

Festival highlights

Live music from a multitude of genres, spoken word, visual art, drama, floral art and even a guided walk looking at a key part of Leek's textile heritage, all featured in this year's Leek Arts Festival.

And the Foxlowe Arts Centre, once again, played host to many of the headlining acts of this year's festival programme. Spokesman Phil Edmeades

said: "A huge amount of effort by a tiny group of volunteers goes into planning and organising the festival each year and then, when it all finally gets under way, it seems to go past in the blink of an eye.

"This year we started at the end of April and ran through to the middle of June with a total of 37 events.

"That's a massive achievement for a small place like

Leek and I think everyone who played any part in this year's festival - whether as an event organiser, a volunteer supporter or an audience member who simply came along to enjoy what was on offer - can feel really proud of their town.

"Of those 37



events no fewer than 17 were on offer free of charge – another huge achievement in the current economic climate." Highlights of this year's programme included The Bar-Steward Sons of Val Doonican, a one-day ska festival, Fairport Convention, Leek Choral Society, Tom Robinson, Dean Friedman, the Birmingham Conservatoire Folk Ensemble, spoken word from the Three Lancaster Poets and an evening of sheer musical magic from Irish folk superstar Cara Dillon.

Phil added: "It's worth noting that none of this would be possible without the people and organisations who help to fund the festival each year including SMDC, Leek Town Council, Leek Town Lands Trust, KWA, Tinsdills Solicitors and the Three Horseshoes Inn. We are very grateful for their continued support.

"We would also like to say a huge 'thank you' to the trustees and volunteers at the Foxlowe Arts Centre whose patience and understanding we stretch to the limit each year."



Growing success for counselling business duo

Rachel Butcher and Lisa Shaw are the counsellors at On the Horizon Counselling Services CIC which is now based in Studio 3 within the Creative Hub at the Foxlowe Arts Centre.

Rachel and Lisa both work with children and young people from the age of 10 years and upwards as well as with adults. They have been based in the Foxlowe for 12 months now and are slowly building up their counselling practice with one to one counselling within their studio, Walk and Talk therapy and also running groups such as walking groups, LGBTQ groups for young people and adults, and thera-

peutic art groups.

Rachel is a mum of five and also a youth worker. She is the Walk and Talk counsellor at On the Horizon Counselling Services and she believes that walk and talk therapy is essential in shaking off the stresses of modern life.

She said: "I think that work-stress and people experiencing burn out, is at its highest, and we need to go out for more walks.

"When we do this we process what has gone on throughout the day.

"We are so lucky in Leek to be surrounded by nature and this provides us with a safe space where we can take a moment to breathe, think, and reflect.

"I hold walk and talk sessions in locations around Staffordshire, even just an hour's walk in your lunch hour makes a difference.

"My role as a counsellor is to provide people with some guidance to encourage them to reflect on who they are and help people seek clarity or resolution."

Lisa is also a mum and she is interested in attachment as a counsellor. She has worked with local voluntary organisations and schools.

She said: "I believe that counselling fo-



cuses on helping you to better understand and manage the issues that challenge you and to identify and build on your strengths.

"I think that we need to overcome the still existing stigma of talking to someone about our selves and worries as we all struggle sometimes and for some of us we need to either speak to a friend, family member or even a professional."

For further information about the services which Rachel and Lisa offer, visit: www.facebook.com/onthehorizoncounselling/ or call Rachel on 07855 652753 or Lisa on 07807 204412.

