



EURO  
CITIES



## The Culture Diary

# Coordinating culture in London

London's Culture Diary launched in 2010 as an online tool for London's cultural sector. Events organisers use it to share activities and avoid diary clashes while public services and local authorities can coordinate planning around city events.

## Coordinating London's cultural activities

The diary was created in the run-up to the London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics. Developed with the city's major events and tourism office, London & Partners, it is a central coordination tool for events organisers, local councils and city agencies such as the police, emergency services and transport authorities. It gives stakeholders an overview of what's going on in the city so they can prepare accordingly. It also supported the content for London's promotional campaign, 'a summer like no other'.

The Olympic torch relay is a good example of The Culture Diary in action. Stakeholders used information from the diary to plan security and transport in various parts of the city so the relay could run smoothly.

In a big city like London, a clear benefit of such a tool is the ability to coordinate events across different local councils. London has 33 in total, and having advance notice of cultural events means councils can develop joint initiatives across boundaries. It also helps ensure a good distribution of cultural activities throughout the city and identify gaps in cultural provision.



The Culture Diary has provided an invaluable service to London. Not only as a high level overview of thousands of events to help citywide planning but it allowed us to profile smaller, intimate cultural events amongst the big and bold spectaculars and paint a much more colourful cultural landscape of London. This momentum continues as we look to further develop its potential value and legacy beyond 2012.

*Mike Clewley, culture officer, Mayor of London Office*

cities in action

September 2013

where: London, UK  
what: culture  
when: 2010+

## Good publicity

Arts and events organisers are invited to sign up for free to provide content for the diary. In 2012, nearly 5,000 cultural events across London were entered into the diary and there were almost 4,000 registered users.

The diary isn't open to the public, but content is shared with tourism agencies, websites and the media to publicise London's cultural offer.

It also supplies events dates to the Official London City Guide App and contributes to designing cultural trails for tourists and locals. Residents and visitors are encouraged to venture out of central London and explore new parts of the city.

Tourism agencies use The Culture Diary to strengthen London's position as a cultural hub. Since the diary's launch, London has moved up one place in the world culture rankings.

The publicity from the diary was especially important for small arts organisations with limited marketing budgets.

Led by the mayor's office, the diary provides credible exposure for cultural events and promotes culture alongside sporting events. It is also an important tool for events organisers to identify potential new partners.

Building strong links with city agencies, including emergency and transport services, is particularly important for making large scale outdoor events a success.

## The legacy

The Culture Diary focused on the Olympics period, but London hopes to create a lasting legacy.

Asked a year after the launch, 85% of contributors recognised the importance of a centralised planning tool. This figure rose to 95% a year later.

Following evaluations, some adaptations were made to the diary. Data entry was simplified, software upgraded and publicity and communication with contributors was improved. The diary was complemented by a regular newsletter to keep contributors up to date.

For the first time, local agencies in London had a complete picture of what was going on

around the city. London was eager to maintain this momentum in the diary's legacy.

## Relaunch

In July 2013, The Culture Diary was relaunched as a 'clash diary' to avoid diary conflicts and provide a one-stop overview tool for press views, opening nights and other special events by cultural organisations across London and England.

The cost of the 2010-2012 pilot project was around €150,000 for three years. The city wants to ensure the future diary is low on maintenance and light on staff, with an expected administration and development costs of €20-30,000 a year excluding staff costs.

It is hoped that the enthusiasm that has been garnered among London's cultural community will continue to sustain The Culture Diary.



The Culture Diary: [www.theculturediary.com](http://www.theculturediary.com)

