

Report by Cllr Terry Lowther, Chairman of the Events Committee

EVENTS 2018

Looking back to prepare this report, my abiding memory of the events last year was the weather!

Over the 7 years since we started the Events Committee, we've had what can only be described as "mixed" weather and frequently that was calling it at its best! We've often huddled against horizontal rain or fled from flying gazebos – sometimes on the same day.

Not last year! What a wonderful year to be part of a group dedicated to providing fun in the sun! Virtually every event was blessed with lovely weather

The year started with a couple of events which weren't weather-dependent. Our Deputy Mayor, Alison Foden, organised a 3rd FixFest to recycle, reuse and repair items brought along to the Manor, with donations for the repairs in aid of Dawlish hospital. Incidentally, she held a 4th event just recently which was also very successful.

I gather St Patrick's Night held later in March at The Strand Centre with Irish food, Irish music and licensed bar was also great fun. Very quiet, of course!

Once Spring had sprung, outside events started with the Dawlish Walking Festival, now led by Dawlish Transition. Over 600 people took part last year and its an event which is becoming more and more popular.

At the end of April, the 3rd Manor House Wedding Fair took place, hosting a variety of local wedding suppliers. The Manor is proving to be a popular wedding venue in a very competitive market

The Crash Box Car Club had its annual drive day in Dawlish and displayed some glorious vehicles on the Lawn.

At the end of May, under the banner of the "Dawlish Arts Festival" there was a week of concerts, poetry, theatre, bands and recitals, taking place throughout the town

- On 26th May a Summer Street Market & Funday on the Strand and the Lawn, with live music, free children's entertainment, rides and face painting
- Sunday 27th May was the Dawlish Cycle & Heritage Day with a "Market on the Piazza" and vintage bikes on the Strand. The Liberty Sisters, and 60's Explosion provided the music, the Arrow Barrows provided the fun and free face painting and free rides provided children's entertainment.
- Monday 28th May there were bands on the bandstand and a fantastic Steel Band throughout the afternoon. Also on 28th May, the Events Committee was happy to support Andrew Bulpin of the Dawlish Warren Tourism group at an event at Dawlish Warren to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the Blue Flag.
- Thursday 31st May was a Family Fun & Fiction Day. A full day based around young children's literature with a storytelling tent, King Louis Orang-utan hunt, Build a Baloo the Bear and a Teddy bear's Picnic.
- Friday 1st June – Paint Jam & Local Artists 12 noon-4pm Miss C's Graffiti Academy, an Angie Jenner display by local artists and children's activities

Alison Foden organised the Dawlish in Bloom competition taking place during June & July. I know she intends to hold it again this year and is looking forward to attracting more entrants.

Over the weekend of 29th June/1st July, the Armed Forces Weekend was held by the Royal British Legion under the formidable leadership of their Chairman, Alec Fewings. This is now a Civic Event which has become a major weekend in the Dawlish calendar and grows every year with parades, bands and family entertainment.

A new event in Dawlish for 2018 was a giant screen on the lawn to show the Wimbledon Tennis Finals on Saturday 14th July & Sunday 15th July. The weather was absolutely glorious on both days and it was great to see people picnicking in the sunshine, sipping Pimm's and having a thoroughly relaxing time.

(Just an adjunct to that story... we were panicking behind the scenes. What were we to do if England got through to the World Cup Final? Which would we choose? As it happens, the England team ended an otherwise great campaign by losing to Belgium, so we went back to Wimbledon.)

On the 15th, we are very pleased to welcome the Historic Car Club to the Lawn when around 250 enthusiasts and their splendid vehicles joined us as part of their Devon Coastal Run. The crowds and live music in the morning and the Wimbledon finals in the afternoon made for a fabulous day. This was the first time the Club had visited Dawlish and it's a tribute to the town that they intend to come again this year.

The Rotary Community Fair was held again on 2nd August. It was less busy than it used to be and more publicity for the event is planned for this year.

The main event in August is, of course, the Carnival and Trevor Stratford and his team again put on a splendid week all over Dawlish and at the Warren. The highlight was the Parade which was bigger and better than ever and ended as evening fell with fantastic performances on the Lawn. Dawlish Carnival is becoming among the best (and, unfortunately, among the last) in Devon. There will be lots more news about this year's Carnival as the year wears on.

The year effectively ended with the Christmas Celebrations, starting with the Mayor and Father Christmas switching on the festive lights and continuing with a Street Market and free activities (with hot dogs) for the children. Another event which has grown in size and variety over time!

So, another exciting and enjoyable year! This may be my last one as Chair of the Events Committee and, indeed, as a Town Councillor so I want to say thank you to everyone who has helped over the last 7 years. It all started with Alec and the Royal British Legion throwing their weight behind a "Party in the Park" to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and has grown since with the participation of many other community groups in Dawlish. I'm scared of leaving anyone out, so I won't try to list everyone. As they say on the Oscars – you know who you are!

I'm going to finish on some sad news! The person to whom I, as Events Chair, and you, as the Dawlish community, owe the greatest debt of gratitude is Alison Holmes. As Projects Officer, Alison has worked tirelessly to produce and promote the events we have in this town. Without her, none of them would have been as good and some of them wouldn't have happened at all. And she's done a lot of that work in her own time. Alison will leave the Town Council in June to be with her two little boys and to start up her own business. I'm sure we all wish her every success!

Terry Lowther
13th March 2019