

SUMMER FAYRE

22/06/2025

11am – 3pm

St John's Park, Burgess Hill

Budget: £5,000 from Burgess Hill

Town Council.

£2,000 from Burgess Hill Town

Council for the parade

£1,600 Sponsorship from the

Lions

£400 Falconry sponsorship from

GoodOaks Homecare

£435 Programme sponsorship

from Keymer Hall Boutique Care

Homes

Income:

Pitch Fees: £1165

Fairground: £100

Ice cream sales: £197.40

Breakdown:

Most significant spend:

£1,600 BMX Display

£1,200 Slackline

£1,002 Same Sky workshop

£925 Walkabout entertainment – The Butterflies

£528 Inflatables

£400 Publicity, correx boards and banners

£400 Falconry display

£355 Circus All Stars

£300 Toilets

£240 Face Painter

Aim:

The aim for this year's Summer Fayre was to put on an event that had something for everyone. I wanted families, children and adults to feel like they could come down, stay for the duration of the event and always find something new to see or do. The goal was to make it our biggest Summer Fayre yet, packed with activities and entertainment to keep the park buzzing throughout the event.

Number of Attendees:

We had an amazing turnout this year, well over 5,000 people coming along throughout the day. The park felt busy from the moment we opened and there was a real buzz all day. The parade was a huge draw, with seven local primary schools and four community groups taking part. It kicked off with Burgess Hill Marching Youth Band and families gathered early to get a good spot. Food stalls had queues all day, the BMX displays pulled in big crowds and the park felt busiest I've ever seen it.

Publicity:

We used a mix of online and offline promotion to spread the word about this year's Summer Fayre. The social media campaign kicked off on 18 May, a little later than usual due to our VE Day event and coverage, but once the posts picked up, so did the engagement. Posts highlighting the free activities and the two-weeks-to-go countdown reached over 12,000 people and had 42 likes. The "What are your plans for tomorrow?" post, which went out on the Saturday evening before the event, had a huge reach of 10.4K, with 38 likes, 23 comments and lots of interest, this was something new I wanted to try out to see if we could gain last minute interest, which we did.

After the event, we shared a thank-you post on Monday 23 June which has continued to gain interest, 109 likes, 12 comments and 5 shares so far. The reaction has been overwhelmingly positive.

Away from social media, we used posters and signage throughout town. Correx boards went up in key spots including the bandstand, St John's Park, and The Help Point. Large banners were placed at McDonald's, Keymer Parade, The Triangle and the four main entry points into town. I gave this year's design a fresh look with bright, summery colours, completely different to last year's to help it stand out and feel bright and new. Printed programmes were also available pre-event and on the day, thanks to sponsorship from Keymer Hall by Boutique Care Homes. These included the full schedule of performances and activities, timings for the

walkabout entertainment, parade info, details of the dog show, funfair and inflatables, plus a map and direction to where to find a list of stall holders on our website.

We also had press coverage before and after the event. Two press releases were sent out, and both were published online and in print by the *Mid Sussex Times*, who also attended on the day and took photos for the paper.

We also publicised a 'Save the date' in our About Town magazine which is distributed to 15,000 homes in Burgess Hill.

Event breakdown

The Parade:

The day began with a colourful and lively parade, which really set the tone for the event. We had seven local primary schools take part: Birchwood Grove, London Mead, Oak Tree, St Wilfrid's, Sheddingdean, Southway, and The Gattons. They were joined by four brilliant community groups: Burgess Hill District Lions (who also kindly sponsored the parade), Burgess Hill Creative Community, Girlguiding and Burgess Hill Youth.

In the lead-up to the event, Burgess Hill Creative Community teamed up with Same Sky to run creative workshops for teachers. These sessions were really successful and meant that each group had eye-catching, handmade items to carry in the parade.

On the day, we had clear signage and cones at the Old Lido site for each group to line up behind. This made a huge difference to the organisation and helped everything run smoothly. The parade then made its way onto the cricket pitch, where it went around three times before returning to the Old Lido. The crowds were brilliant, and it really felt like a community celebration.

Stalls and layout:

We had over 80 stallholders booked in this year, with only two not turning up on the day. The only one noticeable gap on St John's Road, so overall the layout still felt full and busy.

This year, we introduced a new approach for stallholder arrival by allocating pitches on the day rather than sending pitch numbers in advance. Some stall holders with specific requests were given pitch numbers. The aim was to reduce layout gaps and give us more flexibility with placements. Burgess Hill Bonfire Society were helping with the marshalling, but they weren't able to provide the full number of marshals, which left us a little short on group support. Once a BHTC officer was positioned at the park entrance and communicated clearly over the radio, the new system worked well. Stallholders on the outer cricket pitch, and some in the games area were able to park their cars behind their stalls, which helped reduce marshalling time and made the set up smoother.

We allowed 5m per stall in the inner cricket area (which gave a bit more room than we ended up needing) and 4.5m on the outer pitch. MS Radio were placed next to the cricket pavilion, which helped free up more space in the inner pitch.

A small number of stallholders said they'd still prefer to have pitch numbers in advance. The on the day allocation worked well once the system got going, but we'll look at making it simpler for next year's event, possibly with colour zones and clearer check in instructions.

Activities

There was a huge variety of activities running throughout the park all day. Many of these were free to take part in, which helped make the day accessible to all and encouraged families to stay longer and explore everything on offer.

The BMX displays were a definite highlight, drawing large crowds each time and getting great reactions. Slacklining and Circus Allstars were positioned in a great footfall area and they were constantly busy throughout the day. The Butterflies walkabout entertainers were a lovely visual touch and many had pictures

taken with them. Our free face painting was busy all day long and the inflatables were very popular too, with long queues. We also welcomed back Harris's Old Tyme Amusements and Winters Fairground, the only paid activities on site.

Free Activities and Displays (funded by Burgess Hill Town Council unless stated):

- BMX stunt displays (huge crowd pleaser)
- Slacklining
- Circus Allstars interactive sessions
- Walkabout entertainment from The Butterflies
- Free face painting
- Falconry display (sponsored by Goodoaks Homecare)
- Inflatables
- Harris's Old Tyme Amusements and Winters Fairground (paid activity)

Dog Show:

We advertised the return of the popular Dog Show, sponsored by Heath Vets, but sadly had to cancel it the day before due to high temperatures. Heath Vets still attended with a stall, handing out giveaways and speaking with residents throughout the day.

Performances:

We had a packed programme of live performances from local groups, all based in and around Burgess Hill, including:

- The Triangle Acro Squad
- Burnside and Othellos (with a lovely performance of *Colour My World*)
- Cindy Lou's Line Dancers, who got residents up and joining in
- GKR Karate demonstration
- Walkhouse School of Dance

Feedback:

The day after the event, we shared a feedback link as part of our final Facebook post, using a Google Form to collect visitors thoughts.

What went well?

- *Great afternoon, it was lovely to see all the different community initiatives*
- *The band, Burgess Hill Marching Youth Band lead the children's parade beautifully. Fantastic music leading the kids around the park. Such a great start to a lovely event for all.*
- *Everything, I've never seen the park so busy. The best summer fayre I've been to. There was so much to see and do. Thank you!!*
- *Easy to walk round*
- *Everything . Good selection of stalls. Glad to see local representatives for many things. Marching band was good.*
- *The activities for children were great. We were impressed with the amount, quality and variety of stalls*
- *BMX show, gymnastics, police car, soft play, fairground rides and all the stalls - I was excited to see the Pauline Quirke academy and martial arts there and it helped to show me how much there is in our town!*
- *Absolutely everything! The Brighton Retired Greyhound Trust don't think it needs any tweaking as, as far as we were concerned, it was perfect in every way. The vehicle parking behind the stall was very useful.*

It would be even better if...

- *Having a few more food stalls would be helpful as the queues for food were really long*
- *It was great. Well done. Was well attended and a good afternoon out. Thank you*
- *More varied food stalls*
- *Some seating, not having ice cream van running out. This was rectified, we had another ice cream van come on quickly.*
- *There had been maps or signs at the park reminding us of times - I didn't see any and left the leaflet at home which meant I missed the falconry display unfortunately We had programmes available at the BHTC gazebo and also online, but it's been noted for next years event where we could publicise it a bit more.*

Comments on our Facebook post:

- *Fantastic organisation and event Burgess Hill Town Council 🍷🍷🍷*
- *Well done, especially to the Community Team at BHTC and all those who took part*
- *Burgess Hill Town Council great event... and a great performance from Burnside Day Opportunities Hub ... Colour The World... fantastic 🤗*
- *Brilliant fete well done to all that organised it*
- *Very fun day out, the greek food van was spectacular, as was Rosie's Brews & Bites (as always!)*
- *Was a great day. Well done to the event team for their fabulous organisation.*

Feedback from stall holders:

- *"Really really enjoyed being a part of it and it was brilliantly organised. I thought the numbers who attended were really good and it was brilliant to see the residents of Burgess Hill support the event. Lovely to see something so positive happening in the town. We will be back for next years and look to be involved in other bits you do!"*
- *"Thank you for such a wonderful day and having the sunshine made it extra special. Please thank all those who made this a terrific event especially those behind the scenes who are unsung heroes as well. Having the parade within the park was genius as I think more people came into the park to watch. Good luck for all your future events"*
- *"I thought the day was brilliant and you all did an amazing job. We had a great time and it was lovely to get our business shown to the wider community, as well as bumping into regular customers. We'd love to return next year for sure. Well done! Hopefully a more relaxed day for you today!"*
- *"The event went well for us and we had excellent sales, our highest for the year and much better than last year. We also had a lot more interest in our work and membership. Our volunteers for the day all said they had enjoyed the event very much"*
- *"Our group of volunteers ran a fundraising stall for St Peter and St James Hospice. We held a tombola for adults and children and raised £353 for the hospice. Excellent event. A suggestion for next year is to allocate pitch numbers in advance, as there was some confusion about where you wanted gazebos to be set up. Parade, and multiple events and displays were all good and crowd drawers"*
- *"Just to say thank you for another well organised and successful event. We had many great conversations with 125 visitors as well as other stall holders. Phew! Our recycling theme struck a chord with many and we answered lots of questions – all of which I'm sure will help to improve recycling in Horsham and clarify queries some people had. Look forward to coming back at Christmas"*
- *"Thank you for inviting the Scout group along, we were overwhelmed to see so many people in the parade which led to lots of hopeful clients. The group managed to raise the grand sum of £533.00 for general funds."*

- *“Dear Valentina, thanks your email and the teams hard work, yes it was a good day, we were busy most of the day and took £200 for our little charity and more importantly chatted to lots of people about hedgehogs. I know the team wanted to try not giving people pitch numbers but we found it rather stressful and we would much rather know where we were going to be ahead of the event. I look forward to next year and again well done to the team!”*

Evaluation:

This year’s Summer Fayre felt like it was the strongest yet. The feedback from residents, stallholders and performers has been positive and it really felt like the event delivered what we were aiming for, a proper day out and a reason to stay for the duration of the event.

The parade was a real highlight. It looked brilliant, the school banners were colourful and creative. The sounds from the Marching Youth Band helped create a great atmosphere. The new line up system with cones and group names made it much easier to manage and kept everything moving smoothly.

All the performances were spaced out throughout the day, which helped keep people in the park. The BMX display, live performances, children’s activities and walkabout entertainers helped keep the energy up from start to finish. We also had great feedback on the event programme and the bright, summery designs used across posters, signage and social media.

Our social media posts had strong engagement again this year, especially in the final few days before the event. The ‘What are your plans tomorrow?’ post on Saturday evening really helped drive last-minute interest. Post event feedback on Facebook has also been really encouraging, with lots of positive comments about the organisation, range of stalls, activities and overall feel of the day.

One of the biggest changes this year was allocating pitches on arrival instead of in advance. It gave us much more flexibility on the day and helped avoid gaps. We also had no first aid incidents on the day or lost children, which is always great to report.

A few key learnings and things to consider for 2026:

- Some stallholders away from the cricket pitch felt a little disconnected from the main event, so we’ll explore how to better connect those areas.
- Inner cricket pitch area stall holders will need to arrive earlier next time to help with set-up and access.
- We may move Huxley’s Birds of Prey back to Lower Church Road next year, they felt a bit out of the way at The Old Lido Site.
- Mix up the inflatables and funfair more, maybe spreading them across the triangle area or bringing them closer to the cricket pitch so everything feels more connected.
- The food area worked well, but look at bringing in more food options to help reduce the queues. We’ll also encourage food vendors to bring their own tables and chairs to give people somewhere to sit and eat.
- It would be great to add some sport-themed activities next year, activities like skateboarding, basketball or tennis could be a good addition and give older kids more to get stuck into.
- We’ll also look at having an event photographer next year to help us capture the day.
- Finally, we’ll simplify our pre-events emails and instructions to stall holders to make things easier to follow.

All in all, this year’s event had a brilliant atmosphere and a real sense of community. It’s been great to see how the Summer Fayre continues to grow and improve every year.

Valentina Gaggero





