

Midlothian Science Festival

AGM 6 February 2014

Report from the Chair

The Past

Midlothian Science Festival started in 2012 thanks to the enthusiasm and dedication of a small group of people who had the vision and determination to make a science festival happen in Midlothian against all the odds. The festival ran for a week from 13th – 21st of October with 1000 people attending just over 30 events.

The Present

In 2013 the Midlothian Science Festival really took off and became a contender in the Scottish science festivals arena.

In July it was awarded charitable status and became a company limited by guarantee which allowed us to apply for a wider range of funding opportunities.

The festival applied for a number of funding grants and sponsorships but was unsuccessful in the following:

Tyne & Esk Leader Plus, Network Rail, The Robertson Trust

A new website was commissioned and built to cope with the increased functionality and demand required by a festival rapidly growing into maturity.

The second Midlothian Science Festival took place from 5 – 20th October with 6,000 people attending just over 70 events which was a magnificent achievement.

I would like to take this opportunity to formally thank all our sponsors and partners for their generosity in providing both financial support and help in kind. They are all listed in the official evaluation report which will be available on the Midlothian Science Festival website www.midlothiansciencefestival.com

The evaluation report provides a detailed analysis of the second festival outlining events, partners, finance and feedback from participants. I would like to thank Dr Iona Beange for compiling a well structured, articulate and helpful document.

The Future

Midlothian Science Festival

The future for the Festival is very positive and I'm pleased to say that £12,000 funding has been secured for 2014 from the Scottish Government Science Festivals Funding for two exciting new projects which tie in with 2014 Homecoming Year. These projects will run throughout 2014 in association with Heriot Watt University, Orkney Science Festival, Dunbar Science Festival and Dundee Science Festival.

1) Scotland's Food Science Technology Roadshow – *led by Midlothian Science Festival*

Food fairs, a competition and a campaign that will showcase current food and drink research at Heriot Watt University, alongside Scottish food and drink providers and producers.

This will take place at Orkney Science Festival in September, Midlothian Science Festival in October and Dundee Science Festival in November 2014. The Public Engagement Co-ordinators at Heriot Watt Engage will facilitate linkages between the festivals and current research scientists.

2) The Great Big Science Read - *led by Edinburgh International Science Festival.*

a) National campaign focusing on Scottish celebrities, scientists, artists and designers to encourage people across Scotland to try a book with a science twist.

b) Author interviews, readings, competitions and events

These will take place at Dunbar Science Festival (March), Edinburgh International Science Festival (April) and Midlothian Science Festival (October)

Darwin Trust

£6,000 for three years

WT-ISSF (Wellcome Trust, Institutional Strategic Fund)

£12,000 for salary of a person to build relationships between University and Midlothian Science Festival events.

Conclusion

Midlothian Science Festival is an important local festival which engages local people of all ages in scientific events and activities. It highlights the tremendous contribution Midlothian companies and higher education establishments have made and are making to the development of scientific discovery and financial prosperity for the benefit of all.

Midlothian Science Festival

The **Key Messages** of the festival are:

- Science is everywhere and is for everyone – regardless of age or background
- Science and technology is a key part of Midlothian’s cultural identity and infuses into all areas including our natural and historic environment, our food and drink, our health care and sporting achievements, and our creative arts
- Midlothian has rich history of science and technology and continues to be a world leader in this field
- There are lots of career opportunities within science and technology in Midlothian
- Our local libraries are a key location for accessing science resources throughout the year.

I started by acknowledging the enthusiasm and dedication of a small group of people who had the vision and determination to make a science festival happen. I would like to end by thanking my fellow Directors, Sarah Keer-Keer and Fiona Maher for their continued dedication and unstinted devotion to making the festival work, to Iona Beange who works long hours without pay to do the necessary detailed work to enable the festival run smoothly and effectively, to Kathleen Pullen and Rachel Archibald for coordinating and organising so amazingly and to all those involved in the planning and implementation of a festival which is now fully established on the Midlothian scientific and cultural landscape – thank you.

Philip Wark
Library Services Manager, Midlothian Council
Chair of Midlothian Science Festival