



# Arts by the Sea Festival

**27 - 29 SEPTEMBER 2024**



**2024  
IMPACT REPORT**



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**





“It’s the best event of the year, unmissable”

# Who are we?

Arts by the Sea is an annual outdoor arts festival funded by BCP Council and Arts Council England.

We work to broaden access to art and culture while maintaining a commitment to excellence in the quality of art & the artists we support.

2024 was our 14th year and we share some of our highlights with you here in this impact report.

# Our Aims & Values

- To combine high-profile, inspirational, spectacular showcase events with local participation, increasing engagement in culture and enhancing a sense of community by combining culture, people and place.
- To deliver a diverse artistic programme which engages audiences in a carnivalesque celebration of culture in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole's unique locations.
- To host a Talent Development programme, focused on upskilling artists, boosting our economy and supporting the local creative sector.
- To implement an Engagement & Participation scheme, providing opportunities for all.
- To demonstrate our commitment to diversity and environmental sustainability.



"A fantastic event for all ages, I hope this continues for many years to come"

# National Profile

Two time winner of **Gold in the Dorset Tourism Awards** for Tourism Event/Festival of the Year (2022 and 2023) and **Gold in the South West Tourism Excellence Awards** (2022); we also won **Bronze in BCP's DMB Tourism Awards** for our 2023 festival.

We share best practice with a network of peers and industry colleagues (including Without Walls, the Mela Partnership and Julie's Bicycle).

We have received national media & press attention, including coverage from Sky Arts and the BBC.



# 2024 Theme

"This year's theme is TASTE and we gave you the chance to challenge yours by sampling our delicious smorgasbord of acts, installations and performances.

Those who joined us got to savour a host of talent as we tantalised your artistic taste buds with our festival artists' creativity. There was something to satisfy everyone's cultural cravings."

- Andrea Francis, Festival Director





"The Poetry Takeaway was excellent. The poems we received were extraordinary. The fireworks and fire on the beach were some of the best I have experienced IN THE WORLD! The Dancing Terraces tasters were fabulous and the quirky sideshows like the swan pedal car were great. The Indian dancers at Beale place were a delight to watch. Loved the buzz in the town."

# 2024 Artistic Programme

**45** organisations worked with **31** were from the local area or South West


**320+** creatives produced over **145** free performances

**INCLUDING** 11 new commissions, 10 UK premiers, 1 new piece of online content.

# Talent Development

Providing opportunities for artist development and skills building for young people is core to what we do:

- Extended partnership with **Bournemouth & Poole College** providing a platform for 100+ students to perform & engage.
- Continued Associate Artist and Artist in Residence schemes to support and give platforms to developing artists Jasmin Edwards & Rebecca Strickson.



“The experience of being the ABTS AIR for 2024 was a wonderful and rewarding one, that made me re-evaluate my practice, fall in love with new aspects of its production and allow myself a new freedom of creation I hadn’t thought possible before.”

- Rebecca, Strickson, Artist in Residence 2024

# Engagement and Participation

The festival works with schools and community groups to offer opportunities to discover the arts, participate in creative activity and to become part of the festival performances themselves.

“The children were excited to share the information about the festival with their teachers and were looking forward to participating in the drawing activity. Many of the children said that they would like to go and visit the festival. Seeing the sculptures and artworks that will be there inspired the children.” - Local School

# Associate Artist Scheme

- 4 community workshops delivered with West Howe Community Enterprises, Poole Communities Trust, Upton Bay Care Home, and Care South at Castle Dene.
- 4 pieces of digital communication released on Jasmin Edwards.
- Performed at West Howe & Bourne Community Days and over the main festival weekend.

"Being Associate Artist this year has helped me to develop because it's pushed my creative boundaries. I've not created a piece like this before - with narrative. I now feel more confident in the creation of a piece and direction."

- Jasmin Edwards, Associate Artist 2024



“Our Indian community had a wonderful experience participating in the Art by the Sea event. The activities over the three days catered to all age groups and embraced the diversity of our community.”  
- BPC Indian Community Association.”

## **Torchlight Trail**

312+ participants took part in 12 artist-led workshops prior to the festival. These communities were invited to be part of a magical torchlit trail leading to our festival spectacular, The Honey Pot. Over 100 people took part in the trail from local community groups, cultural groups, and schools.

## **Arts Award**

2,499 children participated in creative workshops in schools, activities at BCP Libraries & at the festival, led by The Story Works. Bournemouth Library held a month-long exhibition of their work. Arts Award Discover was offered to children fully funded with 18 awards booklets completed.

# Diversity & Accessibility

We aim to create an inclusive artistic programme, which champions our diverse communities, and to deliver a festival that is accessible to everyone whatever the challenges.

- We design a varied programme that is inclusive to different access needs.
- We listen to feedback and engage with local groups to continually improve our festival.
- Our participants come from a range of local organisations, ensuring our performances reflect and attract our local population.



“Love the Arts by the Sea team. Always so positive and adaptive to our needs. It's a real pleasure to be part of something so special for the Bournemouth community.”

- The Chatterboxes

# Community Outreach in West Howe & Bourne

**Our Community Days bring quality cultural activity and a touch of Arts by the Sea out into the community for people who are unlikely to attend the festival itself.**

- We returned to West Howe for a sixth year and to Bourne for the second time by delivering a Community Day for both communities!
- We organised 15 activities/performances for each event, ranging from comedy theatre to skate workshops.
- 8 of the 9 artists & creative practitioners at the events were local to BCP.

The events attracted over 500 attendees, of which over 52% were from West Howe/Bourne postcodes. 100% of survey responses said they enjoyed the day and 99% said would attend next year if able.



“It was a joyful and impactful event. Amazing for people to try things for the first time”



“I certainly feel valued, and I love the engagement with the public and professional artists. I would love to do more!”

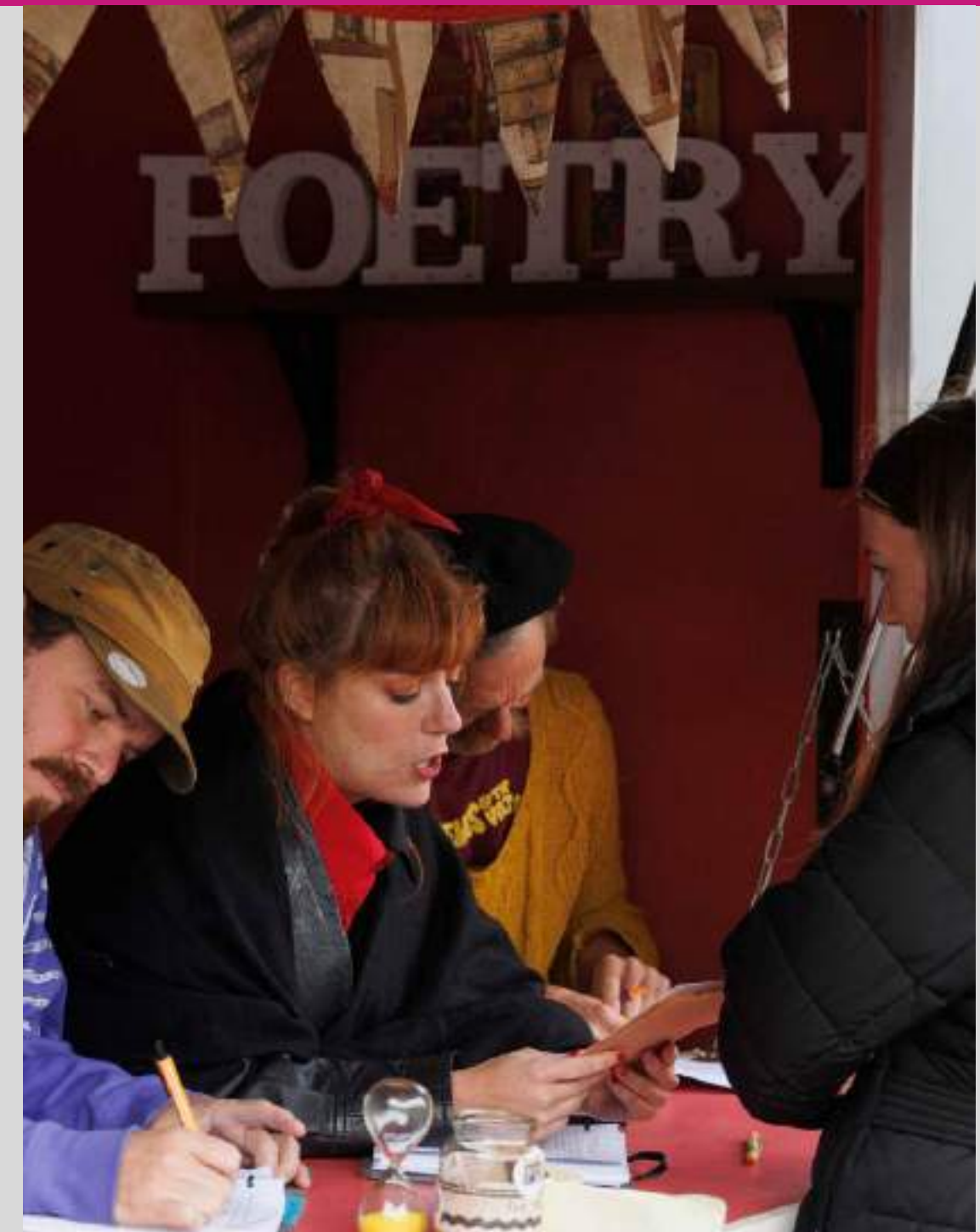
# Community Impact

## Volunteering

We offered 5 different volunteer opportunities which included practical training and professional guidance. **47 volunteers** contributed **393 hours**. 58% of our volunteers said they they enjoyed the experience and would recommend volunteering with Arts by the Sea.

## Opportunity for local poets & spoken word artists

Returning to the Festival was community-led Speakers' Corner, providing a space alongside The Poetry for local poets and spoken word artists to develop their talent and perform.



# Our Audience



80% had visited Arts by the Sea before, 7% were new audience.

The ethnicity of our audience is approximately reflective of BCP's population as per the 2021 census (a difference of 2%).

70% of our audience were from Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole, 4% from the rest of Dorset, and 14% from the rest of the country or overseas. (12% prefer not to say.)



82% of our audience visited the festival with other people, around 66% attending with children under 16.



14% of our audience have a disability. 19% of our audience identify as neurodivergent.



## Audience Feedback

**90%**  
rated their experience  
the event as very good  
or good

**81% of attendees  
agreed that Arts by  
the Sea Festival  
makes them proud of  
their local area**

"Loved everything I saw. The Honey-pot was spectacular and such a buzzing atmosphere. Truth was beautiful. The Bureau of Good and Bad taste was so much fun. Poetry Takeaway so touching and special."

"What a wonderful weekend to bring the community together, thank you!"

"It is such a valuable cultural event that engages with all ages and communities. The range of creative expression and inspiration on show is absolutely wonderful. It is so vital that we support free art events. I work in the education sector and am thrilled when the children come into school discussing what they have seen at the event."



120,000+ footfall in the town centre over the festival weekend

"Fantastic event! Spoke to people from near (Bournemouth, Boscombe, Southbourne) and far (Southampton, Hertfordshire, Bristol) who attended."



# Environmental Impact

Each year we work with artists, traders and suppliers to reduce our environmental impact, and we promote our three key environmental projects: **Reuse, Reflect, Sustainable Travel.**

We hosted a festival Green Hub of environmental partners and activities to raise awareness about sustainability. This included re-siting the Green Hub within a Community Zone at the heart of the festival site.

The Festival's artistic programme contained performances that addressed themes of climate change or climate action, human rights & ethics, nature or ecology, and sustainability.



"Litter Free Dorset had a fantastic experience at the Arts by the Sea Festival, where we had the chance to engage with a diverse crowd, showcase our ongoing projects, and hear firsthand about any litter issues the public experience. Being part of this event was invaluable in helping us connect with the local community and strengthen our efforts to promote sustainable change."

- Litter Free Dorset



# Economic Impact

## Spending

- 60% of people spent or intended to spend in a restaurant, café, pub or bar.
- 21% went shopping.
- 11% did another creative or cultural activity.

Direct gross visitor spend of £3M.

"I know it's a very small team who work on this festival and deliver an amazing event that brings the town centre alive. Keep up the good work!"

# Marketing

15.6K Facebook page likes & 17K followers  
9,441 Instagram followers  
2,108,044 reach from social coverage



## Website Engagement

- 31,601 unique visitors on the website over Sept - Dec 2024.
- 71,000 site events/interactions (e.g. clicks, submissions and scrolls) over Sept - Dec 2024.
- 1 performance recorded for the Arts by the Sea On Demand.

## Press

Estimated audience reach of 490.7M, with 239 pieces of coverage, resulting in an AVE (advertising value equivalent) of £8.3M.

# Partnerships

**Arts by the Sea benefits from a huge range of creative and practical partnerships and is developing relationships with key diversity-led organisations.**

**Thanks to** BCP Council, Arts Council England, Without Walls, POSCA, Stowe Family Law, Bournemouth Pier, The Russell-Cotes, South West Trains, Pavilion Dance South West, Activate Performing Arts, b-side Festival, Arts Award, Bournemouth & Poole College, West Howe Community Enterprises, Poole Communities Trust, BCP Libraries, Mela Partnership, From the Fields, Shambala, Arts University Bournemouth, SUBU, The Cultural Hub, Picnic Park Deli, the Torchlight Trail community leaders & participants, participating schools, Green Hub partners, our Artists, our Volunteers, our Steering Group and Board, the Festival Team (and more!).

**Interested in becoming a festival partner? [Find out more.](#)**

100% of artists said that presenting at Arts by the Sea was beneficial to them





**"Keep introducing more and more people every year, it's such an amazing experience and special & great to spark children's imagination and creativity. I am so grateful for it helping me make more memories with my family and friends, thank you."**

@artsbythesea

**SEE YOU IN 2025**