

## 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2023 Midsummer's Eve Celebration: Report

### 1. What went well?

- 1) The membership table did a roaring trade in the earlier part of the morning. In fact, people were stopping to talk to them before the event had started. The membership table was at its busiest before the walk left at around midday, but people were still regularly stopping by afterwards. The Membership Coordinator's proposal that we grant free membership for the rest of 2022/23 undoubtedly helped to recruit members. We recruited at least 20 new members.
- 2) One critical element of an outdoor event is the weather. Too cold or wet and attendance will be lower. We were fortunate that it was warm and sunny, with a light breeze and no prospect of rain on the day.
- 3) Booking the bandstand was a key part of the success of the entertainment side. The performers were sheltered from the sun and, unlike last year, seated on even ground, out of the wind, which meant that their music stands did not blow over. Add in the fact that we had power, which made the use of microphones possible so that we could hear the music and the singing properly, something which the wind made difficult last year. For future events, the bandstand should be booked.
- 4) Location was important. Placing the tables alongside the path which runs from the Mall to Queens Square meant that we attracted the attention of people walking from one to the other.
- 5) Graham Friday's suggestion of bringing gazebos was an excellent one. They were used and appreciated, helping to shade people from the sun.
- 6) I must mention Monique's Smartphone Photographic Group display. I realise that although it is not possible for all groups to produce something of that standard, it was sufficiently eye-catching for people to stop and engage with her. Credit must be given to her for some of the people we signed up at the event, she is a great ambassador for the u3a.
- 7) I should also mention Peter Selby's excellent display of artworks by the Painting and Drawing Group, which caught people's attention.
- 8) The walk was well attended, with around 15 people. Those who participated in it were very complimentary.

### 2. Which aspects could be improved for future events?

- 1) The timing of the history walk relative to the musical performance. Had we known earlier that the latter could not start until around 12.45, we would have considered starting the walk half an hour earlier at 11.30am so that the walkers could get back in time for the whole performance. In the end, they missed about half of the performance. However, having advertised the walk as starting at 12.00, it was too late to change it.
- 2) Although I made a point of checking the bandstand booking (with power) the week before, we nearly did not have power. My bandstand contact at the Council works Monday-Wednesday and emailed me on Wednesday to say that she had not been able to get in touch with Facilities regarding our need for power. I spent Thursday ringing the phone number she gave me, left a message on the answering machine, e-mailed and finally got lucky late Thursday afternoon when someone answered the phone. She rang me back on Friday

morning just before I left home to say that she had arranged for the keys to be left on the reception desk in the Create building. Next year I must make a point of chasing up the Council on this point earlier than I did and chase again if I do not get a prompt response.

- 3) We could have done with more preparation time. With hindsight, 9.00am, rather than 9.30am, would have been better to start time for preparations.
- 4) Although I did put on the booking form that we would need to unload before the event and reload after it had finished, we did attract the attention of a Parking Enforcement Officer when we were loading our cars at the end of the event. Next year we need to secure permission to park for loading and unloading without the threat of contravening restrictions, as well as asking CBC whether they can remove the bollards so that we can drive closer to the bandstand. It might be possible to get vehicle access on to the Gardens themselves.
- 5) We did not get a full picture on total attendance, as I was not there for an hour. People dropped in for a while, rather than staying for the whole time, which is to be expected. The view of the Chairman and Secretary is that attendance was better than it was (also on a Friday) in 2022, but not as high as it was in 2021 (when it was held on a Wednesday, but 2021 is not a valid comparator as it was the first opportunity members had to meet one another again after the covid lock-down).

### 3. Summary of costs

Hire of bandstand	£97.60 (tbc by CBC)	Invoice not yet received
Advertising	£50.00 publicity leaflets	Assumption only

We have applied to the Third Age Trust for a grant of £147.60, and the final report on the event was sent to the TAT Southeast Regional Trustee, Susie Berry on 4<sup>th</sup> July. As of 8<sup>th</sup> July we have not yet received a response (she may have to obtain approval from the TAT office).

Sue Parker, Communications Coordinator, incorporating comments and changes made by the other members of the Events Sub-committee and the Secretary

1<sup>st</sup> July 2023