



# GRAVESHAM PRIDE 2021

## END OF PROJECT REPORT

16<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2021

# 1. INTRODUCTION

The Borough of Gravesham has a long history of social integration. Ours is a multihued and widely diverse population which has a long tradition of welcoming and enfolding new ideas and new cultures. However, despite having a large LGBTQIA+ population in the area, we do not have adequate representation and support locally.

2019 saw the largest number of Pride events held throughout the globe, and as a result LGBTQIA+ residents throughout the Borough of Gravesham began to show interest in holding one here. This led to a public meeting being held in March 2019 to organise our own Pride event leading to the election of a core committee which grew in number as the project progressed. Gravesham Pride is a registered Community Interest Company (No. 12069934) operated by volunteers.

Gravesham Pride CIC organised a Pride event for 2020 however, this event was cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic. Undeterred, Gravesham Pride CIC joined forces with our neighbours at Medway Pride CIC to deliver a virtual event which was the first of its kind in Kent and viewed by over 10'000 people based not just in our locality but in 32 different countries.

This continued interest from LGBTQIA+ residents throughout the Borough of Gravesham in holding a physical event when possible. This resulted in the planning and holding of Gravesham Pride 2021 on the 14th August 2021 at Fort Gardens, Riverside Leisure Area, Commercial Place, Gravesend, DA12 2BH.



## 2. SCOPE

The scope of the project was to hold an LGBTQIA+ Pride event in the Borough of Gravesham on Saturday 14th August 2021 at Fort Gardens, Riverside Leisure Area, Commercial Place, Gravesend, DA12 2BH from 12.00pm to 7.30pm which would not only celebrate the local LGBTQIA+ community, but also offer avenues for support and information.

The plan was for Gravesham Pride 2021 to celebrate LGBTQIA+ culture and diversity as well as support equality. In essence the project was to create a community cohesion event inviting everyone to come together, to break down barriers and develop understanding and acceptance of each other.

It was to be a staged event utilising the existing bandstand situated within Fort Gardens to deliver a mixture of entertainment including musicians, dancers, DJ's and singers most of which local in nature. There would also be stalls selling items of interest to LGBTQIA+ people and allies and stands for local charities and organisations which were relevant to the LGBTQIA+ community as well as food concessions and a bar on site.

The staged entertainment element would draw in a wider audience from other sections of the community to encourage cohesion and inclusion which would raise the profile of the area and promote local businesses, charities and services.



### 3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The main aims and objectives of the event were to;

- Create an event to raise awareness of the existence of the LGBTQIA+ community within the borough of Gravesham and give LGBTQIA+ people the freedom to be themselves.
- Highlight the existence of LGBTQIA+ people within the borough of Gravesham to demonstrate that support and services are needed within the area.
- Raise awareness and educate the public about the issues and difficulties affecting the lives of LGBTQIA+ people.
- Gather support for staging an annual LGBTQIA+ Pride event as well as other smaller events within the borough of Gravesham for the LGBTQIA+ community in a safe environment throughout the year.
- Cultivate a sentiment in favour of equality and inclusion through celebrating the diversity of the LGBTQIA+ community.

Upon the successful completion of Gravesham Pride 2021, we reviewed our booking system and discovered that our 500 free tickets were reserved to 223 individuals with many bookings made for couples or groups using one e-mail address.

Once we had identified the 223 unique e-mail addresses, we sent each of them an invitation to complete a survey to help us discover how well we met our aims and objectives, and we had a 24% response rate. Each question requested answers on a numeric scale with 1 being “Not Very Well” and 5 being “Very Well”. We set a target for ourselves to receive 80% of responses within the top end of the scale (4 and 5).



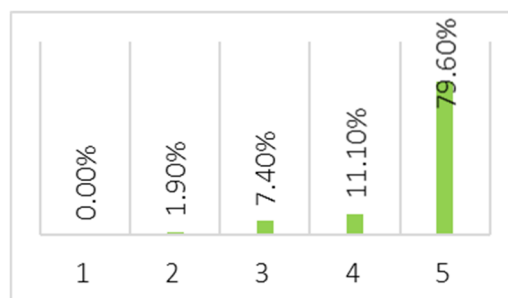
## GRAPH KEY

| 1             | 2          | 3  | 4    | 5         |
|---------------|------------|----|------|-----------|
| Not Very Well | Not Really | OK | Well | Very Well |

| Target Missed | Target Bordered | Target Met |
|---------------|-----------------|------------|
| 0% - 69%      | 70% - 79%       | 80% - 100% |
|               |                 |            |

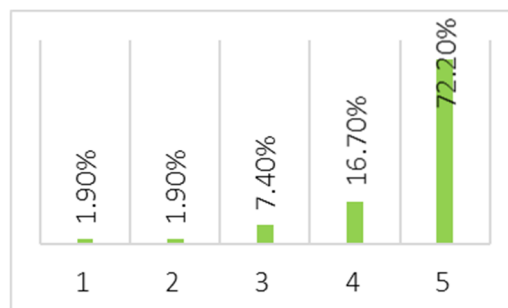
### Target Met – 90.7%

Gravesham Pride 2021 was designed to be an event to raise awareness of the LGBTQIA+ community within the borough of Gravesham and give LGBTQIA+ people the freedom to be themselves. How well do you think we met the brief?



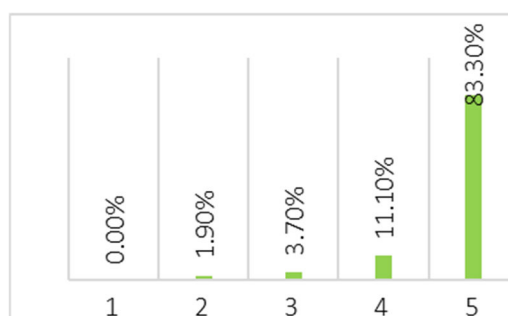
### Target Met – 88.9%

Do you feel that the LGBTQIA+ community and culture was adequately represented throughout Gravesham Pride 2021?



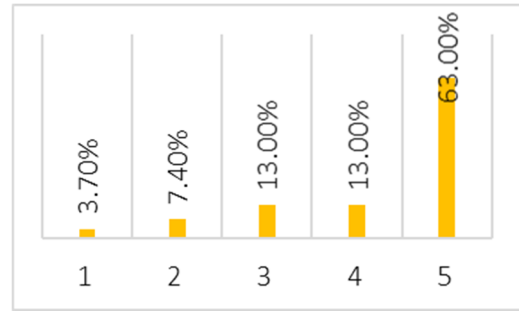
### Target Met – 94.4%

Although Gravesham Pride 2021 was designed with the LGBTQIA+ community in mind, it was important to us to make sure that everyone felt welcome. Do you think that the event was welcoming to all people?



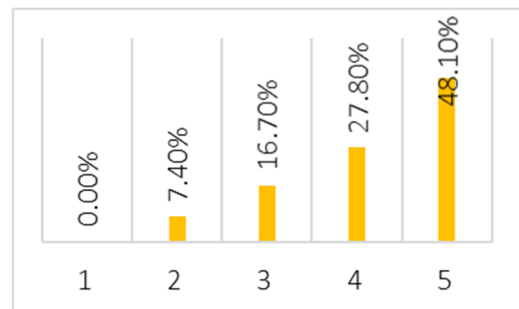
### Target Bordered – 76%

Do you feel that Gravesham Pride 2021 brought the people of Gravesham together?



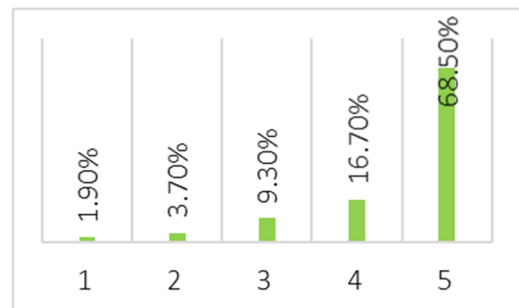
### Target Bordered – 75.9%

Do you feel that Gravesham Pride 2021 adequately represented the area and the people who live here?



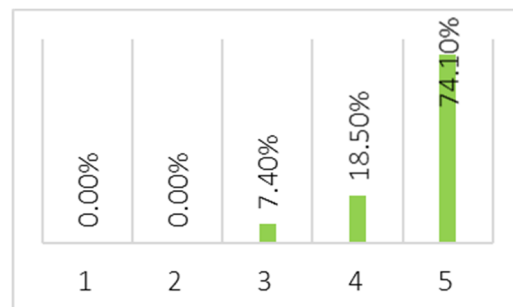
### Target Met – 85.2%

Do you feel that Gravesham Pride 2021 added value to the people of the borough of Gravesham?



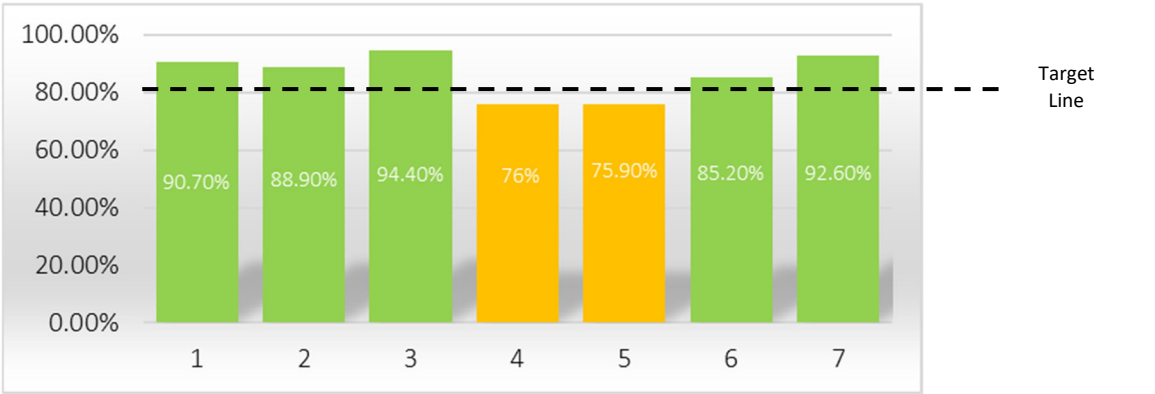
### Target Met – 92.6%

Do you feel that Gravesham Pride 2021 is an event which showcases the area in a good light to those from outside the borough?



Overall, from looking at the 7 key questions we asked attendees the project had;

| Target Missed<br>(0% - 69% of responses in 4 and 5) | Target Bordered<br>(70% - 79% of responses in 4 and 5) | Target Met<br>(80% - 100% of responses in 4 and 5) |
|-----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| 0                                                   | 2                                                      | 5                                                  |



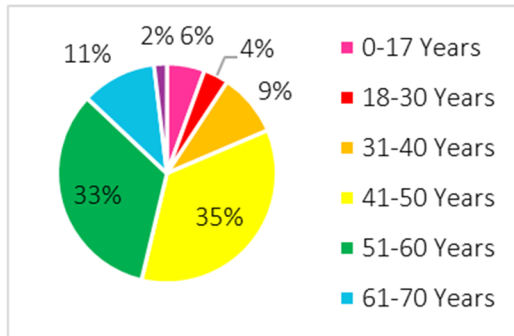
Overall, when we look at the responses across all 7 questions, 86.24% where within the top end of the scale (4 and 5) exceeding our self-set target of 80%.



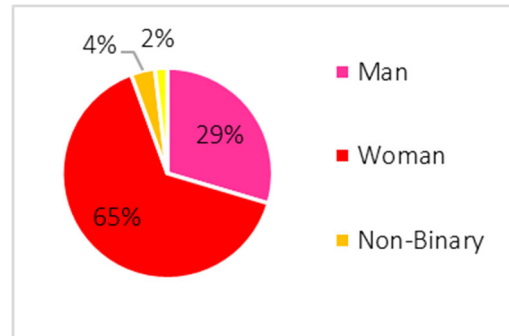
## 4. DIVERSITY DATA

As part of our questionnaire sent to the 223 unique e-mail addresses, we asked respondents some questions in relation to their diversity. All respondents completed this section however, we realised after the fact that this only gave insight into the people who reserved the tickets and may not fully reflect those who attended because many of the bookings were made on behalf of couples and groups.

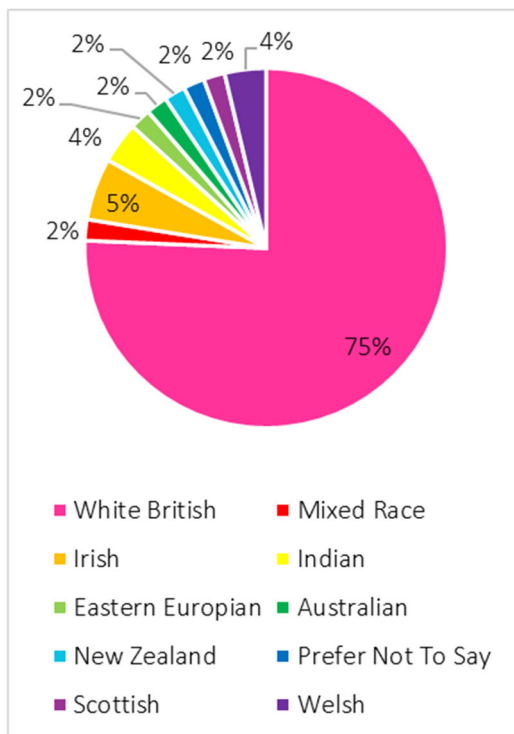
**Age Range**



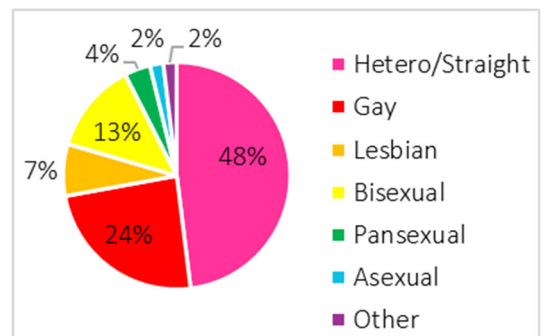
**Gender Identity**



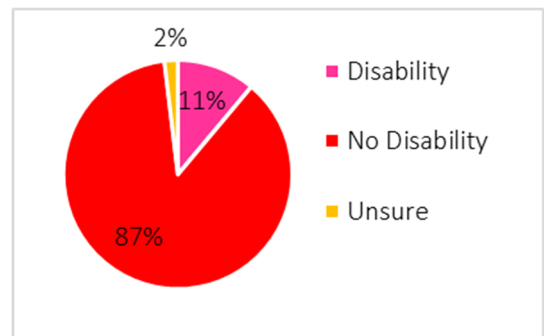
**Ethnicity – Self Defined**



**Sexual Orientation**



**Disabilities**

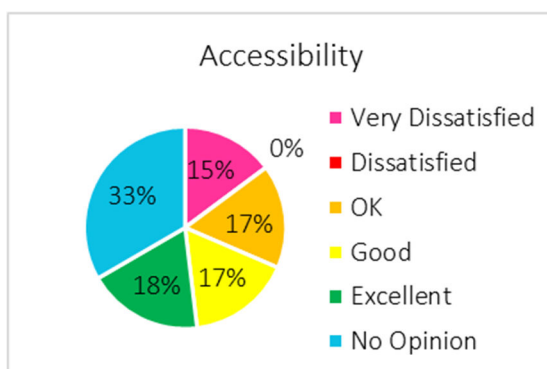


## 5. FEEDBACK

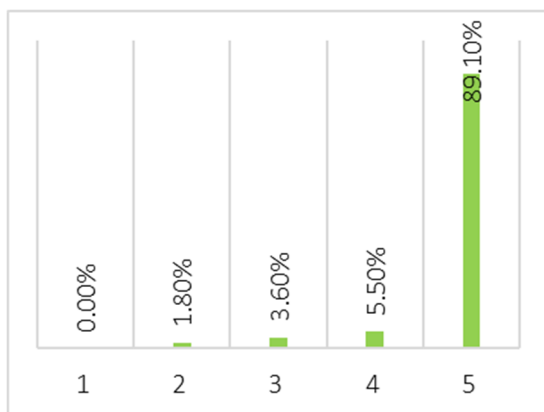
As part of our questionnaire sent to the 223 unique e-mail addresses, we asked respondents some questions in relation to their overall experience of Gravesham Pride 2021 and offered an opportunity to provide feedback regarding how we can improve on the event in the future.

### 5.2 ACCESSIBILITY OF THE SITE

33% of our respondents had no opinion regarding accessibility leaving 67% who used the scale to score it. Whilst 18% felt accessibility was excellent, on the other end of the scale 15% felt very dissatisfied with the accessibility however, no further feedback was given in relation to this in the spaces provided and therefore we are unsure as to how improvements can be made going forward.



Gravesham Pride 2021 was held at Fort Gardens, Riverside Leisure Area, Commercial Place, Gravesend, DA12 2BH which is a public park owned by Gravesham Borough Council and it is marked as an accessible location on their website. Although the site is split level, both levels are flat lawn and they are ringed entirely by a flat level concrete/asphalt pathway which leads to all entrances/exits, toilets and some of the seating.

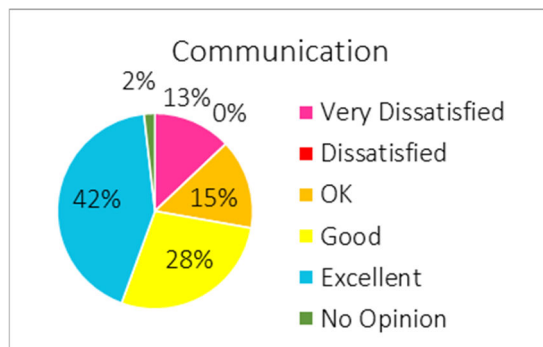


Interestingly, despite 15% of respondents stating that they were “very dissatisfied” with accessibility, when respondents were asked whether Fort Gardens was a suitable venue for Gravesham Pride 2021 94.6% of respondents scored it within the top end of the scale (4 and 5) which could be taken that the issues with accessibility are not in relation to the site itself but rather elements of the event however, with no further feedback provided in relation to the accessibility further review is needed to discover what improvements can be made going forward.



## 5.3 COMMUNICATION

As a committee we were extremely pleased to see that a total of 70% of respondents found our level of communication “Excellent” or “Good” as Gravesham Pride CIC offer various means of communication including a designated phone line, website form, e-mail, Instagram, Facebook and Twitter all of which are manned by 4 volunteers providing a combined contactability of approximately 16 hours per day 7 days a week. From the 9<sup>th</sup> July 2021 we could also be reached through the Eventbrite system.



From reading the feedback regarding communication left by respondents, responses on the lower end of the scale appear to be connected to the advertising of the event rather than the contactability of Gravesham Pride CIC with people feeding back that they didn't see advertising for the event until all the free tickets had been registered for or only finding out about the event through word of mouth.

On the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021 Gravesham Pride CIC began its advertising with the “Good Things Are Coming” video campaign which was designed as a teaser to encourage people to look out for further announcements. These videos were published across all our social media platforms as well as other Kent specific LGBTQIA+ groups. Free tickets for the event became available from the 9<sup>th</sup> July 2021 and were advertised on our website and across all our social media platforms where new advertisements featuring “Artist Spotlights” were posted daily.

The plan was for the free tickets to be advertised first to our existing audiences who had liked, followed, and supported us to give them the earliest opportunity to register for the event. We then move on to other outlets which took place on the 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2021 and included Kent Online which is part of the Kent Messenger News Group. We decided to advertise online only rather than doing leaflet drops and posters because we wanted to be eco-friendly.

As Gravesham Pride 2021 was a covid cautious event, the tickets were limited to 500 excluding artists, dignitaries, vendors and volunteers and therefore the free tickets were registered for quickly however, there was a waiting list available for people to join and Gravesham Pride CIC contacted those who had registered for free tickets on two occasions to surrender them if they no longer needed them so that we could release them to those on the waiting list.

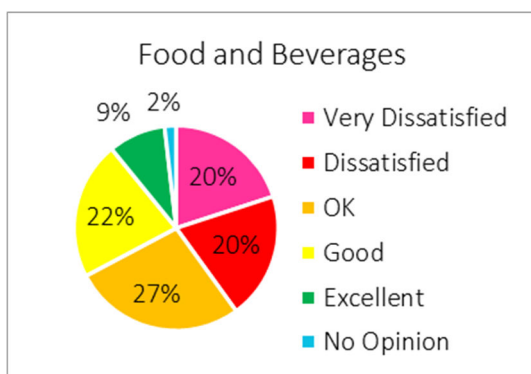


## 5.4 FOOD AND BEVERAGES

The feedback we received from respondents in relation to the food and beverages was fair and something that we were fully expecting due to the difficulty we had sourcing appropriate vendors who could work on the site within in the short timeframe available.

Gravesham Pride 2021 was held in a public park which had limited access to electricity and no running water which meant that any vendors would need to be fully self-sufficient which dramatically reduced the number of vendors who would be able to work on the site.

Furthermore, not only was the event organised in just 16 weeks, but it was held during the peak post covid festival season when there were many events taking place on the same day in the county including a food truck festival which further reduced the number of vendors available to us.



The feedback we received was;

- Not enough variety.
- Vendors were not local in nature.
- Not standard food e.g. chip van
- Expensive.
- Limited options for children.
- Limited vegan/vegetarian options.
- Limited options for food allergies.

Gravesham Pride 2021 was a covid cautious event with tickets limited to 500 excluding artists, dignitaries, vendors and volunteers. As event organisers we were mindful not to saturate the site with food vendors as we felt it would be unfair to those who were working the site, particularly because we were also allowing attendees to bring picnics if they wished.

It was our plan from the outset to include two hot food vendors, one bar and one ice cream van and we initially contacted multiple local businesses within Gravesham to see if they would be able to cater the event however, only the bar had the capacity to do so. We then advertised on several Kent based message boards receiving only one response from a vendor who could not work in the self-sufficient setting. The ice cream van came from the neighbouring Medway area and the other two vendors came from the London area.

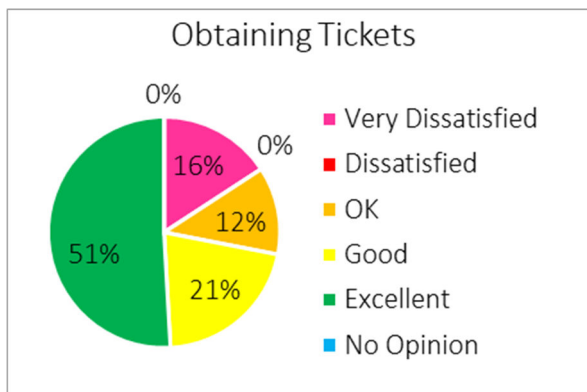
Attendees at Gravesham Pride 2021 were also permitted to bring a picnic if they wished so that those with dietary requirements and small children had appropriate food available with them.



## OBTAINING TICKETS

From reviewing the results of our questionnaire, a total of 88% of respondents found that the process of obtaining tickets for Gravesham Pride 2021 was “Excellent”, “Good” or “OK” with only 16% stating that they were very dissatisfied. From looking at the feedback in relation to this, the negative scoring was due to the limited number of tickets available rather than the booking process itself.

Gravesham Pride 2021 was a free event however, it was organised in a covid cautious way meaning that attendees had to register for a free ticket via the Eventbrite website and links to this were available on all our advertising, our website and our social media platforms.



The free tickets were limited to 500 and became available from the 9<sup>th</sup> July 2021 however, they were registered for quickly. Those who were unable to obtain tickets were able to join a waiting list and Gravesham Pride CIC contacted those who had registered for free tickets on two occasions to surrender them if they were no longer needed so that we could release them to those on the waiting list.

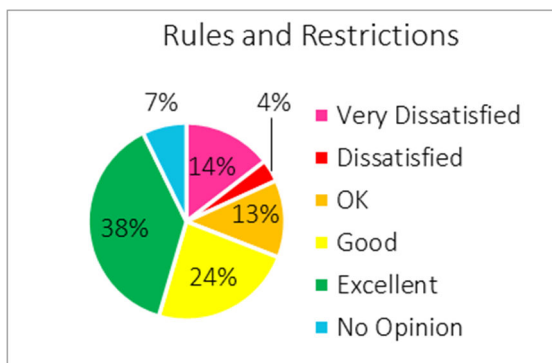


## 5.6 RULES AND RESTRICTIONS

As a committee we were extremely pleased to see that a total of 75.9% of respondents found the rules and restrictions at Gravesham Pride 2021 “Excellent”, “Good” or “OK” as the event was planned to be covid cautious meaning there were tighter restrictions than there would have been during events held in the area pre-pandemic.

From reviewing the feedback from respondents regarding the rules and restrictions at Gravesham Pride 2021 they all tend to be in relation to the limited number of free tickets available due to the event being covid cautious where numbers were restricted to 500 excluding artists, dignitaries, vendors and volunteers.

When Gravesham Pride 2021 was in the planning stages, there were government restrictions in place for public gatherings limiting them to 300 people. Therefore, the infrastructure and risk measures prepared for were for this number.



Although the restrictions were lifted a month prior to the event taking place, it was felt by the committee that it would be wholly irresponsible to dramatically increase the number of attendees permitted because this would require drastic changes to the planned infrastructure with limited time to fully assess their suitability.

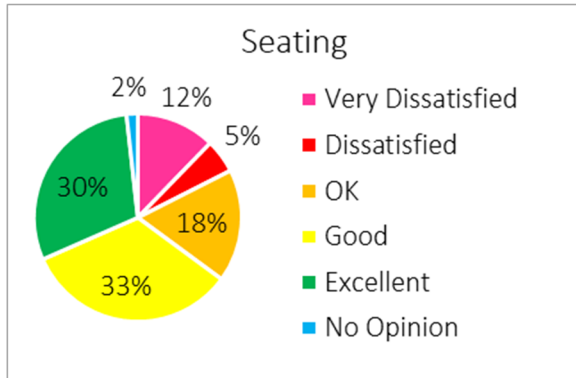
Furthermore, the funding received by grant providers and sponsors was based on our event plan for 300 people and it was felt that to stretch this funding to cater for a dramatic increase in the number of attendees would affect the quality of the infrastructure and the health, safety and risk measures.

When the government covid restrictions were lifted, Gravesham Pride CIC liaised with our partners Cohesion Plus who have vast experience of organising events in this area and they agreed that the planned infrastructure would still be suitable for an increase to 500 attendees. We then proposed this to Gravesham Borough Council and the Gravesham Safety Advisory Group who agreed to the proposed increase.



## 5.7 SEATING AREAS

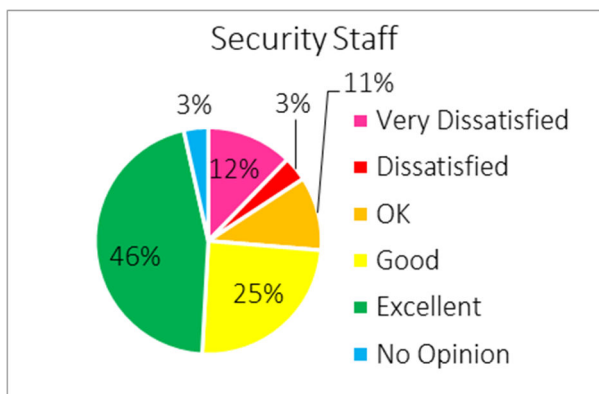
According to our questionnaire, 85.19% of respondents found the seating at Gravesham Pride 2021 “Excellent”, “Good” or “OK” with a further 1.85% having no opinion. As a committee we were happy with this response because the seating at Gravesham Pride 2021 was largely out of our control.



Gravesham Pride 2021 was held at Fort Gardens, Riverside Leisure Area, Commercial Place, Gravesend, DA12 2BH which is a public park owned by Gravesham Borough Council. In the grounds there is a bandstand that was first constructed in the 1900's. Attendees were given the option of bringing picnic blankets or camping chairs to sit on the lawn in front of the bandstand or to use the bleacher style seating wall that is cut into the existing landscape.

## 5.8 SECURITY STAFF

Gravesham Pride CIC took the safety of our attendees at the event very seriously whilst at the same time wanting to ensure that our attendees continued to feel comfortable and confident to be themselves. The security firm we used were an LGBTQIA+ family run company who fully understood the needs of our community and they went through a rigorous interview process with us to make sure that they were right for the task.

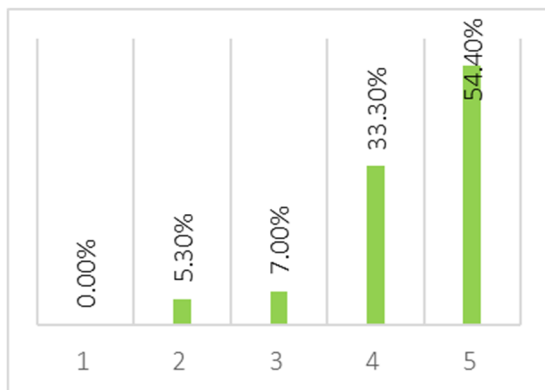


With this in mind, we were extremely pleased to see that 82% of our attendees scored our security team “Excellent”, “Good” or “OK” and when we reviewed the feedback received, the negative comments were relating to rules and restrictions regarding attendees not being allowed to bring in their own alcohol rather than the security team themselves.



## 5.9 STAGED ENTERTAINMENT

Gravesham Pride 2021 was a staged event utilising the existing bandstand situated within Fort Gardens to deliver a mixture of entertainment including musicians, dancers, DJ's and singers most of which were local in nature. We asked respondents to score how much they enjoyed the staged entertainment on a numeric scale with 1 being "Not Very Much" and 5 being "Very Much". We set a target for ourselves to receive 80% of responses within the top end of the scale (4 and 5) and it was found that 87.7% of people scored the staged entertainment within the top end of the scale (4 and 5) exceeding our self-set target of 80%. We also received a lot of useful feedback from our attendees in relation to the staged entertainment which we will be using to improve future events.



Gravesham Pride 2021 Acts were;

- Dan Daly (DJ)
- Gay Elvis (Comedy Tribute)
- Jayne Snow (Acoustic Musician)
- Kings of Dhol (Asian Fusion Drum and Dance)
- Kylie by Jeni Jaye (Tribute Act)
- LA Percussion (Peruvian Drummers)
- Maybe Gaga (Tribute Act)
- Miss Dot Com (Drag Queen)
- Olds Cool Events (DJ Collaboration)
- Ronnie Snow (Fire Artist)

It was fed back that more variety of acts would have been nice to see as the performers were mostly singers. However, Gravesham Pride 2021 hosted a total of ten acts, four of which were singers and the remainder were DJs, fusion musicians, a fire artist and a drag queen.

Many attendees requested a live band particularly rock and SKA music which was something that the Gravesham Pride committee considered however, it was recommended to us by our sound engineers and stage management team not to attempt a live band at our first event because it can be difficult to get the sound right without a sound check due to the multiple instruments.

There was feedback that the sets for the acts were of different lengths and that they changed in tempo swiftly meaning that the atmosphere changed at the event. For example, the Kings of Dohl gave an interactive high energy performance and they were then followed by Jane Snow who is an acoustic musician with a more chilled energy. This was due to most of the staged entertainment being acts who had previously donated their time for our virtual event the year before. We decided to do this because we wanted to give our audience the chance to see those performers in a live setting and we also wanted to provide an avenue for them to perform for payment as a thank you for donating their time for our 2020 virtual event. However, the event was organised in just 16 weeks and held during the peak post covid festival season meaning that many of our acts had other commitments already booked. This meant that our programme was dictated by the performers existing schedules and availability.



There was feedback suggesting that we should have had a celebrity perform at Gravesham Pride 2021 to generate more interest from the wider community however, to have celebrity performers at the event we would have needed a larger budget to cover the cost. Many Prides choose to do this by either charging an entry fee or obtaining corporate sponsorship. However, these types of events are often known as “Prides for Profit” or “Commercial Prides” which have lost the support of many members of the LGBTQIA+ Community and associated organisations causing media backlash and protests in London, Brighton and Manchester. This is because they are often designed as parades and music festivals to make money from marginalised communities which reduces the accessibility of the event for people on low incomes and dilutes the historical meaning of Pride with sponsor promotion often taking precedence over LGBTQIA+ charities and organisations. There is also an ethical issue whereby sponsors need to be fully LGBTQIA+ inclusive in both their employment and consumer policy and practice which is not always the case. The Gravesham Pride Committee did not want to fall into this bracket by ensuring that the event was organised by the LGBTQIA+ Community for the LGBTQIA+ Community and was accessible to as many people as possible by being free.

There was feedback from one attendee who disliked the speeches from local dignitaries in relation to LGBTQIA+ people which they felt were not suitable for a celebratory/entertainment event. However, historically Pride events are designed to raise awareness of the existence of the LGBTQIA+ community and the issues and difficulties affecting their lives. This is usually done in the form of a march held prior to a gathering. Due to covid-19 restrictions we were prohibited from marching at Gravesham Pride 2021 and as a result we took the decision to have 15 minutes where speeches were given to maintain the traditional meaning of the event.

There was feedback from one attendee that the entertainment was “cliché and camp” however, within their feedback they stated that they only saw the first two acts (a Kylie tribute act and a fire artist) along with the compare who was a drag queen which meant that they missed a total of five hours’ worth of staged entertainment which was varied and culturally diverse.

### 5.9.1 PERFORMER FEEDBACK

When obtaining feedback for Gravesham Pride 2021 we also produced a questionnaire for our performers to find out about their experiences of working at the event. The feedback received was extremely positive with 100% of the artists being happy to work with Gravesham Pride CIC again after finding our volunteers, sound engineers and stage management team professional and easy to work with both during the planning stages and the event itself. The performers also offered some constructive improvements for us to consider for future events.

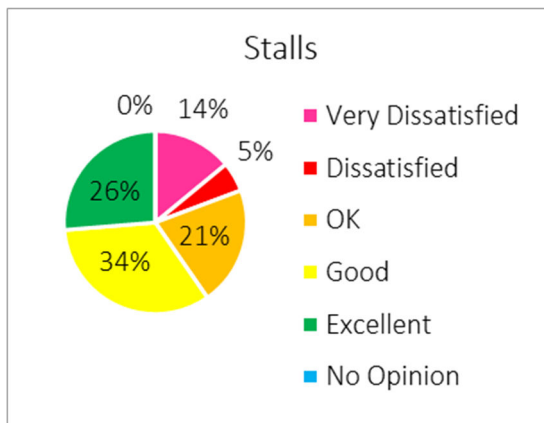
There was feedback from the performers that the 1900’s bandstand was too small for them to move as they usually would during their performances and there was difficulty connecting with the audience due to the high railings and poor visibility. This led to many of the artists opting to leave the bandstand and perform on the grass in front however, because this was impromptu we did not have any barriers in place to limit the audiences contact with the artists although we did place security in that location.

There was feedback from the performers that the dressing room tent was blue in colour which retained heat. This made it difficult for artists to see when applying stage make-up and uncomfortable for them to dress and undress.

There was feedback from artists that they would have preferred for there to be a toilet next to the dressing room tent for them to use because they had to walk across the site to use the facilities which they did not feel comfortable with particularly when they were in the process of putting their costumes on because they felt that it spoilt the magic of their performance.

## 5.10 STALLS FOR SALES AND INFORMATION

It was interesting to us as a committee to see the feedback in relation to the stalls for sales and information as it appeared to be very mixed in nature with 26% of respondents marking the variety on offer “Excellent” but a combined 19% of respondents stating that they were either “very dissatisfied” or “dissatisfied” with the selection available.



Gravesham Pride CIC felt that it was important to use the event to showcase the help and support available for our attendees through various local charities and LGBTQIA+ organisations rather than being a commercial enterprise. At the event there were two stalls selling items relating to the LGBTQIA+ community, one stall offering face painting and the remaining six stalls were providing information from LGBTQIA+ organisations and other local charities.

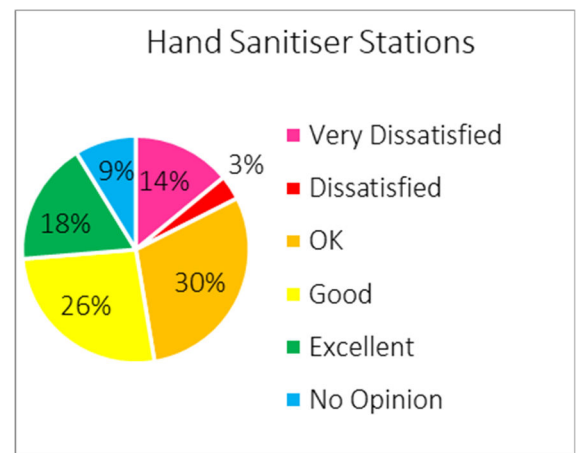
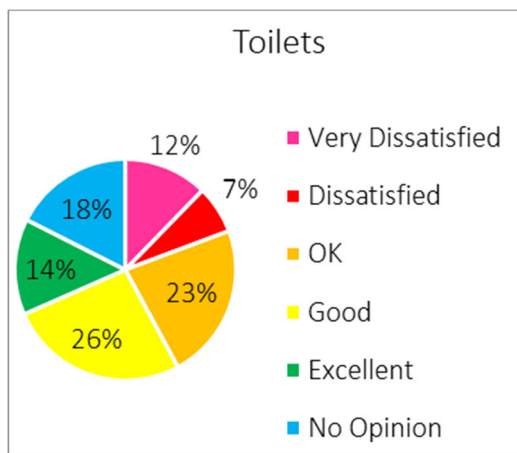
However, from reviewing the feedback it was noted that attendees would have liked more retail stalls available at the event and stalls offering activities for children which was something that we had not expected.



## TOILETS AND HAND SANITISER STATIONS

Gravesham Pride CIC were not surprised by the feedback from respondents in relation to the toilets and hand sanitiser stations at Gravesham Pride as this was difficult to manage at the event.

Gravesham Pride 2021 was held at Fort Gardens, Riverside Leisure Area, Commercial Place, Gravesend, DA12 2BH which is a public park owned by Gravesham Borough Council. The site has its own toilet block however, this was closed due to the covid-19 pandemic and there were no plans to open it again to the public until it was refurbished post events season. With this in mind, we arranged for six standard porter-loos and one disabled porter-loo with baby changing facilities which were situated next to the original toilet block however, many attendees voiced disappointment that they could not use the toilet block on site. We also had feedback from artists that they had to walk across the site from the dressing area to use the toilets which they did not feel comfortable with.

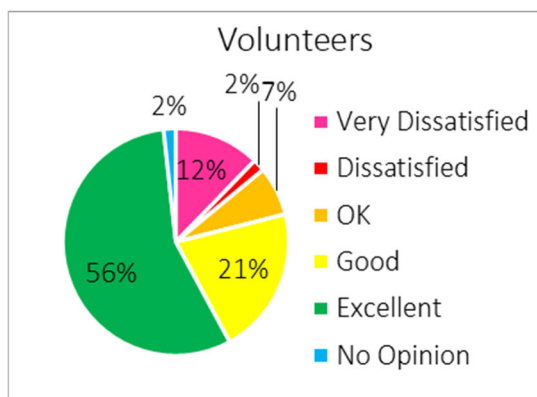


Each one of the porter-loos contained a supply of toilet rolls and hand sanitiser and there were also hand sanitation stations at both the entrance and exit gates which were monitored by security staff. A volunteer was tasked with checking the toilets every 30 minutes to 1 hour to replenish supplies however, the bottles of hand sanitiser kept going missing from the toilets and we had to instruct a member of security staff to monitor the toilet area to prevent theft so that our stock did not run out.



## VOLUNTEERS

Gravesham Pride CIC is a registered community interest company that is run entirely by volunteers. Without them our event and other projects would not be possible. As a committee we were extremely pleased that 84% of respondents scored our volunteers as “OK”, “Good” or “Excellent”.



Despite 14% of respondents stating that they were “Very Dissatisfied” or “Dissatisfied” with our volunteers there is limited additional feedback provided other than one comment where the respondent was unhappy that our volunteers and security were not wearing masks and gloves upon entry to the event. However, the event was held when masks were made optional by the government and it was at an outdoor location that was well ventilated.

All volunteers and security staff were given the option to wear masks if they wished and there was a supply of both masks and gloves available on site. There was a table between all attendees and volunteers/security staff upon arrival to keep a safe social distance and there was a hand sanitation station at the front gate for volunteers/security as well as attendees to use.

### 5.12.1 VOLUNTEER FEEDBACK

When obtaining feedback for Gravesham Pride 2021 we also produced a questionnaire for our volunteers to find out about their experiences of working at the event. 100% stated that they would volunteer again and 100% were happy with their assigned duties. Many of the volunteers provided valuable insight for us to consider when organising future events.

There was feedback that it was difficult to have an uninterrupted break because they did not have a private area to relocate for a set period and because they were wearing high-visibility vests and branded t-shirts they were easily recognisable and therefore would often get enquiries from members of the public. They were provided with unlimited water and a voucher to obtain lunch from one of the food vendors.

There was feedback that there was not a gap between performances which meant that our photographer and videographer had limited time to swap equipment or set up shots when new acts came on stage. This also meant that although provided with unlimited water and a voucher to obtain lunch from one of the food vendors, both our photographer and videographer had to obtain food and refreshments “on the job” because there was no time for them to have a break.

There was feedback that because Gravesham Pride 2021 required attendees to register for a free ticket via the Eventbrite system, those tickets needed to be checked and scanned on arrival using a smart device with internet access. However, Gravesham Pride 2021 did not have any devices and therefore the volunteers had to use their own mobile phones and data allowances although they were provided with portable chargers and were offered financial recompense for the data they used.

## 6. LEARNING CONCLUSIONS

Gravesham Pride CIC have learnt a lot from the feedback we obtained from attendees, volunteers, and participants which we hope to utilise to make Gravesham Pride 2022 even better.

### 6.2 FUTURE VENUE

From reviewing the feedback, 94.6% of respondents scored Fort Gardens within the top end of the scale (4 and 5) when asked whether they felt the venue was suitable for a Gravesham Pride event. This makes it clear to us that we would look to hold a Gravesham Pride 2022 at this location.

We did not learn about any improvements we could make in relation to the accessibility of Fort Gardens. Whilst 18% felt accessibility was excellent, on the other end of the scale 15% felt very dissatisfied with the accessibility however, no further feedback was given in relation to this and therefore we are unsure as to how improvements can be made going forward but we will be submitting our event plan to an accessibility specialist upon its completion who may be able to offer some constructive suggestions.

### 6.3 ADVERTISING AND PROMOTIONS

It was noted from reviewing the feedback that some people didn't see the advert for the event until all the free tickets had been registered for or only found out about the event through word of mouth. We felt that this was in large part due to the covid pandemic and the associated restrictions meaning that we only had 16 weeks to organise the event in total and only 6 weeks to advertise it once we had secured the funding to be able to deliver the event we had envisioned. This was further impacted by the fact that the event was covid cautious meaning that we were limited to 500 attendees excluding artists, dignitaries, vendors, and volunteers and therefore the number of free tickets available were small.

For the 2022 event, hopefully there will be a lack of covid restrictions meaning that we can begin organising earlier including making applications to secure funding. This will mean that a date can be agreed upon and promoted well in advance. We will also be able to hold a variety of different events throughout the year as well as attend events held by others which will give us the opportunity to engage with the community and promote Gravesham Pride 2022.

Furthermore, the hopeful lack of covid restrictions will mean that we can fill the venue to capacity in accordance with health and safety meaning that there will be more tickets available to the public.

## 6.4 FOOD AND BEVERAGES

The feedback we received from respondents in relation to the food and beverages was fair and something that we were fully expecting due to the difficulty we had sourcing appropriate vendors who could work on the site within in the short timeframe available.

The feedback included;

- Not enough variety.
- Vendors were not local in nature.
- Not standard food e.g. chip van
- Expensive.
- Limited options for children.
- Limited vegan/vegetarian options.
- Limited options for food allergies.

Gravesham Pride CIC hope to address this feedback in a variety of ways, the first one being starting our search for vendors early which will hopefully increase the chances we have of finding a greater variety of vendors who are able to work the site. This will include a standard “chip van” style provider and a vegan/vegetarian stall. We will also make sure that any providers offer a children’s menu/portions.

We will reach out to local businesses first who will hopefully be in a better position to pitch at the Gravesham Pride 2022 as many of them had been affected by the covid pandemic and had reduced their staffing numbers or sold equipment used for outdoor catering to keep their businesses running.

We have agreed to continue to allow attendees to bring picnics and snacks to the event in 2022 if they wish so that those with dietary requirements and small children have appropriate food available with them if/when required and we will promote this equally alongside the refreshments that will be available.

## 6.5 STAGED ENTERTAINMENT

Gravesham Pride 2021 hosted a total of ten acts consisting of singers, DJs, fusion musicians, a fire artist and a drag queen most of which were local in nature, and all were delivered on the existing bandstand situated within Fort Gardens. The feedback we received in relation to the staged entertainment was very positive and we plan on using some of the suggestions when arranging Gravesham Pride 2022’s programme.

There was feedback that the acts were of different lengths and that they changed in tempo swiftly meaning that the atmosphere changed at the event. This was in large part due to the covid pandemic and associated restrictions meaning that we only had 16 weeks to plan. It was also held during the peak post covid festival season meaning that many entertainers had other commitments already booked and so our programme was dictated by the performers existing schedules and availability.

For the 2022 event, hopefully there will be a lack of covid restrictions meaning that we can begin organising earlier and therefore securing acts to slots which will better support the intended flow and atmosphere of the event.

We will be including a live band that play either rock or SKA music which would be the first act on the schedule so that our sound engineers and stage management team have the opportunity to run a sound check with them and set up their equipment prior to the event.

There was feedback suggesting that we should have had a celebrity perform at Gravesham Pride 2021 to generate more interest. This is something that we are willing to consider for the 2022 event however, we will not secure a celebrity if this would cause us to either charge an entry fee or obtain corporate sponsorship to recoup the costs because we want to ensure that we continue to organise an event that is accessible to all sections of the LGBTQIA+ Community including those on low incomes.

There was feedback from one attendee who disliked the speeches in relation to LGBTQIA+ people. The speeches during the 2021 event were included because historically Pride events are designed to raise awareness of the existence of the LGBTQIA+ community which is usually done in the form of a march. However, due to covid-19 restrictions we were prohibited from doing so. At the 2022 event we are hopeful that there will be a lack of covid-19 restrictions and we can obtain approval from Gravesham Borough Council to hold a march and those who are more familiar with the historical importance of this will participate. We will continue to hold speeches but they will be done prior to the march and they will be heard by the participate who will hopefully be more appreciative and understanding of their significance.

## 6.6 PERFORMER FEEDBACK

When obtaining feedback for Gravesham Pride 2021 we also produced a questionnaire for our performers to find out about their experiences of working at the event and they offered some constructive improvements we will consider for future events.

There was feedback from the performers that the 1900's bandstand was too small for them to move as they usually would during their performances and there was difficulty connecting with the audience due to the high railings and poor visibility. We have decided that for the 2022 event we would hire a drive-in stage so that the performers can have a more suitable platform to perform. This would also alleviate the issues in relation to poor viability reported by attendees.

There was feedback from the performers that the dressing room tent was blue in colour which retained heat. This made it difficult for artists to see when applying stage make-up and uncomfortable for them to dress and undress. With this in mind, we have decided that for the 2022 event we will use white gazebo structures for technical and dressing which are vented to improve lighting and air circulation. We will also be including a private port-a-loo for the artists within the technical and dressing area so that performers do not have to ward across the site to use these facilities.

## 6.7 STALLS FOR SALES AND INFORMATION

From reviewing the feedback from attendees in relation to the stalls for sales and information it was noted that attendees would have liked more retail stalls available at the event and stalls offering activities for children.

For the 2022 event, hopefully there will be a lack of covid restrictions meaning that we can begin organising earlier and therefore advertise for stall holders well in advance so that we can obtain a greater mix of vendors. We have already had requests by three local businesses to pitch at the 2022 and all of those who pitched at the 2021 event have asked to pitch again. We also plan on having a childrens area at Gravesham Pride 2022 featuring a bouncy castle, face painting, crafts and Mama G Story Hour.

## 6.8 TOILETS AND HAND SANITISER STATIONS

Gravesham Pride CIC were not surprised by the feedback from respondents in relation to the toilets and hand sanitiser stations at Gravesham Pride as this was difficult to manage at the event however, we have learnt some valuable lessons for the 2022 event.

It is our hope that the toilet block situated in Fort Gardens will have been refurbished by Gravesham Borough Council and opened to the public again in time for the 2022 event. However, if this is not the case, we will continue to use port-a-loos the number of which would be arranged dependent upon the number of people allowed to attend as per health and safety. Each port-a-loo will contain a supply of toilet rolls and hand sanitiser and we will instruct a member of security staff to monitor the toilet area to prevent theft so that our stock does not run out.

## 6.9 VOLUNTEER FEEDBACK

Our volunteers provided valuable insight for us to consider when organising future events in order to improve the environment in which they worked.

We will continue to provide all volunteers with high-visibility vests and branded t-shirts as well as unlimited water and a voucher to obtain lunch from one of the food vendors. However, we will also be providing an enclosed seating area for them to have uninterrupted breaks.

There was feedback that there was not a gap between performances which meant that our photographer and videographer had limited time to swap equipment or set up shots when new acts came on stage. We will work with our stage management team in order to alleviate this, we are also hopeful that we may get some other volunteers with photography and videography experience through targeted marketing so that we can alleviate the burden from our existing team so that they do not have to obtain food and refreshments “on the job”.

There was feedback that because Gravesham Pride 2021 required attendees to register for a free ticket via the Eventbrite system, those tickets needed to be checked and scanned on arrival using a smart device with internet access. However, we did not have any devices and therefore the volunteers had to use their own mobile phones and data allowances to perform this task. It is our hope that we will obtain funding through application to acquire the necessary technology which will not only be used at Gravesham Pride 2022 but also at our other fundraising events.

## 7. CONCLUSION

Gravesham Pride CIC envisioned delivering an LGBTQIA+ Pride event in the Borough of Gravesham which would not only celebrate the local LGBTQIA+ community, but also offer avenues for support and information. The event was designed to celebrate LGBTQIA+ culture and diversity as well as support equality by breaking down barriers and developing understanding and acceptance of each other.

We feel that based upon the feedback provided by attendees, volunteers, contractors and artists we fulfilled our original objective and we were able to meet our self set targets upon review. We also obtained some valuable learning to support us in planning an even more successful event next year.