Biggar Little Festival 2015
Economic Impact Assessment

Report for Biggar Little Festival

November 2015

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1. Introduction

This report provides an economic impact assessment of the Biggar Little Festival 2015.

1.1 Background

Biggar Little Festival (BLF) takes place each year over 10 days in the second half of October. This timing is designed specifically to tie in with the October school holiday and extend the visitor season in the town. The Festival covers all the arts and provides events for all age groups. BLF is run by a team of volunteer trustees and a paid part time administrator.

1.2 Study Objectives

The main aim of the study was to assess the economic impact of BLF on South Lanarkshire. Further objectives included analysis of:

- the level of visitor spend;
- the quality of visitor experience at the event;
- motivation for attending the events and whether visitors would attend in future years;
- how attendees heard about the Festival; and
- visitor profile e.g. age, gender, origin.

In particular, suggestions would be welcome relating to how the committee can:

- encourage more visitors from further afield while maintaining the current 'character' of the Festival;
- work with event organisers and local businesses to improve visitor experience and spending in the town; and
- provide enhanced value for local sponsors.

1.3 Report Structure

The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

- Chapter 2: Visitor Survey;

- Chapter 3: Local Business Survey;
- Chapter 4: Economic Impact; and
- Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations.

2. Survey Analysis

2.1 Introduction

This Chapter presents the findings of the visitor survey which was conducted face-to-face over the duration of the event. A total of 354 visitor surveys were conducted, giving a standard error +/-4.6%.

2.2 Visitor Profile

The sample of visitors was 59% female and 41% male. There were similar proportions in the 35-44, 45-54 and 55-64 age ranges amongst the adult audience members.

Table 2.1: Age of Audience Members

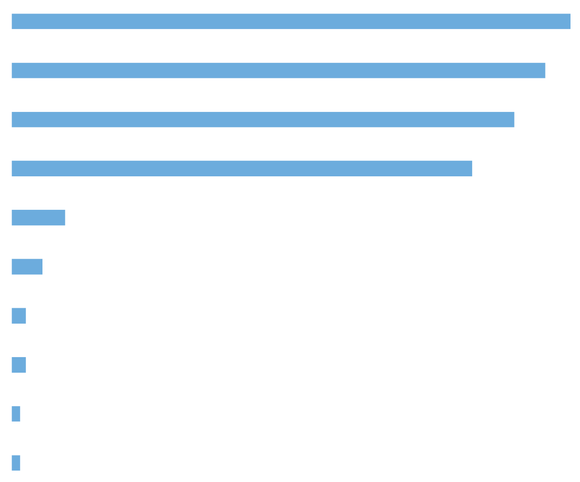
Age	Number	%
16-24	8	2%
25-34	61	17%
35-44	76	22%
45-54	79	22%
55-64	84	24%
65+	45	13%
Total	**353**	**100%**

Party size ranged from one to eight with an average of 2.7. A total of 36% had children in their group. Of those from outside South Lanarkshire, 99% had previously visited the area.

2.3 Awareness of the Festival

Visitors were asked how they accessed information for the Biggar Little Festival. The most common sources were having attended previously (57%), the Biggar Little Festival website (54%), word of mouth (51%) and the Festival programme (47%).

Figure 2.1: Sources of Information about the Event

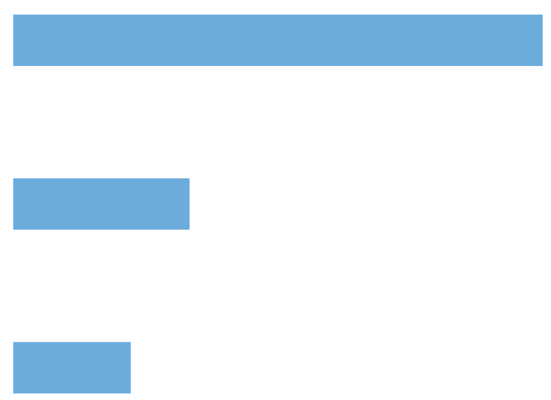


Those that answered newspaper/magazine were asked to provide the title of the publication, with the most common being the Daily Record (0.6%).

2.4 Accommodation

The most common form of accommodation for those staying overnight was staying with friends or relatives (64%) – **Figure 2.2**.

Figure 2.2: Type of Accommodation



2.5 Rating of the Festival

Visitors were asked to rate various aspects of the Festival on a scale of very good to very poor – **Table 2.2**.

Table 2.2: Rating of the Festival

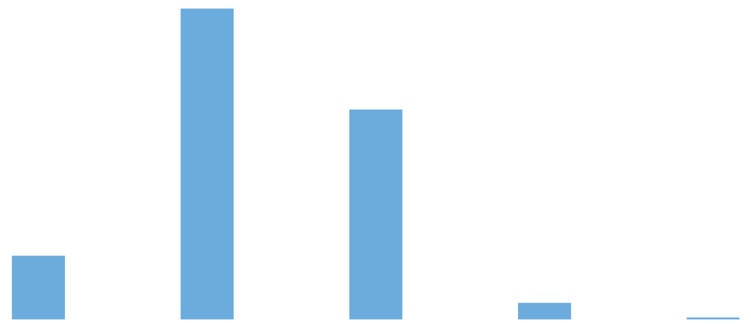
	Very good	Good	Average	Poor	Very poor
Range of shows/activities on offer	51%	47%	1%	0%	0%
Quality of shows/activities on offer	59%	40%	1%	0%	0%
Your enjoyment of the shows/activities	55%	45%	0%	0%	0%

Respondents rated the various aspects of the Festival highly, with very good/good ratings of 99% or 100%. No ratings of poor or very poor were received for any of the aspects.

All respondents rated their visit to South Lanarkshire as very good/good (70% very good).

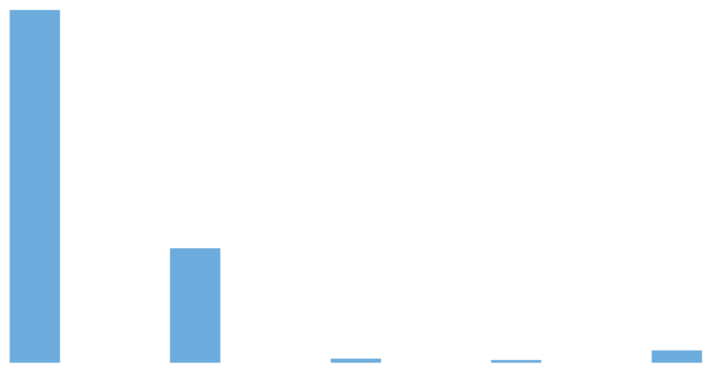
A total of 83% of respondents had attended the Festival in a previous year. Of those, nearly all respondents said it was either better than (63%) or on a par (35%) with previous years – **Figure 2.3**.

Figure 2.3: Comparison with Previous Years' Festivals



Nearly all visitors said they would be very likely/likely to return to the Festival next year (96%), while a small number said they were unsure or were unlikely to – **Figure 2.4**.

Figure 2.4: Attendance at Next Year's Festival



Of those who were unlikely to, this was either because they are unlikely to be in the area next year (two), or because they were disappointed at an event being cancelled at short notice this year (one).

2.6 Suggested Improvements

Festival visitors were asked if there were any ways in which the Festival could be improved, with 19% choosing to provide comments, with the most common responses being:

- the Festival should be better promoted and advertised (4%);
- there should be better signage/directions (2%);
- there should be more events/acts (2%);
- the Beer Festival should not have been cancelled (2%);
- there should be more for children/teenagers to do (1%);
- it should be cheaper to attend (1%);
- there should be better communication when events are cancelled (1%); and
- there should be more options for buying tickets, other than online (1%).

2.7 Other Comments

Festival visitors were invited to provide any additional comments about the Festival, with 11% choosing to do so. The vast majority offered general praise about the Festival and their enjoyment of it (10%), with a small number specifically highlighting that there was lots for children and families to do (2%). One respondent commented that venues could open earlier to avoid visitors having to wait outside, and another said that there could be better directions to venues in the town.

3. Local Business, Performer and Volunteer Surveys

This chapter provides analysis of the stakeholder consultations and the survey of local businesses, volunteers and performers. A total of ten businesses were surveyed and six volunteers and nine performers responded to the online surveys.

3.1 Local Business Survey

This section provides analysis of the survey of local businesses. A total of ten businesses were surveyed by telephone, with a mix of cafes/restaurants, shops, pubs and accommodation providers. Not all questions were answered by all respondents, with some unwilling or unable to do so.

3.1.1 Business Background

The businesses interviewed were split between shops (four responses), cafes (three), accommodation (two) and pubs/restaurants (one).

Five businesses disclosed their annual turnover. This ranged from a low of under £50,000 to a high of £250,001 - £500,000.

Table 3.1: Turnover

Turnover Banding	Number
Under £50,000	2
£50,001 - £100,000	-
£100,001 - £250,000	1
£250,001 - £500,000	2
Total	5

3.1.2 Sales

Businesses were asked if the Festival had impacted on their sales. Nine businesses reported that the Festival had a positive impact on their sales, while one stated it had not made any impact. Of the nine which reported positive impacts, responses were varied:

- the Biggar Day Out was *"the busiest day the business has had in months"*;
- the Biggar Day Out was 50% busier than a typical Sunday;
- 25% busier than usual;
- 15% more sales;
- 10% more sales than usual (two responses); and
- 5% more sales.

Two businesses said that while the Festival had made a positive impact on their business, this was spread out over different events and they were unable to estimate a percentage.

3.1.3 Supporting the Festival

Six businesses reported being directly involved in supporting the Festival, either by sponsoring some aspect of it and being listed in the programme (four), putting up posters (three) or hosting/taking part in special events (three). One business said that they had been more involved in supporting the Festival in previous years, but had taken a step back this year. All of these businesses indicated a willingness to continue supporting the Festival in future years.

3.1.4 Changes to Operations

Half of the businesses altered their hours of operation in some way during the Festival. This included opening up for the Biggar Day Out Sunday (five), either for a few hours or the full day. Three businesses had also extended their hours through participation in special events – the food fair, running a music event, and running a literary event.

3.1.5 Rating of the Festival

Businesses were asked to rate the Festival overall on a scale of very good to very poor. **Table 3.2** details the response.

Table 3.2: Rating of the Festival

Rating	Number
Very Good	60%
Good	40%
Average	0%
Poor	0%
Very poor	0%

All businesses rated the Festival as either very good or good.

3.1.6 Weaknesses and Improvements

Strengths

Businesses were asked to comment on what they believed to be the main strengths of the Festival. All of the interviewed businesses provided comments, with the most cited answer being additional footfall and trade it brings to the town (six responses). Other strengths that were mentioned included the quality and variety of the Festival programme (four), the sense of identity and focus that it gives Biggar (three), and that it gives the town a boost in an otherwise fairly quiet and "dreich" month (two). Two businesses also mentioned how important the event is for Biggar's cultural/arts community.

Weaknesses

Businesses were asked to comment on the main weaknesses of the event. Several could not think of any weaknesses. However, of those that did provide comments, this included that it tends to be the same people that attend events each year (two), and it can come across as "a bit niche" (one). One business reported that they had encountered visitors who were confused about where events were being held and where tickets could be purchased, although said that they were happy to help them on each occasion.

Improvements

Only a small number of businesses suggested improvements for the content and supporting activity of the Festival. In terms of content, one business thought that more could be done to have Festival acts with a broader appeal, although recognised that the cost of booking, for example, popular comedians, could be prohibitive. For supporting activity, two businesses thought that promotion ahead of the Festival could be stepped up, with one mentioning that they think there is potential to attract an increased audience from outside of Biggar. One business felt that signage/directions to venues within the town could be improved.

3.1.7 Other Comments

Respondents were also invited to provide any other comments they may have on the Festival. Six businesses chose to do so, with most offering general praise for the Festival and its organisation, including:

- *"the Festival is positive for the town and its image, and shows Biggar is a place where people go out and do things"*;
- *"the committee and leadership of the Festival are very good. It's great for what it is"*; and
- *"I hope it continues – it's very good for a small town".*

3.2 Volunteer Survey

An online survey was distributed by the organisers to volunteers at the Festival. This resulted in six responses – a 33% response rate.

3.2.1 Rating of the Festival

The volunteers were asked to rate various aspects of the Festival – **Table 3.1**.

Table 3.1: Rating of the Festival

	Very good	Good	Average	Poor	Very poor
Quality of the Festival Programme	67%	33%	-	-	-
Venues	50%	50%	-	-	-
Organisation	67%	33%	-	-	-
Overall Experience	33%	67%	-	-	-

All of the aspects were rated highly either very good or good, with the highest proportions of very good for the quality of the Festival programme and organisation.

Volunteers were asked if they had any suggested improvements to the Festival. One person provided a couple of suggestions - £1 entry to Craft Fair should include a raffle ticket and heating at one event in Gillespie Centre was not working (someone did bring a heater in but it was too small) and they should consider a plan in case this was to happen again in the future.

3.2.2 Volunteering

Five out of six respondents had volunteered at an event prior to volunteering at Biggar Little Festival, two of which provided details – a theatre workshop and a community development organisation. Five out of six said that they will volunteer at the Biggar Little Festival next year (the other did not provide a response to this question). All six said that they were very likely/likely to volunteer at other events.

3.3 Performers Survey

An online survey was distributed to performers at the Festival. This resulted in nine responses – a 38% response rate.

3.3.1 Accommodation

One performer stayed away from home and they stayed with a member of a local music club.

3.3.2 Rating of the Festival

The performers were asked to rate various aspects of the Festival – **Table 3.2**.

Table 3.2: Rating of the Festival

	Very good	Good	Average	Poor	Very poor
Quality of the Festival Programme	88%	13%	-	-	-
Venues	78%	11%	11%	-	-
Organisation	78%	11%	-	11%	-
Overall Experience	78%	22%	-	-	-

Overall the various aspects received high ratings with very good or good of 89% or above. Those rating it as poor were asked for the reason why. The one person that rated the organisation as poor felt that there did not seem to be coordination between different bands and locations in which they played and some locations they were asked to play in were inappropriate.

Respondents were asked if they had any suggestions on how the Festival could be improved. Two provided suggestions which were to have more events for children, to not have similar events on the same night, and some planning for locations where all bands should play.

3.3.3 Previous and Future Visits

Just over half (56%) had visited the Festival in the past. Of those, 40% thought that this year's Festival was much better/better than previous years and the remaining 60% that it was on a par with previous years. All of the performers would like to attend the Festival next year.

4. Economic Impact

4.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out the economic impact of the event.

4.2 Economic Impact Assessment Method

Our approach to the economic impact assessment is given in **Figure 3.1**.

Figure 3.1: Economic Impact Assessment Method

4.3 Visitors

4.3.1 Visitor Numbers

The event organisers were able to provide attendance figures of 4,838. The average number of shows/activities people visited was estimated at 3.0 giving a total number of 1,615 unique visitors.

Table 3.1: Number of Unique Spectators

	Number	%
Day	1,525	94.4%
Overnight	90	5.6%
Total	1,615	100.0%

Overnight accommodation is a significant item of expenditure, therefore, the analysis distinguishes between day visitors and those staying overnight. Also, the pattern of visitor behaviour varied by the origin of visitors, therefore these have been analysed separately in order to derive the economic impact. **Table 3.2** gives a breakdown of type of visitor by origin.

Table 3.2: Visitors by Type and Origin

	Day	Overnight
South Lanarkshire	77.5%	-
Elsewhere in Scotland	17.0%	2.6%
Elsewhere in UK	-	1.7%
Overseas	-	1.3%
Total	94.4%	5.6%

The most common origin for visitors was from South Lanarkshire (77.5%) followed by Elsewhere in Scotland (19.6%).

4.4 Expenditure

The level of expenditure also varies by origin, and day and overnight visitors. The average daily expenditure for visitors is shown in **Table 3.3**[1].

Table 3.3: Average Daily Expenditure

[1] Excludes ticket income as this is accounted for through the organiser's expenditure.

Origin of Visitor	Day	Overnight
South Lanarkshire	£14.66	-
Elsewhere in Scotland	£21.78	£34.34
Elsewhere in UK	-	£60.07
Overseas	-	£60.07

The average length of stay for overnight visitors is given in **Table 3.4**.

Table 3.4: Average Length of Stay

Origin of Visitor	South Lanarkshire
Elsewhere in Scotland	2.0
Elsewhere in UK	2.7
Overseas	2.7

Gross expenditure is calculated as follows:

GE = dv.ndv + ov.l.nov

Where GE gross expenditure
dv average daily expenditure of day visitors
ndv number of day visitors
ov average daily expenditure of overnight visitors
l average length of stay
nov number of overnight visitors

Applying the formula gives gross expenditure of £55,950 at the South Lanarkshire level.

4.4.1 Gross to Net

To calculate the net impact of the event, which is the true measure of the economic benefit to South Lanarkshire, it is necessary to take account of:

- deadweight;
- leakage;
- displacement; and
- multiplier effects.

Deadweight

The event did not receive any public sector funding so deadweight is zero.

Leakage

Leakage is expenditure that takes place outside the geographic area at which the economic impact is being assessed. This has been based on where the expenditure of visitors and the event organisers has taken place.

Displacement

Displacement is a measure of the extent to which the event has simply moved expenditure from one part of the economy to another (i.e. removal of casual visitors). Displacement levels have been assessed using information from the survey on:

- visitor origin;
- importance of the event in the decision to visit the area; and
- counterfactual i.e. what visitors would have done in the absence of the event.

Table 3.5: Displacement (%)

Visitor Type by Origin	South Lanarkshire
Day	
South Lanarkshire	100
Elsewhere in Scotland	14
Overnight	
Elsewhere in Scotland	13
Elsewhere in UK	33
Overseas	33

Taking account of leakage and displacement gives net direct additional expenditure of £14,705 at the South Lanarkshire level.

4.5 Performer and Volunteers

There will also be some expenditure from performers and volunteers visiting the local area. Following the same processes as set out above gives net additional expenditure of £1,812 at the South Lanarkshire level.

4.6 Organiser's Expenditure

The same approach to the organiser's expenditure is that used in the previous report to provide consistency. The event organiser's expenditure in South Lanarkshire was £20,579.

4.7 Total Net Additional Direct Expenditure

The total net direct additional expenditure is £37,096 at the South Lanarkshire level - **Table 3.7**.

Table 3.7: Net Additional Direct Expenditure

	South Lanarkshire
Visitors	£14,705
Performers and Volunteers	£1,812
Organisers	£20,579
Total	£37,096

4.8 Output

The net direct expenditure will also have two types of wider impact on the economy:

- Supplier (indirect) effect: an increase in sales in a business will require it to purchase more supplies than it would have otherwise. A proportion of this 'knock-on' effect will benefit suppliers in the local economy; and
- Income (induced) effect: an increase in sales in a business will usually lead to either an increase in employment or an increase in incomes for those already employed. A proportion of these increased incomes will be re-spent in the local economy.

Applying an output multiplier of 1.42 gives net additional output of £52,676.

5. Conclusions

This Chapter brings together the analysis from the previous chapters to provide conclusions.

5.1 Visitor Profile

There was slightly more female (59%) than male (41%) visitors. The age range of adult visitors was spread across age categories, with 68% aged between 35 and 64. The average party size was 2.7 and 36% had children in their group.

The most common ways in which visitors accessed information about the Festival were having attended previously (56.5%), the Festival website (54%) and through word of mouth (50.9%).

5.2 Views on the Event

Overall the event was rated highly, with a majority of the audience members, performers, volunteers and local businesses rating it as very good/good.

Audience members rated all aspects of the Festival highly, with very/good ratings of 99% or 100% for both the range and quality of shows/activities on offer, and their enjoyment of them. Of those audience members that had attended in previous years, 63% felt that this year's Festival was much better/better and 35% that it was on a par with previous years' events. A total of 96% said that they were very likely/likely to return to the Festival next year.

The most commonly suggested improvements from the different groups are summarised in the table below.

Table 5.1: Suggested Improvements#

Audience Members	Performers	Local Businesses	Volunteers
• More promotion (4%) • Better signage/ directions (2%) • More event/acts (2%) • Beer festival should not have been cancelled (2%)	• More children's events (11%) • Do not have similar acts on same night (11%) • Some planning for locations for all bands to play (11%)	• More promotion (20%) • Better signage/ direction (10%) • Acts with broader appeal (10%)	• £1 craft entry could include raffle ticket (17%) • Contingency plan for heating not working (17%)

All of the performers would like to perform at next year's Festival.

5.3 Local Business Engagement and Impact

A total of 90% of the businesses surveyed had experienced a positive impact from the Festival. The remaining 10% had no impact. Half of the businesses had changed their operating hours during the Festival.

A total of 60% of the businesses had been involved in supporting the Festival in some way, either by sponsoring an aspect, listed in the programme, putting up posters or hosting/taking part in special events. All of these businesses indicated a willingness to continue supporting the Festival in future years.

The main strengths of the Festival was identified as bringing additional footfall & trade to the town, the quality & variety of the programme, and sense of identity & focus that it gives Biggar. The main weakness was that it tends to be the same people that attend events each year.

5.4 Economic Impact

There were 4,838 attendances and 1,615 unique audience members. Of these 23% were from outside South Lanarkshire and 3% from outside Scotland. A total of 6% stayed overnight. The economic impacts are summarised below - **Table 4.1**.

Table 4.1: Net Additional Impacts

	South Lanarkshire
Net Direct Expenditure	£37,096
Output	£52,676

5.5 Other Impacts

The event is highly rated and, therefore, reflects well on the local area. Also those attending the event get to experience the local area with all visitors, from outwith the local area, rating their visit to South Lanarkshire as very good/good.

The event provides volunteering opportunities and the experience is a positive one – 83% would like to volunteer at the Festival next year.

The event also provides, not only visitors, but also local people with access to a range of cultural events.

5.6 Return on Investment

A total of £12,150 of sponsorship support was provided to the Festival. The net additional impact on the South Lanarkshire economy was £52,676. Each pound of sponsorship money generated net additional output of £4.34 in the South Lanarkshire economy.

5.7 Increasing the Impact

There does not seem to be any real issues in terms of the quality of the Festival and the visitor experience. Rather the key issue is about increasing the profile of the Festival.

In terms of increasing the economic impact, it is not really possible to do this through increasing the length of the Festival. It already takes place over ten days. Attracting higher profile acts is also fraught with difficulties as the benefits are unlikely to outweigh the costs, particularly as there is a limit in terms of the size of the largest venue. There is capacity within the current programme to accommodate a larger audience, so increased promotion would help to fill some of these places without changing the current 'character' of the Festival.

However, there may not be a lot of spare income to use for promotion so informal channels should be used as much as possible e.g. people promoting it through other groups they are involved in – particularly arts/culture but also other community groups, promoting it to colleagues at work, adding it to bottom of email signatures (personal rather than work) in the run up to the event, etc.

It does not necessarily make sense for local businesses to offer deals when the event is on, as this may just lead to a lower income from visitors that are already there. However, another possible way to increase the economic impact would be for local businesses to offer deals for people to come back at quieter times in the year.