



Exeter Respect Festival 2025

ALL DIFFERENT, ALL EQUAL

EXETER RESPECT CIC
“ALL DIFFERENT ALL EQUAL”

EXETER RESPECT FESTIVAL 2025
ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 2026



All Different, All Equal

Exeter Respect

Exeter Respect CIC
“All Different All Equal”

Exeter Respect Festival 2025
Celebrating 28 Years of Diversity
Annual Report

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1. INTRODUCTION

Exeter Respect Festival 2025, 28th Anniversary

The theme “Peace and Harmony between Communities”

Dedicated to Dr Anil Lee

Exeter Respect Festival 2025 marked the 28th anniversary of the first Respect Festival 1997 in Exeter, aimed to bring communities together to celebrate their differences and commonalities. The theme for 2025 was ‘Peace and Harmony between Communities’.

This year’s festival was in memory of Dr Anil Lee who was a precious member of Exeter Respect Festival’s Board of Directors. Her legacy will live and her hard work for all communities will be noted and resonated in our lives. Anil touched the lives of many in Exeter and in Devon and was an amazing great believer in harmony between communities.

As we reflect on the 2025 Exeter Respect Festival, we are filled with pride for the vibrant and inclusive celebration of diversity that this year’s event brought to our city. Held annually to honour the values of equality, respect and unity, the festival continues to grow - bringing together individuals and groups from all walks of life to celebrate the rich cultural tapestry that defines Exeter.

This year, we saw an unprecedented turnout, despite the rain on Saturday, with thousands of attendees enjoying a diverse array of performances, workshops, food, and discussions. 2025’s festival marked a significant milestone, showcasing our collective commitment to fostering respect and understanding across communities. From dazzling displays of art, music and dance, every aspect of the festival contributed to deepening connections within Exeter and beyond. As we move forward, the festival remains a beacon of hope and a powerful reminder of the strength we gain from diversity.

The following pages of this report outline our achievements, challenges, and plans for the future. We would like to offer our immense gratitude to our organising committee, volunteers, artists, partners. We wish to thank our grant providers and sponsors, in particular Awards for All and Devon Community Foundation, and our main sponsors Devon County Council; Unison South West and Devon Branch; Exeter City Council and Exeter University, and extend our appreciation to the sponsors and friends of the Festival, and all who attended.

Reflecting on a successful year and continuing our mission to inspire change, celebrate differences and promote respect for all, we are excited to build on this momentum and look forward to welcoming you to Exeter Respect Festival 2026 on Saturday 6 and Sunday 7 June, Belmont Park, Exeter.

Dr Suaad Genem
Managing Director
Exeter Respect CIC
“All Different All Equal”





THE LORD MAYOR'S PARLOUR, GUILDHALL EXETER
Telephone: 01392 265524

Dear Dr Suaad Genem

I was delighted to be invited to be part of the opening ceremony for the 28th Respect Festival. Thank you so much for inviting me.

From the lively drums helping our route to the main stage, to the warm welcome I received from the very many community groups I met during my tour a somewhat damp day was made very sunny indeed.

The aim of the festival to bring communities together to celebrate both their differences and commonalities was absolutely on display and the aim for "Peace and Harmony Between Communities" is certainly not in doubt in Exeter at least. I am looking forward during my year to meeting many more of the diverse communities that make up this historic but vibrant City.

I am certain that Dr Anil Lee would have been very much assured that her legacy and commitment was living on.

I am sure that everyone enjoyed themselves on the Saturday in spite of the weather and hope that the better weather on Sunday ensured that you had lively audiences throughout the day.

Once again, many thanks for inviting me and I look forward to attending many more Respect festivals and seeing how your plans develop for your 30th Anniversary in 2027.

Best wishes

Yours sincerely

The Right Worshipful the Lord Mayor of Exeter
Cllr Anne Jobson



2. THE PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

This report contains a review of every aspect of Exeter Respect Festival 2025, to share with the public; sponsors; stall holders and supporters to comment and suggest recommendations for improvement for future festivals.

3. ABOUT EXETER RESPECT

Exeter Respect Festival 2025 took place on Saturday 7 and Sunday 8 June in Belmont Park in the City of Exeter. Lasting from noon until 7pm on Saturday, and 11am until 6pm on Sunday, Exeter Respect Festival 2025 was an alcohol-free festival providing a great safe space in which communities came together to celebrate and share their cultures.

OUR MISSION AND VISION

Exeter Respect is the city's annual celebration of diversity where we use the performing and creative arts to engage the wider community in saying no to racism and all forms of prejudice.

The Respect ethos is a simple one: racism and prejudice often spring from fear, and fear is often based on ignorance, so let's overcome ignorance by getting to know one another and sharing, not shunning our cultures. One of the best ways to get to know someone is to enjoy yourself with them, hence our celebratory event and adoption of the old Commission for Racial Equality slogan

ALL DIFFERENT, ALL EQUAL!

HISTORY

The first Exeter Respect festival took place in 1997 and there has been a celebration virtually every year since then. From 2003 to 2008 Exeter Respect's biggest event was at primarily at Exeter Phoenix Arts Centre alongside many smaller events held across the city. From 2009 to the present day our focus has been a giant two day festival in Belmont Park, with a footfall of around 20,000 people every year.

4. ORGANISING COMMITTEE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

ORGANISING COMMITTEE

The Exeter Respect Festival thrives thanks to the extraordinary dedication of our organising committee.

We extend our gratitude and thanks for your time, passion, and unwavering commitment to making this festival a true celebration of respect and community. Our thanks go to:

- Exeter Phoenix
- St. Sidwell's Community Center
- Devon County Council
- Exeter City Council
- Ish Weinely
- Phil Andrews
- Tom Caro
- Dan Wiseman Production
- Faten Ayyash
- Emma Watson (Exeter College)
- Suaad Genem Managing director
- John Fitzsimons (Programming Director)
- Iona Colin (Board Director)



HOW EXETER RESPECT INVOLVED THE COMMUNITY

2025's Exeter Respect involved participation from a broad range across our community, in no particular order and including but not limited to the following:

COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS, SUPPORT GROUPS AND CHARITIES

Devon Rape Crisis and Sexual Abuse Service • Exeter Samaritans • Force Cancer Charity • Wren Music Shared Lives Devon Recovery • Devon Intergroup (DCIG) • Together Devon • Exeter Adults Children A&D Step One • Devon County Council Communities Teams • Devon Faith and Belief DFBF • Exeter Kerala Association Refugees Support Devon • Multilingua Devon • Inclusive Exeter • Exeter City Football Trust • Garland Support CIC Exeter City in the Community • Exeter Community Initiative • Wellbeing Exeter • Hongkongers in Exeter Kurdish Association • Egyptian Association and more

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

We are deeply grateful for the spirit of community engagement that drives Exeter Respect Festival. It is through the active participation of local groups and individuals that this event continues to thrive.

We had the pleasure to meet and consult and create a community network with our grassroots community representatives:

- Inclusive Exeter - Kate Hanna and Mahsen Mahby
- Ish Weinely
- Ann Benbridge Smith
- Devon County Council - Phil Ash, David Wright and Ameera Khrisheh
- St.Sidwell Community Centre - Iona Collins
- Exeter University - Emily Prior RSD, Faten Ayyash Volunteer
- Devon Ukrainian Association - Judy Yu
- Dan Wiseman
- RAAM - Stephanie Cherrett
- Ethiopian Link
- African Writers - Ayesha
- John Fitzsimons
- Exeter Phoenix - Patrick Cunningham
- Exeter City Council - Sophie Allen
- Connect România Community - Ion Abuzatoaiei
- Paula Gencer - Multilingual Devon
- Book Cycle
- Nigerian Community in Exeter - Joy
- Filipino Community Association - Arlene Lewis
- Afghan Community Devon
- Prem Sivlal - Exeter Hindu Cultural Centre

This consultation will foster a growing network that will continue to participate in our open meetings and community consultations, bringing people together to share cultures, volunteer their time, and celebrate unity through respect.

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Exeter University • Exeter College • Newtown Primary School

Continued after page 6

TESTIMONIAL - PHILLIP ASH MIGRATION AND RESETTLEMENT TEAM, DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL

The highlight of our year was undoubtedly the Exeter Respect Festival in June. Thanks to the kind invitation from Suaad and the Respect Committee, all three choirs came together for a joint performance on the Communities Stage on June 7th—a first for us, and a big step forward.

In the weeks leading up to the festival, the choirs worked hard to prepare a shared setlist. Each group contributed songs they had been rehearsing individually, and we also learned a few pieces to sing together: Mother, a Native American song celebrating nature; Light a Candle for Peace, a gentle anthem of hope; and My Love for You, a beautiful round that brought all our voices together in close harmony.

We were also joined by a talented four-piece band made up of Devon County Council staff—Ikumi Keighery on keyboard, Jo Hooper on cello, Claire Richardson on flute, and Tim Howard on violin—who added a rich musical layer to our performance.

On the day of the festival, all three choirs met at St Sidwell's Centre in the afternoon for a final rehearsal. The centre generously offered their space, and it was a joyful moment as singers from different towns met for the first time, shared their songs, and sang together. There was a real buzz of excitement.

After a short break to explore the festival (despite the rain!), we gathered at the Community Stage. Spirits were high as we listened to the Italian folk band Trikkeballakke, featuring our own choir leader Valentina. Then it was our turn.

The sound crew were brilliant, helping us set up quickly and smoothly. And then—we sang! Despite the drizzle, the large number of choir members gave it their all—smiling, cheering, and singing with heart. There were so many special moments: Lugard conducting with his young daughter perched on his shoulders, the Exeter choir's moving rendition of the Persian song King of Hearts, and the Tavistock group's rousing (and loud!) performance of Oi U Luzi Chervona Kalyna under Paul's direction.

The audience was incredibly warm and supportive—clapping, dancing, and singing along in the rain. It was a beautiful celebration of community, resilience, and shared joy.

As we took our final bows, we all felt we had been part of something truly special.

A heartfelt thank you to Exeter Respect Festival for your generous support and for making us feel so welcome. If you'd like, we'd love to return next year!

Phillip Ash

Migration and Resettlement Team

Devon County Council



5. RUN UP TO EXETER RESPECT FESTIVAL 2025

Prior to the festival Exeter Respect hosted two events in the city.

RESPECT CINEMA - EXETER PHOENIX, SAT 26 APRIL

The moving image can create a deep connection. Respect Cinema presented an hour of films that highlight inclusion, prejudice, community and change.

Shown and hosted by Exeter Phoenix, Respect Cinema screenings have grown out of the ideals of the Exeter Respect Festival drawing on local films.

Two screenings included: Abigail's An Activist Now, Exeter Respect Interviews, Sea Silk, Through the Perception Lens, Ocean Recovery Project, Levelling The Field, An Exeter Respect Volunteers Film, Tergo, The Rising of The Moon - Solo Noi, Recyborg - The Art of Waste, Wrong Reflection and Humans

The films covered subjects from activism to environmental projects, from mental health to the wider meaning of being human. The filmmakers ranged from an established industry professional to first timers meeting its target of providing a platform for all levels of experience to submit their art.

Submissions were based on the core theme of transcending any traditional barriers to getting projects shown in a cinema setting to the wider public.

This year's event also included a selection of content from the Exeter Respect Festival over the last few years. The film's integration of event footage not only highlighted filmmaking talent but also served as a direct showcase for the festival.

Although the screenings could have been better attended, it fulfilled its core remit and we will continue to provide this platform and expand its scope and reach.

PROMOTION DAY - PRINCESSHAY - SAT 24 MAY

An annual event at Princesshay in the heart of Exeter City with performers from different art and the grassroots community, this year hosted by Ish Weiley and Phil Andrews. Starting at 11:30 performers included the Hikmat Chinese Line Dancing Group, a local group with audience participation trying their delicate elegant smooth dance; local Exeter based female students of Exeter College and high schools from Hong Kong, K-Pop Dance Team, with a magician and singer gave an amazing dance presentation, and local band The Corduroy Curiosities. Ish and Phil closed the stage on a joyful note.

Our promotion day gave the public a small taste of the Festival and feedback received was that we should do this more often. .



6. AROUND THE FESTIVAL

MARKET STALLS

The central avenue of trees and play area in the park transformed into an international market. Here, local small businesses and charities offered Fair Trade goods from across the globe, with many supporting various international good causes. Shoppers could browse and purchase a diverse range of items, from Devonian, Asian, and Indian cuisine to Devon jewellery and world clothing.

Whilst encouraging local traders to participate and promote their goods, this requires careful management to ensure a balanced representation between commercial traders and charitable causes.

COMMUNITIES, CAMPAIGN AND DISPLAYS

This year's Exeter Respect Festival saw a significant increase in demand for spaces from diverse backgrounds, making it challenging to accommodate everyone. Many groups successfully fundraised for their chosen causes. The 2025 festival powerfully demonstrated the solidarity of people campaigning for 'Diversity Built Britain'. The

range of displays and activities encouraged greater movement and engagement throughout the park. The site layout was organised according to causes, traders and caterers.

MANDELA AREA

VENDOR HIGHLIGHTS

Retail Stalls - A diverse range of unique products were available, from African drums and treasures to clothing and handmade jewelry, all offered at affordable prices.

Exeter University Medical Students - Provided valuable health awareness sessions.

South West Unison and Devon County Council Branch - As long-standing sponsors (since the festival's inception 27 years ago), they presented information on diversity and workers' rights.

Hikmat Devon - Multicultural groups from across Devon showcased their heritage through informative displays.

St. Sidwell's Community Café - Offered delicious homemade pastries and bread from their bakery.

Bar Nova - Served non-alcoholic cocktails and hot drinks.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

CHARITIES

Citizen Advice Exeter and Citizen Advice Torbay were on hand to provide legal consultation and support.

CAMPAIGNERS

Some campaigners, such as **Greenpeace** and **Devon Wildlife**, preferred to be spread out across the site, while others including **AA Intergroup**, **Vocap**, **Normal Magic**, and **Exeter Adults Children A&D** opted to be grouped together to share information on specific matters and wellbeing.

COMMUNITY AREA

The Community stage offered a variety of performances from different cultural backgrounds.

Exeter Quakers hosted a workshop, displaying their community work and praying for peace despite the surrounding music.

Devon Rape Crisis and **Sexual Abuse Service** informed the public about their vital services for women.

Exeter Samaritans shared information on how to join their important service.

Force Cancer Charity, **West Bank**, **Shared Lives** and **Devon Recovery** collaborated to raise awareness of their services and plan to continue this in 2026.

Normal Magic offered family activities.

Devon Intergroup (DCIG), **Together Devon**, **Exeter Adults Children A&D** and **Step One Charity** found their co-location beneficial for increasing public knowledge and information access, and will continue this next year.

Ethiopian Link showcased projects and offered coffee tastings.

ANIL LEE CULTURAL AREA

Anil Open Mic showcased diverse talent, including artists, musicians, poets, and spoken word performers. A fourth stage was created for 2025, but a capacity review for 2026 deemed it unnecessary, given the existing three stages.

The **Nigerian Community In Exeter's** stall near the stage showcased Nigerian culture and food. They also shared their music with the public during open mic slots.

Devon County Council Communities Teams presented information on refugee resettlement, the support they provide to different communities in Devon, and recruiting volunteers for English teaching to refugees.

Devon Faith and Belief DFBF hosted a World Peace poem reading with participants from different faiths and beliefs.

Refugees Support Devon shared information about refugees and asylum seekers, with many at the stall sharing their experiences.

Ethiopian Link displayed information about their projects and offered Ethiopian freshly ground coffee tastings. The **Philippines Community** and **Egyptian Association** showcased their heritage and cuisine.

The colourful **Bulgarian Community** shared their culture including dance and workshops.

The **South India** presence from the **Kerala** and **Nigerian** communities of Exeter sharing a taste of their cultures and displayed activities in Exeter.

Multilingua Devon displayed and explained how Devon has been shaped culturally, did you know there are more than 150 languages being used in Devon.

Stalls hosted by **Palestinians** offered information and a taste of the Holy Land.

The **Kurdish Community** stall was rich with Tehri culture and exhibited artefacts from their homeland.

Cultural stalls included stalls from **Hong Kong** and **Afghan Community Devon** who displayed embroidery, original carpets from Afghanistan and lots of Afghan food to taste .

The **Devon Ukrainian Association** displayed their art, and presented honey from their country.

Inclusive Exeter, an umbrella for different projects delivered and designed for all, and specifically BAME.

WINDRUSH FAMILIES AND CHILDREN AREA

Exeter College organized the **Stephen Lawrence Diversity Stage**, featuring students, young people and local artists sharing their music. Communication issues with this stage are being addressed.

The Toy Library offered family activities like spinning plates, poi, a soft toy tombola, and a pre-loved toy and book stall. Mother and baby facilities, usually available, were absent but will be restored in 2026.

RAMM participated in engagement activity and family art workshop, prompting Maya to state *"We just wanted to email to say congratulations for organising such a vibrant and successful festival this year, RAMM enjoyed being part of it"*.

Newtown Primary School made friendship bracelets as a random act of kindness to share with other children and adults in our community.

Scrapstore and **Blue Slide** offered fun to children and families with lots of activities to enjoy.

Exeter City Football Trust and **Exeter City in the Community** presented information about football in the community and provided activities and family fun. Will Bartsted *"it was a joyful day for us , to so many families with their kids taking part in shooting skills, so many were interested to try, thank you Exeter Respect team for your hard work to pull this magnificent weekend together"*.

Exeter Community Initiative provided crafting for all ages

Jelly Shop showcased colorful children's clothing.

Wellbeing Exeter shared health information.

The Climate Hub, including **Exeter Community Alliance** and **Extinction Rebellion Human Project**, focused on environmental justice through displays, t-shirt printing, and painting.

The Global Centre presented research from school collaborations and displayed their archives of research they have collected by working with different communities.

FairTrade supported their movement with product tastings, allowing attendees to experience their diverse range.

Love from Syria shared cultural information and traditional cuisine.

Afghan Community Exeter displayed traditional activities

Book-Cycle, a volunteer-run charity seeking to empower children worldwide through the provision of free books and educational resources,



offered a relaxing space for reading and storytelling, with the opportunity to listen to stories from around the globe. In 2026 they plan to expand to include storytelling, debating, poetry and a spoken word area

OTHER PERFORMANCES AND ACTIVITIES

Belmont Park was transformed into an amazing festival site featuring a number of strolling performances from the **Philippines Community**, the **Bulgarian Association**, the **Exeter Malayalam Community**, **Hong Kong Exeter Community** and the **Kurdish Community** amongst many others. Everywhere you turned you could see people moving around enjoying themselves and witness someone performing something.

DECORATION

The site transformed into a colourful and vibrant festival site. The Art Wall at Belmont Park featured vivid messages, people writing their thoughts based around our theme 'Peace and Harmony between Communities'. The messages and designs were expressed with love and care. Everywhere the park was colourful and vibrant, bursting with joy.

COMMUNITY YOGA

The 108 Sun Salutation is a very popular annual event at the festival which attracts experienced yoga enthusiasts and beginners alike every year. The salutations led by **Fran Allen (DerekTheDog Yoga Centre)** took place on Sunday morning giving us all a bit of a warm-up, particularly in the drizzling rain. Wet weather didn't deter them and they carried on, enjoying the wet muddy ground. They were covered from head to toe with mud, and filled with laughter as they finished their session.

7. PROGRAMMING

MANDELA STAGE

SATURDAY

The Mandela Stage was a vibrant celebration of diversity, featuring distinguished artists. Hosted by Jesby Joseph, with Phil Andrews and Joseph Joseph managing backstage operations.

At 11:30 am a colorful procession arrived from the Windrush area's Family and Play area, making its way through the site. Leading the parade were the Lord Mayor of Exeter Anna Jobson; the Chair of Devon County Council Councillor Caroline Leaver; and Exeter City Council Leader Phi Byalik. The procession showcased cultural dressing, primarily the beautiful Kerala dress from Southern India, accompanied by shining umbrellas. Morris Dancers at the front contributed to a joyful display. Our guests including Professor Rajani Naidoo, Vice-President



of Exeter University expressed delight with the richness and diversity of the festival.

Exeter Musical Theatre Choir from Exeter & Torquay Choirs - fun, vocal technique, building confidence and belting out show tunes!

Leonian Dream - indie rock band from East Devon
Leonian Dream

The Papers - rock reggae band

Da Fuchaman and his Fire Blaze Band - renowned Jamaican reggae headliners

Rameagle - Devon neo-psychedelic rock band

Exeter Jazz Orchestra - transported the audience back to the golden age of jazz

South Kerala Indian Dance - Indian classical dance

SUNDAY

Kirtan Yoga - Megha & Group

Rock Choir - award-winning contemporary choir experience

The Lunar Keys - rock band from Guildford and Exeter

World Robots - melancholic melodies and infectious grooves

Soul of The City Gospel Choir - headlining with inspirational, contemporary gospel music.

Spin 2 - flavours of folk, bossa, eastern, jazz

Rosalie Dance With Me - dynamic dance filled with a fusion of Latin style, with audience participation

COMMUNITY STAGE

The festival's popular community stage showcased diverse cultural heritage, adhering to values and rules that explicitly campaign against prejudice, discrimination, and racism. It strictly prohibits any display of ethnic superiority. The community stage was exceptionally organized by a grassroots stage manager, with experienced student volunteers from Exeter College presenting the acts.

SATURDAY

Soundwaves - a specialist music service working with neurologically diverse people

Hikmat Devon Chinese Group - brought vibrant, dynamic tradition of China to Exeter

Devon Ukrainian Association - performing dance and amplifying their voices through art

Illaria Belly Dance - classical and folkloric styles

Newtown Roots Band - community band with folk tunes from around the world.

Community Zumba - energetic dance session

Filipino Community Association and Friends - singing and dancing including the Sacred Heart Church Children Choir.

Karina Gracia Dance - flamenco dance

Exeter Community Folk Orchestra - toe tapping and beautiful melodies

Trikkllakke - Southern Italian folk music and dance band

Multicultural Choir - with members from Afghanistan, China, India, Hong Kong, Turkey, Syria and Ukraine

SUNDAY

Sacred Sounds of the Didgeridoo - the magic and sacredness of the didgeridoo

Miruna Negura - Romanian folk singer

Bulgarian Society Devon - traditional Bulgarian dance club

The Bollygals - dance troupe demonstrated the vibrancy, fun and emotion of Bollywood



A. K-pop dance by EXEstar - most of the girls moved to the UK with their parents recently, all of them go to Exeter schools or University

Sing and Sign Jukebox Choir - inclusive choir with individuals from the learning disabled community, their parents, carers, enablers and professionals

Kurdish Govenda Dance - traditional dance troupe

Tell a Child in Gaza's Tale - world storyteller David Heathfield with Palestinian folk tales

Global Harmony - mixed community choir, songs of celebration and protest from around the world

STEPHEN LAWRENCE DIVERSITY STAGE

This stage primarily provides a platform for young, emerging artists, though it occasionally features adult professional and semi-professional performers. Largely youth-led, with significant organizational input from Exeter College students, the emphasis on young artists addresses a critical need, as many new talents lack opportunities and venues to showcase their skills at festivals. By offering this unique stage, we empower them to develop their performance and management abilities.

SATURDAY

Saff Juno - songs about themes of empowerment, especially for women

Melodie Jones - a collection of intimate and soulful songs played on the piano.

The Corduroy Curiosities - an acoustic duo from Exeter

Fossilheads: Climate Crisis Cabaret! - encouraged audiences toward environmental action

Dance DynamiX - dance and fitness aerobics

Marki - rhythmic indie rock band from Exeter

Hoztility - inspiring indie music from Exeter

SUNDAY

Cat Rose - folk singer-songwriter

3 Days of Wonder - young original Devon based rock band

Drea and The Panda - a band driven by a multicultural spirit

Firestone - a fusion of Appalachian, Irish, Canadian, African stepping

Izzy Gale - an impressive singer-songwriter

Grlbnd - Exeter's all female indie-pop band with a rising voice for female empowerment

Community Yoga - a very popular annual event at Exeter Respect

8. VOLUNTEERING

It wouldn't be possible to run the festival without the generosity of many people from all different backgrounds and from Exeter University staff and Students and Exeter College coming together to help and support the festival, before, during and after the event. For many years people have been coming from all parts of Exeter, Devon and Cornwall to volunteer and be part of this amazing event. Volunteers have managed to perform and showed dedication and commitment.

9. SOCIAL MEDIA AND PROMOTION

This year, Wiseman Production led the creation of a series of short videos, actively promoting the Exeter Respect Festival 2025 across our social media platforms. We also distributed an A5 brochure detailing the festival, along with A5 flyers throughout the city. Our website posted updates through to the start of the festival. Our social media, including Facebook, Instagram and Twitter were consistently updated before and during the festival by our dedicated volunteer, Tom Caro.



The festival was a central presence in our city, with our publicity efforts well-received at the University of Exeter and Exeter College. We also participated in Exeter City InExeter's June Boom promotion. A variety of posters and digital screen advertisements were placed around the city. We maintained regular meetings with our diverse communities to ensure their continued involvement in shaping the festival.

Our presence on the High Street and in Princesshay was effective for engaging new people, recruiting volunteers, and promoting the festival through word-of-mouth. Moving forward, we aim to reduce paper-based promotion and increase our focus on media and digital outreach.

10. OVERALL EVALUATION OF EXETER RESPECT FESTIVAL 2025

The 2025 Exeter Respect Festival marked its eleventh year as an alcohol-free event, a decision made after extensive discussions with the police and Exeter City Council. Following positive feedback from the police, the City Council's Health and Safety group and the public, the organising committee opted to continue the alcohol-free policy for 2025. The response was overwhelmingly positive, with visitors respecting the request not to bring alcohol. This created a more inclusive environment where families, children, and young people felt comfortable and safe throughout the park, able to move, sing, dance, eat, and relax freely without intimidation.

COMMENTS FROM FESTIVAL GOERS, STALL HOLDERS, MUSICIANS AND PERFORMERS

Here are a few comments written on our visitor book at the end of the festival from different people including stall holders, musicians and performers:

"Another fun peaceful festival excellent acts from around the world"

"Another fantastic event-brilliant team working behind the scenes and fantastic food & music"

"The warmest welcome! The kindness of people of our community, what a beautiful gathering".

"I feel so uplifting to celebrate Exeter's cultural diversity. An expression of the world we all should live in. Thank you"

"Brilliant festival, I look forward to it every year. It's so nice to see everyone. I wish we could have more opportunity to share our cultures".

"May our government learn the respect that so many in this beautiful city have people from other cultures" !

"Excellent as always".

"Thank you Suaad for everything for everyone who were involved".

"Amazing Respect Festival, as usual !"

"Thank you for excellent incredible festival of humanity coming together"

"Beautiful Event. Love the diversity display"

"Beautiful festival. Love everything"

"Lovely. Had great time. Very well run!"

"Excellent event, incredible atmosphere. Thank you! "

"I love it. I like the fake tattoos."

"So much love, hard work and effort to celebrate-different but all equal- Much love and gratitude."

"glad you are in my life xx wonderful day. Thank you !!!"

"Congratulations- great atmosphere & attitudes"

"It has been a lovely atmosphere of inclusion and always very joyous! "

"Most enjoyable event thank you. Well organised safe for families- and Alcohol free"

"I love it, I wait for Exeter Respect each year. Thank you for your effort"

"Always my favorite weekend in Exeter. Share the Love"

"Street Heat were amazing -both days next year please. Great entertainment in the rain on Saturday ! lovely atmosphere. "

"Always enjoy the festival. Good opportunity to connect with different ones. "

"Wonderful atmosphere. Lovely people its always a fantastic brilliant weekend. So inclusive and brilliant."

"Lovely organisers and team., great atmosphere"

"Brilliant Event-Great vibes, nice people. Better weather next year please. "

"Brilliant days-especially when the sun shine's. Excellent music, atmosphere & so many stalls"

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TESTIMONIAL - ION ABUZATOAEI CONNECTED ROMANIANS FROM EXETER DEVON

Dear Dr. Suaad Genem and the Exeter Respect Festival Team,

I am writing to let you know how thankful I am for the exceptional organisation of the Exeter Respect Festival 2025. As a first-time participant representing the Romanian Community, I was deeply moved by the inclusive and welcoming atmosphere that your team created at Belmont Park.

The festival embodied the true spirit of “All Different, All Equal” and served as a powerful reminder of how cultural diversity strengthens our community bonds. What particularly resonated with me was witnessing people from various backgrounds—families, children, and individuals from several languages spoken in Devon—coming together in genuine celebration and mutual respect.

The festival’s emphasis on bringing communities together to celebrate their differences and commonalities was evident throughout the weekend. The alcohol-free environment created a safe, family-friendly space where everyone could participate freely, and the variety of stages provided platforms for authentic cultural expression. We are glad that one of our local artists, Miruna Negura, got to perform traditional Romanian songs openly on the stage.

Your commitment to fighting prejudice, discrimination, and racism through celebration rather than confrontation is both admirable and effective. The festival demonstrated that cultural festivals play a significant role in promoting social interaction, celebrating diversity, and fostering community cohesion.

As someone who believes that communities often naturally cluster around shared ethnic, linguistic, or cultural backgrounds, I was particularly impressed by how the festival created bridges between different groups. The event provided exactly the kind of space needed to build those essential connections that strengthen our entire community. The 28-year legacy of this festival is a testament to its vital role in promoting intercultural understanding and social cohesion.

The seamless coordination of multiple stages, diverse cultural displays, and community activities demonstrated exceptional planning and attention to detail. The Anil Lee Cultural Area, the Windrush Zone for families, and the various stalls representing communities from around the world all contributed to a comprehensive celebration that honoured both local and international cultures.

Events like the Exeter Respect Festival are crucial for helping us recognise and appreciate the rich diversity within our community. They serve as catalysts for building stronger social networks and creating lasting connections between people who might otherwise remain isolated within their own cultural groups. The festival’s impact extends far beyond the weekend itself, contributing to a more cohesive and understanding society.

Please share my appreciation with your grant funders and supporters. Their investment in community cohesion through cultural celebration is making a tangible difference in building a more inclusive Exeter. The festival’s success demonstrates that when we create spaces for genuine cultural exchange and celebration, we can overcome the barriers that often divide communities.

Thank you for your tireless dedication to bringing our community together and for creating an event that truly celebrates the beautiful diversity that makes Exeter such a special place to live.

With sincere appreciation and warm regards.

Ion Abuzatoaiei

Connected Romanians from Exeter Devon CIC



"Some very good conversations and a great result. Thank goodness the sun came out."

"Very busy with lots of children trying fire lit and adults finding out about fire safety. Very important."

"Great atmosphere-very busy, plenty of variety, it would be beneficial to be more involved. We are here to engage positively and help change stigma attached."

"Brilliant event as always well organised volunteers and security all on it. Well done."

"Such a great event and everyone as so friendly. The music on the main stage was diverse and wonderful. Thank you."

"Very well organised-Thank you so much. Incredibly helpful security staff-facilitated-disabled access from rear gate. All kept very clean. Excellent. Up with Respect !"

"We love this event. Always a pleasure to be here, well organised, friendly and so important in these difficult and uncertain times. Well done all !!! xx"

"Very well organised, impressive, good layout, thanks to all organisers."

"A great team."

"Our team met amazing people over the weekend."

"We have really enjoyed being here again this year. See you in 2026, An amazing atmosphere, promoting love and inclusivity."

"Absolutely fantastic event, great atmosphere. Lovely family event. Would love to come again next year!"

11. ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Accepting that we must look after the environment Exeter Respect Festival 2025 embraced environmental responsibility by powering its generators with biodiesel, eliminating any environmental damage and avoiding neighborhood complaints. Everyone who came through the gate had the experience of 'All Different, All Equal.' This is what Exeter Respect Festival stands for - bringing people together every year. Only together can we build a society free from prejudices. Exeter Respect Festival is the platform for all people regardless of their background, colour, creed or ethnicities, to come together to celebrate diversity in the heart of Exeter.

WE'RE LOOKING FOR SPONSORS, VOLUNTEERS, PERFORMERS & STALLHOLDERS TO MAKE NEXT YEAR'S FESTIVAL AMAZING!

SPONSORS

Support
your community
& enjoy great publicity
opportunities.

VOLUNTEERS

We need friendly,
energetic helpers.
Be part of
something special!

PERFORMERS

We'd love you
to share your talent
across our
stages!

STALLS & TRADERS

Whether you sell
crafts, food, local products
or campaign, join our vibrant
market area!

Click here - exeter-respect.org/general-enquiries/

12. SPONSORSHIP

Exeter Respect would like to thank the following organisations and businesses from whom we received financial support and in-kind support

PLATINUM SPONSOR



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FRIENDS OF EXETER RESPECT FESTIVAL



IN-KIND SPONSORSHIP OR CONTRA DEAL



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13. KEEP IN TOUCH

Exeter Respect Community Interest Company - CIC No. 08725612

Exeter Respect, Sidwell Street, Exeter EX4 6NN

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stalls@exeter-respect.org

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Thanks to our photographers Filippo Catania, James Amos and Tom Caro, and filmmaker Dan Wiseman
Exeter Respect Festival branding designed by Evolve Promotion