

Alternatives to Cruel Reindeer Parades

With an awareness of the pressure on local authorities and other event organisers to provide crowd-pleasing family entertainment, to attract large crowds, Animal Aid have put together a range of fun ideas, as an alternative to events with live animals, to suit a range of budgets and tastes.

Festive Fun Run for Charity



Photo by Brian Bracher on Pixabay

Why not get local people to dress up as a festive elf, Father Christmas or even a Christmas pudding and head out on a hilarious fun run? Great for all ages, for participants and spectators alike! The event will also encourage fitness and, if you're sponsored, could help humane charitable causes.

Cost: £ - Extremely economic

Animal Aid have a list of humane medical charities here: <https://www.animalaid.org.uk/the-issues/our-campaigns/animal-experiments/health-charities-animal-testing/>

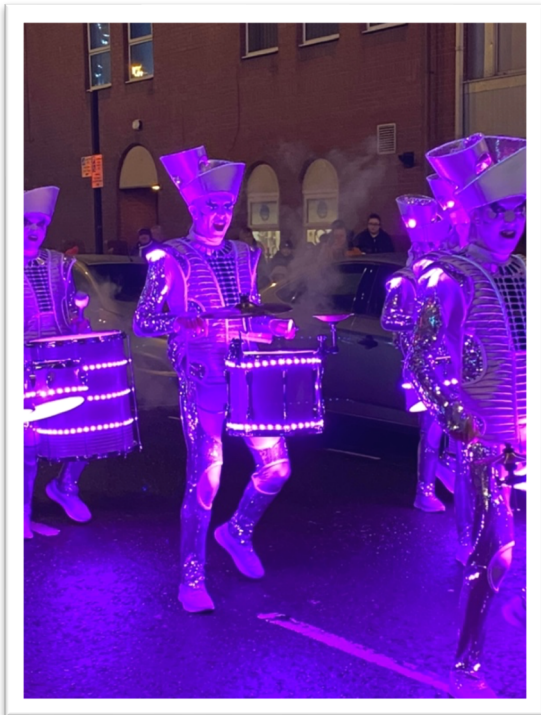
Open Air Christmas Cinema



Photo by David Breen on Pixabay

Fun for all ages! Create a poll on your event page and ask people to vote for their favourite movie. Wrap up warm and gather to watch family favourite festive films. It's also an opportunity for caterers in the local area to sell their delicious vegan food. Children could also dress up as their favourite characters for added enjoyment.

Cost: ££ - Moderate for hire of equipment and to cover performance rights licences.



Christmas Wonderland Parade

South Tyneside Council hosted a sensational animal free Christmas procession, after dropping camels from their yearly event. Crowds were entertained by bright and vibrant drummers, illuminated structures, stilt walkers, dancers and other street entertainers.

Cost: £££ - Expensive. However, community groups can be encouraged to show-off their talents, rather than hiring outside entertainers, to reduce costs and increase community engagement.

<https://www.southtyneside.gov.uk/article/74381/>

Photo by Lianne from North East Animal Rights

Reindeer Trail

Give children a map to go on a quest around the park or shopping centre to find hidden reindeer.

In Gloucester twelve colourful model reindeer, painted by local artists, formed a trail around the city centre. Families had fun searching for all the reindeer, using a map. If they found all 12, they had the chance to win a prize!
<https://www.gloucesterbid.uk/runaway-reindeers/>

Cost: £ Economic



Puppet Show and/or Puppet Making Workshop



Image by Prawny on Pixabay

A festive cloth or shadow puppet making workshop with storytelling is a great way for children to get into the festive spirit. Why not encourage them to stage a production for local residents?

For a larger event you could hire a professional puppet company to put on a performance.

Cost: ££ - Moderate

Hire an Ice Rink

Event companies hire out their services to create a safe and fully functional ice rink. The rink could also be used to show an 'on ice' production for the more ambitious!



Photo by Pech Frantisek on Pixabay

Cost: £££ - Expensive. However, this may be part sponsored by local businesses and a reasonable fee for all skaters could be taken to help cover costs.

Festive Grotto in the Local Landscape



Photo by Tim Mossholder on Unsplash

Cheddar Gorge Caves made the most of their wonderful natural asset, Gough's Cave and created a sense of adventure with storytelling and a visit to Santa deep in the caves.

<https://visitbristol.co.uk/whats-on/christmas-at-cheddar-gorge-and-caves-p2571273>

Cost: £ - Economic

Animatronic Puppets



Photo by Stratford-upon-Avon Victorian Christmas Market

Stratford-Upon-Avon hosts an animal-friendly alternative to live animals, with life-size singing animatronic reindeers. Animatronic puppets are always a great hit with children and adults alike and can be bought or hired online. Many even talk or sing for added entertainment.

Cost: ££ - Moderate outlay

Lantern Parade



Image by O K on Pixabay

Many towns host a magical annual lantern parade each year. Hundreds of residents gather in the streets, to join the procession, carrying their own special lanterns. These could either be created during daytime workshops or purchased. The sight of so many glowing lanterns is truly magical.

Here are examples of lantern parades held in Monmouth:
<https://www.facebook.com/monmouthlanternparade> and
Newcastle-Under-Lyme:
<https://www.newcastleunderlyme.org/newcastle-lanterns-to-light-up-town-centre/>

Cost: £ - Extremely economic

Day of Music Event



Photo by Malachi Witt on Pixabay

Host a community 'Christmas Variety Show' or 'Day of Music' in the town centre. Local musicians, dancers, choirs from local schools and amateur dramatics societies can all be invited to perform. Rotherham City Council replaced their cancelled reindeer parade several years ago and put on a successful 'Day of Musical Mirth' featuring local bands and choirs as well as conjuring and crafts.

Cost: ££ - Moderate

Other Ideas

There are many specialist events companies that can offer everything from life sized snow globes to walkabout street entertainers. Here are just a few:

- Life size snow globe: <https://www.thefunexperts.co.uk/christmas-giant-snow-globe-hire>
- Inflatable grottos and other Christmas fun objects for hire:
<https://www.thefunexperts.co.uk/gallery/gallery-christmas-grottos-and-entertainment>
- Costumed walkabout performers:
<http://www.circusperformers.co.uk/christmasacts.html>
- Virtual reality team games: Christmas Elf Rescue:
<https://www.virtualrealityexp.co.uk/christmas-vr-for-company-events-and-christmas-parties/>
- Christmas themed shows: <http://www.christmas-entertainers.co.uk/christmas-show-acts.html>

The above are purely examples and are not affiliated with nor endorsed by Animal Aid.