



# FORCES OF NATURE

May to October 2023

## IMPACT REPORT



“That was fantastic - it really was magic”



### Over 12,500 people came to watch and participate.

This year saw more people coming to see and to participate. The festival weekend alone attracted an audience of over 5,500. Importantly HAF has successfully grown whilst continuing to provide a wide range of high quality and often unique art and experiences to the people of the Holme Valley.

“What makes the festival special to me is the mixture of visual art with musical art and the variety of different visual art that keep just “popping up” all across the weekend.”

Over 48 different performances and events.

91% thought the quality was excellent or very good.

99% want to come again!

Including via social media, nearly 120,000 people engaged with Holmfirth Arts Festival in 2023.

Pictured from top to bottom: Festival Parade, Handmade Productions, The Children's Art School and local community groups, 17 June Kyla Brox and Dan Blomeley, 20 May Flamin' Nora Flying Compo by Urban Angels, 17 June, photo by John Coombes Graveship of Holme Walk, 30 July 2023.



# Events



Pictured from left to right, top to bottom:  
**Light Up Honley**, (new work commissioned by HAF), 13 October 🦋 **Banda Na Ru**, 17 June 🦋 **To Be Us** (new work commissioned for the festival) by Dark Horse Theatre 18 June 🦋 **Hallam Sinfonia**, 23 September 2023, photo by John Coombes.

“A crazy combination of art and performance that is a showpiece for the community of Holmfirth.”



“Soothing, culturally uplifting, conscious of how wonderful artistic human endeavour can be”



## Festival Weekend – 17<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> June

“Thousands of people enjoyed Holmfirth Arts Festival’s Big Weekend, as performers, artists and musicians filled the streets with live performance, installations and new commissions.”

Creative Kirklees, online 20<sup>th</sup> June 2023

🦋 All age groups were well represented at the weekend.

Saturday was a real festival day; a celebration of music, performance and of the creativity of local people. The highlight was of course the Parade.

“The thing that really stands out is the parade. Clearly the organisation was fantastic. Impressed that there were so many participants, real community effort, real community involvement.”

Festival Sunday audiences had 17 live performances, a photography exhibition and 2 art installations to enjoy.

## May to October – extended programme

“Spreading things out ... it’s better for local people”

For 6 months the people of the Holme Valley were provided with a varied programme of events sprinkled across the area. From Blues to baroque, local history walks to a well known comedian, audiences numbers were high and the feedback appreciative.

“Exceptionally fine music in exceptional surroundings.”

The festival finale was a hugely successful community engaged Lantern Parade “Light Up Honley”.

🦋 Over 1,200 people enjoyed the extended programme.





# Making a difference



“ With things like this - all the stuff about the environment - the kids don't need homework.”

Holmfirth Arts Festival is a strong positive presence in the area which brings people together to create a community enhancing event.

🦋 95% say Holmfirth Arts Festival is good for Holmfirth's image.

“ The best thing about the Lantern Parade was just the amount of people who joined in! It made a great effect and a great sense of community.”

“ Holmfirth Arts Festival creates a sense of community, of something special about Holmfirth ”

🦋 78% of festival weekend audience thought the festival was raising awareness of the environment.



## Increasing access and diversity

By providing support through commissioning and a mainstream platform for marginalised performers HAF are “making the invisible visible” and enriching our cultural landscape. Their continued commitment to accessibility is encouraging more disabled people to attend their events.

“ When Dark Horse got everyone up [to dance] there were lots of people in the audience with disabilities. The festival is making the invisible visible! ”

🦋 17% of the festival weekend audience members identified as D/deaf or disabled – nearly twice as many as last year.

Pictured from left to right, top to bottom:

- 🦋 Flood by Theatre Témoins, 18 June
- 🦋 Free Fall by Urban Angels, (new work commissioned for the festival) 18 June, photo by John Coombes
- 🦋 The Méabh Begley Trio 28 July
- 🦋 Accessible Activities Amble, 17 May 2023.



# Supporting Creativity




“By encouraging children to be part of creative events we are helping to develop future creatives and people who see the value in cultural participation and cultural communities.”

Pictured from top to bottom, all new work commissioned for the festival:

**Art in the Landscape** - installations by local artists and community groups, 17-25 June  **Flamin' Nora Flying Compo** by Urban Angels, 17 June, *photo by John Coombes*  **Sound Scenes** by Ellie Ford, 17-18 June  **Light Up Honley** Participatory Session, October 2023.


HAF brings artists, local people and community groups together to be part of events and exhibitions they can be truly proud of. Through it's commissioning of new work in particular, it is investing in the development of local and national creativity.


 511 days of work for artists

 304 artists/professionals employed

“ I like that there was a recognition of local talent whilst also bringing more diverse and unusual artists to our Valley. ”

 18 new products and commissions

 77% of artists said HAF had supported their creative practice.

 375 days of performances and exhibitions

 81 participatory sessions

 1,540 participants.





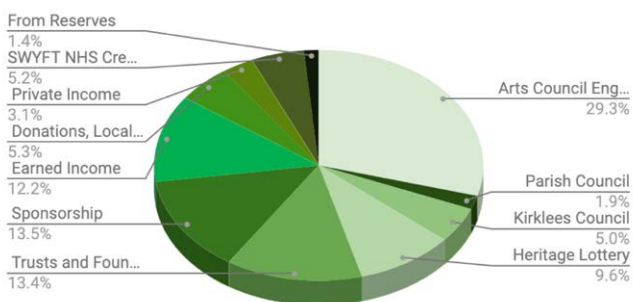
Pictured from top to bottom:

**Hade Edge Band** in the Festival Parade, 17 June  
**HAF Volunteer**, 17 June 2023.

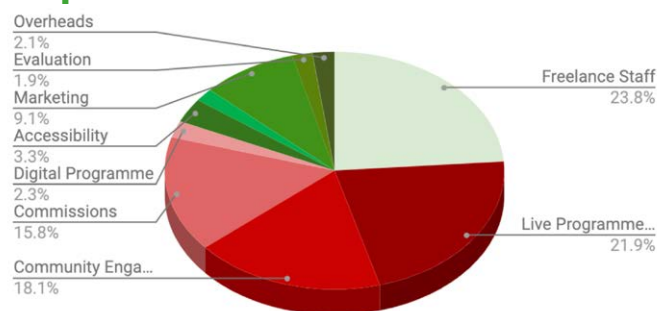
HAF’s innovative, participatory and accessible approach has created a much appreciated high quality programme of performances and artworks. This years’ festival has enhanced the lives of the people of Holmfirth and beyond.

- 🦋 53% of audience members were from Holmfirth or nearby.
  - 🦋 13% of festival weekend audience members identified as non white, a broader ethnic mix than the recorded Holmfirth population of 3.1%.
  - 🦋 28% of weekend audience members were from outside the Huddersfield area.
  - 🦋 The festival has supported the local economy, the weekend audience spent approximately £38,200.
- “ Thank you to all the volunteers who made this event fabulous.”
- 🦋 HAF is made possible by a group of around 30 volunteers, most give over a week of free time to make the festival happen.
- “ Funders - please continue to fund this beautiful and wonderfully quirky, Festival, who are making genuine progress on access and inclusion.”

## Income



## Expenditure



“The success of this year’s Festival is due to the talent of a wide range of artists of national repute, many of whom are local or from the North of England. The commitment of volunteers, our experienced freelance team and the support of our funders enabled us to support artists to make new work and for us to take creative risks with programming whilst involving 100’s of local people in creative projects throughout the year.” Bev Adams, Holmfirth Arts Festival Director

Holmfirth Arts Festival would like to thank their generous sponsors and funders:



This evaluation is based on the information gathered from 217 stakeholders via questionnaires and interviews, and meetings with HAF supporters.

Evaluation by Andrea Fanchette BA (Hons) E&OE October 2023