



# Samhuinn 2025

## Members Survey report

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## Summary

Overall, this was a really successful festival.

### Main Pain Points

- The Floodlight Angle caused issues with visibility and photography. The light was necessary for the First Aid team.
  - We needed to have the light for the ambulance, which was by the stage as the road was closed. Maybe we can adjust placement of stage/ambulance/lighting in the future now that we know it doesn't work this way.
  - We tested the light on the overcast night of the 30th, and it seemed acceptable then. But it was darker on the 31st, making the light more glaring. We got this wrong and we can work on it in future.
- Sadness at not having time to enjoy Bat Hearth
  - We feel your sadness too!
  - Buses were booked for before midnight otherwise there would have been a huge surcharge

### Main Celebration Points

- People generally really enjoyed the after party and were grateful for the work put into making it happen
- So much love for Court and Blues this festival!

This year's survey was also successful in getting over 138 responses which is a really high response rate!

When reading this report, please keep in mind that while we've tried to capture as much input as possible, the response rate was 47.7% so the results may not represent all views. Direct quotes are also subjective opinion.

## Overall Festival Stats - 138 Responses 47.7% Response Rate

Scores are out of 10. As in previous years, results skew high, reflecting strong overall satisfaction.

Group Specific Questions	Festival Average
The group was logistically well organised.	8.91
Questions from me or others were adequately answered.	9.34
There was an atmosphere of respect between GOs and the group.	9.74
I enjoyed attending sessions.	9.43



The group's tasks and objectives were clear to me.	9.1
GOs were available for help and guidance.	9.69
The work during the run-up was relevant to our performance on the night.	9.45
Adequate supporting materials were available.	9.34
I felt physically safe.	9.66
I felt emotionally safe.	9.79
Group sessions and events were accessible to me and any special requirements I had were catered for.	9.73
I was made aware of the costs directly associated with the group early in the process.	9.5
I understood and / or had access to information about where group donations were spent	8.94
Group Fees	£29.84
Any other costs for costuming, props, weekend away etc.	£46.82
<b>Overall Questions</b>	
The overall story-line of this year's festival was clear to me.	8.11
The role of my group and myself within the event was clear to me.	9.29
It was clear how the Cailleach and Kings stories related to my group this year.	8.57
I understood the role of the Blues and how they related to my group this year.	8.92
I felt that the overall Festival was well organised.	8.26
Do you feel from your experience this festival the Board of Trustees are acting in the best interest of BFS and helping ensure it carries out its activities?	9.14
It was clear to me what rights and responsibilities I had as a volunteer/performer, and where I could direct any comments, questions, problems, or other feedback.	9.44
This experience built, strengthened or complemented my relationship to the environment, nature and its seasonal rhythms as well as engaged me with the traditional celebration of the Celtic solar and lunar calendar fire festivals and their relevance to community life and contemporary culture.	8.96
This experience developed and enhanced my skills (whether performance, tech, photography, stewarding or otherwise) in a collaborative arts environment.	9.63
I'll benefit from this experience beyond the context of this festival.	9.38
Overall happiness with the experience	8.93



# Festival Wide

## Blues

### Summary of feedback on Blues

Feedback about the Blues this year was overwhelmingly positive. Many respondents described Blues as “solid”, “awesome”, “great”, “friendly” and “helpful”, and several people commented that they felt reassured by their calm presence on the night, including through simple gestures such as eye contact and nodding.

A recurring theme was appreciation for Blues being more visibly involved with groups during the run-up and on the night itself. People particularly valued moments where Blues joined in drumming, attended group spaces, or engaged informally online. This contributed to a strong sense that Blues were present, accessible, and part of the shared experience. One comment said: "Please continue Blues News!".

A smaller number of respondents expressed uncertainty about the Blues' role, including wanting clearer communication about what Blues do, how they are selected, and how they relate to groups. There were also some concerns raised about decision-making power, creative vetoes, and workload distribution. These comments suggest a desire for greater clarity and transparency around remit, rather than a lack of trust or appreciation for the individuals involved.

Several practical suggestions were also made, including around communication methods, visibility across different areas of the festival, and ensuring that Blues capacity is sustainable. These points are useful indicators for ongoing reflection about how the role is understood and supported within the wider community.

## Court

**The overall story-line of this year's festival was clear to me: 8.1**

**The role of my group and myself within the event was clear to me: 9.3**

**It was clear how the Cailleach and Kings stories related to my group this year: 8.6**

### General

It's probably fair to say respondents very much enjoyed the Court's performance this year - *"This has been my favourite court, the stories all seemed so original, creative and unique but still wove together so well!"*



People appreciated the court figures coming to their group to explain what was going on (and in one case, help make torch-balls), however, a fair bit of confusion remained, and there were multiple requests this year that more information be provided to explain the story to both society members and the audience, either via email, on the website or in the fliers or QR codes provided to the audience.

Many group members appreciated their interactions with court members where these happened. It is also notable that experiences were not uniform across all groups, with some feeling less connected to the Court narrative than others. This highlights an opportunity to think about how story communication can reach all parts of the festival more evenly.

### Summer King (Bob)

The Summer King received a lot of praise for his work coming to groups to explain his storyline, and this led to a lot of the society feeling they understood and related to the story.

Respondents praised the originality, thought and detail of the Salmon King story, and were delighted that the Blues had allowed something so bold. One respondent said they liked the theme of disrupted climate theme over the traditional fight scene

Performers really enjoyed Bob's performance, describing it as "*sassy and entitled*" and "*a Summer King with humour and really deep consideration*". Bob's "flopping on the stage" was described as "*one of the highlights of the night*".

### Winter King (Anna)

The Winter King storyline remained something of a mystery to many respondents, when compared to the Salmon King story, however everyone who interacted with Anna enjoyed it. There is definitely a theme that Heralds of Winter felt closer to the Winter King than any other performers.

Anna's performance is particularly praised, described as "*terrible and inevitable*", "*brilliant*", and "*F\*\*KING AMAZING AND SCARY AS SHIT!*".

### Cailleach (Sara)

Many of the participants who worked with the Cailleach really enjoyed their interaction, and her connection to the Deer Stewards was really appreciated. People from several different groups said they felt a connection with the Cailleach.

The presence and richness which Sara brought to the role of Cailleach, from the open meeting right up until the night itself is widely praised, comments included: "*One of the most moving Cailleachs I can remember*", "*just all round excellent*", "*Her intro at the open meeting made my breath catch in my throat, very powerful words.*". "*The whirlpool sequence was visually amazing*"



## Group Organisers (GOs):

**I felt physically safe: 9.06 / 10**

**I felt emotionally safe: 9.22**

**I felt adequately supported by BFS: 8.72**

GOs remain one of the most popular groups of people in the Survey with a vast number of performers singling out their GOs as people they wanted to thank for giving them a great festival and run up

This year appears to have gone particularly well in terms of direct assistance and information from the Blues and from Operations team, with GOs saying that operations and GO meetings were “smooth”, and *“the most pain-free set of GO meetings I’ve had of all the times I’ve GOd”*.

## Communication, guidance and expectations

While in-person support from Blues, Operations, and contractors was widely praised, feedback about online communications was more mixed. Several GOs expressed a desire for clearer, more consolidated information, including contact lists, timelines, and key documents, particularly to support new GOs who may be unfamiliar with BFS terminology and processes.

There were also comments noting that information sometimes arrived later than hoped, that deadlines could shift, and that navigating multiple communication channels could feel overwhelming. These points suggest that clarity and consistency, rather than volume of communication, may be the most helpful focus going forward.

A number of respondents asked for more structured guidance for the GO role, including clearer expectations, practical templates, and signposting about who to approach with different types of issues. While many of the requested resources already exist, this feedback highlights that they are not always easy to find or interpret under time pressure, especially for first-time organisers.

Taken together, these comments point towards a need for better onboarding, clearer signposting, and shared understanding of what support is available, rather than a lack of goodwill or effort from any particular team. This is a perennial issue and we are always trying to do better!

## Organisation and Contractors

**I felt that the overall Festival was well organised: 8.3**



## Overall

In general, the overwhelming majority of comments were praise for the contractor team. A lot of praise was given for their work this festival, with over 20 people saying that they felt the contractors' work was excellent, and supportive, and that it resulted in a safe and solid festival. Many other comments simply thanked the contractors for all of their hard work, with a couple of comments welcoming Eve and Lisette to their new jobs.

## Safety and Operational Concerns

Alongside substantial praise for the contractors' work, a number of safety-related concerns were raised by respondents. These included issues around the availability and timing of safety equipment, clarity of support for technically complex projects, and isolated incidents where conditions on site created additional risk.

While these concerns were raised by a minority of respondents, they are taken seriously due to their potential impact on performer, volunteer, and audience safety. Detailed reports have been shared internally so that they can be reviewed, addressed, and used to inform improvements to future planning, resourcing, and communication.

The overall feedback indicates that members felt the festival was largely safe and well run, while also identifying specific areas where processes can be strengthened.

## Major themes

As mentioned above, the majority of comments were that the festival was well organised, and that the contractors should be thanked for a good job.

Aside from these, the most major issue reported was timing. Several performers found that each walkthrough and the actual festival had very different event timings, and many performers also wanted to express their sympathy to Bat Hearth for their part of the festival being cut so short due to the coach rush.

Another major issue was lighting, with many mentioning the "blinding" and over-bright floodlights on the stage, with one report that it disrupted the first aid tent. One comment also said that there wasn't enough lighting in other areas of the festival.

The format of the festival seems to have been appreciated, with a few comments that the crowd was nice, and it was good that there were less of them, and also that Calton Hill was a better location than Holyrood Park.



## Minor Themes

Some issues received only one or two comments, these are listed below:

- A comment praising the new paid stewards as being better than the previous company.
- A request for portaloos in the walkthroughs if no public toilets are available.
- The bonfire started too big and dangerous
- Front of House were praised for their performances on the path up
- One complaint that ropes and pins weren't there when expected (though this wasn't a problem)
- The audience expected wristbands, but didn't get them.
- A request for more comms about the festival on social media before and after event
- A suggestion that the paths on Calton Hill for the audience were "confusing"

## Board

**Do you feel from your experience this festival the Board of Trustees are acting in the best interest of BFS and helping ensure it carries out its activities?: 9.1**

**It was clear to me what rights and responsibilities I had as a volunteer/performer, and where I could direct any comments, questions, problems, or other feedback: 9.4**

## Overall

For these questions, there aren't really overriding themes of individual issues, but more general areas of discussion, of which I'll handle individually.

First up, it's worth mentioning that the most commented thing was general support and praise for the board, with them being described as competent and efficient, with members being glad that board members have expressed their enjoyment of the role, and happiness with the increased number of members.

## Safeguarding

Only three comments were made on this important issue, 2 of them expressed concerns that personal relationships may be interfering with the safeguarding process. Another expressed concerns that the team is not willing to take action to remove unsafe people from the community and finally there was a concern that someone has been suspended and their case not investigated.

A note to these comments:





Safeguarding is a critical and sensitive area of the society's work. While only a small number of comments were made in this section, they reflect the importance of trust, accountability, and clear processes.

Due to the need to protect individual privacy and safety, it is not appropriate to share details of safeguarding cases or internal decision-making with the wider community. This can understandably lead to uncertainty or assumptions from the outside. What we can say is that safeguarding concerns are handled with care, seriousness, and a commitment to the wellbeing of all members.

The team is very conscious about conflicts of interest and has a robust declaration process so that we do not work on cases where there is personal involvement. We also have a wholly independent Resolutions and Safeguarding contractor, Simone Last - contactable at [resolutions@beltane.org](mailto:resolutions@beltane.org) and any member of the community can email her directly and confidentially. Only Simone will see emails sent to this inbox and she can then triage accordingly, this might mean involving someone on the team who does **not** have any conflict of interest or, in rare circumstances, it may mean processing the case fully on her own. In general, the Safeguarding Team works in pairs on cases for support and for proper compliance with our own processes.

Community trust is essential in this work, and we appreciate members engaging thoughtfully with these processes.

If you would like to contribute your support and time to the Safeguarding Team and be part of the solution, we would certainly be open to widening the team with suitable community members, please contact [board@beltane.org](mailto:board@beltane.org).

From Your Questions Answered:

- ❖ Slightly paraphrased for anonymity: *Not sure about safeguarding - there is feedback I have about a group member that would help future GOs - and my experience with this same person before allowed me to highlight my concerns in my group but in future it would be good for others to know. I don't want to be the type of person who dobs people in (however in these instances it has created a safety concern).*
  - If you have any concerns, please feel encouraged to message the Safeguarding Team at [safeguarding@beltane.org](mailto:safeguarding@beltane.org) who can advise without judgement.
  - All of our policies [can be found here](#).
  - You can also [complete a form](#) or if you would really like to remain anonymous (although we do encourage you to share full details so that we can take appropriate action if necessary), you can [use this form](#) to submit concerns anonymously.
  - Anything you say to the Safeguarding Team or Resolutions Officer will be treated with utmost confidentiality and **your name will not be shared with the subject of your report** (or outwith the team in any way) without your very clear consent to do so.



## Communications

There's quite a few diverse comments about BFS comms, some of it mentioning how good they are, with special praise for the emails about general Beltane big picture stuff. One member requested more blethers.

There are also a few issues:

There are a couple of people mentioning that communications may be going out too close to the events they mention, making planning difficult.

A couple of mentions that Board members could perhaps be more present and available, with a request they identify themselves at GO meetings. -Board note: Board members were present and available at GO Meetings, perhaps we can be even clearer here.

These comments point towards an opportunity to reflect on timing, consistency, and tone in communications, while recognising the constraints of a largely volunteer-run organisation managing complex events.

## Environment / Culture

A few comments suggested that Beltane could focus more on its stewardship of the environment. A couple of people suggested that some sort of environmental aim be added to BFS's Charitable Aims. Other commentators suggested direct actions BFS could take to help with the environment:

- BFS could work as an organisation to try to ensure the environment of Calton Hill is repaired and maintained after our events
- Burger vans could be replaced with vegan alternatives

One commenter was worried that Beltane was becoming too Corporate, with another suggesting that BFS move from Google tech to an Open Tech Stack

## Other Bits and Pieces

There was an allegation that Torchie numbers were limited to encourage more Stewards, and expression of dislike of this. - Board note: there was no such limitation.

## Afterparty

The overwhelming theme from the afterparty feedback is that people had an extremely good time, with over 40 comments praising it, with many effusively mentioning what an excellent, and appropriate venue it made, with many asking for afterparties to return there, especially on weekends. Example comments below:

*"It feels so good for BFS' values that it's a weird hippy commune instead of a sleazy city centre venue."*

*"OMFG!! It was INCREDIBLE"*



*"This was a STELLAR venue. It felt much more like "our space" rather than "a club we hired" like with the caves. "*

Beltaners particularly enjoyed the extra spaces, including the quiet room and outdoor fire pit, which one self-described introvert described as "a game changer" from the normal sensory overload at the Caves. People also were delighted at the close proximity to the After-After venue, and the BYOB making it so much cheaper.

A great many people effusively thanked Tom Watton, Tom Caine, the Board and contractors for their work in making this happen.

Praise wasn't universal, though, with one member saying they wouldn't go back, and another asking to return to the Caves.

Also, perhaps unsurprisingly, there were quite a few issues with the venue which were mentioned even by people who had a very good time there. The most prevalent complaint was location. It was hard to get back from, difficult for people with disabilities and many said they preferred the city centre. A lot of people expressed their annoyance with the rush to get to Corstorphine, and their sympathy with Bat Hearth for their time being cut short.

Accessibility issues were reported by a number of people, with particular note that there weren't any disabled toilets, and the dark, "cursed", "unusable" portaloos were criticised by a number of people., however, there was another comment that the BYOB policy made the club more accessible to people with low incomes.

A large number of people were disappointed by the lack of +1s availability and a few also complained that the venue was too small and cramped. Several members of Photopoint complained that their balcony room was used as a normal part of the venue by other partygoers, making processing very difficult. People were also put off by the scariness of the rules document, with one report that a GO hadn't sent their group this (and thus it should have been sent out by the Board to everyone)

The perception of the locals seems largely positive, although there was one complaint that they were taking photos, which is against the rules and they were spoken to at the time.

The playlist received mixed reception, with one person delighted that there was a community playlist and a couple of people asking for DJs back. Noise levels seem to have been an issue, with one person commenting that the sound system was a bit quiet, some requests for better soundproofing between rooms, and one complaint that Beltaners weren't respecting the singing groups, talking over their performances.

Finally, there were a couple of complaints that a lot of mess was created, and most of the clean up for ~150 partygoers was done by two GOs at the end, which seemed unfair.



## Charitable Aims

Environment, nature, seasonal rhythms and the Celtic solar and lunar calendar (8.71)

A great many respondents mentioned how much this festival strengthened and grounded their connection with nature and the seasons. A couple of people also mentioned their enjoyment of learning directly about nature, especially as relates to salmon and bats.

A few comments mentioned that new members were finding it difficult to follow the meanings of the rituals, culture and practices behind BFS's festivals.

A couple of comments mentioned that there were issues with the Festival's direct treatment of its environment, with the leaving of fire props in the grass on Calton Hill, and also with the afterparty issue of very few members of the society cleaning up all of the trash.

Developed and enhanced art performing skills in a collaborative environment (8.81)

This element seems to have largely gone quite well with more than 25 comments that participants had either learned new skills or improved pre-existing knowledge.

Three participants felt that they were already pretty experienced at everything they were doing so didn't learn anything new, and one participant felt that they just didn't learn anything.

## General / Other Feedback

### Accessibility

Some volunteers mentioned poor accessibility in the Afterparty venue, both in terms of the stairs in the venue itself, and the poor access and lighting in the portaloos.

Two groups were singled out for providing really excellent accessibility: Bog Point and Dance of the Falling Light both had multiple members praising them for providing excellently accessible groups.

### Deselection

Only 4 deselection forms were received, mostly pretty happy about the process, with one member being slightly disappointed by Reds deselection (7/10) for reasons unknown (another of the 4 was someone entirely happy with this (10/10)).

## Your Questions Answered

### General Lore and Tradition

- ❖ Why do we have a Cailleach, who traditionally embodies the winter, and also a Winter King? Where is the representation of Autumn in all of this?
  - (The Blues might give a better answer but...) We have been telling the same basic storyline for Samhuinn since we started, based on a traditional *Galoshans Play* - in line with our charitable objective to promote Scottish Street Theatre. In this format, the play shows a conflict between two parties - in our case, the Kings - who fight and are reconciled by a doctor - in our case, the Cailleach, a traditional Celtic goddess figure. Autumn is not a traditional figure in Scottish traditions; in fact, it only became a common word in the sixteenth century. The duality of opposition from Summer and Winter is a much stronger fit for the storyline.
- ❖ Also, why do so many people have (Germanic) runes on their faces at a nominally Celtic festival?
  - BFS has been using Germanic runes since almost the start of our Beltane festival, and they have become a part of our culture. If you would like to learn more, please [see here for a more](#) in depth discussion around the use of runes within BFS.
  - Though based on historical traditions, our version of Beltane is designed for all of Edinburgh's people. We encourage Beltaners to weave their own cultural heritage into the celebration.
- ❖ In the entire history of BFS, how many Blues have there been in total, and if you added up all their years of festival experience and laid them end to end how far back in time did we just travel? Can this be represented as an infographic? A fun project for someone if you're feeling the post-Samhuinn... blues ;p
  - This would be an interesting data finding mission - we have a lot of records but they're incomplete, especially in the earlier years. If you would like to undertake it, please feel free and let us know!! Unfortunately, we have many other crucial projects and tasks that leave little time for such ponderings :))
- ❖ The basis of the ritual elements and story, i just wish i could explain this well to other people. I wish we all knew a bit more about the performances, other groups and symbolism
  - Be the change you want to see! These are moving, evolving stories and change between festivals; if you have specific information to share about your group, please contact [board@beltane.org](mailto:board@beltane.org) or [newsletter@beltane.org](mailto:newsletter@beltane.org) and we can share it with the membership, or further afield for witnesses. For the basics, we've put together a welcome document which was sent to everyone on the mailing list, which is [also on the Archive](#).
- ❖ What do the blues do?
  - Here is some information [about Blues on the website](#) in the About Us section.

## Logistics

- ❖ Why don't the Blues have radios?
  - There was a Steward attached to Blues that had a radio on the night and this worked really well, they had received the Radio Training via C'tri's project.
  - Blues are undertaking a profound ritual role on the night, holding space for the court and all the performers in a powerful way. This would be impacted on significantly by navigating a radio and lots of speech.
- ❖ Why was the light so bright at the stage?
  - We needed to have the light for the ambulance, which was by the stage as the road was closed. Maybe we can adjust placement of stage/ambulance/lighting in the future now that we know it doesn't work this way.
  - We tested the light on the overcast night of the 30th, and it seemed acceptable then. But it was darker on the 31st, making the light more glaring. We got this wrong and we can work on it in future.
- ❖ Will we be going back to Calton Hill next year?
  - We haven't been able to book the space this far ahead, but it's been a very warmly received venue with this format, and so it seems to be the membership's first choice. The membership expressed a strong desire for a home at the last blather, and we hope to deliver that!
- ❖ Why sell so few tickets?
  - Festival
    - Having too many ticketed witnesses at a festival causes big issues with lines of sight and people not being able to see. We had this issue at Samhuinn 2024 with only a few more tickets than this year. This year's festival ran at an expected loss of about 12 thousand pounds, but if we had increased ticket numbers, we'd have had to pay an additional council levy, meaning that we'd have lost even more money. We feel that we would have liked a few more people on the hill, but not enough to recoup the cost of the levy without ruining sightlines for the audience.
  - After Party
    - Normally, we hire a venue with a capacity of around 300-350 people, which is more than adequate for the number of volunteers, community members and other +1s at the party. However, with Samhuinn falling on a Friday, every single licenced venue was booked up. Barnton Bunker was suggested to us so late that there wasn't any chance of making any adjustments, and our analysis showed that the safe capacity was around 250 people - mostly due to the limited fire escapes.
    - There's been a rumour that our capacity was due to licensing costs; this wasn't true: as a private function, there were no licences involved. It was purely down to the safe capacity of the venue.
- ❖ What is the reason for no amplified music? Runach and Suail were not properly audible at the after party. Also for Community Fires and After After Parties, there is a rule or culture of no amplified music. As a fire spinner, I want music to enjoy the flow



and it also makes it more interesting for people to watch when there is music. Could you explain why this is such a no-no?

- We don't have such a rule; in fact, we had a group (Water Point) with amplified music at Beltane. However, we do have to consider how such an element fits with the theme and feel of the festival. Normally we have at least two drum crews providing the soundtrack for performers, so the need for amplified music is much reduced as drums are pretty loud! It's also a very different skill to perform with microphones and without, so musical performers don't necessarily want to have microphones.
- From a GO of Suail: "The reason for no sound system at the After was that it'd be too much work in an already busy night. Amplification requires a person sound-teching, some soundcheck time, and musicians who know how to perform amped. It wouldn't be practically feasible for Suail: it's not in our skillset and also arguably not in the spirit of the thing, though I appreciate it's not ideal."
- Rùnach could in theory have used amps: they own amps and know how to play amped, but there isn't really time at the afterparty to do a soundcheck. Last Beltane, Aerosphere did the afterparty amped and the soundcheck ate up half of the set; they only got 20 mins of set-time.
- For Community Fires, amplification isn't banned - community fire isn't really regulated by anyone - but it would likely change what community fire means for people. Amplification tends to create a separation between 'performers' and 'audience', and most people seem to prefer that to be less defined: different people taking turns to share performances, and/or to socialise without music.

## Selection

- ❖ How does the May Queen get appointed? What is the process? It seems different from other court figures - why is that? What is the Lore around this?
  - See here for [the notes from the May Queen Blether from 2017](#).
  - Please see here for the [Court Selection Process](#) as published on the website.
  - For any Court figure, community members can nominate themselves or it is possible to nominate another who would then be invited to apply.
  - The Blues run interviews with selected candidates who fit [the criteria](#), see below. For the Green Man interviews, the May Queen has a vote and for the Summer and Winter Kings, the Cailleach has a vote.
  - A board member sits in on the interviews to ensure that all candidates are given the same opportunities and that processes are respected. They have an advisory vote.
- ❖ When will we finally see John Wilson as May Queen?!
  - If John applies and is accepted, he has the same chance as anyone else! It is also possible for people to nominate community members for the role.
- ❖ Why was someone who I don't think should have been a GO given a position of authority in the Community? Why were they not asked to be a group member until they prove they are ready to GO?



- Selection decisions are made through a structured process that involves careful discussion, safeguarding considerations, and reflection on the needs of the festival and the community. These discussions are necessarily confidential, which can make it difficult to share full context externally.
- What we can reassure members of is that decisions are not made lightly. Where concerns exist, they are considered seriously, and outcomes may include additional support, limitations, or decisions not to proceed. BFS aims to balance care, inclusion, and safety, recognising both the responsibility that comes with leadership roles and the value of growth and learning within the community.
- ❖ How are Blues selected? Who chooses, what is the process?
  - Blues consider those nominated by the community (through this survey and at any time via email: [blues@beltane.org](mailto:blues@beltane.org) ). Through discussion among themselves, they reach out to individuals that have suitable experience and are cleared by safeguarding (wide range of groups, long standing members, interpersonal skills, calm demeanor and organisational prowess). The team also takes into consideration the skills and experience that are already present within Blues and look to fill the gaps. It is not the biggest factor, but it is considered i.e. Fire, Acro etc. Being a Blue is a really significant role in the community and blue selection is considered with utmost sensitivity and care. There are certain roles that you cannot hold at the same time, for example, you cannot be a board member and a Blue at the same time.

## Leadership

- ❖ What is the chain of command - who to direct questions to.
  - We try to avoid a strictly hierarchical structure! The membership elects the Board, who have ultimate legal responsibility. But you can ask questions to Group/Project Organisers, who would normally ask questions of the Event Coordinator, a contractor who answers to the board. You can also direct questions to Blues - who can provide answers about traditions, lore, and general pastoral support - or the board directly. Finally, if you've been approached by the press, we would recommend talking to our press officer, who is also a contractor. But the main thing is to ask the question; we'll do our best to make sure it gets to someone who can answer it, but in rare cases when you don't get an answer, keep pestering us, or ask directly to [board@beltane.org](mailto:board@beltane.org); we are here to help!
- ❖ Who is in charge? Who to direct questions/concerns to? Why does noone reply to my emails/questions?
  - Please see above for the main answer to these questions.
  - In terms of no-one replying to your emails and questions: We're sorry that this was your experience. In such a large community filled with neurodivergent hippies who are almost all volunteers and almost all juggling many multitudes of things, it is usual that some communications do fall through the cracks. It is a kindness to be accepting of this. But it can also be very frustrating when you need an answer! As recommended above, please keep trying or ask someone





different than before until you get your answer! When in doubt, email [board@beltane.org](mailto:board@beltane.org).

- ❖ What is the division of responsibility between the Board and the Contractors when organising a festival?
  - The board has ultimate responsibility to ensure that everything is done to run the festival safely and legally. But we aren't experts and we have limited capacity, so we appoint contractors to perform the day to day practical functions, such as booking spaces and equipment, getting stage designs signed off, and a myriad of other vital jobs.
- ❖ Is there legacy planning being done, around Tom's role? If he gets hit by a bus... ?
  - Yes. Both Site Coordinator (Eve) and Contractor Assistant (Andy) have been learning BFS production and logistics procedures as an explicit part of their role. We're also actively looking for someone, or a group of someones, to take on the volunteer role of Beltonia Quartermaster, which includes managing our inventory and ordering supplies before they are needed - this is one of many jobs Tom does as back-stop but we would prefer to hand over. If you've got capacity and the ability to self-manage once taught, get in touch with [board@beltane.org](mailto:board@beltane.org) for a chat!

## Other

- ❖ Do people prefer BYOB or club afterparties?
  - There seems to be a lot of support for BYOB for cost savings! And there will always be those that prefer one or the other. Club afterparties can be more logistically viable from an organisational point of view:
    - there are hired staff which means Beltaners can enjoy the party and not be in a position of authority
    - There is a clean up team! (because it seems we are not the best at cleaning up after ourselves when left to our own devices)
    - There is no need to organise effective transport of drinks to the venue.
    - See above for comments on the After Party for more information..
- ❖ Will Beltonia be moving?
  - Yes, we will need to find a new home for Beltonia as our lease is running out and the building will be redeveloped in the future. There are people looking into this but if you have a good idea for a potential building, please email [board@beltane.org](mailto:board@beltane.org)!
- ❖ What kind of group socials could groups do that are more neurodiversity-friendly than going to the pub?
  - If this is something that interests you, we would love to hear your thoughts! As always, there are plenty of crucial tasks to be done at any given moment within the operations teams and so lovely think tanking like this does not necessarily happen in a top-down way. Please consider running a project or becoming a Community Organiser if this is something you feel passionate about!
- ❖ What is the meaning and purpose of life!
  - 42
  - Make Art



- Become one with all consciousness and the present moment
- Connect with humans/beasties/goblins/trees
- Eat big dinners
- ❖ Have we ever done a survey for visitors, or would that be insanity?
  - This has never been done for Samhuinn - but thanks to Queen Margaret University, a survey was done regarding Beltane 2007, and a proper exit survey was conducted for Beltane 2011. The concluding reports are [on the Lore Drive](#) for your perusal.
- ❖ How are you doing? Is post festival life treating you ok? Are you hydrating enough?
  - Well, not gonna lie! This survey project is quite a huge undertaking!! A lot of information to parse and answer and make sure we have the tone right in order to share with the community. A lot of collaboration. Work continues, we look forward to Yule and even already beginning planning around Beltane 2026. But yes, post-festival life carries on :)

## Celebrations and Thanks to:

We tested out this question in the survey and there were lots of thanks and appreciation for specific individuals and groups! Individual comments were sent to the recipients. While this is a truly lovely part of the survey, it is possible that we will not continue it in the future as the administrative task of summarising is significant!!

## Feedback about Projects

### **Cloaking devices:**

People liked the idea of this group, and found its support useful, however also commented that it could have been more useful if it had been earlier in the run up, as there were clashes with other events.

### **Front of House:**

Overall feedback was mixed but valuable for production learning.

Extensive individual commentary, and mention that it felt like a group suggests that this maybe should have been treated as a group, as it has two long comments which both cover a lot of ground. Both commentaries may make interesting reading for production, if they haven't reported back directly.

One of them enjoyed it, liked working with Lisette, thought the costumes were good and enjoyed working with Bat Hearth

One found it a bit disorganised initially, and suggests using comically large lit up arrows to show the crowd where to go, as they got a bit confused and tended to stay on path at first rather than watching performances.

### **Hillisphere**



Everyone who worked on this seems to have enjoyed it, and the results of the project are praised as being exciting and new.

However, there is a report that felt the project which took a lot of work, was sidelined. They lacked help, support and materials which were promised, and complain that Hillusphere was not present on the map, and was poorly lit.

### **Kindling**

One report which describes this project as one of the participant's best experiences in the runup. Hannah's knowledge and commitment to safety is praised, and the participant says they felt "safe" and "inspired" after the session.

### **Mabon**

One report - *"This was such a lovely community afternoon with the seed bank and letters For refuweegees. I would love to see more projects like this that bring several different corners of the festival together at once. "*

### **Radio Training**

One report, which described this session as useful and said that it helped build their confidence in getting past fears which had caused problems in previous festivals.

## Appendix 1 - Festival Comparisons

Scores are out of 10. As in previous years, results skew high, reflecting strong overall satisfaction.

Group Specific Questions	S2025	S2024	S2023	Average S2024 & S2023
<b>Response Rate</b>	47.7%	27.7%	22.9%	22.30%
The group was logistically well organised.	8.86	8.51	8.73	8.62
Questions from me or others were adequately answered.	9.38	9.26	9.5	9.38
There was an atmosphere of respect between GOs and the group.	9.85	9.66	9.75	9.705
I enjoyed attending sessions.	9.36	9.32	9.7	9.51
The group's tasks and objectives were clear to me.	9.01	8.6	9.33	8.965
GOs were available for help and guidance.	9.8	9.34	9.7	9.52
The work during the run-up was relevant to our performance on the night.	9.37	9.38	9.16	9.27
Adequate supporting materials were available.	9.29	9.31	9.3	9.305
As a participant, I felt physically safe.	9.62	9.25	9.77	9.51
As a participant, I felt emotionally safe.	9.86	9.43	9.52	9.475
Group sessions and events were accessible to me and any special requirements I had were catered for.	9.73	9.4	9.86	9.63
I was made aware of the costs directly associated with the group early in the process.	9.41	9.04	9.19	9.115
I understood and / or had access to information about where group donations were spent	8.94	8.87	8.59	8.73
Group Fees	£31.76			
Any other costs for costuming, props, weekend away etc.	£50.60	£71.60	£89.14	£80.37
<b>Overall Questions</b>				
The overall story-line of this year's festival was clear to me.	8.12	8.72	7.74	8.23



The role of my group and myself within the event was clear to me.	9.29	9.13	9.04	9.085
It was clear how the Cailleach and Kings stories related to my group this year.	8.52	8.68	8.33	8.505
I understood the role of the Blues and how they related to my group this year.	8.8	8.82	8.96	8.89
I felt that the overall Festival was well organised.	8.13	7.57	8.37	7.97
Do you feel from your experience this festival the Board of Trustees are acting in the best interest of BFS and helping ensure it carries out its activities?	9.19	9.38	9.27	9.325
It was clear to me what rights and responsibilities I had as a volunteer/performer, and where I could direct any comments, questions, problems, or other feedback.	9.4	9.43		9.43
This experience built, strengthened or complemented my relationship to the environment, nature and its seasonal rhythms as well as engaged me with the traditional celebration of the Celtic solar and lunar calendar fire festivals and their relevance to community life and contemporary culture.	8.94	8.79	8.63	8.71
This experience developed and enhanced my skills (whether performance, tech, photography, stewarding or otherwise) in a collaborative arts environment.	9.73	8.89	8.73	8.81
I'll benefit from this experience beyond the context of this festival.	9.33	9.41	9.47	9.44
Overall happiness with the experience	8.87	8.73	9.22	8.975