

Creativity in the Landscape
12th to 14th & 28th June 2026

holmfirth
arts festival

2026 Impact Report



Enchanted Woodland by Chicks on Sticks
Photograph by Neal Rylatt

Final year of Flow as a theme

In May and June 2026, we wrapped up the final year of our three year Flow programme, a huge celebration of creativity, community, and the stunning landscape of the Holme Valley. Through a vibrant mix of performances, new commissions, workshops, and local events, we brought together artists, volunteers, and friends to create some unforgettable cultural experiences right here in the heart of our community.

All activities, including the three indoor events were free of charge.



At a glance...

5570 live audience members, compared to 4615 in 2025

Townships in Flow parade celebrated local creativity and participation

24 volunteers

99% of respondents rated the festival as good, very good or excellent

35 performances

River of Art returned as a co-created installation

119 artists

25 community groups

98% would consider coming again

36% of audiences attended for the first time

15 new commissions

598 participants

Photos above Townships in Flow Parade with The Children's Art School and audience participation
Photographs by Neal Rylatt



Creativity and Community

The festival continued to place participation at the heart of its programme, bringing together professional artists and local communities to co create ambitious cultural experiences. The River of Art trail and the Townships in Flow parade became defining moments of the festival, while performances, workshops and exhibitions celebrated local creativity alongside artists from across the UK and beyond. Audience feedback consistently described the festival as welcoming, inclusive and community centred.



"Thank you for all your tireless work and everyone's creativity and commitment . The festival brings smiles to so many faces, which feels important now more than ever."



Heritage and Place

Celebrating the distinctive heritage and landscape of the Holme Valley remained central to the festival. Community groups, schools and local artists explored stories of place through creative projects, while the River of Art and Townships in Flow highlighted the area's rich cultural identity and strengthened local pride.

"I loved the installations along the river. It would be great if they could be left in place longer than just the weekend."

Wellbeing, Access and Inclusion

Creating an accessible and welcoming festival for everyone remained a priority throughout 2026. British Sign Language interpretation, accessible viewing areas and a dedicated Nurture Tent helped ensure the festival could be enjoyed by a wide range of audiences. 23.5% of the audience survey respondents shared with us that they live with a disability or a long term health condition, underscoring the importance of our accessible approach. Participants and audiences consistently praised the friendly atmosphere and inclusive approach, highlighting the festival as a place where people of all ages and backgrounds felt able to take part.

"Thank you. It's great for bringing people together. Loads of people participated in the parade and it brought a good audience into the centre. Good for local businesses. Also creatively enriching."



Environmental Action

Environmental sustainability continued to be embedded throughout the festival programme. Creative work explored themes of landscape, rivers and nature, while the organisation continued developing its environmental practice through carbon monitoring and sustainable planning. The festival's commitment to celebrating and protecting the natural environment remains central to its future development.

"I think the puppetry and children's events are delightful and really well done - thanks for that and please carry on!"

"There seemed to be a common thread through the programme, with themes of nature and environment"

Photos: Samantha Green BSL Interpreter, Gaia and Maia by Bev Adams Arts and HAF supporter / audience. Photographs by Neal Rylatt

Behind the Festival

Alongside delivering the festival itself, 2026 marked the completion of a significant three year programme of organisational development. A strengthened governance structure, robust evaluation framework and long term strategic planning have provided strong foundations for future growth. As Bev Adams prepares to step down as Artistic Director, the festival enters a new chapter with clear strategic direction, strong partnerships and an evidence base to support the next generation of leadership.

"Make sure it keeps going"

Looking Ahead

The conclusion of the three year Flow programme marks the beginning of an exciting new chapter for Holmfirth Arts Festival. Building on strong community partnerships, ambitious artistic programming and a growing commitment to environmental sustainability, the festival is well placed to continue celebrating the creativity, heritage and communities of the Holme Valley for years to come.

Outcomes of 3 year Theory of Change framework

Delivered ambitious community co-created arts programmes

Embedded environmental sustainability

Strengthened governance and organisational resilience

Created a strong foundation for the festival's next chapter

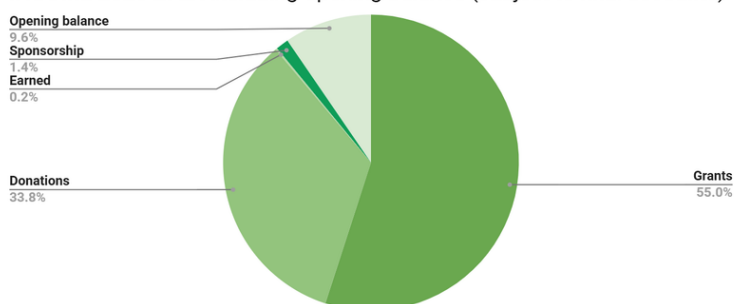


Photos: Volo VR Swings by Studio Go Go and Glaswave at the Emerging Talent Showcase
Photographs by Neal Rylatt and Bev Adams

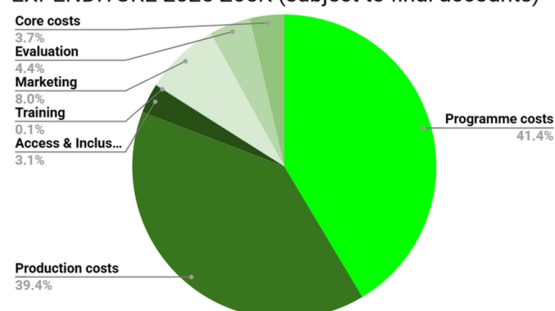


Financial Summary

INCOME 2026 £72K including opening balance (subject to final accounts)



EXPENDITURE 2025 £65K (subject to final accounts)



Photos: Roaming Noras by Urban Angels Aerial, Mass Brass by HD9 Community Music. Holmfirth Writers Group, Townships in Flow parade by The Children's Art School and Happy Daggers. Photographs by Neal Rylatt

Acknowledgements

We'd like to thank our generous donors, sponsors and funders for their continued financial support, as well as all our dedicated volunteers for their time and energy throughout the year. We'd also like to thank all 119 artists and 598 participants for their enthusiasm and talent. Last of all we'd like to thank our brilliant audiences who made 2026 such a fantastic year.



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