



Noël Turner Science Festival Report 2020

Festival Summary

The Noël Turner Science Festival (NTSF) has traditionally been a physics based festival run on the Isle of Wight by a small steering committee as a stand-alone event. Winchester Science Centre (WSC) has identified the Isle of Wight as a priority area for engagement due to the high areas of deprivation and barriers to transport, leading to low levels of aspiration. WSC and the NTSF decided to work together to run this year's NTSF festival, with a view to continuing running the event annually in the future.

The festival was held on 6th and 7th February 2020 and engaged primary and secondary school children on the Isle of Wight. Everyone had around 4 hours at the festival, where they had a live science show, a small group interaction (or challenge) with a STEM employer and time to circulate taking in the very interactive employer stands as well as the pop up science centre. The first day was aimed at secondary children (years 7 and 10) and the second day was mainly aimed at primary school children (year 5).

In the evening there was a celebration event for VIP's, influencers from schools and industry. Many of the employers who attended were from traditional, and obvious, STEM careers but several employers exhibited from less obvious STEM areas such as the Army and a surveying activity from the University of Winchester. Student volunteers from Cowes Enterprise College, CECAMM and the Bay School who wanted experience in event organisation and science communication helped at the event.



Festival Highlights

- 2,591 pupils from 37 (74%) schools across the Isle of Wight attended the Noël Turner Science Festival in February 2020.
- 60 home educated students attended the festival across the 2 days
- There were 29 exhibitors from local STEM companies across the 2 days of the festival
- There was excellent engagement with wider community stakeholders including ferry and bus companies who gave significant discount or free tickets.
- The festival secured free use of the Cowes Enterprise College as a venue for 2 days and the UKSA facility gave a major accommodation discount for WSC staff supporting the festival.
- Transport for the schools was heavily subsidised depending on the financial make-up of the schools (based on percentage of free school meals).
- 51% of pupils who responded to our survey were already interested in STEM before their visit, whilst 15% said they were not already interested in STEM.
- Following the Festival, 82% said they had discovered something new (7% disagreed) whilst 67% said that attending the Festival had made them want to explore some aspects of STEM further (14% disagreed).
- 100% of teachers who responded to our post event questionnaire (all from primary schools) said that they would welcome additional STEM support for their schools with 89% saying they would like in school workshops, delivered by external STEM experts and 78% saying yes to visits from volunteer STEM Ambassadors and other inspiring STEM role models.



Feedback

From Teachers

'On behalf of all the Queensgate group – students and adults, a massive thank you for the science fair on Friday. Superbly organised by you and your team, the kids were thoroughly engaged throughout the day. This was my first experience of this event – already looking forward to the next one.'

From Exhibitors

'...it was remarkably well organised and the breadth of companies you had, for what is essentially a local event, was really impressive. Please keep us in mind for any future festivals/events as we'd love to participate.'

'We had a good time and very much enjoyed talking with the students and interacting with them – they seemed to be much more enthusiastic this year and well worthwhile.'

Impact of COVID on future planning

- NTSF was intended to be the first step in a repeat engagement model, enabling WSC to start relationships with schools and communities, offering in-school workshops, teacher and STEM professionals networking / CPD and pop up community events. Unfortunately, despite significant interest in working with us, Covid-19 stalled all of our follow up plans.
- WSC has adapted its physical schools offer in order to continue to spark curiosity and inspire children during the pandemic.
- In October 2020 WSC ran three pilot digital schools workshop with Isle of Wight primary schools (the pilot also ran in Southampton). The feedback from these events was hugely positive and the schools are keen to run further workshops.
- A further 10 Isle of Wight primary schools have booked a digital schools workshop to take place before Christmas 2020.
- STEM Ambassadors, including two from the Isle of Wight, are currently recording content for future workshops.
- Digital workshops will be refined and offered to primary schools, secondary schools and FE establishments throughout the 2020/21 academic year and/or until such time as physical activity can resume.

