

Worcestershire Open Studios 2022

20-29th August

Report and Evaluation



Our thanks to all 108 participating artists in 2022 and to everyone who visited and supported Worcestershire Open Studios. We estimate there were 11,000 studio visits in total over the ten-day event.

Background

Worcestershire Open Studios (WOS) is in its eighth year. It is an independent not for profit organisation run by a small team of three artist and is entirely self funded.

For 2022 we made the decision to extend the event to run over a ten-day period offering artists the option of opening for one or both weekends, plus weekdays.

We have also taken actions to consolidate and simplify the event infrastructure to provide focus and make it manageable for an ever increasing volume of participating artists and visitors.

- This includes investment in a new website designed specifically for open studios, with shared development with other open studios.
- The registration process has been simplified.

How did we do this year?

We surveyed our visitors and participating artists, asking for feedback on the event and specifically on the new extended format. 75 percent of artists responded to our survey and 256 visitors completed our online survey. This is what they had to say:-

- Artists and Visitors loved it!
 - 90 percent of visitors rated WOS 2022 as excellent
 - 96 percent of artists said they would take part again
 - Artists rated the event organisation an average of 9.1 out of 10,
 - What did our visitors say?
 - Inspirational, joyful, educational, fascinating, welcoming
 - Sharing behind the scenes work practices encouraged visitors to be creative themselves
 - Opportunity to support independent local artists and buy original artwork and book workshops
 - An enjoyable day out with friends and family
 - Exploring and Enjoying Worcestershire
- Positive response to extending the length of the event
 - Overwhelmingly positive response from visitors to the open question about the change to ten days (See Q5 in visitor survey attachment). Reasons given included

- more opportunity to visit, flexibility, time to travel across the county, they are busy on Bank Holiday
 - Small number of visitors' comments worried ten days might be too long for those artists who opened every day
 - The majority (72%) of artists also supported the change preferring this format to continue for 2023
- Visitor numbers
 - Extrapolating the artists survey estimates we received approx 11,000 visits over the ten days. Each person visited an average of 5 artists each. Therefore, we estimate 2061 people visited open studios. This compares with an estimated 8829 total visits by 2946 people in 2019
 - It should be noted that visitor numbers vary widely by artist and location
 - Visitor numbers were even over the first seven days, then doubled at Bank Holiday weekend. This was not surprising as the event is established as a bank holiday event, we would expect more visitors at the first weekend in future years as the new opening period is more widely known. Most artists were open over bank holiday, not all opened for the full 10 days
 - Over half of visitors saw up to 5 artists each, and an additional one third visited 6-10
- Marketing and communications
 - We achieved strong coverage in the local media both printed and online across the county including front page features
 - Great support from local radio with two interviews on BBC H & W
 - The event was featured in other local and national printed and online publications and events guides
 - Social media campaigns including paid advertising were successful in generating visitor numbers. 30 percent of visitors said they found out about WOS through social media and we gained around 300 new followers
 - Printed materials remain important – 40 per cent of visitors saw a leaflet or poster.
 - We received many positive comments about the return and production of the printed guide. Twelve thousand copies were distributed across the county
 - Positive feedback for format and ease of use of the the new website. Website traffic was high and we saw peaks corresponding to the online advertising campaigns. The website had nearly 26,000 visitors from launch to the end of the event, peaking on Sat 20 Aug at 1660 visits to the website with 63,100 pages viewed.
 - Through general marketing and the prize draw postcards we gained an additional 200 subscribers to our email newsletters
- Breakdown of Finances
 - We received income from artist participation fees, sponsorship and advertising
 - The event breakdown of costs is shown in the attached pie chart.
 - Prize draw winners
 - £200 Bevere voucher I O, Birmingham
 - 1 x £100 voucher each (to spend on work by a participating artist) to S S, Cheltenham and D C, West Sussex
 - Artists' total sales during Open Studios are estimated at £94000. This is an average of £870 per artist. Figures vary widely from less than £200 to over £2000

Points to take forward into next year's planning

- The longer event was very well received by both visitors and artists. More days open generated some new considerations such as impact on neighbours, artists stamina/support, signage, establishing the event as a longer event with the public to increase visitor numbers .
- The lack of a group entry category disappointed a small subset of artists.
- More simplification and outsourcing is needed to sustain management of the organisation as the event grows
- Visitors and artists both value the return of the printed guide and in addition to online information. We are mindful of the environmental considerations of print, plus there are significant timing, organisational flexibility and cost implications.
- Directions, balloons and signage worked well for visitors but balloons not so great for artists to manage over ten days.
- Video reel content performed best on social media. Top posts were the guide flip through, and Gillian's FB live interview with Anne Guest. We need more video input from artists. Continue to look at balance of marketing activity, perceived value vs actual, and time vs benefit. Marketing was evenly distributed across the county yet there was a perception it was skewed to Worcester. Very time consuming to get printed coverage in magazines and newspapers, perceived as important by artists yet visitors do not rate it highly when asked how they learnt about open studios.

Thank you from the organisers of Worcestershire Open Studios

Gillian Simpson, Richard Nicholls, Sally Morgan

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www.worcestershireopenstudios.org

Attachments

- What did visitors say about the event - comments and charts
- Breakdown of Finances

What did visitors say about the event overall?

Inspirational, joyful, educational, fascinating, welcoming

"Inspirational, friendly and fun"

"Stunning, inspiring "

"Brilliant. I loved meeting the artists, talking to them & am inspired. "

"Very enjoyable and inspiring to see such a range of high quality work in so many different media"

"Educational, inspirational, interesting."

"Excellent 2022 Guide enabled me to plan to visit several artist in local areas each time. Wonderful opportunity to hear the artists talk about their work, each one so enthusiastic and generous with explaining the techniques and inspirations for the diverse range of work being shown. "

"Quality. Impressive. Relaxing. Enjoyable. Exciting. Rewarding"

Sharing behind the scenes work practices encouraged visitors to be creative themselves

"Such a wonderful experience to meet the artists and talk about their art in their working environment. I found it a great inspiration to find my 'lost creativity'."

"A wonderful experience, very informative, eye opening, so much great talent in the area and I'm planning to take up the opportunity to improve my pencil portraiture skills."

"Really lovely to meet the artists, especially the ones that let us inside their unedited studios to see where they really work"

"Rare opportunity to see artists in their working environment"

"The whole event was so enjoyable. Artists were generous with their time, tips and seeing works in progress. Looking forward to next year to visit even more"

Opportunity to support independent local artists and buy original artwork and book workshops

"Lovely to see so much talent in the county. The Open Studios is a highlight of the summer for me."

"A delightful way to meet artists and start to understand how they work and what drives them. It's also great to see so much originality and creativity. "

"Nice to support independent artists "

"The artists I spoke to were extremely welcoming and I learnt a lot from them. I would normally find speaking to an artist about their work intimidating (as I am not artistic myself but do appreciate art). However, they were most accommodating and happy to chat. A most enjoyable and unique experience."

"It was so interesting to meet and talk to the different artists, to see their processes and their work. Everyone was very welcoming and friendly, several of them recommended other artists that weren't on my original list, and I'm very glad they did! "

"Amazingly clever artists to be found in Worcestershire and we are so lucky to be able to visit their fascinating studios. A thoroughly enjoyable time."

"Very enjoyable, good to talk to artists and planning to do a couple of workshops.

"Such a lovely experience and I purchased a beautiful birdbath! Also enjoyed talking to the artists

"It was an excellent experience and a great opportunity to look at the work of so many different artists through a single event. It enabled me to reflect on the art I would like in the future. I have identified a couple of artists whose work I would like to own. It was a great event"

"It was a great opportunity to meet the artists and purchase original works."

"We met a charming artist, and bought one of his drawings, which do true justice to the beauty of the Malverns."

"I had no idea how many artists there are in Worcestershire. I have loved seeing the handful I managed to get to. It is so inspiring to see such talent. I have only recently started to experiment with art myself so it was amazing to see what is out there. Everyone I spoke to were lovely and encouraging. I couldn't help buy a few cards and a mug. I will definitely be looking out for this event again next year. I hope all the artists involved found it inspiring too."

"I bought a wonderful painting meet the artist so if I need another I can contact her direct, lovely day out. "

"Overwhelmed at the number of high quality artists in such a small area. I bought art, cards, coasters and I will be back to other artists to buy more work now I have found them"

"We had two lovely days out and purchased a lovely piece of original artwork"

An enjoyable day out with friends and family

"A really enjoyable day out with my wife. Quite inspirational."

"Spending time with people who are creatively active is mentally motivational, particularly for a fellow artist. I had my partner with me who is a non artist he enjoyed the day and seeing parts of Worcestershire we were no that familiar with. Tea and Cakes were a bonus"

"Wonderful to speak with the artists and learn more about their techniques and art. Everyone was very approachable and friendly. My son aged 17 was surprised to find some art that he liked. "

"It was a refreshing change to go somewhere new and different. I enjoyed seeing different types of art work and talking to the artists. Also, we managed to source a lovely bedside table for our house refurbishment and enjoyed excellent tea and cake at the Bevere Gallery."

"I thought the Worcs Open Studios guide was very helpful in the way it listed studios by area, and also an index listing including medium. This was our first visit to Worcs Open Studios, and I'm sure we will visit again."

"We thoroughly enjoyed talking to the artists and managed to purchase a lovely piece of art for our home. Thanks to everyone involved".

"Wonderful as usual! Inspirational! I have also replenished my stock of cards and bought a painting. I particularly appreciated how generous the artists were with their time, to discuss how they had achieved their work, the materials used etc. I found this experience very valuable.

"Great to meet the artists, learn about their work and being able to discuss the thoughts regarding the art.

With free entrance and a possibility to buy their work, I think it's a lovely way of spending a day

"We are considering taking up a new hobby following our visits today. The catalogue guide for the event is invaluable with all the information that you need in it. It's also useful as it has the details in of artists that we haven't had time to visit, should we wish to look into them at another time.

As I say all were incredibly welcoming, chatty, friendly & informative, offering us exclusive & fascinating demonstrations. "

Exploring and Enjoying Worcestershire

"As a newcomer to the county, the Open Studios provided a wonderful opportunity to discover the diverse and talented work of artists living and working in my new locality. Next year I hope to visit studios in other parts of the county. I was also particularly impressed by the excellent catalogue of participating artists and by the clear studio/workshop directions. "

"Met people/artists you would never have met otherwise. Also you see artwork that would never normally see. It makes a great day out in lovely Worcestershire countryside. "

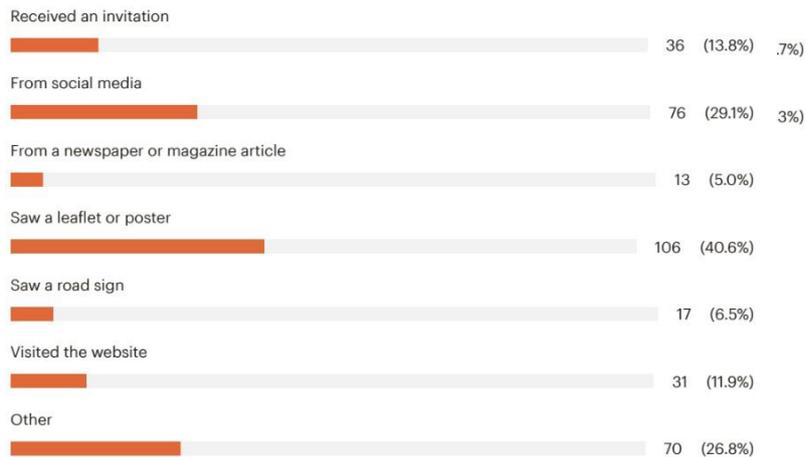
"Inspirational, uplifting, diverse, with some unexpected treasures around corners! A great opportunity to explore the lanes of the county with a very

warm welcome at every venue."

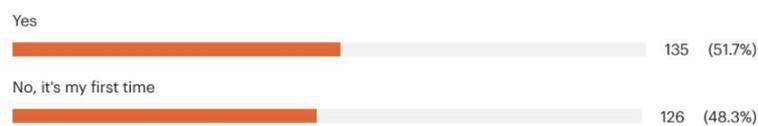
"Very enjoyable with artists really putting themselves out to give us a warm welcome. The balloons and signs were a simple but clever way of spotting the venues and getting parked. "

Visitor Survey charts

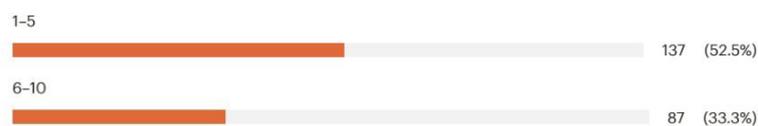
"Q1 How did you find out about Worcestershire Open Studios? (tick all that apply)"



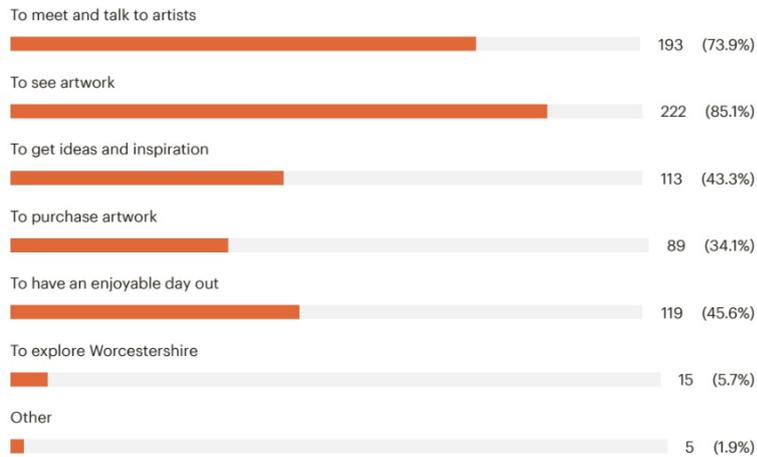
"Q2 Have you been to Worcestershire Open Studios before?"



"Q3 How many studio venues did you visit over the 10 days of the event?"



“Q4 What were your main reasons for visiting Worcestershire Open Studios? (tick up to three)”



“Q5 This is the first year that the event has been run over 10 days. We'd love to know what you thought about artists being open over an extended period.”

“Q6 Do you live in Worcestershire?”



“Q7 Overall how would you rate your overall experience of Worcestershire Open Studios?”

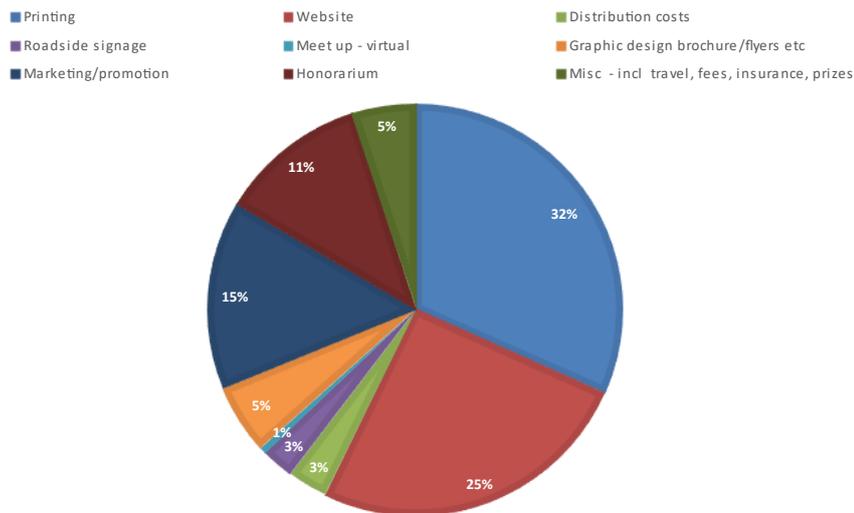


Breakdown of Finances



Artists' registration fees	£9,880.00
Planned spend of reserves	£2,050.00
Sponsorship & advertising	£1,060.00
Total income	£12,990.00

WOS 2022 EXPENDITURE



Printing	£4,113.00
Website	£3,315.00
Distribution costs	£399.00
Roadside signage	£333.00
Meet up - virtual	£72.00
Graphic design brochure/flyers etc	£700.00
Marketing/promotion	£1,923.00
Honorarium	£1,500.00
Misc - incl travel, fees, insurance, prizes	£635.00