

Report of the Assistant Director (Lifelong Learning and Culture)

THE GF400 CELEBRATIONS

Purpose of Report

1. The Shadow Executive has requested a report back on the GF400 celebrations that took place in November, 2005.

Background

2. The idea for the GF400 celebrations originated with [York@Large](#) during 2004. York@Large felt that the 400th anniversary of the Gunpowder Plot was something that should be marked in the birth place of Guy Fawkes and decided that this should be one of its headline events for 2005 within the City of Festivals initiative.
3. A steering group and a marketing group were formed by York@Large to take the preparations forward and a varied programme of events was put together linked to the Renaissance Project's public illuminations programme that was taking place. Events included:
 - ❖ St Peter's School – *The Gunpowder Plotters Ball*
 - ❖ Barley Hall – Guy Fawkes weekend
 - ❖ Barley Hall – *A Jacobean Evening*
 - ❖ City Centre – Illuminating the City: creative lighting schemes
 - ❖ Guy Fawkes trail by Yorkwalk
 - ❖ St Peter's School – *Fireworks, Principles and Practices*, an explosive public lecture
 - ❖ St Michael-le-Belfrey – Gunpowder Workshop for York's primary school children
 - ❖ *Remember, Remember . . . The Tragedy of the Gunpowder Terror*, a new play from Riding Lights Theatre
 - ❖ York Dungeon – Coming face-to-face with Guy Fawkes
 - ❖ York St John Fountains Lecture Theatre – *reflections on Guy Fawkes: religion and politics revisited* with Professor Mary Hickman
 - ❖ National Centre for Early Music – *Ye Traitors All: Music from the time of the Gunpowder Plot*.
 - ❖ St Peter's School - *The Desperate Remedy: Henry Gresham and the Gunpowder Plot*
 - ❖ St William's College - *Remember, Remember the 5th of November* – a public lecture by Professor James Sharpe,

- ❖ St Peter's School - *Gunpowder Plot Festival Concert*,
- ❖ Guy Fawkes 400 – City Centre
- ❖ St Michael-le-Belfrey - Yorkshire Bach Choir: *Gunpowder, Treason & Plot*
- ❖ English Heritage at Clifford's Tower –the story of the 1605 traitors

4. Funding obtained was: £
- ❖ Illuminate Yorkshire project (Yorkshire Forward funded) 20,000
 - ❖ Existing Council budgets 12,000
 - ❖ Urban Cultural Programme 40,000

5. This budget was spent as follows: £
- ❖ Lighting 32,000
 - ❖ Marketing activity 1,800
 - ❖ 5 Nov. street entertainment 4,600
 - ❖ 5 Nov. Bells and Brass 9,100
 - ❖ 5 Nov. fireworks 20,000
 - ❖ 5 Nov. security 2,400
 - ❖ Other 2,100

6. A review of the various events is attached at Annex 1. In terms of economic impact the total spend in the city is estimated at £2m.

5 November: The City Centre

7. The programme for the day was set out in a leaflet (attached at Annex 2). The centre piece was the Bells, Brass and Percussion Symphony accompanied by four hours of street entertainment. A 15 minute skyline firework display was included in the programme advertised as being visible from most points around the city and beyond.
8. A review of learning points from the event (a version of that originally produced for the Safety Advisory Group) is attached at Annex 3.
9. A copy of the Events Manual and all the comprehensive risk assessments for each element of the day's events has previously been provided to the Shadow Executive.

Conclusion

10. The GF400 celebrations should be seen in their appropriate context as a week long programme of events. This was never planned or advertised as a substitute for a fireworks display. The decision not to stage a fireworks display was informed by past experience of:
- ❖ an Evening Press campaign against the annual display
 - ❖ public consultation which came out against the city's display
 - ❖ some disappointing displays
 - ❖ significant logistical difficulties in staging displays
 - ❖ mounting cost (£70k 10 years ago)

Recommendations

11. The Shadow Executive is asked to:
 - ❖ Note the report, and
 - ❖ Offer advice on whether the city should seek to mount similar events in future which might attract large numbers of people into the city centre

Annexes:

1. Review of Events
2. Leaflet
3. Review of learning points

Contact Details

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