



Kent Vegan Festival 2015

On the 24th of October, 1,500 people left their homes to be part of the very first Kent vegan festival in Canterbury. We were overwhelmed by the amount of support for the festival. We felt that it would be big but we hadn't expected it to be that big! People were queuing into the High Street for most of the day.



Luckily those queuing were entertained by excellent vegan musicians, headlined by Rudy Warman and the Heavy Weather, who are a well-known local band respected for being very outspoken about veganism.

The atmosphere was overwhelmingly positive and full of hope. It was brilliant to see so many people who believe in peace, compassion and non-violence

for all living beings; people who care about animals, people and the planet, recognising that we cannot go on consuming as we are!



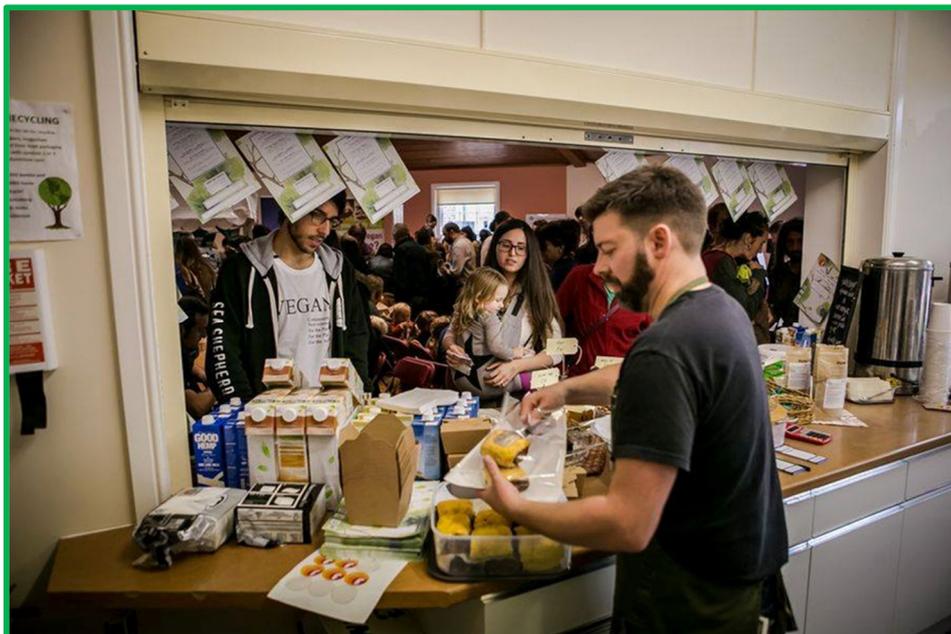
The aim of the festival was to be inclusive and welcoming, encouraging all people in their vegan journey. We certainly achieved that and more! The festival was summed up brilliantly by Philippa Mulcuck who said:

"We just so appreciated today's event especially as we are new to veganism. I've been a veggie for nearly 21 years and now taken the next step. Thank you to everyone involved. Can't wait for next year!"

There were a wide range of stallholders covering all aspects of veganism from animal rights, food and food security, clothes, skin care, animal rescue and health and environmental reasons for being vegan. There were talks, workshops and films. We had a children's zone with loads of fun and

informative activities for young people and Fortify, currently the only all-vegan café in Kent, provided the main catering for the day.

We also set up a vegan buddy scheme and over 200 people signed up to our mailing list. Our Facebook page has over 1,300 'likes'.



Veganism is a whole way of life. It is not only about food (but, of course that is important – we all have to eat!) Veganism means being considerate in all aspects of your life – what you eat, what you wear, what you use to wash with, where you shop etc. At its core, veganism is about justice. It is about

living in harmony with our natural environment, with other animals and with each other.



Donald Watson was the founder of the Vegan Society in the UK. He defined veganism as “A philosophy and way of living which seeks to exclude—as far as is possible and practicable—all forms of exploitation of, and cruelty to, animals for food, clothing or any other purpose; and by extension, promotes the development and use of animal-free alternatives for the benefit of humans, animals and the environment. In dietary terms it denotes the practice of dispensing with all products derived wholly or partly from animals.”



The aim of the Kent Vegan Festival was to raise awareness about veganism as a holistic, healthy, environmentally sustainable and intrinsically non-violent way of life. The event was inclusive and welcoming, with the aim of encouraging all people in their vegan journey.

We wanted to be supportive, educational, encouraging and positive: we believe in non-violence to all living beings and in peaceful, friendly, non-discriminatory means of campaigning and getting our message across. We believe that this is the most effective way to teach people about all the aspects of veganism and to increase the number of vegans in the world.



We were overwhelmed by people's enthusiasm and generosity and would particularly like to thank the following:

- All of our excellent sponsors: The Abbot's Mill Project, Plamil, Animal Aid, The Vegan Society, Canterbury Wholefoods and Canterbury City Council.
- All of our wonderful stallholders, who were run off their feet for the entire day but never stopped smiling 😊
- Our speakers and workshop leaders who educated vegans and non-vegans alike about all aspects of veganism.
- Fortify Café for the delicious food and constant sense of humour, despite having no break all day!
- All the musicians who entertained the crowds throughout the day, especially Rudy Warman and the Heavy Weather who put on a show-stopping performance.
- St. Peter's Methodist Church for allowing us to use the hall.
- Poppies Café for the use of their electricity and for being so friendly and helpful on the day.
- All the local people and businesses who promoted our event and supported us throughout.
- Shaun Eggesden and his print centre team at Canterbury City Council.
- Adrian Garwood from Canterbury City Council's Environment Health team.
- Canterbury Police for their support.
- Daryoush for all his calm and friendly support on the day.
- The KM for their excellent coverage of our event.
- Our core organising team of 7 people, and other volunteers (over 20 of them) being involved in some way either before the festival or as part of the 'help team' on the day.
- And, of course, everyone who turned up on the day to support the festival – you all made it an amazing experience!

Based on the huge success of this first festival, the organising team is already beginning to plan our next event. We will definitely be looking for a larger venue!



Some feedback from our Facebook page and feedback wall:

Thank you so much for putting on this event! It is so encouraging to see so many vegans & people interested in it in the area. Once you've had a well-earned rest & recovered from all your hard work, please do the event next year, but in a much bigger venue 😊 x

You did a fantastic job! Well done you all. Looking forward to next year's festival 😊

We had a brilliant time. Thank you so much for organising it.

Great job guys!
Fabulous day x

What a great event! Thanks. Look forward to next one.

All the lovely vegans!!

Great festival..... BIGGER VENUE PLEASE!
Maybe Canterbury Cathedral next time? 😊

We had a great day on the Viva stand, well organised day and a real pleasure to be there with you all.

Great day, very crowded, so amazed at the people interested. Who knew? Would not have expected this. Looking forward to the next one already. 😊

We just so appreciated today's event especially as we are new to veganism. Been a veggie for nearly 21 years and now taken the next step. Thank you to everyone involved. We can't wait for next year.

We had such a wonderful day. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to be there. I don't think anyone could have anticipated how much of a success the whole event was going to be. Well done guys, the organisation of the entire event was spot on! (Amy, The Sugared Fig)

So brilliant, inspiring and wonderful! Well done! Such good news!

The music was wonderful!

Thank you for an inspiring and uplifting event ☺ xxx

I'm not a vegan, however many of my face book friends are and attended from as far as the Midlands. You have a niche in the market here, and I wish you all the success in this hugely expanding market. You may need a bigger venue next year!

Be very proud. It was great and clearly demonstrated a need for more of the same all over Kent. Xxxxxx

Wow what an amazing festival! Full of positivity and hope. Everyone was so happy and the atmosphere was amazing. You have all done a fantastic job and I'm really proud of you all. Well done you must be buzzing xxx

I still have a smile on my face! This whole thing turned out much, much better than anything I'd hoped for and all of you should be really proud of yourselves. Good job all round, bring on KVF 2016! (Ben, Animal Aid)

Fabulous! So glad to see such a turnout. Well done all! Xx

Better than Veg Fest!

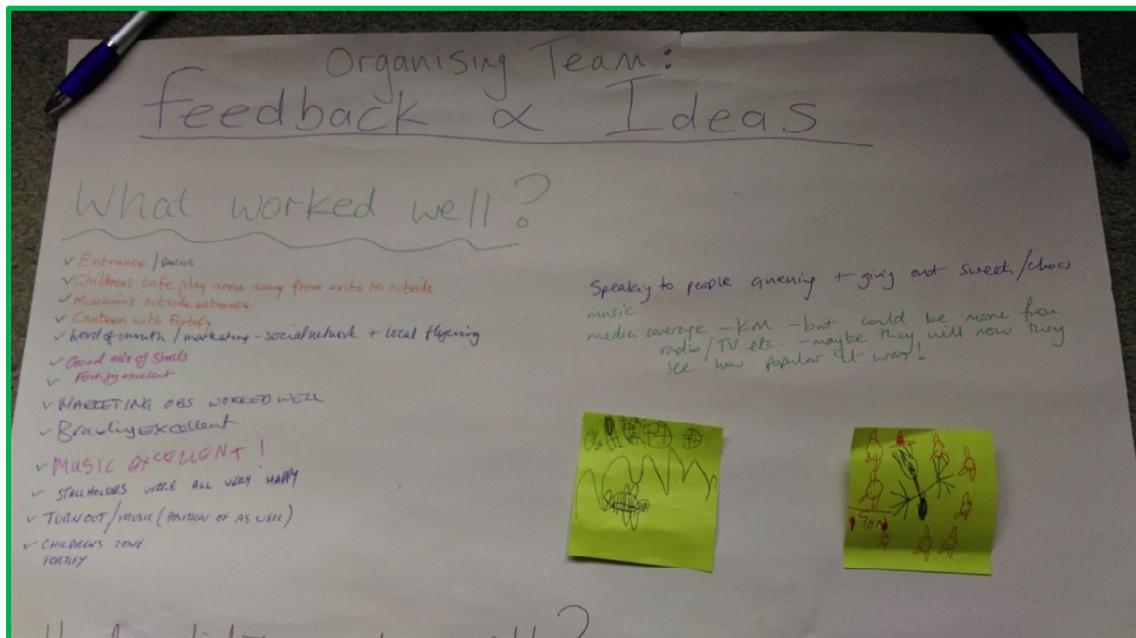
It was great to work with you guys. Huge thanks to Jo for orchestrating an amazing event. Over 1,500 attendees!! Who on earth would have thought that could ever happen in little old Canterbury. Looking through the sheets we had hundreds sign up for pledges, buddy schemes and to become volunteers. Feels totally surreal - is this the same town that I left 10 years ago because I couldn't find more than 3 people that knew what the word vegan meant? I was so impressed with all the talks and workshops, better than I could have imagined, music was supreme, well done to everyone involved. Can't wait for next year - let's double the numbers. (Pete, from the KVF Organising Team)

More vegan events please. They are great!

Met some beautiful people. Awesome!

Brilliant face-paints ☺
I was a tiger!
I was a chameleon!

Just to say we really enjoyed being part of the festival and we're delighted that it proved to be such an outstanding success. You and your team did a fantastic job organising things. We enjoyed a really tremendous knock-on effect at the shop and the cafe - it was one of the best days we've had since we moved here. So, many thanks - we're already looking forward to the next one!
(Roger, Canterbury Wholefoods)



Feedback on Twitter:

<https://twitter.com/search?q=kentveganfestival&src=typd>

#kentveganfestival

#vegansurge

#vegan

Contact us:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/KentVeganFestival>

Email Jo Kidd at jo.kidd@abbotsmillproject.co.uk

Phone: 07912 087599

Jo Kidd, on behalf of Kent Vegan Festival Organising Team.

Photos thanks to Rich Lehman at The Other Day Photography.



