



The following are the responses to the survey we undertook and our responses:

QUESTION 1: We aim to invite entries for the competition in December with the draw (by Plymouth City Council) completed in January. It was agreed that entrants have been trading for at least two years and should be members of a recognised industry trade body, such as the BPA, EIG, TESA etc. Do you?

Responses:

No of Responses: 70
Agree: 71.43%
Disagree: 28.57%

Our Comments: We understand the concerns about membership of trade bodies and propose to drop this requirement in future. We propose to retain the 2 year trading requirement but will agree to waive this provided the principals can demonstrate that they have the necessary experience and have all the correct licences and insurances.

QUESTION 2: Competitors currently receive £10,360 for taking part, which is index linked so will rise with inflation. After some discussion the meeting agreed that this was a fair budget for a competition. Do you?

Responses:

No of Responses: 64
Agree: 46.88%
Disagree: 53.13%

Our Comments: We will continue to press Plymouth City Council for more funds for teams, which we have repeatedly asked for, and we will seek to find ways we can help to reduce costs for competitors, such as through accommodation. Furthermore, if TESA can reduce its costs in any areas we will ensure that those savings are channelled to support prize money.

QUESTION 3: The meeting agreed that TESA should approach Plymouth University to block-book accommodation for the teams and to try to obtain a discounted rate for them. Do you?

Responses:

No of Responses: 63
Agree: 100%
Disagree: 0%

Our Comments: This will be a priority.

QUESTION 4: The meeting agreed that in future prize money should be given to the 1st – 2nd – 3rd as this was considered the fairest way of doing this, particularly as the winner on each night might not necessarily be the best of the displays. It is proposed to split the prize money – 1st £3500 – 2nd £2000 – 3rd £1500 Do you?

Responses:

No of Responses: 62
Agree: 80.65%
Disagree: 19.35%

Our Comments: As always there are lots of different ways to carve up the prize money. We accept the majority view on this.

QUESTION 5: TESA suggested that they should seek to develop arrangements with other events to provide the winners each year with the option of doing other commercial displays around the UK. This was seen as being a positive benefit by those at the meeting. Do you?

Responses:

No of Responses: 61
Agree: 75.4%
Disagree: 24.59%

Our Comments: We will explore this further as a way of enhancing the commercial benefit to the winner. We would anticipate offering such opportunities as an option to winners and, if they do not wish to take them up for any reason, we would pass the offer to the runner-up or another of that year's competitors.

QUESTION 6: Those present said that they would like to have more space to set up their displays and suggested that spreading the event over three days would enable this. Currently the site is restricted by the risk assessments in relation to the crowds outside the Mountbatten Pub and the proposed new apartments scheduled to be built on the edge of the breakwater. TESA reported that they had suggested a third night but

Plymouth were concerned about the infrastructure cost of this. The meeting agreed that TESA would approach Plymouth about spreading the event over a third night. Alternatively, they would review the risk assessments with the Adjudicators to see if teams could be given additional space. Do you?

Responses:

No of Responses: 59

Agree: 91.53%

Disagree: 8.47%

Our Comments: We will explore the options with both Plymouth City Council and the Adjudicators. This will include a review of our risk assessments.

QUESTION 7: The meeting agreed that a minimum weight of 400Kg and maximum of 550Kg was acceptable but there was concern over how this could be checked on site. The meeting agreed that the organisers/adjudicators should set a standard weight for each type of pyrotechnic and should check weights according to this classification. It was also agreed that the use of red/green/orange shells to signal the start of each display should be continued rather than maroons which were previously used. Do you?

Responses:

No of Responses: 58

Agree: 68.97%

Disagree: 31.03%

Our Comments: We will review weights further with the Adjudicators and we particularly take on board comments made about the breadth of the gap between the minimum and maximum weights. We will consider further how we can better verify the weights of materials coming onto the site. We will similarly discuss further the use of Maroons to start the displays.

QUESTION 8: Concern was expressed about the angles being used and the risks these presented, particularly to other displays. It was agreed that TESA should review the angles with the adjudicators and these should be more rigidly 'policed' at the event. Do you?

Responses:

No of Responses: 57

Agree: 80.7%

Disagree: 19.3%

Our Comments: We recognise that this could be resolved if the event took place over 3 nights rather than two, which we will discuss with Plymouth. However, if this is not feasible, we will review angles with the Adjudicators.

QUESTION 9: The meeting felt that there had been too many people on the site in 2019 and that this present an unnecessary risk. It was agreed that Display Teams should be restricted to a maximum of 12 in future. It was also agreed that other visitors (including journalists) must be escorted and should not be allowed to wander into the team set-up areas. Do you?

Responses:

No of Responses: 55

Agree: 60%

Disagree: 40%

Our Comments: We have to be mindful of the risks involved in having too many people on site but we equally hear the various arguments for allowing more than 12. Several respondents have referenced poor weather in relation to this. We propose to set the limit at 16 which several respondents have suggested but will discuss this further with the Adjudicators. Visitors will only be allowed on site in future if they are escorted by the Adjudicator or a representative from the organisers.

QUESTION 10: The meeting agreed that in the event of a display failing to fire for any reason, displays must be derigged and removed from site and not fired later. As the responsibility is on the display business, they should not then be paid the full sum but should receive a contribution to their costs. It is suggested that they should receive half the normal display fee? Do you?

Responses:

No of Responses: 55

Agree: 67.27%

Disagree: 32.73%

Our Comments: The reason shows should not be fired later is that there are public safety issues involved, particularly in relation to crowd management. The police have specifically highlighted concerns about this. We fully take on board comments about displays not being able to fire due to circumstances outside their control, such as damage caused by a previous competitor. In such circumstances, we would expect teams to be paid. In the event of a team not being fully paid due to a technical fault with equipment etc., we would propose the balance of any fees should be split between the remaining teams.

QUESTION 11: While it was generally felt that the site security, toilets, barriers etc were OK, it was felt that there was a lack of catering available for the teams in the evening. TESA offered to arrange for a pizza delivery to the site for around 7pm each night and to ask if Celtic, who currently provide a catering unit, could extend their time at the site. It was also agreed that Plymouth should be asked to ensure that security remain on site until it is fully cleared and also that the site is road swept between nights. Do you?

Responses:

No of Responses: 54

Agree: 98.15%

Disagree: 1.85%

Our Comments: We will explore the options in terms of food provision. While some have asked for menu choices, it may be difficult to provide a range of options on a delivery basis but we will discuss this also with Chris Allen. We will impress on Plymouth again the need for the area to be thoroughly swept between nights.

QUESTION 12: Concerns were expressed that the adjudication should be independent of the BPA. Currently, Carndu provide the advice and adjudication. It was suggested that an independent health and safety consultancy should be appointed to adjudicate the event, with support from an independent pyrotechnic consultant. Do you?

Responses:

No of Responses: 54

Agree: 74.07%

Disagree: 25.93%

Our Comments: This question generated a mixed bag of comments. We will give careful thought to this area and are mindful equally of concerns over bias if adjudication was undertaken by someone from within the current display industry.

QUESTION 13: Currently judging is done by two panels, one made up of event organisers and people from the industry and the other a lay panel drawn from Plymouth. It was felt that at least one member of the professional panel should be someone drawn from within the industry, ideally a consultant not involved with any of the competitors. It was also suggested that an international judge might be invited. Furthermore, it was agreed that the professional judges should make a site visit at around 6pm each evening to see to site layout and discuss any issues with the adjudicators. Do you?

Responses:

No of Responses: 54

Agree: 81.48%

Disagree: 18.52%

Our Comments: Comments made around this question show a variety of opinions, from having a totally professional judging panel to an entirely lay one. We believe that there should be a balance between the two. The lay judges provide guide to the way the public view displays, while professional judges can assess displays more on technical merit. Unfortunately, the layout of Plymouth and limited ability to communicate with the audience, as it is so spread out, makes it difficult to involve the public in voting – which has been tested in previous years. We do not conceal the names of the judges, as some have

suggested, but we do not reveal who made which comments when we publish the results as we want them to give their honest opinions. In terms of the professional judges visiting the site, their role is not to advise those taking part to adjust their displays as some have intimated but so that they can see the set up and talk to the Adjudicators.

QUESTION 14: The meeting discussed how the judging is done and it was agreed that rather than scoring each team as the display takes place, they should do this at the end of each evening and they should be able to amend their scores after the second night. In future judges would be given paper to make notes on during the displays and would only be handed score sheets at the end of the displays. It was felt that this would give them greater flexibility in comparing displays. Do you?

Responses:

No of Responses: 54

Agree: 85.19%

Disagree: 14.81%

Our Comments: We are absolutely committed to impartial and fair judging. We have fully taken on board the need for judges to revisit their scores from previous nights and also for them to be able to discuss shows, although care needs to be taken that a particularly strong judge does not over influence others. Video footage – covered below – should help this process in relation to comparing displays from different nights.

QUESTION 15: To further eliminate any bias between the first and second nights, TESA proposed that the first night shows should be filmed on video and replayed to judges on the second night, before they started judging the new displays. Do you?

Responses:

No of Responses: 54

Agree: 75.93%

Disagree: 24.07%

Our Comments: While we recognise that a video can never fully replicate the previous night's displays, we believe this should help to remind judges of what they have seen the previous night.

QUESTION 16: The meeting felt that the current penalties/points given for not attending a site visit, late paperwork etc. should be scrapped. However, teams failing to meet deadlines – such as getting paperwork in on time – should get a financial penalty docked from their display fee. £500 was suggested. Similar 'fines' would apply if competitors broke the rules or did not have appropriate paperwork, such as ADR certificates for transport etc. Do you?

Responses:

No of Responses: 53
Agree: 58.49%
Disagree: 41.51%

Our Comments: As views are split on this we will give further thought to how best to address this issue – professional businesses should be able to meet basic deadlines and it is unfair to others if some abide by the rules and others don't.

QUESTION 17: Difficulties in getting teams to and from the venue where the results are announced were discussed and it was agreed that TESA should take charge of this if Plymouth were unable to make the arrangements. It was further agreed that representatives of each of the display companies should be invited onto the stage and introduced before the results are announced in order to give them more recognition. Do you?

Responses:

No of Responses: 53
Agree: 94.34%
Disagree: 5.66%

Our Comments: We will talk to Plymouth about taking over the process of getting competitors to and from the presentation. We will also give more time to the presentations on stage by involving the competitors.

QUESTION 18: The meeting agreed that this should continue to take place every sixth year and that a commitment for winners to return should be included in the Rules that each signs and agrees to. In the event of a company being unable to take part (e.g. due to insolvency), the runner up from that year would be offered the place. Do you?

Responses:

No of Responses: 53
Agree: 81.13%
Disagree: 18.87%

Our Comments: After this year's events we were of a mind to abandon the Champion of Champions event but having listened to comments from the industry we will continue to support this event and will build an agreement to return into the rules.

GENERAL COMMENTS: In addition to the specific questions asked in this survey, we also invited additional comments.

Responses:

No of Responses: 20

Our Comments: Some of the comments we received replicated comments already made in the survey but key points we have noted are:

1. That we should seek more feedback from the industry on issues – such as through this survey – **Agreed**
2. Better communication with the public – **This is difficult as they are scattered over a wide area. While we can communicate to a degree with those on the Hoe, beyond that is not possible, particularly since local radio stations etc. close down in the evening and hand over to regional stations.**
3. Provide music – **There is entertainment on the Hoe but beyond that communication is not feasible. We are also not trying to compete with Southport.**
4. Some top teams were not invited to the meeting – **we circulated invitations to the meeting in Birmingham to every display company we are aware of – no-one was excluded – everyone should have received the invitation. We also asked those mailed to pass the invitation on to anyone else interested. If anyone knows of a company who did not receive an invitation, please let us know and we will ensure they are not omitted in future.**

**Jim Winship
Director**