

Narberth Food Festival

24th – 26th September 2010

Overview

The three day Narberth Food Festival was established in 1999 and focuses on local food and drink and in particular meat. The festival's mission statement is 'to promote an interest in Pembrokeshire and Welsh produce and for locals to sample international foods as well'. The festival has an emphasis on education and this year's theme was 'breakfasts from around the world'. Most producers are selected either because they have exhibited in previous years, or were recruited through the Ludlow Food Festival network of exhibitors.



Management

Narberth Food Festival is managed by a committee of sixteen volunteers, three of whom deal with exhibitor applications and selection of exhibitors. There are no permanent staff employed during the festival or throughout the year, although consultants are contracted for specialist tasks.

Aims



The festival has had an educational emphasis for the last six years and Friday is education day which includes many visits from local schools. Entry to the festival is free for school students on Friday. The management aim to create a friendly atmosphere across the three days and throughout the rest of the town by providing wandering street entertainment between the high street and festival location.

The Programme



There were approximately 50 stalls at the festival in 2010 which met the full capacity of the current site. The festival was spread over three main areas alongside supplementary attractions such as roaming musicians and an area for children. The three main areas comprised the 'Food Theatre', the 'Talks Tent' and the 'Music Stage', each with full programmes throughout Saturday and Sunday. The Food Theatre and Talks Tent included talks, workshops and master classes by a mixture of local and celebrity chefs and food experts that contributed to an informative and entertaining events programme.

The festival took place in the central car park in Narberth town centre and the nearby park was opened up for free parking and additional access. However, because the festival occupied the main carpark in Narberth, there was a slight shortage of town centre parking on the day. To some extent, this was relieved by the park and ride facilities operating from the fringes of the town.

The majority of producers were attracted to the festival partly on account of its reputation and successful sales at previous events. There was a prominence of Welsh produce displayed and the offer comprised meat, cheese, baked goods and dairy products. Producers were chosen according to the mission of the festival with priority given to local food producers, as long as a balance in the overall offer was maintained. There was a strong takeaway food offer which included paella, vegetarian food, pies and pasties, barbecued meat, alongside a coffee bar and a central bar which sold drinks and other snacks and which had a large seating area. Entry was £2.50 per day for adults and free for under-18s. There were no extra charges for demonstrations, talks, master classes, entertainment or children's activities except for face painting. Information about the festival programme was available well in advance on the Narberth Food Festival website¹.



Finance

The festival is supported by a contribution from the Welsh Assembly Government Food Festivals Grant (FFG) of £9,999, which contributes about 40% of the total running costs of the festival (£24,083). Exhibitors are charged £60 per day for a 2 metre wide space with a further cost of £10 per day if electricity is required. Exhibitor fees made a total of £7,140, and along with £8,606 generated from entrance fees, the FFG grant and other small amounts of sponsorship contributed to a total income of approximately £25,745. Total running costs are approximately £23,000 and the festival made a surplus of £1,662, which will be channelled into next year's festival.

Visitor Data

Awareness and Visitor Ratings

A total of 73 visitors responded to the survey – with about 1 in 10 completing the survey in Welsh. The main factors influencing attendance were the fact that it was local; the reputation of the festival and to find out more about local producers. Seven out of ten respondents arrived by car, 6% by bus and the remainder walked. Just over half of the respondents lived within 25 miles of the festival but by contrast, almost 30% of respondents came from between 100 and 500 miles away, which corresponds with the high proportion of car travel to the festival. Nine in every ten respondents thought the event was excellent or good overall, with the range of experiences and the size of the festival scoring particularly well. The layout of the festival was rated very highly and the availability of takeaway food, waste management, festival staff and site information followed closely. The toilets received the lowest ratings and this may be due to the fact that they were public toilets located away from the main festival site. The quality of the speakers was rated well but not as highly as the other categories.



Two thirds of respondents did not bring children to the festival despite there being an educational emphasis. This low proportion on the Saturday² may be a reflection on the fact that the school day took place on the Friday.

¹ www.narberthfoodfestival.com

Spend and impacts

Just over half the respondents expected to stay for part of the day (ie: morning or afternoon) with just over a fifth staying most of the day and 16% all day. 59% said they would buy from local shops or eat in local restaurants, 21% were visiting friends or family and 22% were planning to do some walking or other outdoor activity. 53% of the overall sample stated that they lived within travelling distance and consequently did not require accommodation. Of the remaining proportion, a third stayed with friends and family, almost a fifth stayed in self-catering accommodation, 22% in a caravan or on a camp site, 15% stayed in a hotel whilst the remaining minority used bed and breakfast accommodation. Just under half of the respondents were planning on visiting another food festival during the year.

Two thirds of respondents spent between £5 and £25 per head at the festival, with an average spend closer to the higher end of approximately £21. When taking into account the total cost of their visit to the festival, the average spend rose to approximately £72 implying the wider economy benefited to the extent of £50 per respondent as a result of the event taking place. Using the estimated footfall figure of 6,000, this could equate to an overall spend within the festival of between £95,000 and £160,000 spent within the festival with the local economy conceivably benefiting from between £282,000 and £582,000.



Visual Assessment

Quality of the Event

The main element of the festival was concentrated in a large marquee located in the main town centre car park in Narberth. The weather was very sunny for most of the day albeit with a slight chill in the air. Although the marquee was situated in a car park there was raised decking on the floor which improved the overall appearance significantly. The event appeared to be very well organised with stewards working on the gates, in the car park and within the marquee. Crowds and queuing at the entrance were kept to a minimum and the only incident requiring any crowd control was dealt with quickly and effectively³.

Signage/Information

The event was not well sign posted on the approach to Narberth. The only signs coming into the town from the A478 were brown tourism signs directing visitors to the park and ride facility, but these were not specifically for the festival itself. Within the town centre, green signs directed people to the festival site, although the entrance sign on High Street was small, and was somewhat overshadowed by the alternative car parking sign next to it. A larger banner



² When the survey was undertaken.

³ This was when a takeaway stall became very busy at lunchtime and the queue needed to be repositioned.

was positioned at the entrance to the site in addition to a sandwich board. However, signage within the festival was very good, with appropriately placed signs to the toilets, recycling bins, carpark, demonstration areas and the main marquee.

Quality of the Stalls



Stalls were well spaced out and of a high quality. Many individual traders had enhanced their stalls to make them more attractive, for example by hanging items above stalls. The talks took place in a separate enclosure about half way down the main marquee to mitigate noise from the main area. There was a 'Food Theatre' at the end of the marquee which included a well-equipped kitchenette with a sound system for

the chef demonstrations. True Taste magazines were available to consumers in the main marquee but there was a limited presence of True Taste amongst individual producers.

Facilities

Public toilets were located outside the festival perimeter and were of moderate quality. Adequate recycling facilities were available and clearly signed. There was another large open marquee sitting outside the main marquee that provided space for the bands to perform and this also housed tables for wet weather.



Summary and conclusions

The Narberth Food Festival is an established event in the food calendar in Wales. It is well organised, and provides an entertaining events programme and a diverse range of producers. Although the non-food element was substantial, it complemented the food and drink offer. Signage to the festival needed to be improved, but this shortcoming is to some extent countered by a very impressive website and good signage within the event. Parking may become more of an issue should the festival grow further.

Strength	Weakness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very well organised • Diverse food and drink offer • Good mix of local and national produce • Good quality producers and stalls • Excellent demonstrations and good speakers • Good wet weather provision • Informative and attractive website • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of promotion outside town • Poor signage to festival on the approach to and within town • Insufficient parking provision
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential of shared marketing with Narberth town centre businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited space for expansion • Reliance on WAG support for festival

- Use marquee facility for evening event

development

Annex 1: Key Headline Data

Table 1: General Information

Total Producers	~50
Estimated Total Visitors	~6000
Potential Total Visitor Spend at the Festival⁴	£93,000 - 160,000
Potential Input into the Local Economy⁵	£292,000 – 570,000

Table 2: Visitor Spend Per Head at the festival

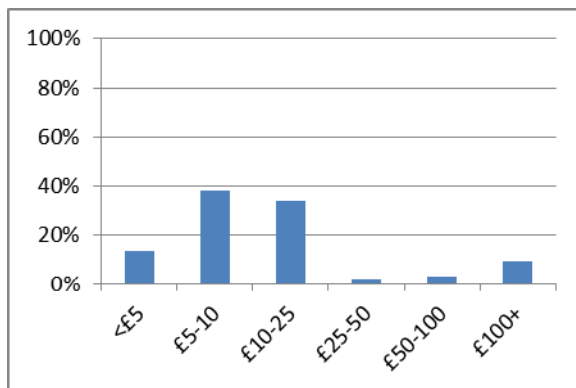


Table 3: Visitor Input into the Local Economy⁶

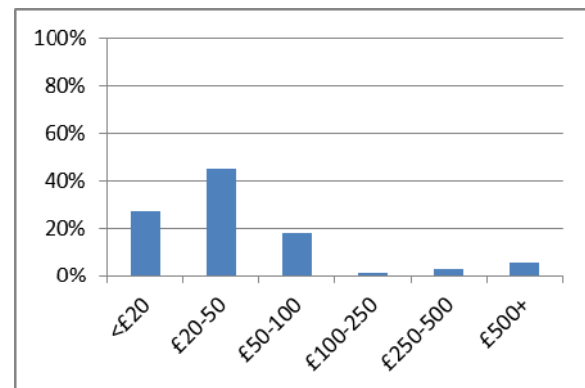


Figure 1: Visitor Overall Rating⁷

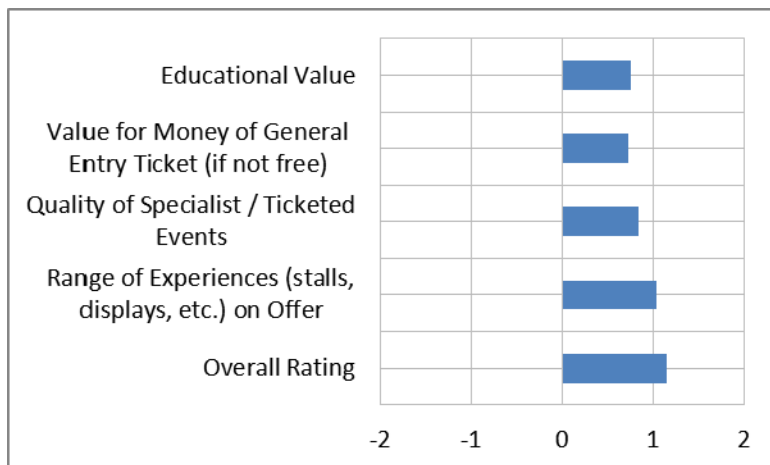


Table 4: Visitor Travel

Distance (miles)	Percentage
<25	53
25-50	2
50-100	13
100-500	28
500-1000	4

⁴ This is an approximation, based on the average visitor spend amongst survey respondents and the total footfall at the event.

⁵ This shows potential overall local spend from all visitors to the festival. This is an estimation based on total footfall at the event and the responses from those completing the survey, in terms of total spend per person during their trip to the festival, not limited to the event itself but including costs such as accommodation, food and shopping.

⁶ This shows predicted overall local spend of those completing the survey, in terms of total spend per person during the trip to the festival, not limited to the event itself but including costs such as accommodation, food and shopping.

⁷ Where +2 is Excellent, +1 is good, 0 is Neutral, -1 is Fair, and -2 is Poor.