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**Kensington Community Festival - Community Building
Opportunities Review**
DECEMBER 2021

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2. Project overview

The Kensington Community Festival (KCF) started as a celebration of Housing Week in 2008 to showcase the diversity of residents living in the newly redeveloped public housing estate. Its purpose was to be a forum for building connections, fostering inclusiveness and celebrating cultural diversity within Kensington. Over the subsequent 11 years the Festival grew in size and popularity, but without a corresponding growth in funding and resources.

Unison Housing as the event organiser receives financial support from City of Melbourne and the Victorian Government's Festivals and Events Program. This funding is largely allocated to infrastructure and entertainment costs. Event management is provided in-kind by Unison. The Kensington Community Network, local organisations and resident groups also provide in-kind support.

An internal review of the Festival by Unison in 2016 identified that the ongoing growth of the Festival was unsustainable. Going forward Unison wants to focus its community development resources onto more sustainable community building events and opportunities.

The purpose of this Review is to develop a strategic plan that details potential future community building activities (that may or may not include the KCF) that Unison can deliver throughout the year that have similar outcomes to the KCF but without the resource intensiveness of a whole day event and the associated risks and compliance measures.

The Review will also identify potential future options for the KCF to occur in an alternative format.

This Review has been informed by consultation with the wider Kensington community as well as targeted consultation with the Kensington Community Network (KCN), Flemington Kensington Rotary Art Show and the Kensington Traders Association. The consultation methods and feedback are outlined below.

3. Community Survey

A survey was developed to help identify the elements of the KCF that residents value the most (refer Appendix 1). This survey was administered online and promoted via:

- KCF Facebook and Instagram
- Unison Facebook
- Waste Wisdoms newsletter – distributed on-line and in print to Unison tenants
- Unison email to private tenants
- Kensington Neighbourhood House Facebook
- Community WhatsApp Parent Group coordinated by Marwo Salat
- KCN member organisations

A paper copy of the survey was translated into Mandarin and distributed to members of the Chinese Friendship Association.

A second survey was developed to get input from children and young people. This was in the form of an interactive powerpoint presentation which was administered by the Kensington Neighbourhood House and the Venny Inc to groups of children on line during lockdown. This survey failed to get any meaningful input as most of those who participated didn't recall attending the Festival which was last held March 2019.

An in-person survey was then administered by The Venny Inc staff over the course of two weeks in November once lockdown restrictions had eased. The aim of this survey was to find out what type of Festival activities children and young people enjoy.

3.1. Who responded to the Community Survey

A total of 73 individual responses were received. Of those that responded:

- 71% were female / 28% male / 1% other
- There was a reasonably good spread of age groups except for people aged under 24.
- Country of birth was largely in line with the demographics of Kensington (46% Australia, 15% Chinese, 11% Somali, 8% Ethiopian). The one notable group missing is Vietnamese born residents.
- 59% had previously attended the Festival

A separate survey aimed at children and young people was administered at the Venny in order to address this gap (Refer Appendix 2). A total of 30 children aged 8-15 participated in the face to face survey that was administered at the Venny.

3.2. What did they say - Adults

The community survey listed 13 elements of the KCF and asked respondents to rank these in order of importance.

The top five most valued elements were:

- Celebrates cultural diversity
- Safe and welcoming
- Music and entertainment
- Activities for all ages
- Feel more connected to my community / brings the whole community together

The three least valued elements were:

- Local business expo
- Craft activities
- Stalls selling products

In summary residents value the Kensington Community Festival because it celebrates cultural diversity and brings the whole community together. They enjoy the music and entertainment and the fact that there are activities for all ages. The Festival is safe and welcoming.

The survey also asked respondents to identify what else is important to incorporate into a community festival. Responses can be grouped into the following categories:

- **Active participation** – individuals have the opportunity to play a larger part in the Festival (eg. Races or competitions like kite flying, all ages choir, sports matches, go cart race, sunflower competition, garden show)

- **Participation by more community groups/organisations on the day** – reference was made to Kelly School of Dance, Meet Up groups, soccer, hockey, health and education, demonstrations of community activities. A few responses also noted the need for more youth activities.
- **Enhancements** – everyone wears a name tag; displaying photos and videos from past Festivals, prizes, more food options.

3.3. What did they say – Children and Young People

A poster with pictures of 13 different activities from previous festivals was presented to various groups of children in-site at the Venny over the course of two weeks in November. They were asked “If you went to a Festival what would be your top 3 favourite things to do.” A 14th option presented was “your own ideas”. 30 children provided feedback.

The top five most popular elements in order of popularity were:

- Delicious Food (over half of respondents had this in their top 3)
- Wildlife display
- Animal Farm
- Competitions with prizes (this was not a pictured activity and includes responses such as; go cart races, ugly dog competitions, remote control car races)
- Dancing (this includes children performing, talent competitions, dance workshops)

Refer to Appendix 2 for complete survey responses.

3.4. Conclusions drawn from Community Surveys

Residents value seeing, experiencing and celebrating all that Kensington has; it’s cultural diversity, it’s many different community and sporting groups, it’s artists and entertainers and those passionate about making a greener Kensington (and world). The KCF is a celebration of what exists in Kensington.

Whole of community celebrations need to be informed by the whole community and involve everyone (residents, organisations, services, groups and clubs) who is willing and able to participate. Everyone is welcome.

Children and young people want to be involved and take part in activities as well as experience the things that are traditionally offered at Festivals and Events.

4. Kensington Community Network (KCN) Consultation

4.1. Who participated

Two identical standalone workshops were held 30 August and 3 September 2021 to discuss ideas for transitioning the KCF from Unison to the KCN. These workshops were attended by representatives from the following organisations:

- City of Melbourne (Community Engagement Team and Ageing and Inclusion)
- Kensington Association
- Kensington Children's Childcare Cooperative
- Kensington Community Recreation Centre
- Kensington Neighbourhood House
- The Venny
- Transition Town Kensington
- Unison

Email input was provided by Victoria Police and Kensington Business Association.

The above organisations (aside from CoM Ageing & Inclusion) have all been active participants in the KCF over the years, both in their presence on the day and on the organising committee. Other KCN members that are regular participants in the KCF are Flemington Kensington Rotary, Hotham Mission, coHealth and Somali Women's Development Association.

A summary of the workshop feedback and recommendations that emerged from them was presented at the KCN meeting on 17 September 2021. This meeting was attended by:

- City of Melbourne (Community Engagement Team and Ageing and Inclusion)
- Flemington Kensington Community Legal Centre
- Kensington Neighbourhood House
- The Venny
- Unison

Refer to Appendix 3 for document tabled at KCN meeting.

4.2. What did they say

There was a general acknowledgement and acceptance that it was no longer practical or sustainable for Unison to continue to take a lead role in delivering the KCN.

Three ideas were put forward and discussed by attendees at the KCN workshops, all from the Kensington Community Action Plan, as potential options to be taken up by the KCN.

- Option 1 – Employ a paid KCF Events Coordinator under the auspices of the KCN

Getting funding that enabled a paid events coordinator was thought to be unrealistic. Total KCF budget, including in-kind, is estimated to be \$70,000. KCF 2019 attracted 7,000 patrons which places it in Tier 4 of the CoM Events Partnership Program where funding is capped at \$10,000.

- Option 2 – Neighbourhood Activity Program; a series of smaller community events, eg. Ramadan/Eid, Sustainability Week, Seniors Week

There wasn't much interest in doing smaller community events such as Eid/Ramadan celebrations, Sustainability Week, Seniors Week, etc. Having events that only targeted part of the population doesn't achieve the goal of bringing the whole community together.

- Option 3 - Open House Event, a day for people to get to know each other and their neighbourhood. Community stalls are scattered across Kensington, in their own venue or around activity hubs, with each organisation/group taking the lead on their activity

There was a lot of support for Option 3. The following advantages and disadvantages were identified by workshop attendees in relation to this option:

Advantages include; not having to move equipment and resources down to Holland Park, less red tape in terms of permits required from CoM, can be scaled up or down if weather inclement or COVID restrictions come into play, no infrastructure costs, reduces costs (real and in-kind), more equitable and sustainable event management.

Disadvantages identified were; no one single gathering point where the whole community would be at the same time, not fully accessible to those with limited mobility.

No other options were suggested or put forward by KCN members.

Option 3 was presented at the KCN Meeting on 17 September 2021 as the preferred recommendation to transition the Festival away from Unison to KCN.

The KCN acknowledged and agreed that the KCF is financially unviable in its current format. It was noted that no single organisation is willing to take on the coordination and management of the event. The KCN have voiced a willingness to trial running the Kensington Community Open Day in lieu of the KCF. Input was provided by members on how this may look. Refer section 6.0 of this report for further details.

4.3. Conclusions drawn from KCN consultation

The KCN is a network made up of over 30 organisations. Approximately 15 of these regularly engage in network activities within the community. So whilst participation in the consultation was small in terms of attendees, those that did participate are the more active KCN members, representing organisations who have deep knowledge of the Kensington community.

It is important that these organisations are supportive of whatever recommendation is adopted in relation to the KFC, as it will more than likely be these organisations that take responsibility for delivering the event.

The KCN agreed that it was important that an annual event that celebrates diversity and brings the community together continue to happen in Kensington. The KCN acknowledged that it has become necessary to transition from running a single-day large community festival to a more manageable and financially sustainable alternative option. The KCN was supportive of an Open House concept as being a very suitable alternative, and expressed its willingness to collaborate to develop and deliver such an event.

5. Other Stakeholder Consultation

A list of other Kensington community events was compiled and analysed for similarities to the KCF in terms of audience and purpose. Those that were the most similar were the Flemington Kensington Rotary Art Show and the events of the Kensington Business Association. Both of these organisations were contacted individually and invited to provide further input into this review.

5.1. Flemington Kensington Rotary

The following information on the Art Show was obtained online and through email correspondence:

- The Flemington-Kensington Rotary Art Show is an annual fund raising event for Rotary as well as an opportunity for local artists and the wider arts community to present and sell their work.
- The first Art Show ran in 2018 over 10 days and across multiple sites. In the ensuing years it reduced in size and length. It now runs over a weekend, Friday to Sunday, and is based at the Kensington Town Hall.
- Rotary are committed to continue to run this event annually in its current format.

Repeated attempts were made to engage with Rotary to glean more information and pose the question of a potential collaboration with simultaneous staging of events. These attempts were unsuccessful.

5.2. Kensington Business Association (KBA)

Email correspondence from Sarah Maguire, Executive Officer, provided the following information.

Because the KBA is a business association its focus is on supporting the businesses of Kensington. The KBA stressed that any event or activity that they run or dedicate their resources to must take place directly in the business precinct area of Bellair Street and Macaulay Road.

The KBA are required to run a certain number of events per year in partnership with the City of Melbourne. It is their intention that one of these events will be open for community collaboration however what that looks like was still to be confirmed at the time of preparing this report.

If there was to be another KCF their participation would be limited to an information stall/marquee.

5.3. Conclusions drawn from stakeholder consultation

The KCF is a grass roots community festival. It is put on for the community by the community as a community building tool. Neither the Arts Show or the KBA events have the same community building and inclusiveness focus that the KCF has.

Potentially the Kensington Community Open Day could be scheduled to occur on the same date as either the Arts Show or a KBA event. This would require further investigation and consideration to ensure that the collaboration enhanced the event rather than detracted from it.

6. The ‘Kensington Community Open Day’

This section of the Review outlines how the Kensington Community Open Day concept might work. It outlines how the concept could be developed so as to stay true to the community building aspirations of the KCF event.

6.1. The Kensington Community Open Day Concept

The Kensington Community Open Day is a day for people to get to know each other and their local neighbourhood (parks, community facilities, local businesses, etc).

A map and a program will provide details of the various services and facilities open for visitors. Each service or organization will be responsible for hosting and planning their own “stall” just as they would at the KCF. For many organisations this will be at their own premises. Smaller groups or organisations can have pop-up stalls at key locations.

A scavenger hunt and/or kids passport that would entice people to explore and visit as many places as possible. Roving entertainment, pop-ups and spot prizes would provide a fun atmosphere along the way.

Starting at the Venny and finishing at the Kensington Town Hall (or however people want to tackle the map) residents would be encouraged to stop and gather for a picnic at either end. The key will be keeping stalls to a handful of key locations to minimize sprawl and maximize attendance.

Key locations can be grouped as:

- Holland Park Precinct (takes in the Venny, KCRC, KCCC and sporting clubs)
- McCracken St Precinct (takes in KNH, CCK, 6th Melb Scouts and KPS)
- Kensington Town Hall Precinct (takes in KNC, KTH, FKLC, Compost Hub and Kensington Hall Reserve)

Other locations of interest and information can be included on the map to encourage residents can go back and visit them at their leisure. For example, the Food Forest in Derby Street and Community Garden.

A free shuttle bus will transport people with limited mobility from each of the precincts with an additional drop off and pick up point at 94 Ormond Street.

6.2. Staying true to the purpose of the KCF

The Kensington Community Open Day will retain the vision and purpose of the KCF, as follows:

The Vision – *celebrates and promotes the diversity and connectedness of Kensington to create a closer, more vibrant and sustainable community.*

The Purpose

- *Celebrate, engage and showcase the local community with activities that foster a spirit of togetherness, fun, wellbeing, inclusiveness and cultural exchange.*

Open Day occurs during Cultural Diversity Week, activities are free and accessible, encourage community input in event planning and ensure all residents are represented.

- *Strengthen relationships and connections between people, businesses and organisations in Kensington.*

Each participating organisation has a “stall”, include Kensington Business Association in planning ensure organisations such as Vic Police, City of Melbourne, etc have a presence

- *Strengthen relationships and connections between all residents in Kensington: renters, owners, those living in social housing and between people of different abilities and cultural, social and linguistic backgrounds.*

Encourage everyone to wear name tags, Open Day route weaves its way through the Kensington Estate, whole of community picnic/gathering at either end of trail.

- *Encourage a more sustainable community that supports renewable energy, uses less water and energy, avoids unnecessary consumption, avoids waste and helps restore planet health.*

Aspire to achieve zero waste, retain the Festival guidelines for participants and stallholders, celebrate local sustainability initiatives.

- *Raises the profiles of local businesses, community and government services and agencies in Kensington, the City of Melbourne and nearby suburbs.*

Local businesses, community services and agencies open their doors, smaller organisations can congregate at a common site, patrons directly connect with the “stall holder” on site.

- *Encourages a circular economy that keeps resources in Kensington and supports the economic viability and sustainability of local residents and businesses.*

Use local entertainers and suppliers and raises awareness of what's in people's "backyards".

6.3. KCN's Role

The following role is proposed for the KCN in relation to this event:

- KCN to establish a sub-committee to oversee coordination of the event and make key recommendations (date, time, theme, event guidelines, tasks).
- The sub-committee considers the feedback from the community detailed in this report when planning the Open Day.
- The sub-committee will assign tasks to individuals or organisations (who may or may not be part of the sub-committee). Key tasks will include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - ❖ Fundraising (grant writing, sponsorship)
 - ❖ Coordinate the Treasure Hunt/Kid's Passport
 - ❖ Marketing and Promotion (develop flyers, social media content, billboards, etc)
 - ❖ Develop program and map (liaise with "stallholders" to determine sites and activities)
 - ❖ Evaluation
 - ❖ Entertainment (activities that occur independently of "stallholders")
- The Sub-Committee to reports back to KCN.

7. Unison Community Building Activities

Unison's participation in the Kensington Community Open Day will be significantly less resource intensive than coordinating the Kensington Community Festival. This will free up financial and staffing resources to undertake other community building activities.

A review of the Unison's Kensington Community Building Action Plan revealed a lot of ongoing successful community building initiatives. Many of these initiatives involve supporting regular community groups, partnering with other agencies to deliver programs and an increasing focus on environmental initiatives.

The following suggested community building activities are designed to enhance the ongoing work of Unison in this space.

7.1. Kensington Community Open Day

As co-convenor of the KCN and event coordinator of the KCF, Unison should join the Kensington Community Open Day Sub-Committee. Their knowledge and expertise in planning the Festival will be integral to the success of the inaugural Kensington Community Open Day. As the Festival transitions to its new format it is important to retain relevant event plans and systems for a smooth handing over the baton.

Unison will ensure residents and resident groups on the Kensington Estate have input into the planning and provide support to those who want to be involved in the actual delivery of the event.

7.2. Kensington Community Food Forest Compost Hub

The newly built compost hub provides a focus for public and private residents to engage onsite and with the broader community. Establishing a Compost Care group similar to that of the Forest Care group will help facilitate this engagement. Educating the community about composting and waste reduction contributes to lifelong learning.

7.3. Community Celebrations

Run two events each year that piggy back onto a larger celebration and invites the whole community to celebrate together. Suggested examples include:

- Chinese New Year – work with the Chinese Friendship Association to host an event that showcases Chinese culture (music, food, art, language). Use interpreters, invite non-Chinese community. Outcomes include; cross cultural connections, breaking down of negative stereotypes, valuing own culture, reducing racism.
- Ramadan – work with residents to host an Iftar dinner open non-Muslim residents on the Kensington Estate. Outcomes include; cross cultural connections, breaking down of negative stereotypes, valuing own culture, reducing racism.
- World Environment Day – showcase the various sustainability initiatives that take place on the Kensington Estate. Outcomes include; raising awareness of local initiatives, increased volunteerism, understanding and awareness of environmental issues and positive behaviour change.
- International Youth Day – convene an organising committee consisting of young people to plan a youth-led event in partnership with Victoria Police. Outcomes include; positive engagement and relationship building, leadership skills, enhanced relationships with families, enhance community profile.

7.4. Mental Health and Wellbeing initiatives

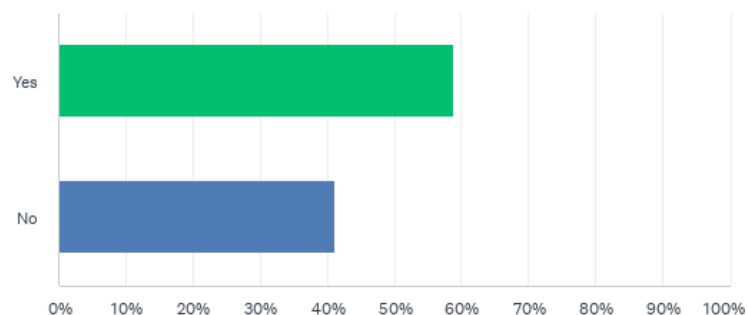
One of the biggest all-outs of the pandemic has been the negative impact on people's mental health and wellbeing. Unison can support residents to adopt simple self-care activities and actions and improve their mental health with actions such as:

- Running a train the trainer type workshop for representatives from various groups (Chinese Friendship Assoc, 78 Seniors Group, SWDA, Vietnamese Elderly Group, etc) to learn how to conduct a 10-minute mindfulness session. They can then in turn run mindfulness sessions for their own groups when they meet.
- Running an information forum to link residents into existing initiatives such as choirs, gardening, walking groups, exercise classes, social groups, etc.
- Providing information to residents on available support services.

Appendix 1 – Community Consultation Data

73 responses received

1. Did you attend the Kensington Community Festival in Holland Park in March 2019?



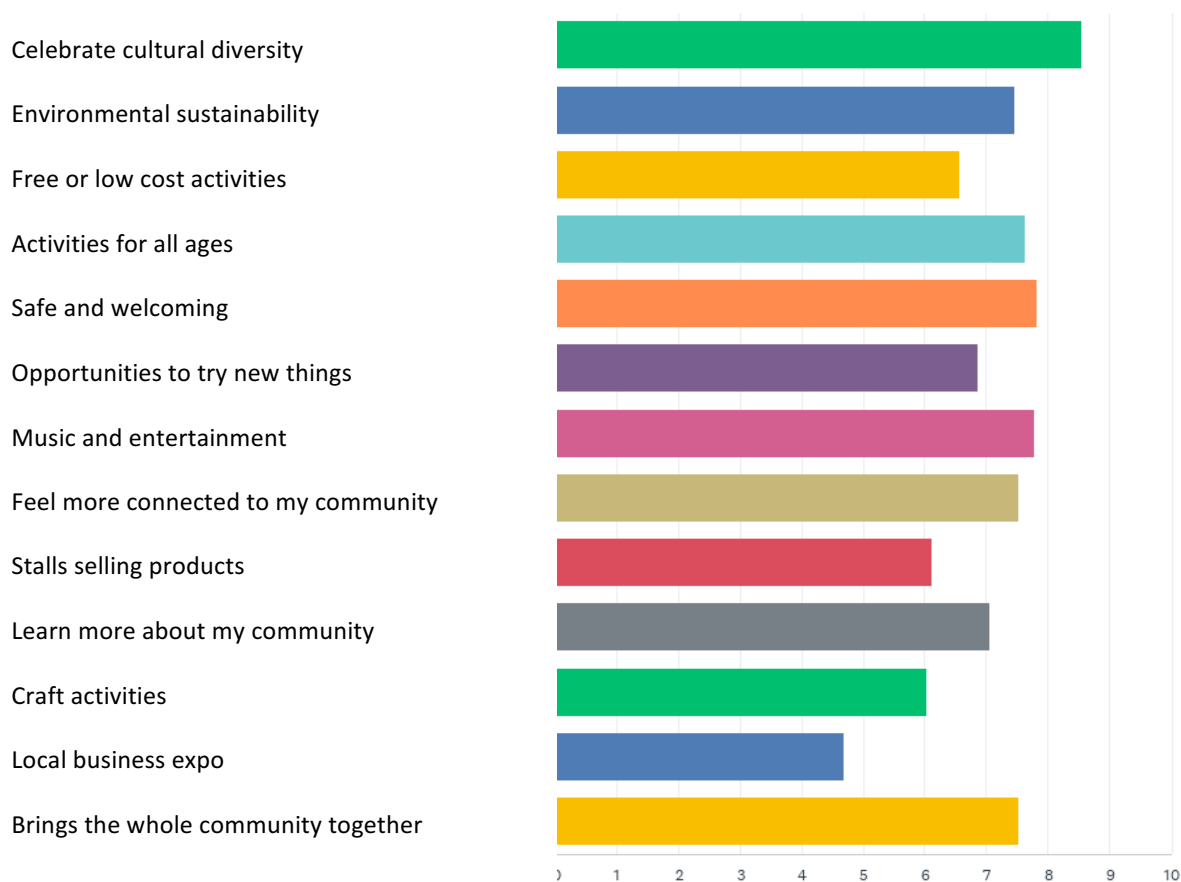
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	58.90%	43
No	41.10%	30
TOTAL		73

2. If yes, what was the thing that you enjoyed the most?

- Connecting with so many residents and sharing the opportunities
- Lunch
- The music
- The community vibe
- All the different activities
- Can't remember
- Learning about sustainability, buying native plants, roving puppeteer
- The music and sustainability component
- The food
- atmosphere, community presence, variety. Nice to be in park
- Sustainability aspects
- Children enjoying themselves
- Market product, animals, game bus
- Nothing
- The various musical performances from the different bands.
- Colourful people, multicultural music
- Henna
- The farm animals, The Food

- The music
- The different stalls and acts.
- Being with my son
- Food and ride
- It was fun I had fun with my friends and family
- I enjoyed the animals and the foods
- Activity
- The community coming together
- Everything
- community groups displaying what they do
- music on stage, my kids loved the police car
- Seeing the community coming together
- Chatting to locals
- Food trucks
- Community spirit

3. If Kensington was to run another community Festival rank the following items in order of importance to you:



4. Is there anything not listed above that you believe is important to incorporate in a community festival? If yes, please describe

- Local service groups and agencies
- Food options
- The festival needs to address climate change and give information about how people can reduce their contribution to global warming. The festival needs to be #USELESSWOOD to keep trees in the group
- Showcasing what the NH does and what's coming up
- Challenges or races or competition – like kit flying. Something that people could do to prepare. Or what about something that inspires a sense of wonder like a night bonfire ie. solstice
- Developing community participation through different projects; eg. Funding Kelly School of Dance to do a performance on the day; a choir master to bring all ages choir together. This needs to be done at least 12 months in advance and across different cultural, sporting and artistic pursuits. It takes time, money, preparation and involvement.
- Gift bag
- That each person will have a name tag, (written on just a piece of paper and a pin) so that we will be able to add a name to a familiar (or not) face:)
- Demonstrations of community activities such as Tai Chi and Qigong
- Past years festival photos and videos people of multicultural Kensington. I have some photos last 12 years of festivals.
- When the soccer tournament is on I would like that the music was not so loud
- Health and education
- Extended time, different types of traditional foods
- Food stalls
- Soccer, hockey and other sports matches
- Ongoing connections
- Including youths
- An activity that should be included would be if younger teens had activities that could win prizes. And more activities for children
- Cultural awareness
- Add activity that runs by the younger groups that run activities we could take part in eg. Meetup groups able to be there to recruit new members
- Good atmosphere: Consider the spacing between the stalls/lay out of the festival to create a good vibe and connectedness.
- Local traders
- Clear timetable for event activities
- Mixture of high quality acts, mixed with community-focused acts
- An event like garden show or go cart race or sunflower comp
- Food always brings people together
- Local community garden info

Appendix 2 – Children and Youth Survey

30 responses received

If you went to a Festival, what would be your top 3 favourite things to do?

