

Event report

Event title: Dursley Town Festival – **Festival Day**
Date: Saturday 17th July 2010
Location: Dursley Recreation Ground
Staff: Ann Wheeler, Jane McKerron, Mandy Bailey, Viv Jones, Helen Jenkins, Zac McKerron, Caron Whitlock.
Volunteers: Angie Fisher, Maureen Jarrett, Stuart Heffernan, Paul Ayland, John Wheeler, Malcolm Jones, Lorna Smith.
Partners: Dursley Education Centre.

Aim of event: This event was on the final day of the Dursley Town Festival 2010 – four days of entertainment, fun and activities for all ages. It is one of the main opportunities for GL11 to showcase its community work, and an excellent opportunity to network with other local organisations – and most importantly to meet new people. This collective demonstration of what is available locally to the community is essential to generate new learners, volunteers, support local businesses, and raise the profile of our work and that of our partner organisations, to the residents of Dursley, Cam, surrounding area and much further afield .

Preparation: The organisation of the DTF is co-ordinated by a voluntary committee.

An immense amount of planning is required in order to pull everything together, and many local organisations were actively involved and offered a varied and enjoyable programme. The Festival activities were:

At the Festival event, GL11 staff, volunteers and family members arrived at the ground from 9.30 a.m. and erected one large party tent.

The Festival started with the procession at 12.30 p.m. walking through Dursley to the Recreation Ground where judging took place for the best entry in the procession. This was the launch for the afternoon and evening's events. There were 7 entries in this year's procession compared to 3 entries in 2009, which is a very encouraging and positive indication of the success of the marketing of the event throughout the year.

Format: The theme of this year's procession was the Circus and GL11 was represented by staff, family members, volunteers and members of the Toddler group who dressed in a variety of ways: as ring masters, clowns, animals - and staff pulled a cage full of toy animals.

Our volunteers organised and ran a Teddies Stall as a fundraising activity – which proved very popular throughout the afternoon. Our information stand drew a lot of attention and was a prompt for much discussion with local people interested in finding out about our work. With four laptops available we were able to promote GL11's status as a UK Online Centre – this allows us to support people who have no or little knowledge of computers into becoming confident internet users, with knowledge and skills in how to e-mail and shop/bank online.

On many occasions we find that residents know our name “GL11”, but do not know what we do – so these community events really highlight the importance of one to one contact. By the end of the day, we have a list of potential students, and people wanting to find out more about our work – very successful.

GL11’s Bike Shed was represented with young people, supported by Zac, able to learn basic skills in bike maintenance – including mending punctures. This was a good chance to promote the Bike Shed which is our weekly drop-in group, on Wednesdays from 4-6 p.m.

Evaluation: This was a long day, but made easier by the collective contribution of our staff, volunteers, family and friends. GL11 is a recognisable ‘brand’ by many within the community, but not all are aware of the work we do, and are very surprised at the range of courses, drop-ins and activities we provide for all age groups. The event offered us an opportunity to speak directly to about 60 residents, but to be highly visible and indirectly engage with in excess of 300.

Ann Wheeler
Project Manager
July 2010