



Chilterns
National
Landscape



Forest of
Bowland
National
Landscape



Surrey Hills
National
Landscape



Mendip Hills
National
Landscape



Dorset
National
Landscape



Lincolnshire
Wolds
National
Landscape

Nature Calling: Evaluation Report 2025



Nature
Calling



National
Landscapes
Association

activate
performing arts



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Nature Calling 830%

Total project reach exceeded expectations, delivering over **830%** of target outputs across all activity.

Nature Calling is a major national arts and nature programme delivered by lead partners National Landscape Association and Activate Performing Arts, across England's National Landscapes, designed to connect a wider range of people with nature through creative practice. Running from 2023-2025, the project commissioned writers and artists in six Hub landscapes (Chilterns,

Dorset, Forest of Bowland, Lincolnshire Wolds, Mendip Hills and Surrey Hills) and worked with 28 Spokes to deliver workshops, large-scale artworks, community events, and participatory activities. Responding to the Landscape Review's call for greater inclusivity in protected landscapes, the programme focused on celebrating local voices, strengthening nature connection, and

reaching communities who may not traditionally feel represented in outdoor spaces. Through poetry, sound, visual art, film, storytelling and hands-on creative exploration, Nature Calling has inspired thousands of people, nurtured new partnerships, and created powerful moments of connection between people, place and landscape.

Digital engagement reached **more than 551,000 interactions**, compared to a target of just 4,933 (over **11,000% of target**).

8,258 active participants took part in creative and nature-based activities (target 4,923 - **168% of target**).

55,000+ people engaged as **live audiences/visitors**.

18% of people were **not connected to nature**.

413 freelance creatives were employed — more than **double the target** of 206 (200% of target).

69% of all activities included the pathways to nature

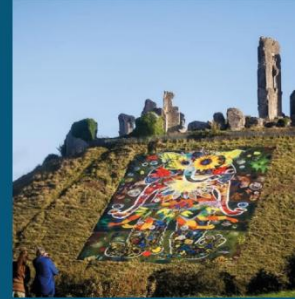
The project successfully reached a **new diverse audience** - 34% had an ethnic background from the global majority, 25% were aged under 19 years, 24% were disabled and 21% came from the most deprived households in the UK.

- Senses** - tuning in to nature through the senses
- Emotion** - feeling alive through the emotions and feelings nature brings
- Beauty** - noticing nature's beauty
- Meaning** - nature bringing meaning to our lives
- Compassion** - caring and taking action for nature



"It has made me realise I want to bring the landscape to more people, to add excitement and meanings to sites to encourage more people to explore and cherish the spaces that we have."

Artist & Writer



"Art offers us a vocabulary to tease out difficulty... and a space to think hopefully."

Artist

"The depth of connectivity... I didn't expect it to be this amazing, but it's been better."

Writer



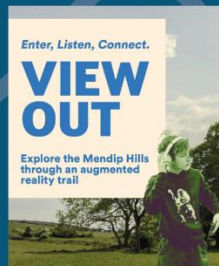
"I wanted people to feel connected to nature... it's spiritual, it's real, and it's just so available to everyone."

Writer



"People really enjoyed working with an artist... it created something meaningful and people wanted more of it."

Hub team



"Seeing people relaxed, reflecting, and feeling good about being in nature... that sense of belonging really worked."

Hub team



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SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION AND PROJECT OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Nature Calling is a bold national experiment led by the National Landscape Association and Activate Performing Arts, highlighting what happens when creativity, community and the natural world come together with real ambition. Delivered across six hub landscapes and 18 spokes, the programme set out to reach people who rarely feel represented in England's National Landscapes, commissioning diverse artists and writers to create work that resonates with local identity, culture and lived experience. From poetry, sound and film to large-scale artworks, hands-on workshops and training and residencies for artists, the project has become a powerful invitation for thousands of people to step into nature, feel welcome, and see their own stories reflected in the landscape.

The project has exceeded expectations at every level. It significantly broadened audience diversity, exceeded participation targets many times over, and generated moments of genuine connection and joy—whether through families discovering new places, young people finding confidence outdoors, or artists reconnecting with nature in new and inspiring ways. Creative commissions explored heritage, belonging, environmental awareness and local identity, while participatory activities embedded the “pathways to nature,” helping people notice beauty, feel calm, build meaning and develop lasting relationships with the natural world. The work reached over half a million people digitally, engaged more than 8,000 active participants, and employed over 400 freelancers, contributing meaningfully to the creative economy.

Alongside its public impact, Nature Calling has shifted how National Landscapes work with artists and communities. The programme was delivered through Hubs and spokes - a **Hub** is one of the six selected National Landscapes that lead and deliver major local commissions and community collaborations, while a **Spoke** (the surrounding partner areas) refers to nearby communities and landscapes that work with and benefit from the hub's activity and engagement. The Hubs and Spokes strengthened partnerships, learnt how to commission more confidently, and recognised the importance of early relationship-building, clear roles, accessible briefs and the time required for deep engagement. Many described the programme as transformational—both for participants and for their own practice—creating new skills, networks and long-term foundations for more inclusive landscape work in future. Together, these achievements show a project that not only connected people to nature but has begun to change who feels these landscapes are “for,” and how creativity can help open the door.



“I have felt very inspired by the collaborative creative process around this project and it has encouraged me to look at my own relationship with the landscape on my doorstep in new ways.”

Artist

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Nature Calling is a bold national arts project that brought creativity, community, and the natural world together. Funded by Arts Council England and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), the programme is led by Activate Performing Arts & the National Landscapes Association (formerly the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty). Working with artists, writers, and local producers across the country, the project set out to explore how art can open new ways for people to experience and value our protected landscapes.

Running from December 2023 to December 2025, Nature Calling spanned six lead National Landscapes – the Mendip Hills, Dorset, Surrey Hills, Chilterns, Lincolnshire Wolds, and Forest of Bowland – known as “Hubs.” Each Hub commissioned an artist and a writer to create new work inspired by their landscapes and communities. Around them, a wider network of 28 “Spokes” and two “Super Spokes” in the Yorkshire Dales and New Forest National Parks extend the project’s reach, creating a vibrant national programme of creative commissions, workshops, training and residency talks and live events.

At its heart, Nature Calling aims to connect more people with nature through the arts, particularly those who may not have previously felt welcome or represented in England’s National Landscapes. It responds directly to the Glover Landscape Review, which highlighted the need for these places to become more inclusive and reflective of the diverse communities they serve.

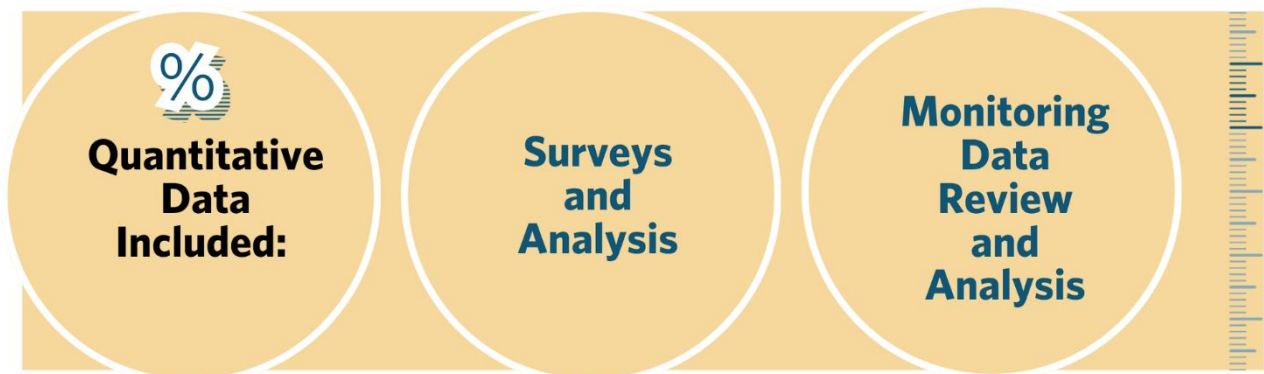
Through poetry, performance, storytelling, and participatory art, the project celebrates the beauty and diversity of our landscapes while inviting audiences to see themselves within them. It also supports artists and landscape professionals to work together in new ways - learning, sharing, and reimagining how creative practice can contribute to environmental care, wellbeing, and social connection.

Nature Calling is, above all, a celebration of creativity, of community, and of our shared relationship with the land. It is an invitation for everyone, wherever they come from, to step into these extraordinary places and feel that nature is calling them too.

STRATEGIC OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

This evaluation sat within the ambitions of the Nature Calling project, which stemmed from the 2019 Landscape Review and its call for England’s protected landscapes to become more inclusive, accessible and representative. The project aimed to measure whether it had increased participation from diverse audiences and strengthened people’s connection to nature, reflecting the bid’s commitment to **“commissioning an exceptional range of diverse artists to animate, celebrate and increase access to nature.”**

This informed the project’s dimension statements, which explored local relevance, environmental awareness, representation of diverse voices, cultural celebration and nature connection. The evaluation therefore examined whether a wider range of people took part, whether connections to nature increased across writers, artists, producers and audiences, and what influence the work had on commissioning within the hubs and spokes. Staff experiences were also monitored through Reflex surveys, and audience research questions were finalised through a deep dive at the Forest of Bowland. In line with the Landscapes Review focus on cultural diversity, socioeconomic inclusion, physical accessibility and urban outreach, the evaluation collected demographic data on gender, age, ethnicity, disability, socioeconomic background (via IMD), and urban-rural comparisons for both participants and activity locations.



We have looked at 1,343 different pieces of numerical data with individual results - including 71 surveys, scales, self-assessments and evaluation forms. This includes:

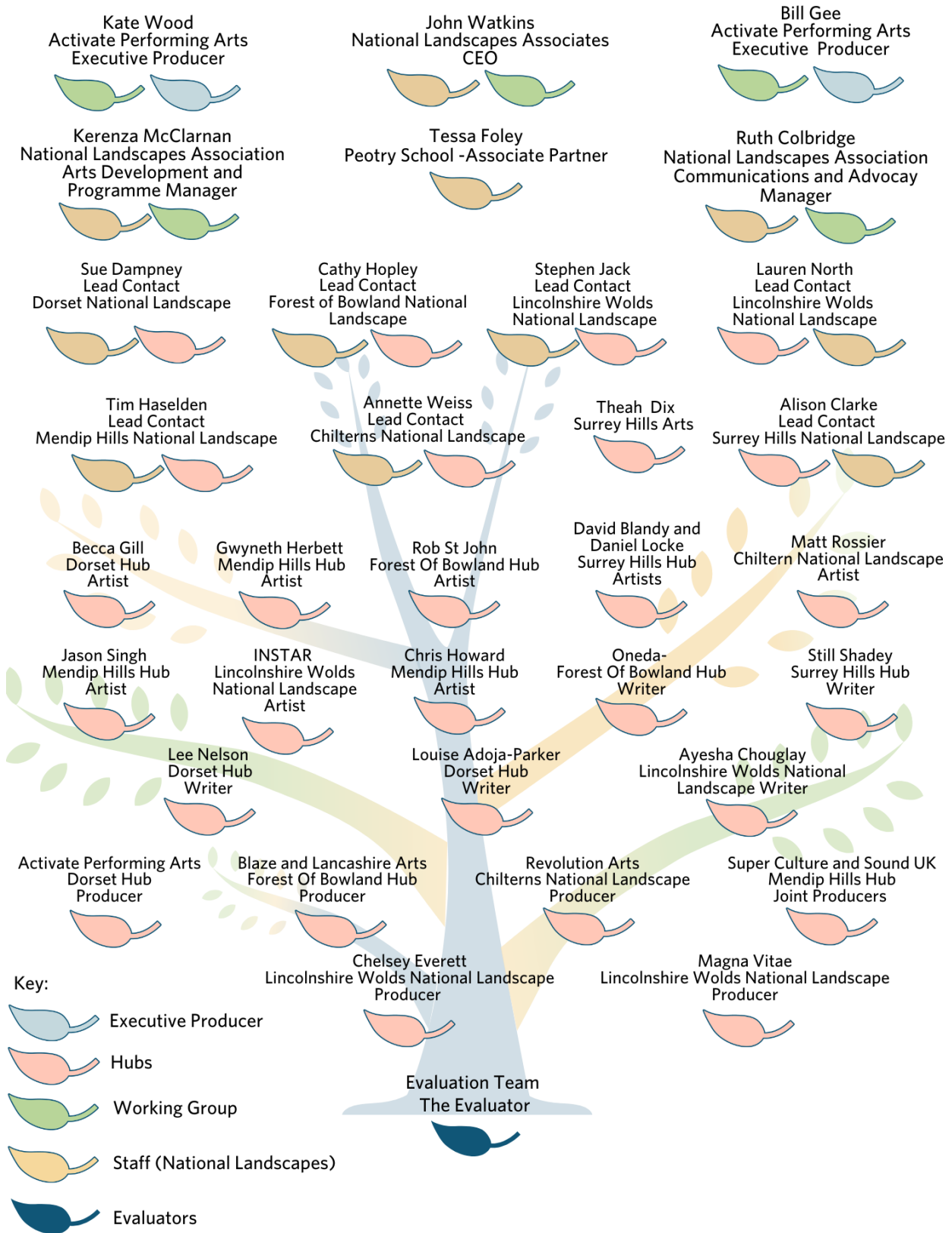
- 12 Spoke reflex surveys
- 15 Hub reflex surveys
- 32 Audience deep dive surveys
- 12 Collaborators surveys
- 10 sign-in sheets that cover over 350 entries
- 417 lines of monitoring



We have talked to 25 people directly, which means we have heard 21,900 words. Six of these people were spoken to through individual one-to-one interviews.

In total, we have heard from 77 people and used 24,670 pieces of information to measure the process and impact of this project.

Nature Calling-Project Family Tree



The yellow leaves on the family tree that depict the project staff are members of staff from National Landscapes Association Nationwide, not specific to one location within the Nature Calling Project.

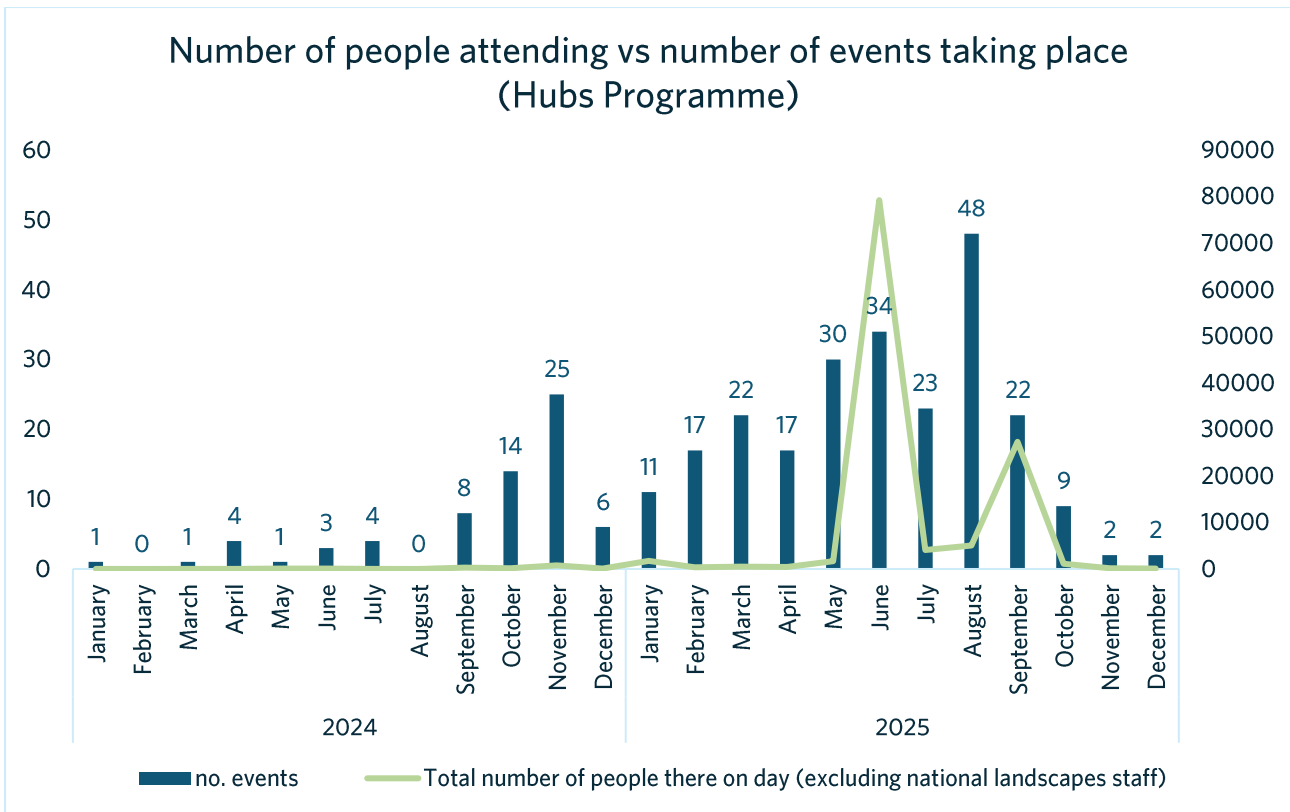
SECTION TWO-KEY ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

NATURE CALLING KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

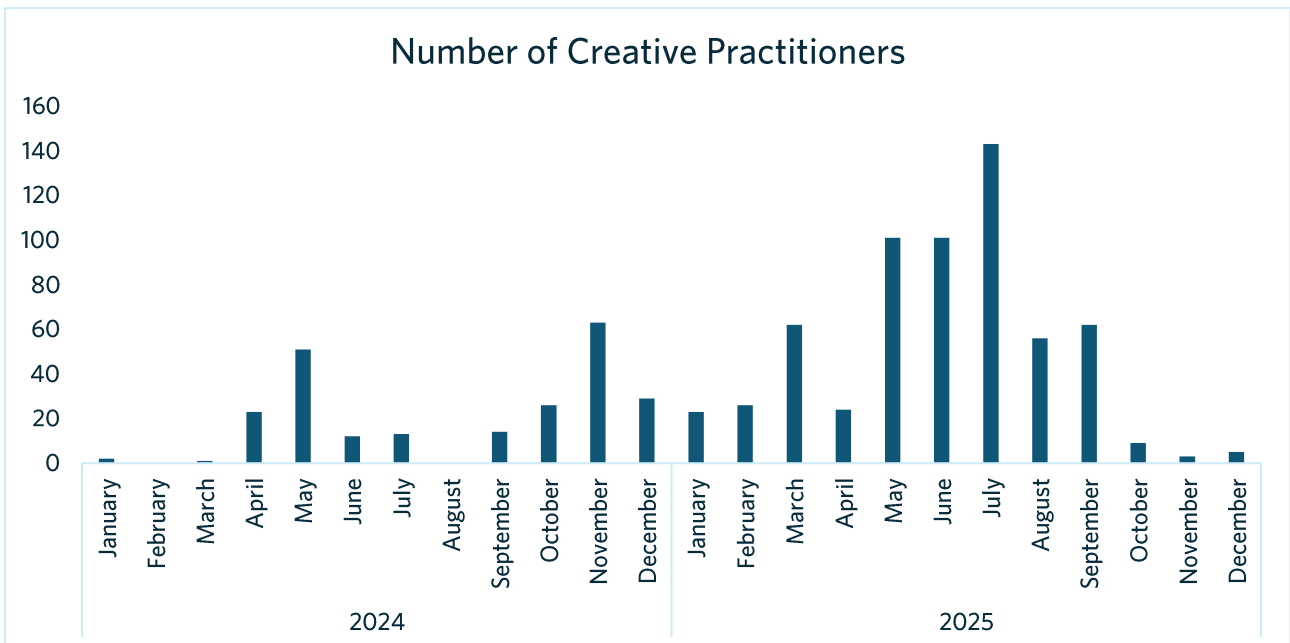
The Nature Calling programme has made exceptional progress across all delivery areas, with overall achievement significantly exceeding initial expectations. Based on the project tracking, total delivery sits at over 830% of the combined target output, highlighting the extensive reach and impact of project activities.

OVERALL PERFORMANCE

- **Creative Practitioners:** 897 engaged versus a target of 724 (124% of target). Strong creative engagement across all hubs, with particularly high delivery in the Forest of Bowland and Lincolnshire Wolds.
- **Active Participants:** 8,258 engaged compared to a target of 4,923 (168% of target). Hubs have achieved extensive local participation through creative workshops and nature-based activities.
- **Volunteers:** 221 volunteers supported the programme against a target of 420 (53% of target). Although lower than other metrics, volunteer involvement remains valuable, particularly in community event delivery.
- **Live Audiences / Visitors:** Estimated total reach of over 55,000 compared to a target of 63,000 (87% of target), demonstrating a strong public response to exhibitions and events.
- **Digital Engagement:** Digital reach has been exceptional, with more than 551,000 online engagements compared to a target of 4,933 (over 11,000% of target), reflecting the success of the project's online storytelling and social media strategies. In addition, the project reached an audience of 5 million through the BBC Countryfile programme, which featured the project in an episode aired in May 2025, with a particular focus on the 'Are You Lost' installation in the Forest of Bowland."
- **Freelance Creatives Employed:** 413 employed compared to a target of 206 (200% of target), showing a major contribution to the creative economy and alignment with Arts Council England's investment principles.



The graph above shows how 2024 was a planning phase with a number of events, attracting smaller numbers of people attending. The programme was busier in 2025, with notable audience attendance spikes in June 2025 and the greatest number of activities took place in August 2025.



Nature Calling invested significantly in sector development through two complementary training offers designed to build confidence and capability across both artists and landscape professionals. The first was a specialist residential programme supporting artists to work within protected landscape contexts. Delivered twice—at Space 101 in Newbury and at Walk the Plank’s offices in Salford—each three-day residency brought together a highly competitive cohort, with 30 participants selected from over 60 applications. The programme focused on developing artists’

understanding of place-sensitive practice, environmental considerations and community collaboration within National Landscapes.

Alongside this, Activate Performing Arts and the National Landscapes Association delivered a six-part online training programme for officers from National Landscapes, National Parks and the National Trust. Running from September 2024 to January 2025. The course combined case studies, guest speakers and practical tools to help participants work more confidently with artists and diverse communities, with a strong focus on emotional connection to place, co-creation approaches, commissioning processes, audience engagement and legacy planning.

The online programme attracted 54 participants, including 44 from National Landscapes, 13 from National Parks and one from a National Trail, demonstrating strong sector appetite for skills development and peer learning. The overall ambition was for participants to feel "commission ready" - better equipped to advocate for, commission and deliver creative work that connects new audiences with protected landscapes.

All the hubs including the core team activities		Total number of attendances during the project	Number of active participant attendances	Number of live audience attendances
Total Number of activities run		123,255 attendances Additionally, an estimated 5 million viewers watched the Nature Calling televised feature on BBC's Countryfile.	8,172 active participant sessions	Total of 18,760 known and 37,142 estimated attendances
Number of volunteers hours in total	Value of volunteer time in total	Number of creative practitioner attendances	Number of freelance creatives employed	Busiest single day
990.5	£15,860	849	406 freelance creatives employed	61,000 attendances at the Lincolnshire County Show in June 2025

NATURE CALLING IN THE CHILTERNs

The Luton team worked with Revolution Arts, poet Lee Nelson and artist Matt Rosier to connect local communities with the Chilterns National Landscape by exploring its natural features, Neolithic heritage and contemporary relevance. Through poetry, participatory art and a new community-built monument inspired by the Chilterns, the project aimed to draw people out into the landscape, strengthen their sense of connection to nature, and celebrate the cultural identities of Luton’s diverse communities.



**Chilterns
National
Landscape**

Key Outputs in The Chilterns

Hub Name = Chilterns		Total number of attendances during the project	Number of active participant attendances	Number of live audience attendances
Total Number of activities run = 36 different events, including public events, walks and more		1768 attendances	731 active participant sessions	Total of 911 known and 8 estimated attendances
Number of volunteers hours in total	Value of volunteer time in total	Number of creative practitioner attendances	Number of freelance creatives employed	Busiest single day
1,096 hours from 142 volunteers (some of whom may be regular volunteers)	£13,260	144	68 freelance creatives employed	Luton Henge Festival on 26 th July 2025 - attracting 1092 people.

Key Artistic Outputs in The Chilterns

WRITING COMMISSION

Taken from Lee Nelson’s Beginners’ Hill poem:

Let tomorrow and tomorrow²
and tomorrow come
take your land
take your time
The climb is the cause
and the cause is the climb

“I think it’s just the spirit of human nature and how a group of people, organisations, sectors, who either didn’t know one another very well or even not at all, we’ve managed to work together... we’ve cultivated the process in accordance to our personalities and we’ve made the project how we wanted to make it ... that’s been really special and really powerful.

I think the process and the love and care has led the project ambition to be greater than what I thought it was going to be and I guess it’s the depth of connectivity and the depth of relationship that we’ve cultivated. I didn’t expect it to be that, to be this amazing, but it’s been better.”
Lee Nelson

LUTON HENGE BY MATTHEW ROSIER ARTIST



Image credit Ray Chan

"I found it pleasantly surprising how caring and open-minded people are when given the opportunity and the space, I suppose, to be so.

People's eagerness in getting involved with the physical aspects of it and how much people will give over to that process. Whether that's hammering chalk or ... burning wood or collecting rubbish from around the site, I found that very surprising in a positive way.

It really shows that the conversations that

people were having who didn't even know anything about the project, there was an open-mindedness, a curiosity." Matthew Rosier, Artist

PROGRAMME COMMUNICATIONS

- Writer Lee Nelson - 267 people visited this page online, with an average of 53 views per month. In addition, the YouTube collected poems performances received 68 views
- Artist Matthew Rosier for Luton Henge - 308 people visited this page online, with an average 51 views per month. In addition, the YouTube conversation content received 11 views.

STRENGTHS OF THE PROJECT

The Chilterns team emphasised that the artists' creative vision, alongside strong community engagement and involvement, were central to the project's success. They also highlighted the importance of having a physical base from which to operate, which helped build trust, deepen relationships, and ultimately strengthen the project's long-term legacy. Another strength of the project was the commitment from the partners, in particular the National Landscape Association in securing planning permission for the artwork creating a permanence place for it in the landscape.

"The key to it was Matt's vision, our artist, and his ability to bring people in, and particularly the local community... they really got behind the henge."

"That strength of community is what means that it's also got the legacy now... the project hasn't really ended, it's carrying on."

"The final thing was having a base was really important, a physical place where people could come and gather... the community centre next to it... we were in the right place."

NATURE CALLING IN DORSET

The Dorset National Landscape team worked with producers Activate Performing Arts, writer Louisa Adjoa-Parker, artist Becca Gill and the Radical Ritual team to engage communities in Yeovil, on the northern border of the protected landscape. Together they engaged people with Dorset’s dramatic landscapes —from its Jurassic Coast to its ancient inland sites— through storytelling, ritual and participatory art. Louisa aimed to gather diverse local voices and encourage people who are not traditionally represented in nature writing to explore their own connections to Dorset’s environment. Becca Gill and the Radical Ritual team invited underrepresented groups to take part in a giant game of Consequences to cocreate an inclusive ritual artwork using natural materials. Inspired by visits to the Cerne Abbas Giant, storytelling and song, four communities created the Head, Heart, Legs and Feet of the new Giant. The 30x40m Giant artwork was displayed alongside the Cerne Abbas Giant before touring to hillsides in Yeovil and Corfe Castle. The programme sought to deepen people’s sense of belonging, strengthen connections to the land, and celebrate the shared heritage and identities of the region’s communities.



**Dorset
National
Landscape**

Key Outputs in Dorset

Hub Name = Dorset		Total number of attendances during the project	Number of active participant attendances	Number of live audience attendances
Total Number of activities run = 24 events including artist events, public events and walks		30,410 attendances	509 active participant sessions	Total of 2901 known and 27,000 estimated attendances
Number of volunteers hours in total	Value of volunteer time in total	Number of creative practitioner attendances	Number of freelance creatives employed	Busiest single day
44 hours from 11 volunteers (some of whom may be regular volunteers)	£880	68	61 freelance creatives employed	14,697 people estimated to see the Consequences Giant on 20 th September 2025, 1197 known audience and 13,500 estimated views from the road.

Key Artistic Outputs in Dorset

COMMISSIONED WRITER CASE STUDY- LOUISA ADJOA PARKER

“It was taking something that was ostensibly such a simple concept and the genius of changing, making that giant and using that concept that everybody could understand to bring the communities together and **it really brought those communities together, those really diverse communities**, not only those moments, at the workshops, which were fantastic and brilliantly shaped and a really rich opportunity for people.”

“But what a lovely surprise to see people turned up then for the parade and to see the work... it’s often quite hard to get that moment where a community engaged with the project so much or a creative project that they then want to come back and share it more and more.”

“It was taking that simple concept and making it into something that really unified people, particularly at that time. I think it was really, really strong.”

“I was surprised but by how relevant it really is, and that how it emotionally touched nearly everybody that was part of it in some way and that was very clear with either coming to one of the workshops and seeing it, then coming to meet people in the parade.”

Extract from Louisa Adjoa Parkers writing titled “This Patch of Land”

This green-gold land, which has been allowed to breathe, to stay connected to the wild. The more we learn, the more we can get under its skin. Maybe the land will love us back, if our feet trace the same steps each day. Although we wounded it, if we tread more lightly now, perhaps the land will let us stay.

CONSEQUENCES BY BECCA GILL ARTIST

The Consequences Giant was created by over 200 people from Yeovil in a giant game of Consequences, inspired by the incredible landscape around it and each other.

What was most surprising? “The incredible workshops that we had in Cerne Abbas with the groups and how walking with people in the landscape and being guided by Dorset National Landscape Team to really immerse yourself, listen deeply, smell the sounds, feel what you feel and how that created a very incredible process that then people took into their creation.

It was a surprise to see the giant that was created. I think seeing that full being, seeing the joy and the landscape projected back and a sense of belonging for people that came through seeing their artworks on such a giant scale... the scale of 30 by 40 metres was always going to be a surprise when you finally saw that whole thing all together.

We managed to do incredible things on social... we’ve had over 64,000 views of those reels and the impact that that had digitally, as well as the people that came and the amount of people that viewed the giant and the integrity of the participation work. It’s something that is I feel like we can all be really proud of actually.”



Image credit Roy Riley

PROGRAMME COMMUNICATIONS

- Writer Louisa Adjoa Parker - 107 people visited this page online, with an average 18 views per month. In addition, This Patch of Land received 18 views
- Consequences- 306 people visited this page online, with an average 51 views per month.

STRENGTHS OF THE PROJECT

For the Dorset team, the project created valuable new connections with Yeovil communities where no prior relationships existed. The depth of engagement was repeatedly recognised as a core strength, with multiple opportunities to collaborate meaningfully and build trust. The ambition and commitment of the artists also contributed significantly to the project’s success, bringing creative energy and determination throughout. Together, these factors laid the foundations for lasting relationships and future partnership work in the area.

“The depth of engagement was a real strength... we worked at many opportunities with the groups and got to know them really well.”

“The ambition of the artists was a strength... they came up with a fun and inspiring idea... and they worked really hard and stuck with it.”

NATURE CALLING IN THE FOREST OF BOWLAND

The National Landscape team worked with Blaze, Lancaster Arts, writer OneDa and artist Rob St John to connect young people and local communities with the Forest of Bowland’s dramatic moorlands, valleys and cultural heritage. OneDa intended to explore the landscape through lyric writing, spoken word and music inspired by her Nigerian–Manchester roots, while Rob St John’s Are You Lost? project would collaborate with youth groups to create film, sound and textile installations reflecting diverse local perspectives. The programme aimed to showcase underrepresented voices, spark creative engagement with Bowland’s natural environment and install temporary artworks across both accessible and remote sites in 2025.



Forest of Bowland National Landscape

Key Outputs in the Forest of Bowland

Hub Name = Forest of Bowland		Total number of attendances during the project	Number of active participant attendances	Number of live audience attendances
Total Number of activities run = 120 different events including public events, walks, writing events, artist events and more		16,894 attendances	3,842 active participant sessions	Total of 789 known and 20,363 estimated attendances
Number of volunteers hours in total	Value of volunteer time in total	Number of creative practitioner attendances	Number of freelance creatives employed	Busiest single day
120 hours from 29 volunteers (some of whom may be regular volunteers)	£2,410	168	61 freelance creatives employed	10,338 people (over 420 hours) attended the Are You Lost soundscape made with young people at Women in Farming exhibition at Clitheroe Castle which ended on 30 th August 2025

Key Artistic Outputs in the Forest of Bowland

WRITING COMMISSION

OneDa - Writer/Rapper	
Extract from OneDa’s spoken word commission:	

Yet the city keeps me grounded
Grounded and bounded
Forest of Bowland had boundaries to be broken
Astounded by what I had founded
A place where escapism resounded
Dry Stone Walls in my mind to come down
Freedom awaits those who aren't afraid to go
Find It seek beauty beneath the troubled exterior of life and behind It
Terrains that stretches
No phone signal so my minds invested

ARE YOU LOST BY ROB ST JOHN ARTIST

NATURE CALLING: CASE STUDY - ARE YOU LOST?

The Forest of Bowland National Landscape hosted **Are You Lost?**, an immersive installation by artist **Rob St John**.





Image credit Jack Bolton



Image credit Jack Bolton

Created in collaboration with local communities, young people, and artists, *Are You Lost?* explored themes of land, belonging and environmental justice, weaving together field recordings, choral improvisations and textile traditions from East Lancashire and beyond. Over the year the artist had been speaking to people connected to the Forest of Bowland to better understand a wide range of perceptions of this often-misunderstood part of England. He has been collaborating with diverse communities, to develop artworks that explore themes of environmental justice, land

access and personal stories of the landscape. A [series of podcasts](#) share his explorations and conversations with the people he has met along the way.

Over the course of two weekend events, the installation was accompanied by a vibrant programme of creative workshops and activities that included weaving, printing, group discussions, and creative writing.

Visitors were greeted by friendly staff at a welcome tent placed next to activity tents where weaving and forest wand creations took place.

A creative workshop held in the woodland area inspired and encouraged people to reflect on nature writing from a new perspective. Speaking to several participants we were told:

"It felt quite transformative. We forget how to be still and just listen to the trees. It can be quite powerful to just stop and listen."

"It was a contemplative experience, thinking of a different approach to writing and the use of words."

"I realise I definitely need to spend more time in the trees! It lets you to settle and feel calm."

A foraging workshop lead by a local foraging expert was an educational and interactive group session. The workshop helped dispel common fears around wild plants, teaching participants how to safely identify species and forage responsibly. The health benefits of nettles were highlighted, and the group were told how plants often dismissed as “just weeds”, can not only support wellbeing but also play a vital role for pollinators.

“I will never look at dandelions in the same way! I thought they were a pain but actually, they have a lot of benefits that I just hadn’t known.”

“It’s something you hear about – eating foods straight from nature like this but I wouldn’t have tried it on my own. It now feels like actually, I could learn a bit more about this, and certainly could now name some of the things we were shown today.”

One participant had kept a note of ten common plants that were more easily recognisable, **“We found out that things like nettles and meadowsweet can actually be used for making tea, and could support our health – I would never have thought this.”** The forager, founder of Pendle Plant Craft, has written two books and members of the groups were



Image credit Jack Bolton

inspired to make a purchase to continue their foraging experience.

An interactive sound workshop invited people to listen and consider the sounds of the woodland. The use of instruments combined with vocal sounds emulating the forest created an immersive shared experience that supported an in-the-moment connection to nature.

“Even though the forest was quiet, listening to the wind in the tree tops was really soothing. Makes you think how we never really stop to listen, but when we do, there’s just magic that happens.”

The “forest wands” workshop invited people to a sensory experience of attaching beautiful bouquets of sage, heather and lavender to bamboo sticks wrapped with fairy lights and ribbon, adding a sprinkle of magic to the woodland and nature themed event. The act of working with these natural materials, drawn from the landscape itself, seemed to foster a sense of connection to the rhythm of the forest.

“I have never done anything like this before, but whilst I was making it [forest wand], it was like all pressure and life’s responsibilities drifted away for a while. And the smell of sage and lavender made it a sensory experience, it felt really good.”

The weekend drew to a close with a procession through the forest, where participants carried their handmade forest wands as members of the singing group, *The Stonechats*, sang a choral improvisation using original prose from the art installation. The community choir led the diverse group to gather around a fire pit deep in the woods, ending in a moment of shared silence as everyone absorbed the atmosphere and the sounds of the forest.

"It was such a moving experience, the collection of voices and then the stillness as the light was fading, just magical. Very profound actually."

"What a beautiful thing, singing "black and white together" in that setting, and with that group. I think some lovely links were made for people singing together again in the future too."

As the voices faded into silence and people returned to their busy lives, there is the hope that the Are You Lost installation may have fostered new perspectives and a deeper bond to the landscape.

"Especially young people, their wit, their intelligence, their creativity, their hope for future things to be different. The kind of networks of new people meeting in new ways and more kind of progressive and hopeful version." Rob St John

"Art offers us a vocabulary to tease out difficulty, slipperiness ... and a space to think hopefully"
Rob St John

PROGRAMME COMMUNICATIONS

- OneDa - Writer/Rapper - 103 people visited this page online, with an average 20 views per month. In addition, the OneDa Connections on YouTube received 91 views
- 405 People visited the artist page online, an average of 68 people per month and in addition the artist Rob St John's conversations on YouTube received 35 views.

STRENGTHS OF THE PROJECT

In the Forest of Bowland, the team identified that existing relationships with key urban community groups provided a strong foundation for the project. This allowed engagement to progress quickly and meaningfully. The amount of digital content created, in particular podcasts was a strength, as well as the relationship between the artist and the NL Association in engaging people in the strategic plans of the NL Association. The artist's contribution was also highlighted as a major strength, particularly in his ability to work creatively and confidently with younger participants. Together, these factors supported sustained participation and positive outcomes for the young people involved.

"One was that we had existing relationships in the urban area that we wanted to work in... so we weren't having to go right back to the start in terms of identifying and making contact with those groups."

"The artist, his engagement skills, particularly with young people, were just amazing... he was an absolute wizard at that, and that was a massive strength."

NATURE CALLING IN THE LINCOLNSHIRE WOLDS

The Lincolnshire team worked with producer Chelsey Everett, writer Ayesha Chouglay and artist duo InStar to help local communities explore the Lincolnshire Wolds' gentle chalk landscapes and rich cultural heritage through creative participation. Ayesha intended to work with a range of community and disability groups to explore barriers to accessing the Wolds and to reflect on her own ancestral connection to the area through new nature writing. InStar's Sightlines project aimed to create contemporary printworks and temporary visual sculptures inspired by the Wolds' wildness, developed in collaboration with local people.



**Lincolnshire
Wolds
National
Landscape**

Key Outputs in the Lincolnshire Wolds

Hub Name = Lincolnshire Wolds		Total number of attendances during the project	Number of active participant attendances	Number of live audience attendances
Total Number of activities run = 47 events, including artist events, team and development activities, public events and more		74,117 attendances	1,448 active participant sessions	Total of 1890 known and 14,015 estimated attendances
Number of volunteers hours in total	Value of volunteer time in total	Number of creative practitioner attendances	Number of freelance creatives employed	Busiest single day
0	0	191	85 freelance creatives employed	61,000 attendances at the Lincolnshire County Show in June 2025

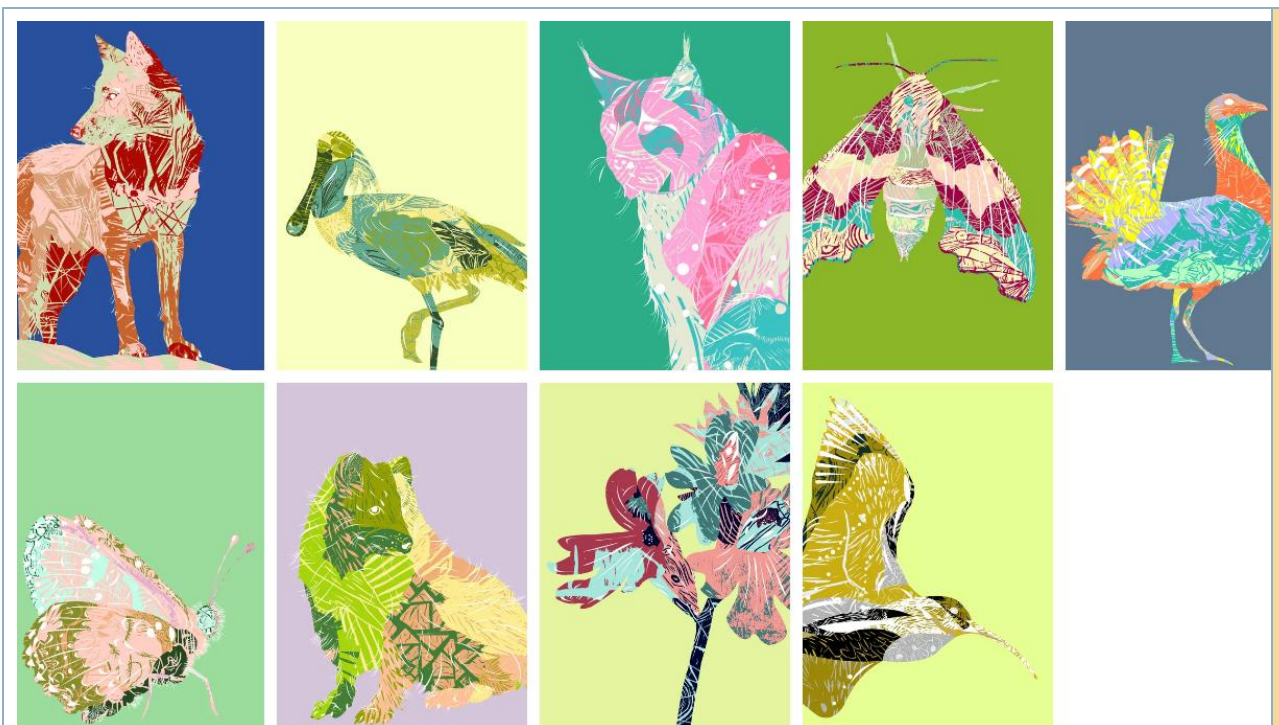
Key Artistic Outputs in the Lincolnshire Wolds

WRITING COMMISSION

<p>Walk on by Ayesha Chouglay</p> <p>when they leave, each back of the head, each hand, slight on the train door,</p> <p>each long, dark coat, woollen, low lustre, becomes an is it them, walnut in the stomach,</p> <p>till posture raddles them anew, and you set them on the concourse, quietening, something drifting from the piano</p> <p>starnil perhaps, and I walk, heart pelting, feeling for the break, families droving, bellwether up</p> <p>heading for the fold of the carriage, small red hands in manicured tips, each a milk tooth,</p> <p>I, theave, thief-like, lose my way in the station's metal ribcage, past the make up</p> <p>counters, yan, tan, tethera, phone pulsing my side, announcement ringing out, the orange and yellow tickets</p> <p>bright like lanolin, in our small, raw hands</p> <p>"The network that we had, and joining those weekly chats and conversations was a surprise to get that level of support, and a positive."</p>	
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SHELF LIFE BY INSTAR





Illustrations by INSTAR

INSTAR'S work - Above are a series of nine collaborative designs highlighting lost and vulnerable species of the Lincolnshire Wolds. The design incorporates a selection of relief prints created by over 70 pupils from local secondary schools

"It was really positive environment, really positive connections, very locally, really inspired and it was been great to work with other artists along the way who've really enabled the reach."

"Everybody came along at the right point and really helped us out when we needed it and we had the confidence it gave us confidence to do what was quite an ambitious idea to take billboards into fields."

PROGRAMME COMMUNICATIONS

- Ayesha Chouglay - Lincolnshire Wolds – 120 people visited this page online, with an average 20 views per month.
- In addition the INSTAR podcast conversation received 16 views and the podcast downloads via podbean received 21 views, conversation on Youtube received 3 views

STRENGTHS OF THE PROJECT

The Lincolnshire Wolds team found that their strong existing relationships enabled seamless engagement with local farmers. They also highlighted the benefit of collaborating with other National Landscape staff on a coordinated national project, noting that the regular support calls were particularly valuable in helping to develop the work. They also reflected that the project's ability to reach such a large number of young people was new for the National Landscape team and represented a real strength of the initiative.

"We already had contacts with the farmers... previous relationships with them really helped the project, we didn't have to go out there in welly boots and trudge around farms and try and find them."

NATURE CALLING IN THE MENDIP HILLS

The North Somerset team worked with Sound UK, writer Gwyneth Herbert, sound artist Jason Singh and wildlife filmmaker Chris Howard to help communities connect with the dramatic Mendip Hills and the coastal town of Weston-super-Mare through a multidisciplinary commission. The View In, The View Out (VIVO) aimed to blend lyrics, song, sound recordings and documentary approaches, drawing on Jason’s bio-data compositions, Gwyneth’s community-centred songwriting and Chris’s expertise in capturing the natural world. Working with producer Super Culture and supported by spokes across nearby National Landscapes, the project sought to uncover local stories, amplify the voices of people and place, and create new creative experiences that brought Mendip’s landscapes and communities into dialogue with one another.



**Mendip Hills
National
Landscape**

Key Outputs in the Mendip Hills

Hub Name = Mendip Hills		Total number of attendances during the project	Number of active participant attendances	Number of live audience attendances
Total Number of activities run = 22 events including walks, writing events and public events		1,270 attendances	241 active participant sessions	Total of 30 known and 948 estimated attendances
Number of volunteers hours in total	Value of volunteer time in total	Number of creative practitioner attendances	Number of freelance creatives employed	Busiest single day
118 hours from 29 volunteers (some of whom may be regular volunteers)	£2,360	58	28 freelance creatives employed	202 people attended the VIVO installation on the 20 th July 2025

Key Artistic Outputs in the Mendip Hills

ARTIST AND WRITING COMMISSION - VIEW IN VIEW OUT



Image credit Paul Blackmore

Commissioned Artist/Writer Collaboration – Jason Singh, Gwyneth Herbert and Chris Howard

Jason Singh reflected on leading Super Culture workshops and what surprised him:

“The amount of diversity in terms of the voices that that came to speak about, Mendip and Western and the range of people that were involved in.

People having their voice included in this piece of work... it's about celebrating a

place. It was phenomenal, absolutely phenomenal.

The way that the poetry brought everything together through these different stories..... intricate little things that happen and when we were in this room, piercing together the whole piece, it was phenomenal.

It was brought together magically by this beautiful narrator. It was sick.”

While Gwyneth reflected on her surprises...

“The Walking, the talking, the listening and all the ways that meant that really I felt it.....I was just able to listen and listen and then at the end I just got out of the way and the words fell out.

It just felt right, from so many of the encounters that we had, there was magic embedded in the Mendip Hills and that was navigating what we listened to, what we heard was represented and what spoke in the piece”

PROGRAMME COMMUNICATIONS

- Gwyneth Herbert, Jason Singh & Chris Howard: View In View Out (VIVO) – 372 people visited this page online, with an average 62 views per month.
- In addition, the YouTube conversations received 8 views & podcast conversations received 6 views

STRENGTHS OF THE PROJECT

In the Mendip Hills, the team highlighted that strong partnerships were key to the project's success. Working with Super Culture as producer helped build trust with local residents and has already created a foundation for future legacy work. The team also emphasised the importance of their relationship with the artist's, who was highly skilled at engaging audiences. A significant achievement was the installation in Weston's shopping centre, a long-held ambition that successfully brought the Mendip Hills into an urban setting. Combined with the audio trails, the project created a clear gradient of opportunities for people to connect with the landscape, from the town centre out into rural areas. These elements have helped embed lasting community connections with the Hills.



Image credit Paul Blackmore

“The relationship we’ve developed with Super Culture, our producer... that’s been really, really positive... People trusted us a little bit more because we were working with them... definitely going to be legacy that comes from that.”

“Our relationship with one of the artists... she was just really great at engaging with the audiences.”

“The installation within the shopping centre... one of these things we’d wanted to do for years... bringing the Mendip Hills to Weston, to an urban area... that really worked in the end.”



Image credit Paul Blackmore

“There was a nice gradient of opportunities from the urban area right through to rural.”

NATURE CALLING IN THE SURREY HILLS

The Surrey Hills team worked with producer Surrey Hills Arts, writer and performer Still Shadey and artist duo Blandy & Locke to help communities—particularly those from New Addington and other underrepresented areas—explore and connect with the Surrey Hills’ chalk downs, woodlands and heathlands through music, storytelling and visual art. Still Shadey aimed to create a poetic rap soundtrack celebrating everyday encounters with nature, inspired by his own lived experience and cultural heritage, while Blandy & Locke planned to work with local groups to develop new graphic narratives exploring how urban communities can access and relate to the landscape. Supported by spokes from neighbouring National



Surrey Hills
National
Landscape



Landscapes, the programme sought to spark creativity, strengthen nature connection and amplify diverse perspectives on what the Surrey Hills mean to the people who live nearby.

Key Outputs in the Surrey Hills


Hub Name = Surrey Hills		Total number of attendances during the project	Number of active participant attendances	Number of live audience attendances
Total Number of activities run = 40 events including artists events, walks, development days and public events.		1,076 attendances	1,221 active participant sessions	Total of 20 known and 1,370 estimated attendances
Number of volunteers hours in total	Value of volunteer time in total	Number of creative practitioner attendances	Number of freelance creatives employed	Busiest single day
45 hours from 20 volunteers (some of whom may be regular volunteers)	£900	209	79 freelance creatives employed	251 people attended the Still Shadey Performance at the National Landscapes Symposium.

Key Artistic Outputs in the Surrey Hills

WRITING COMMISSION

Still Shadey	
<p>“Primarily, I find my greatest joy in communicating stories...and then specifically to this project, I was telling the story from a point of view as a Croydon resident...an untapped community that I could represent...sharing my own personal journey...finding healthy environments to grow, to...just heal.”</p> <p>“It can engage people that wouldn't normally come out into the landscape or have access to quality arts activity.”</p> <p>“I wanted people to feel connected to nature. think it's spiritual, it's real, and it's just so available to everyone...to emphasise that this is something that's accessible”</p>	

CASE STUDY



NATURE CALLING: CASE STUDY - SURREY HILLS WRITER AND PRODUCERS EXPERIENCE

This case study follows the creation of 'Nature's Anthem' a poetic rap that blends personal storytelling, collaboration and landscape-inspired learning to show how nature connection can spark hope, healing and pride. What began as a simple creative commission grew into a powerful shared journey—one that deepened understanding of place, engaged underrepresented communities, and sparked new educational and artistic possibilities.

This project involved the creation of a meaningful piece of poetic rap that promotes a message of how nature connection can inspire hope, and healing. A core driver of the project was the emotional and psychological relationship people can develop with nature, especially those who've historically been underrepresented in outdoor and environmental spaces. The writer reflected on this further, **"Primarily, I find my greatest joy in communicating stories...and then specifically to this project, I was telling the story from a point of view as a Croydon resident...an untapped community that I could represent...sharing my own personal journey...finding healthy environments to grow, to...just heal."**

The local ranger was able to walk the writer around the area, introducing different species and themes, supporting a deeper understanding of the landscape, and having a keen interest in the arts, he was deeply supportive of the project. Some of this knowledge was included in the lyrics, referencing types of butterfly within the words. **"It's wonderful when you walk around with someone like that. It feels great and he knows so much."**

The writer reflected on how writing is usually quite independent and isolated, and so the collaborative approach was a new concept. **"But I have thoroughly enjoyed the back and forth experiences...when the lyrics started to be created, and there was a shared approach to the writing, a review process of, hey, this is the first draft."** A continued joint approach continued throughout, **"I love people that are as involved as me, and it just felt very collaborative, the words were coming from my pen, but it was really being inspired by the thoughts of the group as well."**

This 'back and forth' meant that collective nature and personally inspired themes found the space to grow and develop into the final work. The producer recalls the moment she read the first draft:

"It's always slightly nerve-racking when you haven't seen the initial stages, you know, the actual writing... it wasn't a flowery piece of writing. It was a bit gritty, but it was hopeful...There was so much there and it was just so well written."

Not only is the piece profound on an emotional level, but the educational element is a way to stir interest in the landscape itself, as well as addressing the healing energy of nature and being able to incorporate this into his writing has resonated deeply with the writer, **"It's educational, it's inspirational, and that's my mantra, entertainment is inspiration and education... I find so much pride and sense of purpose."** Parts of the project unfolded organically. For example, an opportunity for an impromptu Q and A session arose, while the writer was out in the landscape working on the production of the video...**"that's how we like to work because it becomes clear when you're working on something, oh, it'd be great if we could do this...And that sort of evolves with the art."**

This in-the-moment idea was filmed, and the aim is to use this in schools, which is an example of new ideas that are forming off the back of the project...**"We've been in touch with Surrey Hills Arts, Music Department and Secondary Schools about them sharing that and building a resource...Because I think that that will be really powerful to that age, 12 to 15, maybe. So we're pursuing that right now."**

The hope is to continue to use the piece to encourage nature connection and creativity. The writer reflects, **"using this type of art form to, to explore nature is encouraging, so to young creatives that are just trying to find new ways to communicate and tell stories...And then also just ultimately, a call to action for people to explore the topic matter that we've stated in this piece, is also another personal hope of mine as well."**

Surrey Hills Arts, the producer on the project reflected on art being a way to encouraging people to access and become more aware of the natural world and how it can **"engage people that wouldn't normally come out into the landscape or have access to quality arts activity."**

What began as a creative commission appears to have enabled something much deeper; a shared narrative of nature, healing, and identity, and the emergence of a legacy that blends education, inspiration, and emotional connection.

DAWN AFTER NIGHT, SPRING AFTER WINTER BY DANIEL LOCKE & DAVID BLANDY

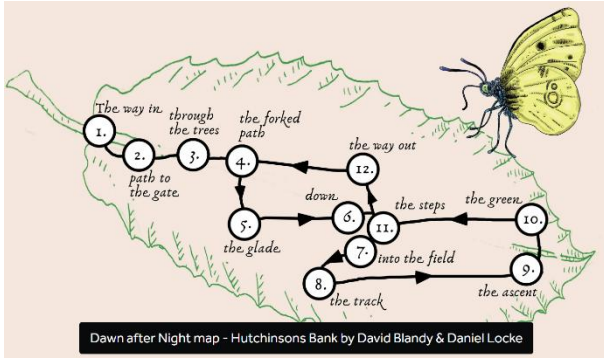


Illustration by David Blandy & Daniel Locke

'Dawn After Night, Spring After Winter' is a pair of free, artist-led game-trail walks created with local communities to inspire new ways of experiencing the landscapes of Hutchinson's Bank and Box Hill, blending fantasy, lived experience and Still Shadey's landscape-inspired lyrics. Designed to be played at home or outdoors, the trails use poetry, storytelling, drawing and immersive audio to help people see nature with fresh eyes, supported by a rich creative process explored further in a conversation with Dr Lena Grinsted.

In total 595 people (a cautious estimate) clicked on the posts. The most popular posts at Box Hill were posts 1 and 10, and posts 1 and 8 at Hutchisons Bank.

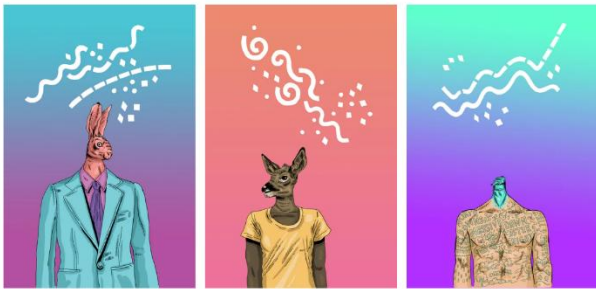


Illustration by David Blandy & Daniel Locke



Image credit Ameena Rojee



Image credit Ameena Rojee

PROGRAMME COMMUNICATIONS

- Still Shadey, Writer - Surrey Hills – received 82 visits to the webpage with an average of 13 views per month. In addition Still Shadey received the following number of views for Still Shadey Writer, 29 views, Still Shadey Nature’s Anthem, 119 views & Still Shadey’s anthem and discussion, 28 views.
- Dawn After Night, Spring After Winter received 387 views online, an average of 65 per month. Whilst David Blandy & Daniel Locke’s – Artist’s, / conversation on Youtube received 7 views

STRENGTHS OF THE PROJECT

The team at Surrey Hills reflected that having Still Shady involved brought a fresh and valuable dimension to the project. Overall, the experience highlighted how diverse artistic contributions can broaden the project’s impact and connect with new audiences. **“I think having Still Shady’s piece is a strength... it’s a beautiful piece... having a different face to show... is quite a positive thing for the Surrey Hills National Landscape.”** The team also reflected that the permanence of the trails within the landscape offered the opportunity for future engagement in the work.

The advisory board played a major role in widening engagement, often suggesting new contacts and helping the team link with people who could support the work. These factors made collaboration smoother and opened doors to meaningful relationships within the community. **“It happened to be London Borough of Culture, so there was that additional post... really eager for new activity... For us not knowing the borough at all, it was actually quite easy... to make those quite important connections.”**

“Within the advisory board, they said, ‘Oh, how about talking to so-and-so?’ So the advisory board themselves had a lot of connections.”

NATURE CALLING COMMUNICATIONS

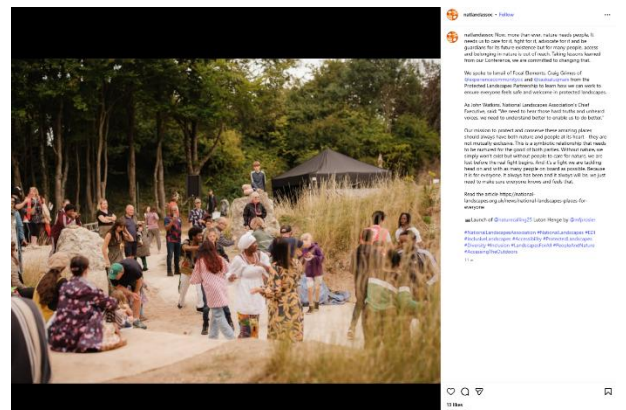
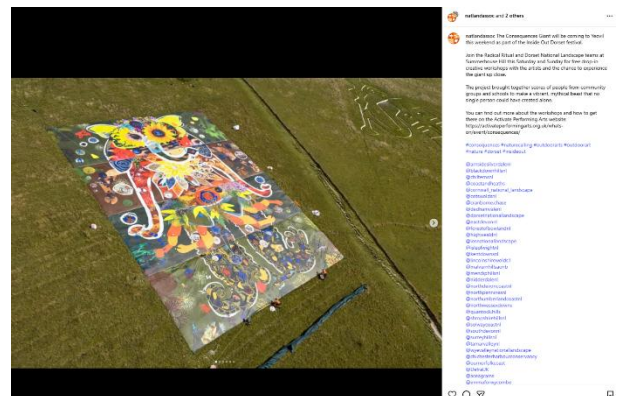
Website traffic increased significantly across the year, with strong engagement in autumn and early 2025.

Website users rose steadily, peaking between October 2024 and March 2025, with monthly users ranging from 115–435, and new users tracking closely behind. Engagement time remained strong (often 2–3 minutes), showing people were not just visiting but reading. Pages linked to commissions—Commissions, About, Projects, Dawn After Night, Shelf Life, Consequences—consistently attracted the highest traffic, demonstrating a clear public interest in artist content and storytelling from the landscapes.

Individual artist/commission pages drove substantial traffic and reveal which projects captured attention most.

Several commission pages received very high visit counts over the year:

- Shelf Life (552 visits)
- Are You Lost (405 visits)
- Dawn After Night, Spring After Winter (387 visits)
- View In View Out (372 visits)
- Still Shadey (Surrey Hills) (82 visits but notable spikes)



These patterns show that video-rich, narrative or place-specific commissions attracted the most engagement, especially when paired with engaging visuals or audio.

Instagram was the strongest-growing platform, with exceptional reach and interaction spikes.

Instagram reach was consistently high with a yearly total of over 53,000 views and monthly peaks above 10,000-12,000. Followers grew steadily from 358 to over 1,050, an average of +60 per month. Interactions also showed clear spikes aligned to major artist releases or campaign pushes (e.g., 546 interactions in one month). This confirms Instagram as the most effective platform for storytelling, visuals and project visibility.

Facebook showed slower but reliable steady growth.

The Facebook page grew from 28 to 103 followers across the year, with engagement levels modest but stable. Growth aligns with announcements or artist features, suggesting Facebook is most effective for older demographics and event-driven updates rather than high-volume visibility.

LinkedIn remains a major visibility driver for professional audiences.

LinkedIn Page Views were high throughout the year—65,987 in the first recorded period and 20,567 in the following period—showing reliable, high-volume professional interest. Followers grew from 1,866 to 3,408, showing strong sector engagement. Impressions were consistently strong (up to 21,378 in a single month). This demonstrates LinkedIn’s role as a hub for funders, partners, arts professionals and policy audiences.

YouTube and Podcast content attracted steady interest, with standout pieces acting as anchor works.

Key high performers:

- Nature is Calling (launch film): 215 views
- Shelf Life (Lincs Wolds): 155 views
- Still Shadey Nature’s Anthem: 119 views
- OneDa Connections: 91 views

Podcasts through Podbean also attracted solid niche engagement (notably 21 downloads for INSTAR). Video content clearly supports deeper narrative engagement, while podcasts provide a long-tail professional insight resource.

Nature Calling also achieved significant national media visibility through targeted PR activity delivered by specialist agency The Space in Between. Coverage included a feature in The Guardian, positioning the programme within a wider cultural and environmental conversation and helping to raise awareness among arts and policy audiences. Broadcast reach was further amplified through a dedicated feature on the BBC’s Countryfile, which brought the project to an estimated audience of around 5 million viewers and showcased the Forest of Bowland’s Are You Lost? installation in particular. Together, this high-profile media coverage substantially extended the project’s public reach beyond direct participants, strengthening national profile and reinforcing the programme’s credibility across both cultural and environmental sectors.

Across all channels, the project generated strong growth, wide visibility and sustained engagement, particularly through Instagram, LinkedIn and the website. Artist-led commissions consistently drove the highest traffic, proving



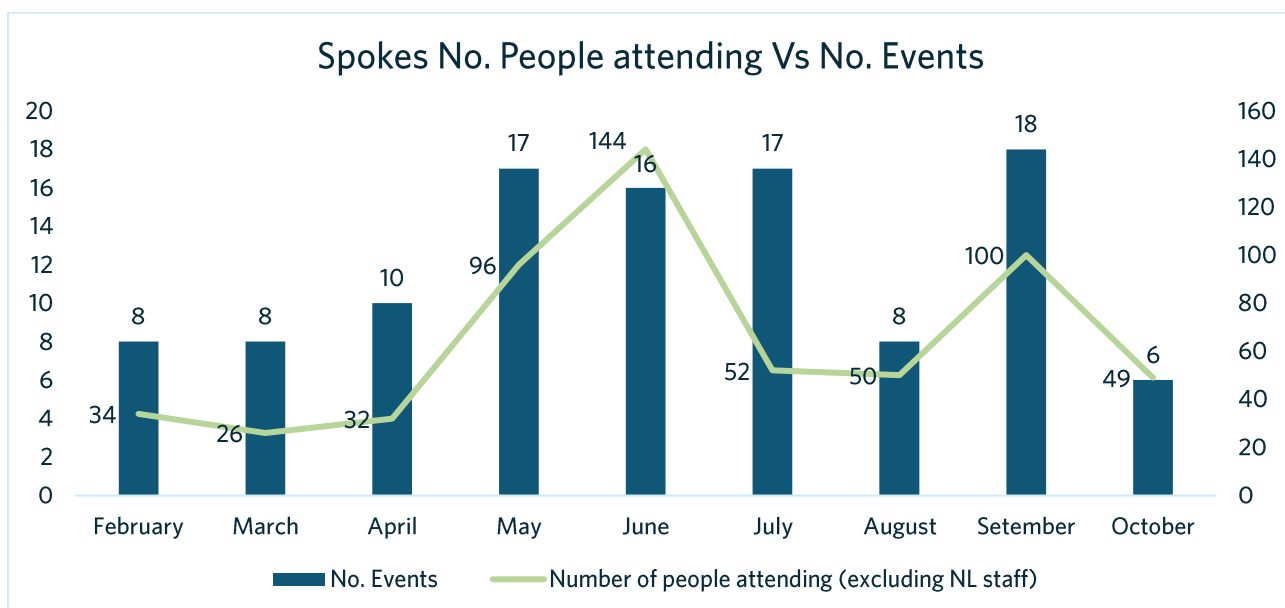
that audiences connect strongly with creative storytelling rooted in place. The peaks in autumn/winter and early 2025 highlight successful campaign timing, and social growth patterns suggest a healthy and expanding audience base across both public-facing and professional platforms. Collectively, the comms data demonstrates that Nature Calling has built a high-impact, multi-platform digital footprint, successfully amplifying artists, landscapes and the core vision of the project.

ACTIVITY AT THE SPOKES

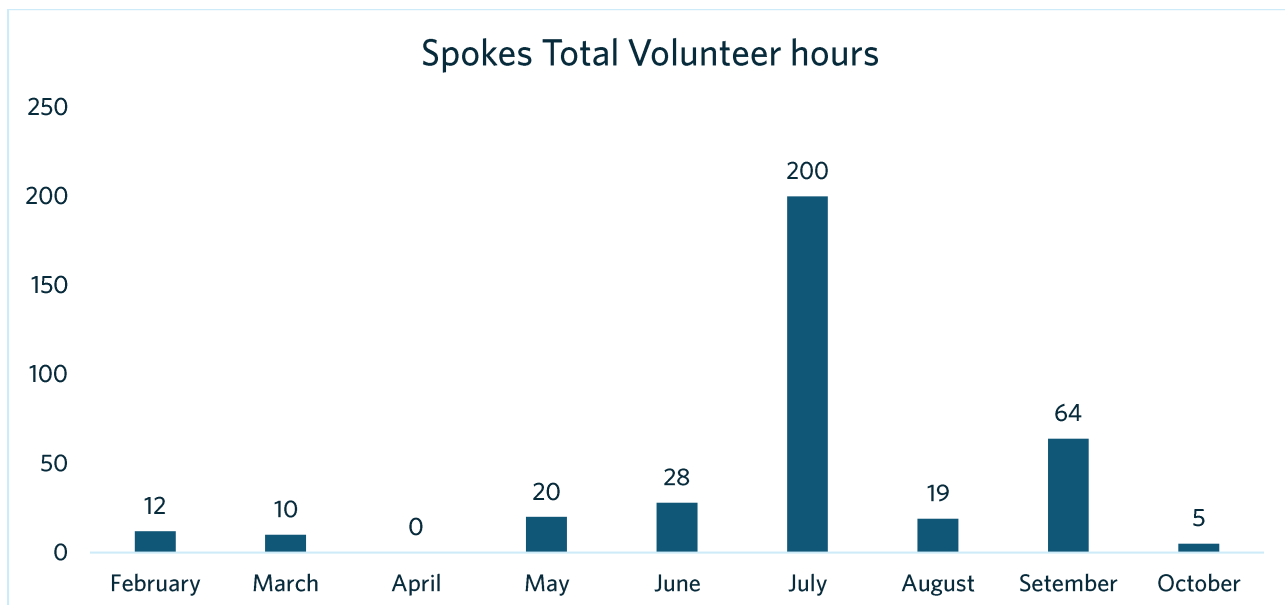
The Spoke National Landscape taking part included; North Devon, East Devon, South Devon, Blackdown Hills, Arnside and Silverdale, North Pennines, Northumberland Coast, Solway Coast, Nidderdale, Howardian Hills, Malvern Hills, Shropshire Hills, Cornwall, Tamar Valley, Isle of Wight, Kent Downs and the High Weald, along with the Super Spokes - Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority and New Forest National Park Authority

Across the Spokes, partners focused first on laying strong foundations, using meetings, informal conversations and interviews with artists and arts organisations to recruit creative practitioners, plan programmes and co-design activity with local groups. Once in place, Spokes delivered a wide range of nature-based creative engagement: inception visits and site tours helped artists get to know each landscape, while community days, carers’ breaks and youth sessions combined time outdoors with making, music, film, poetry and craft.

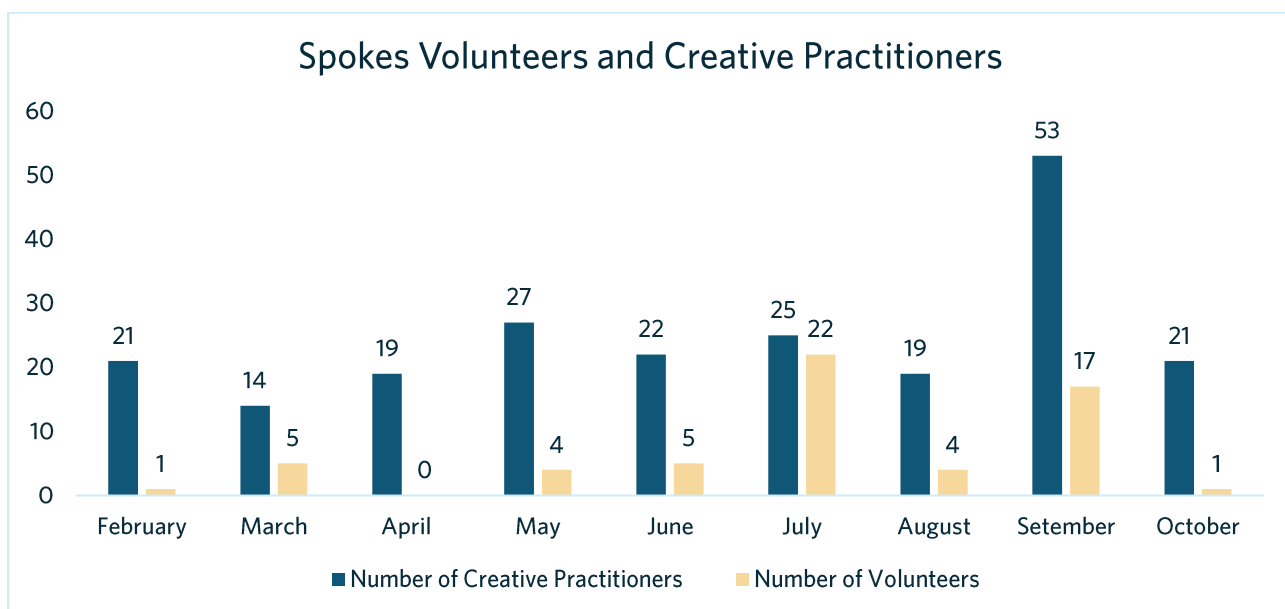
Several Spokes worked intensively with specific communities, including young carers, adult carers, dementia groups, school and SEND groups, using repeated workshops to build confidence and deepen participants’ connection to local nature. Others used high-profile public events and festivals, such as agricultural shows, cultural festivals and town celebrations, to reach very large and diverse audiences, often integrating “pathways to nature” activities into busy public programmes. Alongside face-to-face work, some Spokes invested in youth committees, communication and social media to involve young people in commissioning decisions and to extend the reach of the work digitally. Overall, the spokes used a mix of artist development, partnership building, targeted group work, outdoor creative experiences and large-scale public events to test different ways of connecting people with National Landscapes through culture and creativity.



The Spokes programme also saw a summer spike in attendance, but they ran events in a fairly consistent way between February and October 2025. The average number of events per month was 12 with the average number of participants being 475.



The graph shows that volunteer hours fluctuated throughout the year, with relatively low levels of activity from February to June and a sharp peak in July at **200 hours**, indicating a concentrated period of volunteer engagement. After July, hours decreased but remained active, with a smaller rise in **September (64 hours)** before dropping again in October, suggesting that volunteer involvement aligned with key project events or seasonal activities.



On reflection with the Spokes teams, the spoke leads highlighted a number of things that worked particularly well across the Nature Calling programme. Strong, values-driven partnerships with arts organisations were central to this. In the Yorkshire Dales National Park super spoke, commissioning Shape North was seen as a major success: their clear communication, shared commitment to working with young people who face barriers, and attention to practical access (locations, indoor spaces, toilets, travel) meant the right groups were engaged and supported. Similarly, in Nidderdale, partnering with Chapel FM in Seacroft created a genuinely collaborative project, "New Eyes

for Nidderdale”, that combined the arts centre’s deep community roots with the National Landscape’s knowledge of place.

Spokes also reported powerful creative outcomes and moments of connection. In Nidderdale, trips with asylum seekers, refugees and local residents to working farms and iconic sites such as Brimham Rocks led to radio pieces, singing, writing and drawing. Staff described “magical” spontaneous moments, such as Eritrean and Ethiopian participants breaking into song, and a scratch performance with large “giants” among the rocks that drew in tourists as an informal audience and gave the group a real sense of ownership of the landscape. In East Devon and the Blackdown Hills, work with a dementia support group and a community college culminated in an immersive exhibition at a local gallery, with especially moving intergenerational encounters – for example, children making leafy headdresses for older adults.

Building on existing trusted relationships was another clear strength. In Arnside & Silverdale, working with Coppice Co-op and the Stations of Welcome women’s group allowed the spoke to deepen an established partnership and move from “just” session delivery to creating tangible outputs: carved benches and a handrail installed both in the National Nature Reserve and at Accrington Station. The women, many of whom did not initially see themselves as artists, developed skills and confidence through supported carving sessions and embedded their own identities into the work through motifs such as train tracks, acorns and symbols from their mosque. The project also successfully brought new partners, such as the local Landscape Trust, into direct contact with the group, prompting reflection on their responsibility to engage more diverse communities.

Finally, the support structures around the spokes were experienced as helpful and enabling. Spoke leads valued having access to specialist advice (for example, from the central team and colleagues) when they were trying approaches that felt outside their comfort zone, and the chance for neighbouring National Landscapes to combine budgets and share workload. Several people noted that Nature Calling had significantly increased their confidence in working with arts organisations and artists, and that, despite the learning curve, they would now actively seek similar opportunities in future. Overall, what went well was the combination of strong partnerships, careful attention to access and inclusion, rich creative processes, and the building of relationships that are likely to continue beyond the life of the project.

USING COMMUNITY VENUES

In total 43% of events took place in community venues with 36% taking place outdoors. A further 21% took place in venues which were both community and outdoors or were described as ‘other’.

Community Venue Vs Outdoor Site Percentage

	Hubs	Spokes	Total
Community	124 = 42%	47 = 44%	171 = 43%
Outdoor	123 = 42%	22 = 21%	145 = 36%
Both/Other	48 = 16%	36 = 34%	84 = 21%
Total	285	105	400

Event Type as Percentage

Artists	51 = 20%	38 = 36%	89 = 24%
Public event	111 = 43%	16 = 15%	127 = 35%
Team & Development?	14 = 5%	27 = 25%	41 = 11%
Writer	7 = 3%	0	7 = 2%
Other/Blanks	39 = 15%	26 = 24%	65 = 18%

Training	6 = 2%	0	6 = 2%
Walk	29 = 11%	0	29 = 8%
Total	257	107	364

PATHWAYS TO NATURE

Pathways to Nature refers to the different routes through which people build a meaningful, confident and lasting relationship with the natural world. It recognises that connection doesn't happen in a single moment but through layered experiences: early sparks of curiosity; accessible, low-pressure opportunities to notice, explore or create; supportive social environments; and regular, repeated contact that feels safe, relevant and enjoyable. These pathways can include sensory encounters, emotional resonance, learning and skill-building, creative expression, social bonding, and practical action. Together, they help people move from occasional contact with nature to deeper feelings of belonging, stewardship and care.

Key finding: In total, 77% of all the hubs activities included the pathways to nature.

Did this event include the pathways to nature?	Hubs	Spokes	Both
Yes	220 = 77%	57 = 50%	277 = 69%
No	60 = 21%	80 = 44%	110 = 28%
Not sure	5 = 18%	7 = 6%	12 = 3%
Both	285	114	399

SECTION THREE: IMPACT

This section summarises the impact of Nature Calling on people, practice and places across the programme. It brings together evidence of behaviour change (for example, deeper, repeated engagement with nature and creative activity), shifts in commissioning practice, and the ways in which artists and writers developed their work in response to landscapes and communities. It also explores who took part and how far the programme reached new and more diverse audiences, including those from Global Majority backgrounds and more deprived areas. Finally, it draws on wellbeing and connection-to-nature measures to show how creative, place-based work can support people to feel better, feel they belong, and feel more connected to the natural world.

IMPACT ON BEHAVIOUR

The Mendip Hills hub demonstrated a clear impact on behaviour change through its adaptive engagement strategy, which shifted from broad recruitment efforts to a targeted focus on established community groups. In response to initial participation challenges, the engagement plan was revised multiple times to overcome blockages and ensure delivery remained aligned with contract expectations and value for money. By partnering with key groups such as drama clubs, YMCA participants and home-educated young people, the project succeeded in fostering sustained, high-quality involvement rather than prioritising large numbers. This refined approach not only encouraged deeper engagement and more meaningful behaviour change within a smaller cohort, but also generated further opportunities for continued creative activity, with some groups independently progressing to additional Super Culture-funded work.

- **“We changed the way we did things and ended up working with just some set existing groups... like some drama groups, a YMCA group, a home ed group, that worked really well then.”**

- **“We were going to get a group of young people together... but because of some of those blockages... we had an engagement plan that changed maybe about five times... that change of approach, it’s led to a lot more engagement - of less people, maybe - but high-quality... better quality engagement for fewer people.”**

Nature Calling also enabled significant behaviour change through the creation of positive, shared experiences that strengthened participants’ sense of belonging. An unrushed day out in the countryside provided families, many of whom rarely participate in community activities, with the opportunity to relax, reflect and connect with nature. Staff observed that even groups unfamiliar with outdoor environments quickly became comfortable and engaged, highlighting the wellbeing benefits of the approach. The theme of belonging resonated particularly strongly with groups such as Yeovil Together, connected to Dorset National Landscape, where participants expressed how valued and connected they felt. Reinforced by the recurring artistic message of “together we are giant,” the experience helped build confidence, collective identity and new social bonds, supporting families who might otherwise remain isolated to feel welcomed and part of something bigger.

- **“I think that time, an unrushed day out in the countryside... I could see that people were just reflecting and feeling good about being in nature.”**
- **“A sense of belonging was one of the themes... and it really did work... particularly with the Yeovil Together... and the things they said about belonging... was really moving.”**
- **“...one of the headteachers said she would never... those families never come out to anything.”**
- **“...the artists all through the workshops had had sort of a recurring song and a theme about ‘together we are giant’, and it just really connected with people.”**
- **“...all of the groups were surprised about how relaxed they became being outdoors.”**

In the Surrey Hills - The Box Hill event provided strong evidence of the positive impact of sustained engagement on behaviour change among young people. All participants from Croydon who had taken part in the dance activities attended the event, demonstrating their commitment and the value they placed on the experience. The continuity provided by the dance artist, who built relationships and inspired confidence over time, contributed to a deeper sense of motivation and ownership. In contrast, engagement with the trail artists was more limited due to budget constraints and the requirement to work across all age groups, resulting in shorter encounters that offered less opportunity for meaningful interaction. Despite these challenges, the event highlighted that when young people receive ongoing, high-quality support, their enthusiasm, participation and long-term engagement significantly increase.

- **“Maybe the event that we did at Box Hill... the young people from Croydon who took part in the dance activity, they all showed up that day for the event at Box Hill.”**
- **“They had ongoing engagement with our dance artist. I think ongoing engagement leads to a bit more meaning.”**
- **“But I think... the dance artist being so driven... that really helped inspire those young people and they all turned up on the day.”**

The project further demonstrated behaviour change through increased resilience and willingness to participate, even in challenging circumstances. Staff noted their delight when young people arrived for outdoor activities despite torrential weather, reflecting a growing commitment and enthusiasm for the programme. Forest School sessions and creative walks, in particular, facilitated deep engagement, enabling children and young people to build confidence, connect with nature and develop new skills. While it remains uncertain whether participants will independently revisit trails with their families, the experience clearly laid foundations for continued interest in outdoor learning and exploration.

- **“Seeing them come out on a torrential morning was... well, we were like, they’ve arrived, they’ve actually turned up, we’re so happy.”**

- **“Some of the activities that are particularly successful... the forest school activities, the creative walks... that was a deep engagement for the children and young people.”**
- **“It would be nice to think the kids would take their family out to do the trail, but we just don’t know.”**

At the Forest of Bowland, participants consistently reported that working closely with charismatic artists was a highly valued aspect of the project, with many expressing a desire for ongoing creative interaction. Although early delivery discussions focused on reaching high numbers of different groups, the emerging evidence suggested that repeated engagement led to greater depth and more memorable experiences. One example of this was a reflective blog that powerfully captured the personal significance of her participation and was widely shared as a testament to the project’s impact. Additionally, organised outings to Bowland provided a highlight for many, offering free transport, exposure to new environments and the excitement of discovering animals and nature. These experiences were frequently referenced by participants afterwards, demonstrating their lasting influence and the importance of accessible, high-quality engagement opportunities.

- **“I think that what people really enjoyed was actually working with an artist... they were both quite charismatic... and people... really enjoyed that contact and wanted to do more of it.”**
- **One participant “wrote this lovely blog that we used quite a lot... she was quite exceptional...”**
- **“I think the chance for groups to come out to Bowland... was the highlight for them all... getting on a bus and going somewhere different and meeting animals and nature... free transport, free day out... they talked about the impact it had on them afterwards.”**

Over in the Lincolnshire Wolds, the project demonstrated tangible behavioural and educational impacts within secondary school settings. Artists were able to secure access to GCSE classes, where the creative techniques they introduced contributed directly to students’ final grades, providing clear curricular value. Teachers reported that even pupils who were typically difficult to engage showed sustained interest and enjoyment, behaviour they had not previously witnessed, highlighting a positive shift in engagement and confidence. By embedding activities within wider community events, the project also sparked curiosity and dialogue about local landscapes, with young people asking how they could access the Wolds and learn more about the area. Furthermore, creative outputs such as the poem and film became effective conversation starters among farmers, who reflected on their role in supporting wildlife, demonstrating how the work encouraged wider community reflection and pride in local environmental stewardship.

- **“Our artists managed to get into secondary schools... and they got to work with GCSE students... the techniques they were teaching them... went towards their final grades.”**
- **“Some of the pupils... really hard to work with... were actually really engaged, and they really enjoyed themselves... the teachers said they’ve never seen that before...”**
- **“Because we’d attached ourselves to events... it opened a lot of conversation... where are the wolds? How can we access it?”**
- **“The poem and the film... was quite a talking piece for farmers... they wanted to discuss... how they were helping wildlife... a lot of positive conversations.”**

The project at Luton Henge demonstrated tangible behavioural and educational impacts within secondary school settings. Artists were able to secure access to GCSE classes, where the creative techniques they introduced contributed directly to students’ final grades, providing clear curricular value. Teachers reported that even pupils who were typically difficult to engage showed sustained interest and enjoyment—behaviour they had not previously witnessed—highlighting a positive shift in engagement and confidence. By embedding activities within wider community events, the project also sparked curiosity and dialogue about local landscapes, with young people asking how they could access the Wolds and learn more about the area. Furthermore, creative outputs such as the poem and film became effective conversation starters among farmers, who reflected on their role in supporting wildlife—demonstrating how the work encouraged wider community reflection and pride in local environmental stewardship.

- “People coming back for the chalk packing... coming back for the second and third time just because they loved it... it was very social... and quite physical.”
- “That sense of belonging... feeling that you’re doing something good... creating something.”
- “When the Luton Henge Collective was established... and the local community were able to then really feed into what activities happened at the henge...”
- “When people... are leading activities and designing activities... you know that it’s probably going to be pretty successful...”
- “We’ve got a physical henge, it’s there for people to use all the time... some legacy outcome.”

IMPACT ON COMMISSIONING



“The project pushed us and moved us out of our comfort zones – I don’t think we felt that prepared for the interview & commissioning process for example”

- National Landscape Staff


Across the hubs and with the national team there was consistent agreement that the commission brief was overly long, complex, and difficult to communicate, which created confusion for artists and commissioners alike. Several people described it as **“way too long... too layered,”** and noted that the dual writing–artist structure made it **“really hard to talk about... a real red flag when you can’t explain it easily.”** Others reflected that the presentation and sequencing added unnecessary barriers, with one hub simply saying, **“it was a nightmare for the artist... it was horrible.”** Overall, the brief was seen as well-intentioned but over-engineered, leading to lost applicants, mixed understanding, and avoidable delays.

Commissioning was described as uneven, time-consuming, and often more complicated than expected, with many hubs feeling they lacked clarity, control, or timely support. Some hubs felt disconnected from key decisions and, in one case, **“burned some bridges... with local artists.”** Others highlighted the challenge of managing multiple partners and roles, saying it took considerable time to **“work out roles and responsibilities,”** particularly where artists brought their own producers or where advisory groups were weak or inconsistent. Overall, commissioning was seen as a task that required stronger early structure, clearer roles, and more local autonomy to avoid delays, tension, and unintended consequences.

Despite all those challenges, a lot of artists and writers did apply for the commissions. There were 247 applications in total, with Surrey Hills receiving the most at 51. The remaining applications were: Dorset 48, Mendip Hills 39, Forest of Bowland 38, Chilterns 37, and Lincolnshire Wolds 34.

Artists and writers first heard about the commission through a wide mix of channels, reflecting strong reach across both digital platforms and personal networks. Social media was a common route, with Instagram and Facebook mentioned alongside general online advertising and arts-focused sites such as Arts Jobs. Several people learned about the opportunity through colleagues, local connections, or being sent information directly by others. A number of respondents referred to the original call-out in May 2024, while others heard through specific networks such as the Renew Addington Network or were directly invited to apply. Overall, the commission reached people through a

blend of social media, professional networks, and targeted online platforms.

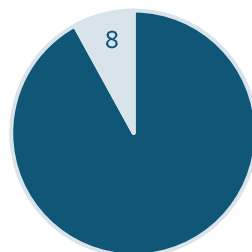


“When you find the right working relationships, there's so much more you can do.”

- Creative Practitioner

IMPACT ON ARTISTS & WRITERS

Have you ever worked with National Landscapes before?



■ No, this is a first for me ■ 1-2 previous commissions or projects

The artists and writers chosen were mostly new to nature working – with 42% of them never having worked on a nature or landscape commission before, and a further 33% having worked on 1-2 previous commissions or projects.

Most artists and writers said the experience shifted or strengthened the way they thought about working in the landscape, often in unexpectedly powerful ways. Several described feeling inspired, with one saying, **“very inspired by the collaborative creative process”** and another said it encouraged them to **“look at my own relationship with the landscape... in new ways.”**




“I feel more connected to the landscape and am keen to move my practice in a direction of nature-based work. I feel I can say I’m a nature writer now!”

- Writer

For some, the work prompted a deeper reconnection: one reflected that the project **“reminded me that I missed getting out there,”** unlocking **“the best and most energetic writing I had done in a long time.”** Many also spoke about wanting to use their practice to help others connect with nature, saying it had **“made me realise I want to bring the landscape to more people”** and inspired them **“to support more people to tell their stories of nature”**



and land.” A small number said it had not changed their thinking, explaining “No. I find it really rewarding as always,” suggesting that for those already working confidently in landscape, the project reaffirmed existing motivations rather than shifting them.



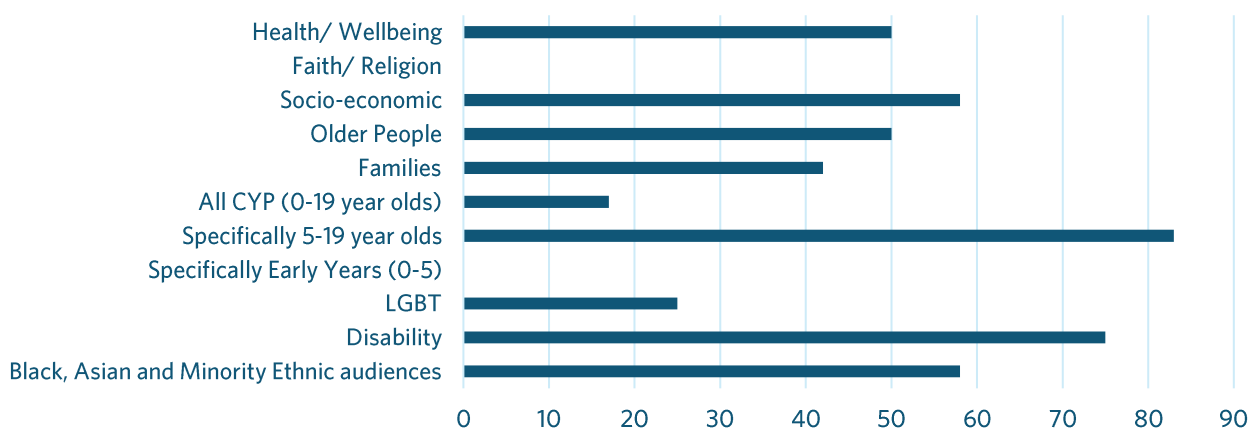
“Getting reconnected with the freshness, the freedom, the fairness brought out of me the best and most energetic writing I had done in a long time.”

- Writer

On average, writers and artists reported spending significant time on their Nature Calling commissions, highlighting the importance of fair and transparent payment for creative labour. Across all respondents, the average time commitment was 117 hours, with artists spending around 122 hours and writers averaging 107 hours. At the time of surveying, most writing commissions had been completed, enabling a clearer calculation of workload and payment; this equated to an average hourly rate of £56. Many artists were still mid-commission when surveyed, meaning their total hours were likely to increase further. These figures reinforce the need for commissioning structures that recognise the depth of creative work, the iterative nature of artistic practice, and the real time required to deliver high-quality, community-facing creative projects.

The graph shows that artists and writers most frequently tailor their work to children and young people (0-19 years), disability audiences, and socio-economic groups, with each of these receiving over half of respondents’ focus. In contrast, areas such as faith, LGBT, and early years (0-5) receive comparatively lower targeted attention, indicating more niche or specialised engagement.

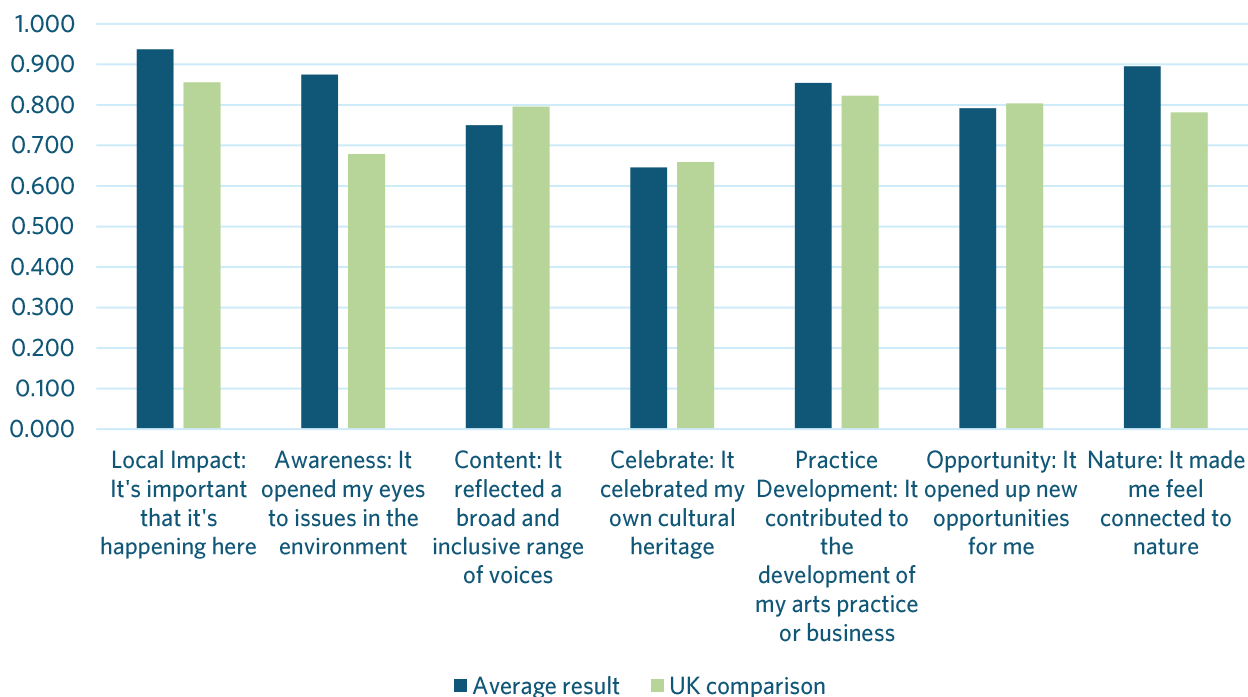
Percentage of artists and writers work aimed at specific audiences



This evaluation measured the quality of both art and experience using the Arts Council Quality Metrics, which are a set of statements that organisations can ask audiences and peers to agree or disagree with. The Quality Metrics have been nationally tested with circa 19,000 audiences and peers and provide a benchmark, broken down into different broad and detailed artforms and by presentation. These are now available as updated benchmarks on the Insight & Impact Toolkit site. Within the survey, we provided a series of statements and asked respondents how

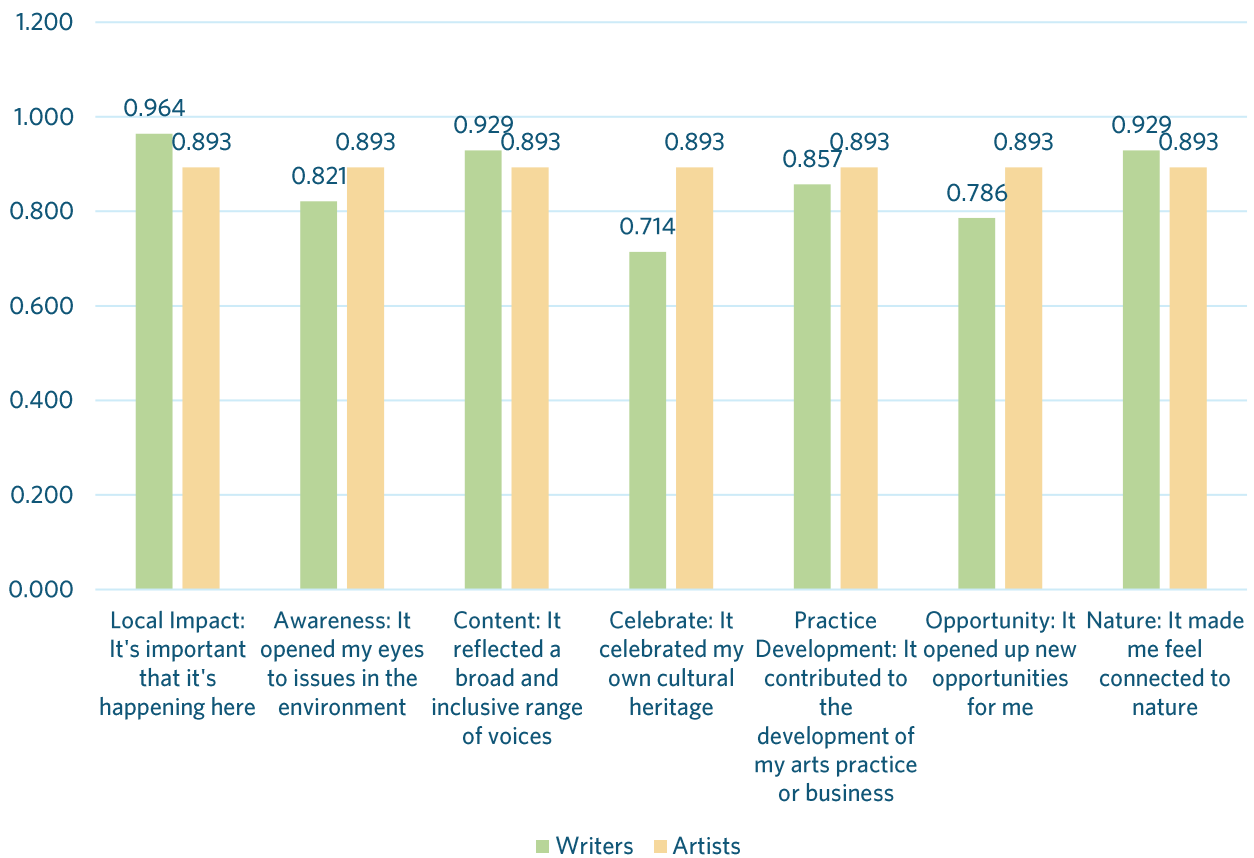
much they agreed with the statements, ranging from 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'not sure', 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree'. Scores closer to 1 represent higher agreement, a larger number is better.

Art Quality Compared to UK results



These results show that the writers and artists scored the Nature Calling programme very highly in four areas; Local Impact, Awareness, Practice Development and Nature. All of these were above UK average results for quality.

Writer and Artist Quality Result Comparison



There are a number of interesting findings when artists and writer quality scores are compared, although this is a small sample, and can't indicate broader trends. Of note is that writers were much less likely to feel the project celebrated their own cultural heritage than artists - does this indicate that writers felt able to put less of themselves into the writing? Artists scored higher on 'opportunity' and 'awareness' too, but writers were much more likely to agree with the statements 'It's important that it's happening here' and 'It made me feel connected to nature'.

Artists and writers told us what they had heard from audiences:

Participants' reflections on the creative sessions were often warm, personal and immediate. Many people expressed surprise at their own creativity, saying things like "I didn't know I was such a good writer...", "Maybe I could be a producer when I grow up...", and "Are we getting royalties for this?!" Others responded to the sense of place, describing moments of calm and belonging: "It's peaceful here. I could come here... I could just come here!" Requests such as "Can we do this every week?" showed how strongly some individuals connected with the experience. Several artists also reported that early feedback on poems, drawings and nature-based creative work was "bloody lovely," with workshop participants saying the pieces felt like a "true reflection" of their shared experiences in the landscape.

Workshop evaluation forms, emails, and social media messages were consistently positive, with participants emphasising how the experimental approach helped them find "new ways of drawing and writing," connect more meaningfully with the landscape, and enjoy the social aspects of taking part.

There were also powerful moments where individuals' confidence and sense of identity appeared to grow. In one school session, a boy who struggled in conventional lessons proudly announced, "I made it because I'm an artist!"—a highlight noted by the facilitators. Staff at one community group - Good Food Matters - were so

impressed by the engagement during the workshop that they began considering art sessions alongside their usual cooking activities. Another standout example came from a guided nature walk where children became so absorbed in collecting leaves and bracken that the activity was extended, with several asking if the artists would return the following week. Teaching staff reported that this group **"were often easily distracted"** and that they had **"rarely seen them so engaged."** Across the hubs, one artist also noted that the Pendle team were particularly impressed with the young people's writing sessions.

NATURE CALLING: CASE STUDY - THE WRITERS STORY

CASE STUDY



This case study shares how a Luton-based writer transformed a deeply personal connection to nature, childhood memory and place into a powerful creative project that invited others—including local asylum seekers—to rediscover joy, belonging and a sense of "ownership" of the landscape. What began as an authentic, values-driven commission grew into moments of elation, shared discovery and lasting confidence, revealing how creativity can break down barriers to nature and open up new possibilities for people who rarely get the chance to step outdoors.

I first heard about the commission through my links with a theatre company. The commission not only aligned with my values but with my own personal history and experiences of Luton. I have vivid memories of childhood, and the way in which my father introduced me to nature. This significantly influenced my approach. My application was authentic, and I outlined my creative and perhaps "peculiar" needs! What tends to happen for me when I'm trying to finish something, is that I have to loosen myself up a bit physically. **"So, I did my research...but I also went up into the hills and I danced. Anyone who saw it would have gone - there's a loonie on the hill having a dance!"**

Connection with nature is so important, some people are raised with a notion that they have a right to access it, and some are raised without this and so this whole piece became more about **"ownership and rights to the land"** and if there was a way my words could challenge this and **"invite people to engage with nature to explore how it makes them feel and to let people have that astonishing feeling of untrammelledness you can have a being caught between the hilltop and the sky, then that is what it's for."**

And so we looked at groups of people that may struggle to access that. We contacted some local asylum seekers and these two skilled guys, had come to this country and been stuck in a hotel for months doing nothing, not allowed to do anything. They were animatedly talking about the types of rock in the hill, how the spring works, and about the pipework that was around from the 19th century. They had been stuck in a room staring at concrete for months and here they were, out in the back end of summer and it's still glorious, but it's the right time for the blackberries. So they're eating the blackberries, drinking water from the spring, sharing stories, then at one point, this guy having spoken to us about his farm back at home and outdoor life he was what, he must have been in his mid-twenties, but there's a slope literally it must be 35 45 degrees slope down this hill... **"He just ran down it absolutely full pelt. It still kind of gets me a bit...a smile on his face so wide it looked like the top of his head was going to tip off you know, and it's going to meet around the back, and he just looked astonishing."**

One of the poems ended up being called, *Running Full-Pelt Down a Hill with a Bellyful of Handpicked Blackberries.*

So I've done a thing that made somebody who's been stuck in that situation, and seeing the country that they've come to for support and help, treat them with loathsomeness, and to be able to do something because of this {project} that brought that spark of joy... **"I can tell the story but you can't really articulate the feeling accurately because it's just...it's elation."**

So we were looking at what prevents people from getting into nature, so we talked with the people, we looked at things like accessibility and transport routes. **"there's all these ways not to get there...but if you take them there and show them, then they go, 'oh, this is beautiful', then there's a reason, there's an incentive to overcome the barriers because I had a lovely time that afternoon in**

September, maybe I'll go again." So helping to find ways of using transport so they might try to go themselves after having experienced it.

The world is now deeply unfriendly, and people can be unkind and so to remove barriers, to open things up, **"to do something that's about moments of peace and elation...that was what became the purpose of the work."**

The only frustrating parts for me was the wait after the application, but that is partly inexperience, as I know there's so much work and strategy to be developed. The practical installation phase for the project is next, and the poems are on the website and the other thing, it would be nice to have had some feedback as I'm unsure what people thought.

I have learned a lot and initially uncertain about working something of this scale and so I am looking into other potential projects, **"I'm going to also look at things with a little bit more self-confidence in my capabilities. I've had a brilliant time. It's been an empowering and confidence building thing...I found myself able to operate in larger spheres than previously and it's and everybody's been very, very nice and people have been enthusiastic too."**

IMPACT ON REACHING NEW AUDIENCES

The demographic profile of staff across the hubs shows a predominantly White British workforce, mostly female, and largely aged between their 40s and early 60s. Only a very small number reported being slightly affected by a disability or long-term condition, and just one person identified as neurodivergent, suggesting the team is not demographically diverse across ethnicity, disability or neurodivergence.

All the spokes staff that answered our survey were female, White British, and aged between 26 and 50, with 37.5% aged 26–35 and 62.5% aged 36–50; 12.5% identified as disabled and 25% as neurodivergent. Respondents were spread across IMD deciles 5–10, with the highest proportions in deciles 6 and 7 (25% each).

The artists and writers represented a broad spread of ages and career stages, with participants identifying as emerging (20–34), mid-career (35–49 and 50–64), and established. Most respondents were aged between 35–64, with a smaller number in the 20–34 age group. The majority identified as female, with several male participants. Ethnically, most respondents described themselves as White – English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish, alongside people from Mixed ethnic backgrounds (25%) and Black or Black British – African backgrounds (16.7%). There was a mix of lived experience relating to disability and neurodivergence. Several participants reported that a disability affected their daily life "a little" or "a lot," representing 33.3% of the group. Neurodivergence was also represented, with 41.7% of respondents identifying as neurodivergent and a small number choosing not to disclose. Sexual orientation included heterosexual/straight, queer, and gay woman/lesbian, with some respondents preferring not to say. Overall, the responses show a varied group across age, ethnicity, disability, neurodivergence, and sexual orientation.



"It's so important to reach under-represented groups, because clearly there is a huge community, which I represent to an extent, which wasn't experiencing those benefits."

- Creative Practitioner

Gender



Gender	Nature Calling	Uk Average	Results
Female	64%	51%	<p>Nature Calling generally has an even split between male and female audience members. The percentage of females was slightly higher than the UK average (51%) but this is often due to women being more likely to fill out surveys than men.</p> <p>The Landscapes Review reports that across all members of the 10 National Parks (a comparable audience) there are 71% Male and 29% Female members. This shows that Nature Calling are reaching a higher number of Females than is represented in the membership of the National Parks.</p>
Male	33%	49%	
Non binary	0%	0%	
Prefer not to say	3%	0%	

Age



Age	Nature Calling	Uk Average	Results
0-19	25%	22%	<p>Nature Calling has reached a lot of young people, more than the UK average. It has also reached less than expected numbers of people aged 65+.</p> <p>The Landscapes Review reports that across all members of the 10 National Parks there are 19% of members aged 25-54, 33% are 55-64 and 47% are over 65. This shows that Nature Calling are reaching higher numbers of the younger demographic that is represented in the membership of the National Parks.</p>
20-34	55%	60%	
65+	13%	18%	
Prefer not to say	7%	n/a	

Ethnicity



Ethnicity	Nature Calling	Uk Average	Results
White British	62%	82%	<p>34% of Nature Callings audience were from a non-white background which much higher than the national average of 18%. Figures provided in the Landscapes Review showed that membership of the National Parks represented only 0.9% from Global Majority communities.</p> <p>This shows that Nature Calling is reaching a Global Majority significantly higher than the figure represented in National Parks membership.</p>
Global majority	34%	18%	
Prefer not to say	4%	n/a	

Disability



Disability was not asked on the sign in sheet – for speed reasons, so this is based on the 31 responses we had to a more in depth survey.

Disability	Nature Calling	Uk Average	Results
No	68%	82%	23% of Nature Callings audience identified as being affected by a disability in some way. This is similar to the national average of 18% highlighting how Nature Calling did a good job at engaging those affected by disability.
Yes, Limited a little	13%	18%	
Yes, Limited a lot	10%		
Prefer not to say	9%		

Socio Economic



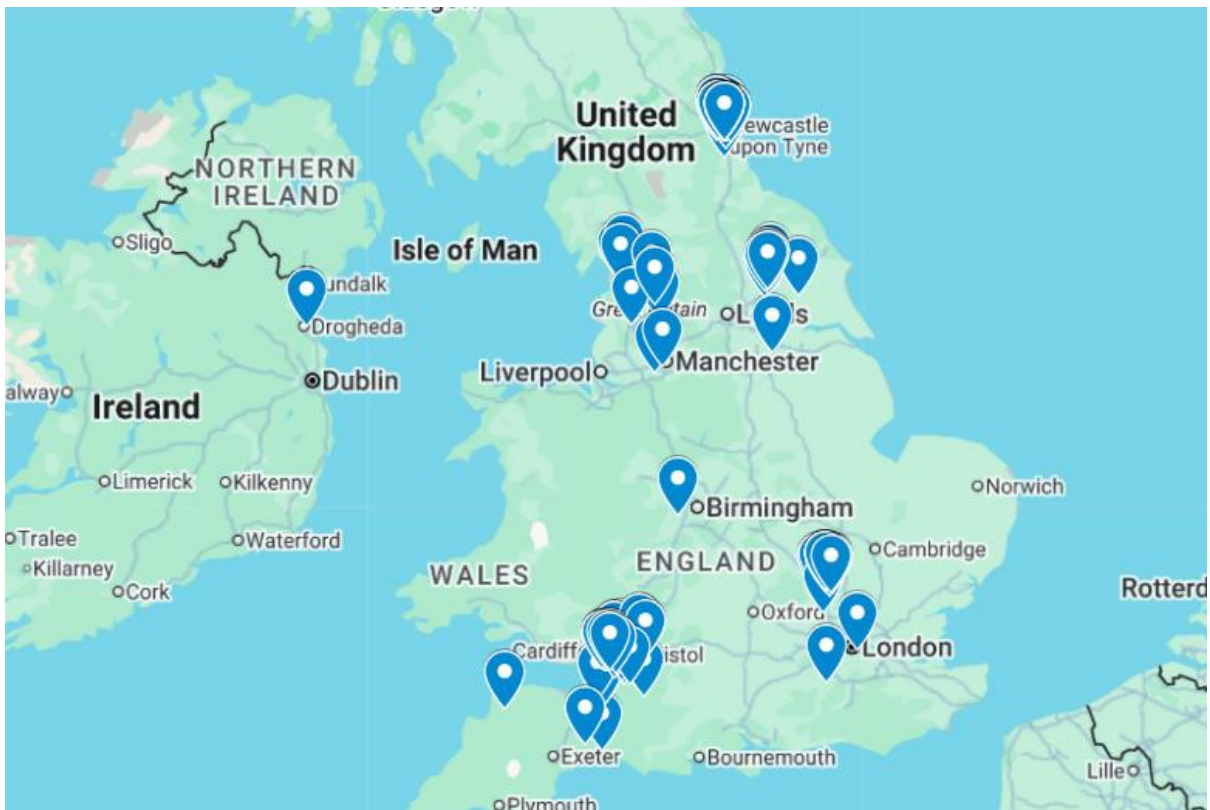
Socio-economic status was measured using participants' postcodes, which were compared to the Indices of Multiple Deprivation. The current English Indices of Deprivation 2019 (IoD2019) is a complex measure which ranks seven domains of deprivation. These seven domains include: income, employment, education, health, crime, barriers to housing and services, and living environment. These domains each have multiple components. For example, 'barriers to housing and services' consider seven components including level of household overcrowding, homelessness, housing affordability, and distance by road to four types of key amenities (post office, primary school, supermarket, and GP surgery). Ultimately the lower the IMD number the more issues that person (in this case household as we have used postcodes) will have as barriers.

IMD 1	IMD 2	IMD 3	IMD 4	IMD 5	% of people in IMD 1-5
21%	14%	13%	4%	4%	57%
IMD 6	IMD 7	IMD 8	IMD 9	IMD 10	% of people in IMD 6-10
13%	10%	8%	4%	7%	43%

20% of Nature callings audience from sign-in sheets were from IMD 1 - the most deprived areas of the UK and typically the hardest to engage with.

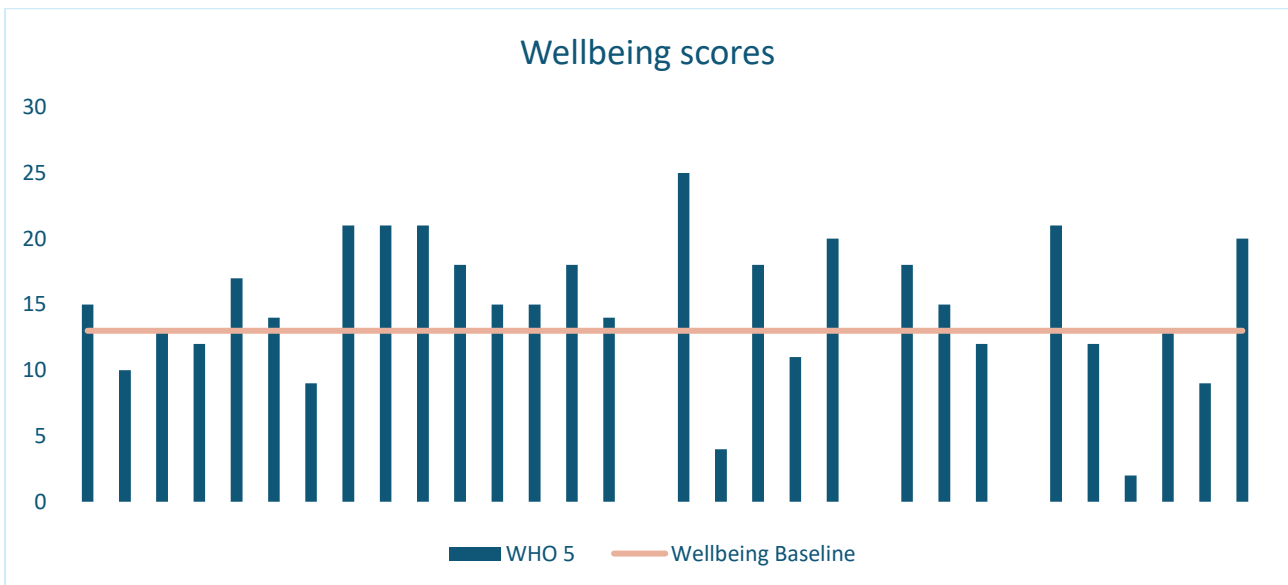
The Nature Calling audience postcodes can be seen below on a searchable link:

https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=1hupi_nlc0EnISnt4b0NBSLWGbqenYkw&usp=sharing



WELLBEING

Participants' wellbeing was measured through the World Health Organisation – Five Well-Being Index (WHO-5). This is a short self-reported measure of their current mental wellbeing. The measure consists of five statements, which respondents are asked to rate on a scale, (in relation to how they have felt over the past two weeks). The statements are scored from 0 (at no time) to 5 (all of the time) and give respondents a total raw score between 0 and 25. A higher score on this measure indicates better mental wellbeing. Each participant's wellbeing was added up to give a total score. A raw score of 13 or below indicates poor mental wellbeing.



The average WHO 5 score was 14.9 with 34% of all participants scoring below the wellbeing baseline of 13.

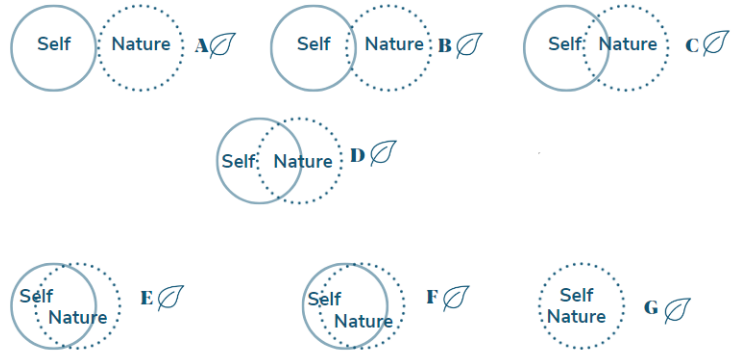
The audience members who were less connected to nature had an average score was 14.8 and for those who felt more connected the average score was 15, this is evidence that people who are more involved in nature tend to have slightly higher wellbeing.

IMPACT ON CONNECTION TO NATURE

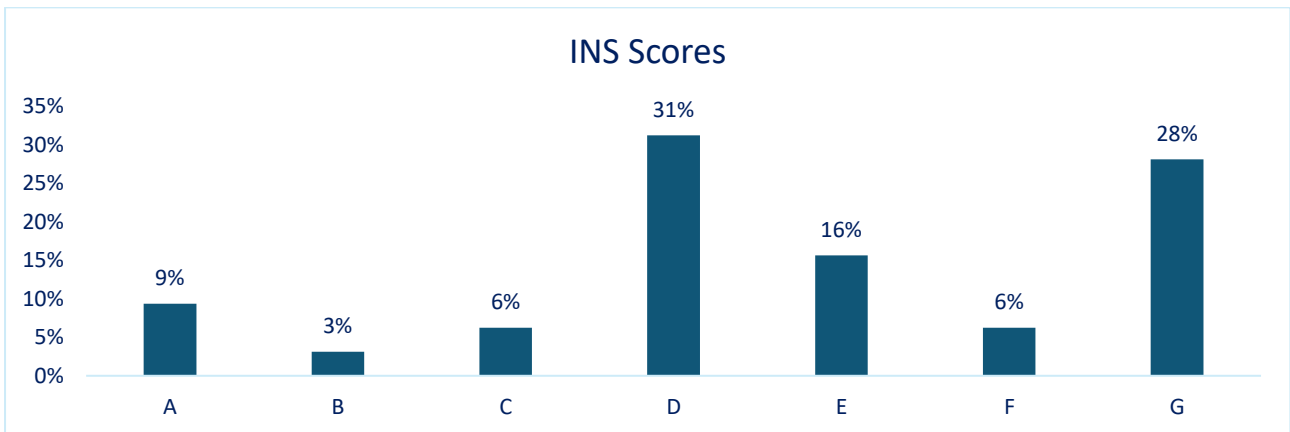
INCLUSION TO NATURE

The Inclusion in Nature Scale was used to measure connection to nature. Participants were asked to pick the diagram from the image below which best represented them, a series of overlapping circles indicate if the person feels their self and nature to be well connected or not.

The Inclusion in Nature Scale (INS) - Which represents you best?



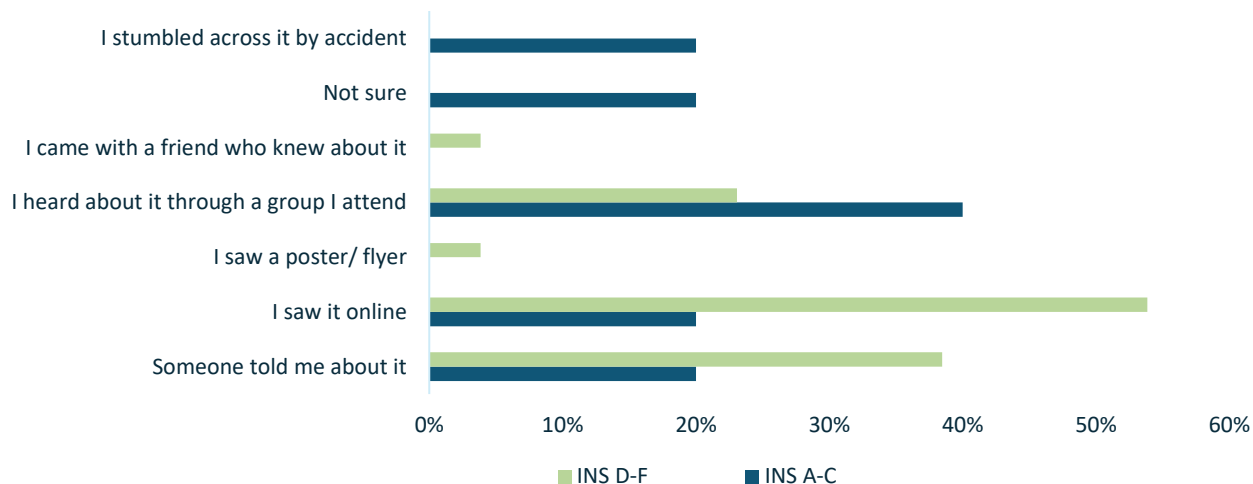
The results for the question were as follows:



Although only small numbers of people chose A-C, indicating they were less connected to nature, it has allowed for comparison between people who are less connected to nature (INS A-C) and people who are more connected to nature (INS D-G) – to understand how those less connected people were found, what their experience was and what might be able to be replicated more in future.

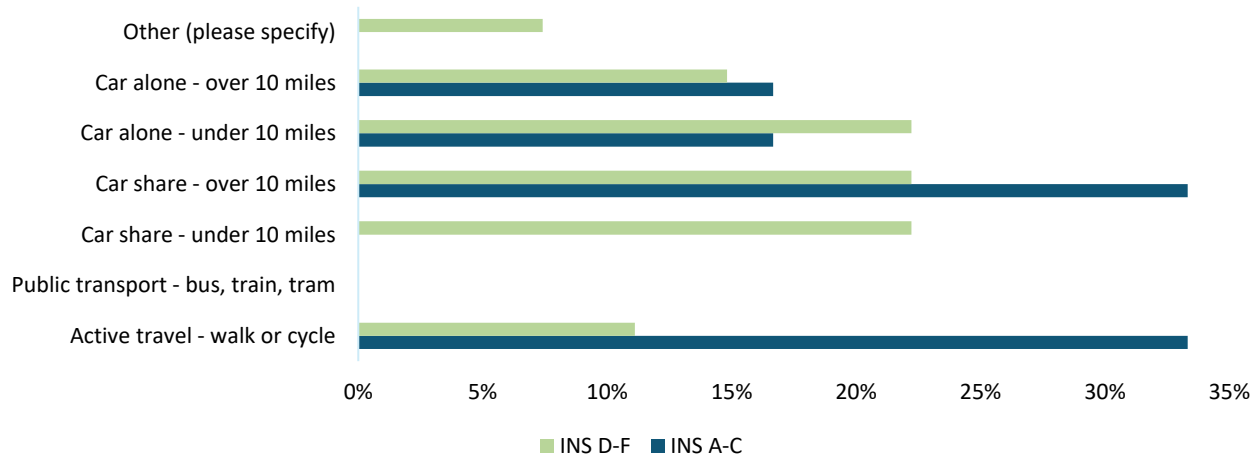
We analysed the results from 32 responses to our audience deep dive survey. Our results our split between those who have a low inclusion to nature score (INS A-C) who make up 18% of our results and those who have a high inclusion to nature score (INS D - G) who make up 82% of our results.

How did you hear about the event today?

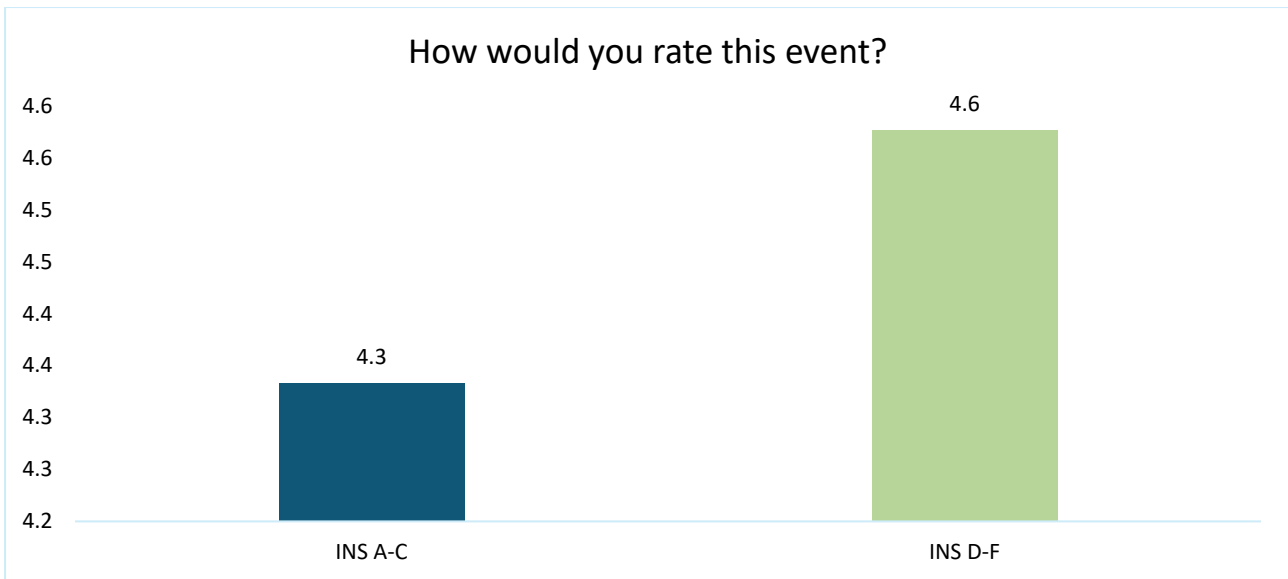


Most people in INS D-G – our more connected to nature group- (54%) heard about the event online highlighting how people who feel closer to nature are more likely to actively search out nature events that they can participate in. People with INS A-C – our less connected to nature group - mostly heard about the event through other people (60% heard about the event from a friend or through a group they attend). A number of less connected to nature people also stumbled across the event (20%), which does demonstrate the power of just doing things where people might see them!

How did you travel here today?



People used an array of different transport methods with none being favoured significantly more than the other. People who are less connected to nature were equally likely to actively travel to the activity as they were to car share over 10 miles, for example. However, it is notable that no one used public transport to attend the events. This is indicative of what transport options are available.



Those who were more connected to nature rated the event on average 4.6 out of 5 and those who were less connected to nature rated the event an average of 4.3 out of 5, both of which are relatively high scores highlighting how most people enjoyed the event regardless of their relationship to nature.

Feeling part of nature	Noticing nature												
<h4 style="text-align: center;">How much do you agree with the statement: I feel part of nature</h4> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Group</th> <th>Agreement Score</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>INS A-C</td> <td>2.2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>INS D-G</td> <td>2.7</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Group	Agreement Score	INS A-C	2.2	INS D-G	2.7	<h4 style="text-align: center;">I have taken time to notice and engage with everyday nature (e.g. listening to birdsong, noticing butterflies).</h4> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Group</th> <th>Agreement Score</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>INS A-C</td> <td>4.83</td> </tr> <tr> <td>INS D-F</td> <td>5.08</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Group	Agreement Score	INS A-C	4.83	INS D-F	5.08
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<p>When asked how much they agree with the statement : I feel part of nature, both groups had similar results with only a 0.5 difference between them, although those who are more connected to nature do agree more that they 'feel part of nature'.</p>	<p>Those who felt more connected to nature agreed more strongly with the statement: in the last week I have taken time to notice and engage with everyday nature rating it a 5.1 out of 7 with 7 being strongly agree whereas those less connected to nature rated the statement a 4.8 out of 7. This indicates that people who take time to notice and engage with nature on more days, feel more connected to nature.</p>												

Reaching new audiences who don't know and love nature already is not without its challenges. Artists described how feedback across the programme was varied, with some people deeply engaged and others less certain. One artist described responses as **"very mixed,"** noting that some participants felt nature **"wasn't for them"** or that they **"didn't have the time or the resources"** to engage. At the same time, others spoke about how important nature was in their lives and engaged **"in deep and insightful ways."**

SECTION FOUR: PROCESS

Both hubs and spokes reported that Nature Calling strengthened partnerships, deepened their understanding of protected landscapes, and built confidence in working with artists. Staff described developing new relationships with one spoke describing **"really amazing friendships... between us and them"** with new cultural partners, noting how these relationships created momentum for future collaboration. Many reflected that the project improved their ability to navigate the complexities of artist-led work, with another spoke saying, **"I think I can see us slowly getting there in the way that we're working with arts organisations... it's been a big learning curve."** Teams also spoke about how the project changed their own behaviour and practice – from adopting new co-creation methods to spending more time outdoors with communities – with one hub noting, **"I could see that people were just reflecting and feeling good about being in nature... all of the groups have asked for new excursions."** Across the programme, team members described growing confidence, stronger networks and a clearer sense of how to support creativity and belonging in protected landscapes.

Reflex Results - Nature Calling Hubs

What is a reflex survey? The team are asked to assess progress quickly, and therefore it should capture a 'reflex' assessment of where a particular element of the project is at the moment. This uses the 'Forming, Storming, Norming and Performing' model which describes the way a team work together through a project.

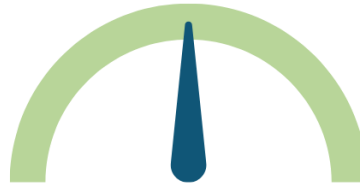
These surveys assess progress on a one-to-ten concept where the numbers one-to-three represent Forming, four-five represent Storming, six-eight represent Norming and nine-ten represent Performing.

Start date:
December 2023

End date:
December 2025



Most recent project overall



Project time period



Forming
Learning about opportunities and challenges, agreeing on goals and starting to work on tasks

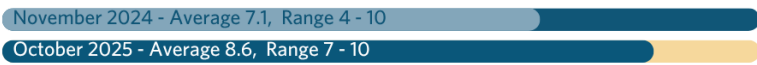
Storming
Opinions are raised by team members and conflict can be present

Norming
The team have a shared goal and work together to achieve it

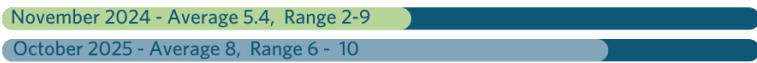
Performing
The group is motivated and knowledgeable and is delivering more as a group than it could individually



Project Overall



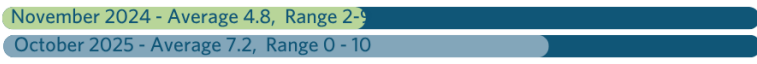
Reaching New Audiences



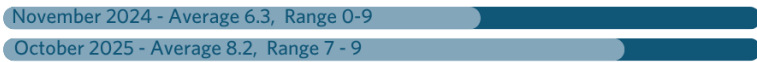
Reaching a Wide Range of People



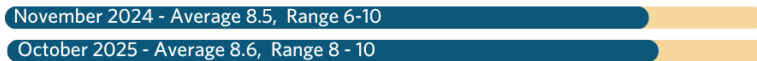
Building Connection to Nature



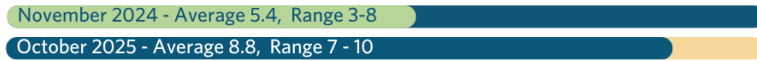
Building Commissioning Skills



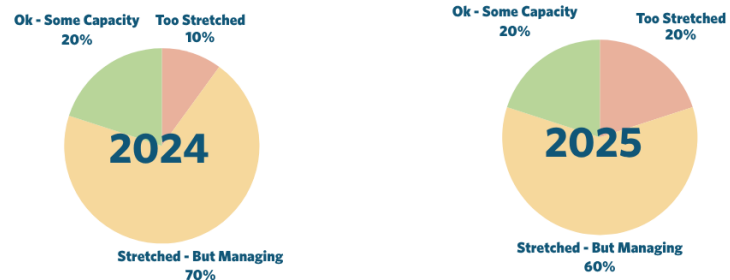
Writing Commission



Artist Commission



Capacity Results:



How would you rate your relationship with the following:

Key: Not Sure Poor Good Great!

Artist	Writer	Producers	Volunteers	Hubs	Spokes

Team comment:

"All 6 community groups that we did the workshops with to create the Giant artwork want to do more with us, so we are re-meeting them this autumn to plan future activity to connect them to nature. Nature Calling sparked those new relationships for us and we plan to build on them in the coming years."

What have people learned about commissioning:

"That working with an experienced Producer is key in terms of quality of project and supporting our relationship with the artist to develop but also handling the programming, health & safety, access etc"

"Be clear about the brief and budget available. Ensure the artist knows what you want to achieve and you know how they can achieve it - good lines of communication and seeing early drafts of the work are essential."

Team comment:

"It has been incredibly valuable working with the NLA, Activate and other hubs, as well as our local producer. We have developed a strong relationship with our producer and are already looking at how we can develop the relationship into the future on other projects, as well as continue to work with the artist to provide a legacy for the work."

Reflex Results - Nature Calling Spoke reflex survey

What is a reflex survey? The team are asked to assess progress quickly, and therefore it should capture a 'reflex' assessment of where a particular element of the project is at the moment. This uses the 'Forming, Storming, Norming and Performing' model which describes the way a team work together through a project.

These surveys assess progress on a one-to-ten concept where the numbers one-to-three represent Forming, four-five represent Storming, six-eight represent Norming and nine-ten represent Performing.

Start date:
December 2023

End date:
December 2025



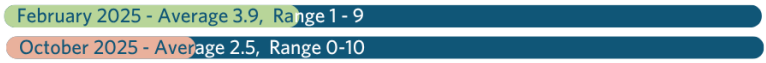
Most recent project overall



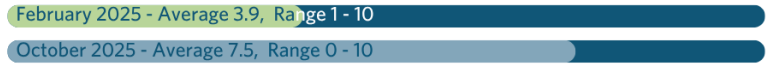
Project time period



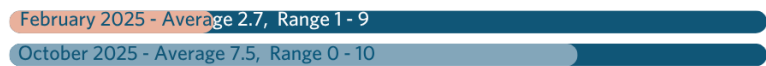
Project Overall



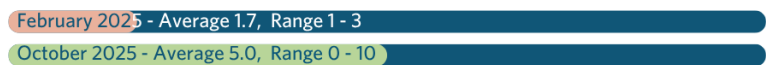
Reaching New Audiences



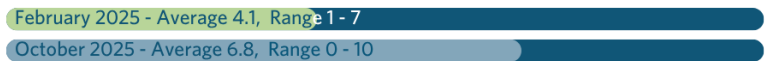
Reaching a Wide Range of People



Building Connection to Nature



Building Commissioning Skills



Own Commissions



Training needs:

Do you think there are any training needs at present? -February 2025

12% Yes, - 63% Not Sure, - 25% No

Topics Include:
Evaluating Proposals

Do you think there are any training needs at present? -October 2025

75% Not Sure, - 25% No

How would you rate your relationship with the following:

Key: Not Sure Poor Good Great!

Hubs	Spokes	Commissions
Good	Good	Great!
Good	Poor	Great!
Poor	Not Sure	Good
Not Sure	Not Sure	Poor

Team comment:

"Project sharing by NLS in training sessions extremely valuable. Evidence based need was equally as important, I've used the presentation by Dr Carly Butler on Nature Connection to shape two other projects. It's easy to understand by partners and audiences - more like this would be really helpful."

Team comment:

"The national project as a whole has felt a bit distant, but I really think a lot of that is because as a spoke we had limited funds and very limited staffing capacity. There is so much more we'd like to do - we have so many brilliant ideas, we just need the funding (and the time)."

Team comment:

"I think capacity for landscape engagement needs to be built within National Landscape teams with proper revenue funding from Defra; there is such potential here but it's incredibly inefficient when we spend much of our time without confirmed budgets and with insufficient long term revenue funds confirmed to mean we can plan effectively."

Team comment:

"Once we got into delivering our spoke project, we sort of lost track of what other partners were doing. Most of the recognition for the programme focused on the big projects. There seemed little interest in what the spokes achieved which added to our disengagement with the bigger picture."

SECTION FIVE: LESSONS LEARNED

LESSONS LEARNED - HUBS

Across the hubs, teams consistently reflected that—while the programme was ambitious and valuable—they would simplify structures, strengthen clarity, and ensure stronger alignment between artistic freedom and project aims. Several hubs felt they needed clearer roles and responsibilities, better-managed creative partnerships, and more support or resources at key moments, including communications, commissioning, and national guidance. Others noted challenges around timing, seasonal delivery, and the complexity of multiple project layers, as well as the need for stronger links with local partners and spokes. Overall, hubs said they would take a firmer steer earlier on, streamline processes, and create the right conditions—practical, organisational, and seasonal—for artists, landscapes, and communities to thrive together.

LESSONS LEARNED - SPOKES

Across the Spokes, teams highlighted that Nature Calling offered valuable learning but exposed several structural challenges: reaching new audiences relied heavily on trusted local partners; relationship-building took far longer than the delivery window allowed; and limited staff capacity often constrained ambition. Many spoke of a steep but rewarding learning curve in working with artists, and the importance of specialist support and peer networks in enabling experimentation. Practical issues such as IP, permissions, and documentation needed embedding from the outset, and the disparity between hub and spoke resources sometimes made expectations feel misaligned. Looking ahead, spokes said they would build in more time for early partnership work, ensure clearer guidance on roles and creative processes, plan copyright and image permissions from the start, and—crucially—secure dedicated capacity so they can deliver confidently without relying on goodwill or “stretching” existing roles.



“The world can be all about exclusion, preclusion, and prevention of people accessing the things that make them happy...it's enlightening if it [the project] helps people look at things with a different perspective.”

- Artist

SECTION SIX: OVERVIEW. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Nature Calling has significantly widened participation in England's National Landscapes, successfully engaging a far more diverse audience than is typical in outdoor or cultural programmes. Across hubs and spokes, the project reached people of different ages, ethnicities, socio-economic backgrounds and levels of nature connection, with notably high involvement from children and young people, disabled participants, global majority communities and residents from the most deprived IMD deciles. This was achieved through working with trusted intermediaries, embedding activity in community venues, and commissioning artists whose identities and practices resonated with groups who often feel excluded from landscape-based activity. As a result, the work felt more relevant, more local and more representative, fulfilling the project's ambition to “animate, celebrate & increase access to nature” through an inclusive creative programme.

The project also made a measurable impact on strengthening connection to nature for artists, writers, participants and audiences. Activities intentionally included the Pathways to Nature—sensory engagement, emotional resonance, beauty, meaning and compassion—and 77% of hub events incorporated these elements. Participants

reported feeling calmer, more connected and more aware of environmental issues, while artists described profound shifts in how they think about land, belonging and creative responsibility. Audience feedback reflected increased awareness of place, stronger feelings of belonging, and a desire to revisit landscapes independently. At a strategic level, the commissioning process itself influenced hubs and spokes, prompting new ways of working with artists, building confidence in creative partnership models and highlighting the need for clearer briefs, early relationship-building and suitable resourcing. Together, these achievements show that Nature Calling not only reached wider audiences and deepened nature connection but also reshaped organisational practice and opened the door to more ambitious, inclusive cultural commissioning in the future.

INSPIRING PEOPLE TO CONNECT WITH NATURE



"To let people have a little taste of the infinite... it just goes on, and there's just the sky, and then you, and then the earth and that's an unmediated relationship, and it's a lovely thing."

- Writer



"It has really informed my thinking and surprised me about... this extraordinary element of community ownership and joy."

- Artist

Across the hubs and spokes, there is consistent evidence that Nature Calling inspired participants, artists, partners and local communities. People described feeling moved, energised and uplifted by the creativity, the sense of belonging, and the experience of being part of something larger than themselves. Moments of unexpected connection – from spontaneous singing to cross-generational encounters and gentle time in nature – left a lasting impression. Many groups have already asked to continue activities, and several National Landscapes are planning repeat visits, new excursions or future partnerships as a direct result of what they experienced.

The project also inspired practitioners and partners. Staff spoke about increased confidence, pride and surprise at the depth of community ownership that developed. Artists and National Landscape teams noted that people felt welcomed, accepted and empowered to be creative in places they had never visited before. Across transcripts, people repeatedly described the process as "magical", "moving", "better than expected", and something they want to build on in the future.

"Art in whatever form is about opening up and liberation and exploring and also saying to other people, like the first art, as soon as people had enough to eat, they started painting on the wall of the cave."



"It's absolutely essential to humans to decorate, to elaborate, to reflect the area around them. And if you're not able to do that, then how do you feel, you know, and vandalism are just arts of that same impulse, aren't they, to kind of what I need to show the world that I've passed by and if you can do that in a positive way, then amazing, you're light in other people's lives, but if you're prevented from doing that by circumstance or by poverty or by ourselves, then negative things are the consequences"

- Artist

Most writers and artists said the project had been well run and supportive, though a number highlighted areas that could be strengthened in future. Several people described challenges in connecting with local groups, noting **"Connection with local groups has been challenging... more help in this area would've been welcome,"** and others reflected on delays caused by trying to secure a suitable community partner, saying **"We had quite a struggle securing a community group as per the brief. That delayed us getting started."** A few also suggested building on what worked well, particularly the collaborative side of the programme, with one person saying **"Perhaps more connection between the commissioned artists and writers? A particular highlight was the collaborative element, which could be leaned into."** Overall, these reflections point to the value of stronger local links, clearer early structures, and the opportunity for even deeper creative collaboration.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Nature Calling has shown that commissioning diverse artists and writers, alongside trusted local partners, is a powerful way to open up England's National Landscapes to people who rarely feel these places are "for them". Across six hubs and 28 spokes it reached far more diverse audiences than typical outdoor or cultural programmes – including children and young people, disabled people, Global Majority communities and residents from the most deprived IMD deciles – and there is strong evidence that people felt calmer, more confident, more creative and more connected to nature as a result.

To make this impact easier to deliver and scale, the next phase should deliberately **simplify the model**: a shorter, clearer brief; fewer events with more planning time; a smaller cohort of National Landscapes with deeper peer support; more autonomy for hubs to lead local press and communications; and flexibility to shape timelines around local realities rather than a fixed national schedule. If these changes are made, the project has clearly demonstrated that an equity-led, artist- and writer-centred approach can reliably widen participation, shift commissioning practice



"All in all, a great learning curve and positive experience; leaving us with a better understanding of utilising environmental & community artists to reach out to new audiences. And to provide a different perspective and interpretation of our respective living and working landscapes"

- National Landscapes Staff

and embed more inclusive, imaginative ways for people to experience and care for the countryside.



“I didn’t expect it to be this amazing, but it’s been better.”

- Artist

CONCLUSION

Nature Calling has shown what becomes possible when creativity, care and equity sit at the heart of landscape engagement: people who had never stepped onto a hillside felt a sense of belonging, young people found confidence and joy in places they didn’t know existed, and artists rediscovered their own connection to land, memory and community. This programme proved that when barriers are removed and imagination is welcomed in, England’s National Landscapes become not just places to visit, but places to feel at home. With a simpler structure, more time, and the freedom to work locally and collaboratively, the next chapter could unlock even greater change—inviting thousands more people to see themselves in these landscapes, to find beauty and peace there, and to know that nature is not a privilege for the few, but a shared right for everyone.



BLAZE

SUPER

CULTURE

MAGNA VITAE

TRUST FOR LEISURE & CULTURE

activate
performing arts

 **SurreyHills Arts**

 **Lancaster Arts**

REVOLUTION


SECTION SEVEN: ABOUT THE EVALUATOR

All of the work of The Evaluator is underpinned by easy to read, visual reports. The Evaluator says, 'We'll figure it out for you!'

This report was written by Kate Dixon, and Rebecca Throup, Project Officers at The Evaluator and by Kirsty Rose, Founder and Director.

The Evaluator was founded by Kirsty, an experienced Project Manager and Evaluator, who previously specialised in arts, regeneration, and wellbeing projects. Kirsty has an educational background in Maths and Economics, which covered many statistical topics, leading to an MA Hons in Economics from the University of Edinburgh.

Kirsty has 16 years of charitable project management experience including working with artists and audiences, and 9 years' experience of arts development. She is trained in negotiation, motivational interviewing and 'social return on investment' and is passionate about helping organisations to run the most effective programmes they can.

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