Wantage Summer Festival introduction for leaders

This is a short document outlining core activities involved in running of the Wantage Summer Festival. The Festival has over 20 years of history and since 2015 is run by a small team with two executive members who spend their voluntary time on the following tasks listed below.

Core Festival activities:
- Registrations of events
- Creation of events on the Festival website
- Printed programme design
- Printed programme distribution
- Promotion and marketing of events and the Festival during its annual cycle

Additional key activities:
- Community engagement
- Liaison with the funding organisations
- Governance
- Finance
- Planning and processes (back office)
- Website, social media and MailChimp newsletter management

In the following pages, we have listed the tasks for the core activities and other useful information.
+roadmap explained
+key contacts
+links and logins

All accompanying documentation is available on Google Documents & on a hard drive.

WANTAGE
SUMMER FESTIVAL

Core Festival Activities

Registrations of events
Registration of events happens only online to allow easy and fast management of submissions. We had paper forms in the past and they were illegible. Only one organisation was using those and did move to the online form easily. We are using Wordpress with forms plugin which allows the creation of new forms by copying the old ones. It also allows collection of all submitted data in one central .xls spreadsheet which speeds up the process of reporting to the Committee and preparing information for the printed Programme.
Sample registration page is here: http://www.wantagesummerfestival.com/registerfor2017/ - it can be used as a template.
Once a submission is received an automated email arrived at our central Gmail email address so we can follow it up with a short email message to the organiser just to confirm that we have received their registration.

Creation of events on the Festival website
Once an event is registered we have all the data we need to create it online - we are using a calendar of events plugin and a lot of venues and events can be copied from the past too. It's very easy to use.

Printed programme design
We have ensured that the current programme design file does not contain complicated visuals (colours on the borders, for instance) so it can be prepared on any Mac computer and sent to the printer easily. The current programme design contains all the relevant sections and can be adjusted it needed - it works pretty much like a Word Document. It has to be completed on a Mac though as it allows more professional look of the final design.
Information for the programme can be collected from registrations (an .xls spreadsheet downloaded from the website). Once a draft is ready, we recommend sending it out to all event organisers for proofreading, before finalising it for the print - some details might change last minute.

Core Festival Activities

Printed programme distribution
WSF programme goes to print with Instantprint stapled booklets (quick delivery and lowest prices but also good support if we are not designers)> https://www.instantprint.co.uk/. We order 5000 copies. We distribute the programme to all core town and the area locations starting with the Vale & Downland Museum first (one round of car trip around the villages should be enough, core town locations might need a top up later, some shops might ask for copies too). There are local organisations that have always supported the Festival and expect the programme: the Museum, the Beacon, Wantage Library, the Mix, Madhatter's Shop, King Alfred's Head. But we recommend the distribution to all shops in the Market Place, all cafes, hairdressers, garden centres and village shops in the area at least - all can be completed in one afternoon. Some of our organisers and other volunteers are happy to help with that, but core team needs to ensure the programme reaches important location. The door to door drop off was considered but we feared the backlash and waste of paper.

Promotion and marketing of events and the Festival during its annual cycle - we promote the events and the Festival through the following channels:
- Website - always needs to be up to date and we also recommend using blog as a way of documenting the work of the team, press coverage and highlights from events (newsletter copy is good as a blog post too)
- Newsletter - we have two core audiences: media and everyone else but the general list also has to contain all media outlets (this way they receive two emails) and all past and new event organisers as it serves as our central means of communication. Once a newsletter goes out on a Thursday 9 am we often receive a follow-up call from media for more details. Email responses from people to the newsletter go to our central email address. We send out a monthly newsletter during the year and weekly news during the Festival.
- Social media - we have core social media channels and we use them mainly around the Festival but we schedule 1-2 post for each month to keep them active.
- Printed assets - we have a banner for the Museum and have in the past printed Christmas cards, business cards (https://www.moo.com/uk/products/minicards.html), moo.co.uk small sticker books (https://www.moo.com/uk/products/stickerbooks.html) and very popular badges (http://www.awesomemerchandise.com/25mm-badge-box).

Additional key activities

Community engagement

Staying in touch with the local community is crucial to the success of the Festival. It is important to maintain the monthly newsletter but also be involved in local events, talk about the Festival, occasionally host an open meeting or feedback meeting. There will always be key individuals involved in those events and meetings so it's important to keep them involved in the Festival - all around the year. The easiest way to do so it to re-share the work of others online for example.

Liaison with the funding organisations

We are in a close relationship with the Wantage Town Council all throughout the year and visit their meetings twice a year. We also invite the Mayor of Wantage and the Town Counsellors to our opening event or other key events. We invite a representative of the Vale Council to those events too.

Governance

We have identified - with the help of past organisers and the community - the goals and values of the Festival to ensure that everyone's voice is included. There was a long discussion about whether the Festival should be closed and of high quality or open and inclusive. Majority of our stakeholders voted to keep it open. Based on that, we have put in place all core legal policies: the Constitution and a CRM policy (really important for transparency). We have also prepared a general Media pack which can be used to explain the goals of the Festival. Any future changes of those need to be agreed by the Committee in consultation with the funding bodies and the community.

Additional key activities

Finance

We have a healthy balance in the bank. We are expected to secure funding always at least one year ahead so that the funding organisations can support us with an additional budget for the following years.

We currently bank with the TSB Bank based the Market Place, Wantage. We have experienced poor support and complicated processes with them, so it might be a good idea to change banks. The community account requires two signatories.

We receive funding from two sources - both of which need to be equally acknowledged in all our internal and public communication. We receive a lot of hands-on support from the Wantage Town Council too.

Planning and processes (back office)

We have worked predominantly remotely and worked our processes that don't depend on one particular person. This means that all documents are saved in Google Documents (backed up on a dedicated hard drive) and can be accessed via our central gmail account. We strongly recommend using that as in the past we have experienced communication which was meant to be private but sent to Festival account. Central account helps to maintain healthy boundaries and managed any possible miscommunication. We have collected and organised all past programmes, contacts and processes in relevant spreadsheets but also organised it all into folders for easy access.

We have created visual templates too: programme template, presentations, and pdf templates, visual templates on canva.com. So no new design is required.

Website, social media and MailChimp newsletter management

All social media channels, website forms, and newsletter/MailChimp account are linked to that gmail account - this allows easy and fast coordination. We have created templates for newsletters on MailChimp. Wordpress allows usage of current pages but also any additional expansion - although we strongly recommend using the white look of the page to follow the design of the programme. We have agreed on Lato font and orange/grey/green colours - it keeps our branding modern, fresh and strong. We use it all across the channels, if possible.

ROADMAP

September:
REVIEW & PLANNING

WSF Committee
Meeting, feedback,
planning next year

October:
FUNDING

Funding
Applications

November:
RESTING

NO ACTIVITY

February:
**REGISTRATIONS
& SPONSORS**

Registrations,
sponsor applications

January:
**REGISTRATIONS
& SPONSORS**

Registrations,
sponsor applications

December:
**AGM
& REGISTRATIONS**

AGM, registrations open
at Dickensian Eve

March:
PROGRAMME

Programme design,
WSF Committee
Meeting

April:
PROMOTION

WSF Programme
print & distribution,
WSF Promotion

May:
ONLINE EVENTS

Registrations for
events promoted
only online close
WSF Promotion

AUGUST:
RESTING

NO ACTIVITY

July:
**WANTAGE SUMMER
FESTIVAL**

WSF events,
Digital Journalists work

June:
**WANTAGE SUMMER
FESTIVAL**

WSF events,
Digital Journalists work
WSF Committee Meeting

Wantage Summer Festival roadmap explained

This section contains the annual cycle of the Festival explained visually.
Please see below the explanation of each stage of this cycle (starts in September).
Please also refer to the annual roadmap planner in the relevant spreadsheet on WSF drive

- September - WSF Committee meeting to sum up the Festival, collecting feedback (online or by meeting all organisers in an open meeting - King Alfred's Pub are always happy to host it), publishing feedback on the website, planning approach to the following year, media and organisers need to receive the feedback via monthly newsletter, social media posts/visuals can now be created and scheduled for all upcoming months to lead to the following summer
- October - time for funding applications: Wantage Town Council (Bill Faulkner) asks for feedback in their meeting and expects feedback on this year but also plans for the following year; The Vale of White Horse Council just ask for online application to be completed; newsletter can contain information about those applications and/or highlights from summer, visuals for the following year might need to be updated - for example the roadmap.
- November - time off to the team, Festival is resting
- December - AGM and Committee meeting, registrations open at the time of the Dickensian Evening so the online form for those needs to be ready before 1 December (a template is available on the Wordpress dashboard, or the old form can be used, a Wordpress page might need to be created for it and added to the main website menu), newsletter and social media announcements are a must but printing Christmas Card with Wishes and note about the registrations is also a good idea - Dickensian Evening is a perfect time to give it out
- January - registrations are open and some event organisers might need help with form details, the current registration process means that a form is submitted online and sent to us so we need to confirm it by a short email to the organisers just to let them know that we have received it. The organisers might wish to update event details later, which is possible, but they need to be aware of the deadline of details for the print so we always add their emails to the newsletter. (We do not email them more than once). We might also look for Festival sponsors this month - if time is available. Newsletter needs to contain prompt for new registrations, reminder of deadlines and focus for the year for the press.
- February - the work continues - we are managing registrations and sponsors, not to forget about the monthly newsletter too, usually the end of this month is the deadline for print details so it needs to be stressed in all public communication.

Wantage Summer Festival roadmap explained

- March - WSF Committee is meeting again to discuss the registered events and what else is needed for this summer, to look through the data (text and visuals) for the programme; WSF programme is then prepared for print - we have all branding and design of the document in place so it does not need a professional designer, but it does require access to a Mac computer to input text and update visuals. Newsletter needs to remind readers and media that printed programme registrations are closed but online registrations are still open for a month to allow last minute ideas (those need an online event to be created on our website).

- April - WSF programme goes to print with Instantprint stapled booklets (quick delivery and lowest prices but also good support if we are not designers)> https://www.instantprint.co.uk/. This month we distribute the programme to all core town and the area locations starting with the Vale & Downland Museum first (one round of car trip around the villages should be enough, core town locations might need a top up later, some shops might ask for copies too). Museum is always happy to display the banners too. Newsletter and online promotion of events starts - it's recommended to schedule social media posts on Hootsuite in advance of each event now, not later (prepare 3-4 posts on each event).

- May - the online registration of events and their creation on the website ends, we focus on promotion and additional programme distribution if needed. Newsletter needs to contain highlights of summer events. This is also the time when we have all events online so we like to prepare weekly Festival newsletters with a list of those (it can be easily copied from the digital version of our programme, so it is not a lot of work) - we then schedule the newsletter for Thursdays of the Festival - our readers like a weekly reminder of what's on that week. Templates for that are on MailChimp.com

- June - WSF events are on, we try to go to a few and take photos but Wanted Camera Club like to help us to; Digital Journalism Programme will not continue; no need for monthly news as we have weekly newsletters.

- July - as above, WSF Committee meeting is also needed, but might happen around one of the Festival events; weekly newsletters go out.

- August - no activity, we are resting but we are watching the web for stories from our events, starting to collect feedback, a thank you newsletter might be a good gesture.