

Moving Sweetly Together

Community Performance for the Pontefract Liquorice Festival Parade

COMMUNITY GROUP CALL OUT

Event Overview

Pontefract Liquorice Festival is a much-loved, annual festival celebrating the town's unique connection to the cultivation of liquorice. A specialist market fills the historic marketplace, showcasing some of the region's finest local produce—many offering a distinctive liquorice twist.

The festival features vibrant street entertainment and a wide range of family-friendly activities, including funfair rides, creative craft workshops and face painting, alongside a colourful liquorice-inspired parade sponsored by HARIBO. Local cafés, bars and restaurants also take part in the Liquorice Festival Trail, serving an enticing selection of liquorice-inspired treats—from pastries and cakes to smoothies and cocktails—encouraging visitors to explore the town. The event attracts an estimated 5,000–10,000 visitors throughout the day.



Moving Sweetly Together

Brief Overview

The Pontefract Liquorice Festival is a flagship celebration rooted in the town's long-standing liquorice heritage. Pontefract is internationally recognised as the home of Pontefract Cakes, with liquorice production shaping the town's identity, economy, and community life for centuries.

Community groups play a vital role in bringing this heritage to life, representing the people, stories, and shared pride that sit at the heart of Pontefract's liquorice legacy.

Over the last 3 years the event parade has become a highlight of the festival, and in reflection of this, the parade will be expanding in 2026 to include professional dancers, stilt walkers, community groups, schools, and live music.

As part of this expansion, Wakefield Council are seeking community groups to play a key role in this year's liquorice-inspired parade by creating liquorice-themed props and which would then be perform with as part of the Pontefract Liquorice Festival Parade.

Who Can Apply

We welcome applications from a wide range of community organisations, including but not limited to:

- Dance schools
- Performing arts groups
- Arts or sports clubs
- SEND groups

Groups of all ages and abilities are encouraged to apply.



Moving Sweetly Together

Performance Requirements

- Selected groups will perform a synchronised, forward-moving routine during the parade.
- Movement should be accessible, rhythmic, and celebratory, designed to flow with the parade route.
- Performances should draw inspiration from liquorice, sweets, and Pontefract's heritage, celebrating themes such as craftsmanship, trade, sweetness, endurance, and community togetherness.

Clothing

- Participants should wear their own uniforms or everyday clothing suitable for outdoor performance.
- Black, white, pink, red, or pastel tones are encouraged to align with traditional liquorice colours, though this is not essential.

Props

Groups will be required to create or adapt handmade liquorice-themed props to enhance their performance. Props should be:

- Lightweight and safe
- Suitable for walking performance
- Visually bold and clearly readable from a distance

Prop Making: Creative Themes & Ideas

1. Sweet Streamers & Ribbons

- Symbolising the flowing syrup, strands, and wrapping of sweets.
- Long handheld ribbons in liquorice-inspired colours (pink, black, and white).
- Simple synchronised actions such as swirls, lifts, and waves that reflect the making and movement of sweets.

Moving Sweetly Together

2. Pom Poms & Handheld Shapes

- Celebrating joy, rhythm, and iconic sweet forms.
- Pom poms made from recyclable materials in classic liquorice colourways.
- Sweet-inspired silhouettes such as circles, hearts, and Pontefract Cakes, mounted on short handles.

3. Umbrellas & Canopies

- Evoking market stalls, factory life, and community gathering spaces.
- Bright umbrellas decorated with liquorice, sweet, or heritage-inspired patterns.
- Coordinated opening and closing sequences, or wave effects created by tilting umbrellas forward in unison.

4. Forward-Motion Props

- Representing trade, transport, and the movement of liquorice through the town and beyond.
- Hoops, wheels, or circular frames decorated in liquorice colours or historic-inspired designs.
- Rhythmic stepping or rolling actions to maintain parade pace and momentum.

Spirit of the Performance

Performances should celebrate:

- Pontefract's liquorice-making past and present
- The people and workplaces behind the industry
- The joy, sweetness, and shared identity liquorice brings to the town
- The overall atmosphere should be uplifting, inclusive, and proudly Pontefract.



Moving Sweetly Together

How to Apply

Please apply by outlining your interest in taking part, including:

·Details about your group:

- Name, type of group, number of participants, age range, and any accessibility requirements.

·An overview of your liquorice-themed prop ideas:

- Include visuals, sketches, or inspiration boards where possible.

·A brief description of how the props will be made:

- Outline materials, construction methods, and intended functionality.

·An explanation of how the props will be used during the parade:

- For example, performance style, movement, or audience interaction.

·Staffing and support arrangements:

- Explain how you will provide sufficient staff or volunteers to supervise participants before, during, and after each parade, and how you will work with the Council to ensure all health and safety measures are met.

·A simple budget breakdown:

- Outline how the funding will be used for materials and prop creation.

What the Council Will Provide

- Funding: Up to £150 per community group to support material costs for prop making.
- Creative support: Advice and guidance on choreography or movement, if required.
- Facilities: A changing space/holding area before and between each parade.
- Refreshments: Basic refreshments provided on the day of the parade.

Moving Sweetly Together

Key Dates & Submission Details

- Application Deadline: Friday 27th March
- Notification of Outcome: Friday 10th April
- Submit Applications To: festivals@wakefield.gov.uk
- Email Subject Line: Submission for Community Performance for the Pontefract Liquorice Parade from [Enter Group Name]

Event Day Information (for selected groups only)

- Date & Time: Sunday 12 July, 10:00–16:00
- Parade Times: 11:30 and 14:30 (each parade lasts approximately 30 minutes)
- Availability Required: 10:30–15:30
- Parade Route: Town Hall, Horsefair to Pontefract Castle (twice)
- Parade Overview: The parade will feature professional dancers, live musicians, stilt walkers, community groups, and the HARIBO Goldbear mascot.
- The selected group will be required to submit a rehearsal video by [DATE TO BE CONFIRMED].

