

Written evidence submitted by the Notting Hill Carnival Ltd

INTRODUCTION

CARNIVAL VILLAGE TRUST AND NOTTING HILL CARNIVAL LTD

Established in 2007, Carnival Village Trust (CVT) is a registered charity that is located in the heart of Notting Hill's remarkable and diverse community. CVT is London's Development Agency for Carnival Arts. We spotlight the arts, crafts and business of a relatively unsung art form in the UK, extending to its roots and broader culture.

CVT is a National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) funded by Arts Council England (ACE) to develop and promote Carnival Arts.

After a successful bid to be the official organisers of Notting Hill Carnival 2018, CVT incorporated Notting Hill Carnival Ltd in January 2018. In Autumn 2018 CVT again successfully bid for funding to implement the organisation of Notting Hill Carnivals 2019, 2020 and 2021. The monies awarded to CVT finance Notting Hill Carnival Ltd. as the NHC organiser, creating and implementing the structure and strategy to deliver Notting Hill Carnival.

Notting Hill Carnival (NHC) is proudly a community-led event, its ever-increasing popularity over the last 5 decades has seen it become the wonderfully diverse and vibrant event it is today. With over a million visitors expected over the August Bank Holiday, London's NHC is second only to Brazil's Rio Carnival in size, and is now one of the globe's largest annual arts events. NHC is considered to be the largest street event in Europe.

ACCESS ALL AREAS

Due to the pandemic for the first time in its 54 year history Notting Hill Carnival did not take to the streets of West London in 2020 but we felt it was our cultural responsibility to work with the Carnival community and with the support of our funders, Greater London Authority (GLA), Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC) and Westminster Council (WCC), we produced an online experience.

'Access All Areas' showcased the various artistic elements of Carnival with performances from masquerade bands, Steelband's, Brazilian bands, sound systems, Calypso and Soca artists.

The content for 'Access All Areas' was predominantly filmed at iconic London venues, Abbey Road Studios, The Royal Albert Hall and Haymarket Theatre and other London Filming Studios with live stages from Trinidad, Barbados, Grenada, Jamaica and Nigeria. Although a virtual experience can never take the place of a live event the online content attracted over

6 million views over the August Bank Holiday. Our aim was not only to entertain and educate but to encourage the Carnival audience and participants to stay at home over the August Bank Holiday and not congregate in the Notting Hill area.

1. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACT

MAYORS REPORT

In 2004 The Mayor of London commissioned a strategic review of Notting Hill Carnival. The report highlighted not only the cultural impact of Carnival but also the economic value of the event which in 2002 was estimated to generate £93 million.

[Mayor of London Strategic Review of Notting Hill Carnival](#)

Carnival does not just generate income over the August Bank Holiday. During the summer months there are many Carnival arts activities taking place in London. The Carnival season starts in June with steelpan competitions, community events and cultural - related activities. Carnival Arts are intergenerational and at its heart diverse in participation and audience. Many of the performers within the Carnival sector are professional and semi - professional musicians, artists, designers, dancers and performers with lockdown taking place over the summer months the opportunity to earn income was not possible.

CARNIVAL WEEKEND

Whilst Notting Hill Carnival is rooted in Caribbean culture, with its Windrush-generation influence remaining strongly evident, it is at the same time characteristically 'London' – today's modern London.

Carnival weekend starts on the Saturday night with the Steelpan competition, Panorama, which attracts an audience of 5,000 and 8 bands of up to 100 players participating. The competition is ticketed and all funds raised go directly to the Steelband's taking part to support their participation.

Over the two days of Carnival, the Sunday and the Monday, members of the Carnival arts disciplines perform, entertain and compete with each other for a range of titles and awards on the streets of Notting Hill. There are also two live music stages that host local, national and international artists.

The atmosphere of the Carnival is enhanced by approximately 250 stalls the majority of whom are small traders selling food and drink. The stalls are licenced by the local authorities generating revenue for RBKC and WCC as well as the private traders, which has all been lost this year.

CARNIVAL ARTS

Carnival Arts, as emanating from the cultural traditions of Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean take place throughout the year. From workshops teaching the skills of costume making to steelpan classes, Brazilian drumming classes and dance classes. These activities not only contribute to the UK's cultural landscape but help create a sense of community and well-being.

Steelband's offer a unique opportunity, in addition to promoting excellence in their art form, for the public and its members to become part of a community; one that offers an atmosphere of inclusion, dedication to hard work and a place where young people can feel safe and supported, not only within their own band, but within the wider Steelband community.

Due to the pandemic many of these activities have not taken place, and, although some classes have made a switch to online learning not everyone has access to the infrastructure to support this. 2020 may see a gap in the creative leaning of the Carnival and combined arts sector as well as a negative impact on people's mental health and well-being.

ECONOMIC RECOVERY

London needs to get major events back for next Summer to drive tourism, hospitality, hotel bed nights and for the much needed multi-million pound economic impact boost to our city. The UK's economy needs these key drivers as it plans its post-COVID-19 recovery. In cultural and social terms over a year will have lapsed since the last meaningful live entertainment took place to its return. There is an overwhelming need for the nation's health and wellbeing to get back to live entertainment and events.

2. RISKS TO NOTTING HILL CARNIVAL 2021

AUGUST BANK HOLIDAY 2020

In May 2020, the NHCL board decide to take Notting Hill Carnival off the streets, and to create a digital alternative.

After months of lockdown and a relaxing of social distancing many young people felt frustrated with the lack of social opportunities in London. This saw a rise in un-licensed music events (UMEs) and although still in the midst of a pandemic UMEs started to appear all over London. By June the world had processed and was reacting to the murder of George Floyd in May.

It was anticipated that crowd gatherings may take place within the Carnival area over the Bank Holiday Weekend and it was agreed by Carnival key stakeholders that crowd management resources should be deployed in the area to monitor and potentially manage potential crowd issues within the area. As a result of this proactive response, combined with

a consistent, strong and effective social media message, there were no incidents or gatherings of note within the Carnival footprint over the August Bank holiday,

The weekend was a great success helped by the joined up approach of working with key stakeholders and Carnivalists, the strong communications from NHCL and all agencies to stay at away from the area, an alternative Carnival offering to the community via 'Access All Areas', the cooperation and support of the Carnival sector and our community engagement efforts.

However, if Carnival 2021 cannot take place the frustration of London not hosting one of the world's most iconic events may mean that it is far more challenging to engage the public with online content and to deter people from bringing an alternative 'Carnival' to the streets of West London.

EVENT PLANNING

Notting Hill Carnival is a free event and does not generate revenue from ticket sales, it is funded by the GLA, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster Council it also attracts some sponsorship. NHCL has the confidence of funders and stakeholders alike to work together in organising a safe and spectacular event.

Live Entertainment, concerts, theatres and carnival's cannot just turn the tap on. Large events take many months to organise. NHCL is a small team and planning of Carnival is an all year round activity. The operational team meets frequently with strategic partners at OSPG (Operational Safety Planning Ground) and at a 'Gold' level, CSPG (Carnival Strategic Planning Group). The planning for Carnival 2021 is well underway for all agencies.

Tours for bands are already being scheduled for next Spring and tickets are on sale for concerts in Hyde Park in June and the events industry remains cautiously optimistic, hopeful that live events will come back gradually as restrictions are lifted and the COVID 19 vaccine is made available.

As organisers we plan for a multitude of risks e.g. the avoidance of crushing, anti-social behaviour, construction of stages, drug and alcohol abuse, safeguarding, prevention of spread of communicable diseases, prevention of health risks such as salmonella, prevention of terrorism, etc. COVID-19 is one more risk to mitigate for.

SOCIAL DISTANCING

However, Carnival cannot take place whilst there are still social distancing measures in place. Unlike ticketed events such as Glastonbury Festival or concerts that take place in various London park's we cannot erect a wall around the Carnival footprint to control numbers, this is not a financially viable or practical solution.

The mandatory testing of audiences is not a pragmatic solution with over a million people attending Carnival and the many thousand who take part in the event as well as the stakeholders that support us, from the police, St Johns Ambulance to the Council enforcement officers.

Apart from the operational factors the nature of Carnival is one of freedom to dance and interact with fellow 'Carnivlists' whether they are performing in a Mas band or a member of the public dancing at a sound system.

To help mitigate any risks, protocols and good practice across the UK" s carnivals can be shared. There is already a working group in place with representatives from various UK carnivals discussing how we can create and deliver safe events in 2021.

INSURANCE

The unavailability in the Insurance market for any COVID 19 related cancellation cover is a massive challenge for the performance units and contractors taking part in Carnival. As organisers of the event NHCL insist that any organisation taking part in the event holds the appropriate level of insurance. The risk to event organisers, artists and suppliers to late cancellation of events due to localised outbreaks of COVID 19 and/or increased restrictions is huge This needs to be understood as no other sector is expected to carry these potentially catastrophic risks that could be brought to bear on future events at any point.

3. SUSTAINABLE CARNIVAL

GREENER CARNIVAL

One of our main focuses for Carnival is to make it a more sustainable event and reduce its carbon footprint. We have worked with Thames Water to install 'Water Bars'

It transpired that Carnival 2019 was the hottest on record with temperatures reaching 33.3c. Thames Water estimated that the use of the water stations meant that over 10,000 single use plastic bottles were 'saved' by visitors and participants filling up at the stations.

Another area we looked at to reduce our carbon footprint was power and the reducing the need for diesel generators. We worked with T.C.P, a company that provided Ecolites, the lighting towers for Panorama which were powered by the latest LGP 2500 portable zero-emission power packs. These also provided the power for the judging stage.

We are currently working with a consortium of Carnival's and Carnival Arts organisations as exploring particle solutions of making Carnival a more sustainable event.

