What supports are needed to encourage and assist community festivals and events to succeed and grow? An empirical study.

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What supports are needed to encourage and assist Community Festivals and Events to succeed and grow? An empirical study.

Helen McDwyer
What supports are needed to encourage and assist Community Festivals and Events to succeed and grow. An empirical study.

Researcher: Helen McDwyer
Research Supervisor: Dr. Angela Wright
Date: August, 2019

This thesis is submitted in fulfilment of the Business Masters course requirements.

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Declaration of Academic Honesty

Title:

'What supports are needed to encourage and assist Community Festivals to succeed and grow'

Name: Helen McDwyer

Student Number: R00158652

Supervisor: Dr. Angela Wright

Declaration:

I hereby declare that this thesis is solely my own work and that if any text passages or diagrams from books, papers, the internet, or other sources have been copied or in any other way used, all references, including those found in electronic media have been acknowledged and fully cited in the reference section. This thesis has not been submitted for any other academic award at this or any other institution.

Signed: ___________________________   Date: ________________

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Signed: ___________________________   Date: ________________

Dr. Angela Wright
Supervisor
29th May to 2nd June 2019

JUNE BANK HOLIDAY

29th May to 2nd June 2019
# Table of Contents:

Declaration of Academic Honesty ................................................................. ii

Table of Contents: ....................................................................................... iv

Dedication: ................................................................................................. ix

Acknowledgements: ................................................................................... x

Abstract: ..................................................................................................... xi

Chapter 1 Introduction.................................................................................. 1

1:0 Introduction .......................................................................................... 1

1:1 Research Context .................................................................................. 1

1:1:1 Tourism .............................................................................................. 2

1:1:2 Social Benefits .................................................................................. 2

1:1:3 Volunteers in Tourism ....................................................................... 3

1:2 Rationale and Justification for the Study ............................................ 4

1:3 Aims and Objectives of the Research ................................................. 5

1:4 Research Focus for the Study ............................................................. 6

1:4:1 Chapter 1 .......................................................................................... 7

1:4:2 Chapter 2 .......................................................................................... 7

1:4:3 Chapter 3 .......................................................................................... 7

1:4:4 Chapter 4 .......................................................................................... 7

1:4:5 Chapter 5 .......................................................................................... 8

1:4:6 Reference .......................................................................................... 8

1:4:7 Appendix .......................................................................................... 8

1:5 Conclusion ........................................................................................... 8

Chapter 2 Literature Review ..................................................................... 9

2:0 Introduction .......................................................................................... 9
5:9 Limitations of the Study ................................................................. 79
5:10 Conclusion and Final Comments .................................................. 79

Word Count for Chapters 1-5 inclusive: .......................................... 80

References: ......................................................................................... 81

List of Figures ..................................................................................... 90

Appendix 1: Timeline ......................................................................... 91

Appendix 2: Profiles of Interviewees and festivals ............................... 92
  Declan Mangan - Puck Fair ............................................................. 92
  Gary Curran - Dingle Food Festival ................................................ 92
  Katie Graham - K-Fest ................................................................. 92
  Ken Tobin - Tralee Food Festival .................................................... 93
  Margaret McCarthy - Halloween Howl ............................................ 93
  John Sheehy - Other Voices .......................................................... 94
  Aidan O'Connor – Revival ............................................................ 94
  Mickey Ned O'Sullivan - Ring of Beara Cycle ............................... 94
  Oliver Kirwan – Quest Adventure Series ....................................... 94
  Collette O'Connor – Listowel Writers Week ................................. 95
  Geraldine O'Sullivan – Kerry Volunteer Centre ............................. 95

Appendix 3: Interview Guide: ............................................................. 96

Appendix 4: Sample Consent form ..................................................... 98
Dedication:

Jerry, Neal, Una and Aisling,

Love you loads!
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I would like to thank:

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Dr. Angela Wright for all her help throughout this dissertation

All my lecturers who have helped me along this journey

All the interview participants for giving so generously of their time
Abstract:

Communities are motivated to host festivals and events for a myriad of reasons. They generate important economic and social benefits for an area with increased visitor numbers, increased local spending and greater community cohesion. Festival and event tourism is an important segment of the overall tourism product in Ireland, particularly in an area such as Kerry where there is a heavy reliance on tourism.

Many festivals and events in Kerry are organised by community and voluntary groups and yet these groups are increasingly pressurised to increase the professionalism of their offering to compete for regional funding and sponsorship. Changes need to be made to how these festivals and events are supported in order to avoid increasing levels of events ceasing operation and new organisers becoming discouraged from setting up new innovative festivals.

Furthermore, in an era where rural residents in Kerry have a predominantly ageing population these festivals and events bring vitality and foster community engagement in an area. While there is a growing body of research dedicated to community festivals and events, there is little focus on the supports that are necessary to sustain them. This research aims to address that deficiency in an Irish context, concentrating on the Kerry Local Authority area.

This research study looked at festivals in key Kerry tourism areas, Dingle, Killarney, Kenmare, Killorglin and Listowel. Ten community festival organisers gave in-depth interviews and voiced their pride in their events, the challenges that they face and the solutions they feel would mitigate those challenges. This research has identified support measures which are both practical and easily implemented through current support frameworks that could bolster the existing community festivals and events in Kerry and ease the path of new entrants into the sphere.
Chapter 1 Introduction

1:0 Introduction

This research study examines the community or voluntary events tourism sector in Kerry. Chapter one outlines and presents an overview of this research study. The researcher undertook a multiple case study approach in an attempt to determine practical supports that could be put in place to support community festivals and events in Co. Kerry. While there is an increasing body of research regarding festival and event tourism there are still large gaps in the research.

Kerry is the County most dependent on Tourism throughout the Country. The festivals and events that are held throughout the year make up a dynamic and authentic component of the overall tourism product. Kerry has a vibrant and varied event tourism sector with the GoKerry.ie website offering a partial list of over seventy festivals and events happening throughout the County, many of which are organised by community groups. While the overall challenges and benefits of each festival may be shared with others, each committee pulls together the pieces of its festival or event in their own unique way.

1:1 Research Context

Fáilte Ireland (2018) has identified that an opportunity exists for festivals and events to play a more significant role in driving Ireland's tourism performance and aim to encourage the creation of unique new festivals through their festival innovation programme. At the same time Fáilte Ireland's funding for current regional festival has been divested to the Local Authorities and the National funding stream is closed to new entrants.

Due to the importance of festivals and events the visual and physical impacts often created by event activities to the environmental and social resource base upon which, events depend, have begun to draw attention to the way events are planned and managed (Maguire and McLoughlin, 2019). Although the concept of sustainability has become the topic of much discussion and debate in event management literature, there exist many gaps in relation to its practical application in event management planning in Ireland (Maguire and McLoughlin, 2019). This research focuses on festivals and events managed and run by non-profit organisations. The researcher also spoke to a private event organiser to ascertain whether
they had professional insights and suggestions to aid festivals and events in Kerry and to Volunteer Kerry to triangulate the results and see whether the results of the study correlated with their experience.

The researcher volunteers for a number of regional festivals and events in Kerry and works for a Destination Marketing Organisation. While every attempt is made to present the study in an impartial manner, the subject is an area the researcher is deeply invested in.

1:1:1 Tourism

Throughout the instances of European touring during the 18th and 19th centuries, the concentrated time-space frame of the festival helped to make visible the social life of ‘foreign’ townscape and landscapes that while rich in historic and architectural significance, often lacked animation (Picard and Robinson, 2006:1). While touring Killarney in 1767, Samuel Derrick managed to find a peasant family who engaged him in English, unlike many of their neighbours whom, he claimed, were too stubborn to oblige him! (William, 2010: 154).

While the number of tourists visiting Kerry remains high, and the town of Killarney is a key attraction, the other more rural villages in the county rely on innovative strategies to increase their attractiveness (Mottiar et al., 2018: 79). Festivals are staged increasingly for their economic benefits, they increase leisure options for locals, attract new investment to an area and revitalise existing infrastructure (Ferdinand and Williams, 2018: 33).

1:1:2 Social Benefits

A common characteristic of non-profit festivals: their organisers may make no or little direct profit, but instead they catalyse meaningful monetary benefits for their surrounding communities as a flow-on effect – through tourism visitation expenditure, through the hiring of local expertise, and sourcing local services and materials (Gibson and Stewart, 2009: 16). Davies in Gibson and Connell (2011: 175) asserts that festivals are important catalysts for local leadership in rural communities, with local leadership widely recognised as the key to organisational effectiveness and successful endogenous development activities, festivals can benefit the overall well-being of communities.
Quinn, in Cronin and O’Connor (2003: 62), notes that since at least the mid-1980s, local people in countless locations have become extensively involved in ‘community-based’ tourism planning and development initiatives, thus, the opportunity for individuals, small firms and community groups to mould, or at least to influence the shape of tourism landscapes is very significant. The motivations of social entrepreneurs are driven by external factors, the motivation does not just come from within the individual, and it is driven by the environment (Mottiar, 2016: 1138). These are the people who often identify tourism opportunity in the first instance, play a key part in advancing local networks, and develop common goals and visions among the local community (Mottiar et al., 2018:81). Volunteer festival managers perform a diverse range of activities, including strategic planning, human resource management, marketing, fund raising via grant applications, ticketing and merchandising, stakeholder management, festival programming, and tourism development and planning – all while volunteering their services to the festivals, and all within the context of artistic direction and within the management framework (Hede and Rentschler, 20017:167). This statement was borne out in this current research, each of the festival organisers interviewed had clear motivations in setting up and sustaining their events. Some of the motives for volunteering are being a part of an event, experiencing real life events, loving activity, personal satisfaction and opportunity to engage with other people (Clarke, 2016).
1:2 Rationale and Justification for the Study

Quinn (2015: 3) asserts that what brings a researcher to an inquiry matters, their background, experience, training, skills, interpersonal competence, capacity for empathy, cross-cultural sensitivity, and how they engage in fieldwork and analysis—these things undergird the credibility of their findings. This research study set out to understand the shared concerns and challenges within the community festival and event arena in Kerry and to ascertain what supports could negate or lessen them. The literature to date on the governance of rural festivals has largely focused on some of its component parts, namely the event life cycle, festival leadership, festival strategic planning and decision-making, organisational structure and volunteer burnout (Frost and Laing, 2015: 1299).

The researcher volunteers and works in the area of event tourism and destination marketing and through the formation of the Kerry Tourism Forum in 2017 had the opportunity to discuss current challenges facing tourism with other Kerry destination representatives. In regards to festivals and events there were a number of concerns voiced by people within the sector, the difficulty in encouraging people to volunteer and funding being the most frequently discussed. There was also a sense of frustration when discussing these areas of concern due to the perceived lack of understanding from Public Bodies of the reality ‘on the ground’. There was also concern about the lengthening list of festivals and events that were no longer being held. Frost and Laing (2015: 1314) noted that while the value of festivals to many rural places is undeniable, few studies have examined the challenges to their sustainability. Getz (2002: 209) noted that a search of the pertinent literature on festivals revealed that failures were mentioned, and might be common, but failures have not specifically nor systematically been studied. In a similar vein Wilson et al. (2017: 208) also noted that there has been little serious consideration of the amount and types of resources needed to be able to run a festival. Without looking at why festivals and events are failing and what challenges are facing them, a clear understanding of the solutions needed to address the issues is impossible. While each festival and event will face common challenges and create common benefits each one is unique due to the combination of differing talents and motivations of the community group that organises them. As a result a holistic approach needs to be taken in respect of the supports that festivals and events in the majority face while acknowledging and respecting their individuality.


1:3 Aims and Objectives of the Research

The main aim of research is to find out the truth which is hidden and which has not been discovered as yet (Kothari, 2004: 2).

The aim of this research was to study the festival and event sector and to ascertain whether there are practical recommendations for creating supports to encourage, sustain and grow community festivals and events in Kerry.

The objectives of this research are as follows:
1. To create greater understanding of the needs of the non-profit festivals and event sector in Kerry.
2. To research best practice in festival and event tourism and see if those methods could be applied in Kerry.
3. To assess the benefits derived from festivals and events in Kerry to gain a better understanding of the importance of the sector to Kerry.
4. To gather ideas for solutions from within the festivals and events sector in Kerry.

1.4 Research Focus for the Study

The event tourism sector is an area of increasing importance to Ireland’s tourism industry, Minister Brendan Griffin has stated that:

“Not only do festivals and events play an important role in delivering brilliant visitor experiences, they often encourage people to visit areas outside of traditional tourism hotspots and outside of peak times, helping to spread the benefits of tourism to communities throughout Ireland” (Dennehy, 2019).

The focus of this research is the festival and event tourism sector in Kerry. Festivals and events can be held at any time throughout the year and are used by many communities to attract tourism spend and to create awareness of the area. There are an array of festivals and events taking place in Kerry but anecdotal evidence when speaking to organisers in the community festival and event sphere tells us that there are frustrations with lack of financial support, the time intensive funding and drawdown applications for funding that is available and concern over the levels of volunteering.

This study looks at the benefits that these festivals and events bring to an area with the intention of creating a justification for increased support. The main challenges for the community event tourism sector are examined to devise solutions that best suit the needs of organisers. Due to the uniqueness of each festival and the different construct of each organising committee it was essential to allow each participant to lead the interview and to tell their own story. Qualitative inquiry makes attention to context a priority both for data collection and for reporting findings, which means documenting diversity and the contextual
factors that explain particular variations even while identifying cross-cutting patterns and themes (Quinn, 2015: 9). A semi-structured interview process was decided upon in order to yield rich informative data to answer the research aim. The secondary research looked at the literature in the area and case study research on festivals and solutions that have been tested. The findings and recommendations that are put forward are as a result of the secondary and primary research.

1:4:1 Chapter 1

Chapter one is an introduction to the topic that has been undertaken in this research study. The chapter will begin by following the research journey through the decision to conduct this research, the motivation behind that decision and the aims and objectives set out by the researcher. The researcher will then set out the justification and focus for the research.

1:4:2 Chapter 2

Chapter Two reviews the relevant literature relating to the tourism sector, the festivals and events sector, volunteers and volunteer motivations.

1:4:3 Chapter 3

This chapter discusses the research methods available and provides the rationale for the qualitative approach utilised in this study.

1:4:4 Chapter 4

This chapter outlines the findings of the primary research. In this chapter the researcher outlined nine main themes which were generated through the interview process.

The themes outlined were;

Motivation of festival organisers.

The benefits that festivals and events bring to an area:

I. Economic Benefits
II. Social Benefits
III. Tourism Benefits
The challenges for community festivals and events:

I. Insufficient Public Body support
II. Scarcity of necessary skills
III. Volunteers

The necessity to professionalise festivals and events.

Recommendations for solutions.

1:4:5 Chapter 5
This chapter concludes the research study. Chapter Five summarises the findings of chapter four and further examines the themes revealed through the primary research. The researcher discusses a model for practice and outlines recommendations for practical supports. Recommendations for further research are also outlined.

1:4:6 Reference
This section is a list of the literature reference used by the researcher set out alphabetically in the Harvard style.

1:4:7 Appendix
This section contains a profile of the interviewees and the festivals and events that they organise and volunteer for. A copy of the interview guide, a sample consent form are also included.

1:5 Conclusion
This chapter set out the background that led to the study topic and the reason why the researcher felt it was imperative for this research to be carried out. The following chapters will expand on the research focus and the outcomes of the research.
Chapter 2 Literature Review

2:0 Introduction

This chapter will review the literature in relation to volunteering, the importance of volunteers in general and more specifically, the importance of volunteering within the tourism industry.

Volunteering has gained widespread public and political interest in recent years with policy debates taking place in many countries focusing on how to preserve and encourage volunteering, and various parliamentary and government commissions have studied ways to stimulate voluntary activities among diverse groups such as the young and the elderly, working parents and immigrants (Dekker and Halman, 2003: 1). While Anheier and Kendall (2012: 1) assert that the voluntary sector is at a crossroads with various challenges facing the sector, in part, due to a backdrop of mixed messages from government, with ample supportive rhetoric often not matched, and sometimes even contradicted by, ambivalence in policies and their implementation.

2:1 Definition of volunteering

Handy et al (2000) notes that while volunteering has been the essence of scholarly work for numerous academics around the world, no clear-cut definition that encompasses all aspects of volunteering exists. To most people, a ‘volunteer’ is someone who contributes time to helping others with no expectation of pay or other material benefit to themselves (Wilson and Musick, 1999: 141). Cnaan et al (1996) put forward that the perception that what a volunteer is can depend on the relative costs and benefits to the volunteer, that the greater the net costs to the volunteer, the purer the volunteering activity and hence the more the person is a real volunteer. Volunteering can also be seen as a cluster of helping behaviours, entailing more commitment than spontaneous assistance but narrower in scope than the care provided to family and friends (Wilson, 2000). Strict definitions of Volunteering can be problematic due to freedom of choice and the nature of rewards may be known only to volunteers (e.g. a person who volunteers out of a sense of religious or moral obligation, or to improve their job prospects) (Whittaker et al, 2015). Davis-Smith (2000) sets out four key characteristics of volunteering, it should not be undertaken for financial gain, it should be
undertaken in an environment of freewill, there should be identifiable beneficiaries and there can be both formal and informal types.

The key themes that emerge across studies of major trends affecting volunteering include demographic change, increased choice and time pressures, advances in information and communications technology (ICT), new forms of volunteering and increased diversity (Yeoman et al., 2014: 178). There are also different terms used in Ireland to describe the set of organisations that are distinct from both the private and the public sectors; terms such as charities, voluntary organisations and, more recently, voluntary and community organisations (Ruddle and Mulvihill, 1999: 12).

2:1:1 Volunteering: Not for Financial Gain

One of the distinguishing features, of the voluntary sector, is the absence of explicit monetary incentives for the share of work done (Frey and Goette, 1999). The criterion of being unpaid is not entirely straightforward (Dekker and Halman, 2003: 2). Paine et al., (2010: 11) note that there are some payment types such as, incurred expenses, enhanced expenses, incentives and rewards and explicit payments offered to volunteers. Fiorillo (2011) found that monetary rewards do not crowd out intrinsic motivation since volunteers who are intrinsically motivated and who get monetary rewards supply more hours than those who are intrinsically motivated and are not monetarily rewarded.

MacNeela (2008) suggests that the key issue should be to identify the principles of benefit maximizing and cost minimizing across the variety of ways in which volunteering takes place. One of the new ways companies demonstrate their social responsibility is by encouraging and supporting employee involvement in community programmes (Pajo and Lee, 2011). These employee volunteering (EV) schemes now represent a cornerstone of many company Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) strategies (Cook and Burchell, 2018). These EV schemes can include team volunteering, secondments, mentoring, coaching and matched giving (Visser et al, 2010).

2:1:2 Volunteering: Identifiable Beneficiaries or a Beneficiary

Volunteering should directly or indirectly benefit people outside the family or household or else benefit a cause, even though the person volunteering normally volunteers as well
UNV.org, 2011). Herman et al., (2011) note that Volunteering is prosocial rather than self-sacrificial: it is actively intended to benefit others but not restricting possible benefits to the volunteers as well. It is widely believed that helping others is as beneficial for the donor as the recipient (Wilson and Musick, 1999: 141). There is some evidence that engaging in volunteering activities can provide beneficial social, physical, psychological, and cognitive outcomes for older people (Pettigrew et al., 2015).

2:1:3 Volunteering: Without Coercion

According to Paine et al. (2010: 12) there are five forms of pressure or coercion that may be exerted on volunteers, physical coercion, legal coercion, institutional coercion, social coercion and individual coercion. Recruitment can be done through personal and workplace social networks, which may foster an obligation framework that many volunteers felt made them beholden to volunteer (Steimel, 2018). Adults might encourage young people to think about the benefits of volunteering, they might remind them that colleges or jobs after school will want to see a record of volunteering, or they might institute actual requirements for volunteering, tied to grades or graduation (Bode, 2017).

It may also be argued that individuals who receive some remuneration are not operating altogether under a free will paradigm, although relatively un-coerced, the economic rewards available may be more of an inducement than the accompanying intrinsic rewards of the work (Mesch et al., 1998). While Largent et al., (2012) warns that much valuable (medical) research is unlikely to be completed in a timely way or even conducted unless research subjects are offered payment as a financial incentive to participate, however, there are ethical concerns that payment constitutes coercion or undue influence.

Volunteering implies free choice but as can be seen, people in some situations, may feel compelled to volunteer (Beehr et al., 2010). Cary and Snyder (1999) warn that future choices to volunteer may be less likely if the initial experience is accompanied by perceptions of external control.

2:1:4 Volunteering: Formal and Informal

Informal volunteering refers to engaging in an activity without the umbrella of a formal organization, in contrast, formal volunteering is activity conducted through a formal
organization or government program (Carson, 1999). Formal and informal volunteers share common characteristics, such as empathy, self-confidence, or other psychological and physical traits (Lee and Brudney, 2012). Plumptre and Laskin (2003) note that an informal voluntary body may simply be a group of people who come together to accomplish some shared purpose of benefit to the community and while many groups remain at this stage others may eventually find that part or full-time staff are needed.

Primarily the formal voluntary sector is also known as the ‘Third Sector’ (Halsall et al., 2016). This refers to non-profit organizations, private voluntary organisations, philanthropic and operating foundations – in short, those organizational forms located between the private, for profit world and the government (Anheier and Siebel, 1990). These institutions share a crucial characteristic that makes it feasible to differentiate them from for-profit enterprises: the fact that they are prohibited from distributing any surplus they generate to their investors, directors, or stakeholders and therefore presumptively serve some broader public interest (Salamon and Sokolowski, 2016). Williams (2008: 25) notes that Governments have predominantly pursued the development of a culture of volunteering by giving primacy to nurturing participation in voluntary groups (a third sector approach) rather than the development of informal volunteering (a fourth sector approach). Williams (2008: 25) argues that there is a need to complement this third sector approach of nurturing formal volunteering with a ‘fourth sector’ approach that seeks to develop informal volunteering. Due to findings which display that the current third sector approach of fostering participation in voluntary groups appears to be leading to a reduction in the level of informal volunteering and consequently in overall volunteering activity in the UK (Williams, 2008: 31).

2:2 Volunteer motivation

When it comes to inspiring and harnessing the time and talent of volunteers, there is so much more involved, and more potential for greatness and meaning, than just extra man-hours (Rosenthal, 2015: xii). Although the work of the voluntary sector is growing, the number of people volunteering is not increasing at a comparable rate, the best way for an organisation to succeed in recruiting and retaining its volunteers is to have an understanding of its target group (Bussel and Forbes, 2002). A person’s incentive to volunteer reflects a variable mix of altruistic motivation, material self-interest, and social or self-image concerns (Benabou and
Tirole, 2006). The kind of volunteers desired are those who appreciate being needed, who have an opportunity to contribute to something they value, and who receive satisfaction from being able to make a difference (Rafe, 2013). By maintaining an emphasis on the impact volunteers have on those they are assisting, organisations can also support the motivation of those volunteers seeking personal fulfilment (Aguirre and Bolton, 2013: 336).

Maslow’s and Herzberg’s theories are found to be most relevant when analysing the expectations and concerns of humanitarian volunteers (Bjerneld et al., 2006: 50). Herzberg, a psychologist, proposed a theory about job factors that motivate employees while Maslow, a behavioural scientist, developed a theory about the rank and satisfaction of various human needs and how people pursue these needs (Gawel, 1997).

2:2:1 Maslow

Maslow states that people are motivated by unmet needs which are in a hierarchical order that prevents people from being motivated by a need area unless all lower level needs have been met (Pardee, 1990). Maslow’s hierarchy starts with physiological needs and moves upward in a pyramidal shape to safety and security, social activity (or love and belonging), to esteem (or ego), and finally to self-actualization (Greene and Burke, 2007). Once the first four lower levels are achieved, individuals are able to pursue self-actualization where they fulfil their true potential for performing acts of an altruistic and generative nature; this relates to the volunteer motivations for personal fulfilment and altruism (Aguirre and Bolton, 2013: 328). Maslow (1971) notes that people who move beyond self-actualization are, without a single exception, involved in a cause outside of their skin: in something outside of themselves, some calling or vocation.

2:2:2 Herzberg

Things that make people satisfied and motivated on the job are different in kind from the things that make them dissatisfied, while environmental factors make people miserable even if managed brilliantly, they don’t motivate anybody to work much harder or smarter (Herzberg, 2003). Motivation is founded upon satisfaction born of a sense of achievement, recognition for achievement, responsibility and personal growth (Herzberg, 1987). Motivation, satisfaction, and long-term positive job performance are determined by 5 factors: achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibility, and advancement (Bjerneld et al.,
2006: 50). While other factors that do not motivate or create satisfaction are called dissatisfiers because their absence can lead to job dissatisfaction (Bjerneld et al., 2006: 50).

2:3 Volunteering and Tourism

Tourism volunteering is volunteering that takes place in a tourism setting, volunteers can contribute to tourism as participants in its production as well as consumers of tourism experiences (Smith and Holmes, 2012: 562). Volunteers are an essential part of tourism, whether they are volunteering in their local museum, at a sporting mega-event, as an airport ambassador, or travelling the globe as a volunteer tourist (Holmes and Smith, 2012: xviii). Not-for-profit associations can be formed to act in the interest of business in general (e.g., chamber of commerce) or specific industries, such as destination marketing organisations (Andersson and Getz, 2009: 849). They are also the realm of ‘social entrepreneurship’ whereby founders set out to fulfil a dream and/or create employment for themselves.

While many peripheral rural areas face significant challenges in terms of sustaining communities and attracting tourists it is often social entrepreneurs, as much as traditional entrepreneurs, who are involved in developing new ideas, new products and activities, and envisioning a future for the area (Mottiar et al., 2018). Solberg (2003: 17) notes that volunteers assistance in planning, organization, marketing and production often represents the difference between financial deficit or plus for local event organizers. It is important to examine the positive outcomes, such as personal development for the volunteers, financial savings for the organisation, a better service for visitors and increased social capital for a community while recognising that volunteers are not free labour (Homes and Smith, 2012).

Resources that local organizers have available may vary considerably, and this certainly applies to volunteers (Solberg, 2003: 17). Mair and Marti (2006) propose that social entrepreneurship is a process that catalyses social change and addresses important social needs in a way that is not dominated by direct financial benefits for the entrepreneurs. Research on social entrepreneurs has gained traction among a variety of business fields yet, interest among tourism scholars has been slow to develop (Mottiar et al., 2018: 78). A social entrepreneur’s mission is not to create a tourism product, but by attracting national and international attention, there is an impact both in terms of strengthening sense of community and connectedness and in terms of enhancing the tourist experience and
establishing the area as a potential destination in the minds of an international audience (Mottiar et al., 2018: 78).

2:4 History of Rural Tourism

Rural Tourism in many areas (but not in all) was seen as a rural diversification and development tool for a countryside losing jobs and income through the modernisation of agriculture, a process that had produced surplus food, thus forcing down farm gate prices (Lane and Kastenholz, 2015: 1133). Niche industries such as handcrafts production and rural tourism services, particularly those which may be defined as ‘quality’, are, as a result, being assigned increased importance in national and EU rural development policies (Cawley et al., 1999).

Rural tourism leaders face many challenges, such as managing factions and enclaves within communities, re-assuring new entrants about risk and vulnerability, securing long-term commitment amongst leaders, establishing continuity from one leader to the next, and coordinating cooperative governance across numerous governmental and non-governmental organizations (McGehee et al., 2015). There are two major new competitors to Rural Tourism, cruise ship tourism and city based tourism, in addition to continued competition from new and regenerated traditional resorts, and internal competition from new entrant regions and enterprises within rural tourism itself (Lane and Kastenholz, 2015: 1135).

2:5 Importance of Festivals and Events

Festivals represent complex cultural phenomena that humans, for centuries, have engaged in to invest cultural practices with specific meanings, to celebrate their beliefs and to assert their identity (Quinn, 2018: 63). Festivals play an important role in rural communities and are typically embedded in the local ecosystems of sports, culture, business and other types of associations, where they might deliver elements of coherence, commitment and meaning, as well as occasional economic benefits (Hjalager and Kwiatkowski, 2018). Events operate on a range of scales, from the small, voluntary-run community event for 100 or so people, to the professionally organised, politically driven mega-event which takes years to plan and attracts millions of attendees (Richards et al., 2013).
The role of the 'hallmark event' ranging from cultural festivals to the Olympic Games, has become increasingly significant and as tourism assumes the role of a leading global industry, the value of these events, both as political symbols and generators of enormous income, is perceived to be extremely high (Hall, 1992). Quinn (2006: 288) cautions that festivals' engagement with tourism needs to be carefully managed in the interests of promoting the socially sustaining function of festivals and of encouraging sustainable approaches to tourism development.

Events are both animators of destination attractiveness but more fundamentally as key marketing propositions in the promotion of places given the increasingly global competitiveness to attract visitor spending (Getz and Page, 2016: 593). Clarke's (2016: 6) research while recognising the importance and potential impacts of festivals within local communities, also recognised that events cannot easily be analysed without performing an analysis of society itself.

2:5:1 Importance to the Economy

The use of the term ‘festival tourism’ is increasing among tourism researchers, the vast majority of whom conceive of the festival primarily in terms of its economic potential (Quinn, 2005: 933). As the staging of special events is often dependent on the financial or in-kind support of the public sector, it is critical for the long-term viability of special events that it is possible to demonstrate their contribution to the host community in credible ways (Yeoman et al., 2014:100). The optimal economic impact of any event occurs when locally supplied resources are equal to demanded event resources, in other words, an event that makes a city exceed capacity will generate costs that lower the economic impact (Agha and Taks, 2015) Independent studies of mega-events routinely conclude that ex ante estimates of the economic benefits of these events overestimate the actual ex post benefits by a wide margin (Matheson, 2006). Given the range of activities that compete for government support, if these criticisms are not addressed to ensure that the credibility of economic evaluations of special events is enhanced, the public sector support for events will be at risk (Yeoman et al., 2014:100).
2:5:2 Importance to Tourism

It was only a few decades ago that 'event tourism' as a phenomenon became established as a recognisable term within the tourism industry and research community, so the subsequent growth of this sector can only be described as spectacular (Getz and Page, 2016: 594). The demand for tourism services like accommodation is often created by that part of the industry that motivates travel, including festivals and other events (Andersson and Getz, 2009: 847). Place marketing, often referred to as boosterism (where events are used to 'boost' visitor numbers and appeal), has emerged as a key feature associated with events to develop a unique selling proposition that differentiates the destination from the competitions (Getz and Page, 2016: 593). Events are an important motivator of tourism, and figure prominently in the development and marketing plans of most destinations (Getz, 2008). Special events provide important recreational opportunities for local residents and, in many destinations, they form a fundamental component of the destination's tourism development strategy (Yeoman et al., 2014:100). Events can attract tourists (and others, such as sponsors and the media) who otherwise might not visit a particular place; the spending of event tourists generates economic benefits; event tourism can be leveraged for maximum value in combating seasonality of demand, spreading tourism geographically, and assisting in other forms of urban and economic development; portfolios of events can be designed for maximum impact, especially by appealing to multiple target segments (Getz and Page, 2016: 597). The tangible and symbolic tourism benefits instilled in destinations by hallmark events are well-documented; with destination managers increasingly adopting event portfolio approaches to nurture and develop existing and new hallmark events (Todd et al, 2016). Marketing a place through festivals enables celebration of natural links, local produce and industry, seasonal transitions or other endogenous cultural traits and at the same time, creates an association with place that lingers in the national imagination (Gibson and Stewart, 2009: 29).

2:5:3 Importance to the Community

Whether perusing the ancient artefacts of museums or art galleries, participating in community fetes or fairs, consuming classical or pop music, attending football matches or fashion shows, or performing in local theatre group or national arts festivals, culture is central to personal, community and national identity (Yeoman et al., 2014: 55). Festivals and events
are the lifeblood of society, they are inseparable and crucial to enhance and maintain community well-being or quality of life (Clarke, 2016: 3). At the core of community development is the notion of capacity building that is identifying and developing the resources of the community and building on its strengths (Hibbert et al, 2003). Quinn (2006: 288) conceptualises festivals as socially sustaining devices and argues that while they frequently function as tourist attractions, their social significance extends far beyond tourism. Many rural communities stage events, partly for the boost they give to tourism and thus economic development, but also for the potential social and cultural benefits they bring to a community or region (Frost and Laing, 2015: 1298). These voluntary and community organisations are one way in which social cohesion can be generated and they are important building blocks in social sustainability (Donoghue, 2001). At present, in Canada specifically, ethnic organisations and urban development projects have responded to current migration settlement patterns by increasing the number of community events and leisure festivals to help contribute to senses of belonging and community (Yeoman et al., 2014: 144). The Parkes Elvis Revival Festival, New South Wales, represents about as narrow a rationale for an event as can be imagined, yet the festival has invigorated the town, attracted loyal, repeat visitors and brought a community together in the tourist off-season, because it is well-organised, slightly weird, in a friendly town and, above all, fun (Gibson and Connell, 2011: 175).

Research carried out by Lyck et al. (2012) states that by investing in events, securing appropriate communication, providing frameworks for local engagement, and establishing collaboration with the tourism industry, festivals and events can make communities prosper and give individual residents a reason to believe in the future during recessionary times. Whilst the noneconomic impacts of special events are very important, the results of the economic evaluation of an event’s contribution tends to be the key interest of the public sector, and this is likely to continue in the foreseeable future (Yeoman et al., 2014:100).

2.6 Fragile Nature of Community Festivals and Events

If rural tourism is to continue fulfilling expectations that it can contribute to the rural development process and emerge as an industry of sustainable, growing businesses, it must identify and meet the challenges facing it (Hall et al., 2005). The cessation of a festival can have a negative impact on destination image and tourism for a region, it is therefore important to understand the factors that underpin the long-term survival of rural festivals
Laing (2018: 166) highlights the dearth of studies on the factors behind the failure of festivals and events which mirrors the situation with respect to tourist attractions, perhaps because examining success is considered to be a sexier topic and easier to sell to funding bodies when grants are being sought. There are however, lessons to be learnt from successful examples of a festival places: success doesn't come easily; it requires logistical effort, squads of volunteers, and ultimately, individuals who are willing to bear the burden of the long hours and stress involved in event management (Gibson and Stewart, 2009: 29). Unfortunately, much of the research on volunteers within the context of festivals has focussed on volunteers at the operational level, with little interest towards those that manage festivals and events (Hede and Rentschler, 2007:158).

2:6:1 Volunteer Burnout

Successful volunteer management programs – those that contribute significantly to the organisations success in fulfilling its mission, are strongly correlated to the education, training, and experience of their professional Volunteer Resource Managers (Connors, 2011). Unfortunately, for smaller scale events, the organisations volunteer management is usually informal, ad-hoc, and often insufficiently resourced (Holmes and Smith, 2012: 32). Volunteer burnout may lead to a premature exodus of committee members, rather than an orderly departure, without giving new members time to learn the ropes under the tutelage of their more experienced counterparts. (Frost and Laing, 2015: 1300). Research found some festivals were developing strategies to avoid or minimise burnout including deliberately keeping the festival small and contained, both geographically and in terms of numbers attending; delegating tasks from an organising committee to a series of sub-committees; limiting the number of festivals that are staged in a region and attempting to stagger them throughout the year where possible (Frost and Laing, 2015: 1313).

2:6:2 Professionalising of Community Festivals and Events

Frost and Laing (2015: 1298) ask whether rural festivals which burgeon in popularity will eventually need to be staged under the auspices of government, rather than continuing solely through a volunteer organising committee. Rosenthal (2015: 89) notes that the professionalism of volunteer engagement has been an ongoing theme over the past three
decades. Instituting best practices, many with their roots in the field of Human Resources, has led to a much more formalised approach to how organisations manage their volunteer workforce (Rosenthal, 2015: 89). Is there then a tipping point that leads these festivals to seek a more professional footing or are they corralled towards this outcome by governments who are concerned about fostering tourism and minimising risk (Frost and Laing, 2015: 1298)?

2:7 Governments Role

It is politically accepted that tourism generates a wide range of economic and social/cultural benefits for the people, but it is so fragmented and diffuse that only governments or public–private agencies can manage and market it (Andersson and Getz, 2009: 849). In 1925, the Irish Tourism Association (ITA) was created under the de Valera administration (Costa, 2009: 113). The potential to create a market from the descendants of émigrés would exceed all expectations in years to come through the use of clever marketing that evoked an imagined Ireland in the minds of second and third-generation Americans and Canadians (Costa, 2009: 114). Irish policy makers pursued a strategy of economic development in the Gaeltacht (Irish-speaking areas in Ireland) from the 1960s to the 1980s which centred on employment growth via the development of factories, hotels, holiday homes and the attraction of inward investment (McCarthy, 2012: 260). Tourism policy, and development in particular, is now commonly undertaken through collaboration and partnerships between governments and the private sector. (Andersson and Getz, 2009: 848).

2:8 Conclusion

Yeoman et al. (2014: 274)note that event managers should consider the following four areas in their planning for the future: increased regulation will require event organizers to strike a balance between risk and creativity; to influence policy makers and to achieve this, industry must speak with a united voice; treat the media as potential partners and supply it with good news stories that highlight the positive impacts of events; and evaluation should be a high priority for all event managers, and the findings should be disseminated to all stakeholders including government agencies.
Chapter 3 Research Methodology

3:0 Introduction

Research comprises defining and redefining problems; formulating hypotheses or suggested solutions; collecting, organising, and evaluating data; making deductions and reaching conclusions; and, at last, carefully testing the conclusions to determine whether they fit the formulated hypotheses (Woody, 1927).

Throughout this chapter the researcher outlines the journey to determine the research question, the research method that was utilised and the analysis of the data obtained. The most difficult area of this research study was determining the research question. While the researcher has a great interest in community festivals and events, the areas that could be researched within this field are endless.

3:1 What is Research?

Research is a point of view, an attitude of inquiry or a frame of mind, it asks questions which have hitherto not been asked and it seeks to answer them by following a fairly definite procedure (Rusk, 1922). The purpose of research is to discover answers to questions through the application of scientific procedures (Kothari, 2004: 2).

When one examines and judges accomplishments and effectiveness, one is engaged in evaluation, when this examination of effectiveness is conducted systematically and empirically through careful data collection and thoughtful analysis, one is engaged in evaluation research (Patton, 1990). Greenfield and Greener (2016) suggest a four-part research process: (1) reviewing the field, (2) building theory, (3) testing theory and (4) reflecting and integrating. While specific research methods enable us to describe, understand, and explain the complexity of living by providing us with various perspectives, different methods are best designed for, and used to answer, particular types of questions (Morse, 2003).
3:2 The Research Problem

A research problem, in general, refers to some difficulty which a researcher experiences in the context of either a theoretical or practical situation and wants to obtain a solution for the same (Kothari, 2004: 24). Corbin and Strauss (2008: 21) identify the two major questions related to deciding upon a topic are (a) How do I identify a problem that I would like to research? (b) How then do I narrow the problem down sufficiently to make it into a workable project? Wisker (2008: 49) informs us that whatever your reason for undertaking a research project, you will need to think about what your hypothesis or question is, how you can ask and answer (or address it) using what methodology/ies, design and methods, and what your findings might contribute to human knowledge and our developing understanding of the area in which you have researched (Wisker, 2008: 49).

The area of community festivals and events which has been researched in this study is an area of enormous interest to the researcher. The researcher was instrumental in setting up the Kenmare Halloween Festival and continues to assist and create new festivals and events that bring value to Kenmare. The researcher is aware of the need for supports for non-profit festivals and events and the growing sense of disconnect between the community organisers and the Public Bodies that are, ostensibly, there to support and fund them.

3:3 The Research Question

The hypothesis or question is the first real step in developing the ideas and interests a researcher has, into something that can be researched and enquired about in a manageable, well-shaped way (Wisker, 2008:48). In order to pose a well-structured and answerable research question it is necessary to have thought in depth about the subject being studied, and to have decided on a precise research topic (Stone, 2002). When faced with producing a research question as part of a qualification it can be incredibly difficult to decide the area of research and the question that needs to be answered. Once the researcher has decided on the question, the method, quantitative or qualitative, of data collection must then be decided. Qualitative studies are usually exploratory and more hypothesis generating rather than testing, so it is necessary to frame the research question(s) in a manner that provides the investigator with sufficient flexibility and freedom to explore a topic in some depth (Corbin and Strauss, 2008: 25).
One of the researcher’s aims for this study was to give a voice to the festival and event community in Kerry. The precise question that needed to be asked took longer to narrow down, and the method of research was debated as to generate the best quality data for this research.

3:4 The Research Design

The research design and processes will set out to explore, address and enquire, and try to construct some responses rather than final fixed answers, all of which are to be interpreted in context, sometimes generalisable to a variety of contexts and instances and sometimes more specific and local to the context and focus of this particular instance of research (Wisker, 2008: 50). The research design is the conceptual structure within which research is conducted; it constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of data (Kothari, 2004: 31). Designing the question appropriately, even in qualitative studies, is very important, sometimes a research problem requires the use of mixed methods or qualitative and quantitative approaches (Corbin and Strauss, 2008: 25). The reflective and interrogative processes required for developing effective qualitative research questions can give shape and direction to a study in ways that are often underestimated (Agee, 2009). Originally, the researcher looked at carrying out a mixed method approach and conducting a survey questionnaire as well as interviews. This was decided against on the grounds that each festival and event organiser will have unique experiences and attempting to gather details on that experience using a generic questionnaire was deemed impractical. The researcher believes strongly that each of these voluntary organisers warranted an in-depth interviews in order to ascertain what they have learnt and what they need in order to continue and grow.

3:4:1 Research Methodologies

Our assumptions, interests, and purposes shape which methodology we choose, when stripped to their essentials, debates over methodology are debates over assumptions and purposes, over theory and perspective (Taylor et al., 2015: 14). Wisker (2008: 68) notes that the continuum of beliefs that underpin and inform the chosen methodologies, and therefore the methods and interpretations of data, ranges from perceiving the world to be fixed and knowable (positivism) or constructed (constructivism). While researchers rationalize their
interpretive frameworks in terms of fundamental distinctions of ontology, epistemology and theory, they develop over time habits and dispositions as well as particular expertise and preferences for particular approaches and may lack the time and inclination to extend skills and interests in other directions and across the qualitative/quantitative divide (Brannen, 2005). The six major methods of data collection are questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, tests, observation, and secondary data (Johnson & Turner, 2003: 297). The time taken to complete the research, and the resources required must also be taken into consideration (Rogan, 2011: 117) when deciding on the research strategy.

3:4:2 Quantitative Methodologies

Quantitative methods express the assumptions of a positivist paradigm which holds that behaviour can be explained through objective facts (Firestone, 1987). Quantitative data can help establish correlations between given variables and outcomes (Choy, 2014: 99). Yilmaz (2013) defined quantitative research as research that explains phenomena according to numerical data which are analysed by means of mathematically based methods, especially statistics. Johnson and Turner (2003: 297) described pure quantitative research as confirmatory, deductive, structured, closed-ended, controlled, and linear research that results in quantitative data.

3:4:3 Qualitative Methodologies

Capturing and understanding diverse perspectives, observing and analysing behaviours in context, looking for patterns in what human beings do and think—and examining the implications of those patterns—these are some of the basic contributions of qualitative inquiry. (Quinn, 2015:8). Quantitative studies usually commence deductively with a theory which will subsequently be tested, through the process of research, while qualitative approaches inductively build theory (Gray 2013). It analyses data from direct fieldwork observations, in-depth, open-ended interviews, and written documents (Patton, 2005). Researchers develop concepts, insights and understandings from patterns in the data rather than collecting data to assess preconceived models, hypotheses, or theories (Taylor et al., 2015: 18)

Positivists and postpositivist research is most commonly aligned with quantitative methods of data collection and analysis (Mackenzie and Knipe, 2006). A positivistic research
methodology is used where there is a belief that the world is essentially knowable; that it consists of knowable facts; and that, if we ask the right questions in the right way, use the right research methods, carry out the right kind of experiments and processes, we will discover these facts or truths (Wisker, 2008: 65). While a postpositivistic research methodology will be used if your belief is that we can ask questions but never gain absolutely final answers; and that our understanding of the meanings we determine from the findings produced by our research could be differently interpreted in different times and places by different people (Wisker, 2008: 66).

**Figure 3:1**
The model of strengths and weaknesses of qualitative and quantitative research methodologies (Choy, 2014: 101)

### 3:4:3:2 Interviews

Quinn (2015: 7) notes that if you want to know how much children can read, give them a reading test but, if you want to know what reading means to them, you have to talk with them, listen to them, and hear their stories about the stories they love. Interviews provide in-depth information pertaining to participants’ experiences and viewpoints of a particular topic (Turner, 2010: 754). An interview is literally an inter view, an inter-change of views between two persons conversing about a theme of mutual interest (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009: 2).
The interview method of collecting data involves presentation of oral-verbal stimuli and reply in terms of oral-verbal responses. This method can be used through personal interviews and, possibly, through telephone interviews (Kothari, 2004: 97).

Once a researcher has decided to use interviews as their tool of choice an interview guide should be set out in order to frame the area under scrutiny. This guide can assist the interviewer to refocus the interviewee when they go off topic, it can also be used to set out questions in a manner that encourages the interviewee to respond more robustly. Interview questions can be seen as the core of the interview protocol, bounded on the front end by questions to invite the interviewee to open up and talk and located at the back end by questions about “Whom should I talk to in order to learn more?” or comments thanking the participants for their time for the interview (Creswell and Poth, 2017: 164). The depth and breadth of information that can be ascertained through interviews means that they are a valuable tool to procure insights when conducting research on complex and multifaceted areas such as in the areas of social research.

3:5 Case Study Method

Case research can be defined as a research method that involves investigating one or a small number of social entities or situations about which data are collected using multiple sources of data and developing a holistic description through an iterative research process (Easton, 2010). While case study methods remain a controversial approach to data collection, they are widely recognised in many social science studies especially when in-depth explanations of a social behaviour are sought after (Zainal, 2007).

Case studies are designed to bring out the details from the viewpoint of the participants by using multiple sources of data (Tellis, 1997: 3). The design of all research requires conceptual organisation, ideas to express needed understanding, conceptual bridges from what is already known, cognitive structures to guide data gathering, and outlines for presenting interpretations to others (Stake, 1995: 15). Yin (2017) states that properly doing a case study means addressing five traditional concerns – conducting the research rigorously, avoiding confusion with non-research case studies (i.e. popular case studies, teaching-practice case studies, and case records), arriving at general conclusions if desired, carefully managing your level of effort, and understanding the comparative advantage of case study research. To find
unanticipated effects, you have to go into the field where things are happening, observe what is really going on, interview program participants about what they're experiencing, and find out through open inquiry what is happening, both intended and unintended (Patton, 2015: 10). Case studies tend to be selective, focusing on one or two issues that are fundamental to understanding the system being examined (Tellis, 1997: 4). Triangulation of results is also needed in Case Study research (Tellis, 1997: 4). The triangulation carried out in this research was examining other Case Study research in the area to check for commonalities and also checking results with Geraldine O'Sullivan of Volunteer Kerry, who also works and researches in the area.

3:6 The Research Strategy

Deciding on what strategy to use is an important decision. The manner in which the data will be collected, the sample of participants that will be chosen and ultimately how the research study will be presented can all be influenced by the strategy that is originally decided upon. Creswell and Poth (2017: 309) note that a study may consist of one or two individuals (i.e., narrative study), groups of people (i.e., phenomenology, grounded theory), or an entire culture (i.e., ethnography).

3:6:1 Grounded Theory

Grounded theory methodology and methods (procedures) are now among the most influential and widely used modes of carrying out qualitative research when generating theory is the researcher's principal aim (Strauss and Corbin, 1997: vii). Grounded Theory methods consist of systematic, yet flexible guidelines for collecting and analysing qualitative data to construct theories from the data themselves (Charmaz, 2014: 1). Grounded theory begins with inductive data, invokes iterative strategies of going back and forth between data and analysis, uses comparative methods and keeps you interacting and involved with your data and emerging analysis (Charmaz, 2014: 1)
3:6:2 Sampling

A sample refers to those respondents selected for survey, they must be representative of the whole population of interest (Rogan, 2011:116). Sampling is central to the practice of qualitative methods, but compared with data collection and analysis its processes have been discussed relatively little (Robinson, 2014: 25). The determination of sample size is a common task for many organizational researchers, inappropriate, inadequate, or excessive sample sizes continue to influence the quality and accuracy of research (Kotrlik, et al., 2001). Robinson (2014: 25) suggests a four-point approach to sampling in qualitative interview-based research: (1) defining a sample universe; (2) deciding upon a sample size; (3) selecting a sampling strategy; and (4) sample sourcing.

The deliberate sampling method involves purposive or deliberate selection of particular units of the universe for constituting a sample which represents the universe (Kothari, 2004: 15). Theoretical sampling is when researchers go to places, persons, and situations that will provide information about the concepts they want to learn more about (Corbin and Strauss, 2008:144). Theoretical sampling is based on the premise that data collection and analysis go hand in hand, that is, the questions to be asked in the next interview or observation are based on what was discovered during the previous analysis (Corbin and Strauss, 2008:145).

3:7 The Data Collection process

Creswell and Poth (2017: 148) visualise data collection as a series of interrelated activities aimed at gathering good information to answer emerging research questions. Data can be collected in ever increasing ways, the choice of the data collection process will often depend on the type of data that the researcher is attempting to gather. Another consideration when deciding on how data should be collected is to look at how other research studies in the area have been carried out, is there a reason that that data collection method was used?

3:7:1 Secondary Data

The phrase, secondary data, refers to the analysis of information collected for a purpose other than that of the researcher – in this sense the researcher becomes the secondary user of the data (Finn, et al., 2000: 40). Knowing what other research has been conducted may save us
going down blind alleys, making mistakes or repeating work that has already been conducted by others (Long, 2007: 32).

The researcher used, journals and books from CIT library in order to carry out a comprehensive background knowledge of the research that was available for the topic of festivals and events. Due to the nature of the study the researcher gathered information on various areas of interest pertaining to the study. The first port of call was Google Scholar to highlight areas of interest and to generate an outline of what is available online and through the CIT website and what would need to accessed through the library itself. The search terms originally used were:

Tourism: There are almost three million mentions within journal articles and books.
Tourism in Ireland: There are over two hundred and seventy mentions within journal articles and books available to peruse.
Festivals and Events Tourism: There were over sixty six thousand mentions within journal articles and books.
Volunteers: There are over three and a half million mentions within journal articles and books.
Volunteers and Tourism: There are over eighty three thousand mentions within journal articles available to peruse.
Volunteers and Tourism in Ireland: There are over twenty three thousand mentions within journal articles and books.
Volunteer burnout: There are over forty five thousand mentions within journal articles and books.
Volunteer burnout in Ireland: There were over five thousand mentions within journal articles and books.
Volunteer motivation: There were almost five hundred and fifty thousand mentions within journal articles and books.
Volunteer motivation in Ireland: There were over fifty four thousand mentions within journal articles and books.

SCOPUS results based on a search for the period 2008–October 2014 report over 1000 articles using the search terms ‘event’ + ‘tourism’, with an increasingly interdisciplinary focus within the literature (Getz and Page, 2016: 594). The growth in research into the event and tourism area meant the next step was to refine the search terms to where all three areas, tourism, events and volunteers over-lapped.
3:7:2 Primary Data

Primary data refers to original data generated by new research using techniques such as surveys, interviews or observations (Finn, et al., 2000: 40). As the previous section on secondary data states there has been wide ranging research on the areas surrounding the topic but little research on the ground speaking to the volunteer festival and event organisers that are producing these occasions for a myriad of reasons.

For example, there is a wealth of research on volunteer burnout, how volunteers should be managed and motivated but little concept of the fact that a large number of not for profit committees are themselves volunteers. The researcher wanted to explore the festival experience of each interviewee, to listen to their successes and failures and discover what supports they felt were needed to help support them into the future. After all, the people with the largest bank of knowledge regarding community festivals and events are the people who are running them year after year.

3:7:3 Pilot Interviews

A pilot interview should be conducted with participants that have similar interests as those that will participate in the implemented study as it will also assist the researchers with the refinement of research questions (Turner, 2010: 757). The researcher carried out a Pilot Interview with Maire Ni Mhurchu in order to practice carrying out an interview and to perfect the questions outlined in the interview guide. It was through the pilot interview with Maire that the decision was taken to limit the study to Kerry based festivals and events. During the interview it was brought to the forefront that each County Council offers different supports depending on their interest in the area.

The pilot interview also taught the researcher to ask less questions and to allow the interviewee to lead the interview where feasible, while maintaining the ability to re-direct their attention when the conversation strays from the main area under discussion.

3:8 Chosen approach for this research study

For this research paper the decision was taken to follow a case study approach using qualitative research methods in order to gather the information that was sought. The aim of
the research was to ascertain what is needed to support voluntary community festival and event organisers in order to sustain and grow them. In order to generate that information the researcher felt that a qualitative research method was the optimal choice. Pure qualitative research is defined as exploratory, inductive, unstructured, open-ended, naturalistic, and free-flowing research that results in qualitative research (Johnson and Turner, 2003: 297). Progress in any subject requires the origination of theoretical ideas and often, new theoretical ideas are derived from unpredicted findings (East & Ang, 2017). Realising that community festivals and events will have as many similarities as differences it was important to the researcher to have the flexibility to mine for further information where necessary. A multiple case study approach using semi-structured interviews was chosen as the vehicle to gather in-depth knowledge of the challenges facing these organisers, the solutions that have been put in place and the assistance they feel they need to progress their events. It was acknowledged that while all cases operated within the event tourism field in Co. Kerry, each case was unique in regards to their volunteers, organisational set up etc.

When deciding on participants for the study the researcher decided to use the deliberate sampling method which involves purposive or deliberate selection of particular units of the universe for constituting a sample which represents the universe (Kothari, 2004: 15). The interviewees chosen were picked to give a geographical spread across the county and to examine whether there were common areas of concern regardless of the length of time a festival or event had been staged. Nine interviewees were chosen as either community festival event organisers or members of the local chambers of commerce who assist with a number of local festivals. One interview was carried out with a professional event management company to see if there were areas of need that crossed over between not-for-profit organisers and private organisers. Following the collection of the data, the researcher carried out an interview with a member of Volunteer Kerry to verify that the findings of the research were consistent with other research in the area.

What Corbin and Strauss (2008: 28) found most interesting about interviews is that participants often offer some of the most interesting data as soon as the tape recorder has been turned off! A statement that reverberated deeply with the researcher!
3:9 Data Analysis

Corbin and Strauss (2008: 163) suggest that analysts should begin the coding soon after the first interview or observation/video is completed because the first data serve as a foundation for further data collection and analysis.

3:10 Ethical Considerations

Planning and conducting an ethical study means that the researcher considers and addresses all anticipated and emergent ethical issues in the study (Creswell and Poth, 2017: 151). Typically these ethical issues relate to three principles guiding ethical research: respect for persons (i.e., privacy and consent), concern for welfare (i.e., minimise harm and augment reciprocity), and justice (i.e., equitable treatment and enhance inclusivity) as outlined by Creswell and Poth (2017:151). While all participants of this study gave permission for their interviews to be used and published as part of this research, it was important for the researcher to be mindful of the relationship between organisers and Public Bodies and to strive to avoid damage to that relationship.

3:11 Limitations of the Research

At the beginning of this research process the researcher had considered carrying out an all-Ireland survey where the interview participants would be drawn from a number of Counties. On further reflection, and having carried out a number of informal, unstructured interviews it became apparent that each Local Authority supported festivals and events in different ways. With that information to hand and the limits on time and resources it was decided to curtail this research to Kerry based festivals and events in order that all participants would have a homogenous set of opportunities for funding and support open to them. It was felt that this approach would give interviewees a “level playing field” in terms of what support they were currently receiving and aware of and what supports were necessary or desirous.

While efforts were made to interview more participants, due to time constraints this was not possible. The researcher would like to have interviewed a number of community festival and event organisers outside of the main tourism centres of Kerry where the level of support from the local community may differ significantly. The researcher was also keen to interview a
member of the team organising the Rose of Tralee festival. This festival has transformed form a community run festival into a professionally run festival over its life span, research into how that journey unfolded and whether the history of the Rose of Tralee festival could be used to instruct other festivals in Kerry.

3:12 Reliability and Validity of the Research

The researcher carried out all interviews with an open mind and an authentic desire to listen to each of the interview participants. Having completed the interviews, the researcher undertook an informal unstructured interview with Geraldine O'Sullivan of Volunteer Kerry to see if the themes emerging from the study were consistent with themes that have emerged from research into volunteers in Ireland. All research, both primary and secondary was carried out in good faith. The data derived from the interviews, the findings from the research, the conclusions and the recommendations are set forth accurately and without bias.

3:13 Conclusion

This chapter examined how an area of interest is transformed into a research question, and how that research question goes on to be researched and how the findings can then be analysed. Having researched the manner in which research can be carried out, the researcher explains the reasoning for choosing the research methodology used for this study. In Chapter four, the findings of the study will be looked at.
Chapter 4 Research Findings

4.0 Introduction and themes

This chapter will outline the findings of the primary research. The data presented was gathered by conducting interviews with Festival and Event organisers between March and June 2019. The aim of the research is to explore what assistance is currently given and what supports are needed to sustain and grow festivals and events in a particular area. This research focuses on the Kerry Region as County Councils offer different aids to festivals and events and each geographical area will have different needs depending on their tourism potential and the population density of their area.

Three main research themes emerged from the empirical data, as follows:

1) Motivation – the motivation behind the festival and the individual’s motivation in being part of the festival.

2) Benefits generated from Festivals and Events
   i) Economic
   ii) Social Benefit
   iii) Tourism Benefit – Destination marketing

3) Challenges facing Festivals and Events
   i) Insufficiency of support
   ii) Lack of experienced personnel
   iii) Dwindling volunteers

4) The need to professionalise community festivals and events

4.1 Festivals: Motivation

The researcher set out to uncover what motivates people to set up a festival or event and then go on to organise and run it. This research has found that a large component of the interviewees were originally financially motivated, to set up an enterprise that would drive financial benefits to the local area. When asked what motivated him to set up the event one contributor noted that:
I think there are economic benefits, social benefits and basically the community benefits from being involved in something. I just make my contribution and I think that I might have an effect on somebody else and they then might get involved too. Suddenly, we’ll all go and get involved and everyone benefits and the atmosphere in the community is much more positive and enterprising.

Mickey Ned O’Sullivan, Chairperson of the Ring of Beara Cycle Kenmare

One contributor notes that the benefits that festivals and events to a town are the driving force behind creating more events:

We see that festivals serve so many purposes, they really enhance communities. They get the communities involved, they attract visitors and with the likes of Writers week, which is now approaching its 50th year....what it brings in economy wise into the town is immeasurable, it is of massive value.

Colette O’Connor, Listowel Business and Community Alliance, Listowel, Co. Kerry

Another contributor stated that the stimulus to set up the festival was a grant that was made available through Kerry County Council during the early years of the recession:

This is our seventh year, I think they got a grant around the time of the recession, maybe the Town and Village renewal scheme? So the idea was it was going to set up I think three festivals, two anyway. So the first one was K Fest and the second was Flavour of Killorglin, which was on in September for about two or three years. It was to highlight all the different food businesses that are here in Killorglin...The idea for K Fest was to do something different, to revitalise Killorglin and to use the assets the town has, that weren’t in use. The June bank holiday was traditionally a weekend everyone either went to Killarney for Bike Fest or people went away, there was no point being in town. Now you can’t miss the weekend in Killorglin!

Katie Graham, Logistics officer, K-Fest, Killorglin, Co. Kerry
Another contributor also cites the recession as a contributing factor to the creation of their festival:

The festival was set up to elongate the season. When the recession hit, as a tourist town, we saw a massive drop in tourism revenue. As a chamber we realised that we needed to put something on in order to draw people into the town, particularly in the shoulder season.

Margaret McCarthy, former Chairperson of the Kenmare Halloween Howl, Co. Kerry

A similar view concerning the motivation behind creating festivals is expressed by another contributor:

Generating economic development in the town and sustaining the businesses that are here, that’s the key driver, to get that footfall. I have a couple of businesses in town and I see the direct benefit to me when something is happening in the town. That’s why I am involved.

Ken Tobin, Managing Consultant, Tralee Chamber Alliance

For areas that are dependent on Tourism, extending the season is the motivating factor behind setting up festivals and events:

To grow the tourist season. Most of the events are off shoulder, they are very popular. We began creating events for the shoulder season 8-10 years ago and they have all grown really well.

John Sheehy, Dingle Peninsula Tourism Alliance, Dingle, Co. Kerry

While one contributor notes that the main motivator for keeping their festival going is tradition:

The first recorded mention of Puck Fair is 1613, King James 1st gave a chapter to the local landlord, Jenkin Conway, and he gave permission to charge tours at the fair. Our main concern and the reason why I’ve been involved in Puck Fair is to make sure it goes on to the next generation and to the generations after that.
Declan Mangan, former Chairperson of Puck Fair, Killorglin, Co. Kerry

One contributor notes that while some festivals and events are traditional others are motivated by the need to extend the tourist season:

*First of all, you would have your traditional festivals, things like Dingle races and regattas and stuff like that, which have been going on for 100's of years but always in July and August. Now our outlook on festivals is that they are on either at the beginning or later in the season. The original concept is to try and stretch out the season. It is used as a catalyst either to start your season or to push it out. That's exactly how the food festival is planted in the first weekend of October.*

Gary Curran, Dingle Peninsula Tourism Alliance, Dingle, Co. Kerry

A gap in the Event calendar for Listowel was the motivator behind the Revive festival in Listowel:

*We felt you had the Military weekend, Writers week, the June weekend and then there was a gap and then you had the races. We felt there was something that needed to be done to bring more people to town, so the idea came up at the Listowel publican’s AGM in 2015.*

Aiden O'Connor, Chairperson of Revive Music Festival, Listowel, Co. Kerry

### 4:2 Festivals: Benefits Generated

#### 4:2:1 Economic Benefits

Findings from this study indicate that the driving force behind the creation of many festivals and events is to generate revenue in an area by extending the season and increasing visitor numbers. Festival and event organisers are keen to point out just how successful these events are at generating positive financial rewards for an area. Our professional event management contributor notes that there are various ways to quantify economic benefits:
Events can be a vehicle for a cheap alternative to having a marketing campaign where people can use the media and the exposure from the events, which is a huge benefit to the location. There are various different ways of estimating the economic impact of an event to the destination depending on what methodologies you want to go with. Bringing 1500 people to a location could generate up to €2 million in terms of direct economic impact which is huge.

Oliver Kirwan, Elite Event Management, Quest Adventure Series, Killarney, Co. Kerry

The next contributor agrees that a festival or event can have significant economic benefits for the area:

We can look at every town in the country and there are vacant streets. Whereas if there was something happening on those streets people would want to come down. We see it ourselves, every time a festival or event happens there is a direct economic benefit to those shops, bars and restaurants.

Ken Tobin, Managing Consultant, Tralee Chamber Alliance

The same view is espoused by another contributor:

You can walk around town and speak to any business about the amount of bed-nights that the event brings at the end of October. It has extended the season, partly I think because more people are staying open, it is kind of a 'catch 22', if businesses start to close people stop coming. If people stop coming businesses close. So, not only is it busy that weekend and that week economically it also has extended the season because people are staying open longer and that brings people in. It's a cycle.

Margaret McCarthy, former Chairperson of the Kenmare Halloween Howl, Co. Kerry

Another contributor observes that the economic impact is not limited to just the town that the event takes place in:

For Writers Week, accommodation wise it fills the town for about four nights. The B&B's and the hotel are booked out every year. Airbnb is very hard to measure but
again we would feel that would be very strong. Ballybunion would also get quite a big spinoff from Writers Week, their hotels out there would have very strong room nights from it as well.

Colette O’Connor, Listowel Business and Community Alliance, Listowel, Co. Kerry

The financial benefit to the businesses of the area can be considerable:

An uncle of mine had a pub at one time and he said that Puck used to be worth about 3 months trade to him and it probably is!

Declan Mangan, former Chairperson of Puck Fair, Killorglin, Co. Kerry

Another contributor confirms this view:

Every business in town benefits a small bit. We try and keep the tender, even for food and stuff, as local as we can. Even the PA system, he’s based in Limerick now but he’s from just outside Listowel. The food is all local, the fencing is local, and the electricians are local. Then for the pubs in town it’s mayhem after the gig for a few hours and a small bit before. The restaurants should benefit beforehand, fast food will benefit after. We’ve even found hairdressers coming to us saying ‘we had a fantastic time because people were arriving early to get their hair done.’

Aicen O’Connor, Chairperson of Revive Music Festival, Listowel, Co. Kerry

The extent of the financial benefits is not just in direct revenue but also in indirect revenue as outlined by another contributor:

The economic benefits would statistically be about €5 million to the community, but you also have the multiplier effect. People want to come back and they bring their families and they go around the Beara Peninsula.

Mickey Ned O’Sullivan, Chairperson of the Ring of Beara Cycle Kenmare
Allowing people to stay off the Live register for longer is another important economic indirect benefit:

*Having a festival means people think it is worth staying open. From a business point of view that gives confidence, I can keep the staff on, I can keep the restaurant open, keep the bar open, keep another girl on, there is no one signing off... Now everyone is saying we will slog it out through November and hold out until Other Voices. I could name at least ten businesses off the top of my head that would have never opened in November before. They won’t make much money but they stay open for four more weeks, they won’t have their staff on full time but they will have two or three days work out of it.*

Gary Curran, Dingle Peninsula Tourism Alliance, Dingle, Co. Kerry

Another interviewee notes that the financial benefits encourages locals to support the festival:

*75%-80% of the funding (for the festival) comes from the town of Killorglin and what is lucky now is that it’s such a busy festival that they can see the benefit in their wallet.*

Katie Graham, Logistics officer, K-Fest, Killorglin, Co. Kerry

**4:2:2 Social Benefits**

The research finds that once a festival or event has been established the social benefits gain as great an importance if not a greater importance than the financial benefits in the minds of the organisers. The research shows that these events have a positive impact upon the community:

*One thing I hate to see is rural decline. It is happening all over the world, but you can prevent it. There is an Irish saying “Ar scáth a cheile, a mhaireann na daoine.” (Under the shelter of each other people survive). I have enjoyed living in the area all my life, and it is a unique place. I like to see new enterprise because if you have one thing going there is the multiplier effect, it will create jobs, then young people don’t have to leave the community.*
Mickey Ned O'Sullivan, Chairperson of the Ring of Beara Cycle Kenmare

The pride of place that a successful event engenders within the community is talked about by some of our contributors:

There is a great sense of pride and belonging and ownership of Puck in Killorglin. People who are away from home, even if they are abroad, they take holidays for the three days of Puck and celebrate wherever they are. It is an identity with Killorglin that is synonymous with Puck and I suppose there is a great sense of pride in that.

Declan Mangan, former Chairperson of Puck Fair, Killorglin, Co. Kerry

The same sentiment is heard from another contributor:

It is a very good social event for the town, for the kids of the town, families of the town and for the families coming back to Kenmare as well. People make sure they are home for that weekend and the people who grew up here and are now rearing their families elsewhere, that is a weekend they come home for.

Margaret McCarthy, former Chairperson of the Kenmare Halloween Howl, Co. Kerry

Another participant spoke of the sense of pride engendered by festivals and events:

There is a great sense of pride in the town. It instils this great feeling of showing off our wonderful town and wonderful people... the festivals demonstrate a great ability to show an area at its best and highlight the talents in the area and they attract more into it as well.

Colette O'Connor, Listowel Business and Community Alliance, Listowel, Co. Kerry

The pride of place engendered by festivals is reiterated again by another contributor:

They give people a grá for their own area, they have pride in it to see festivals well run. They are ambassadors for that festival when they go someplace else and say why don’t you come down for this festival or that festival. They are happy to bring the people back to their hometown or home location because they have pride in the fact that the festival is going to be run right and that the people that come with them will enjoy it.
The awareness of the ability of a festival or event to bring the diaspora home for an occasion is once again mentioned by another contributor:

*I think Revival is turning into a more reunion kind of festival. We will just say for arguments sake there was about 2,000 there last year but it is predominantly local, but it is people coming home for the weekend for it. They may be working in Ireland or in England or in America or wherever and now they are coming home for it...When (tickets) go on sale next week it will only be about 20% that will go online, the rest will be sold in our office.*

Aiden O'Connor, Chairperson of Revive Music Festival, Listowel, Co. Kerry

The pride festivals and events provoke within a community is mentioned by another participant:

*It gives people a lift. People feel great themselves after a festival. I think people love to see people enjoying their town too. You get a buzz from that...We have done more than just a festival, we have contributed to the community. The younger generation in Dingle are very passionate about the area because they love these festivals and they look forward to them. For that younger generation the town is alive, it’s actually a good place to live!*  

Gary Curran, Dingle Peninsula Tourism Alliance, Dingle, Co. Kerry

Another contributor again speaks of the same positive impact on their town:

*Now, it is like you can’t miss this weekend in Killorglin. Whereas I remember when I came here first nine years ago, for the June bank holiday there was no point in being in town, it was the same as a regular weekend... There are businesses that donate that don’t make any money at K Fest and they are just generous to the cause. They just want to do something. We are very lucky in Killorglin, we are a good community.*

Katie Graham, Logistics officer, K-Fest, Killorglin, Co. Kerry
One contributor conflates both the social and economic benefits and explains why festivals and events are essential, not just for tourism, but also for sustaining jobs in regional areas:

There are organisations established just to try to recruit staff for large companies that are based in regional areas and Kerry is no different. Kerry SciTech exists just for that purpose, but the one thing that they are saying is that if the vitality, and they keep using the word vitality, of a town is not right they won't attract back the millennial generation to take these jobs up. Kerry has the oldest population in the country, if we want to attract back the millennials you need to have a vibrant vital town that has lots going on.

Ken Tobin, Managing Consultant, Tralee Chamber Alliance

4:2:3 Tourism Benefit – Destination marketing

Events and festivals offer the opportunity to garner positive media attention and to attract tourism into the region. Fáilte Ireland has announced increased funding for festivals and events as they acknowledge that they are a key driver of growth within the tourism sector. One contributor explains why events are such a popular tool to stimulate tourism growth:

Our Quest Adventure series is purely destination based, where the destination wants to showcase the area in a different way rather than only use pure destination marketing or even just have individuals marketing it. Events can be a vehicle for a cheap alternative to having a marketing campaign where people can use the media and the exposure from the events, which is a huge benefit to the location.

Oliver Kirwan, Elite Event Management, Quest Adventure Series, Killarney, Co. Kerry

The profile of an area is raised by the marketing around a festival or event:

It's the profile of your area. You look at the coverage that certain events get here. Especially the Food Festival and Other Voices. The name Dingle is carried everywhere with those, and I am not saying just for the weekend itself. With the Food Festival there will be things on every food article, like a food writer in the Examiner weeks before will
be saying they are getting ready for Dingle and weeks after saying I was at the Food Festival in Dingle. You are getting a burst of coverage around the festival but you are getting weeks of coverage before and after it.

Gary Curran, Dingle Peninsula Tourism Alliance, Dingle, Co. Kerry

This sentiment is echoed by other contributors:

The Ring of Beara is probably the best kept secret in Irish Tourism. I know that tourism has improved in the Beara Peninsula in the last four years, because people are aware of it now, it (the cycle) puts it on the map. I mean, people didn’t know how beautiful it was.

Mickey Ned O’Sullivan, Chairperson of the Ring of Beara Cycle Kenmare

Festivals catch the attention of people who may not have otherwise ventured to your area:

People are travelling! From the County Councils point of view, they love to see people travel from outside of the town or county to get more people into North Kerry. We saw ourselves from the ticket stubs after last year that people had travelled from all over the country.

Aiden O’Connor, Chairperson of Revive Music Festival, Listowel, Co. Kerry

The ability of festivals to draw people to a destination is again mentioned by another interviewee:

Writers Week attracts in a lot of International people and it attracts very educated people who can add something to the area. The local art gallery would do art as well and you would have artists here from all over the world coming and they find it a really good atmosphere and environment to continue their own work – very inspiring. Writers Week probably planted the seed for that a long time ago... We are never going to have the scenery that the west and the south of the County have but what we do have, is we have fantastic people. Festivals are a great way of showing off that.

Colette O’Connor, Listowel Business and Community Alliance, Listowel, Co. Kerry
The multiplier effect that events can have on visitor numbers is spoken about by one participant:

_If you look at the marathon here, participating in the marathon is only a fraction of the people coming down. The whole family might have come down to see that one person do the marathon. There might be ten at the starting line but it is only one that is doing the marathon, it is an excuse to go away._

John Sheehy, Dingle Peninsula Tourism Alliance, Dingle, Co. Kerry

The correlation between these events and festivals and the increase in revenue for businesses is again pointed out by another contributor:

_Say for example with the Food Festival, it would be the busiest weekend bar none for the restaurants in Tralee. It will be busier than any Christmas time nights out, it would be busier than the Rose of Tralee because the event is focused on food and driving footfall. You are generating a lot of new people through the doors of the restaurants and bars that would probably never have gone and obviously a lot of them are new tourists into the town._

Ken Tobin, Managing Consultant, Tralee Chamber Alliance

The success of a festival not only encourages awareness of the destination but also a desire to become a part of the festival:

_The first year I think there was something like 130 visual artists and now we are down to more like 100, we get more critical each year as to who gets to exhibit as the festival grows in stature. Even the bands, the initial bands we got were anyone we could get for the budget, whereas now we can be picky and people want to come here._

Katie Graham, Logistics officer, K-Fest, Killorglin, Co. Kerry

The awareness of a destination can be magnified by the festivals and events that the community host:
Puck Fair is an International brand. There is a Puck Fair bar in New York. We had a fella, 25 years ago he came over; it was the time when Puck was floundering, he came in and he promised he'd bring us grass from Graceland and all this kind of business. Sure enough he did the following year and he invited Ann and myself over to Memphis for their St. Patricks Day festival. He has a huge bar, the Puck bar, with two goats out in the garden and all sorts!

Declan Mangan, former Chairperson of Puck Fair, Killorglin, Co. Kerry

4:3 Festivals: Challenges

Festival and event organisation is a challenging field. While each festival and event is unique in their offering, they share many commonalities. Throughout this section of the research we examine the challenges that face this sector in an effort to derive practical ways to avoid or mitigate those challenges.

4:3:1 Festivals: Insufficient Public Body Support

Having outlined the areas in which festivals and events benefit an area and a community the focus of the research next looks at how Public bodies are supporting this area. The need for more support from state bodies is mentioned not just from voluntary organisations but is also mentioned by professional event management companies. Support is not just financial but also assistance with bringing an event to completion, be that with road closures, vending licences or health and safety requirements:

Another big threat to us is lack of funding from both regional authorities and national authorities and a significant lack of understanding of mass participation sports events within Ireland compared to other events that we do in other destinations around the world...As well as that, there is no one authority in a lot of counties that gives permission for an event so no-one can say 'yes, this event is happening or no it's not happening'.

Oliver Kirwan, Elite Event Management, Quest Adventure Series, Killarney, Co. Kerry

Funding is a key concern for most event organisers:
Funding is always the biggest challenge. Being an accountant myself my mantra is always it’s always easy to spend the money, it’s collecting the money that is the problem. If you can crack that nut at the start or have a template for your festival that raises revenue rather than provide everything for free for people and it will work well. If you spend €10 and you get €10 worth of an experience or presentation or talk and you feel it is value for money you will go along again next year. We have about forty four festivals here on the peninsula, looking at regional festival allocations from Fáilte Ireland less than ten of them would be getting Fáilte Ireland funding.

John Sheehy, Dingle Peninsula Tourism Alliance, Dingle, Co. Kerry

The unstable nature of festival funding is highlighted by another participant:

It’s the same every year. There’s always worry about funding. Always worrying will we have enough funding and will we be able to get it. There is a huge amount of work that goes into getting funding and everyone knows that is takes a full-time job applying for it and knowing what’s out there. That’s always a challenge, that’s a worry every year, is it going to be financially viable. It usually is but it is always a concern.

Colette O’Connor, Listowel Business and Community Alliance, Listowel, Co. Kerry

Another contributor highlighted the onerous nature of receiving support from both Kerry County Council and Fáilte Ireland:

At the moment, the support is financial, and then it isn’t just given, it is hard work to get! The KMEG office have to go out and hustle for anything that we get from anybody. There is nobody coming knocking on our doors, but I suppose there never is.

Margaret McCarthy, former Chairperson of the Kenmare Halloween Howl, Co. Kerry

Another participant outlines the areas of assistance that are required for the Ring of Beara cycle and how the event has to pay for that support:
Take for example the County Council, we have to pay for that support and that shouldn’t be. We have to pay for road closures…the guards, these are state bodies, and we are paying them doubly...All the various state sponsored bodies have to be paid.

Mickey Ned O’Sullivan, Chairperson of the Ring of Beara Cycle Kenmare

Another contributor, while noting the ongoing support from the Kerry art office for the event, outlines some of the problematic conditions that can come with financial support and the unrealistic and counter-productive constraints that those conditions can impose:

We get money from the Arts Council....The VAI (Visual Artists Ireland), come down and do workshops, so we house them and we have to pay for the workshop. The only people (performers) that aren’t paid at the minute are the artists and that’s apparently now going to be a bit of an issue. Apparently we are supposed to pay them which we didn’t know about, but our theory is that they come down and exhibit and they actually make money out of coming here whereas the bands don’t come to make money, the money they make is the money we pay them....The idea is about exposing young people who might not otherwise have a chance. We don’t take established artists we take the up and coming.

Katie Graham, Logistics officer, K-Fest, Killorglin, Co. Kerry

Another contributor, while again outlining the support and guidance that they receive from Kerry County Council also notes that that support can be a double edged sword:

For instance when the street trading act came in...we were called into a meeting and told that all street trading is now governed by legislation and all street traders have to pay so much. He (Martin Lawlor) said ye are the best people to collect the money for us and will you kindly collect the money from all the street traders and we said we can, but that we would spend it ourselves if you don’t mind, and he said, that’s fair enough. That rapport with the County Council is very important. Something that is coming in now for the horse fair is all horses are supposed to have a passport. The department wants us to issue the passports, which is nearly impossible!

Declan Mangan, former Chairperson of Puck Fair, Killorglin, Co. Kerry
The method in which the level of support that is given is decided is another area that raises concerns with participants:

*We don’t have huge support from Fáilte Ireland because the events aren’t of scale. I suppose our focus on the events is not only focused on attracting in tourists but it’s also actually on town vitality and getting locals to come into town and there is no buy in from Fáilte Ireland on those because they are all driven on bed nights and tourist numbers. Whereas sometimes you run events just to sustain the economy.*

Ken Tobin, Managing Consultant, Tralee Chamber Alliance

Another concern for organisers is the worry that supports which are currently available will be taken away:

*I hear murmurings of Fáilte Ireland pulling out of festival supports. It’s a catastrophic mind-set because that mind-set doesn’t see the importance at all of them and the amount of work that is being done for free anyway. Usually the support you get anyway is actually only a fraction. It might pay the insurance bill for the event or it might do something like that but you are still going to be begging, borrowing, selling tickets, doing other fundraisers and still knocking on doors...That still has to happen because that gets you local buy in and it gets you to meet face to face with people but you still need a bit of reliance that you can sit in comfort knowing that at least there is €5,000 coming from Fáilte Ireland.*

Gary Curran, Dingle Peninsula Tourism Alliance, Dingle, Co. Kerry

4:3:2 Festivals: Scarcity of necessary skills

While anyone can organise and run an event, legislation, insurance considerations and lack of necessary skills within the pool of volunteers, places greater pressure on the organising committees to ensure an event runs without incident and in accordance to legislative and insurance constraints. In order to ensure that all necessary aspects of organising a festival are covered, a large number of events are now recognising the need to hire professional services.
Festivals in larger towns can have a greater advantage over smaller towns due to the availability of skilled professionals that can be called on to assist an event or festival:

If we go back to my days in Killarney, you have so many hotels, so many staff...Christmas in Killarney was set up when I was there. They would ring up and say can you send your marketing person and I would send them up! So suddenly they have a crew of thirty people because of all the marketing people from all the hotels, but this person in marketing can go but she doesn’t have to worry about it because I am paying her wages...The Facebook campaign was coming out of the budget and is being done by a professional. The event plan can go back to one of the girls in accounts who is in an office and can go through everything and she can bounce it off the health and safety officer down in the Gleneagle and the crew in the INEC. There are all these people in the hotels that are a resource...Who would be doing that in Dingle?

Gary Curran, Dingle Peninsula Tourism Alliance, Dingle, Co. Kerry

The next contributor expands on the benefit in having volunteers within the community that have the necessary event management skills. These skilled volunteers create templates for the crucial statements to ensure the event runs professionally. They also share their knowledge and train subsequent volunteers to ensure the professional running of the event is continued:

We’ve been lucky in that the first crowd to do them (the event management and health and safety statements) were approve.ie. They are from Killorglin and Brid Moriarty was our secretary for Puck Fair for a good few years. She was fantastic altogether and her brother Tadgh was involved in the safety side if it. Bit by bit they decided to form a company. They actually had done the first safety statement and that kind of thing. So we’ve followed on from that. There are a lot more volunteers now but last year we decided that we should know more about what we were at. We spent a day up in Glencar Hotel and Tadgh Moriarty came down and he gave us pointed lectures on various aspects of what we should be and shouldn’t be doing.

Declan Mangan, former Chairperson of Puck Fair, Killorglin, Co. Kerry
The next contributor acknowledges the importance of having support from people with the necessary skillset:

We are very lucky we have Martin McCarthy who was once the superintendent in the County but he is retired now. He does a lot of the event management and safety statements for us and he does it for most of the events in the town. We are very fortunate, if he were not there I can imagine it would be an absolute nightmare.

Colette O’Connor, Listowel Business and Community Alliance, Listowel, Co. Kerry

Having people within the community that are willing to assist in areas that require a certain skillset means that festivals and events can be facilitated to set up by the community as discussed by one contributor:

If you can get some people involved that want to do an energy festival or music festival or whatever, they are the core heart. There are other people that can help them out. Help them with how to get funding, how to do the administration, help with traffic management and stuff like that. Those people are there to assist the people who want to start the festival. A lot of them know what they are doing in terms of, for example, with the music festival they know about music, they know about literature or they know about cycling etc., it’s the other bits they don’t know about and they are the things that drive them demented after a while.

John Sheehy, Dingle Peninsula Tourism Alliance, Dingle, Co. Kerry

It becomes apparent that the same people are instrumental to more than one festival or event in a town:

We have one councillor, Jimmy Moloney who came on board, he deals with any grant applications. Then Martin McCarthy, an ex-superintendent comes on board mainly just on the day as safety officer, he deals with all that kind of stuff.

Aiden O’Connor, Chairperson of Revive Music Festival, Listowel, Co. Kerry
Similarly, another contributor outlines the benefits of having volunteers with not just the required skill set but also with the patronage of larger firms:

> With insurance, we are very lucky we have Ruth McCafferty, she handles all of our insurance and I think she does some of that with help from FEXCO. While FEXCO don’t pay our insurance, she can use some of the assets that FEXCO offers to hop the ball and see what they think or what should we be doing or whatever. She handles all that and has a background in that.

Katie Graham, Logistics officer, K-Fest, Killorglin, Co. Kerry

When there is a lack of skilled volunteers or a lack of donated skilled man-hours, organisations are left with little choice except to hire professional help:

> I think you need professional leadership. I think that the responsibilities now are so great, running events like these, that a person doing it in a voluntary capacity doesn’t have the time or the energy because they have so many other things in their life. They will do it, for maybe one or two years but they get burned out, but if it is a professional, doing it professionally, this is their job. They have built templates, how to go about it on a daily basis. They have the time and they have the professionalism unlike an individual doing it on a voluntary basis because it is inevitable that people reach burnout.

Mickey Ned O’Sullivan, Chairperson of the Ring of Beara Cycle Kenmare

Even when an organisation or committee recognises and accedes to the necessity of hiring professional event management, there is a difficulty in recruiting skilled events personnel to a voluntary organisation:

> Tralee IT here have a three year Events Management course. We are developing a steady stream of qualified people out of the college locally but we ourselves can’t recruit them. We don’t have a funding stream to recruit those students when they graduate who have the skills we need. They are being shipped off to other locations where those teams are funded, most I would say, would be in the private sector within
the large hotels and conference facilities... The talent is there but what we don’t have is the fund.

Ken Tobin, Managing Consultant, Tralee Chamber Alliance

One contributor mentions that even when a committee seeks professional expertise, there is still a vast amount of work needed to pull together the necessary information to draw up these professional documents:

We got professional help with our safety statement for Halloween a few years back. The whole thing needed an overhaul. I put a lot of work into actually doing that and then it was advised to get an outside body to help... We sent it off to them, they changed the syntax of my document slightly and sent it back to me and then charged a load of money for it! Then even at that I wasn’t happy with some of it so we had more over and back. So basically, I wrote the document, they rubber stamped it and we paid the money. I think that is insanity!

Margaret McCarthy, former Chairperson of the Kenmare Halloween Howl, Co. Kerry

4:3:3 Festivals: Volunteers

The lack of volunteers and experienced volunteers who withdraw from a committee are a serious challenge for voluntary and community based events. Rapid turnover of practiced organisers within a voluntary event committee can lead to a disjointed approach to the coordination of an event and impact the viability of a festival and the festival brand:

I had intended to chair that committee for three years and I lasted two! By the third one, I was just unable to speak, you know! I loved like fifty percent of it and couldn’t stand fifty percent of it. You know, you are a volunteer and you have a business to run yourself. A life to run yourself and it sucks you in. It is just not realistic, it is not realistic to have volunteers, volunteer committees running festivals from scratch. It is just not realistic, certainly they’ll do it once, they may do it twice but they aren’t going to do it a third time. So you can see really good festivals nosediving because of that. So you get all the enthusiasm and all the creativity that is the individual side of a festival, and
that is what makes a festival successful, and if you burn out the people that are being creative, there is no festival.

Margaret McCarthy, former Chairperson of the Kenmare Halloween Howl, Co. Kerry

The immense pressure on volunteer committee members who lack professional assistance can lead to volunteer burnout. Another participant speaks about reservations volunteers have due to the implications of legislation and insurance claims:

Anyone can stand on the side of the road, but realistically the way things are going with insurance, if you have an event that is happening on a road and something happened on that road and the volunteers that are helping out on that road weren't competent in what they were doing or given specific training, then the event or the volunteers could be left liable. That then in turn discourages the volunteers and the risks associated with it... They can volunteer in other ways in the town, whether it be the local GAA clubs etc. where there is a structured volunteer system, coaching system and vetting system with kids but for community driven events? It's hard that way.

Oliver Kirwan, Elite Event Management, Quest Adventure Series, Killarney, Co. Kerry

Another interviewee discusses the dedication and stress on volunteers when setting up a festival and the resultant burnout of those volunteers:

I was very lucky, I came on (to the committee) in year six. My sister in law actually used to do this role. I remember, I didn’t live here the first year of the festival, I moved back to Killorglin in the second year of the festival and I remember meeting her on the middle day of the festival in the office. I remember her bursting into tears, she was heavily pregnant which didn’t help things and she just couldn’t cope. That was at a time where you had 100 visual artists and we actually had to house them all... The role has changed and adapted to be much more manageable.

Katie Graham, Logistics officer, K-Fest, Killorglin, Co. Kerry
One participant outlines how a volunteer committee can grow and contract over time, putting the entire festival at risk:

We are an entirely voluntary committee. In the 70's the committee dwindled down, there might have been ten or twelve and eventually there was only three or four and eventually there was only one or two. I think 1988/1989 was probably the poorest Puck in memory, just because there was only one or two people left to organise it. So, after that there was kind of a community meeting and I was involved with the pantomime group and the pantomime group took over the running of Puck Fair, and that was 1989.

Declan Mangan, former Chairperson of Puck Fair, Killorglin, Co. Kerry

Another contributor also outlines the cyclical nature of voluntary committees and highlights the precarious fate of festivals and events organised by them:

The Food Festival has changed after ten/twelve years. Some people got out of it and then there was a meeting saying that if we can't get more volunteer, we are going to have to shut it down. Forty or fifty people turned up and it was great, because then (due to numbers) you could ask people to volunteer a small amount of time.

John Sheehy, Dingle Peninsula Tourism Alliance, Dingle, Co. Kerry

The cessation of festivals and events due to lack of volunteers is unfortunately a common theme:

Feile an tSolais is the perfect example of a new festival that is completely voluntary. There was a huge amount of work that went into that but I think to sustain that in the future you would need to hire someone. It would be quite hard to see how it would continue long term without someone in place. We had another festival, a military and history festival which this year was the first year it didn't happen, but again it was a very small committee and they just couldn't sustain it.

Colette O'Connor, Listowel Business and Community Alliance, Listowel, Co. Kerry
The lack of volunteers can also be compounded by outside pressures as outlined by one contributor:

*What fell by the wayside was the Walking Festival which was on in February. It's so hard to the volunteers, the finance. Then with the risk of insurance going up as people were falling we needed more and more volunteers because there were three different walks and we needed people at the start, middle and end of the walks... Volunteers are hard to get, people are busy.*

Gary Curran, Dingle Peninsula Tourism Alliance, Dingle, Co. Kerry

One contributor talks of the necessity to show appreciation of volunteers and the contribution they make and to have the community engaged and eager for the success of the event in order for an event to survive:

*The challenge is to keep all the interested groups bought into it, because it is about buying in. Everybody must see that it benefits their group and that is difficult. The other thing is volunteers, you need to give them the respect of gratitude for giving up their time for the day and they must get some bit of satisfaction. Somebody must say 'well done'. People like to get a bit of recognition for doing what they did, and if they don’t that comes to leadership. If the leadership isn’t there it dissipates very quickly and that’s basically it. The volunteers would then think they are not appreciated.*

Mickey Ned O’Sullivan, Chairperson of the Ring of Beara Cycle Kenmare

Without volunteers a large number of non-profit festivals and events would not be financially viable. One contributor outlines their experience:

*The team within the chamber, some are part time paid and some are voluntary, face huge burnout because they are involved, unfortunately, in everything. Even just trying to motivate business owners and the community groups to get involved... So, it’s actually people that is probably the biggest issue that is there. You can’t underestimate the amount of work that goes into coordinating and managing these events. From everything from road closures to marketing to pulling various stakeholders together.*
That takes a considerable amount of work on top of all the other work that they are already doing. It actually burns you out.

Ken Tobin, Managing Consultant, Tralee Chamber Alliance

4:4 Festivals: Professionalising of non-profit Festivals and Events

Bringing in professional event people and hiring people to oversee not just events, but indeed destination management plans is becoming more typical. Within Kerry County many of the Chambers of Commerce have hired professionals to work on the marketing and management of their area. With volunteer numbers dwindling and with people pulling back from voluntary commitments, communities need a consistent presence to follow up and achieve desired outcomes for the area. The need to professionalise a towns offering whether it is marketing, events or for enterprise, is driven by the desire to support voluntary committees rather than replace them. The professional event management contributor outlines why there is a shift towards professionalising events:

We (Elite Event Management) take a lot of the responsibility. There are technical elements to hold an event that a voluntary group would not have the necessary skills to sign off on, such as the event management plan. Whereas if something happened on your event, that event management plan is what would dictate whether it was planned correctly or not. If that management plan isn’t put together by a competent person, with regards to what is right or wrong in it, if you are standing up in court if there is an accident they will ask you who put your management plan together and if it was Mary who works in the local ship, that won’t stand up in court. That is where people are getting afraid.

Oliver Kirwan, Elite Event Management, Quest Adventure Series, Killarney, Co. Kerry

The changing landscape of the voluntary community run festivals and events with the increased level of responsibility regarding Health and Safety and Event management mean that voluntary committees are under immense pressure to deliver a professional product with limited or no professional skills:
The costs of running festivals are going up and up. Ten years ago you would have never needed an event planner. You would never need to have a meeting with the Gardai. It was all unofficial. There's that body of work that needs to go on and there's extra layers of it because of the insurance. You need coverage at so many other points, you need stewards everywhere if you are doing a race or run.

Gary Curran, Dingle Peninsula Tourism Alliance, Dingle, Co. Kerry

Another interviewee outlines the stress and the pitfalls involved when non skilled personnel are responsible for completing essential statements and the repercussions that that can have for future voluntary committees. The need for these professional areas to be carried out by non-professionals also means that the volunteer committee spends a disproportionate amount of time working on the administrative side rather than on growing the festival:

The first year I was chairperson of the Halloween Howl committee and I was led to believe that our insurance and our safety statement and everything was 'tickity boo'. Those kind of things I like to check up myself if I am taking responsibility for something. When I looked into it, the safety statement was generic and insurance wasn't adequate so I proceeded to make that my high priority that year to sort out the insurance and the safety statement, both of which were a complete and utter nightmare.

Margaret McCarthy, former Chairperson of the Kenmare Halloween Howl, Co. Kerry

An event or festival is only as strong as the organisers running the event. One contributor outlines the devastating impact ill-considered decisions can have on a festival and the need to have structures put in place to avoid catastrophic decisions that will have a negative impact on the festival or event:

The committee in the eighties tried a few things, they put in a marquee and marquee acts thinking that that would boost up numbers but it actually cost money and they were left with a debt of about twenty five thousand pounds. The festival was run into the ground. So, when we took over, we were very lucky the bank manager took over the role of financial controller and he told us, you can spend X amount of money and you must raise X amount of money, and a portion of what you raise has to go to pay
off the debt. It was so successful that the debt was paid off in five years. We've been running sometimes at a slight loss and sometimes at a slight profit ever since.

Declan Mangan, former Chairperson of Puck Fair, Killorglin, Co. Kerry

Another contributor offers another viewpoint and looks at the financial need to professionalise events. He speaks of the necessity for events to become self-sustaining and the need to run them as commercial entities in order to fund them:

*Events and festivals need to be self-sustaining. They need to grow from a commercial perspective so that we are not reliant on public sector funding, so that we can leverage private sector sponsorship for them but yet we are running them as an amateur volunteer organisation. If you want to be invested into from a sponsorship point of view, they want to see a professionally managed event. We need to put ourselves on the same level as the Electric Picnic structure because some of these events have actually got the same potential in regards to spend in the local economy and the amount of people visiting the local area. So we need to run them professionally.*

Ken Tobin, Managing Consultant, Tralee Chamber Alliance

A further confirmation of the benefit of having a professional company on board to help is espoused by another participant:

*The first meeting I called for the ring of Beara cycle, eight or nine people turned up in the Park Hotel. I listened to everybody and I went home and said I'll be left on my own here, listening to what they were saying. So, I immediately googled Event managers and Oliver's name came up, because I felt at that point that I didn't have the time that it would take and I needed to get the professionals in. I think that any festival, say the Halloween Howl or the Ring of Beara, at that level, they need a full time person.*

Mickey Ned O'Sullivan, Chairperson of the Ring of Beara Cycle Kenmare

The necessity to pay people for work carried out at community festivals and events is becoming a reality in many areas:
A lot of people say I’m happy to volunteer but they don’t know what they want to do. If there was a better kind of pool of volunteers that you could pull from it would make my life a lot easier. People are very good but then you wonder when your goodwill is going to run out. Puck Fair pay a lot of their volunteers, like their rubbish pickers and all that, they are big enough to pay them and maybe that is what K Fest will have to do.

Katie Graham, Logistics officer, K-Fest, Killorglin, Co. Kerry

The need for a paid position to progress festivals and events is outlined again by another interviewee:

A lot of these festivals, not just unique to us, when you have a very small committee it is very hard to keep going and at least if you have a paid person in there who is chugging away and getting the work done, it takes the pressure off the volunteers.

Colette O’Connor, Listowel Business and Community Alliance, Listowel, Co. Kerry

Another contributor proposes how the professional skills could be funded:

If Fáilte Ireland funding could be broadened a little bit to maybe cover programming costs, cover getting someone in who was going to do the health and safety plan of do some other plans. The funding should be for marketing AND programming. That would definitely assist us in some of the smaller festivals that are growing year on year.

John Sheehy, Dingle Peninsula Tourism Alliance, Dingle, Co. Kerry

4.5 Recommendations for Solutions

While every festival and event faces challenges, the aim of this research was to ascertain whether solutions could be put forward to address and relieve some of the strains on non-profit festival and event organisers. Throughout the research process participants were keen to speak of suitable solutions that would benefit the festival and event area in Kerry. The professional participant spoke of the best practices that he has seen implemented and
recommends that Kerry, due to the extensive list of festivals and events held in the County should have a dedicated events team:

Some of the County Councils that we have worked with in the UK and Wales have an event division in the County Council. For example, I was at an Event Safety Advisory Group meeting in Wales last week for an event we have over there, they call it an ESAG meeting. Virtually every event that happens in the County, the event division hold a meeting with the Guards, the medical people, the events people, the national parks and any affected businesses and say this is the event, this is what’s happening, what are the concerns, what do we have to do, how do we address it? Rather than a week before the event going ‘someone hasn’t given their permission or stuff like that.

Oliver Kirwan, Elite Event Management, Quest Adventure Series, Killarney, Co. Kerry

Other participants speak of a mentoring project that could be rolled out in order to help organisers to learn how to better manage their events and to help them to put systems in place:

A lot of lessons we have learned we’ve learned them the hard way. Whereas, if you could have help or assistance! I know the LEO have mentors for different facets of business. Maybe having a mentor come in and help might be the right way. Rather than just have someone say OK, this is how you do this and this is how you do that and this is who you call to do this, because it is not always so cut and dry.

Katie Graham, Logistics officer, K-Fest, Killorglin, Co. Kerry

Having a funded event co-ordinator in areas to relieve some of the pressure on small non-profit committees was another popular suggestion. The fact that Udaras Na Gaeltachta have begun rolling out tourism offices for all their Gaeltachts this year was also mentioned and praised:

A lot of these festivals, not just unique to us, have a very small committee, it is very hard for them to keep going and at least if you have a paid person in there who is
chugging away and getting the work done, it take the pressure off the volunteers. I think it is a given that you have to have someone employed.

Colette O’Connor, Listowel Business and Community Alliance, Listowel, Co. Kerry

Another participant concurred with the need to have a funded person in each area to assist festivals and events:

*I think each location needs teams because when you look, in particular at Kerry’s case, there are so many events and festivals that happen. It is not possible for one organisation to manage all of those. I think each chamber or each town needs a person because it is an economic development role. The festival and event is just how we bring the money in. It’s the outcome of bringing the money into town is the key driver of this.*

Ken Tobin, Managing Consultant, Tralee Chamber Alliance

Another recommendation put forward was for Fáilte Ireland to create greater networking opportunities, this participant was speaking regarding the now discontinued Dingle Film Festival:

*Maybe they can’t give you money but maybe Fáilte Ireland could say ‘here is a way to network the festival with some influential people in the film industry’. Or network them with people who have been generous to other festivals. Network them with businesses them with businesses that might work with them. Make introductions for them, bring them down and pay for them to visit the festival.*

Gary Curran, Dingle Peninsula Tourism Alliance, Dingle, Co. Kerry

Another participant spoke of the restrictive nature of some of the funding and a need to broaden the use to which allocated funds could be used in relation to the Fáilte Ireland regional funding:

*If Fáilte Ireland funding could be broadened a little bit to maybe cover programming costs, cover getting someone in who was going to do the health and safety plan or do*
some other plans. It should be marketing and programming. That would definitely assist us in some of the smaller festivals that are growing year on year.

John Sheehy, Dingle Peninsula Tourism Alliance, Dingle, Co. Kerry

Another suggestion was the requirement for road closures and the provision of Gardaí for non-profit festivals and events should be ceased:

_The County Council should be there to support them, encourage them and to provide expertise. That is not there. They should be providing the backup, the supports for all of these, free of charge, because it is crazy to thing that voluntary organisations have to pay state bodies for jobs they are already getting paid for._

Mickey Ned O’Sullivan, Chairperson of the Ring of Beara Cycle Kenmare

Another contributor outlined the need for areas to have a shared collection of festival and event resources:

_I believe a lot in pooling, having a pool of resources, having a pool of people. So, from the town point of view, i’m involved in a lot of different clubs and say for instance something as simple as tables or hot water urns, why do all ten/fifteen or twenty groups in the town have to own their own tables or hot water urns. There should be a central pool, where I can go in and say I am signing out the ten tables and the five water urns, because nearly everything that is done is done to support a club and that’s for the health and welfare of the community or to support something charitable._

Margaret McCarthy, former Chairperson of the Kenmare Halloween Howl, Co. Kerry

Insurance is becoming an increasing worry for festivals and events:

_The biggest worry is insurance. If for instance insurance companies were refusing to cover, and if Fáilte Ireland had a real say with national clout from festivals. It could say something like ‘well if ye don’t insure this guy all this crown are pulling away from your insurance company. It will take something like that in the long run I think._

Declan Mangan, former Chairperson of Puck Fair, Killorglin, Co. Kerry
4:6 Conclusion

This chapter outlined and presented the research findings of this research study. In Chapter five the main findings, recommendations and conclusions of the research will be discussed.
Chapter 5: Main Findings, Recommendations and Conclusion

5:0 Introduction and Themes

This chapter presents an evaluation of the main themes of the research findings, the researcher will also outline the recommendations for future practice and the areas which need further research. This research thesis was carried out to seek a better understanding of common challenges for community festivals and events in order to identify ways to mitigate or nullify those challenges. The decision was taken to limit the scope of the research to County Kerry, the reasoning for this was two-fold. Firstly, Kerry is the County in Ireland with the highest dependency on Tourism, with the awareness that festivals and events are ways to maintain and drive increased tourism numbers, it is imperative that County Kerry, in particular, should support and safeguard their community events culture within the County. Secondly, every County Council’s tourism priorities are different. Some County Councils have separate Tourism Units, others do not even have a Tourism officer, limiting the boundaries of this study within the Kerry region means that all the festival coordinators interviewed have the same opportunities and supports available to them.

5:1 Motivation

Andersson and Getz (2009: 850) assert that social entrepreneurship is often at the root of the establishment of institutions and other not-for-profit organisations such as festivals and that in these cases, one or a few individuals create new organisations as a means to achieve their personal goals, which include generating an income. 80% of interviewees in this study indicated that one of the key reasons for setting up their festivals and events was to draw people to the community and to improve the local economy.

Generating economic development in the town and sustaining the businesses that are here, that’s the key driver, to get that footfall.

Ken Tobin, Managing Consultant, Tralee Chamber Alliance
One festival was set up to take advantage of a Government grant that was made available during the year of the gathering. Andersson and Getz (2009: 848) assertion that festivals normally create a demand for tourism services not only at a specific place but also at a specific time was a key point. Many communities set up their events in the tourism shoulder season in order to encourage people to stay at a quieter time of the year.

While the original motivation to set up 70% of the events discussed was to lengthen the season and increase the levels of tourism, the increased awareness of the events as incentives for people to come home and reconnect with their area were consistently put forward as the motivation to remain involved. The sense of being part of the community and working to improve it was important to all interviewees.

5:2 Challenges facing Festivals and Events

The festive and event sector as a whole face many challenges, not least, insurance, weather, funding and personnel. Within the not for profit event sector these challenges can be heightened due to the heavy reliance on volunteers and generally a funding model that largely depends on the goodwill of people within the community and Public Bodies. This section looks at the areas that came to the fore repeatedly during the interview stage.

5:2:1 Insufficiency of support

There is a sense that if a festival isn’t pulling in huge numbers it is not seen as worthy of time and attention by Public Bodies, yet festivals in small areas are as relatively beneficial to a community as a large urban festival is to a city. There is a sense of disappointment throughout the interviews with the level of support that is received from Fáilte Ireland in particular:

*We get no recognition from Fáilte Ireland, it is amazing! To them we are just a two-bit street festival with no recognition. We get something like €2,000 for marketing and that is just for marketing purposes.*

Declan Mangan, former Chairperson of Puck Fair, Killorglin, Co. Kerry
While funding is the easiest lack to hone in on, it is not the only support that is needed. Frost and Laing (2015:1298) noted that during their research issues of burnout were raised, linked to the increasingly onerous regulatory and administrative burden of managing and staging these events. The report from the taskforce on active citizenship (2007) stated that as our society becomes more litigious, the level of insurance costs and fear of litigation has become a growing barrier for many community and voluntary groups. We are now in 2019 and the Government has still not acted on this ever pressing concern, yet, we are assured that the Government is very supportive of the voluntary sector.

Fáilte Ireland and Kerry County Council give support to these festivals and events in the form of funding, yet eight out of the ten interviewees talked about the onerous nature of the funding process. It is time consuming to apply for the funding and it is time consuming to draw down the funding. Most funding, apart from National funding, has to be applied for every year, with no guarantees and as a result a festival or event committee cannot budget effectively long term.

5:2:2 Lack of experienced personnel

Finding adequate human resources with the expertise and experience needed to stage an event is particularly challenging in small country towns (Frost and Laing, 2015: 1299). While committees in larger towns are fortunate to have some skilled people available to them through the larger industries, hotels and event spaces, committees in smaller towns do not have the same access to event expertise. This lack of specialised event knowledge can hinder the growth of community festivals and also increase the pressure on volunteers who must take on the responsibility for a festival or event without the relevant skills to do so confidently. One of the interviewees speaks of the New Year’s Eve event in Dingle which grew from a small community tradition to a much larger event:

*First it needs insurance, now it needs an event plan, now it needs so many volunteers, you have to have all your t’s crossed and lined up. When you get to that stage people just say, ‘I didn’t sign up for this!’*

Gary Curran, Dingle Peninsula Tourism Alliance, Dingle, Co. Kerry
5.2.3 Dwindling volunteers

Eight out of the ten festival and event organisers interviewed specifically mentioned the difficulty in sourcing volunteers:

Volunteers are hard to get, people are busy. If you have a festival on at the weekend and you need so many people that Saturday, you think all the moms and dads will be off, but that mum is probably running around with three kids with different matches in different places and has to get the shopping done and everything else.

Gary Curran, Dingle Peninsula Tourism Alliance, Dingle, Co. Kerry

There are a number of sources for Volunteer statistics in Ireland. A comprehensive research study (Ruddle and Mulvihill, 1999) into donating and volunteering in Ireland, showed volunteer rates had declined from 39% in 1992 to 33% in 1999. The National Economic Social Forum, (2002: 2) research looks at the rates of volunteering in Ireland and discusses the various figures put forward;

NESF volunteer figures in 2002 was 17.1%, the 2006 Census (CSO) showed a volunteer rate of 16.4%. While the Taskforce on Active Citizenship (2007) also carried out research in 2006, showing a volunteer rate of 23.1%. Results from the 2013 QNHS (CSO, 2015) show the volunteer rate at 28.4%.

Firstly, these figures reaffirm the need for strict parameters to be set about what constitutes ‘volunteering’ and the need for comparable data sets to be collated. If we take the 2013 QNHS (CSO, 2015) figures as correct, and we will because they are the figures consistently quoted in subsequent government papers and on Volunteer Ireland websites, with Ruddle and Mulvihill’s (1999) figures, the percentage of the population volunteering has dropped from 39% in 1992 to 28.4% in 2013. This represents a fall of over 10% in a twenty year period.

The Government is keen to support and encourage the voluntary sector, at least on paper! Since 2000 there have been a number of reports and taskforces convened to research the area and proffer recommendations, yet a large number of these recommendations are not
acted upon. Despite their positive outlook, many participants (interviewed for the Active Citizenship report, 2009: 6) had previously been involved in consultation exercises about similar issues and are frustrated by a perceived lack of implementation and follow through on previous reports and initiatives. Yet, another report, Powering Civil Society (O’Connor and Ketola, 2018), was commissioned and published to satisfy the current Government’s commitment to producing a ‘coherent policy framework and develop a strategy to support the community and voluntary sector and encourage a cooperative approach between public bodies and the community and voluntary sector’ as outlined by the Department of Rural and Community Development in their annual Report (2018:8).

It would seem that the time for looking at the issues facing the voluntary sector and reworking the recommendations to address these issues is gone. The pressure currently being placed on too few volunteers in our communities will inevitably lead to increasing volunteer burnout which will leave community festivals and events in a more precarious position than before and will negatively impact the vibrancy of our communities.

5:3 Benefits generated from Festivals and Events

In the case of tourism it is often politically accepted that tourism generates a wide range of economic and social/cultural benefits for the people, but it is so fragmented and diffuse that only governments or public–private agencies can manage and market it (Andersson and Getz, 2009: 849). The tourism market is made up of a large volume of smaller commercial entities, perhaps the greatest achievement of these community festivals and events has been to gather together the tourism business community along with the wider community in order to work towards a common goal. This section outlines the benefits that the organisers see as the greatest benefits derived from the community festivals and events.

5:3:1 Economic

Festivals are crucial to the tourism sector, and were highlighted in Fáilte Ireland’s recently launched 2019 plans as a key component to continue to grow tourism, extend the season and spread tourism benefits across the country (Fáilte Ireland, 2019). Each of the organisers that
contributed to this study outlined the economic benefit that events and festivals bring to their area. There are both direct and indirect economic benefits to festivals and events. An example was given to the researcher, shown below, of the direct, indirect and intangible impacts the Ring of Beara Cycle event has on the Kenmare and Beara Peninsula area:

![Economic Impact Diagram](image)

**Figure 5.1**

Ring of Beara Cycle, Elite Event Management

While the direct economic benefits can be seen clearly, especially in a rural area, and can be calculated using a number of different methods, the indirect and intangible benefits can be harder to quantify. Fáilte Ireland state that festivals and events are critical for tourism growth as they specifically attract more than 200,000 overseas visitors to Ireland and contribute €108 million to the economy every year (Fáilte Ireland, 2019).

In a County with no major City and few large scale industries apart from Tourism, festivals and events prove a valuable resource within the Tourism industry.
5:3:2 Social Benefit – Pride of Place

Kerry has an ageing population, with a larger percentage of people living in smaller rural communities rather than in an urban area (CSO, 2016). An important benefit outlined by 70% of the participants was the continued bolstering of community spirit, the increased vitality within the area and the sense of pride of place that encourages people to re-locate to these areas and encourages young people to return home to these areas to live.

*Writer’s week brings a great sense of pride to the town. It instils this great feeling of showing off our wonderful town and our wonderful people.*

Colette O’Connor, Listowel Business and Community Alliance, Listowel, Co. Kerry

While 80% of participants spoke of the financial benefits that festivals and events brought to their area, it was the pride in their area that made them most animated. One interviewee noted that only a small percentage of the tickets for their event are distributed nationally in order to make them available to people from the area. 60% of interviewees spoke about their festivals becoming a weekend where people came home to enjoy their hometown and reconnect with friends and family. Laing (2018: 166) advocates for the exploration of the nexus between festival and event tourism and resilience, both at an organisational level and from the perspective of attendees and the local community; facilitating adaptation to an increasingly volatile global environment.

5:3:3 Tourism Benefit – Destination marketing

One of the most significant trends for destinations seeking differentiation has been through the organization of events and festivals (Van Niekerk, 2017: 842). All of the participants of this study made reference to the use of local festivals and events as a destination marketing tool. The study showed that in the smaller towns that are highly dependent on tourism, like Dingle and Kenmare, there is a concerted effort to create events to lengthen the season. One interviewee mentioned actively steering people to host events in a quieter period:

*A group came to us (Dingle Peninsula Tourism Association) the other day and they wanted to revive the walking festival and they wanted to do it in May next year. We*
Gary Curran, Dingle Peninsula Tourism Alliance, Dingle, Co. Kerry

Kerry's heavy dependence on tourism, over 20% of its workforce are employed in tourism-related enterprises (Kerry County Council, 2016: 12), necessitates a long term strategy in areas such as festivals and events. The low level of financial support that is currently provided by Public Bodies yields a high return both economically and socially for the areas that these events take place in, they also create media content to promote an area. The cessation of these festivals would leave the tourism product in Kerry much poorer, so it behoves the entire tourism industry to support them to grow and improve.

5:4 The professionalising of community festivals and events

The regulation of civil society organisations, in Ireland, — and the associated requirements for specialist knowledge, paperwork and reporting—is increasing all the time, which is onerous for small, voluntary organisations (O'Connor and Ketola, 2018: 5). Research on seven rural Australian festivals found that while all the festivals involved volunteers in their staging, there was an increasing reliance on professional assistance on the management side (Frost and Laing, 2015: 1302). This study found that 90% of interviewees would like assistance on 'red tape' areas, administration and funding applications. One interviewee noted that:

If you burn out the people that are being creative there is no festival, you'll have the framework but it will become static, so, I think you have to have more support on the administrative side and you need to let the creative side be fairy cakes if they want to!

Margaret McCarthy, former Chairperson of the Kenmare Halloween Howl, Co. Kerry

It is important to note that none of the community festival and event organisers interviewed wanted to privatise their events. Rather they want and need professional help to navigate
legislation changes in areas such as Governance, Health and Safety and increasingly onerous funding applications. Professional help in the areas of market research and tailored marketing approaches will also provide information in order to create sponsorship packages to secure increased funding.

5:5 Summary framework of the main qualitative research findings

Original Motivations for setting up the festival/event

- Financially motivated. The majority of festivals and events are set up with some financial gain in sight, be it increased tourism numbers, increased spend in the area or with a view to increasing the possibility of people choosing to settle and work in an area.
- Grants becoming available e.g. The Gathering grants in 2013, enabled and encouraged festivals and events to be set up.
- Maintaining traditions
- Destination Marketing, increasing the perceived vitality of an area to encourage people to visit and to encourage locals to partake in local events

Challenges facing Community Festivals and Events

- Financial Challenges
- Lack of necessary skills
- Feeling of isolation – no one to turn to

Benefits derived from Community Festivals and Events

- Pride of Place
- Sense of community
- Increased Tourism numbers
- Economic Benefits
The researcher would recommend an hourglass hierarchy structure to represent the layout of the relationship between the public bodies, such as Fáilte Ireland and Kerry County Council, and the regional community festivals and events.

The highest tier of the hourglass is the Public Sector, including regulations that are coming into force that will effect non-profit community organisations, the funding and drawdown criteria, the requirement for festivals and events to be run in a professional manner including creating professional media content in order to promote them, etc. This tier funnels down into the Local Enterprise Office (LEO).

The second tier is the LEO’s with their register of professional people. This section is the linchpin between the regulations, standards and requirements from the Public Bodies and the ability of the regional festivals and events to comply with those mandates. This section will aid the creation of templates for festivals and events in order to relieve the stress on community organisers and to improve the professionality of the events.

The third section is made up of regional festivals and events. These organisations want to be run in as professional manner as possible with the aim of growing their event and maximising the benefits from them. The assistance to create professional templates to run a festival well, means that the sponsorship packages are easier to sell, making festivals and events more sustainable. Professional media content means that a higher calibre of sponsorship can be sought. All these areas support the festivals and events to grow in a professional manner which makes them a more attractive commodity for Tourism Ireland and Fáilte Ireland to promote.

The last section of the hourglass is the smaller and newer community events. The expertise that: organisers of existing festivals and events gain through this new structure can be transferred to newer events or smaller events that want to grow and improve. Thus improving all the festival and event ‘products’ throughout the County. It also has the benefit of encouraging people to explore new ideas for festivals and events as they know there will be support there for them.

The hourglass structure means that information can move both ways creating a bonding tier
between the Public sector and the Community organisations on the ground. New regulations or new ideas flowing from either side can be filtered through a professional layer, this will enable an assessment on whether an idea is feasible and if so, what is the best way to roll it out.

![Figure: 5.1 Model for Practice](image)

**5:7 Recommendations for Solutions**

**5:7:1 Voucher System**

This study outlines the areas where professional knowledge would benefit the festivals and events and reduce the stress and workload of volunteers. The majority of communities do not have voluntary experts available to write or oversee the research and creation of health and safety plans or event management plans for festivals and events. While in a larger festival these areas could be outsourced to professional bodies, in a newer start-up funding for these plans may not be available. As a result newer festivals may falter and cease due to the increased pressure to produce professional documents with a voluntary amateur committee.
Currently local enterprise offices (LEO) are offering a voucher system for small businesses. These grant funded vouchers offer small businesses funding to attain professional help to build different areas of their business such as an online trading presence. This research shows that a similar initiative for festivals and events would be broadly welcomed. Vouchers could be offered in the areas of; Health and Safety; event management plans; how to create and sell sponsorship packages; how to apply for funding and how to create a marketing plan. As the Fáilte Ireland funding for regional festivals is now administered by the County Councils, this could be an initiative between the local enterprise offices (LEO’s) and Kerry County Council.

A voucher system means that professional ‘know how’ is brought into the community festival and event section without taking over the enterprise. This system would also provide a valuable touch point between community festivals and events and would generate valuable insight into areas of concern for the sector in order that the voucher system could be expanded or adjustment to meet the needs on the ground as determined by the uptake of each area covered.

5:7:2 Mentor Programme

A mentor programme, called Directions, has been trialled in Australia with arts festivals, it provided the mentees of the program with professional development that they often find difficult to access in regional locations and it provided the mentees with management frameworks within which to implement their new-found skills (Hede and Rentschler, 2007: 167). While the Kerry County Council Arts Office offered a mentoring programme in 2018, this was solely for street spectacles for St. Patrick’s Day and arts festival parades. While the voucher system can be used to combat more general challenges, a mentor programme will offer the chance to address challenges that are unique to each festival and event. Having completed the mentoring programme the festival and event organisers would be able to assist other festivals and events in their area and so multiply the effectiveness of the programme and transfer the skill set learned.

5:7:3 Festival Committee Awards

The motivation for 90% of the festival and event organisers that have been interviewed in this research is a philanthropic desire to improve their community and sustain traditions. It
became apparent during the research that the organisers of one festival were often involved in other voluntary activities within the town. While these individuals did not want accolades for themselves, the acknowledgment and appreciation of what these festivals bring to an area is important to them, and to all the volunteers that work so hard for them.

A Festival award scheme could be set up on social media where the names of the events taking place across the County are listed and a poll of the public to decide the winner. As most of these festivals and events will apply for Community Support funding from Kerry County Council, it would seem a simple solution to add a tick box on the application form to enter the awards program. The County Council can then decide whether to offer prizes to different categories or just one awards prize. These awards will only cost the Council the price of the prizes and the hours needed to post the list to social media and to manage those posts.

On the plus side for the County Council, it gives the festivals and events coverage where people can comment on their experiences and how much they enjoyed an event, encouraging others to come and attend. It also highlights the support that the Council gives to this wide ranging variety of festivals and events.

The simplicity of this system is that the event organisers are not being asked to fill out yet another application form, members of the Public and the Council do the limited amount of work needed. The awards can simple be an online poll with a prize for the festival committee, this prize could even be donated by a large business in the County. The prize itself is not important, it is the recognition that these festivals are worthwhile and the acknowledgement, by both Public Bodies and the Public, of what they bring to their community is the core purpose of the award.

There are already National award strategies, such as the All Ireland Community and Council Awards and the Pride of Place awards where the winners of the Kerry Award could be put forward. Again, this award system provides a positive touch point between the County Council and the festival organisers.

5:7:4 Network Event

One of the recommendations in the Kerry tourism strategy and action plan 2016-2022 (Kerry County Council, 2016: 105), is the creation of an annual networking event/seminar for events and festivals to assist in evolving required standards for festivals/events. This
recommendation is echoed in the new Visitor Experience Development Plans which proposes an annual networking event to explore opportunities for collaboration, extension of festivals, new ideas, and the sharing of information on evolving standards for festivals and events (Fáilte Ireland, 2019). This researcher strongly believes that an annual event to open dialogue between all festival and event organisers would encourage the transfer of knowledge and increase awareness about festivals and events being hosted around the County.

Fáilte Ireland (2019) created an annual masterclass for festivals that receive National funding to build world-class festivals and develop skills in growing international visitors. As a result the framework for a networking event combined with training for festival and event organisers is already available. Kerry County Council working with Fáilte Ireland and with the support of the industry led Kerry Tourism Forum could host this event annually in fulfilment of the recommendations previously outlined.

5:7:5 Simplification of Funding

Every event organiser spoke of the necessity to simplify the current funding models with many citing difficulties with the arduous application and drawdown process. With the increasing avenues of funding, often for relatively small amount of funding, there is a sense that all of an organisers time is taken up with paper work and chasing funds. While all organisers understand the need for checks and balances within the funding model there is a pressing need to look at cutting the volume of red tape in the process.

5:8 Recommendations for Future Research

In Andersson and Getz’ (2009: 852) research into the different ownership models of festivals they noted that the common observation that the festival sector was dominated by not-for-profit organisations was found to be true in UK, Australia, Norway and Sweden samples. Further research by Getz and Page (2016: 594) into the progress and prospects for festivals noted that planned events in tourism are created for a purpose, and what was once the realm of individual and community initiatives has largely become the realm of professionals and entrepreneurs. It would be interesting to see where and how this change came about, are non-profit festivals and events now being run by private interests or have non-profit festivals and events ceased and been replaced by private events?
Research into the relationship between resilience in communities and the voluntary spirit within those communities, in an Irish context, would be interesting. Looking at rural areas that are resilient and seeing what makes them resilient, is an increasingly important question. Is there a correlation between the level of community involvement in voluntary activities and the resilience of a community?

Future research in where the ideas for festivals originate and which individuals are involved as proposed by Wilson et al. (2017: 196) would be an interested area of research.

Expounding on William’s (2008) research, and whether the Government focus on formal volunteering through the regional Volunteer centres is harming the informal volunteering sector and if so, will this have a negative impact on volunteer numbers in the long term.

5:9 Limitations of the Study

This research study is confined to Co. Kerry, initially, the researcher wanted to carry out research on an ‘all of Ireland’ basis, however a number of factors altered that decision. During initial research into supports that are currently available for public sources it became apparent that Local Authorities differ in the types of support that they provide to festivals and events in their area. As a result a common list of recommendations would be more difficult to generate and due to a lack of time and resources a more homogenous study of festivals and events taking place in Kerry was decided upon. Time and resources were another reason to limit the research to Kerry.

5:10 Conclusion and Final Comments

It is humbling to speak to so many voluntary organisers and listen to their passion for their event and to see the mountain of work done on behalf of the community for no personal gain. According to the Department of rural and community development annual report (2018) the measures in their Action Plan focus on supporting, empowering and building sustainable communities; growing jobs and enterprise; maximising tourism, culture and heritage assets; and improving connectivity in rural areas. Community festival and event organisers are already fulfilling this brief to some extent and they deserve recognition of all they do for their community, at no small cost to themselves and they deserve to be supported in their efforts.
Word Count for Chapters 1-5 inclusive: 25,740
References:


Figure 3:1 Choy, L.T., 2014. The strengths and weaknesses of research methodology: Comparison and complimentary between qualitative and quantitative approaches. IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 19(4), pp.99-104.


List of Figures

Figure 1.1 The Makeup of Community Festivals and Events

Figure 3.1 The Model of Strengths and Weaknesses of Qualitative and Quantitative Research Methodologies (Choy, 2014: 101)

Figure 5.1 Ring of Beara Cycle, Elite Event Management (2018)

Figure 5.2 Model for Practice
## Appendix 1: Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Start Date</th>
<th>End Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Review of Current Literature</td>
<td>Jan 2019</td>
<td>September 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gathering Empirical Data</td>
<td>March 2019</td>
<td>April 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reviewing, Analysing the Empirical Data</td>
<td>May 2019</td>
<td>June 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presenting Findings, Discussion, Recommendations</td>
<td>July 2019</td>
<td>July 2019</td>
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<td>Final Edit, Check References</td>
<td>August 2019</td>
<td>August 2019</td>
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</table>
Appendix 2: Profiles of Interviewees and festivals

Declan Mangan - Puck Fair

Declan Mangan, a Killorglin native and a retired national teacher was the chairman of Puck Fair for a long number of years. He has also been volunteering with the annual Killorglin pantomime for over 56 years.

Puck Fair is an annual three day, family-friendly street festival that is like no other! Held in Killorglan, Co Kerry each year, a wild mountain goat is crowned king of the town by the Queen of Puck, who is traditionally a young local schoolgirl. There is a coronation parade and King Puck rules the town until his dethronement on the festival’s final day. It is an unusual concept for a festival but it never fails to provide excellent entertainment and to create a real buzz around Killorglan!

Gary Curran - Dingle Food Festival

Gary owns and runs the Greenmount Guesthouse in Dingle and was previously manager of the 5* Brehon Hotel in Killarney. Gary is a member of the voluntary Dingle Peninsula Tourism Alliance and heavily involved in the Dingle Food Festival among other events.

The Dingle Food Festival showcases and celebrates the quality of local producers, chefs, restaurateurs and the award-winning local food and drink they produce. Voted Ireland’s Best Foodie Town in 2014, Dingle is renowned for its award-winning restaurants, particularly in the medium of seafood. The Festival is a food lover’s dream with demos, markets, workshops, wine-tasting, discussion forums, craft beer and cider fest and over 80 stops on the Taste Trail, where you can sample a wide range of local culinary delights.

Katie Graham – K-Fest

I have lived in Killorglin for nine and a half years after emigrating from Canada. I got involved with K-Fest as a weekend volunteer three years ago and I have been on the committee for two years as the logistics officer. I also volunteer as PRO for the local rugby club and the Reeks District initiative. I love where I live and I want to help put us on the map a bit better.
K-FEST is a multi-discipline arts festival that incorporates visual arts, music, spoken word, dance, street entertainment and kids and family. It was born out of the Gathering grant in 2013, a grant aimed at encouraging communities to host festivals and events especially in rural Ireland. K-Fest has just celebrated its 7th festival. We open up old buildings that aren't in use and use them to display 100+ visual artists. We choose up and coming artists.... people who are just starting out. It's great to see them succeed on a bigger stage and we have witnessed it time and time again. It runs the run bank holiday weekend every year.

**Ken Tobin - Tralee Food Festival**
Ken is the part-time Managing Consultant for Tralee Chamber Alliance. He is co-founder of HQ Kerry, co-working hubs and offers a restaurant and marketing strategy consultant. Ken was also a director and co-owner of the Nightmare Realm events. Ken also volunteers for the Tralee Food Festival.

Tralee Food Festival promotes and showcases local producers and food establishments and provides something for everyone who loves food and fun! With an extensive Taste Trail, exclusive Restaurant Menus, Cooking Demos, a bustling Food Market, an Entertainment Marquee, Live Music, and Food & Family Day.

**Margaret McCarthy - Halloween Howl**
Margaret is a co-founder of Kenmare Ice-Cream and has a background in Hospitality. Margaret is an avid volunteer and there are few voluntary enterprises in Kenmare that Margaret hasn’t given a hand to. Margaret was a volunteer for the Kenmare Halloween Howl since the beginning and was chairperson of the Kenmare Halloween Howl committee for two years.

Kenmare Halloween Howl is a week-long community festival which runs over the midterm break in October. It is a family event with something for everyone, meet Bessie the witch, visit the haunted house and Nightmare on Kenmare Street! Carve a pumpkin or take part in some Halloween splatball fun. Take part in our famous Halloween parade on the 31st of October and enjoy some traditional games in the park afterwards. The Halloween Howl is a great event for all the family.
John Sheehy - Other Voices

John runs his own chartered accountancy practice in Dingle. He is a member of the voluntary Dingle Peninsula Tourism Alliance and involved in some form in practically every event taking place in Dingle. One of the events John has helped with is Dingle Voices. A celebration of music in all its forms, Other Voices began as an intimate gathering in 2001, with musicians travelling to sing in a tiny church in Dingle, on the very western edge of Ireland. Every year thousands of music fans make the pilgrimage to Dingle to see exceptional music performed in an extraordinary place.

Aidan O'Connor – Revival

Aiden is owner of award winning live music venue Mike the Pies in Listowel. Aidan is a native of Listowel and his pub has been owned by his family for over 100 years. Aidan was one of eight publicans behind Revival, a venture that was established in 2016 as a mid-summer boost for the town and the local trade. Revival is a live music festival hosted in the heart of Listowel town. It began as a one day festival but due to increasing success the organisers have now grown it to a two day event.

Mickey Ned O'Sullivan - Ring of Beara Cycle

Mickey Ned O'Sullivan is a retired school teacher, Kerry football legend and a tireless community volunteer. Mickey Ned, took the idea of the Ring of Beara Cycle and made it into a reality with the first event taking place in 2015. The Ring of Beara Cycle, Kenmare has become a hugely popular event in recent years. Participants choose between 140km or 110km cycles, on the rugged Wild Atlantic Way coastal route on the Beara Peninsula. Participants pass some of Ireland’s most picturesque and quaint towns including Ardgroom, Eyeries, Allihies, Castletownbere, Adrigole, Glengarriff and back to Kenmare town. Cyclists revel in the unspoilt beauty of the Wild Atlantic Way.

Oliver Kirwan – Quest Adventure Series

Oliver Kirwan is owner and founder of Elite Event Management, Ireland’s largest mass participation sports event company. Based in Killarney for the last 8 years Elite Events deliver
and promote events including the Ring of Beara Cycle, Ride Dingle Cycle, Quest Adventure Series and Run Killarney. With over 20,000 participants annually Oliver and his team produce market leading events.

Founded in 2012 with 300 people running, cycling and Kayaking around Killarney National Park the event concept has grown to incorporate seven events across Ireland and the UK, including: Quest Kenmare, Quest Killarney, Quest Glendalough, Quest Wales, Quest Lough Derg. The unique event format is hugely popular and is based on a sports tourism model with heavy emphasis on using the Quest events to promote the regions for adventure sports.

**Collette O'Connor – Listowel Writers Week**

Colette has a background in hospitality and is a part-time Marketing Administrator for Listowel Business and Community Alliance, while also managing her own event and hospitality consultancy. Colette is very involved in community events in Listowel and volunteers, among others, for Listowel Writers week and Féile an tSolais

Listowel Writers’ Week is an internationally acclaimed literary festival devoted to bringing together writers and audiences at unique and innovative events in the historic and intimate surroundings of Listowel County Kerry. The Festival showcases, and provides access to writers who offer substantive artistic content and who offer guidance and inspiration to our diverse audiences. The Festival aims to promote the general good of the community, to advance education across all age groups, to develop work in connection with the arts, and to give a platform for participants to perform their art form.

**Geraldine O’Sullivan – Kerry Volunteer Centre**

Geraldine works with Kerry Volunteer Centre. She is responsible for implementing Kerry Volunteer Centre’s strategic plan and the company’s QCI (continuous quality improvement plan). She acts as the Garda Vetting Liaison Officer and delivers all of Kerry Volunteer Centre’s training, mentoring and consultancy service. Geraldine’s a busy lady who is enthusiastic about the difference that Volunteering makes to local people and everyday living in Kerry.

Kerry Volunteer Centre’s mission is to promote the value of volunteering and increase the range and quality of volunteering in Kerry.
Appendix 3: Interview Guide:

1. What is the main motivator or driving force for setting up your festival/event

2. Can you give me a brief description of the Event/Festival, when it began, where it takes place, when and over what period?

3. What best describes your event committee or organisation, fully voluntary, mainly voluntary with some professional help or purely commercial?
   i. If fully voluntary – how many people are on the voluntary committee, and how are they chosen and do you think it will be necessary to look at hiring paid staff in the future to run events?
   ii. If mainly voluntary – how many people are voluntary and how many paid? When did the paid position(s) begin and how are the professional fees funded?
   iii. If purely commercial – how many staff are involved in the event/festival?

4. If you have a voluntary committee how are they recruited, chosen and retained?

5. What are the principle achievements or successes of the festival/event?

6. What are the principle challenges facing your event committee or organisation?

7. How has the event/festival evolved since that first year, and why?

8. How is the festival or event resourced, both financially and otherwise and by whom?
9. Are there other supports/resources that you are aware of but cannot access, if so what are they and why?

10. Have formal strategies been put in place e.g. for committee succession, event development, volunteer recruitment etc.? If so, have outside agencies been used to formulate those strategies? If not, could outside agencies help and what form should that help take?

11. Are there suggestions that you would have for supports that are needed and how they could be implemented?
Appendix 4: Sample Consent form

Each participant signed a consent form prior to their interview commencing.

Interview Consent Form

Supports for Festivals and Events in Kerry

By

Helen McDwyer

Supervised by, Angela Wright

CIT, Master of Business

I, Margaret McCarthy, consent to be interviewed for the purpose of the research named above. I have had all of the details of the research explained to me. I am happy that my quotes can be used for the purpose of the research. I can ask for clarification about the research at any stage. I understand that I can withdraw (opt out) from the process at any stage. I understand that my data will be stored in line with CIT GDPR regulations and policy.

Signed:

__________________________

Date