

OBAN WINTER FESTIVAL

19th - 27th
November 2011



Above photographs courtesy of Wee Beauty Photography



MacQueen Bros.
Charitable Trust



History

Over the last few years a group of individuals have undertaken various fundraising activities based on a Christmas theme to raise funds for local charities.

All the events to date have been single ,self funding events, with volunteer time and in kind local business support. However last year after members organised the "Victorian Market" alongside the Reindeer Parade they were encouraged to look to further develop their very successful events into a full Festival programme which would, they hoped would incorporate an "ice rink" activity.

Planning

By working collaboratively as a consortium of groups/organisations with support from private sector business the organisers approached funders jointly. All seeking funding worked to provide a plan which would enable a series of events to be established and thus provide a "Winter Festival Programme " for the community of Oban Lorn and Isles which would also encourage others to visit the area.

Aims

- *To enhance and build on previously successful " Ready Steady Christmas events" e.g Reindeer Parade, Victorian Market.*
- *To pilot and provide the first "winter festival" over two weekends in Oban*
- *To assist and enhance the local economy by encouraging community participation and late season visitors to Oban.*
- *To support, encourage and promote Oban Lorn and Isles as a vibrant "community active" area.*

It was a learning curve for the committee , through many days and nights of planning to bring together the full programme. Appendix 2

The festival began on Thurs 17th Nov with a beautiful production from Ballet West and ended on the 27th Nov with the spectacular " fireworks" display and a lot of enjoyment, fun, laughter and fundraising in between.

People of Oban and surrounding areas –did us proud! Thank you so much to everyone who supported Oban Winter Festival in many differing ways. Yes it was hard work but without the fantastic support of businesses, participants and audiences it would not have been the great success that it was.

You all turned out on some really wet/cold days and nights for the events for which we are very grateful. The Festival organising committee appreciated your encouragement and were extremely pleased to hear your lovely compliments about all the happenings during the 10 days of the Festival.



The committee is appreciative for the financial support received from Argyll Beats Cardiovascular Disease, MacQueens Charitable Trust, NHS Highland (Oban Lorn & Isles Public Health Network), Argyll and Bute Council, Ross Electrical and Oban 200.

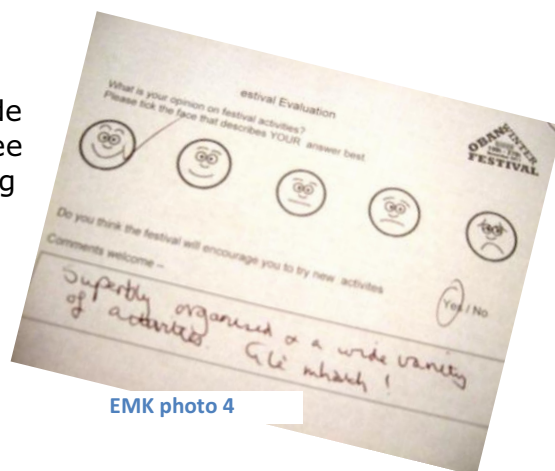
The funding support allowed us to progress many of our planned surprises, however we also have a great deal of thanks to give to our many "in kind" and event supporters from across the whole community. Without this joint effort the Festival would not have been possible. *Appendix 3 supporters*



Evaluation

To learn from this event and to provide feedback to our funders the committee completed a range of evaluation using differing methods to engage with participants attending the Festival.

The result is that we have had a very good response rate and a raft of knowledge to build on for the following year.



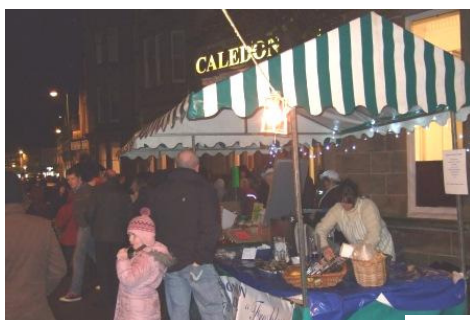
EMK photo 4

- The method of evaluation was by short surveys which were completed face to face during Festival events (Ice rink, floral demonstration and children's market, online using Survey Monkey, email to participating stall holders and event organisers and comments received through what turned out to be a very successful "Facebook" page.

In total we have 253 survey responses, this does not include the additional anecdotal and "facebook comments" received.

To report our findings and show the community benefit from a Winter Festival we have categorized the findings under 3 headings:

- ✓ *Local Economy*
 - *business community*
 - *fundraising (local charities)*
- ✓ *Feel good factor – Mental Health and wellbeing*
- ✓ *Community Cohesiveness/involvement*



Local Economy

At a time of year when the town is normally quiet, we are certain that those attending will agree that the Festival achieved the aim of providing a vehicle to support the local economy. The 10 days of activity did boost the economy of the area with busy shops and restaurants, particularly over the two weekends at the beginning and end of the Festival.

EMK photo 5

Anecdotal discussion with the business community has told us of the increase in trading with comments such as

- "Can we have winter festival every weekend"
- "Great to see the town buzzing"
- "Lots of families home and coming out for meals"
- "Sold out" (from our stall holders)

And from our **survey responses**

- *The huge range of events were great for local businesses during a very quiet season*
- *Great idea to bring business to the town*
- *Excellent for the town, hope becomes a regular event!*



EMK photo 6

The following questions were posted in our on-line survey with a Yes/No option
The results with positive responses are as follows:

Whilst attending the Festival events

Did you eat out? - 79%

Did you shop for non food/gift items - 74%

Did you stay overnight 8%

More than one night 3%

This is all very positive results for an inaugural Festival with the results also showing that 9% of those attending travelled over 50 miles.



Our local charities also benefited financially during Festival, through events organised by themselves or via events co-ordinated by the committee such as the Children's Market afternoon at which average donation for each stall £130 giving estimate of £3900 to local charities – not bad for 2 hours on an November afternoon.

Below are a couple of examples of monies raised for and by charities

- One organisation gained over £500 donations for items their volunteers had produced
- The 1745 house at Dunollie received donations of £653 from their afternoon teas
- Stall holders at the children's market afternoon reported average income on stall of £130
- Events organised by local business – donated to local charities

All of the above show how different activities and organisations took part in the Winter Festival to gain funds which will support their service delivery and thus assist with the sustainability of our very active voluntary sector here in Oban, Lorn and the Isles.

Feel good factor – Health and Wellbeing

From early stages of planning "fun and laughter" was always high on the agenda for the committee members to encourage the community to participate.

"can we have a snow machine?" was one of the early request which we were all very excited about with good reason as it proved to be a real hit with children and adults alike

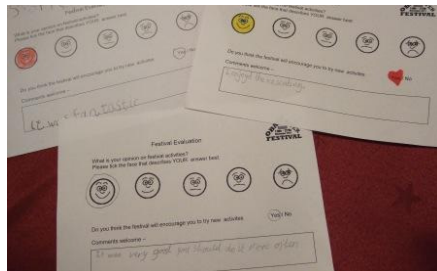


photo courtesy oban times



photo emk

Despite some setbacks with funding we were delighted to be able to achieve the aim of encouraging family sports activity by providing the "ice rink" with support from Atlantis Leisure who agreed to act as host for the rink. The "ice rink" was the initial talking point of the Festival and encouraged many families to participate in an activity that is not normally on offer in our home town.



Face to face surveys were completed at the "rink" with both adults and children. From the responses it was encouraging to discover that 56 from 124 responses would consider other physical activities having attended the "rink". The smiles on the faces at events, with young and old enjoying the activities and comments from participants showed positive results

- *Elderly resident - I went down to the Reindeer parade, have never done this before and met lots of people had not seen for years*
- *Student - lovely to come home to such great events*
- *Charity stalls – great way to speak to people in an informal setting*
- *How positive everyone was even in the terrible weather*

The Public Health Network had an unmanned stall at Atlantis with leaflets on various health topics and support groups, this stall showed a large uptake on leaflets over the week and although no direct contact with public the majority of leaflets taken related to elderly health topics and mental health topics.

Community Cohesiveness/Involvement



Photograph courtesy of Oban Times

The inaugural Winter Festival was completely led, co-ordinated and managed by community volunteers who invited the wider community to become involved, this was achieved by describing to the community the mutual benefits to be gained from engagement.

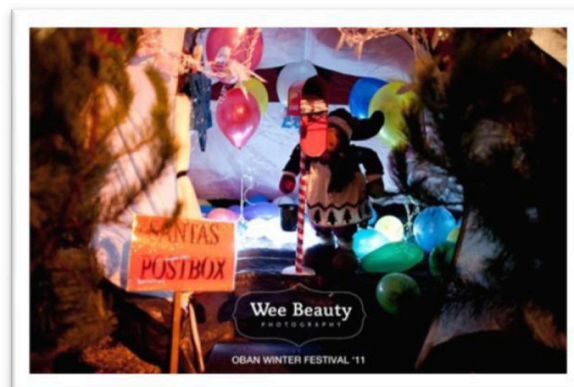
The enthusiasm and support for the Festival to progress by local businesses and event providers acted as further motivation to make the "Festival" an event Oban would be proud of.

It cannot be underestimated the time and effort that was required to support the Festival through potential obstacles and hurdles, the committee worked hard to act not only as "the glue" for those involved by programming events, timetabling the events but also as much as possible supporting event providers.

The funding grants (£7902) and donations from trusts and business (£1250) would not have been sufficient to run the Festival without the volunteer activity. It is difficult to allocate a monetary value to the volunteer input but we estimate £8000 additional funding would have been required to allow the event to have run without all the volunteer activity from the whole community which we received.

Our on line survey (105 responses) reported a common theme

- *Very much liked the lack of 'top down' involvement*
- *Pulling Oban together as a community.*
- *Great sense of community about the place*
- *Lots of community & business involvement*



Photographs courtesy Wee Beauty Photography

Conclusion

We as a "committee" are now reflecting on "what went well and what could be improved" during the 10 days by reading and listening to our respondents comments. Further samples of feedback listed in Appendix 1 attached – strengths and weakness.

We have already met with many of our supporters to start the discussions on how to progress for the next Winter Festival, however, to progress a Festival 2012 we have various decisions which will be required to allow access to funding.

When it is reported to us that other areas of Argyll & Bute are now considering following our lead by creating their own winter festivals, we would hope that funders will see this event report as evidence of money well spent and worthy of support in the future.



Photograph courtesy of Oban Times

Appendix 1

Strenghts and Weakness comments

Sample comments from strenghts

- the variety of events for ALL ages
- whole event was well thought out and we thoroughly enjoyed it
- great to see the town busy on some pretty awful November nights
- The theme was lovely & the window displays are amazing - great way of getting local businesses involved & making the town look festive.
- wide range to suit lots of different people
- the people involved in the festival were helpful and friendly, and the activities were lovely
- The best fireworks display this town has ever seen.
- The lighthouse pier is far better we were stretched out all the way along the esplanade as far as the castle to watch and enjoy
- great being able to nip into a coffee shop for a warm drink with the kids while waiting
- How positive everyone was even in the terrible weather
- The facebook advertising was superb

Sample comments from weakness - Improvements requested

- Deals to be had with the hotels for locals travelling from other parts of the county
- the out of town signs in the run-up to the festival didn't do it justice
- Thought the parade could have had a bit more to it though rather than just the pipes and reindeer, maybe some other local groups could have been involved
- Latern parade could have done with finishing somewhere other than in the distillery square as it got quite crowded with people trying to get in and out the same exit initially.
- More advanced warning of when the festival was going to be held
- Better signage to events - went to go to the market on Saturday but couldn't find it a wee sign pointing me in the direction
- Indoor Victorian crowded
- town didn't look very Christmassy
- I feel that there wasn't enough advertising in the town itself of what was going on
- some things on too late for people with children and events overlapping
- Website a bit jumpy

And finally some general comments from our survey

- My partner and I really love Oban and would love to stay there. We think the festival is a great idea and hope it goes from strength to strength each year.
- Brilliant community effort, with excellent partnership working between organisations.
- Looking forward to it next year already!

Appendix 2

Programme

Thursday 17th November 2011

Festival Opener with Ballet West ;
"Another Opening" Corran Halls

Friday 18th November 2011

Official opening The 1745 House -
Dunollie

Dramatic Tale of Jacobites and the
Enlightenment Exhibition

Saturday 19th November 2011

Argyll Animal Aid Fayre, Corran Halls -
11am -3pm

Synthetic Skating for all the family,
Atlantis Leisure, booking required
Touch Pool courtesy of Sea Life
Sanctuary

Atlantis Leisure; 10 – 4pm

Carriage Rides, Argyll RDA - Dunollie; 1-
4pm

Cream Teas at The 1745 House
Dunollie ; 1 -4pm

Guided walks – Dunollie Castle.

Meet at The 1745 House - 2pm

Cook along for children,

Waterfront; 3 – 5pm - booking required

Victorian Market Stalls, Caledonian
Hotel; 3- 7pm

Santa's Post Box, Caledonian Hotel; 3-
7pm

Reindeer Parade,

Corran Halls to Station Square; 5pm

Christmas Tree Lights- switch on 6pm

Comedy Club – Anvil Springstein,

Waterfront, Railway Pier; 9.30pm
(tickets)

Sunday 20th November 2011

Synthetic Skating for all the family

Atlantis Leisure, Booking required

Winter Wonderland Fun Day –

Sea Life Sanctuary, Barcaldine; 10am-
4pm

Cream Teas at The 1745 House -
Dunollie ; 1pm -4pm

Guided walks – Dunollie Castle. Meet at
1745 House 2pm

Carriage Rides, Argyll RDA, Dunollie
House; 1-4pm

Sugar craft demonstration and
workshop;

Glencruitten Church Centre 1.45pm –
5pm

Monday 21st November 2011

Coffee & Blether; Congregational Church
Hall; 10.30 -12.30

AVA Past Times - Old Oban display and
crafts,

21 High Street ; 11am -3pm

Synthetic Skating for all the family

"Abstracts" Oban Photographic; Regent
Hotel; 7.30pm

Talk - "Hope MacDougall a child growing
up in Dunollie House" 7pm at the 1745
House.

Tuesday 22nd November 2011

Synthetic Skating for all the

family; Atlantis Leisure,

AVA Past Times - Old Oban display and
crafts, 11-3pm

"A schoolboy's recollection of the war
years" –

R Banks Oban War & Peace Museum,
10am

"The Goonies" Phoenix Film Night,
Corran Halls 7pm

Wednesday 23rd November 2011

AVA Past Times - Old Oban display/
crafts, 11- 3pm

Children Storytelling – " Tales of the old
kitchen" 4- 5pm at The 1745 House,
Dunollie

Under 18's School of Rock – Open Mic-
Skipinnish Ceilidh House; 7pm – 9pm

Christmas Floral Demonstration,
Argyllshire Gathering Hall ; 7.30pm

Thursday 24th November 2011

ARCTIC Lectures - SAMS Staff during
school hours

Rolls n Rollers- Argyll College,

Glengallan ; 11am - 6pm; booking
required

AVA Past Times - Old Oban display/
crafts;; 11am -3pm

Party Ideas - Kitchen Garden , 7pm –
ticket only

Friday 25th November 2011

"Salting away for winter" butter making
workshops,

The 1745 House Dunollie 2 – 4pm
booking reqd

Phoenix Family Ceilidh -Caledonian
Hotel ; 7.45pm – 12

Wine Call My Bluff - Waterfront Oban;
9.30pm

Winter Fairground – Old Rockfield Car Park

Saturday 26th November 2011

Farmer's Market and Grazing,
Waterfront, Railway Pier; 10.30am – 3pm

Taster sessions – Kilbowie Outdoor Centre- Dry Ski Slope; Gorge walking, Cycling - 9.30am – 12.30: 1.30pm – 4.30pm Booking required

Kundalini Yoga

Kilbowie Studio, Gallanach; 10am – 11am

Cream teas – The 1745 House - Dunollie; 1pm -4pm

Guided walks – Dunollie Castle.

Meet at The 1745 House 2pm

Family Ceilidh , Oban Music & Dance - Skipinnish Ceilidh House; 7pm-10pm

Oban 365 – Countdown to Christmas Disco, Argyllshire Gathering; 9pm -1am advance ticket £5

Winter Fairground – Old Rockfield Car Park;

Sunday 27th November 2011

Advent Service - Kilmore & Oban Church,

Glencruitten 11.30am;

Adult 5 aside- Football Tournament – Phoenix Group:

Atlantis; 12 noon

Children's / Young Enterprise Market plus Youth Choirs, Corran Halls; 2pm-4pm

“Guided walks – Dunollie Castle.”

Meet at The 1745 House 2pm

Santa Race- Atlantis Leisure to Station; 3pm

Cream Teas - The 1745 House- Dunollie 1pm -4pm

“Elves Treasure Hunt”, Stramash – Dunollie; 1-4pm

Winter Fairground – Old Rockfield Car Park

Family Lantern Parade , Corran Halls to Distillery Stafford St; 5pm

Entertainment & Food Court– Oban Distillery Court Yard ; 5.15 – approx 7pm

Auld Lang Syne

Appendix 3

Supporters

Alba

Argyll College

Argyll RDA

Argyll Voluntary Action

Atlantis Community Leisure

BBC Alba- A Wolffe

Ballet West

Caledonian Hotel

For Argyll

D Hardley – marketing photo

Kilbowie Outdoor Centre

Lidl

Little Bay Trading

Oban 365

Oban Distillery

Oban FM

Oban High School Pipe Band

Oban Phoenix Cinema Group

Oban Pipe Band

Oban Lions

Oban Lorn Tourism Association

Oban Times – reporters and
photographers

Oban Photography Club

Oban Rotary Club

Oban Sealife Sanctuary

Pyro 1 – Cllr L Glen Lee; Cllr R
MacCuish

The 1745 House Dunollie

The Kitchen Garden

Scottish Association Marine Science

Stramash

Stewards Fairground

Strathclyde Police

Strathclyde Fire & Rescue

Skipinnish Ceilidh House

Visit Scotland

Wee Beauty Photography

Waterfront Restaurant

War & Peace Museum & Robin Banks

Technical support - C Black

Twitter support – Chris Kenned Ee
usk

Facebook support – D MacIntyre

Gaelic Santa - F MacKenzie

ALL our STALL Holders at Events

