The University of Nottingham prides itself on its strong community links and diverse opportunities for public engagement. In 2016, Dr Lisa Chakrabarti and PhD student Matthew Young applied for funding to kick-start the city’s contribution to the international ‘Pint of Science Festival’.

The Festival, which brings academics and their cutting edge research to the pubs of the city, compliments Nottingham’s prestigious ‘Science City’ status and aimed to deal with its’s lack of hub for the scientific community, whilst introducing the general public to science in a fun, engaging and accessible way. Matthew Young was happily surprised to discover the widespread enthusiasm for the project, having dozens of student volunteers sign up and being offered venue space for far less than anticipated.
Despite initial concerns that the marketing of this new event would be costly, a strong social media presence, and a large initial interest saw that the 12 city centre events quickly sold out. Dr Chakrabarti commented: “[The audience] were non-scientists living and working in Nottingham who just wanted to hear what was going on and had a general interest in science programmes on TV.” After attending the event, guests expressed a 40% increase in confidence when having to talk about science in everyday conversation compared to when they were asked the same question beforehand; 99% of attendees felt they had learnt something new.

This informal and fun means of knowledge transfer has caught the attention of the City Council who asked the project to start advertising through schools news networks. In this way, the project is creating interest for science and research at UoN among the community’s young people and families.

Having proven its impact, Matthew and the team have recently secured three years of external funding for the project; allowing them to continue with this year's festival whilst working with Nottingham’s Festival of Science & Curiosity, a Stemcity community event, in February.