

Street Piano Project - evaluation

The Festival Street Piano project brought an unwanted piano back into use for the enjoyment of people from across Saltash. It was a fun, accessible, sociable and inspiring experience which:

- Brought members of the community together.
- Created a visitor attraction on the Waterside.
- Provided an instrument for amateur pianists and children play.

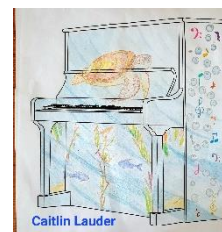
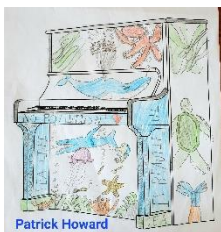
What we did

A suitable piano was selected from several which were offered to the project and was moved to a workshop to be renovated and tuned.

Notes were put through doors of residents local to the Waterside to inform them of the project. Positive replies were received (with some warnings about likely vandalism) and one resident volunteered to help look after the piano.

A professional artist (Georgia Nethercott) was recruited. Georgia has specific experience in creating art with and for young people through working at Soap Box Children's Theatre in Plymouth.

A competition was run through four local primary schools for children to create artwork for the piano on the theme of 'under the sea'.



Georgia Nethercott and Lindsay Endean selected the final winning artwork to go on the piano – merging artwork from 7 different entries. Winners were informed via schools and prizes were given out in school assemblies.

Painting, weather-proofing and security work on the piano took 6 days in the workshop. A decision was made not to use a public space offered at the Original Factory Shop because the varnish being used was too smelly for the shop.



On 9 June the finished piano was moved into position on the waterside and an 'opening' event was held with local musician/composer Judy Whitlock performing on the piano. This event was featured on the front cover of the Saltash & Liskeard Voice Newspaper.

All 203 entries for the artwork competition were printed in two folders installed in a waterproof display unit on the piano for the public to see.

The piano was then left in position and was unlocked at 9am and locked at 9pm to avoid noise problems for neighbours. The piano was also covered on Friday and Saturday nights to protect from vandalism.

The location and purpose of the piano was advertised through Festival leaflets (one delivered to every home in PL12) and on social media.



Requests were made by the public, local businesses and the Saltash Regatta committee to keep the piano on the Waterside beyond the end of the Festival.

On 26 June the piano was moved to a new home outside Livewire.

Numbers

Piano art competition entries	203
Piano launch event	35
Pop-up Piano event	152
Estimated use of piano over two weeks of Festival (based on observing use of piano for 1-hour periods on 4 different days = c.30 people per day playing or actively listening)	420
	810



Digital reach

A number of videos of performances were shared on social media, generating extensive online reach for the project. Two examples are:

Bohemian Rhapsody performance	c.10,000 views and counting
We ♥ the Festival piano film	1,840+ views

Feedback

Comments collected before the piano was installed:

"Good luck – nice idea let's see how long it lasts"

"That will get vandalised – everything gets vandalised down here"

Comments collected during the project (some left in a feedback notebook left on the piano):

"We have loved this piano – such a positive thing for the area"

"The town needs more projects like this"

"Such a beautiful instrument"

"My son asks to come down here every day to play the piano"

"It was such a pleasure sitting in the evening sun enjoying a pint by the river when the piano started to 'play'"

"A group of young adults from Livewire gathered around and filled the evening air with song and music. It was lovely"

"Mary Ferguson from Canada played on your piano. So appreciated the opportunity to tickle the ivories in this beautiful environment – thank you"

"I had a lovely time playing the piano and having a drink with the family"

"A jogger just stopped and taught my daughter to play baby shark"

"We enjoyed listening and watching our grandchildren play the piano"



"It's really cool and I'm glad to see little things like this improving Saltash"

"Events like this really bring the community together"

"I played and everyone had a smile on their faces"

"My son learnt to play from Youtube. We only have a keyboard at home and he is loving playing a real piano"

"A stranger taught me how to play along with her, it was lovely. Just what I needed thank you"



In addition to the above comments the Festival also received a very personal thank you note from a number of young people at Livewire who held a wake at the piano, for a friend who sadly passed away a few weeks before the piano was installed.

Budget

Expenditure

	<i>Estimated</i>	<i>Actual</i>
Delivery and moving	£200	£214
Project insurance	£300	£0 *
Painting	£500	£484
Weather and security	£100	£386 **
Tuning	£125	£163
	£1225.00	£1250.00

Income

Saltash Town Council Grant	£900	£900
Festival income from tickets / FEAST etc	£325	£350
	£1225.00	£1250.00

**The Festival insurer was happy to cover the cost of the piano at no extra cost.*

*** Additional cost incurred by installing acrylic folding cover.*

Conclusion

This project was launched with a certain amount of trepidation due to so many unknown factors and risks. Feedback from the town suggested that while people appreciated the Festival making the effort and they wanted it to succeed – they generally were expecting the piano to not to survive the two weeks proposed.



The results of the project definitively proved that it is possible to install a fragile item like a piano on the waterside and for it not only withstand rain and wind, but it to also be valued and used by people from across the community. The piano was a starting point for conversations, entertainment, interactions between strangers and creating positive opinions of the area.

It was observed that the demographic most likely to be accused of vandalism (young boys) were also some of the most enthusiastic users of the piano. Other players ranged from toddlers enjoying hitting few notes with parents or grandparents, to people who arrived with folders of music to perform.

The design of the folding acrylic cover has been sent back to project advisors at Streetpiano.com for them to add to future advice for other street pianos.

The piano has now been adopted by Livewire and will stay on the Waterside for as long as it survives. Hopefully it will continue to bring pleasure to hundreds of people over the summer.

**Salt
Arts**

