

Community Interest Company
11620054
www.prestoncitymela.co.uk



PRESTON CITY MELA REPORT

2019

*Preston City Mela Celebrating Multi Cultural Arts & Heritage
Report Compiled by Gulab Singh MBE DL – Mela Production Manager and
Jenny Paul Project Worker -Evaluation*



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**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Preston City Mela would like to thank everyone who has been associated with the Mela programme for 2019. This includes the artists leading workshops and those performing, community organisations for their valuable contributions at the Mela event, our VIP and dignitaries' guests and partners for their presence and ongoing support.

Special thanks go to our funding bodies:

- Arts Council of England (North West)
- Preston City Council
- Community Gateway
- SELNET
- University of Central Lancashire for helping to establish the Community Interest Company

I would also like to pay tribute to the following individuals who have been instrumental in the planning and implementation of the Mela programme for 2019:

- Angela Chappell – Relationship Manager Arts Council of England
- Abhinandana Kodanda
- Shreya Ghodke
- Richard Baxter Events Manager Preston City Council and his team
- Chris Davis (ALISON- Soundskills) and Preston Photographic Society
- Creative Communities Group for the Vox Pox input
- Jenny Paul and Rita Whitlock for their assistance in the Mela evaluations
- All the Mela Board Members

Finally, to all our visitors who make the day so special.



Gulab Singh
Mela Production Manager

INTRODUCTION

Mela has its roots in the Indian subcontinent. The word Mela signifies 'Fair / gathering'. Its tradition is to connect communities. In its modern usage, it is not only a South Asian, but also an intercultural festival, which incorporates art, culture, music, dance, food and heritage. The Mela provides the backdrop for community cohesion bringing together people from all walks of life sharing traditions and cultural experiences.

Preston City Mela focus has always been to provide a rich family-oriented event, full of fun and experiences. It provides an opportunity to share rich cultural heritage with the mainstream population and showcase traditional music, dance, art, crafts and food. Furthermore, it provides an opportunity for service providers from both the public sector and voluntary organisations in Preston to promote their services.

Preston City Cultural Mela aims to give local North West up and coming artists a platform to show case their skills and talents and perform alongside International artists; engage with the public at the event and in the care home setting. Year on year we have increased our ambition to promote multi-cultural arts and heritage developed locally, regionally and nationally.

This one-day event has been supported by a prior outreach programme in partnership with new organisations and established events over the spring season. This gave Preston City Mela an opportunity to showcase South Asian artistic talent through arts, music, dance, food, history, culture and heritage and reach audiences otherwise who would not attend the main event. This year our outreach programme consisted of:



Newman College - Four sessions to teach students and for them to perform Bollywood dances at the Let's Grow Spring Fair;

Avenham Park - Easter Event;

Ashton Park - Lets Grow Preston Spring Fair;

Community Gateway Association in sheltered housing settings, providing an arts-based experience;

The Harris on Saturday.

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For the past three years we have been working collaboratively with Preston City Council, Community Gateway Association and GS Consultancy Limited. Financial support has been secured from the Arts Council of England (North West) and from local partners.

In January 2019 Preston City Mela joined the national network of 'Future Melas'. This will ensure sharing of good practice and learning at a national level thereby extending our collaborative working beyond our local catchment.

PRESTON CITY MELA OBJECTIVES

1. To promote and develop South Asian art forms in Preston and across Lancashire.
2. To showcase local artist talent and retain traditional South Asian art forms in the city.
3. To use South Asian arts, as a key enabler to promoting community cohesion, breaking down cultural differences and engaging people from all walks of life.
4. To contribute towards a vibrant and diverse city offer connecting into the city's main cultural programme.
5. To establish a quality cultural offer for Preston and Lancashire.
6. To contribute towards the positive health and wellbeing of Preston's residents and visitors.

GOVERNANCE

In September 2018 the Preston City Mela established a formal governance structure by formulating Community Interest Company [Reg No. 11620054], to progress the Mela to the next level. The new governance structure has strengthened the expertise of Preston City Mela. As a collective it brings together a range of skills and competence in event management and artist talent to assist with governance, project management and community involvement.



Chairman
Paul Kelly



Director
Chris Davis



Director
Kim Graham



Director of Performance
Abhinandana Kodande



Director of Workshops
Shreya Ghodke



Co-opted
Linda Tompkins UCLan

As the event grows year on year, the Preston City Mela continues to provide one of the City's key cultural diversity art events through its Board membership and co-opted members.

- Preston City Council bring public events management skills.
- Community Gateway bring with them experiences of community engagement and cohesion.
- Abhinadana MK Dance Academy bring experience of showcasing traditional and cultural heritage of India by teaching local people to perform Indian classical, folk and Bollywood dances.
- ArteeCraft has experience of incorporating a multidimensional, multicultural curriculum that links all form of arts.
- Gold Thread Bobbins, with experience of delivering at previous Mela programmes brings knowledge of delivering art forms inspired by Preston's cultural heritage.
- Alison – Soundskills, grounded in creative arts, using photography, music, illustration and technology to mobilise local talent.
- GS Consultancy led the work of the Mela through the Preston Mela Production Manager bringing experience of delivering South Asian arts and cultural heritage events.

The following lead officers manage the 'Project Team' and implement the Mela programme of events:

- Gulab Singh, Mela Production Manager;
- Abhinadana Kodanda, Director of Performance;
- Shreya Ghodke, Director of Workshops.

OUTREACH PROGRAMMES

OUTREACH ONE: NEWMAN COLLEGE (MARCH/APRIL 2019)

Cardinal Newman College students learn contemporary dance as part of their A-level course.



Abhinandana MK Dance had previously worked with their dance groups to deliver Bollywood workshops. The students were extremely interested in understanding the new dance form which gives an insight into South Asian culture. The Bollywood dances included storytelling, fusion elements with contemporary dances and regional folk dances from India which helped students understand not only the concept of Indian dance but also promoted community cohesion through dance

learning which was the main principle of Preston City Mela.

Abhinandana MK Dance was commissioned to work with students and dance training was implemented over a period of 4 weeks with one hour of training each week. The sessions took place over 4 Thursday afternoons for practical sessions. Students were initially assessed to understand their capability to learn intermediate or advanced Bollywood dances. Based on that, the training was one Indian dance piece each week giving them time to practice for the rest of the week. Music was provided, and the dance routine was video to enable them to practice.

Students also watched a few Bollywood dances on you tube for the students to understand the flavour of Indian Dance. Having a contemporary dance background, the students were quick in grasping the new style of dance. They had neat lines and good understanding of technique. Bollywood to them was a vibrant and a contrasting dance form which made them very inquisitive and enthusiastic to learn with a focus on the upcoming performance theme.

The students performed at a local spring fair conducted by Let's grow Preston on April 27th based on the theme of environment and spring. Colourful costumes and jewellery was provided to the performers. They were thrilled to wear those costumes and perform in front of audience.

Engaging with Newman college through *Isabel Elder*, was extremely supportive and prompt in her communication during the execution of the project. The college provided a dance studio for training sessions and the students did their homework after every class in preparation for the performance. Letters were given out to all the performers with very detailed information about the project and the event. On the day of performance, everybody turned up in time, got dressed in beautiful costumes and gave a brilliant performance.

The project opened doors for introducing South Asian culture through Indian dance to non-Asian background students. The approach needed to engage these students was slightly different as it

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required explaining them the roots of the dance form and ethos behind the development of this heritage dance. The turnaround time was very fast, but we could have done with a few extra hours to get a better learning experience.

We had to make a change to the second session of the outreach programme on the 27th April 2019 at the Spring Fair. The Newman College dance project had to be implemented early to avoid clashes with student exam times. Instead of performing at the main event the performance took place at the Spring Fair.

OUTREACH TWO: AVENHAM AND MILLER PARKS AT EASTER EGG ROLLING EVENT (22 APRIL 2019)

Preston City Mela contributed to the entertainment programme of this event by providing stage performances and workshops. The two stage performances included Bollywood dances from Abhinadana MK Dance Group with audience participation. The second performance was Vijay Venkat International Artist who played the traditional Indian flute and got children to play along to some of the tunes.

There were 7 workshop artists, who demonstrated traditional Indian arts forms, the participation was non-stop all day with people and children taking part and enjoying the activities.

- ArteeCraft Shreya Ghodke Saree Draping and Photo booth
- ArteeCraft Rakesh Ghodke Kandeel Lantern making
- Jane Blackburn Silk Painting
- Viraj Gandhi Under Water Rangoli
- ArtFull Bernie Velvick Whirling Gems
- Henna Artists Bhagya Reddy and Nirali Parekh

All the workshops were so busy, and it was quite challenging to get people participating in the activities



to complete evaluation forms. Artists were asked what they felt participants gained from their workshop. Responses highlighted that the delivery provided participants with an insight not only into Indian culture but to the particular skills and techniques required to create particular art forms. The enjoyment from those participating in the workshops was clear. From the artists' perspective, they enjoyed explaining about Indian culture and seeing the joy and excitement of those taking part. A key highlight for workshop artists was the ability to work with such a wide range of children and young people.

Based on the audience engagement with the stage programme, for next year, Mela should aim to have a one-hour slot either prior or post to the main stage event to promote the cultural experience of Mela through performances.

Both stage performers were asked to provide some feedback regarding their input on the day.

Vijay Venkat commented on how the audience started to gather once the performance began.

Being an Indian classical instrumental music, Vijay noted how it can be challenging to engage with the audience, however they engaged extremely well with the music. Children joined in towards the end of the performance, trying to hold or play the flutes, providing them with new experiences.

The Abhinadana MK Dance Group also commented on the excellent participation from all age groups. After the performance, the group encouraged individuals to take part in dances conducted by a professional. This generated enthusiasm and further interest to take part in Bollywood dancing on a regular basis.

Both performers commended the organisers for the professional arrangements which drew large audiences, providing a platform for communities to be brought closer together.

Feedback was extremely positive with participants mostly enjoying:

- learning new skills and about new cultures;
- friendliness of workshop artists;
- that children of all ages were able to participate in the activities on offer.

When asked what should be included in future Mela events, feedback mainly focused around the inclusion of food stalls, additional henna stalls as they were extremely busy on the day and more craft activities.

<http://prestoncitymela.co.uk/2019-event/egg-rolling-at-avenham-and-miller-parks>

OUTREACH THREE: LET'S GROW SPRING FAIR (27 APRIL 2019)

Preston City Mela showcased South Asian artists as part of the entertainment programme of Let's Grow Preston. Unfortunately, due to expected severe weather forecast of storm Hannah, the organisers moved the event indoors.

The performing artistic input included Bollywood dances from Abhinadana MK Dance Group, performed by Preston Newman College Group Students, which included audience participation. The second performance was Prathap Ramachandra, an international artist playing Mridangam, a two-headed percussion instrument from South Asia (India). This popular classical instrument of ancient origin is held across the lap and played on both ends with the hands and fingers. It is the primary rhythmic accompaniment in a Carnatic music ensemble.

There were 7 workshop artists, who demonstrated traditional Indian arts forms:

- ArteeCraft Shreya Ghodke Saree Draping and Photo booth
- ArteeCraft Rakesh Ghodke Kandeel Lantern making
- Arts 2 Heal Banu Adam Ebru Marbling
- Gold Thread Bobbins – Screen Printing – Kim Graham
- Mela Monsters Ben Hunt
- Henna Artists Bhagya Reddy and Manisha Chauhan



Workshop artists were asked to complete a short questionnaire and also ask participants to complete one. All workshops were extremely busy on the day making it difficult for them to deliver the workshop and request completion of evaluation forms. There was a tendency for people to experience one activity and quickly move onto the next Mela workshop.

Artists were asked what they felt participants gained from taking part in their workshop. Responses highlighted the fun and excitement generated by participating in the workshop and creating a range of diverse art forms.

From the artists' perspective, they were able to inspire individuals with Indian art and provided an opportunity to take part in art for those unlikely to do so outside of this event. Artists also felt inspired to develop further ideas and projects for future engagement events. Workshops generated overwhelming interest on the day with many participants enquiring where to buy resources and how to prepare materials. Artists noted that the event had successfully brought together a range of different age groups, generating enthusiasm for future events.

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Participant feedback was extremely positive with participants mostly enjoying:

- learning new skills and about new cultures;
- audience participation;
- friendliness of workshop artists;
- that children of all ages were able to participate in the activities on offer.

Event organisers of *Let's Grow Preston* commented that the Preston Mela Outreach team of activities and performances were exactly what the Spring Fair needed. They enhanced the event without doubt, providing activities for children and adults, diversity and total entertainment.

<http://prestoncitymela.co.uk/2019-event/lets-grow-preston-spring-fair>

OUTREACH FOUR: COMMUNITY GATEWAY ASSOCIATION (18 MAY 2019)

Community Gateway is a not-for-profit community business, set up to meet the housing needs of people of Preston and surrounding area. Community Gateway is about creating friendly communities, where people want to live.

Preston City Mela worked with Community Gateway as one of its valued partners for the Mela programme. The Outreach programme provided its residents in sheltered housing scheme to experience the artistic and traditional crafts of the South Asian heritage

There were 6 workshop artists, who demonstrated traditional Indian arts forms,

- ArteeCraft Shreya Ghodke Saree Draping and Photo booth
- ArteeCraft Rakesh Ghodke Kandeel Lantern making
- Denise Swanson Dye Versity – Creating a Lancashire Fleece
- Henna Artist Yogni Patel and Manisha Chauhan

In addition, Arian Sadr, Persian Drummer provided a short musical performance with workshop sessions.



Feedback from *Paula Lister -Outreach& Support Services Manager Community Gateway* noted what a fantastic event the Mela was, well organised lots of variety of things for people to get involved with and everybody had a fantastic time. The crafts and all the

artists were excellent, which made it so memorable for residents and community.

<http://prestoncitymela.co.uk/gateway-outreach>

OUTREACH FIVE: THE HARRIS (15 JUNE 2019)

The final outreach session of the Preston Mela programme for 2019 took place in The Harris Museum, Art Gallery and Library.

The workshops were taster sessions leading up to the Mela main event and it gave visitors the opportunity to try out some of the activities. This was mainly a family orientated event as it captures people involved who were just visiting the library and took part in the Mela activity.

There were 5 workshop artists, who demonstrated traditional Indian arts forms,

- ArteeCraft Shreya Ghodke Saree Draping and Photo booth
- ArteeCraft Rakesh Ghodke Kandeel Lantern making
- Viraj Gandhi Under Water Rangoli
- Henna Artists Shnehil Patel and Mohini Bhen Soni.



This year the workshops were advertised by the Harris through 'Eventbrite' and people were welcomed to book an allocated time. Although the numbers attending were low, feedback from both artists and participants was extremely positive and mirrored feedback captured at previous events. There was a general feeling of excitement for both participating and sharing of diverse art forms and cultural experiences.

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MELA EVENT PROGRAMME (6 July 2019)

Mela
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MAIN STAGE PROGRAMME

TIME	PERFORMANCE
11am	Jay Acharya Compete - Music Tracks
11.20am	Chendamelam - Karala Drummers
11.40am	Vijay Venkat Musikan Banasuri (2)
12 noon	The Worldwide Samba Drummers & Dancers
12.25pm	Pratheep Ramachandra - South Asian Drumming
12.45pm	Annapurna Indian Dance - Kathakars
1.15pm	Morris - Netjam
1.30pm	Anna East Ghazal Players (2)
1.40pm	Vijay Venkat Musikan Banasuri (2)
1pm	Taluk Nageshan (2) Bharatanatyam Dancers
1.30pm	Abhinandana MK Dance Academy
1pm	Arikan Saad - Fusion Drumming
1.30pm	Red Rose Ragas - Classical Music Mix
1pm	Music

PUBLIC SPACE AT THE SEASONAL MARKET

TIME	PERFORMANCE
12 noon	Diana Bayliss - Puppetry (2)
12.30pm	Chendamelam - Karala Drummers
1pm	Diana Bayliss - Puppetry (2)
1pm	Anna East Ghazal Players (2)
1pm	Anna East Ghazal Players (2)
1.30pm	Arikan Saad - Fusion Drummer

Workshops

- Henna Artist - Aneel Farook
- Gold Thread Bobbins - Kim Graham
- Artee Craft - Shrey Ghoshie
- Artee - Bernie Vanice
- Arts 2 Heal - Banu Adam
- Henna Artist - Nigali Patel
- Artee Craft - Aneel Farook
- Henna Artist - Shrey Ghoshie
- Bhaggy Rabby
- Bangal Under Water - Vinj Ganesh
- Mela Monsters - Ben Hunt
- Orchery Mill Studios - Caroline Fleming and Evelyn Rose
- Henna Artist - Manisha Chauhan
- Calligraphy Lancashire - Janice McCalland & Jean Grey
- Silk Painting - Jane Backburn
- Henna Artist - Manishi Sani
- Artee Craft - Aneel Farook
- Henna Artist - Nigali Patel

Community Organisations

- Disability Equality (NIW) Ltd
- ABL Health
- Dragonfly Holistic & Beauty
- Galloway's Society for the Blind
- Lancashire Constabulary - Hate Crime & Diversity Unit
- Lancashire Police & Crime Commissioner Office
- Sahars in Preston
- INTACT
- Community Gateway
- Let's Grow Preston
- Preston Domestic Violence Services
- Lancashire Women's Centre
- The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment - Mobile Unit
- University of Central Lancashire - Mobile Unit

This year, additional performances were showcased in the public space of the new seasonal market. This provided an opportunity to showcase Mela activity for members of the public who would not walk past the main market site, drawing them to attend the main event.

The Abhinandana MK Dance Academy performance featured a young Bollywood flashmob dance of Preston enthusiasts aged between 6 and 12 years old. These upcoming and budding dancers showed an interest in developing their dancing skills and were able to perform alongside more experienced performers. This was a great way of encouraging and showcasing local talent and contributing towards the positive health and wellbeing of Preston's people and visitors.

There was an extra bonus for the Mela programme this year as Preston Jazz Festival Organisers offered to provide a performance at no cost. *Aziz Ibrahim* is a highly accomplished, respected and world-renowned musician with an impressive back-story that has seen him working across the musical spectrum. Aziz and his team aspire to contribute to the conversation/ progressive development of how national museums, libraries and art galleries work with contemporary music artists and digital technologies. Therefore, due to the already packed stage programme, it was fitting that the performance took place within the Harris rotunda area and VIP Guest and visitors were invited to the performance!

The performance utilised modern music making technology and live guitar virtuosity to contemporize the sounds of ancient South Asian Instruments, helping to preserve the history and heritage of the Indian sub-continent, whilst also introducing the culture to new audiences. The performance aimed to contribute to the UK's understanding of the musical instruments and history of South Asia and the influence they have on the 2nd, 3rd and 4th generation British South Asian communities.

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The stage programme consisted of 14 acts made up of international, regional and local artists. More than 71 artists performed on the day.

The flag market was at full capacity with 17 different regional and local workshop stations providing free of charge activities to the public. A total of 21 artists were involved in the delivery.

Fifteen local voluntary, community, charities and public sector bodies took part in the Mela and provided extra audience participation activities. There was also a commercial food stall selling traditional Indian street food to the public.

Additional support was provided by two project workers managing the stage and ensuring that artists performances on both sites ran on time. Hassina Occasions Stewards team signposted the public to the activities and kept a watchful brief on safety and security, with support from the Police Cadets volunteers.



To demonstrate Preston City Mela's gratitude to the volunteers and the young artists who performed on the stage, we presented them with a 'Certificate of Appreciation' as a momentum for their portfolio.



Creative Communities Group, attended the event and brought with them some media students from UCLan, who captured a short video feedback of the event. These have been compiled and upload onto the main Mela Web site page for 2019.

MARKETING AND PUBLICITY

This year we used a different approach for the publicity material. Due to the number of outreach programmes committed to during April to June, it was more feasible to produce one single generic leaflet containing the Mela details, all the outreach programmes including venues and the artists taking part. This enabled a single dissemination model with a PDF version to be used through our social media networks. Three thousand leaflets were printed and provided to our collaborative partners to give additional publicity. A copy of the event material can be accessed through the main website <http://prestoncitymela.co.uk/2019-event-material>

Four pop-up banners marketing Preston City Mela were sourced and these will be used as part of the outreach programme to raise a greater awareness of Mela activities and signposting to our website.

We promoted our event through local and regional press such as Marketing Lancashire, Radio Lancashire, Blog Preston, BBC North West, and the Lancashire Evening Post. A two page full coverage of the Mela event was published by the Lancashire Evening Post on 8th July 2019. This can be accessed via the following link: <https://www.lep.co.uk/best-in-preston/outdoors/preston-mela-2019-14-photos-from-this-weekend-s-vibrant-feast-of-sound-and-colour-1-9862725>

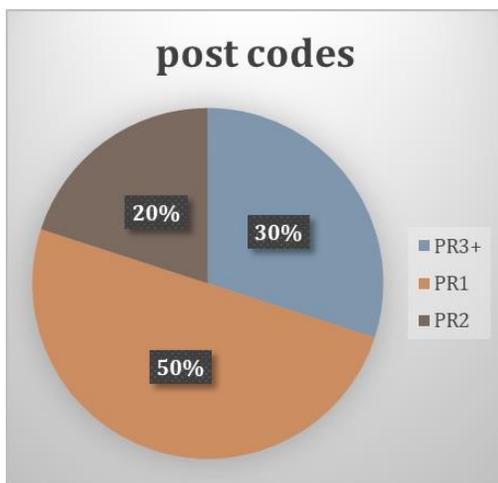
Social media accounts were created for Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. Daily profiles of each of the artists contributing to the event were posted on the Mela Facebook page two weeks leading up to the event. Over 300 people stated they would be attending the Mela through this medium.

'Certificates of Appreciation' were issued to young volunteers and performers in acknowledgement of their contribution to the events.

Invites were sent out to dignitaries and other event organisers across Lancashire and South Cumbria with a view to providing future links for collaborative working. Invites were also extended to the National Future Mela Network for organisers of Mela programmes across UK to attend Preston Mela and enhance the network experience.

PUBLIC EVALUATION

This year's public evaluation of Preston City Mela was carried out with a fun element. Visitors were invited to add their post codes to the wishing tree and score the quality of the performances by adding pompoms to the appropriate jar. We left a board to one side and were delighted to see the positive comments which were recorded, these were a true reflection on the event. A total of 54 visitor evaluations were completed.



Feedback captured through the board included:

- In one word EXCELLENT
- Lovely to meet the cultures
- Fabulous event
- It is a great place to be here
- Lovely event. Need more veggie food stalls and better advertising x
- Really emotional to see the community celebrating & dancing together with great inclusivity
- Love the colours and diversity
- Brilliant to see everyone together, mixing and smiling 😊 feeling the love



When asked to provide feedback on the performances at this year's event, 92% rated these as Very Good, 6% Good and 2% OK. The majority of members of the public surveyed were transient shoppers and passing by. Some had previously attended the event and heard about the event through our social media channels.

Following the event, a parent of one of the young performers emailed Preston City Mela. Feedback such as this is extremely welcoming.

For me the key highlight for the event was the variety and mixture of multi-cultural south Asian program which were very entertaining. The performances / stalls / art / food all showcased the variety and beauty of the subcontinent with rich culture and vibrant colours. The fact that parents and children were involved throughout the day was heart-warming to see which allowed people of all ages & all cultures to experience and learn different cultures at the same time. Additionally, allowing both performers from a variety of ages to showcase their work was fantastic, especially for the young performers where confidence building is a very important for future skill.

I feel we should consider taking this as a cultural event and all replicating the same event at other Lancashire Towns. Lancaster, Blackburn, Blackpool etc. It will help grow the event and encourage cross town participation.

WORKSHOP AND STALLHOLDER EVALUATION

Feedback from eleven of the seventeen workshop artists were captured. When asked what they felt participants gained from their workshop, there was an overwhelming positive response. Taking part in art forms that many people may have never come across before helped generate a sense of appreciation and enthusiasm for learning about these and cultures. Workshops attracted participants of all ages and many of them were able to take home products. Artists enjoyed meeting new people and sharing what they had to offer. There was a sense of unity where people were able to come together amid colour, music, dance and food. The interaction seemed to foster love and respect for one another's cultures.

The questionnaires generated great new ideas for future showcasing at Mela events such as cooking lessons, a lantern parade and further showcasing of art forms for example tie and dye, kite making and creating a large sculpture or carnival style costumes.

Community organisations also promoted local services at the event. This provided them with an opportunity to engage with large audiences, often from diverse communities and highlight the range of service provision available to them. Some organisations commented on enjoying the sense of being part of a diverse community and highlighted the general buzz, laughter and entertainment experienced by members of the public, stallholders and artist performing on stage. Ideas for future Mela events included community organisations coming together to deliver a joint community art project which would create a lasting installation.

PERFORMERS & GUESTS FEEDBACK

Stage performers contributed to the vibrant atmosphere of the day which saw people of all ages and walks of life coming together to enjoy the day.

I would like to congratulate you for organising such a great event. I enjoyed performing for the wonderful audience...The dancing space is big and beautiful; dance floor would be more suitable (I guess you can hire it). The arts and crafts were fantastic as well. Thank you again for inviting me to be part of the celebration.

Priya Sundar, Morris-Natyam

It was absolute pleasure to participate in the well organised Mela, excited as a performer and amazed as a participant. The line was well rounded to present south Asian arts and culture. Before the event my Mexican Flamenco dancer friend wished to go back soon after our performance. But the mela had such a 'feel good' feeling that we stayed back till the end. It was a joyful vibrant celebration and the crowd was ecstatic.

Charu Asthana, Dancer - Annapurna dance company

The most exciting part was the varied crowd with all different age groups. It was interesting to see the diversity of line ups and transition from one performance to another. It is so very important to have this kind of festival as some people may never have seen certain instruments of dance forms.

Prathap Ramachandra, International Artist

This is a great opportunity to take part in a multicultural event. The showcasing of Persian drumming as part of the event brings a different contrast and attraction to the programme of performances. It has been great to share something from my side for people and to see everyone expressing themselves.

Arian Sadr, Persian Drummer

India has a variety of different cultures and dance forms. Our performance provided an opportunity to showcase some of these and to show the public how different stories can be told through dance.

Phoebe, Dancer – Annapurna dance company

FEEDBACK FROM VIPS & POTENTIAL PARTNERS

It was a lovely day today. The Mela was the greatest possible fun, a superb spectacle enjoyed by all. Congratulations to you, all your helpers and the performers for splendid entertainment in an excellent atmosphere. Thank you very much indeed for inviting Ann and me. We enjoyed lunch on the Harris terrace, and meeting all your other guests. Well done to everyone concerned.

The Lord Shuttleworth KG KCVO

You work so hard and it is enormously appreciated by all of us who are privileged to be included in your party as well, I'm sure, by everyone else! Every year seems to be special and this one was no exception. We were blessed with the weather (we always are!) and all the performers were amazing. They have unbelievable energy and must be extremely fit! I loved the experience of wearing a sari although I felt Lynne and Christine looked rather more elegant in theirs!! Thank you for your amazing hospitality, you looked after us so well and we felt incredibly lucky to have been part of it all.

The Lady Ann Shuttleworth

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Dear Gulab and Board Members,

On behalf of the Directors and Organising Group of Kendal Torchlight Carnival I really want to say thank you for your kind invitation to join in the Mela on Saturday. It was a fabulous day and a celebration of a community and cultures that we can all be rightly proud of.

We met some wonderful people, full of passion, energy and creativity, committed to sharing their experience with a wide range of local people and visitors.

The workshops were each run by people with a real desire to pass on skills and share stories between cultures. Hundreds of people were coming away from the day with great memories, new friends and mementos of the day.

The dancers, musicians and singers transported us around the world and enabled us to enter a new set of experiences while still in the familiar surroundings of the city square.

It was good to be alongside the police and armed services to realise how important they are to protect and preserve the safety and security of the community and cultures that we were all valuing during the Mela. The dignitaries and authorities we important to see and be included as their leadership and example broadens the reach of what the Mela is achieving.

The food was again excellent and a real sign of the generosity of spirit that the Mela embraced and celebrated.

The organisation was top-notch, clearly a great deal of thought and preparation had been put into the event, a lot of hard work in the fundraising and recruitment of volunteers and the creativity of the performers and artists. It was great to see the organisation Directors with their sleeves rolled up and hard at work serving the community all day – much respect. You were clearly on the ball through-out the day, checking details, supporting volunteers, looking for creative opportunities, taking time to talk to everyone. Very well done

You can probably see I was very impressed with what I have seen of the Preston Mela and very much looking forward to working with you as you make your contribution to the Kendal Torchlight Carnival on the 28th September. We will be in touch before then to finalise the details.

With every good wish and a shared commitment to bringing people together in creative community.

***Craig Russell, Torchlight Creative Director & Team Leader
Kendal Torchlight Carnival***

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Preston City Mela believes that its ethos of cultural activities for community cohesion is strongly rooted in a “social return on investment”. This ensures we make it a priority to promote upcoming local artistic talents and skills alongside national and international artists. This helps build confidence and gives exposure to new emerging art forms. Preston City Mela also ensures investment stays within the local economy by procuring for infrastructure at a local level.

Preston City Mela’s model of delivery cuts across the four strands of ‘Capital’.

- With ‘*Social Capital*’ we help artists and other providers to develop relationships, networking, links, sharing ideas and influencing the Mela offer.
- Through ‘*Cultural Capital*’ we are able to share our commitment to showcasing South Asian Arts. We value its worth and heritage, use it as tool to promote inclusion, cohesion, learning and sharing experiences. The process also values equality, respect, dignity, trust, mutuality and reciprocity.
- Through ‘*Economic Capital*’ Preston City Mela is able to build people and community capacity to engage with new art forms, get involved, generate an economical value for the City’s business and status in the cultural offer.
- Our programme delivery of both the outreach and main Mela programme is person entered, building on ‘*Human Capital*’. This helps grow artists’ and others skill base and abilities, knowledge transfer, confidence building and self-esteem.

It is important, however, not to become complacent and reflect on learning and improvement for the future. With this in mind, the following recommendations are put forward to the Preston City Mela Board. Some of the recommendations listed below are taken from the early work undertaken as part of the research and development project.

1. To secure a range of alternative funding to help with organisational development and thus ensuring sustainability and governance.
2. In order to increase the Mela offer, there is a requirement to ensure further funding and in-kind support from potential collaborative partners.
3. To continue to identify and support artists who are from South Asian heritage, to help promote this talent across mainstream arts and cultural provision.

4. To create an '*Associated Artist Membership*' for local artists with a Lancashire postcode, in order to form a pool of South Asian artists committed to working with the Community Interest Company.
5. To ensure any artists likely to work on a one-to-one basis with young people or vulnerable adults have a DBS check completed before the commission is offered.
6. To revisit project team workers' roles and responsibilities to reflect the new changes and approach; and consider the recruitment of a business administrator.
7. To appoint in the first instance, a highly skilled Business Administrator, subject to funding and make this a paid role within the Community Interest Company. The Business Administrator will have three key functions:
 - Service the Mela Board;
 - Manage financial transactions;
 - Lead on social media.
8. Agree to incorporate a new outreach programme, in collaboration with other event organisers as part of its Mela offer for 2020.

PRESTON CITY MELA

OVERVIEW OF MELA 2019 BUDGET

Income

<u>Organisation (cash)</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Actual</u>
Preston City Council Grant	£2,000	£2,000
Community Gateway Grant	£2,000	£2,000
Arts Council of England (North West)	£26,375	£26,375
Total Cash Available	£30,375	£30,375

In-Kind Support

Preston City Council	£9,000	£9,000
Community Gateway	£3,000	£3,000
Preston City Mela Community Interest Company	£4,000	£4,000
Mela Project Team (15 days) +10	£2,625	£4,375
Total	£49,000	£50,750

Expenditure

<u>Programme Area</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>
Performance Artists	£6,500	£6,300
Workshops Artists	£8,800	£8,950
Marketing & Publicity	£1,500	£1,502
Overheads & Project Management	£13,575	£13,600
Total	£30,375	£30,352