



MACC-POW! 2024

About the festival

We first hosted *MACC POW!* in Macclesfield in 2016 – at that point it was just a one day event has since grown to a multi-day, town-wide event with creators and visitors from all over the world making the trip to Macclesfield to take part.

Currently the Town Hall hosts a comic book fair and workshops on the Saturday of the festival with various other workshops and activities taking place around town and at the Room For Comics studio over the weekend. All the activities which take place on the Saturday and a selection of the Sunday activities are free of charge. In 2023 we saw engagement with local businesses increase, as more of them came to see the benefit of the festival to the town and their businesses:

- Proper Sound hosted an evening exhibition launch and DJ set to kick-off the festival from internationally acclaimed illustrator Stanley Chow
- Cartoonist Jim Smith took part in the cartoons and coffee trail, visiting 6 independent cafés and in return for a coffee on the house, he drew a staff member a cartoon of themselves.
- We also had cartoonist Emma Reynolds drawing 'Five minute portraits' in the Acacia Tree cafe at the bottom end of Chestergate. This helped to connect the event further out of the direct town centre, drawing customers in with the chance to have themselves drawn for free.
- The Library hosted a 'Meet & greet' and book signing with cartoonist and author Jim Smith. Beano artist Nigel Parkinson also hosted a workshop to teach participants how to draw their favourite Beano characters.
- Button Warehouse transformed into The Graphic Novel Reading Room on the Sunday of the festival where visitors could sit and read a range of incredible titles whilst enjoying a drink.
- To close the festival, Cinemac held a special screening of the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles with Honest Crust pizza from the Depot and a DJ set in the evening.

This year *MACC-POW!* was nominated for best comics event worldwide in the Tripwire magazine awards, which was an incredible honour. We stood proud next to Yorkshire's Thought Bubble, the San Diego comic con, New York comic con, and the Lake Como comic art festival. Sadly we didn't win, but it did go to a UK event (Thought Bubble) showing that festivals of this size have every chance of being able to compete with the big American events at this level.

Our festival continues to stand proud amongst many of the great comics events this country produces, and each year I hear from a creator of note who has heard great things about our event and wants to come along and take part; this includes both national and international creators. This also includes up and coming new creators from a small comics scene right here in Macclesfield who have been keen to make their first steps by attending the event.



Funding Request

We'd like to continue to grow the festival, whilst maintaining our commitment to providing a range of free and engaging activities to visitors and local residents.

We are currently at capacity inside the Assembly rooms, but with additional funding we would potentially like to hire the Council Chamber and Silk Room, this would allow us to expand the reach in terms of inviting more guests and being able to accommodate exhibitors who I've had to say no to in the past due to space restrictions.

Additional rooms would also allow us to host a full programme of rolling workshops throughout the day. Many visitors visit specifically for these workshops so by having a dedicated room we'll be able to schedule a range of activities which will keep a steady flow of people over the course of the day, who will then go on to explore the rest of the festival and, of course, the town centre.

In 2023 we paid artists Emma Reynolds and Jim Smith for running workshops for us and an increase in funding will allow us to invest in more creators and to pay them for their time and skill, which is really important. We have always prided ourselves in looking after our guests, and if we can improve on this as well, the word in the comics community will get around, as an event that should be worth attending. The comic-art community is a committed one and with these names we'll be able to attract additional visitors to the town from all over the UK.

That being said, we're also committed to promoting the event locally for the people of Macclesfield and additional support will also help to go towards extra promotional items around town. All posters, flyers, website work and social media is handled by myself and my wife Jane, but having extra support allows us to print more additional promotion such as some standees for the town centre (similar to the tree/bollard promo the council used for the Summer activities) – increasing offline visibility which expands our potential market.

As part of our plans for 2024, in conjunction with the Lakes International Comic Art Festival, we've arranged to hold a satellite *MACC POW!* event in February at the Silk Museum, involving an exhibition of extremely rare 'facsimile' pages of the original first appearance of SPIDER-MAN from *Amazing Fantasy* issue 15. These pages are incredibly important in the comic world and are expected to draw fans from all over the country as this is potentially the last opportunity to see them in the UK before they're moved to the Brussel's Comic Museum later in the year. Hosting this event allows us to expand the *MACC POW!* reach throughout the year and we're excited to be working with the Silk Museum as another key Macclesfield institution.

We have always been incredibly grateful for any and all support, but would love the opportunity to show how we can grow *MACC POW!* both in the town and in the comic festival community.

To cover these additional costs (room hire, artist payment, workshops and additional promotional materials) we'd like to request funding for *MACC POW!* 2024 of **£4500**