

**A RESCUE PACKAGE FOR
BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY
PRIDE 2010**

**A BUSINESS & COMMUNITY
PARTNERSHIP**

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Introduction - Wilde Ones

Wilde Ones has been involved in Brighton Pride for 14 years, the last ten of which it has produced the event in its entirety. For two years in succession, (2001 and 2002), when the financial status of the event wasn't secure, it agreed to underwrite the event to the sum of £25,000, though fortunately this action was not required.

Wilde Ones is the production company responsible for the provision, organisation and management of all the infrastructure (big tops, tents, toilets, fencing etc.) on the park.

It is also responsible for the provision of the catering facilities, the booking of trader stalls, and the management of the marketplace. As such it has been the second largest investor into the event, behind the bar franchise.

It also deals with all the liaison with community and charity groups in the planning and organisation of the community village, an area it has subsidised for the past 10 years, as well as annually donating 25 free stalls to local LGBT charities and groups each year.

Pride 2009 - Event Debrief

Overall, Brighton Pride 2009 was a great success with no major incidents, thousands of people coming into the city, providing a major boost to the local economy and maintaining Brighton's reputation for staging the best free pride in Europe.

However, a number of factors and activities occurred that have started to tarnish the event's reputation, and created problems for many of those involved in its organisation and operation.

Examples of incidents:

- Attendees to the park being subjected to violence and homophobic abuse
- Illegal sales of alcohol by unlicensed vendors, especially to underage teenagers
- Children able to enter areas unsupervised which were neither suitable nor safe for them.
- Dogs roaming off leads unsupervised and around children.
- Illegal merchandise sellers selling their own branded items freely.

All these examples and more paid a huge part in the following:

- The event being seen some as "no longer an LGBT event"
 - Attendees have commented that they did not "feel safe".
 - Teenagers being admitted to hospital for apparent drug and alcohol abuse.
 - The bar franchise company suffering a loss of 50k
 - Pride facing a deficit of 50k+
 - Individuals profiting from others hard work.
 - Increased incidents of alcohol abuse - despite the bar trade being the lowest ever on the park - demonstrating a direct result of illegal selling of alcohol.
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2009 – The Current Situation

Currently the future of Brighton Pride is in serious jeopardy.

- Pride (South East) Ltd. has announced a potential deficit of £50,000
- At the recent public meeting it had no plans to go forward and was desperately asking the public for ideas
- It recently revealed plans to dramatically change the park event, reducing it to a garden fete
- Its proposals include plans to remove the most popular attractions on the park:
 - the Cabaret Big Top
 - the Wild Fruit Big Top
 - the Women’s Performance Tent
 - the Calabash tent
 - the ‘Girls’ Dance tent
 - the Men’s Dance tent
 - the Paul Wilde Line Dancing Tent
 - the Funfair
- It has not indicated how it will fund this new event, or how much it will cost
- Its current publicity machine is producing so much negative publicity that it is damaging chances of bringing in sponsorship
- plans are being so delayed that sponsorship will be even harder to come by

‘making events happen’

- the current organisation is not engaging with the business community
- it is also not engaging with the LGBT community. For example, it had no official presence at the recent hate crime vigil against the homophobic attacks, which in London was organised by Pride London.
- it is not going to give any grants to the community this year
- it has cancelled Winter Pride

With these factors combining, it is highly unlikely that the current Pride organisation will be able to deliver the event that both the attendees want or have come to expect.

This will have a far reaching effect, not only on the park, but on the city as a whole, its trade, credibility and international reputation.

The Future For 2010

All is not yet lost. The event plan as in 2009 can be delivered in 2010, but action needs to be taken quickly.

In order to regain confidence in the event, and to persuade investors and sponsors to invest time and money, some risk reducing exercises need to be put in place. The primary one of these is to fence the park. In one foul swoop this action will:

- control admission and the bringing of alcohol into the park, in order to reduce alcohol abuse and underage drinking
- prevent illegal traders / flypitchers setting up and taking money away from the event
- dissuade the homophobic element from attending
- enable the organisers to seriously collect donations from the attendees at the entrance points

Wilde Ones would then produce and stage the park festival essentially as it was in 2009. This would keep the following areas of the park:

- the Cabaret Big Top
- the Wild Fruit Big Top
- the Women's Performance Tent
- the Calabash Tent
- the Access Tent
- the Community Village
- the 'Girls' Dance Tent
- the Men's Dance Tent
- the Paul Wilde Line Dancing Tent
- the Marketplace
- the Funfair

To pay for the park event will require considerable funds. Some 40% of this amount would be generated through the market, catering and bar concessions.

The two other major income streams for this event are as follows:

Sponsorship:

The current bad publicity about Pride's situation will undoubtedly make this aspect difficult. However, the fencing of the event will be a major bonus to sponsors, and if we are able to move forward quickly with the planning of the event, we would be hoping to capitalise on this and bring in a significant amount of sponsorship.

Donations at entrances:

The third major source of income would come from a suggested minimum donation of £3 at the entrances. The organisation of bucket collections in previous years has been a travesty, with attendees constantly saying that they never see any bucket collections on the day, so this is a clear opportunity that needs to be capitalised upon.

A donation will also allow people attending to show some commitment to keeping it a free and inclusive event and will also translate into improvements that will be obvious and appreciated by the public.

The park will cost a considerable sum and we are certainly not complacent about raising such sums, but feel that the recent feedback on the Facebook website indicates that largely the public are behind the notion of contributing a donation towards the event.

With the event on the park out of its hands, the current Pride organisation will then be free to concentrate its efforts on organising the parade and supporting the festival week's events.

Community

- Wilde Ones initiated the subsidising of the Community Village area at Brighton Pride, and has continued to provide free stalls to local LGBT groups and charities, as well as subsidise stalls to non-local groups. This activity would certainly be maintained, though we would look to improve the set-up of this area.
 - It is imperative that the festival itself is paid for. If the festival itself is not sustainable, then the whole of Brighton will suffer with its decline, including both the business *and* the charity sectors. However, should the event produce surplus funds from the bucket collections at the entrances, then this profit will be donated to charity via the Sussex Community Foundation Rainbow Fund. All LGBT and HIV organizations, including Pride, can then apply to this fund for grants.
 - The festival brings the people to Brighton, which then gives an opportunity for fundraising for the charities. If the club events and parties over the weekend donate monies from the door, and allow bucket collections at the events, then this money would go *directly* to the charities, not to paying for the event. Over the weekend this could be a considerable amount.
 - In years gone by, fundraising from the businesses was a major source of income to Pride. However, fundraising from the businesses has dropped by 30% over the past two years, from £43,863 in 2006/7 to £30,530 in 2008/9, clearly showing that Pride has lost major support from the businesses. This proposal does not ask for any of the donations from business fundraising to go towards staging the event. With all fundraising going towards the charities, this would hopefully re-ignite the enthusiasm for the businesses to collect, and consequently produce greater income for them.
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Suggested Improvements

As vibrant and enthusiastic producers of events, Wilde Ones is very keen to add improvements and enhance the attendees experience wherever possible. Initial ideas are as follows:

- free drink with every donation over a certain amount; in order to encourage greater contributions at the entrances, if an attendee gives a donation of a certain amount, we would give a voucher / token to be exchanged for a drink at one of the bars
- enhance the current member's area. This has long been under utilised and needs re-invigorating. Whether this becomes a VIP area, a public bar serving cocktails and Pimm's or a different entertainment area is to be decided, but this is clearly the one area of the park that needs updating or bringing up to scratch.
- with donations at the gate, and restrictions on illegal alcohol sellers, the cost of alcoholic drinks on the park will be able to be reduced
- update the Community Village. Currently this area becomes a ghost town from 4.30pm onwards, as community and charity groups struggle to keep volunteers staffing the stalls. This both causes a health and safety problem with empty stalls, as well as becoming a waste of space. We will investigate the idea of replacing the stall structures with a tent that could be used for charity groups until around 4.30pm, and then cleared out and used for alternative activities afterwards (e.g. speed dating, salsa dancing etc.)
- all dance areas to be over 18 only. As with any club, these areas are not designed for children and so would be restricted to adults only.

- deposits on (plastic) glasses: customers pay a £1 deposit on a higher quality (plastic) glass, and get the deposit back on its return. This has worked at other festivals, dramatically reducing the amount of waste produced, and thereby reducing potential clean up costs, and we would be keen to investigate the concept at Pride.
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Political Message

Though we are business we have always been involved in Pride because of our fundamental belief in its principles, namely the elimination of discrimination to the LGBT community.

With the recent homophobic murders, we feel it is even more important to bring the message home of what the day is about, and we would welcome any involvement from businesses and the wider community to help with promoting this message.

We would also propose rebranding the event 'Gay Pride – a celebration of LGBT lives'. 'Gay' has become a derogatory term over recent years in youth culture, and by reclaiming the term in the event's title will make a statement and hopefully discourage homophobic youths from attending.

Conclusion

It is clear from the recently set up Facebook group that the public do not want the proposals suggested by Pride (South East) Ltd. This group attracted 6000 supporters in a week, and generated more interest in the event than by Pride (South East) Ltd. in the past three months.

We have the experience, the enthusiasm, the contacts and the knowledge, together with a financial plan, to ensure its success, while leaving Pride (South East) Ltd. free to organise the parade and Pride week events

Supporters

Current contractors:

Arena Entertainment Systems - PA, lights & power

Capita Symonds - Health & Safety consultants

Atec Security - overnight site security

Coles Brothers Funfair

Ray Linge Marquees

A&J Big Tops

Appendix

As holders of the bar concession for the current Pride organisation, Aeon Events has been invited to become partners in this project. We are currently awaiting its response.

Aeon Events

Aeon Events PR Ltd has been a staunch long time supporter and fundraiser for Brighton Pride, and has programmed and operated the hugely popular Wild Fruit dance tent. This has been an integral part of the Pride celebrations for the last 12 years, and one of the most popular attractions on the park.

Aeon has been involved with bar operations at the Pride festival and has been Pride largest business investor for several years.

Aeon Events diverse roster of special parties, events and fundraisers cater for a wide spectrum of the city's LGBT community, including the internationally renowned and respected Wild Fruit. Aeon have staged large Pride events at Brighton Racecourse, Brighton Dome and the Brighton Centre, as well as many Brighton nightclubs.

Wild Fruit is a multi-award winning club night that is famous for its innovative themed events, attention to detail and commitment to the community and local worthy causes, having raised over £125,000.
