

Blackwell Music Festival

11 September 2021

Post Event Report

BLACKWELL
*Festival
Charity*

1 Background & Purpose of report

- 1.1 Since 2011 the Blackwell Festival Committee has run an annual 'Party in the Park' summer festival for the benefit of local people, and since 2017, an annual music festival. No festivals were held in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic, although a 'lockdown' festival took place in June 2020 based around resident's front gardens.
- 1.2 Continuing pandemic restrictions meant that no Party in the Park took place in June 2021, however, easing of restrictions over the summer meant that a music festival could be planned and it took place on the 11 September.
- 1.3 This report is intended to set out a record of the planning for and success of the 2021 Music Festival and is intended for stakeholders, advertisers, and organisations from whom permissions are required to run this event.

2 The Festivals

- 2.1 The 'Party in the Park' summer festival has to date been held as a free festival, with the only charging made by the mobile bars which are operated by local operators. There is no gate fee and all entertainment is free. The cost of the event is covered by fundraising events, sponsorship (primarily via the production of a programme), through surplus funds raised through the Music Festival and an annual contribution from Lickey and Blackwell Parish Council.
- 2.2 The Music Festival is a ticketed event and additional income is raised through sales from a bar and 'tuck shop' run by the Festival Committee and by pitch fees for catering operators.
- 2.3 The festivals and supporting fundraising activities are managed by a volunteer Festival Committee which meets on a monthly basis. The Festival Committee has the status of a Small Charity and is governed by Trustees who are ultimately accountable for its activities.

3 Music Festival 2021

Venue

- 3.1 Until 2019 the Music Festival has been held on land at the former Hunters Hill School, however the closure of the school and uncertainty over the future of the land meant that an alternative site needed to be found if the Festival was to proceed in 2021. The Hunters Hill site was well suited to the Festival and it is unlikely that, had the school not closed, an alternative site would be sought.
- 3.2 An alternative potential site was identified by Festival Committee members in late 2020. The land, to the north of the village, was of a suitable size and topography, had good access and had secure boundaries. The Cropwood Estate Trust holds the freehold interest of the land held in trust as Sole Trustee and is responsible for ensuring the Trust is managed in accordance with the governing document and in accordance with charity law and relevant Charity Commission guidance. Birmingham City Council City Council acts as Sole Corporate Trustee for the Cropwood Estate Trust and delegates decisions relating to the Trust to its Trusts and Charities Committee.
- 3.3 With the assistance of Nigel Oliver, the Council's Property Manager, the approval of the Trusts and Charities Committee was secured on the 22 April 2021. The terms for the use of the land were set out in a licence between the Council and the Festival which was signed off on the 2 September 2021.

Approvals

- 3.4 In addition to the landowner's agreement, authority is needed from Bromsgrove District Council as the appropriate licensing authority. As with previous events, the Temporary Event Notification route was used for this year's event.

Consultation

- 3.5 In addition to the engagement of Birmingham City and Bromsgrove District Councils, consultation took place with the following prior to the event
- Lickey and Blackwell Parish Council via regular updates, engagement of Parish Councillors and the Executive Officer who is a member of the Festival Committee

- West Midlands Police via an email advising of details of the event, how it was managed and the approvals in place
- Residents immediately adjacent to the event site by a letter drop prior to the event explaining the change of venue and offering the opportunity to raise any concerns with the Festival Committee. A copy of this letter is appended to this report.

3.6 No adverse feedback was received in response to the above. In particular, a number of very supportive responses were received from residents adjacent to the site.

Health and Safety

3.7 As with previous Festivals, a robust risk assessment was carried out in advance for the event following a site walkover with a number of members of the Festival Committee. The lead assessor is IOSHH trained, has a Diploma in Construction Health and Safety and has extensive experience of management of workplace and construction health and safety.

3.8 This year the risk assessment took account of the DBEIS & DCMS Guidance 'Working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19)' (17 August 2021 revision) with particular reference to the section on Events and attractions.

3.9 A Lost Child Policy has been developed through previous festivals and this was updated for this event.

Ticket sales

3.10 Tickets went on sale on the 22 July at the 'early bird' price of £10 and £5 for 5 – 17 year olds. Sales were made online using Ticket Tailor and in the Blackwell Stores. All tickets had sold by the evening of the 10 September and posts were made on social media to advise that all tickets had sold and that no tickets would be available on the gate. Signage was also arranged at the site entrance to advise that no further tickets were available.

3.11 At the request of the Trusts and Charities Committee, complimentary tickets were offered to its members, however, none were taken up.

Festival preparations

3.12 Other than being used as a location for beehives, the field appears to have had no use for some considerable time. In liason with Birmingham City Council, the Festival Committee made arrangements for the field to be cut and baled on the 25 August. This exercise was

required for safe general access to the site and to inspect the ground surface in time for any issues to be addressed

3.13 A photographic record of the site was undertaken on the 31 August.

3.14 Volunteers and event service providers attended the field from late afternoon on the 10 September in order to prepare the site for the festival. Tasks undertaken included:

- Erecting the main marquee and stage and setting up sound desk
- Erecting tents and gazebos for the bar, tuck shop, entrance desk and secondary music stage
- Addressing hazards identified in the risk assessment, including levelling bumps/holes in the ground, fencing off uneven ground, beehives and mature trees with risk of limb drop
- Installing lighting, signage, waste/recycling stations and temporary ground protection in the entrance gateway
- Setting up the bar, tuck shop and generator
- Additional grass cutting to define pedestrian routes and areas that were not cut and baled in August
- Setup of toilets

3.15 The site was locked on completion of setup and 2 volunteers stayed on the night of the 10/11 September to ensure the security of the site, handing the site over to the volunteers who arrived on the morning of the 11 September to complete the setup.

3.16 The tasks listed in section site setup were completed on the morning of the 11 September, in addition to which the food vendors arrived and completed their setup. An operational and health and safety briefing for volunteers took place which covered the lost child policy.

The Festival

3.17 The tasks listed in section site setup were completed on the morning of the 11 September, in addition to which the food vendors arrived and completed their setup.

3.18 Weather conditions on the day were good, being warm and dry with a little light cloud and sunny spells.

3.19 A team of volunteers was present with effective communication in operation

3.20 The gate opened at 12 pm with guests arriving shortly after. Attractions on the day comprised:

- 2 stages with 9 bands
- Bar with a range of drinks, including local cask ale
- Tea/coffee tent and 'tuck shop'
- Childrens' games, bouncy castle and 'Have a go at an instrument' tent run by the Midlands Music Academy
- Food stalls providing a varied catering offer from Pizza Heaven, Ascotts and Best's Jamaican Cuisine

3.21 The event was well attended, and despite the 'sold out' campaign, a number of potential guests were turned away at the gate.

3.22 The final act finished shortly after 9 pm, and all guests had left by 10 pm. During this time the sound engineers and food vendors removed their vehicles and equipment from the field.

3.23 The site was locked and 2 volunteers stayed overnight to ensure the security of the site.

Site clearance

3.24 Volunteers attended the site from 10 – 2 on Sunday to take down the stage, marquee and tents and remove all fencing, lighting, signage etc. All items in the waste/recycling containers were sorted into waste and recyclables and disposed of accordingly. The site was thoroughly litterpicked and a video record made of its condition. The site was cleared by 2pm and secured at 6.30 pm.

Accidents and incidents

3.25 No accidents or incidents were reported. 2 incidents of lost children were dealt with through the lost child procedure, with a safe return to parents/grandparents in both instances.

Community feedback

- 3.26 No adverse representations were received during or after the event, although there was some disappointment expressed by guests who arrived hoping to buy tickets on the gate.
- 3.27 A significant number of very positive comments were made by guests on social media and by messages to the Festival Committee. A sample of these is set out below;

You all did an incredible job to make it I think the best BMF ever. We were saying earlier it felt that it was such a lovely atmosphere, the bands were all ace and the fact that the dance floor was full as the evening went on, full of kids dancing with their parents, adults with their friends just having a good old dose of fun and laughter, something that's been missing for the past 18 months. Be proud all of you. It was the best evening a lot of us have had for a very long time

It was a great event which was very well organised and great bands hopefully see you next year Thanks

You've done it again..... Fabulous day!!! 🙌🙌 Thank you to all the organisers, volunteers and helpers. You're all amazing 😊

Absolutely loved it ..our first time . See you next time ..Congratulations and a massive well done to the Organisers and staff 🙌

We had a fab time, thank you to all the amazing organisers and volunteers on the day. Best one yet 😊

Great work everyone! Really was amazing!

Just wanted to say thanks for a fantastic day yesterday

Huge thanks to the organisers for a fantastic afternoon and evening of amazing live music! So much hard work and energy has gone into putting the festival together....Blackwell rocks!

Appendix 1

Event photographs

Event setup



The Festival



Appendix 2

Consultation letter sent to occupiers of properties adjoining the site



11 August 2021

Dear Resident,

Blackwell Festivals 2021

I am writing to you in connection with the Blackwell Festivals which have been running for the benefit of the local community for 10 years.

You may have heard recently that we have reluctantly taken the decision not to proceed with the summer Party in the Park, which takes place on the school field on St Catherine's Road. The Festival Committee felt that there was just too much uncertainty and risk with Covid 19 to proceed.

However, we are intending to proceed with the summer Music Festival and have set a date of Saturday 11th September for this. If you have not been to this event, it runs from 12pm until 9 pm, with the field cleared by 10 pm, and features acts from local artists and bands, including young people who have the opportunity to perform on stage in front of a live audience. We have a licensed bar and a small number of catering concessions. The event is subject to an event licence issued by Bromsgrove District Council.

In previous years we have been able to use a field within the Hunters Hill School for the event. However, given the school closure, the field is no longer available to us and we have therefore sought and received permission from Birmingham City Council's Trusts and Charities Committee to hold the event on land owned by the Cropwood Trust off Linthurst Road. I attach a plan showing the land in question edged in red.

The Committee have asked me to write to residents who live adjacent to this land to inform you that the Music Festival will be taking place on the 11 September, and if you are not intending to attend (and we hope you will join us!) to give you the opportunity to raise any concerns or questions you may have.

The event is very much a local, relaxed affair and has been run successfully for 4 years. Volunteers stay on the site the night before and after the event to ensure the protection of any equipment and facilities that are present, and the site will be empty of attendees shortly after the last act finishes and no later than 10 pm. We take a pride in having a big turnout of volunteers the day after the Festival to make sure that the site is left at least as clean as before the event.

We do hope to see you at the Festival. However, if you have any queries or concerns please do not hesitate to contact me on 07971 278025 or emmajwestwood@googlemail.com

Yours faithfully

Emma Westwood

Chair – Blackwell Festival Committee