



**MANCHESTER
HISTORIES**

MANCHESTER HISTORIES FESTIVAL

HISTORY OF CLIMATE CHANGE

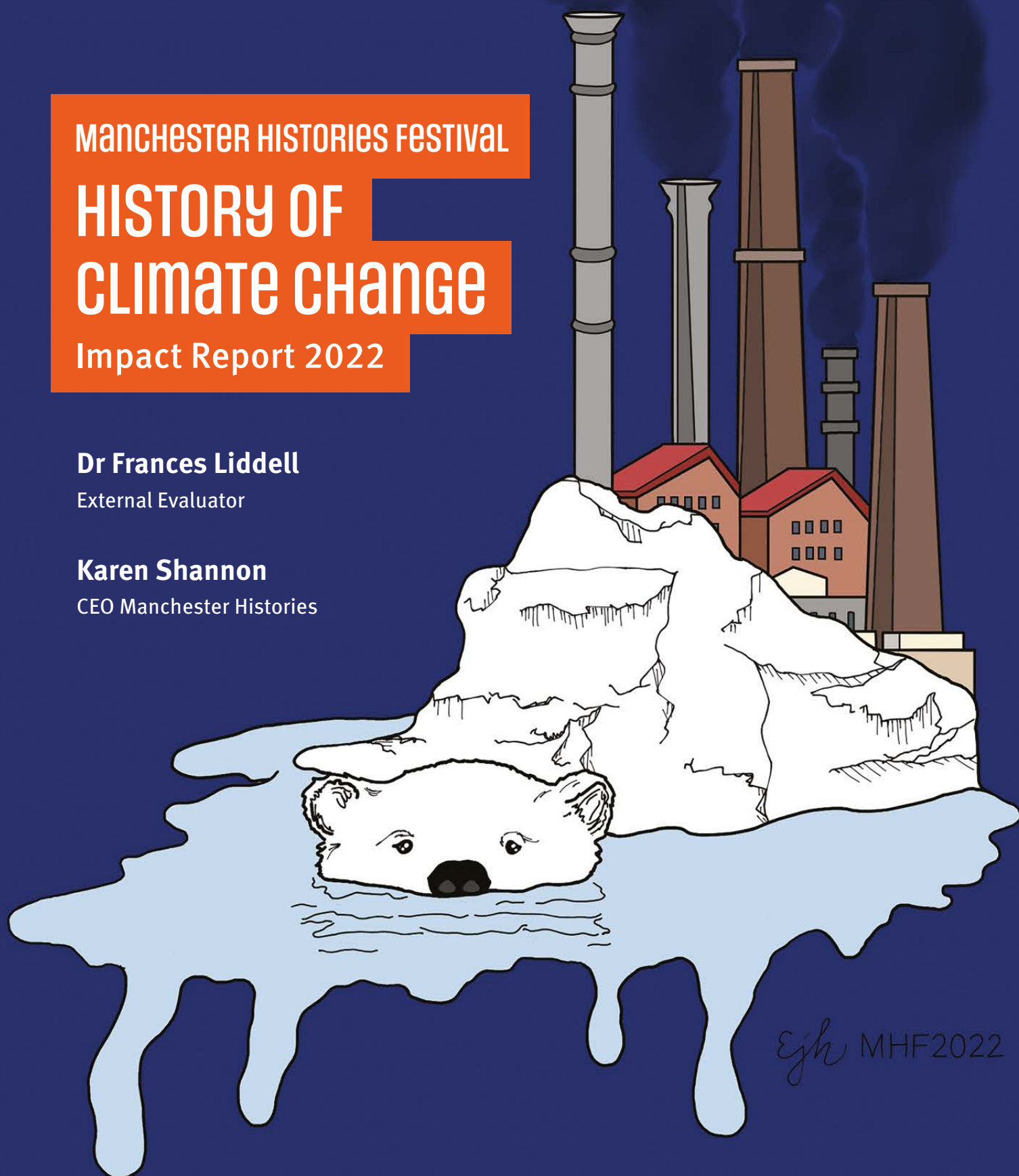
Impact Report 2022

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Ejh MHF2022

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Zero Carbon Cities: Targeting Climate Change



Angel Meadow Park

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Manchester Histories works collaboratively to reveal and celebrate the stories of the people and places of Greater Manchester. They connect people through histories and heritage to explore the past and shape the future, valuing all voices in the telling, preserving, and celebrating of people's stories. They run a year long public engagement programme and produce the biennial Manchester Histories Festival.

This year, the festival returned for its eighth edition which was themed around the history of climate change. The festival took place over five days with 54 events including a wide array of workshops, talks, performances, exhibitions, and walking tours which were split across four main venues including Manchester Central Library, Manchester Monastery (Gorton), Angel Meadow Park, and Gallery Oldham. This attracted an estimated 22,164 visits over the course of these five days (inclusive of online visits, repeat visits, artists, and performers).

This year's festival also involved the successful trial of the new Manchester Histories Hub in Manchester Central Library which provided an intimate and communal setting for workshops and talks. The experiences of using this space at this year's festival will provide the grounding for the delivery of future events and festivals.



Michael Wood

CEO REFLECTIONS



This year's festival was a welcome return to meet and engage with people in person for the first time since the pandemic.

However, it was important to acknowledge that life in 2022 is still very different to what it was two years ago. This was evident in this year's festival, as we saw lower in-person audience numbers than in previous festivals and the trend of last minute sign up to events due to the uncertainty of people going down with COVID-19. Although, it was evident that having online digital content available as part of the festival and on demand afterwards was a crucial way of engaging with new audiences and that the blended festival of in-person and online is the way to go for all future festivals.

The festival embodied our values of being inspired by the rich histories and heritage of Greater Manchester and the people who live and work in the region, who continually demonstrate their curiosity about the world, radical thought, compassion for others, and commitment to social justice.

Having an eclectic array of different events, talks, cultural, and creative activity from contributors was a very positive and rich part of the festival. A huge thanks goes out to all those who dedicated their time, energy, lived experiences, and specialist knowledge to this year's festival that tackled and opened up discussion and awareness around the climate crisis.

Collaboration is the foundation on which the success of Manchester Histories is built. Our positive and proactive approach to working with others is evident in our ability to deliver successful projects and festivals that engage a wide range of people and we are very proud that this year's festival has seen more active engagement than ever before.

Developing and commissioning work for the festival, particularly with people who may not ordinarily engage with heritage and those from marginalised groups, was very meaningful and a way of championing diversity and inclusion. Using the festival as an active platform for showing new work and diverse voices is something we will continue to develop for future festivals.

Manchester Histories prides itself on building long-lasting partnerships and relationships of mutual benefit and it would not have been possible to deliver the festival without the continued support of our partners, funders, and volunteers. Thank you to everyone who took part or attended Manchester Histories Festival 2022: The History of Climate Change. I hope the festival has given you the opportunity to learn from the past and to create a better future to benefit our local and global communities.





The following report examines the festival through a case study approach where different partners, venues, and commissions are investigated individually. This analysis highlighted the following key outcomes:

Climate Awareness and Action

With the emphasis of this year's theme focusing on climate change, this sparked a need to explore to what extent the festival has raised awareness and encouraged visitors to take climate-based action. Findings from the feedback forms indicate that the festival was successful in achieving this aim with 72% of respondents noting that they would take some form of action based on their visit to the festival, which included reducing their plastic usage, eating a more vegetarian diet, and reducing their car usage.

Widening Access to Local History

The broad range of events that channelled the climate change message was shown to be an effective way of widening access to local history. This included partnering with organisations such as Crossing Footprints and Gallery Oldham, which provided more nuance to the historical knowledge presented at the festival.

A Sense of Community

Festival events such as the Opening Night and the Celebration Day provided an informal and social setting for visitors to come together to learn about the history and cultural organisations in the area. These events were found to be invaluable in building a sense of community and the festival is found to be an important cultural mediator for potential collaborations between the organisations, groups, and visitors in the region.

The food and drink day at Angel Meadow Park also played a vital role in harnessing a sense of community and social atmosphere for stall holders and visitors. Future events could capitalise on these types of events and promote the food and drink element as a way to reach different kinds of audiences to other events on the programme.

Resilience

Carbon Literacy Training was included in the process of this year's festival with the Community Engagement Manager being trained to provide sessions for festival volunteers. The investment in this training will be important for future events and support the festival in maintaining a sustainability focus.

Partnerships

Partnerships remain an integral way for the festival to achieve its aims in reaching new audiences and providing a more diverse programme of events. This year, partnerships included working with Gallery Oldham to bring a selection of exhibitions and talks exploring climate connections and local history. In doing so, this brought a richer experience for visitors and offered them an opportunity to learn about more localised knowledge. From an internal perspective, this partnership has supported both of these organisations in sharing their audiences and thus broadening their reach. On a regional level, this kind of collaboration supports Oldham's Cultural Strategy 2022-2030 as it spotlights Oldham as a creative hub and helps to bring cultural events to the residents of this area. Therefore, partnerships such as these offer a beneficial relationship for both organisations as well as the broader region.

Consultation groups also supported the festival this year. A communication steering group was developed to share ideas, give advice, and to promote the festival through different networks. Meanwhile, a festival steering group provided a sounding board for the team to discuss specific topics around histories and climate change. Together, these working groups provided the festival with external support and ensured that the programme represented a more diverse selection of events that would appeal to a broader reach of audience.



Disability and Climate Activism: Setting an Inclusive Agenda

Based on these findings, the evaluator provides the following recommendations:

Specific Partnerships

The success of engaging with different partners to create a more diverse and relevant programme is at the core of the success of this year's festival. The evaluator recommends continuing to build these relationships and to take a more networked approach to production and marketing in future festivals. This refers to encouraging partners and communities associated with the organisation to gain more agency in the production and marketing and helps to take a more collaborative approach to delivering the festival.

Public Transport

Findings from the report indicate that the use of venues such as Manchester Monastery might have had an impact on visitor numbers. In the future, the festival could consider providing further information on public transportation links or working with Stagecoach, First Bus, and Metrolink to promote the festival on public transport routes to the venues.

Alternative Marketing Strategies

The festival might also consider taking alternative approaches to marketing for events such as the food and drink day at Angel Meadow Park. The festival could collaborate with popular Manchester food accounts on Instagram such as EatsMCR and ManchestersFinest which would likely draw in a younger range of visitors to the park, and in turn to the events happening on the day.

Venue Setup

Feedback from some artists and visitors suggests that venue set up could be improved. Discussion with artists on venue decisions and technical setup would also help to mitigate these kinds of issues in the future.

Capacity

The festival team is small and whilst they did an incredible job in delivering the festival, it is recommended that a dedicated festival team with a full time marketing person should be considered for future festivals so that the festival can reach its ambitions to grow and diversify its audience reach. Furthermore, further funding has to be found to support this festival. It is important that the festival is kept free but in the future the team could offer more paid ticketing events to create a sustainable business model which includes a 'Pay-What-You-Can' framework to be considerate of keeping this festival accessible to people across the region.



INTRODUCTION

Manchester Histories is a cultural organisation that celebrates the histories and heritage of Greater Manchester. After a challenging few years due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this year the festival was celebrating its grand return to in-person events.

The festival took place over five days (Wednesday 8th June 2022 to Sunday 12th June 2022) that consisted of 54 different events including talks, workshops, walking tours, performances and exhibitions covering topics from local history and heritage, climate change, activism, and sustainability. These were split across four venues in the region including Manchester Central Library, Gallery Oldham, Angel Meadow Park, and the Manchester Monastery.

This culminated in an estimated 22,164 visits over the course of these five days (inclusive of online visits, repeat visits, artists, volunteers, and performers). This is lower than in previous years, but could be attributed to a couple of different factors including post-pandemic behaviour changes, public transport issues, and other competing events taking place on the same weekend as the festival including Parklife at Heaton Park, Ed Sheeran at the Etihad Stadium, and The Killers at Old Trafford Cricket Ground. Nevertheless, the festival was a moment of celebration in being able to return after three years to in-person events and the following report will critically reflect on this year’s events.

Methodology

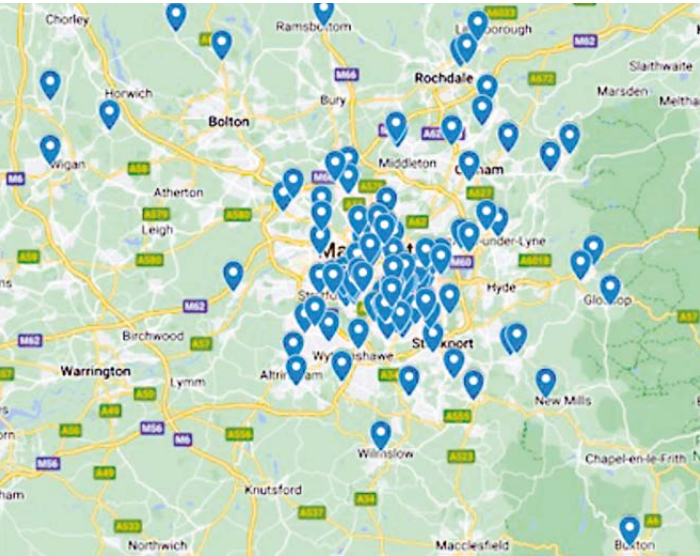
Data for this report was collected using the festival’s evaluation tool kit which includes visitor, partner, and artist feedback forms. This collected a mix of qualitative and quantitative data relating to the demographics and experiences of visitors, partners, and artists taking part in this year’s festival. Supplementary data was collected using vox pops, structured interviews, and email interviews to gather more detailed data on selected case studies.

A total of 231 feedback forms were collected. This is a small sample size and should be considered when reflecting on the findings of this report. However, these responses do provide some insight into the experiences of visitors and partners and therefore provide value for the organisation. A further 10 vox pops were collected from visitors at selected events and interviews and email interviews were carried out with selected partners including Crossing Footprints, Gallery Oldham, and Gorton Youth Zone.

This data was analysed using a case study approach where the different key venues, partnerships, and commissions are individually considered. Case studies provide a more granular and richer analysis of events and it was agreed with the Chief Executive of the festival that this will provide a more in-depth overview of this year’s festival. The following analysis will begin with a survey of the visitor demographics, it will continue with the case studies of the different key events, venues, and partnerships. It will conclude with an overview of the analysis and recommendations provided by the external evaluator.

FESTIVAL ACTIVITY

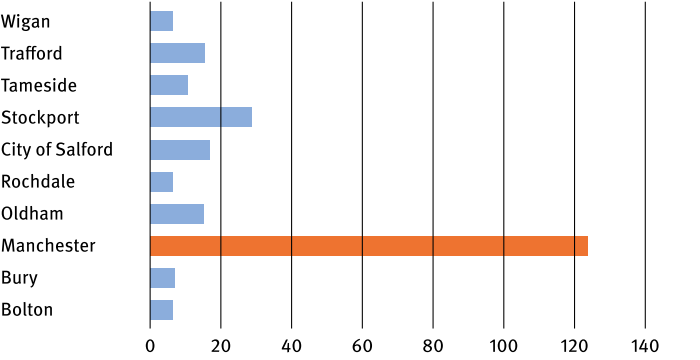
Figure 1
Postcode distribution of feedback responses



Visitor Demographics

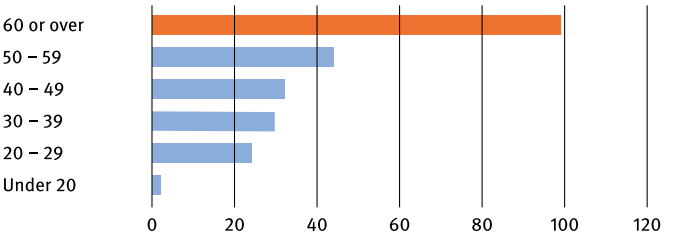
Most respondents to the survey live in and around central Manchester (122), followed by Stockport (28), Salford (16), Oldham (15), and Trafford (15). Other areas of Greater Manchester were identified in the forms including Bolton, Bury, Wigan, Tameside, and Rochdale. Mapping postcode data also indicates that the festival reached audiences beyond Manchester including Birmingham and Southern Ireland.

Figure 2
If from Greater Manchester which borough do you live in?



To understand the diversity of the audiences of this year’s festival, visitors were invited to identify their age, ethnicity, and gender on the survey.

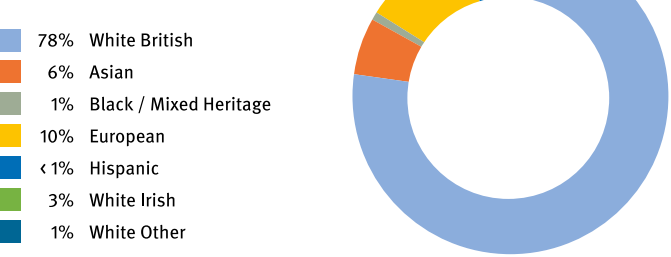
Figure 3
Age Range of Visitors



As shown in **Figure 3**, the vast majority of visitors were 60 and over (99 out of 231), and there is a downward trend as the age category is lowered, with only 2 visitors who filled out feedback forms identifying themselves as under 20 years of age.

According to 2021 census data, the highest count age category in Greater Manchester is the age 30 to 34, which suggests that the festival is failing to engage with the largest part of the region’s population.

Figure 4
Ethnicity of Visitors



Similarly, 78% respondents to the feedback form identified themselves as White British (**Figure 4**), with the remaining 22% being mostly European (10%), Asian (6%), with 1% identifying themselves as Black or Mixed Heritage and less than 1% as Hispanic. These findings suggest that the festival has started to attract a more diverse audience but there is still some homogeneity.

Figure 5
Gender of Visitors



In recent years, gender has become a more diverse and complex category and to address this the gender question on the survey consists of a box for respondents to provide their own description of their gender. This returned with 48% respondents identifying themselves as female, 33% as male, 18% unknown, and 1% queer (**Figure 5**).

Of the respondents to the survey, 25 noted that they are disabled, which is attributed to 10% of all responses. Recent data indicates that 23% of the population in the North West are classed as having a disability, therefore the data from feedback forms suggests that more could be done to support those with disabilities to attend the event.



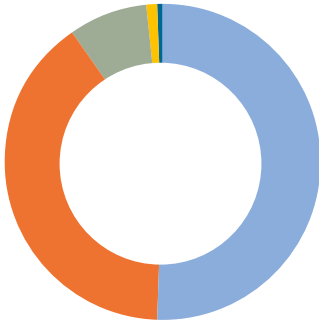
FESTIVAL ACTIVITY

Visitor Experiences:

Overall, visitors were shown to have enjoyed the festival with nearly 99% of respondents rating the festival either Excellent, Very Good, or Good and over half of responses noted that they would definitely attend another event (Figure 6).

Figure 6
How would you rate the event overall?

- 51% Excellent
- 40% Very Good
- 8% Good
- 1% Adequate
- 0% Poor



The events of the festival also had an effect on visitors. 63% of visitors noted that they felt inspired, and over 50% noted that the event that they had attended made them consider climate change in a different way. Whilst some of these responses highlighted a recognition of the more negative or gloomy aspects of climate change:

I didn't realise how bad it's become [...] Action is required faster than we think.
Audience Member, Feedback Form.

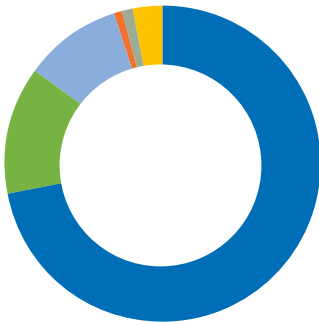
Others responded with a more positive outlook and a want to make a change:

No action is too small' [...] I feel more people are coming on board' [...] It has impressed on me the importance of needing change.
Audience Member, Feedback Form.

This is also evident in the data as 72% of visitors said that they would like to take some form of action out of concern for climate change following the event they had attended with a further 10% noting they will continue with their climate awareness action (Figure 7).

Figure 7
Will you take action?

- 10% Action Continues
- 1% Re-examine Actions
- 1% Maybe
- 3% Not Sure
- 72% Yes
- 13% No



These actions include eating less meat by taking on a vegetarian diet, using less plastic, using more public transport, and cycling to places as opposed to using a car. Many also highlighted a desire to go out and learn more about the subject and one respondent noted how they would use the information learnt to discuss with others in future debates. One primary teacher even noted how they felt inspired to implement climate education with the children they teach:

It has certainly given us pause for thought about our buying habits when it comes to food, and also provided useful and informed material/information that can be used/referenced in future debates.
Audience Member, Feedback Form.

As a primary school teacher, I feel inspired to implement education and change with the children.
Audience Member, Feedback Form.

These responses highlight how the festival has supported both raising awareness and encouraged people to take action on climate change. Many respondents also acknowledged the historical and climate change connections evident throughout the festival, which indicates that the festival has been successful in using history to explore and raises awareness around the themes of climate change:

Has attending this event made you think about climate change in a different way?
Yes, how local history has affected it [...]
Yes, the historical influences on today's climate, social and vegetation [...] Interesting to think about how the North and its resources were the origins of climate change.
Audience Member, Feedback Form.



The Opening Night at the Manchester Monastery provided an opportunity for people to come together in person for the first since the pandemic to experience a heritage event.

Opening nights are an integral part of the festival as it brings people together to network and to have conversations about history and heritage. These encounters often spark new relationships, ideas, and collaboration for future work. More broadly, it also provides audiences with a chance to hear more about the festival programme and meet the volunteers who encourage them to take part in further festival activity.

What a brilliant festival it has opened my eyes to see things more clearly about the history of climate change through seeing a creative piece of work. A brilliant way to get a message across.
Audience Member, Feedback Form.

The programme included a poignant opening speech on the history of climate change by historian & broadcaster Michael Wood. Councillor Luthfur Rahman, Deputy Leader of Manchester City Council also gave an inspirational speech around Manchester becoming a zero-carbon city by 2038 and how culture can support climate change and action.

A short film was premiered which showcased the fantastic performances from young people and artists from across Greater Manchester, and the Manchester International Roots Orchestra delighted audiences with their beautiful and unique music from across the world.

Listening to MIRO perform, the aesthetics of the monastery gave atmosphere and sense of history to the event, such unique settings, felt that the youth group that performed was a well researched topic.
Audience Member, Feedback Forms

Likewise, it gave these young people a chance to tell their stories and create responses to the history of climate change in a professional environment and to a live audience. In this way, this kind of work supports the festival in providing opportunities to their local communities and supporting young people to grow their confidence and develop their creative and research skills.

Unfortunately, audience numbers were lower in comparison to previous festival launches. This may be due to people still feeling reluctant to return to live cultural activities after the pandemic and that the location was harder to reach via public transport (see recommendations).



MANCHESTER CENTRAL LIBRARY

The Manchester Central Library was the main festival venue for both the festival's curated and community sourced talks, conversations, performances, and exhibitions which took place between Thursday 9th June and Saturday 11th June.

This included the use of the Library's Performance space where activities were live streamed from a popup broadcast studio and the successful trial of the new Manchester Histories Hub located in the Library. In addition, a stunning photography exhibition from Brazilian curators Eduardo Carvalho and Vanessa Gabriel-Robinson, *For Those Who Are To Come*, was exhibited in the Wolfson Reading Room.

The festival's programme for these different spaces hosted a variety of activists, academics, and experts all exploring the past, present, and future of climate change through various types of activities. This included contemporary debates exploring themes of activism such as Just Stop Oil and Disability and Climate Activism. The future of climate change was also debated in the final sharing event for the Zero Carbon Cities network led by Manchester City Council, which presented on how different cities across Europe have learnt and progressed within their cities to achieve their zero carbon targets. In addition, GMAST discussed their journey on how they have brought together the cultural and creative community across Greater Manchester to address the climate and ecological crisis.

Talks included Dr Mike Nevell and Ian Miller's illuminating discussion on the impact of the Manchester Ship Canal where they discussed the commercial and social impact of the canal throughout history and its role in affecting climate change today. Other sessions explored how the city of Manchester and its vast empire of cotton had an imprint across the British colonial world, as well as how merchants from Manchester left a global legacy of ecological transformation through large scale cotton plantations. Meanwhile, headline speaker David Olusoga delighted a packed audience as he spoke about how the commemoration of individuals from our historical past remains a matter of continued and highly contested importance: why do statues matter? And what should we do with them today?

Community Stalls
Manchester Central Library



On Saturday, organisations such as Manchester Digital Music Archive, Climate Emergency Manchester and Restoring Pennine Peatlands among others hosted stalls to play, get involved, and learn about some of the brilliant grassroots groups involved in climate action and local campaigns. Together, these events provided the 'traditional' Manchester Histories audiences a chance to explore local histories through the themes of climate:

What did you enjoy?

Made me think about things not previously considered.

Audience Member, Feedback Forms

What did you enjoy?

That a very wide and deeply researched argument is educative not controversial.

Audience Member, Feedback Forms

Meanwhile, Ergon Theatre's 'The Wicked Problem' was a real hit with audiences as they acted as judge and jury in a conflict over climate compliance in a remarkable performance from the company. This was thought-provoking for audience members and offered an opportunity to discuss the themes of the play from a different perspective:

What did you enjoy?

Watching a good performance, hearing facts and different perspectives in an interesting way, having a chance for discussion.

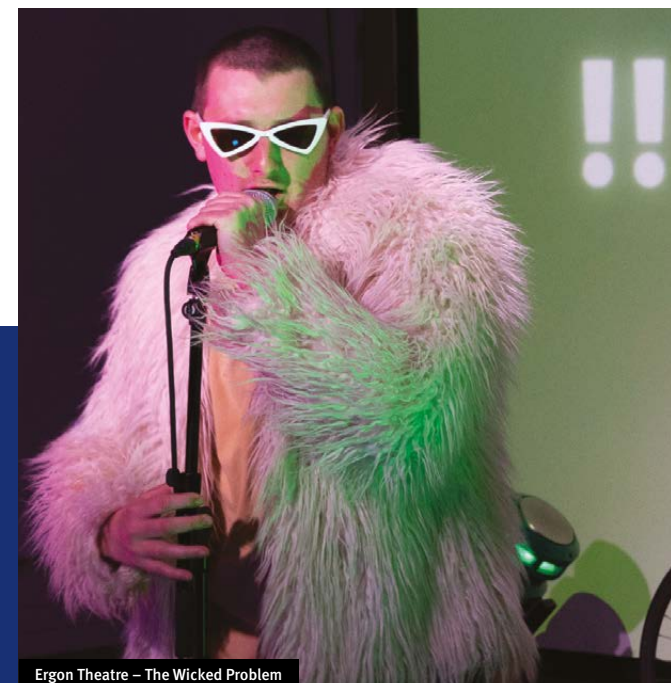
Audience Member, Feedback Form

Excellent theatre but also informative and thought provoking.

Audience Member, Feedback Form

The Manchester Histories Hub created a more intimate setting for festival talks and workshops. This was a trial run of the Hub as a new public facing space for the organisation and offered a space for a series of author talks and workshops covering a broad, insightful range of climate linked topics with authors published by Manchester University Press plus former Financial Times editor and historian Brian Groom and historic graphic novelist, Polyp.

Overall, the trial was a success, although the team will look into improving the internet connection to support further blended and online sessions. The workshops offered in the space explored ways of empowering people of all ages to share knowledge and this provided a lively and creative forum for interactive discussion. In this respect, the new Hub supported the festival in bringing people together through history and climate and to offer a space for discussion and participation. In turn, this supports a new kind of audience to the festival who are interested in more active conversation-based events. Internally, the Hub has also supported the festival in developing close links with the Library's staff which will support future collaborations for the festival.



Ergon Theatre – The Wicked Problem



Ayna Arts



For those who are to come





GALLERY OLDHAM

Gallery Oldham is situated in the centre of Oldham and provides a wide range of exhibitions and activities targeted at different audiences of all ages within Oldham and the surrounding area. This year it partnered with the festival to deliver a series of exhibitions, talks, and events that explores the natural world and climate change.

This included the exhibition, 10 Years of British Wildlife Photography Awards, which showcased a retrospective of the British Wildlife Photography Awards that looks at the past 10 years and for the first time included all the overall winners along with a selection of images that have made this the exciting and wonderful event it is today. The gallery also exhibited *The Nature Table: Work by Sheila Tilmouth*, which presents the work of the artist Sheila Tilmouth and her use of photography and microscopes to discover and magnify the extraordinary lives that are hidden all around us and in the miniature worlds beneath our feet. Together, these exhibitions provided a platform in which to discuss the themes of the festival and to explore the gallery's natural history collection from the context of climate change.

To support these exhibitions, the gallery presented two talks; one by Patricia Francis, the gallery's natural history curator, and one by the artist, Sheila Tilmouth. Francis's talk discussed the interconnectedness of climate change through the discussion of the fossil displays in the Oldham Stories gallery before turning to species and habitats shown in the British Wildlife Photography exhibition. Meanwhile, Tilmouth provided a guided talk through her new exhibition and discussed the local species and habitats that inspired her artwork.

In addition to these talks, the gallery invited the local group Oldham Microscopical Society to present a range of specimens and activities allowing visitors to explore how climate change continues to affect the plants and animals with whom we share our planet.



Ants by Sheila Tilmouth



Fox Glance by Samuel Morris BWPA



Oldham Microscopical Society

The inclusion of the Microscopical Society worked well in parallel to the wildlife exhibition as it gave additional information and a broader range of local knowledge to visitors. It also supported the theme of climate connections which encouraged visitors to consider the history and local ecology of Oldham. This gave the exhibitions a sense of relevancy and community for many of the audiences who attended and promoted a sense of curiosity.

What did you enjoy most about the event?

Local relevance, informative, emotive.

Audience Member, Feedback Form

For the festival and gallery, this partnership supported in sharing audiences between these two organisations which in turn will grow their respective audiences:

I heard about the talk from the history festival website so originally we went to some of the stuff yesterday and the day before. But because we're local we thought let's see what's happening in Oldham. I wouldn't have known about the talk other than that, we knew about the exhibition but not the talk, so it was the history festival that brought the talk to our attention.

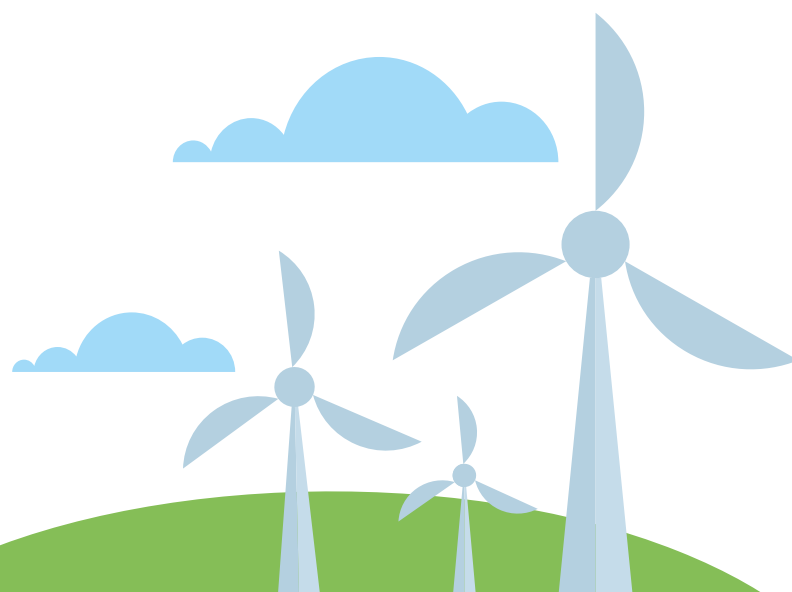
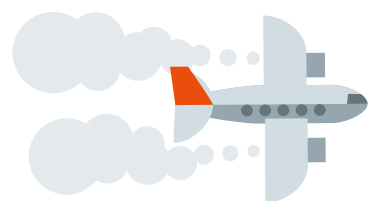
Audience Member, Gallery Oldham, Vox Pop.

In addition, this partnership promoted Oldham as part of the wider festival and encouraged visitors to explore outside of the city centre. This supports the new cultural strategy in Oldham and it promotes Oldham's creative spaces and makes culture more accessible. At the same time, however, this means that the gallery had new visitors who were not familiar with the space, and in future it was noted by some audience members that more signage on how to get to the gallery and exhibits would support new audiences in visiting.

The activity at Gallery Oldham was also linked to Northern Roots. Northern Roots is the UK's largest urban farm and eco-park set on 160 acres of stunning green space in the heart of Oldham. As part of the festival it released digital content that brought to life four key areas in which Northern Roots is working to combat climate change. The content was made by University of Salford students, as part of a partnership project, Northern Roots. A host of other interactive/arts activities based on botany, biodiversity, and environment also took place across the festival.

See https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/100009/leisure_and_culture/2817/oldham-cultural-strategy-2022-2030

Accessed 1 August 2022





ANGEL MEADOW PARK

Walk the Plank, Climate Change Myth Buster



The Vegetarian Society



Manchester Histories Volunteer

Following the success of Manchester Histories' outdoor Soapbox programme in All Saints Park, Manchester Histories Festival 2018, the team wanted to build on this and produce an outdoor festival day for 2022. Angel Meadow Park seemed like the right place for this day as the festival had previously connected with local people, Friends of Angel Meadow Park, and Solid Ground to deliver the People's River project which culminated in a photography exhibition in the park.

Manchester Histories developed a day-long programme of creative content and Solid Ground supported the operational side of putting on the event in the park. This concluded with a brilliant array of speakers, performances, food demonstrations, community involvement, food vendors, and stalls for audiences to engage with. Tour guides Emma Fox and Sibby also showed visitors around the park and the surrounding area to share information about its gory history.



Harp and a Monkey

Alongside the programme of activities, there were workshops and community stalls for people to engage in. Food stalls included Marley's Pizza, The Sri Lankan Experience, White Bean Coffee, and Blackjack Brewery. Workshops were hosted by Manchester Urban Diggers and Jackie the Park Ranger. Other stalls included information about Manchester Food Bank and local charity Mood Swings. Unicorn Groceries, Chorlton Bike deliveries and Groundwork, were also present and provided information on how to eat seasonally and with its environmental impact in mind. Moreover, the day supported the park with the Friends of Angel Meadow Park stall where people were encouraged to join as members and to learn about the history of the local area:

I found out about the event from the 'What's On' website. I took a tour of the area. What interested me most was the impact of the industrial revolution on this area and the terrible conditions of people. I will continue to try to minimise my use of energy and eat more vegetarian meals.

Audience Member, Feedback Forms

Overall, audiences responded positively to the event and it supported in growing links and connections with the groups and performers involved:

The talks were great and I loved the music. It was a great day, I really enjoyed it. We also had a good mix of people come and get involved.

Sam, Manchester Urban Diggers.

Similarly, it was an opportunity for local residents to be able to experience a cultural event that celebrates their particular neighbourhood, therefore creating community value:

We saw it out the window and thought we'd take a look. Music and atmosphere was really nice.

Local Resident, Feedback Forms

And although the crowds were modest in size, this offers an opportunity to improve this event through different marketing approaches and future festivals will explore ways of building on this event such as encouraging people to explore food of the local area (See page 31 – **Recommendations**).



CELEBRATION DAY



The Monastery Manchester Gorton

The Celebration Day is a spectacular event that celebrates the city region's rich history and heritage with over 50 stalls from museums, archives, and projects from across Greater Manchester.

The programme also included a vintage bus to explore, the Nationwide Cycling Academy, who offered free servicing for bicycles, and Valery Touchet, a local fashion designer and community champion for sustainable fashion, who provided a clothes swap party. Creative workshops included Gorton Visual Arts, who provided a free woodcut and screen-printing workshop related to Gorton's social history. In Stitches, a craft group, were also present and knitting a climate change scarf that documents how climate has changed over the last 100 years. Musical performances included Gorton Voice Choir, an adult and informal choir based in Gorton. Youth Zone Voices also performed alongside a composer and instrumentalists from Manchester Camerata.

The Celebration Day is an important part of the festival as it brings different people together, providing a place where people can meet new friends and socialise; improving health and wellbeing and social isolation. It also increased people's knowledge and understanding of their own histories and heritage; focusing on where past generations have come from and their role in shaping the local areas, improving their sense of belonging. In turn, this increases the confidence and pride of people taking part in a wider city cultural exchange on their doorstep.

What is the most memorable thing you have learnt from the event?

That the world is still full of good people doing great things. Though I already knew – it was confirmed!

Audience Member, Feedback Forms

Likewise, it supports local organisations to network and creates opportunities for future collaborations:

I think it's really great to have so many different organisations in the same room and just means that you don't spend months trying to get in contact with one person you can just have a day here to network, so from an industry perspective it's really great.

Manchester Poetry Society, Manchester Monastery, Vox Pop

Indeed, to further this outcome, the festival will develop a project that profiles the smaller volunteer-led organisations who hosted a stall year round by including them in the Manchester Histories Hub and online involving the Manchester Histories volunteers. In doing so, this will support a stronger network of smaller organisations based around Greater Manchester. Therefore, whilst initially it took a significant amount of time and resources to encourage new societies to join the Celebration Day, legacies such as this new project will indicate to future societies the benefits of engaging with the festival.



There were also benefits of using the Manchester Monastery as the venue of this event. In the first instance, for the festival, working with a venue partner that is set up to host large fairs with stalls cuts down on the planning time and other event costs. Likewise, working with the partner has supported the festival in building new partnerships and relationships made with cultural, historical and community organisations based in Gorton, in particular Gorton Local History groups, and Manchester Camerata.

Meanwhile, the venue is set in a local area that is filled with communities whose voices are often excluded from the cultural events and conversations. Therefore, delivering Celebration Day at Manchester Monastery helps to both bring in new audiences to the Gorton area as well as change people's perceptions of the area and support locals to view their neighbourhood in a new light:

People wouldn't normally come to the church but obviously once you've been and you've seen how gorgeous is it you'll want to come back.

Audience Member, Manchester Monastery, Vox Pop

Lastly, the community-led and climate change focus has built capacity, education, awareness, and action for climate empowerment for the people of Gorton and thus supports this community in being more resilient to climate change.



As part of the Celebration Day, Youth Zone Voices from the Gorton Hideout Youth Zone performed a co-created song in response to the climate emergency. The process involved working with a group of 14 young people from the Hideout Youth Zone in Gorton who, through a series of four workshops, developed the song and performed it at The Celebration Day event.

The project included partnering with professional musicians from Manchester Camerata who supported these young people in developing and delivering their song. The artist Layfullstop also supported the development of this project through facilitating the workshops and guiding the young people through the process of devising their own song on the theme of climate change. In addition to the song, the performance involved a soloist singer and a duo contemporary dance act performed by young people from Hideout Youth Zone.

Projects such as this are important for the festival to support. Firstly, it offers the participants opportunities to write and perform a song with an orchestra, something which many of them would not have had the chance to do outside of this project. This is evidence by many of the young people's feedback which mentioned learning new social and musical skills from participating in this project as their favourite part of the process:

What has been your favourite part of doing this project?

Being able to write an original song, [...] making our own song and not copying 'someone else' [...] being able to make music together, [...] being able to perform something that we created.

Performers, Gorton Youth Zone, Interview

This process elevated these young people and gave them a voice in the conversation about climate change and supported them in feeling valued and a sense of community. Similarly, the project gave these young people a platform in which to promote their thoughts on climate change through music and they were able to produce a first draft of the song within the first two workshops.

This highlights the importance of not underestimating these young people nor allowing them to underestimate themselves:

We underestimated how smart these kids were. We were able to give them that space to have their voice heard [...] We practised in the evening so they invested their time and their effort [...] They've been dedicated to learn discipline and confidence, they are not the same kids as they were four weeks ago.

Layfullstop, Manchester Monastery, Interview

In addition, the project brought about a sense of unity and friendship in these young people despite the age range. The artist, Layfullstop who facilitated the workshops noted how age became less of an identifier for the young people with the older ones helping the younger ones with stage fright and nerves when performing:

We want to make sure that everyone can enjoy and have the same experience as a person who is a little bit older as opposed to someone who is a bit younger but whilst that was a challenge at the beginning I feel that idea of unity, it became less about the youngers or the olders and seeing the older ones help younger ones with stage fright or they feel like their nervous and the youngers feeling like they can come to each other for support.

Layfullstop, Manchester Monastery, Interview

At the same time, the projects faced challenges. For example, more budget would have allowed for a more substantial programme of workshops to give the participants an opportunity to develop their performances. Likewise, whilst the subject matter was perceived as important, there was also an issue of losing some of the juniors as the theme didn't seem 'as fun' as it was first assumed at the beginning.

I think we lost a few of the juniors as the subject matter wasn't as 'fun' as they thought it would be at the beginning.

Layfullstop, Feedback Form

But despite this, those that stuck with the project were inspired to continue developing their songwriting and performing skills.



CROSSING FOOTPRINTS

Crossing Footprints is a community interest company based in Manchester and London. It supports creative productions based on human rights, environment, equality, and wellbeing.

Crossing Footprints supported four events at Manchester Histories Festival which was centred around the themes of climate justice. This included a panel discussion Climate Change is a Race and Migration Issue that looked at climate change from the perspective of migration and the increasing concerns of environmental refugees. Further to this was GHOOORN – a Disastrous Cycle by Ayna Arts, a play that combines migration and climate change to tell the story of Bangladesh and the detrimental effect of climate change on this country. Running similar themes is Tales From The Congo Basin, an interactive storytelling performance with Emmanula Yogolelo and the Amani Collective which explored climate justice activism through music and giving a voice to people's experiences of climate change in the 'global south'. Lastly, Climate Connections is a digital art and participatory-based project that presented five films on climate change. These films were shown at Gallery Oldham from Thursday 9th June to Sunday 12th June.

I wanted to bring together a number of under-represented themes, people and groups, as well as support them and make them more visible, also help generate crossovers and develop this sector of POC climate justice activism.

Kooj Chuhan, Director, Crossing Footprints

I hope people became more informed, enjoyed the cultural and artistic elements, re-oriented the usual lens climate change is viewed through, and felt some sense of direct connection between the issues and their own lives.

Kooj Chuhan, Director, Crossing Footprints

Climate Change is a Race and Migration Issue Panel

Climate Change is a Race and Migration Issue was a panel discussion that took place on Friday 10th June at Manchester Central Library with a live Q&A. Panellists included researcher and writer Alex Randall from the Climate & Migration Coalition; creative producer, artist, and filmmaker Kooj Chuhan; musician and activist Emmanuela Yogolelo from the Democratic Republic of Congo; visual researcher and activist Rabia Begum; and the antiracist activist Peninah Wangari-Jones who directs the Racial Justice Network.

The panel reflected on the themes of the festival and discussed the relationship between climate change, climate injustice and migration, themes which are not often discussed together during climate conversations. It also offered the chance for a younger generation to have their voice heard and discuss the topic to a broader audience:

From my perspective the panel is young, knowledgeable, engaged and making a different society from mine.

Audience Member, Feedback Forms.

The panel was also live recorded, which enabled visitors who could not attend physically to listen. Overall, feedback indicates that the panel encouraged some audience members to think about climate change on a deeper level than they have previously considered, which suggests that the project has a longer-term impact on people's behaviour and approach to climate. However, on a practical note, some audience members noted a difficulty in hearing panellists who were calling in. Subtitles could have been used for the video participants to support those hard of hearing in the audience.

Will you be taking any action out of concern for climate change following this event? If yes, please tell us.

Continue to stay active and look to influence others to think about ethical consumption and positive ecological practice.

Audience Member, Feedback Forms.

CROSSING FOOTPRINTS

GHOORNI: A Disastrous Cycle

GHOORNI: A Disastrous Cycle is a performance by Ayna Arts, a group that brings together creative individuals to explore social and humanitarian issues that affect the community through performance and theatre. An early version of the play was performed at the Manchester Histories Festival on Friday at Manchester Central Library with a live Q&A after the show.

The work explored the history of Bangladesh and the progress of this country that is now at risk of being thrown backwards by the impact of climate injustice. In this respect, it brings together core themes of the festival including climate change and migration and highlights the climate disparities across the globe.

Ayna Arts envisions building on this theatre piece and therefore working with the festival offering the company a way to develop their current practice while exposing them to a different kind of venue and audience that they usually perform to. As such, this has supported in broadening the company's current audience. Similarly, the work exposed the 'traditional' audiences of the festival to perspectives on climate change that go beyond the UK as well as offered particular resonance to the young British Bangladeshi community in Manchester.

Therefore, this work has helped the festival in developing new audiences. Importantly, the work also presents this story in a more accessible environment as opposed to a panel session or scholarly articles and so enabled the themes of the festival to be presented to a broader audience. Feedback indicates that this performance had an effect on the audience:

What did you learn?

How it must feel to be misplaced and how migration is a threat to us all. What it must feel like to have nothing. The resilience of people.

Audience Member, Feedback Forms

Has attending this event made you think about climate change in a different way? If yes, please tell us:

Yes, it's opened my eyes to climate change being a global problem. It's a world issue and looking at the history and future of Bangladesh it really brought it home, that we must do something.

Audience Member, Feedback Forms

Tales from the Congo Basin

Tales from the Congo Basin was a storytelling and participatory musical performance performed in Angel Meadow Park on Saturday which explored climate justice activism through music. The work was produced and delivered by singer-songwriter, music facilitator and storyteller Emmanuela Yogolelo and selected musicians from the Amani Collective, a group of musicians of African genres that perform contemporary African music. Therefore, the work supported local talent and provided a space for them to perform and access a new audience. Moreover, the work was part of an ongoing performance which will continue to be developed in collaboration between the Democratic Republic of Congo and the UK planned for 2023.

At the core of this performance is the idea of giving a voice to people's experiences of climate change in the global south, which is typically a voice not heard within the wider discussion around climate change and action. In this respect, the performance was an opportunity to share to a western audience the personal experiences and opinions of the global south citizens and migrants about climate change. For the festival, this is important work as it supports the aim of connecting to history in different ways and highlights different voices.

I want people to know that we still can save our world by starting to make some changes, learn and do some right things at our individual levels and as collective today.

Emmanuela Yogolelo, Artist

However, the small budget made it difficult for the artist to produce a high-quality musical performance and she had to supplement it with Arts Council England funding in order to have a professional based composed of instrumentalists and singers and a choir of local residents.



Climate Connections

Climate Connections is a series of videos on the impact of climate that were displayed at Manchester Histories Festival in Gallery Oldham from Thursday 9th June to Sunday 12th June with a talk introducing the works by Kooj Chuhan, the director of Crossing Footprints. The videos are a product of a digital arts project that aimed to raise awareness about climate change and enable a diverse, migrant, and working-class local people from Oldham to have a voice in the environmental movement. The original project worked in partnership with Oldham Library Service and Community Arts Northwest to create a series of online and in-person workshops in 2021. Participants in these workshops were encouraged to explore issues around climate change and to develop social media posts and videos. Alongside these workshops, a set of artists were commissioned and an online competition for communities connected to libraries in Oldham and Bremen, Germany was arranged to generate further ideas and content. Together these three components created the five videos on display as a loop in Gallery Oldham.

These videos included:

Climate, Conflict & Resources in Africa are driving migration

By musician and activist Emmanuela Yogolelo filmed in the Democratic Republic of Congo

Action Is Needed

Powerful and expressive words and images from members of Oldham Lifelong Learning Service

Years Of Bad Habits

Presents a Bangladesh perspective using original images, words and music by photographer Murad Chowdhury

Old Versus New: Technology, Pollution and Climate Change

A Pakistan focus by Fatima Women's Association (Oldham) collaborating with Sarah Yaseen

Burning Coal

A live solo music performance by Sufi-soul singer, musician and composer Sarah Yaseen.

By re-presenting the videos at Gallery Oldham, the festival supported in showcasing these works to a wider audience and broadening the impact of the original project. Indeed, the videos were situated in the foyer of the gallery and were therefore exposed to the broader footfall of the gallery.

Findings indicates that the premise of using videos had an effect on visitors and their perceptions of climate change:

What has struck me today is how I've fallen into the trap of compartmentalising my knowledge... I've been forced to confront how interconnected things are now.

Audience Member, Gallery Oldham, Vox Pop

To show an image on a screen that a community who is relatively new to it put together, this can be much more powerful than a PhD discussion.

Audience Member, Gallery Oldham, Vox Pop

Therefore, these videos supported the festival in raising awareness of climate change but in a community-driven way. In turn, this highlights the beneficial relationship that partnerships such as this can have for Manchester Histories.





TOGETHER FOR OUR PLANET

There is clear evidence in the UK that people from marginalised groups, disabled people, and people from ethnic minorities and working-class backgrounds face significant barriers and discrimination in accessing cultural activities.

One of the main aims of the festival was to provide a platform for underrepresented communities, young people, and individuals to connect to share their stories and emotions on climate change and action. Thanks to funding from The National Lottery Community Fund, Together For Our Planet we were able to make this happen by working with a number of groups who responded creatively to the challenges of climate change.

Together For Our Planet Film

Manchester Histories commissioned rap artist and youth worker, Kerin Morris and two independent filmmakers to work with local young people to create a script and perform in a short film. This powerful film was then screened at the Opening Night at Manchester Monastery. The creative team worked with young people from Manchester College, Manchester Youth Council and Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People. It involved collaborating with 32 local young people, including many learning-disabled people.

RECLAIM

RECLAIM, a charity that empowers young working-class people to change the country today and lead it tomorrow, developed a project with young people from Bolton, Greater Manchester. Working alongside Seventh Sense Theatre Company, young people co-produced their own work over a series of workshops that explored climate change and performance techniques. This culminated in a compelling and dynamic creative campaigning piece The Fog of War which was performed at the Opening Night.

Crossing Footprints

As noted earlier, Kooj Chuhan of Crossing Footprints connected Manchester Histories with Ayna Arts to explore the themes of race, migration and climate change. This led to the creation of an original theatre piece, written, directed, and performed by the group called 'GNOORNI – A Disastrous Cycle' which was performed at the festival.

Whilst these were ambitious projects which required a lot of time to coordinate, overall this created a positive experience and offered these young people and communities a chance to feel heard and engaged in climate change topics. Moreover, the collaborations developed and delivered excellent creative content for the festival and fostered new partnerships which the festival will continue:

Great speakers who spoke with passion & understanding. I learnt about a different country and more about climate change.

Audience Member, Ghoorni Performance

It was a great opportunity for us young people to share our thought and opinion, who might not have gone before a camera before.

Student participant

Traditionally, young people with SEND's voices are marginalised. From an outside perspective it was wonderful to see our students' voices being heard, and them in turn recognising the contribution they can make to the wider community/ bring about change.

Tutor, Together For Our Planet Film

GRanada FOUNDATION COMMISSIONS

To continue with its aim of supporting marginalised voices, Manchester Histories was keen to focus on young people and consider how they might be part of the festival, especially as they are well-placed to promote histories & heritage and environmental awareness in the more distant future.

Thanks to a grant from The Granada Foundation, Manchester Histories commissioned three young artists and RECLAIM to express their responses to climate change through a range of art forms. This was impactful for these young people for three key reasons. Firstly, this gave them an opportunity to develop their creative practice. Secondly, they were able to present their perspective on the subject to a wider audience. Lastly, this project supported in bringing their work to the attention of the cultural sector and wider public.

Billie Meredith (Poet), Young Identity

Young Identity is a Manchester based youth-arts performance project whose mission is to develop literacy, critical thinking and active citizenship for young people through experimenting with combined arts.

Billie Meredith, spoken word artist and poet from Young Identity was commissioned to produce a new spoken word piece for the festival. Billie attended a climate change workshop at Manchester Central Library in the run up to the festival to hone her ideas and then created a beautiful and powerful poem Immolation on the theme of climate change which she recited at the launch of the festival at Manchester Monastery.

The commission has inspired me to research deeply into the subject of climate change and to develop my own practice as a writer. I have been looking at poets of old who are able to pose tactile and meaningful questions about the world around them, about the idea of nature and our moral duties. It's taken me to Kipling and Whitman, pulling structure from funeral poems to mark the mourning and reflection that comes from looking at an inherently sombre topic like this, the depletion of our resources and our earth.

Billie Meredith, Poet, Young Identity

It's always a funny feeling looking at people watching and listening to your work - but my God, is it a good one! Thank you to @mchristfest for the brilliant chance to create this installation for your festival on Climate Change.

Tasha Down, Multi-Media Artist

Emelia Hewitt (Illustrator), Venture Arts

Venture Arts is an award-winning charity that supports people with learning disabilities to reach their full potential through visual arts and culture. Artist Emelia Hewitt was commissioned to create illustrations for application onto button badges and magnets that reflected the past and future of climate change, related specifically to Manchester.

Emelia produced a series of illustrations that encapsulated the theme of the festival perfectly. Her designs were transferred onto badges and magnets, which were worn by the festival team & volunteers and sold in the shop in Manchester Central Library. Venture Arts were enormously proud and delighted that the illustrations were used as official festival products and are an addition to the artist's professional portfolio.

Tasha Dowd (Multi-Media Artist)

Tasha Dowd, a young artist and climate activist, was commissioned to create a new piece Paying for Time for the festival. The work consisted of three paintings, accompanied by an audio soundtrack. Audiences were invited to experience Tasha's inner world and the dark destruction of the planet throughout history. The work also offered glimmers of hope for the future, but only if humankind acts now to save our beautiful world.

A new piece, Paying for Time, was exhibited in Manchester Monastery and Manchester Central Library. The commission enabled Tasha to focus on the theme of climate change and develop her practice as an emerging multimedia artist.

Tasha also joined the Manchester Histories Festival steering group (see below) to contribute to the development of the festival, ensuring the youth voice was represented.



STEERING GROUP

The festival steering group was set up to ensure both historic and present-day histories around climate change and action were fully represented in the programme and its support and guidance was invaluable to making sure the design and delivery of the festival was open, diverse, and aligned to Manchester Histories core values.

Together, this group of people brought skills and expertise of specific topics around histories, heritage, climate change, and operations which helped the festival team to make strategic decisions about the delivery and content of the festival. It also acted as a sounding board for ideas and discussion and connected the festival to a wider range of contributors and a much broader audience.

The steering group was so important in helping us to develop the festival. The collaborative approach, the sharing of decision making and the sheer knowledge of others made it possible to deliver a more rich, thoughtful, and creative programme for everyone.

Karen Shannon, CEO of Manchester Histories

The steering group for Manchester Histories Festival: A History of Climate Change brought together a range of voices from across the region to help develop the festival programme. Local knowledge through activists and policy makers helped open up the broad range of issues that sit within what we commonly refer to as climate change. These include social justice, colonisation and health and wellbeing. [...]

The festival's approach was to encourage the reuse of materials and projects and it was brilliant to see cultural responses originally developed for the C-Change: Art and Culture Leading Climate Action in Cities appear again to a wider audience. Overall, the programme was wide-ranging and engaging, across many venues in the city. The steering group made new connections that will continue to evolve as we all grapple with the scale of the challenge we face.

Simon Curtis, Convenor, GMAST

The steering group took time, thought, and energy to set up and manage, but it also accomplished a great deal and was essential to the success of the festival. Manchester Histories realises the benefits of working with others and will continue to set up project or festival steering groups to truly include all sectors of the community to ensure that the organisation continues to engage and reach a widening audience.



VOLUNTEERING

Volunteers play a significant role in shaping and delivering each Manchester Histories Festival and the year-long programme. The organisation has a core volunteer group from previous festivals and the Peterloo 2019 commemorations, and the team was keen to build on this core and grow this group through an open call on the website, and the festival's network, and the University of Manchester Student Volunteering Portal to recruit more people.

Over 60 new volunteers applied through these different routes of which 35 continued to the festival in June and contributed 376 hours over 89 shifts which generated a total of £3,760 of in-kind support. These volunteers were given three induction sessions where they were introduced to each other, the organisation's values and work, and the mutual benefits of working alongside each other to support the festival. Volunteers were also given further information through the volunteer handbook which gives insight into the policies and procedures relating to the festival.

As the festival's focus was on the history of climate change, being aware of the carbon impacts on our planet for our volunteers was essential. Therefore, each volunteer had the opportunity to take part in Carbon Literacy Training. This was delivered in partnership with GMAST (Greater Manchester Arts Sustainability Team), on a train-the-trainer basis. The festival's Community Engagement Manager delivered this and could then continue to deliver the training once the festival was over and thus provide longer-term impact beyond this year's festival. However, in future, this training could be reduced in terms of information and time, particularly if given online so as to avoid 'screen fatigue', as one volunteer noted in regard to their training:

Maybe too much info, too long, on the climate change zoom meeting I attended.

Manchester Histories Volunteer

But, despite this, this training was shown to give volunteers more confidence in having informed conversations with members of the public on issues surrounding climate.

In terms of other beneficial outcomes, volunteers were able to experience and learn new things about the history of climate change, they also had the chance to meet new people and engage with different organisations, a point noted by many of volunteers who took part in the festival:

What was the highlight of volunteering with MHF? To get to know other people and to be able to learn something about climate change by attending the talks or discussion on the events.

Manchester Histories Volunteer

Meeting lots of new people, both volunteers and getting to know other organisations in Manchester.

Manchester Histories Volunteer

Many volunteers also felt supported throughout the process, although some noted that they would have preferred more information when they arrived on site:

Maybe a little more information when you arrive on shift on what you will be doing, or a rota.

Manchester Histories Volunteer

This feedback offers ways for the festival to improve the volunteering process next time, and indeed, it did not put off current volunteers from wanting to get involved in future events which suggests that the festival has successfully developed their core group of volunteers during this festival:

I really enjoyed volunteering with Manchester Histories, and I look forward to hearing more about ways to get involved with the organisation in the future. I enjoyed meeting new people and seeing how we as a community can come together to tackle something as big as climate change.

Manchester Histories Volunteer

Really impressed with the online ticketing system, event updates and shift booking; definitely felt like we were supported and informed throughout.

Manchester Histories Volunteer

In terms of future volunteering developments, the festival plans on producing a new digital training programme where volunteers will learn new digital skills and act as 'roaming histories reporters' creating their own digital content. Through this, they will tell stories about the often-hidden histories & heritage of Greater Manchester and these will be profiled and promoted on a new TikTok channel and through Manchester Histories' social media platforms to widen the festival's audience reach. Therefore, volunteering with the organisation will become a more symbiotic relationship for participants.



MARKETING

An important part of this year’s festival was to develop a marketing strategy to ensure that the organisation was connecting with people and that the public were made aware of the different events available. This would also be integral to enhancing the festival’s values and brand image and increasing a broader audience to festival events and activities.

This was implemented by hiring a part-time Marketing and Communications person to help support this and to run the social media channels, digital content, and website. The festival team also worked with Fido PR, which oversaw press and media coverage and Imagine Design, which designed all print and digital materials for the festival.

A communication steering group was also established to share ideas, give advice, and to promote the festival through different networks, social media channels, and marketing emails. The group included Fido PR, marketing agency Solid Ground, Manchester City Council, Manchester Metropolitan University, and Creative Manchester, University of Manchester.

Furthermore, since this would be the first festival post-pandemic, the festival team were keen to consider and adapt to the audiences’ changing behaviour. Indeed, people appear to be attending more local events and accessing more content and information online. Therefore, a blended approach was taken which offered print, live, and digital content to these different needs and attract a more diverse audience for the organisation. These different materials included the following:

Marketing Materials

The festival produced a wide range of physical marketing materials including 1,000 copies of the brochure which were distributed to the different venues, 500 flyers each for the Celebration Day and Angel Meadow Park, banners for Celebration Day, Angel Meadow Park, and Manchester Central Library. Four cardboard roller banners were also produced to display at the Library and Manchester Monastery. Lastly, 70 posters were printed and distributed by the organisation BagThing. To reflect the climate theme of the festival, all printed material was made with recyclable materials via a sustainable process.

In terms of digital materials, Manchester Histories produced a promotional video focusing on the four venues which was filmed by Kenawa Films and presented by Manchester Histories Trustee, Jahmal Williams-Thomas. A selection of social media images were also produced representing the different talks at the Library, the different stall holders at Celebration Day, and the performers at Angel Meadow Park. A further GIF was created featuring the main festival highlights and shared on all of the organisation’s social media channels. Lastly, an Issuu brochure was created and published as a digital document and embedded on the festival’s website.

Digital Promotion

The festival was promoted through different digital channels including Mailchimp, the venues’ websites, twitter, and LinkedIn promotion.

Press Coverage

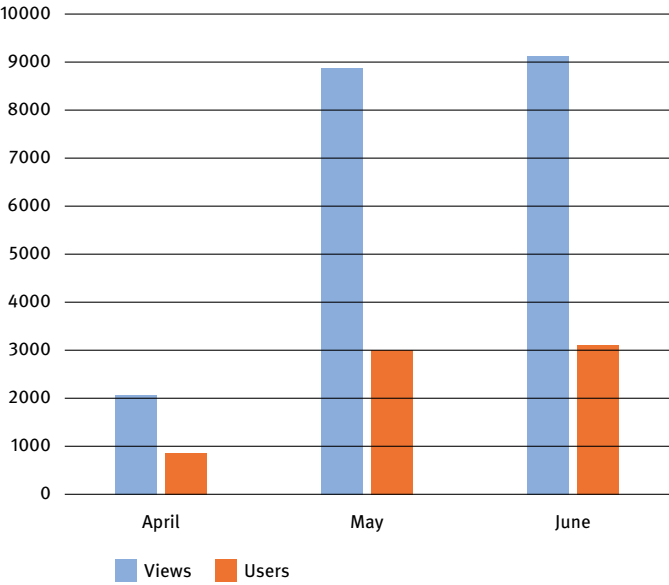
The festival worked with Fido PR to produce and distribute eight press releases between November 2021 and June 2022 which ranged from programme announcements, call for submissions, to Opening Night ‘save the dates’.

In addition to press releases, Fido also secured various press coverage through print, radio, and online channels, including BBC Radio Manchester, That’s Manchester TV, Manchester Evening News, Manchester Wire, Time Out, Big Issue North, Creative Tourist, and more.

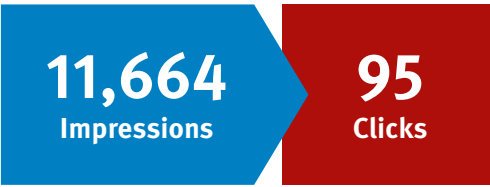
Outcomes

Together these different elements ensured that the festival reached an audience who may not have been aware of its existence (especially as it was the first standalone Manchester Histories Festival since 2018). This is supported by a notable increase in engagement the organisation experienced online. For example, their Instagram reach was up by 1,000% from the previous year. Likewise, their Facebook page was up by 750.8%, and their website views increased from 2,105 in April to 9,174 in June (see **Figure 8**). This has left the organisation with a stronger following on their different social media accounts, a new Linked In profile to use, and new relationships with different media companies that can support future events.

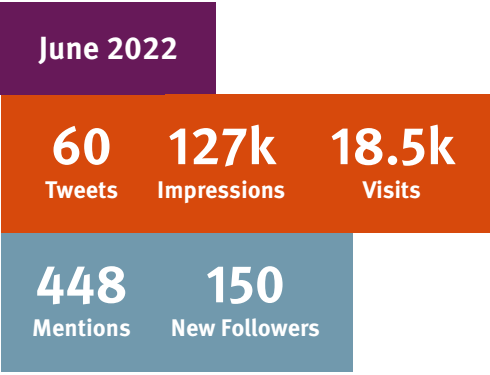
Figure 8
Website Hits



LinkedIn Boosted Post



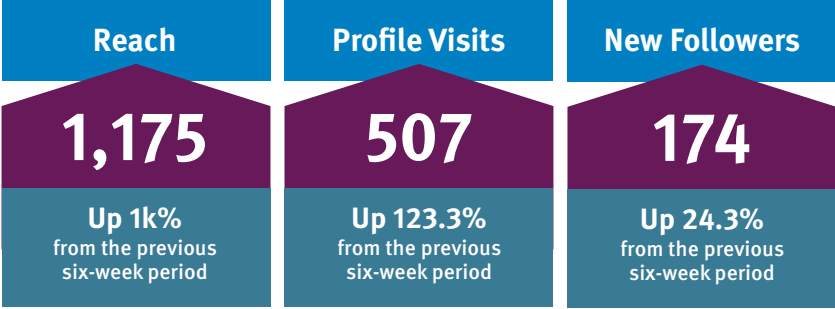
Twitter



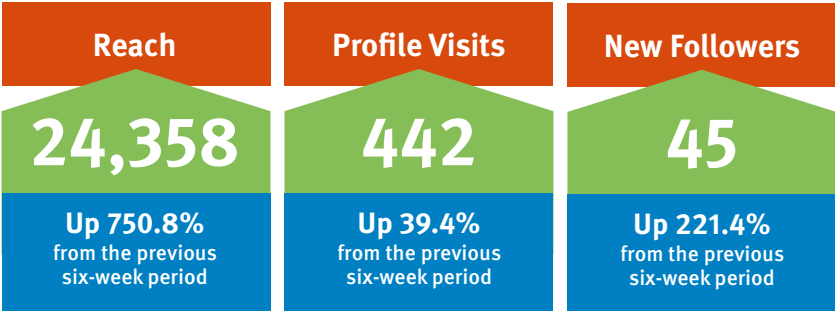
Reflections on this approach highlight a number of important points for the festival. In terms of social media, it was found that posts were more successful if they are fun, ad-hoc or ‘behind-the-scenes’ materials rather than just promotional posts. In terms of ticket sales, the festival team feel that they need more confidence that registrations will increase closer to the time and therefore time should be spent on promoting events that do not require registration to ensure that they are well attended.

Other points to consider include a need to push harder and earlier for contributors to promote their events to their own audiences, including video messages, for which scripts can be written. In this way, this uses the secondary networks of the festival to promote the events and supports in creating a broader reach of audiences.

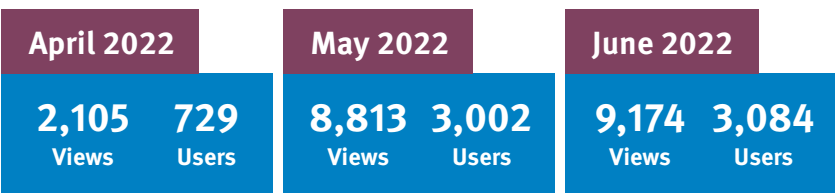
Instagram (from the period 01/05/22 –13/06/22)



Facebook (from the period 01/05/22 – 13/06/22)



Website Hits



Lastly, it would have been beneficial to set up an official online marketing toolkit for partner organisations (e.g., Celebration Day stall holders) with additional advice for those who may struggle with digital literacy. Therefore, future festival planning could instigate more training and support for partners and contributors and take a more networked approach to marketing where some agency in the process is deferred to partners and this is distributed across the community of collaborators for the festival.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the case study analysis in this report, the following conclusions can be made:

1. Climate Awareness and Action

In line with this year's festival theme, one of the core outcomes of this festival was to raise awareness and action through history. The findings of this report show that the festival was successful in achieving this aim with 72% of respondents to the feedback forms noting that they will take some form of action after visiting the festival. This included lifestyle changes such as eating a more vegetarian diet and using less plastic and even a teacher being inspired to add climate change to the curricula. However, responses also indicate that 38% of visitors travelled by car which suggests that the festival team could do more in promoting alternative public transport routes to the different venues around the city.

Nevertheless, the history and climate change theme was a unique approach to exploring this well discussed topic and was shown to create a stronger sense of relevancy to visitors who attended the festival.

Leading up to the festival Manchester Histories also put in place its own environmental policy and action plan to positively tackle climate change in line with Manchester's aim to become a zero-carbon city by 2038 or before. All staff received Carbon Literacy Training and set personal and organisational pledges to reduce carbon footprint. Manchester Histories Festival used sustainable resources wherever possible. It put in place a no meat, no plastics policy, used local goods and services, designed cardboard banners and printed on recycled paper by an eco-friendly printing company.

2. Widening Access to Local History

One of key aims of Manchester Histories is to provide access to local history through reaching new audiences. This year was no exception and the festival focused on working with different partners and spaces around Greater Manchester. This has meant that the events available were more localised and provided richer content than just focusing on the city of Manchester. For example, partnering with Gallery Oldham offered visitors an opportunity to learn about how climate has changed within this area of Manchester with detailed information provided by the local Microscopical Society.

The range of content available has also shown to be impactful in providing access. Talks and panels provided more detailed information and discussion whilst performances and collaborative works provided a way to present the complex message on climate and history in a more informal and accessible approach. Indeed, as one audience member noted with regard to 'Climate Connections' at Gallery Oldham, taking a more community-led focus can 'be much more powerful than a PhD discussion'.

Geographically, however, visitors mostly lived in Greater Manchester with a large proportion living in Central and South of Manchester, which suggests that the festival has not managed to achieve equally distributed access to history across the Greater Manchester region (See page 31 – **Recommendations**).

3. A Sense of Community

Building a sense of community by connecting people through history is an important aim for Manchester Histories. Informal and social events such as the Opening Night and Celebration Day played an important part in creating this sense of community as people can come together, socialise, and learn about the history and cultural organisations in the area. This was also highlighted as an important aspect for groups who set up stalls at these events. As such, the festival acts as an important cultural mediator for potential collaborations between the smaller organisations in the region.

Both the Opening Night and the Celebration Day also provide the space for voices often marginalised or forgotten in cultural exchange. Indeed, projects such as Gorton Youth Zone showcase how smaller funded projects can create powerful messages that also support young people in developing social, performance, and musical skills and, again, Manchester Histories is a key mediator in this process.

Angel Meadow Park was also a significant aspect to harnessing a sense of community as it provided an informal learning environment that had a social atmosphere on Saturday. Findings indicate that this was a valuable aspect to the festival, and one that the organisation should continue to utilise. However, all three of these events had modest size audiences, which suggests that there could be further improvement in how these events are promoted.

4. Resilience

A final and important aim for the festival is to consider how to build resilience for the future. This year's festival was successful in preparing the organisation for a more sustainable future. In the first instance, the Community Engagement Manager was trained in carbon literacy skills. This was important for the festival and for training the volunteers to chat with visitors. However, with the ever increasing climate crisis, this training will also be important for future events and will support the festival in ensuring that all future festivals continue with a sustainability focus that fits and links with current policies and targets for a zero carbon future.

Partnerships and consultation are also integral to creating a resilient and sustainable future for the organisation. The festival achieved this through their different steering groups which supported Manchester Histories in developing and delivering a festival that considers a wider range of contributors and aims to attract a much broader audience. Likewise, partnerships such as working with Gorton Youth Zone, or Crossing Footprints enables the festival to be more relevant to its surrounding audiences.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions of this report, the evaluator offers the following recommendations:

1. Specific Partnerships

As indicated in the conclusion of this report, the North of Manchester had the lowest rate of visitors to the festival which suggests that the festival could focus more attention on developing partnerships in the north of the region. Projects such as RECLAIM and the partnership with Gallery Oldham already show the team developing these connections which could be further cultivated over the next couple of years. But more specific partnerships from across the region for the festival could also create a more networked approach for the festival where a broader range of events can be offered but in the context of the shared values of Manchester Histories.

This idea of a networked approach was also noted in regard to the festival's marketing, it refers to encouraging partners and communities associated with the organisation to gain more agency in the production and marketing of the festival. In doing so, the festival takes a more collaborative approach and benefits from a wider network across Greater Manchester.

2. Public Transport

The use of venues such as Angel Meadow Park and Manchester Monastery encouraged visitors to explore areas of Manchester that are outside of the city centre. However, at the same time, using such venues means that there is less serendipitous footfall to these events which requires more advertising and promotion of these venues.

Respondents to the feedback survey indicated that they felt more promotion of the events was needed in general. In addition, others mentioned that access to information regarding directions and public transport would have been helpful. In taking these points together, one recommendation would be to provide further information about the venues including transport information in the programme of the festival. The festival could also consider contacting Stagecoach, First Bus, and Metrolink to promote the festival on public transport routes to the venues.

3. Alternative Marketing Strategies

To support more serendipitous footfall, further marketing and promotion could be placed in and around the city centre notifying of the events taking place in venues such as Angel Meadow Park, particularly on the Saturday when the city centre has high footfall. In addition, targeted online marketing could be used to attract alternative audiences to the festival. For example, the festival could focus some of its marketing on the food and drink and the general atmosphere at Angel Meadow Park through collaborating with popular Manchester food accounts on Instagram such as EatsMCR and ManchesterFinest which would likely draw in a younger range of visitors to the park, and in turn to the events happening on the day.

4. Venue Setup

Feedback from some artists and visitors suggest that venue set up could be improved. For example, acoustics were noted to be an issue during one talk at Gallery Oldham. To address this, the festival could consider providing a sound system and technical support to partners. Similarly, one performance group highlighted problems with their setup and felt it was not appropriate for their needs. Discussion with artists on venue decisions and technical setup would also help to mitigate these kinds of issues in the future.

5. Capacity

Manchester Histories has a small team, with only one full time and four part time staff members. It also relies heavily on employing freelancers to support festival activity such as creative producers, film makers, photographers, designers and PR expertise. Whilst the team do an incredible job in delivering the festival, it is recommended that a dedicated festival team with a full time marketing person should be considered for future festivals so that the festival can reach its ambitions to grow and diversify its audience reach.

Furthermore, the festival has a limited budget, particularly, around marketing and the team has to seek further funding to support any engagement activity which is time consuming, competitive, and growing in difficulty with the dwindling public funding available due to cuts to arts and cultural budgets across the sector. The CEO and board members are keen to keep this festival free to access but in future they may wish to consider offering more paid ticketing events to create a more sustainable financial business model. To ensure that these paid events remain accessible to a wide number of visitors, the team will consider using a 'Pay-What-You-Want' model to all events to allow visitors to choose to pay what they feel they are able to. Whilst this kind of approach is riskier due to 'free-riding', it shows a recognition of the current economic crisis that visitors will be in. Likewise, research indicates that it can be a profitable approach when marginal costs are low and social preferences are considered (i.e. considering why someone wants to attend the event in the first place).

FUNDING

The festival had a mixed income stream consisting of public funding, grants, ticket donations, stall holder fees, private sector, and in-kind support from partners at each of the venues.

This year saw an increase in budget expenditure due to inflation and procuring goods and services that aligned with Manchester Histories new environmental policy of buying goods that are non plastic, sustainable, local, ethical, and support the reduction of CO2.

INCOME

Neighbourhood Investment Fund Manchester City Council Deansgate/Piccadilly/Gorton Wards	13,000
Greater Manchester Combined Authority	13,500
University of Manchester	10,000
Culture Recovery Fund	9,600
National Lottery Community Fund Together For Our Planet	9,700
Manchester Metropolitan University	4,000
Far East Consortium	2,500
Granada Foundation	2,000
Ticket Donations & Stall Holder Fees	1,122
Earned Income	3,297
Unicorn	750

See Chao, Fernandez, & Nahata (2015) ‘Pay-What-You-Want Pricing: Can it be profitable?’ Journal of Behavioural and Experimental Economics 57, pp 176-185; Gerpott (2017) ‘Pay-What-You-Want Pricing: An integrative review of the empirical research literature’ Management Science Letters 7(1), pp35-62

TOTAL	69,469
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EXPENDITURE

	AMOUNT
Artists Fees	15,220
Professional Fees	21,159
Communications/Marketing/Promotion	15,852
Event Equipment	3,725
Operations and other costs	9,988
Volunteer/Particpants/Event Refreshments/Travel	3,525
TOTAL	69,469

The above does not include staff time for the project team and in-kind contribution, which is estimated to the value of **£46,000**.

SNAPSHOT OF ENGAGEMENT

AUDIENCE and PARTICIPANTS

Audience	19442
Participation	334
Performers	90
Artists	38
Live online audience	355
On-demand audience	1905
TOTAL	22,164

WEBSITE

Views	20,092
Users	6,815

PRESS COVERAGE

Press Releases	8
Press coverage articles including Manchester Evening News, Creative Tourist, About Manchester, Big Issue, Oldham Times, Manchester Wire and I Love Manchester.	34
BBC Radio Manchester interviews	3
That’s Manchester TV broadcasts	2
Local radio broadcasts	3

AUDIENCE REACH (Events)

Events	54
Histories & Heritage Stall Holders	55
Live Theatre Performances	3
Live music Performances	3
Exhibitions	4



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Festival Team: Karen Shannon, Charlie Booth, Janine Hague, Ted Harris, Naomi Whitman, John Leatherbarrow, Frances Liddell. Case study contributions from festival team.

Manchester Histories Board of Trustees: Hannah Barker (Chair) Melanie Tebbutt, John Williams, Heather Shore, Andrew Pattison, Kirsty Hutchison, Rob Higginson, Charlotte Wildman, Jahmal Williams-Thomas, Catherine Fletcher.

Manchester Histories Patrons: Michael Wood and David Olusogo.

Festival Steering Group: Chaired by Manchester Histories CEO and supported by festival team. Simon Curtis: Cultural Climate Consultant & Convenor of GMAST, Sean Baggerly: Principal Arts & Heritage Officer Oldham, Chloe Jefferies: Climate Emergency Manchester, Jenna Ashton: Artist, curator, and Lecturer in Heritage Studies, at the Institute for Cultural Practices, University of Manchester, Cazz Ward: Community activist & local resident, Tasha Downing: Artist and young climate activist, Rebecca Kirkland: Community Liaison Manager for FEC Manchester, Steve Garnet: Event Specialist Manchester City Council, John Mouncey: Visitor Services Manager Manchester City Council, Dorothee Devouge: Service Development Coordinator Libraries, Galleries and Culture Manchester City Council, Chloe Gaughan: Marketing Manager Solid Ground, Colette Farrugia: Operations Director Solid Ground, Naomi Whitman: Freelance Creative Producer Manchester Histories.

Festival Communications Group: Fido PR – Laura Sullivan & Clare Short, Creative Manchester, Manchester City Council, Solid Ground Chole Gaughan, Colette Farrugia, Georgia Maguire, Sustainable Futures. University of Manchester.

Volunteers: Marie Earley, Mu-Mei Chou, Kevin Murphy, Elizabeth L, Shayna Dramasandhi, Lu Wei Tan, Johanna Schnug, Yayuan Wen, Suzie Cloves, Denise Cheung, Margarete Lee-Chapman, Lai Ying (Angela) Li, William Haworth, Christine Corrigan, Karenza Blenkinsop, Peter Holmes, Niamh Loftus, Rachel Foster, Louise Forbes, Maralyn Tohill, Annaelle Sourisseau, Laura Earnshaw, Sarah Taylor, Awurama Mireku, Poppy Germaine Coelho, Charlotte Peters Rock, Mark Simmons, Jo Neri, John Carpenter, Alice Hebdon, Adam Kilkenny, Helen Eden, Alex McKay, Mike Broomhead, Rachael Gilbert, Lamya Luqman.

Media/Streaming Team: Ricardo Vilela – Sagitta Media, Maxim Shannon, Laura Vilela, Jake Ruding.

Design & illustration: Imagine.

Photography/Film Crew: Jonathan Keenan Photography, Belle Vue Productions, Slant Media, Kenawa Films, Jahmal Williams-Thomas.

TV/Radio: ALL FM, BBC Radio Manchester, That’s Manchester TV, North Manchester FM.

Partners: Manchester City Council, University of Manchester, Manchester Metropolitan University, Galley Oldham, The Manchester Monastery Gorton, Solid Ground.

Evaluation: Manchester Histories employed Dr. Frances Liddell to act as an independent freelance evaluator for the festival to enhance the quality and credibility of this evaluation report, also to contribute to organisational transparency and the future development of the festival.

Ecolibrium: We were delighted to have partnered with ecolibrium, a live events industry response to the climate crisis, taking action to reduce travel impacts and invest in climate solutions.

A special thanks to the venues and their staff who hosted the festival: Manchester Central Library, The Manchester Monastery Gorton, Gallery Oldham, Angel Meadow Park.

Collaborators & Contributors: Micheal Wood, Hannah Barker, David Adetayo Olusoga, Creative Manchester, Manchester College Openshaw, Manchester Youth Council, Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People, Archives+, Crossing Footprints, Manchester Camerata, Hide Out Youth Zone, North West Film Archive, RECLAIM/Bolton at Home, Walk the Plank, Caroline Steel, The Vegetarian Society, Unicorn Groceries, Groundwork, Moodswings, Manchester Foodbank, Friends of Angel Meadow Park, Manchester Urban Diggers, Manchester Tour Guides – Sibby and Emma Fox, Manchester City Council Park Rangers, Charlotte Peters-Rock, Harp and a Monkey Emmanuella Yogolelo and Band, Roma Havers, GMAST, Alison Criddle, Ergon Theatre, Ayna Arts, Paul Fitzgerald, Fulbrite UK, Jonathan Purkis, David Whyte, Brian Groom, Celeste Hicks, Sustainable Futures at University of Manchester, Playing Out, Dr Jenna Ashton, Dr Aditya Ramesh, Ian Miller, Dr Mike Nevell, Manchester Green Bees Young Peoples’ Assembly, Dr Carlos Van Tongeren, Dr Sophia Tipaldou, Dr Alexander Gardner-McTaggot, Jackie Haynes, Kooj Chuhan, Manchester Digital Music Archive, Climate Emergency Manchester, Yo-CLI Young Climate Imagineries, Seven Arches Publishing, Just Stop Oil, Prof Vladimir Jankovic, Prof Matthew Paterson, Prof Steven Scott Bottoms, PROTECTnmf, Zero Carbon Cities, Louise Wallwein, Tasha Down, Billie Meredith, Young Identity, Manchester International Roots Orchestra, Emelia Hew, Venture Arts, Gorton Youth Voices, Gorton Visual Arts, Gorton Voice Choir, Valery Touchet, Kerin Morris (Che3kz), Nick Farrimond, Sean Lovell, Seventh Sense Theatre, The Sanctuary, Cllr Lufther Rahman, The Nationwide Cycling Academy, ‘For Those Who are to Come’, Eduardo Carvalho and Vanessa Gabriel-Robinson, Northern Roots, Community Arts North West.

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Also, to all the people who attended the festival as audiences members both in person and online, you made it special and Manchester Histories hopes to see everyone again in 2024.

Appendix A

We Only Have One Planet

Lyrics:
Hideout Youth Zone Voices
Group, Layfullstop, Aine Molines
(Manchester Camerata)

Oxygen means survival
Factories produce smoke
Pollution is our rival
And gas can make you choke.
People and animals dying
Fires at every turn
Trees in the wind flying
Nature is being burnt (burnt, burnt)

We only have one planet
We only have one chance
For future generations
Be prepared in advance!

Why don't you give, give, give?
As the time tick, tick, ticks
We don't have long
Our world is one.

Well you've gotta be mindful
You've gotta be self-alert
You have to look around you
Can't bury your head in the dirt
Recognising what's wrong
And how to make it right
Don't think that all you can do
Is buy a bag for life (life, life)

We only have one planet
We only have one chance
For future generations
Be prepared in advance!

Why don't you give, give, give?
As the time tick, tick, ticks
We don't have long
OUR WORLD IS ONE!

Take action now.
We only have one world.

Funder and Supporters

Manchester Histories Festival would not be possible without the support of our funders.
Thank you for your continued passion and commitment.



The information in this report was correct at the time of publishing. We apologise for any errors or omissions. This report is printed on recycled paper by an eco-friendly printing company.

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Emelia Hewitt
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Back cover image:

"For those who are to come"

Exhibition curated by
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