

Light Night

LIGHT NIGHT: CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

Your Chance to Get Involved

Introduction

According to the media, town and city centres at night are battlegrounds where young people drink to excess, fight and cause damage. Though this is true of a very small minority in town in an evening, most town centres see thousands of people enjoying and behaving themselves and nearly all of them return regularly. The money they spend is an important contributor to local economies creating significant, flexible employment and investment in properties that might otherwise be vacant.

We understand how to get the basics right and to offer a better experience to those coming into town in an evening, we believe it is time to reclaim the centres of our towns and cities after dark for the whole community. To make them places people want to be and to change perceptions amongst the community as a whole. We want good news stories to dominate the local and national media instead of the lurid and scandalous headlines. To this end we have looked at the experience in some of our European partners and believe there is a major opportunity.

The Light Night project will bring to the attention of the local population the huge number of activities that are available for them to participate in everything from the Salsa class to children's judo and the reading club. Music, dance and sport will often feature strongly.

The project should give a platform to hundreds of local charities and voluntary organisations, which make up the fabric of society in participating locations. The engagement of local charities and voluntary groups allow for connections to be made across the community as a whole and help engender civic responsibility and pride. In turn this makes people feel safer in the community and ultimately in their lives as whole.

Our aim is to establish the concept of 'Light Night' in the UK. This is modeled on what in Italy is called *Notte Bianca*, in France is *Nuit Blanche*, and in Germany is *Lange Nacht*. In each case it is an opportunity to celebrate what the city has to offer from retailing to culture, from entertainment to dining through one long night. In some major cities several million people are attracted to the events whilst in others it is not unusual for smaller centres to draw tens of thousands of visitors. The essence of the event is to change the dynamics of the town or city centre at night. To make them places that all feel welcome and that fundamentally change the community perception of their centre and ultimately all town centres at night.

Several UK cities trialed Light Night during 2008 (Leeds has run similar initiatives before) and Liverpool will use the Light Night concept to close its year as European Capital of Culture. A typical Light Night sees museums and galleries opening for free until the early hours of the morning, retailers opening late into the evening, and the streets and squares becoming entertainment zones. From classical orchestras to BMX displays, from community dance and music groups to outdoor comedy and circuses, and usually including lighting and decoration of buildings and spaces, Light Night re-imagines the town and city centre and welcomes all.

The whole centre becomes an entertainment zone for the night and all local communities and all ages are encouraged to be part of it and made to feel it offers something for them. In many European cities there are lead in events and post Light Night events that mean the diversification of activity happens far more than once a year, but the one night is the focal point and the reason for doing all the other things.

How to get Involved

The beauty of a Light Night is its flexibility. It can be arts driven, like Leeds, or mass participating like Birmingham. In Southend a mini Light Night is sponsored and supported by the Crime & Disorder Partnership and the Christmas Partnership Group in order to promote Southend as a safe place to come to at night at Christmas.

The Light Night will offer participating cities residents and visitors the opportunity to celebrate and experience their city, to see it with new eyes and from a different perspective. It is a chance for everyone to come together and celebrate the city, focusing on their shared culture, history and identity. This contributes to the participating cities social inclusion agenda and hits Local Area Agreement targets by allowing communities to come together in a new and unthreatening way. In order to be able to use the Light Night name and branding you must stick to the core **Principles**, which are:

- *Light Night* is a cultural event, open to all with, generally, no admission charge,
- It favours community engagement in all its forms – arts, sports, music, social and voluntary groups and performances,
- *Light Night* presents public areas in all their aspects,
- *Light Night* is an opportunity for promoting local opportunity and activity,
- *Light Night* encourages inter-exchange between towns & cities.

What to do Next

If you want to run a Light Night you can at any time!

Please let us know how you intend to adhere to the Principles set out above and we will send you branding materials to adapt

We would encourage you to join The Light Night Exchange Network (see Q & A).

The Light Night Exchange Network

A Light Night network for the founding members¹ has been meeting for the past year and was established following a study tour to Como, Italy in 2007. It has now been decided to formalise the group, invite other locations to join and provide a service to locations wishing to hold a Light Night.

BENEFITS OF Joining the Network

These will be further developed in response to member needs. Initially these will include:

1. Light night website

The website www.lightnight.co.uk has the following features:

- Dedicated, editable webpage for every Light Event/Location
- Calendar of Events

¹ Belfast, Birmingham, Leeds, Liverpool, Nottingham and Sheffield

- Members Intranet with Bulletin Board
- Directory of participants (the Marketplace): artists, installations light engineers, event organisers etc.
- Online photo library
- Knowledge Bank: Case studies, reports, sample funding applications and more.

2. Exchange Network

The Founding Members of the Light Night group continue to meet in the Exchange Network. Those locations that are undertaking a Light Night event will be welcome to join the group at its regular meetings.

3. Training and events

Invitations to training and events, such as Light Night briefings and study tours, will be prioritised for members.

4. Funding and Sponsorship Income

A comprehensive package sponsorship opportunities has been worked up in association with Smart City Dressing. These and have the potential to generate a substantial income for Exchange Network members. We will work with you to maximise income for your location.

5. One-to-One Support

The ATCM will appoint an officer to work with Light night members to provide answers to queries wherever possible and act as a liaison point between members in order to share best practice and facilitate learning.

6. News Updates

A regular newsletter will be produced to bring together news and opportunities of interest to members.

Five principles

To become a Light Night location you must agree to observe 5 key principles:

1. *Light Night* is a cultural event, open to all with no admission charge
2. It favours community engagement in all its forms –arts, sports, music, social and voluntary groups and performances.
3. *Light Night* uses public spaces in all their aspects,
4. *Light Night* is an opportunity for promoting local opportunity and activity.
5. *Light Night* encourages inter-exchange between towns & cities.

FEES

The cost of Light Night membership is £250 pa + VAT (ATCM Member) or £500 + VAT (Non-ATCM Member)

Q & A

Q. Can we use the branding developed by ATCM?

A. Yes, this is free to use so long as you adhere to the Light Night Principles

Q. Can we have a listing on the website?

A. Yes, there is a nominal charge of £250 a year (ATCM member) or £500 pa (non-member). This charge covers website set up, hosting and maintenance. It also allows you to attend the Light Night Exchange Network.

Q. What is the Light Night Exchange Network?

A. Town and cities that will hold a Light Night are invited to networking meetings to share ideas and best practice. Joining the Exchange also gives you access to the Light Night Knowledge Bank, contact details for other members invitations to exclusive events.

Q. How do I join?

A. Complete the brief application form at <http://www.lightnight.co.uk/join-now/index.php>

Q. Where can I find more information?

A. More information can be found at www.lightnight.co.uk

Q. I have more questions. Who should I speak to?

A. Please email martin.blackwell@atcm.org