

Review of the St Andrew's Beer Festival

Saturday 17 September 2016

1. **General Feedback:**

- a. All the comments so far have been very positive.
- b. It was noted that we had no way of recording these comments, and next time should use Social Media both for publicising and feedback.
- c. There was enthusiasm for doing it again.

2. **Site Layout and Security:**

- a. It would be better if the beer was at the front (at times it did not look from the front as though much was happening at the Festival).
- b. There needs to be better signage around the site.
- c. We need 26 crowd control panels (we were one short) and these were felt to be necessary as it prevented children from leaving the site.
- d. There should be two entrance tables to prevent queues, and a separate table for buying vouchers.
- e. There should be flags and bunting at the front.
- f. Child Protection issues were covered but we need to have the stipulation that parents remain responsible for their children. No incidents were recorded or complaints received.
- g. Although it was in the Tasting Notes, we should have had signs saying 'No Smoking'.

3. **Food:**

- a. The ladies in the kitchen had a long and arduous day, but they claimed they enjoyed it!
- b. The 200 pasties were very popular and sold out, but only about 12 ploughmans were sold.
- c. However, the ham and cheese in French bread served at the end were very popular.
- d. Next time sausage rolls? (This means two pastry based foods).
- e. Or a barbecue?

4. **Church Displays:**

- a. These were thought-provoking and appreciated (Artists, Activists and Pilgrims).
- b. We need to find more ways of encouraging people into the church, as some felt reticent about taking their pint in.
- c. We should open the West Door.
- d. Having teas and coffees and wine inside the church would help bring more people in.
- e. The quiet, reflective piano music (on CD) was felt to have worked well and created the right atmosphere.
- f. Did we block a fire exit?

5. **Beer, Cider and Wines:**
 - a. The beer selection was excellent.
 - b. There was beer left over but, without knowing how many will come, too few beers (and less wastage) makes a less interesting festival.
 - c. Free beer for those clearing up afterwards was a great idea.
 - d. A long bar encouraged more good conversations, especially with those serving the beer.
 - e. The ciders should have been next to the beers.
 - f. The wine bar should have perhaps been inside the church and should have served teas, coffees and cakes as well from the church kitchen.
 - g. Next time we should not worry about half-pint glasses and accept that the halves, and especially the thirds, may be over generous and, therefore, reduce the profit.
 - h. The token system needs to be simplified.

6. **Youth Activities:**
 - a. The teenagers enjoyed the whole event, and were amazed how quickly the time went.
 - b. It was good to have some non-alcoholic drinks for people to buy.
 - c. It was agreed that this is a family-friendly event but should not be marketed as a 'Family Beer Festival'.
 - d. Craft activities continued up until 5pm, even though they had been planned to stop at 3pm. But there was still demand for the activities, and the volunteers were great to continue on.
 - e. Should the non-alcoholic drinks be close to the bar or with the youth activities and entertainments? If, next time, the beer is at the front, the non-alcoholic drinks could go where the beer tent was this time and all youth events be at the back of the church.
 - f. It was good to see young families coming in that we did not know and some were interested in Messy Church.
 - g. We need promotional material for Messy Church.

7. **Entertainment:**
 - a. There should have been more music (*although there was a keyboard and karaoke equipment, they were not used much*).
 - b. We should have a quiz around the site for people to do.
 - c. It was suggested that the children's entertainment (brilliant puppet shows by the teenagers at half-hourly intervals) should start later and finish later.
 - d. A central activity like an auction of promises?

8. **Staffing:**
 - a. About 40 people were involved in acting as stewards, bar tending and serving food. Probably about ten teenagers.
 - b. We could not have done it without Alex's expertise on choosing the beers, monitoring them as they settled, and serving them.
 - c. Offering free beer and bread and cheese to those who helped clear up was a great help in getting the work done quickly and enjoyably!

- d. Some of the stewards did not have much to do, which must have been a bit boring, but we had given commitments to the police.
- e. We gave branded polo shorts to everyone helping and this should have made conversations easier. Those looking after young children had Hi-vis branded jackets. This was generally felt to have been the right thing.
- f. One of the two police officers who visited half way through was heard to remark that it was exactly what he expected from a church beer festival.

9. **Marketing:**

- a. The Mercury did not take the original press release nor the one following the Festival.
- b. Should we have advertised in the Mercury?
- c. The banner was probably the best bit of advertising.
- d. In the last week, more work was done on Hertford social media.
- e. Next time we should sell tickets online and not have hard copies.
- f. It was good to involve the St Andrew Street Traders, but this was no good for people who cannot get to Hertford shops during working hours.
- g. The Traders and Tourist Office sold fewer than 100 tickets.
- h. The dilemma at the beginning was: into which market are we selling? JDT felt that the priority was for fathers of church families and the friends and families of church members; the problem here was the uncertainty about the quality of the product. JDT decided not to sell to CAMRA members, so did not advertise in their newsletter.
- i. It was generally felt that next time church members would have more confidence in the product so would be more willing to invite friends and neighbours.
- j. The market is the whole Hertford Community, not any particular subset, but it is acknowledged that this activity is more likely to be of interest to the men in the community, as was noticed from the attendance profile at this Festival.
- k. Why did people come in? Some came in as a result of the 'patter' on the gate.

10. **Costings:**

- a. The £5 entrance fee did not really work.
- b. Explaining the vouchers options took too much time at the gate: suggested a £1 entry fee (or something) for all and then a stall further into the site where people can buy tokens.
- c. The mixture of cash and tokens was felt to have worked well.
- d. CAMRA said they thought the Beer pricing was spot on (£3.50 for any beer) and although you win on some and lose on others, this is the best option.

11. **Conversations:**

- a. Generally, it was felt that it was easy to get into conversations and some good and worthwhile conversations did indeed take place.

- b. Praying about the quality of conversations was one focus of the Prayer Walk around the site at 8am in the morning.
- c. "First time I have been in a church when it is not a wedding or funeral" was one comment from a visitor.

12. **Did we achieve our objectives?**

- a. We wanted to do something that would change perceptions of 'church', do something that men might come to enthusiastically, and engage visitors in worthwhile conversations.
- b. We estimate about 400 people came, conversations were easy, there was a friendly and welcoming atmosphere, and positive or enquiring comments were received from a wide range of people.
- c. Did we get what we expected? We actually did not know what to expect, but were very thankful for what occurred.
- d. If we did it again, it is likely that church members would have more confidence in inviting their friends.

13. **Would we do it again?**

- a. There was enthusiasm for doing it again, but probably in 2018 rather than 2017.
- b. May/June/July would be warmer but clash with many other events.
- c. The second or third weekend of September may be the best time to do it.
- d. If September, it gets cooler, so should it be last orders at 7.30 or 8.30pm?
- e. There was a preference to start at 1pm rather than 12noon, or at least start youth and entertainment activities at 1pm.

14. **Footnotes:**

- a. On the way out, one of the CAMRA members congratulated us on an excellent festival, but said we had forgotten one thing – it is illegal to leave a Beer Festival with a glass, unless it is in a paper bag. A fair point, though when one of the two policemen who inspected the site returned later, he parked his patrol car on the other side of the street then came back to buy a glass and took it across the road without a carrier bag.
- b. The Angel of the North cartoon in the Times that morning: encouraging coincidence?
- c. Jane's reading for the day was Psalm 104, and v14-15: *He makes grass grow for the cattle, and plants for man to cultivate - bringing forth food from the earth: wine that gladdens human hearts, oil to make their faces shine, and bread that sustains their hearts.*