



HIKE FOR HIGHLIGHTS REPORT: JUNE 2018

HIGHLIGHTS RURAL TOURING

1. Summary

Hike for Highlights was the first fundraising event trialled by Highlights Rural Touring in June 2018. The idea stemmed from a conversation about a fundraiser that would link each of the halls across the three counties of Cumbria, County Durham and Northumberland...at one stage we had been planning that it would be a relay over the fields! The conversations began in spring 2017 with the promoters at a training day where the name Hike for Highlights was produced. Over the next few months it was decided by committee that this should be a sponsored walk, with a cream tea and a performance that would link it back into what we do best – bringing performance to local areas.

On 3rd of June 2018 11 venues took part in Hike for Highlights, raising over £4000, £3900 of which was eligible for catalyst match funding from the Arts Council.

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|---|---|
| Allendale Village Hall, NE (<i>Walk & Tea</i>) | Hepscott Village Hall, NE (<i>Walk & Tea</i>) |
| Arnside EI, CA (<i>Walk & Tea</i>) | Orton Market Hall, CA (<i>Walk</i>) |
| Alston Town Hall, CA (<i>Walk</i>) | Shap Memorial Hall, CA (<i>Walk</i>) |
| Boldron Village Hall, DL (<i>Tea</i>) | Skirwith Village Hall, CA (<i>Tea</i>) |
| Castle Carrock Waston Institute, CA (<i>Walk & Tea</i>) | Wingates Village Hall, NE (<i>Walk & Tea</i>) |
| Crosby Ravensworth Village Hall, CA (<i>Walk & Tea</i>) | |

2. About the Hike

There were three things that sold it to the promoters 1) we would give 50% of the profits for every tea back to the village hall 2) they would get a free performance – a no risk opportunity to attract new people who might not have attended a Highlights performance before and 3) if all 60+ halls in our scheme signed up, we would be breaking a Guinness world record. This combined with our deadline of raising 42,000 by August 2018 as part of our Catalyst funding.

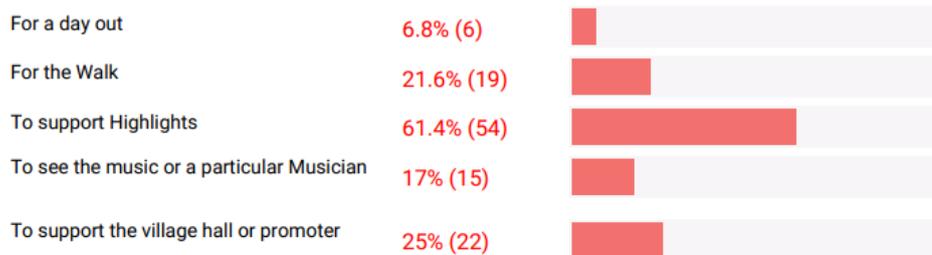
At the autumn promoters days we pitched the idea to 50 promoters, and sent out invites to express interest in the event by the beginning of December. They were given options to choose to whether they wanted to organise a walk or a cream tea, but in the most part the ones who joined were the ones who wanted to do both, or with a twist such as pony rides or added performances. In the end volunteers were limited through availability and resource to 11 promoters; 9 in Cumbria, 2 In Northumberland and 1 in County Durham.

| | |
|---|--|
| We provided: Press Website Marketing Balloons Bunting Free performances Prize Draw Infrastructure/ Templates Support on the day | Halls provided: Space Refreshments Staff Walk leaders Walk routes Risk Assessment |
|---|--|

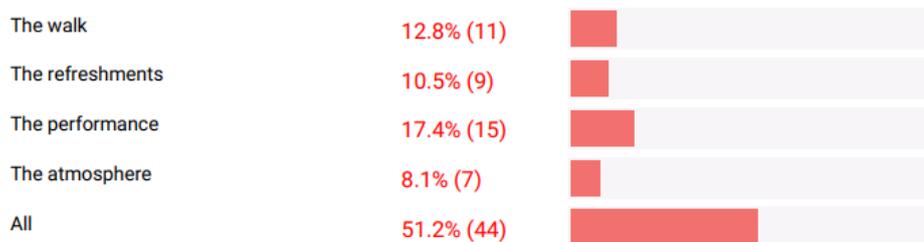
3. Attendance

The event received a positive response, despite being a hard sell due to the number of components to explain. Halls that took part operated on an average of 61% capacity and reported a very enthusiastic response.

2. What was your primary reason for attending the event?



3. What was your favorite element of today's event?



Key Trends:

13.6% had not heard of Highlights before this event and 17% had not attended a Highlight event prior to this day, which indicates that this type of event could be good for advertising to new audiences members.

Cumbrian attendees were more likely to come 'to support Highlights' whilst Northumberland Supporters came mostly to walk, or support the village hall promoter.

5. Response - Local Promoters

Whilst the majority of the promoters enjoyed the day, there was a sense that it was hard work and beyond the usual ask that we make for a Highlights performance, it required more organisation and marketing than the average show. Halls on average made £80-£100 after recouping expenses.

General thoughts:

- Bunting and Balloons went down well
- Excellent audience response
- There needed to be more marketing,
- It would have been better if more halls had been involved.
- Big ask of the promoter – didn't realise it would be so tiring.

Majority of halls commented 'probably' or 'maybe' at the prospect of doing it again.

6. Marketing

33% of attendees found out through Highlights or a Highlights event

48% of Attendees found out directly from the promoter or village hall

18% Found out through words of Mouth, but didn't specify who.

The event, had a large reach across the three counties, with Hike for Highlights posts hitting 7000 people and an average of 9% engagement. Online advertising did not seem to translate into direct attendees, though we do not have the analytics to identify how much traffic there was to the Hike for Highlights website. However, with an additional 2400 people watching the videos we shared, it would be interesting to see if see an increase in long term supporters.

We produced:

A5 leaflets

A4 Posters

A Frames

A website (www.hikefor.highlightsnorth.co.uk)

Press releases (c.2-3 picked up in each county)

Radio Interview (Cumbria)

General comments were that there needed to be more marketing, and that it needed a bigger feature on our main Highlights web page, which our system wouldn't allow without more investment in web development.

In future, being able to arrange events to launch with the brochure release would be an added bonus.

7. Income and Expenditure

| Expenditure | | Income | |
|--------------------|------------|------------------------------------|------------|
| Marketing | £ 149.73 | Sponsorship & donations | £ 2,694.52 |
| Performances | £ 570.00 | Income from Teas | £ 1,023.50 |
| Volunteer Expenses | £ 258.23 | Prize Draw | £ 241.20 |
| Prize Draw | £ 64.00 | Gift Aid | £ 283.00 |
| Branding | £ 130.00 | | |
| Printing & postage | £ 78.86 | | |
| Thanks yous | £ 46.33 | | |
| | | | |
| | £ 1,297.15 | | £ 4,242.22 |

£3718.02 of funds raised are eligible for match from the Arts Council, bringing our total income to **£7960.22**

8. Key Learnings:

In the lead up, we found that to walk from village to village wasn't achievable, so this merged into a local circular walk using the hall as hub. This made it easier logistically, but did mean that we were then limited in sponsorship as it wasn't far enough to warrant big bucks. The highest sponsorships came when the person themselves was advocating for the highlights cause, not for the act of walking/ taking part.

- The event specific Hike for Highlights website didn't work - the time investment required did not convert to additional people
- People struggled with setting up total giving pages, this was too complicated
- In future we would increase the price of the tea and performance and reduce the numbers of extra's (like the prize draw) to make it easier for staff.
- Ensure the event can be run by two people and try to reduce the workload on promoters
- Create bespoke posters to each element of the day (if multiple elements) so that it is easier to sell.
- A longer lead in time to allow it to be included in the season brochure.
- Have either the Tea and Performance, OR the Hike and the Tea, not all three, as this did complicate the message.

9. Future fundraising events:

The event additionally provided opportunity for a short survey asking what audience would support in future.

82% said they would feel positive about the introduction of further fundraising events, whilst we are unlikely to repeat an exact replica of the event next year, it may be that we develop certain elements after taking on board this year's learnings.