

How the Festival of Death and Dying was organized 2019

We work using a model of 'distributed organising'. This model avoids the pitfalls of centralised models, encourages different people to come forward with their own creative ideas for events that help to build a death-friendly society.

The aims and principles of the festival form the ethos of the event ([see document](#)). This means that anyone can put on an event in the name of the Festival of Death and Dying as long as they agree with those aims and principles which includes financial co-response-ability (see below).

There is no hierarchy or leaders. 'The Hub' is a small group of volunteer coordinators who support the contributors and venues to develop a diverse and attractive programme and do their best to ensure there is as much public awareness as possible of the festival.

Each venue liaises with one Hub member who in turn liaises with contributors. Hub members will also recruit other people with particular skills to help. A team of volunteers need to be present at the events, to listen, support and direct participants to further help because of the specialist skills involved these are invited. Everyone on the team (hub members, helpers, contributors, venue staff and volunteers are called 'crew'.

Please note this is a work in progress and we will be reviewing the experience of this year to inform us about how to create a sustainable festival for the future.

The role of the Hub is

- to ensure the aims and principles of the Festival are fully communicated and adopted by all crew
- Invite contributions and network as widely as possible in the death and dying and local community to maximize diversity and inclusion and awareness
- Exclude contributions that do not adhere to principles of diversity, inclusivity, safety etc
- Ensure a diverse and attractive programme which avoids clashes and overlaps between similar events
- Do the regional/area marketing and PR (press, website, social media) etc for all events in the festival so contributors can focus on activating their own networks
- Raise necessary funds to ensure it's (the Hub's) smooth function

Contributors are expected to

- Adopt the aims and principles of the Festival
- Propose an event to the Hub
- Gather the people and resources to deliver the event independently
- Provide clear concise information describing the event
- Keep the Hub informed of significant developments (cancellations of events etc)
- Be responsible for their own funding/adopt financial co-responsibility model

How was the festival funded in 2019?

The Festival has received a grant of £1,200 from Somerset Community to fund to pay for design and printing of promotional materials.

We will report on funds collected and how they were distributed shortly.

In the hope of creating a sustainable event we have adopted a model of financial co-response ability. This is a relatively new model which has been successfully adopted by Restorative Circles pioneered by Dominic Barter and successfully by the Guardian newspaper.

How are decisions made in FoDaD?

The Hub members Henrietta Lang, Rachel Inman, Marisa Picardo and Caroline Kenmore came forward to co-ordinate a festival of death and dying in 2019 following the event in 2018. Harris Lam did the design work.

Over 2018/19 we researched different models of delivering social change and came up with model described here. In April 2019 we put out a 'call out' on facebook for contributors. It was decided to focus the events in a few venues with which we had links; Red Brick Buildings, Goddess House, St.Cuthbert's Church, Wells Cathedral and the Elim Connect Centre with the hope of inspiring other people and place to follow suit.

The Hub then worked to incorporate the contributors into a 3 day programme that took place over 1,2,3rd November 2019. We were delighted when other individuals, groups and venues to the programme came forward including the Art Bank in Shepton Mallet who developed a whole 3 day programme and Bridie's yard in Glastonbury and Sweet Track Counselling centre and the Vineyard Church who came forward with individual events. We collected approximately 150 evaluation forms from participants which was overwhelmingly positive.

We will be holding a people's assembly to gather feedback from all of the crew to inform the way forward from here. We will publish the plans for 2020 on the website.

Financial-co(shared)Response(duty to contribute))Ability(according to means)

This festival has a core principal of no barriers to access. That means that no event will be ticketed and no-one will be asked to pay at entry.

However, in reality, the festival will have cost a considerable amount of both time and money. In recognition of this *participants will be asked to share the responsibility for resourcing the event according to their ability to pay*. By making a contribution of whatever size the participants can show their appreciation for what they have experienced and help create the same possibilities for themselves and others in the future.

At each event a short statement explaining this will be read out, and people posted strategically to collect the contributions. It will then be the responsibility of each venue to collect donations

and agree what will be done with them. The success or otherwise of this will also be evaluated in the weeks to come.

Terms

Crew (people who help deliver the event)

Hub: Festival co-ordinating group

Helpers: People who came forward to help hub members with specific tasks

Contributors: Groups, individuals providing an event

Venues: Hosts the events

Participants: People who turn up to take part in an event