

SEDGEFIELD'S SLOW FESTIVAL



PLEASE NOTE:

Slow Festival will be pushing pause for 2018 to restructure, redefine, re-think, re-evaluate.

Organisers of the Slow Festival have made the decision to 'press pause' on the Slow Festival for 2018.

"We still haven't been able to find a financial sponsor and we simply aren't able to continue to cover the costs of putting the festival together this year," said head Slow Festival organiser Amanda Dixon. "With the cost of the festival escalating each year, I cannot take on the financial risk and continued financial debt in trying to pull this festival together again. I have thus made the decision, with the backing of the Slow Fest committee, to place the Festival on hold until financial sponsors can be brought on board."

An enormous amount of stress is placed on Amanda's shoulders to source any and all means of funds to cover the costs of the festival each year and despite the belief by many that she and her committee make large profits from the festival, this is very, very far from the truth.

Dixon says that though applications for funding go out in early January each year, there is simply no guarantee that they will allocate funds to the festival. "In fact, even when funds are allocated, the communication of such funds is only given up to 2-4 weeks prior to the festival," she explains. "We go on faith and prayers that funding will come through from them. I am constantly worrying whether the income from the festival will be enough to cover the outstanding costs. It's an enormous weight and stress that sits on my shoulders, every second of every day, for months!"

This Slow Festival 'pause' will be sad news for Sedgefield. The event has taken place annually for the last consecutive eight years and has seen amazing growth in popularity. Many concur it has grown to become one of the best genuine family festivals in South Africa, and the proof can be seen by the increasing flood of festival-goers coming to the village every Easter. The benefits to local business goes without saying. Indeed Sedgefield has enjoyed a huge amount of time in the media spotlight through the Festival, which has further helped to put this unique coastal town on the map.

A primary focus of the Slow Festival is to assist all of Sedgefield's charities in raising funds, as well as communicating the true message of Easter.

Working alongside Dixon is the Slow Festival committee, a solid and dedicated team of the same people year on year.

"They are amazing," she says, "They all work alongside me for months to bring this festival together for Sedgefield, without being remunerated (no not a single one of us!). Though it often costs us own money as well as time, we come back every year as a stronger team to do it for the camaraderie, fun, happiness and joy that it brings us as individuals, as well as the amazing cohesion and true sense of community it brings to the town."

"I feel strongly that those putting in so much work should be remunerated for their time and effort - or at the very least to be able to cover their own costs," said Dixon. "The long and the short of it is that the Slow Festival works for the town, it works for the businesses, it works for the charities, it works for the churches... but without a sponsor it just doesn't work financially."

So why press pause for 2018? "To restructure, redefine, re-evaluate and re-think how we move the festival forward," says Dixon.

"The committee would like to be able to look at different funding models and options, and to seek advice from more business-minded people. We want to connect with other small festivals, possibly even with a view to collaborate in the future. We'd like to interact more with the Sedgefield businesses, charities and churches so that we can get their input in how we can solve the funding issue and incorporate them more.

Lastly, we need to continue to look for, source and secure financial sponsors for 2019. There ARE sponsors out there that align perfectly with our brand, we just need to find them!”

“So we’re not saying 'it's the end', but rather that we're ‘pushing pause’ to restructure, redefine, re-evaluate, rethink,” she concludes.

Please contact Amanda Dixon should you wish to come on board as a Festival sponsor for 2019. Please feel free to get in touch with us regarding possible ideas, input or suggestions to help us restructure the current model of the festival. Please contact: events@tumbleweeds.co.za