



FIRE IN THE MOUNTAIN



CITY, COUNTRY

Aberystwyth (West Wales), UK

DAILY CAPACITY

2000

SITE

A farm outside Aberystwyth

CAMPING

Yes

NUMBER OF DAYS

3

ESTABLISHED IN

2011

GENRE

Folk, Roots Music

CHALLENGE & SOLUTION

Reducing travel CO₂ emissions with the Coach Ambassador Scheme



A SMALL, FAMILY-FRIENDLY FESTIVAL IN THE WELSH MOUNTAINS

Fire in the Mountain comes with a friendly reminder on its website:

“This is not a pop-up tent and can of Tuborg festival.”

The festival takes place on an old 40-acre farm in remote mid-Wales, in the beautiful foothills of the Cambrian Mountains. A good-quality tent, a warm sleeping bag and water-proof, sturdy boots are recommended to visitors to be able to handle the Welsh countryside. Yet, the festival is family-friendly and attracts people of all ages, says Joe Buirski, Managing Director and

Music Programmer for Fire in the Mountain. “Because our event is small and relaxed, we attract a lot of the 50-70 age group as well.”

Fire in the Mountain offers a few day-tickets for the Sunday, but most visitors stay in one of the two festival camp sites for the whole weekend.

The festival's strong points are, according to Buirski, “the small size, the beautiful nature, interesting music, non-corporate volunteer-run structure, and being sustainable”.

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REDUCING CAR TRAVEL DESPITE THE REMOTE FESTIVAL SITE

Traveling to and back from a festival is the greatest source of carbon dioxide emissions for events. According to [Julie's Bicycle](#), "audience travel results in two-thirds of the festival sector's emissions and a quarter of all music audience travel emissions". While festivals in urban settings can be reached more easily with all kinds of public transport, the problem is particularly prominent at greenfield festivals.

Fire in the Mountain is a greenfield festival, situated relatively remotely in the Welsh foothills. The festival's team is well-aware of this problem. "There is a climate

emergency and we all must act. We know that personal vehicle transport is one of the greatest causes of emissions for music events. It's the biggest area of emissions we cannot control, and we wanted to attempt to reduce them," Buirski explains. Another motivating factor is the high expenses for creating a space for use as and facilitating a carpark: "It costs us over £7000 to facilitate cars and vans; stewards and parking marshals, extra security, renting a field, and all that expensive, heavy and horrid to handle temporary road matting. Plus, we are running out of parking spaces!"

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CAR-POOLING WITH THE COACH AMBASSADOR SCHEME

To fight travel emissions, Fire in the Mountain has launched a five-year plan, the Sustainable Travel Initiative, to reduce car and van use to only the most essential vehicles and to set off their carbon emissions eventually. The plan includes to increase the parking charge for crew and attendees to £20 per vehicle. “We will see how this pilot year goes, but we are likely to increase parking year on year to help everyone go green. Driving a car should be a luxury, not a necessity,” the Managing Director finds.

The plan also includes free parking and charging for electric vehicles, free minibuses for the crew, promoting car sharing, cycling and coach travel, shuttle buses from the Aberystwyth Train Station for half the price (£1.50), a carbon off-set option for drivers via the festival’s ticket page, and the Coach Ambassador Scheme.

The idea of the scheme is to get visitors to organise car-pooling. “We offer to send a subsidised MPV [Multi-Purpose Vehicle] to any location in the country if there is a proven demand, anything from a 16-52 seat vehicle,” Buirski explains. “It is tricky for a medium-

sized event to guess where to put on coaches. So, we sent an email to our festival audience, encouraging people to become a coach organiser for their local area. We would look at the postcodes of where people bought tickets and email them to see if they would club together with other people who live nearby to share a coach we would organise. We wanted to then invite one person in the area to coordinate the coach and be in touch with the other passengers, in return for free travel.”

The subsidy comes from the fees for car parking: any money that is left after having paid for related costs would flow either into reducing the train station shuttle fee or into the Coach Ambassador Scheme. “A local company is able to supply different size vehicles depending on demand,” Buirski continues. “These coaches won’t be free but will be below cost price.” In order to be economically viable, more than ten people need to share an MPV.

THE SOLUTION



REDUCING VEHICLE TRANSPORT IN 2023

As is the case with many other festivals in 2022, the goal for Fire in the Mountain is to happen in the first place after the long pandemic break. “It is a challenge organising an event after 2 years, and sadly, we don’t have capacity to give the Coach Ambassador Scheme our full attention this year. 2023, when we should be back to normal, we will really focus on reducing vehicle transport,” Buirski says.

The festival will still continue with its Washing Up plan, which bans all single-use items on the entire site. “We invested in thousands of metal plates, bowls and cutlery and bought an industrial dishwasher. We ask all traders to use our serve-ware, and have a team to run the washing-up station. This reduces the amount going to landfill massively,” the Managing Director explains.



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