **An informal gathering in an equally relaxed bar.**
- **Perfect location for most people to come and just have a nice evening.**

Eleanor Nesbitt did a fascinating presentation on ***Sikhs and Sikhism through the eyes of western women*** at the monthly meeting of **COVENTRY INTERFAITH GROUP**. Besides members of Coventry Interfaith Group, there were young first time attendees, who had become aware of the event through the festival booklet.

COVENTRY OSTEOPOROSIS SUPPORT GROUP was delighted with the turnout for a talk by a GP. Equally satisfying was the audience response.

Coventry's very own **DEEP FACT FRIAR, Paul Curtis**, arranged an extremely informative walking tour, during which walkers explored the 12 gates and towers that protected Coventry for 305 years and kept out kings from Edward IV to Charles I. The tour was a real eye opener about Coventry's rich medieval heritage.

Digital Fabrication Course

Organiser's report: A mixture of people attended, the age range being from 19 to 51 years. They were from different backgrounds, with 4 participants being refugees who have moved to Coventry from either Saudi Arabia or Eritrea. All participants gained a good understanding of the software, some picking up the harder elements better than others, but at the end of the course, all 8 participants had created their own design and cut it successfully using one of our fabrication machines.

Levels of English varied throughout the participants, but all managed to understand the tasks set out, and we had a mixture of individuals with varying disabilities.

HILLFIELDS READERS GROUP started their **Open Day** with an afternoon of poetry readings by members of the group and Coventry Live Poets. There was also a Book Quiz. The afternoon culminated with the Imagination Café Storytellers and musicians' performance for children.

Young performers captivated the audience at the annual **Multicultural Concert of Music and Dance**, which highlighted Coventry's rich cultural heritage. It was wonderful to welcome new groups and artists and to see people of different backgrounds join Coventry Morris Men. Certificates of appreciation were presented to volunteers.

PUNJABI WRITERS' ASSOCIATION was delighted with the success of its **Annual Poetry Symposium** at which books were launched and writers honoured for their contribution to Punjabi Literature.

SAHYADRI FRIENDSHIP GROUP marked the **International Day of Yoga** with an energising session from 6.00am to 7.00am in the War Memorial Park.

THE WEAVER'S HOUSE arranged an **Open Day** to enable visitors to view the restored medieval cottage, The Weaver's House, and also a working garden filled with herbs that would have been used by the family who lived there in medieval times. The attendance was amazing.

Yoga taster sessions were also arranged by **Instinct Yoga** at Priory Visitor Centre. One of our volunteers who attended session described it as "wonderful, energising and having a rejuvenating effect on mind, body and soul".

A record number of participants attended **WorldSong Community Choir's "Sing Africa"** workshop, led by their brilliant director, Una May Olomolaiye.

Exhibitions:

***Coventry Pride Arts Shows**, at CET building. Would have benefited from indication of viewing times.

***Kushinga** – Refuge & Asylum Exhibition portrayed the story of refugees and asylum seekers who created a garden from a derelict piece of land with seeds provided by Ryton Organic Gardens. Could have done with a large size heading and signage.

**Green Hearts Exhibition at Holy Trinity Church.*

** Arty-Folks exhibition. The remarkable artwork created by members of Arty-Folks occupied a central position on the main floor and drew many compliments.*

The Centre for Cultural & Media Policy Studies, University of Warwick, sited its **Coventry: Food Culture in Global-Local Development exhibition at City Arcadia Gallery. The venue will not be available next year as the building is being pulled down.*

Organiser's comments: We did not continue the exhibition upstairs – this would have excluded visitors with a disability. Students made a great effort to engage with local people walking by within the City Arcade. We also held a special drinks reception one evening for the delegates of a conference at Coventry University. Everyone who saw the exhibition found it to be very enjoyable and informative.

***Positive Posts:** 111 people recorded their thoughts about what makes Coventry great. It is hoped to incorporate some posts into a wall hanging. A more ambitious plan is to publish a booklet listing all of them. Here are some positive quotes:*

- ***Coventry welcomes everybody, it's the heart of the country.***
- ***Always was the city of culture in my eyes.***
- ***Coventry is another word for diversity.***
- ***This is how the world should be, all together as one, sharing and caring.***
- ***Coventry, the city with open hearts and open minds.***
- ***It's fabulous to live in the city of peace and reconciliation.***

Post-festival events:

***Belgrade Theatre and Mercurial Dance** hosted two productions in the former Coventry Telegraph building in Corporation Street. **City Final** took the audience on a journey through the Coventry Evening telegraph building, back and forth in time, inspired by some powerful stories. For **Retold** the setting was the Foyer area, where articles, notices, etc were handed in. Members of the audience were encouraged to think of their earliest memories of Coventry. One story from each table was woven into a dance.*

*Belgrade Theatre also hosted the annual **Belgrade Mela**, with workshops, talks, an exhibition, performances and information stalls.*

***Imagination Reading Café** at St. Peter's Centre*

*A combination of poetry, music and comedy resulted in an extremely enjoyable and unforgettable evening in the cosy setting of The Tin, Canal Basin. **Poetry at The Tin**, very ably compered by Leanne Bridgewater, involved local and regional talent.*

*In 2 **Masterclass Short story writing** sessions, Emilie Lauren Jones provided tips on how to get a story started.*

*Post-festival events ended on 12th September with an exhilarating poetry session at the Albany Theatre. Poet **Ian McMillan** entertained attendees by reciting humorous poetry in his inimitable style and followed this up with the composition of a poem with contribution from the audience. The brilliant accompanying cartoonist, **Tony Husband**, supported this with his extraordinary cartoons, created on the spot without any prior preparation.*

The duo also performed at Hill Farm School. Pupils, who liked joining in with Ian McMillan's poems, described him as "really funny". Teachers were very complimentary about the way "he brought his poems to life, using illustrations which were created in front of them." A comment from the school "The teachers were raving about it and all the boys want to be poets" sums up the magical effect the session had.

Our thanks are due to Hillz FM Radio Station for arranging promotional interviews for event organisers. We also thank our volunteers, who did sterling work. Special thanks to Sahyadri Friendship Group for providing the bulk of volunteers. We are also appreciative of the coverage given to the festival by Coventry Telegraph, Chatterbox and Your Call.

We congratulate Godiva Trust and Positive Youth Foundation for receiving the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service.

Immediately after the festival, we provided a lot of information about performers and community contacts to organisations that requested this information.

Thoughts for the future:

**Tripta Prashar distributed 141 festival booklets, 21 Multicultural Fair flyers and 21 Community Information Fair flyers and has also provided us with useful information about numbers left at each venue. We need to spread this practice to other areas.*

**Our blank poster needs to be ready much earlier.*

**The list of people/organisations willing to be interviewed on Hillz FM Radio programmes needs to be ready by the end of April.*

**We need more volunteers to cover events for us.*

**New venues seem to have had problems attracting visitors. We need to address this issue.*

**We will need to display a notice about the locations of exhibitions at the Central Library.*

I end the report with some comments received:

- I have enjoyed being part of the festival. As always it was a great success.
- It's great to be part of Positive Images Festival. Thank you for your support.
- The festival booklet and the fair leaflets are lovely.
- It was an honour to be part of Positive Images Festival.

THE 2018 FESTIVAL ATTRACTED 32,128 VISITORS!!!

This figure is bound to increase substantially when we receive information about the number of visitors who viewed the Green Hearts Exhibition at Holy Trinity Church from 16 June to the end of December.

Colin Scott, Chair of Positive Images Festival, and I thank all event organisers, visitors, performers and supporters of the festival.

Our special thanks to our funders - Arts Council England, Awards for All and BSBT. We are grateful to Coventry Libraries & Information Service for providing us a meeting space and to Peter Barnett, a friend and avid supporter of the festival.

Let us now start making plans for Positive Images Festival 2019, when we mark our 25th anniversary.

*Report prepared by
Mehru Fitter MBE
Secretary, Positive Images Festival*