

# Kamloops Society for the Written Arts Community Conversation Report

In January of 2021, the Kamloops Society for the Written Arts set out to talk with our community of writers in Kamloops and area. We wanted to understand their thoughts and feelings on "community" in the digital age. Step one was an online survey. Thirty-one writers - ranging in experience from just curious to well-established traditionally published - participated. We then hosted a Community Roundtable via Zoom, where twenty writers met and discussed what they were looking for in greater depth. This document summarizes what we learned from during this conversation with the community.

We asked writers about their interest in festivals. The following shows how many people said they'd "definitely go" to different festival options.

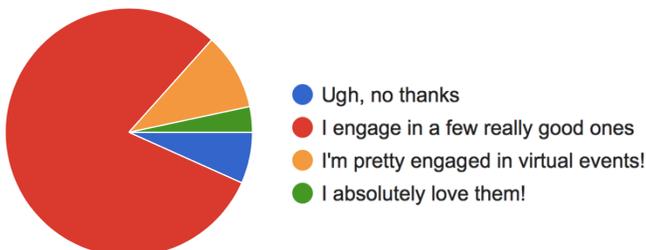
In-person local festival like Words Alive Kamloops	65%
Online local festival	26%
In-person festival in another city	26%
Online festival in another city	16%

## FESTIVAL

How about an in-person Writers Festival like Words Alive in the fall of 2021? Responses were mixed. While there many people are hungry for in-person, there would have to be excellent safety measures and protocols. Possibly a hybrid format, with in-person and virtual options?

## VIRTUAL EVENTS

What's your overall feeling about virtual events?



There is a strong preference for in-person events over virtual events. People noted several things that in-person provides that virtual doesn't, including: real connection, hallway conversations, energy, and rapport.

## SUPPORT

What does a supportive writing community provide?

writing groups / community / goal-setting / readers / inspiration / relationships / networking / accountability / publishing help / events / enthusiasm / writing spaces / tools / mentorship / peers / encouragement / distribution strategies / feedback / ideas / collaboration / book fair / local exposure / motivation

## ACTIVITIES

We asked people about the activities we offer or *could* offer. The following shows the ranking of activities based on how many people rated them as "highly valuable."

1. Words Alive Kamloops Festival
2. In-person writing workshops
3. Resources on our website
4. A local publisher
5. In-person author talks
6. Our Write-a-Thon event
7. A local writing contest
8. A contest calendar on our website
9. An online literary journal
10. Networking events
11. Open mic events
12. Silent Write

## MEMBERSHIP

We asked people what we could provide of value for a paid membership:

event discounts / belonging / local publication / resources / meet-ups / writer talks / retailer discounts / workshops / contests / newsletter / member directory / spaces to gather / business directory / local exposure / open mics / community / online forum

Many people indicated they'd be willing to pay for what we already offer.

## ENGAGEMENT

In our survey, we asked people how they'd like to be involved with Kamloops Society for the Written Arts.

**20% said "I'd love to help organize."**

**43% said "I'd consider light volunteer duties."**

## WHAT HAPPENS NOW?

A huge thank you to all those who participated in the survey and our Community Roundtable! The KSWA Board of Directors is using this input in planning for the organization's future. Stay tuned for developments and an invitation to contribute in new ways to building a great community of great writers in Kamloops and area.