

Burgess Hill Teddy Bears Picnic

1 July 2024

11.30am - 2.00pm

St John's Park

Budget: £500 from the Lions
£500 from BHTC

Breakdown: £320 - Inflatable play park & ball pit
£100 - First aider
£300 - Train
£37.50 - Publicity
£8.00 - Hire of 6 radios
£20.96 -Fruit for attendees
£15.60 -Refreshment for volunteers

Spent: £802.06

Money from ice cream sales: £100.40

Aim:

The Teddy Bears Picnic was a free event aimed at families with babies and pre-schoolers. For the third year in a row, we organized the event alongside The King's Church and Central Sussex Rotary, with funding from Burgess Hill District Lions. Prior to Covid, it was run by West Sussex County Council, but they no longer had the capacity to plan it.

Number of pitches providing an activity: 18

Number of attendees: Estimated 400+ with 212 registrations, as below;

Adult	Aged Under 2	Aged Over 2
85	46	81

Attending with;		Where did you hear about the event;	
Parent	52	Social media	30
Grandparent	22	Noticeboard	8
Childminder	9	Google search	0
Preschool/nursery	1	Town Council website	3
Other -please state	1-Aunt	Newspaper	0
		About Town magazine	3
		Word of mouth	8
		Other -please state	2 -Walking past 4 -Group attending 2 -Been before 1 -Help Point
			1 -Leaflet 1 -Correx on bandstand 1 -Letter (live opposite)

Publicity:

The event was advertised:

- On all the notice boards across Burgess Hill
- In the Mid Sussex Times, on the Thursday prior to the event
- Correx boards next to the cricket pavilion and on the bandstand on Church Walk
- A banner at the McDonalds roundabout

- The Help Point window
- Across the Town council social media pages with several posts (where possible these tagged those involved and were also shared by other organisations to various pages)
- Several groups attending created organic posts
- On the Town Council website, with a dedicated page including an event rundown of all the available activities
- Via the event mailing list, including to schools and preschools
- On the BBC Radio Sussex the morning of the event, by way of an interview with Cllr Janice Henwood

Event breakdown:

Various groups attended and provided entertainment and activities. All the local businesses attending did so for free, but were asked to provide a free or low budget activity in return for advertisement of their business. We allowed them to have paid activities, but they were asked to ensure the costs were low. We paid for the inflatable play park and train from the budget.

Free activities to the public on the day included;

- Soft play, crafts and parachute song time led by The King's Church,
- Soft play provided by The Triangle Leisure Centre (the Town Council Maintenance Team assisted with the transport of the items),
- Inflatable slide and ball pit, supplied by Brighton Bouncy Castles,
- Free plaster painting by Plaster2Paint,
- Information and sensory toys provided by West Sussex County Council Early Years team,
- Information on singing classes and singing along sessions from Westend Wigglers,
- Football 'have a go' area by Little Kickers,
- Story and rhyme time sessions led by Burgess Hill Library,
- Storytime area and story sessions by Gobbledy Books,
- The fire engine attended, left due to an emergency but then returned,
- Rainbow Tots at St Edwards' brought along a variety of sensory activities,
- 'Guess how many ducks in the jar' game with Crest Swim School,
- The year six students from London Meed brought some activities, thought of by the students,
- Colouring sheets from the HAF team and have a chat about their holiday activities and food programme,
- Building Hope had sensory trays,
- Mid Sussex Model Engineering Club provided the ride on mini locomotive,

There were a handful of budget activities;

- 50p to play 'pick the lucky duck' for a chance to win swimming lessons with Crest Swim School
- Time 4 Children raised funds for the charity with games, 50p-£1 a go
- Plaster2paint had an arts and crafts sale
- £2.50 book sale from at Gobbledy Books
- Park View Kiosk was open and their ice cream truck attended

The Burgess Hill District Lions mascot was around for photographs during the day too.

Central Sussex Rotary provided marshals for both the start and end of the event and a refreshment table for volunteers and stall holders.

Feedback:

We created a QR code which is available at the events to scan as well as in notice boards afterwards. The code is linked to a Google form which we can keep adding events to without changing the code itself. The form simply asks what event you have attended, 'what went well' and 'it would be even better if...'

Here are some of the responses received for this event;

What went well?

- Lovely atmosphere, stalls, shade supplied
- Loads to do!
- Had a great range of free and fun activities.
- My 1-year-old enjoyed the sensory play, toys, soft play and singing. I thought it was a great event with lots of good stalls and kids' music.
- It was a really brilliant event, we really enjoyed it

It would be even better if...

- More food stalls and local companies -cozy cubs for example
- Train queue was a bit long and we ended up missing out!
- I was unsure on the layout to be honest - you could easily avoid the business/charities as they weren't really included in the circle.
- Nothing

We also had lots of lovely verbal feedback on the day from attendees.

I emailed the pitch holders and asked them to provide feedback, I received the following;

- **Time4Children** -Thank you for having us along it was a really great event. So lovely to see so many people out and about and we spoke to quite a few people about what we do. I think we would have benefited from being a bit closer to the action!
- **Gobbledy books** -Well, the first thing to say is that everything was really well organised and friendly just like last year and the preparation in advance really was noticed on the day. Congratulations on a terrific job! In terms of improvements for next year, the only thing I can come up with personally is that I could have benefited from a slightly earlier load in slot (even though I was 10 mins late for my one due to traffic!) as it is quite a long set up. I did manage to get everything out in time though. The other thing I was aware of is that I had to extend my stall outwards a little bit to get all the books on display. If a corner spot was available next time (which I think I had last year) I wouldn't had to have done this. The parents were really positive about the books and seemed really pleased I was there. My story time sessions were quite casual but the parents appreciated the reading blanket and I offered a story to customers that were browsing if they wanted one, which seemed to work well. Again, really good work. I would love to attend again next year if you'll have me.
- **St Edwards' Rainbow Tots** -We had a great time. I think we were very lucky with our location between West End Wigglers and King's Church as both drew people to our location on the field. Perhaps spread out your 'event' stalls so that when people are drawn to their locations for the singing, games, stories etc, the surrounding stalls benefit. I was really pleased to see that you had toilets other than the regular St John's toilets open. Great idea to have free tea and coffee for stall holders, my team really appreciated that. Very glad you had some shelter / shade in the middle, could this be extended even further next time? Does your stall, registering families, maybe need to go in the middle to provide more shelter and also catch the attention of more people? A very well organised event, we would love to be a part of it next year too please.
- **Plaster2paint** -Awesome friendly organising team! Our row of stalls was a little disconnected from the main event area this year, behind the train area. We still had over 80 little painters - but much less than half of last year's figure as many parents just weren't walking over to us. If the train had been running the other way - with the queue starting "our end" - people would have seen us. Having said that - we LOVE the event! See you next year!!

- **Brighton Bouncy Castles** -amazing job as usual, possibly a larger castle as it was quite busy for the event, otherwise was spot on.
- **Mid Sussex Model Engineering Club** -It was a very enjoyable event: we (the railway) were in the right place (the only bit that's flat enough), we were kept busy throughout and the customers were a cheerful bunch, many of them interested in the locos and railway. Add the weather, and we had a great day!
- **Westend Wigglers** -Thank you so much for inviting me to be a part of the Teddy bears picnic again this year. It was a lovely event and it seemed to be really well attended with everyone having a nice time. I saw lots of my Wigglers attendees there who said very positive things about it and how nice it is having events aimed at pre-schoolers. From my point of view, I think it worked really well having allocated slots for performing or activities and I think it gave everyone an opportunity to do their activities with everyone's focus. I think the train was a lovely addition!
- **Hope** -Thanks for all your efforts in organising us. It was a valuable event. My feedback from a Hope perspective would reflect what I think, from your email, you may have already had in terms of it being a lot quieter where we were. People can either on their way in or home and didn't linger as we were on the edge of everything. Nobody sat with their picnic near us so at times we were very quiet.

I met with The King's Church (TKC) and Central Sussex Rotary (CS Rotary) for a debrief after the event and the following was discussed;

- Both felt the event was good and was well attended
- The preferred location was St John's Park, but with a slightly different layout.
- Investigate hiring entertainers in costumes for next year's event -such as princesses and superheroes
- Hiring the disco dome inflatable as an addition and hire the inflatable play park as we did in 2023
- CS Rotary would like to do a volunteer refreshment stall again in 2025, TKC thought it worked well and was a useful addition
- Enquire about Lightening McQueen car and Mac track attending
- Have more gazebos for shaded area -this worked well
- Place Councillors stall more centrally to capture data better
- Create a timetable of sessions again in 2025
- Keep the stall holder numbers at roughly the same
- Hire the train again and keep it as a free activity by paying with funds from the budget
- Suggested date for 2025 -Monday 7th July

Evaluation:

Planning of the event was a good example of partnership organisations coming together to plan a successful event. Having the access to the different community reach of each group made it easier to publicize the event to a wider community too, such as The King's Church inviting their parent and toddler groups to attend and Burgess Hill Library with their story session attendees.

The use of Central Sussex Rotary volunteers as marshals was invaluable, as they are well practiced and ensure the safe movement of all the vehicles efficiently. The introduction of the refreshment stall was well received by the volunteers/stall holders, and I would look to do this again in the future if Central Sussex Rotary have the capacity to manage it during the event.

Having businesses provide free activities kept the event budget low and meant there was a good mix of activities. There was a full rundown of who was attending on our website and it was set out in the several social media posts too. I also, where possible, tagged the businesses attending in social media posts. This then allowed us to support the businesses with trade on the day, as well as prior to the event and in the future. The posts would also have reached people who were not attending the event but were still interested in the businesses, allowing us to support them further.

The screenshot below shows all the Facebook posts, including the post event post;

Title	Date published ↓	Reach ↕ 1k	Likes and reactions ↕ 1k	Comments ↕ 1k	Shares ↕ 1k
It was lovely to see so many people attending the Burgess Hill ... Burgess Hill Town Council	Boost 2 July 14:27	1.4K Reach	20 Reactions	6 Comments	8 Shares
We can't wait to see you and your pre-schoolers tomorrow (1 J... Burgess Hill Town Council	Boost 30 June 17:12	1.5K Reach	11 Reactions	5 Comments	4 Shares
For The Burgess Hill Teddy Bears Picnic on Monday 1st July, we... Burgess Hill Town Council	Boost 28 June 10:00	1.6K Reach	5 Reactions	0 Comments	0 Shares
The return of The Burgess Hill Teddy Bears Picnic is nearly upo... Burgess Hill Town Council	Boost 26 June 10:28	3.9K Reach	4 Reactions	0 Comments	6 Shares
We are looking forwards to welcoming West End Wiggles . Ho... Burgess Hill Town Council	Boost 21 June 10:15	1K Reach	2 Reactions	1 Comments	1 Shares
On Monday 1st July come and meet Time 4 Children Charity Burgess Hill Town Council	Boost 17 June 14:01	1.6K Reach	8 Reactions	1 Comments	5 Shares
On Monday 1st July, join us in St John's Park for The Burgess H... Burgess Hill Town Council	Boost 14 June 11:45	1.3K Reach	3 Reactions	0 Comments	2 Shares
Join us for the return of The Burgess Hill Teddy Bears Picnic on... Burgess Hill Town Council	Boost 11 June 17:02	5.8K Reach	8 Reactions	2 Comments	15 Shares

Pre event, the Facebook posts reached over 16.7K, with 33 shares across all the posts. The post event post went out on Tuesday 2nd and reached 1.4K with 8 shares. This shows clear support for the businesses.

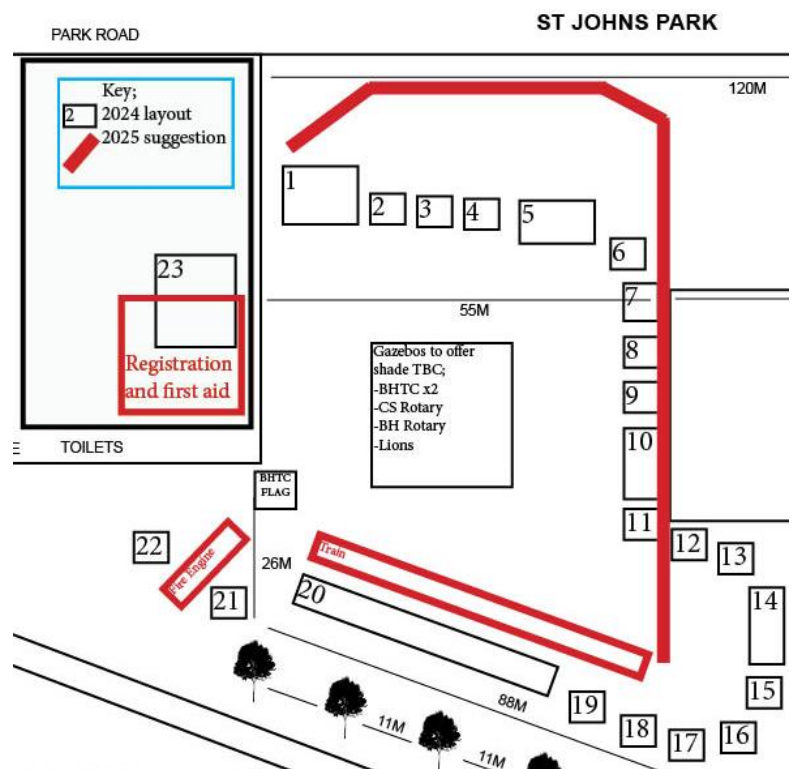
The event was very well attended and the use of some gazebo to provide shade helped to bring people to sit in the picnic area. I would like to increase this offering in the future and this would help if it were to rain too, but it was tricky to obtain gazebos to allow us to do this. It was discussed if a marquee would be useful to provide shelter but this would significantly increase the cost of the event, and realistically the only way we would be able to provide one is through sponsorship.

The layout was quite restricted because of the cricket infield and train location, and I trialled extending the layout to loop round at the bottom of the train, but I hadn't planned for the train to be as far out as it was.

The area at end of the train felt a lot less busy as no one chose to set up their 'picnic' in this area but people did look at the stalls there and join in with the library sessions.

The registration tent didn't work too well where it was placed either and I would like to place it next to the pavilion next year, alongside the first aider.

I would also like to have the train back again in 2025, as it was so busy so I would readjust the layout for as suggested in the graphic.



Our other option is to consider a change of location and hold it at a different site, either Fairfield Recreation Ground or at World's End. There is less limitation in regards to layout with both these sites but at Fairfield we would definitely need to hire toilets, including a baby change. We would need to consider how people would travel to the event, including parking as both sites have limited parking options.

In 2022 we had a timetable of activities but did not for 2023, as we weren't sure how well it had worked. It was decided a timetable was preferred, so this year we reverted to a timetable for the following sessions;

- Burgess Hill Library rhyme time and sensory story
- The King's Church parachute song time
- Westend Wiggle's singalongs

- Gobbledy Books story times

Some of the sessions overlapped to ensure no one activity was swamped with people, and all sessions were held at their pitches, this worked well, minus the parachute which needed more space. The year 6s from London Mead helped with the parachute time which was lovely.

No PA system was hired for this event, as it was deemed to be unnecessary after 2022's event, and I am still of that thought process, so would not be looking to hire one in 2025. Handheld radios are sufficient for this event, to aid with lost children and first aid incidents, of which we had none over the 3 years we have held the event.

The registration stall offered fruit to those who came over, this was well received but we did have some fruit left as not everyone visited the stall, and of those that did visit not everyone took some. I would look to do this again next year but, as suggested above, change the location to ensure footfall was higher to the stall. The fruit did not go to waste though and was gifted to the pantry for their members.

Overall, it was a great event and the footfall was amazing. I am happy to keep the same format going forwards, as this event is aimed at a very particular age group, we will always find that new people are attending and that children will 'age out' so we are at less risk of this event becoming stale if we do repeat it in the same style.

We are grateful to the Burgess Hill District Lions for supporting the event annually and will be approaching them to fund the event again in 2025. A thank you was issued immediately after the event to the Lions

Considerations for 2025;

- Look for marquee sponsorship, to provide covered area
- Location change
- Hiring the train again
- Additional or higher capacity inflatable

Kayleigh Davidson

Event, Communications and Administration Officer

July 2024

