



# South Hams Festival 2025

**Proposal by NDP Circus for a South  
Hams wide festival in June 2025.**



# Contents & Introduction

- **Aims, objectives & scope**
- **Programming/content**
- **The festival content: national & regional**
- **Community engagement**
- **Programme deep dive: Associate Curators**
- **Projections**
- **Team structure**
- **Timeline**
- **Budget overview**
- **Funding ask & outputs**



# Foreword – Paul Liengaard

**The Arts create bonds that sustain us.**

Devon and the South Hams have a rich diversity of population, environment and history. From our fantastic coastline to our magnificent moorland, the area covers a diverse range of peoples and environment from which stories and traditions emerge and are embedded in the fabric of the region.

While there is undoubtedly a lively music scene in some places, the arts across the region are underdeveloped and often exclusive, sections of society and young people are not encouraged to join in, and some communities do not feel included.

The need for a vibrant, inclusive, funded and active arts sector in the South Hams is evident. We know it contributes to our residents' wellbeing, provides employment and attracts visitors and investment to our towns, villages and countryside.

Whilst there are undeniably the skills and talent locally to make such a sector thriving, it is currently chronically underfunded. There is little to no infrastructure for the arts across the South Hams and no cultural strategy. With a 2025 festival, there is an opportunity to start to create a district wide strategy and build infrastructure. As is cited in the Festival Context section, in 2023, the Manchester International Festival brought in £39.2m worth of economic benefit to the area.

The South Hams Festival will weave together a tapestry of established, new and emerging artistic strands across the district to help develop a cohesive and inclusive cultural strategy. Encouraging artistic development and putting South Hams on the map as a place of creative excellence, daring and innovation.

# Aims, Objectives, Scope

## Our mission and aims:

- **Cultural exchange:** between different communities within the South Hams (Totnes, Ivybridge, Kingsbridge, Dartmouth, Salcombe & the surrounding villages) and further afield.
- **Community engagement:** with organisations and individuals to build a programme celebrating creative diversity.
- **Creative dynamism:** putting South Hams on the map as a place of creative excellence, daring and innovation.

## 2025's Theme: CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate Change is the defining issue of our time. From shifting weather patterns to rising sea levels, the impacts of climate change are local and global. By using the arts as a catalyst to illustrate and raise awareness of the issues involved we can all play our part in turning the tide and address contributing factors. 'The Great Climate Change Carnival Roadshow' will be created by participating schools, youth groups, community groups and local artists to tour around the towns and villages of the district during the festival. This will be a unique platform emphasising community engagement and grassroots participation.

### Scope

The South Hams is not only home to a diverse community, it is also a diverse landscape, covering coast to moor, urban centres, villages and farming communities. A district wide festival needs to work with this landscape, rather than against it.

This means developing a rural outreach programme, utilising village halls, schools and community groups alongside touring shows that can work in remote locations as well as town centres and traditional arts venues. It also means Producers and Community Engagement Officers working closely with communities to develop community-led events.

### Why do we think this is important?

To ensure the success of a festival of this size, community ownership should be at the forefront of our work. The long-term vision for the festival, developed with the Council, would be to eventually have a board of community representatives who would lead the planning of the festival, alongside the core festival team. To get to this point, the first festival in 2025 should work closely with communities across the South Hams, which is a large part of the rationale for the festival team structure.

### What about creative dynamism?

We know that Devon has a lot to offer in terms of artists breaking new ground, making innovative work and delivering creative excellence. And we are connected to this community. We believe that with a strong programme featuring local and regional talent, community events and a headline national touring act, we can put the South Hams on the map as a place of creative dynamism. We would use our links to national networks such as Outdoor Arts UK, The Globe, RSC and others to market the festival as a destination festival. An event for people to travel to, driving up economic benefits for local businesses and communities.

**We see the 5 towns as 5 BEATING HEARTS of the South Hams Festival, with the villages and hamlets connected in through community led events, rural touring and a school's programme.**

# The Festival Context

## National

Regional arts festivals have the capacity to make major impacts on the economic climate of a place, as well as huge benefits to communities. Manchester City Council recently published their report on the impacts of 2023's Manchester International Festival and found that the festival attracted over 325,000 visitors to the city and generated £39.2m of economic activity.\* This has long lasting benefits for local businesses as well as community and arts groups. The report found that two of the main reasons for the festival's overwhelming success were the significant number of free events and a prolific programme of online content. At the main outdoor event space, the free programme drew 83,000 visitors. Over the whole festival programme, 174,700 attendees attended free events.

Whilst, arguably, it's not possible currently to replicate these numbers in the South Hams, due to the smaller population size and geographical area, they should be taken seriously as a legitimate economic approach to producing a successful regional arts festival. Similarly, Norwich and Norfolk Festival, established in 1824, works across 8 towns in the region, and in 2023 had over 55k people attending its events – 38 of which were free.\*\* The most successful, and long running, regional festivals provide a significant number of free events. One thing both festivals have in common is significant local authority support and funding. They have a successful working relationship and as a result deliver major benefits to the local economy and community.

There are very few festivals in the UK that are based across multiple towns and a rural landscape. The South Hams Festival could be groundbreaking in its approach to community engagement across urban and rural divides with an accessible and innovative programme.

## Regional

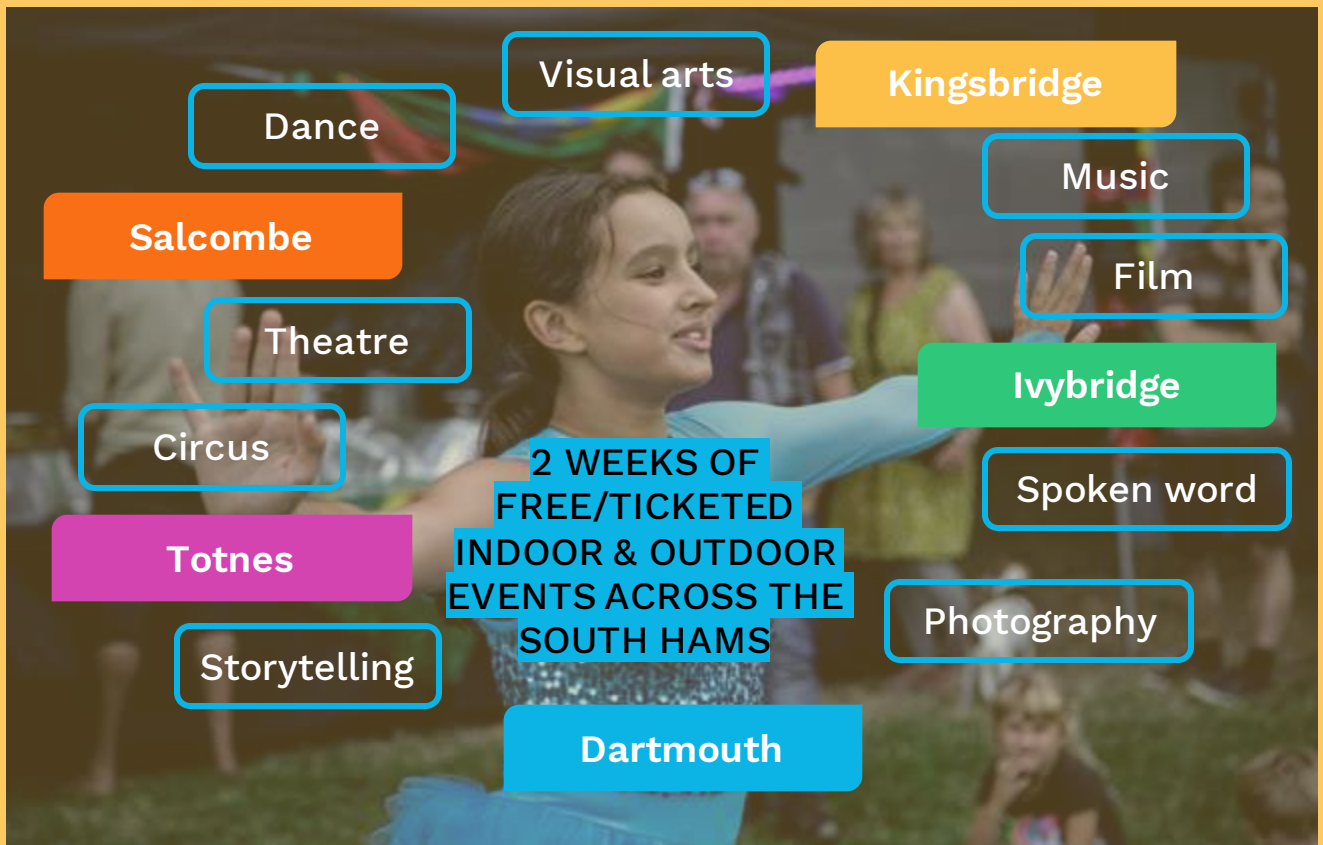
The festival would be entering an arts space in the region which, whilst thriving in certain locations (Totnes, Ashburton), has been severely underfunded for the past 10 years. There has been no significant arts provision at a district level for a long time. A festival of this scope needs the full backing of the district council and as many of the town and parish councils as possible. The reason for this being primarily the geographical make up of the South Hams. Although it has a population size of 88k, this is spread out over small urban centres, villages, hamlets and rural farming communities. The participation of the local authorities and councils means that the festival could have a wide reach across different levels of the population (farming, schools, youth groups, the elderly, low-income families, disabled people, global majority communities, LGBTQI+ communities). We know that these communities currently co-exist, a district wide festival programme would need to incorporate events and workshops which appeal to this wide range of people. The festival team would also need to reflect the local population.

As mentioned above, the South Hams festival would incorporate a mixture of free and ticketed events across a range of art forms. It would also deliver a proportion of online events – this could be in the build up to the festival as well as online resources available during the festival period.

- \* Manchester City Council, Economy and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee Festival Report, 6/02/2024
- \*\* Norwich and Norfolk 2023 Festival Snapshot

# Programming/Content

2025 FESTIVAL DATES: 22<sup>nd</sup> June – 2<sup>nd</sup> July



## Programming Structure:

- 9 months of FREE community engagement activities: workshops in schools, church halls and outdoors working with visual arts, theatre, circus and dance.
- Opening Ceremony (FREE), Parade & Carnival (FREE), Closing Ceremony (FREE).
- Employment opportunities for residents (Producers, Community Engagement Officers, Workshop Facilitators & Marketing).
- X1 Headline act (national touring company) to perform at 2 or more of the 5 towns.
- Volunteering opportunities for young people and residents (stewarding, production assistant, marketing assistant).
- LOCAL VENUES can produce their own programmes to be included in the festival.
- Artist development support via our ASSOCIATE CURATORS programme. An application-based programme which supports up to 5 local artists to produce their own artistic projects working with the community to produce a performance/installation/exhibition for the festival. Artists receive funding, production, development and marketing support.

## Opening & closing ceremonies:

Festival opening and closing ceremonies will be held in locations to be decided in discussion with festival partners and the community. However, we would programme acts from all 5 towns at both events so that we have strong representation across the district. Both events will remain free of charge and be held outdoors, to maximise accessibility.

We would like to engage with transport links across the 5 towns to see if it's possible to offer some free transportation to both events for residents without vehicles and with mobility issues.

# Community engagement

Community engagement will be at the centre of the South Hams Festival. We intend to achieve this through 2 dedicated community programmes:

- **Rural Outreach**
- **Schools Outreach**

We have allocated 2 part time, freelance roles to this via the Community Engagement Officers. These 2 roles, managed by a Producer, will spend most of their time visiting communities across the South Hams and helping to set up community led events, and working with the Producers to programme local, rural artists into the festival programme. They will develop workshops and work with our network of artists and schools to facilitate performing arts and visual arts workshops in schools. These will be linked into overall festival activity & theme via the Producers.

## Rural outreach

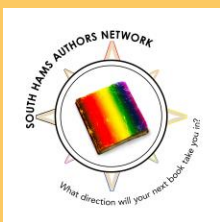
The South Hams covers 59 parishes (54) and towns (5) that are frequently overlooked in arts programming and events, often the parishes have village greens and community halls that could host small touring shows and community led events. We would like to center these in our programming.

The outreach for this would be done via primary schools and councillors that have roots into the communities. We envisage this taking the form of a series of workshops in village halls focusing on arts activities such as puppetry and outdoor arts with the aim of communities coming together in 1 of the 5 towns to participate in a parade.

Alongside this, we imagine there could be a series of pop-up events in a selection of villages with hall infrastructure, e.g., live music, small touring theatre shows that include participation of the local population.

## Community Partners

The below is a sample selection of venues, groups and artists we are currently linked to and have proposals ready for individual programmes for when the festival goes ahead. We have been working with many of the below since 2020 on community events and they represent a wide section of the artistic community in the South Hams. We would bring them into the festival programme as well as sourcing new content, individuals and groups.



**SOUND  
COMMUNITIES**



# Programme Deep Dive – Associate Curators Programme

The below is a snapshot of the Associate Curators programme to give you an idea of the type/style of potential festival content and how we intend to make the festival as accessible as possible to local artists.

We are looking for 5 Associate Curators working across theatre, circus, dance and visual arts based in either Totnes, Dartmouth, Kingsbridge, Salcombe and Ivybridge (& surrounding villages)!

## What's on offer?

- £500 – £1,500 for you to develop a piece of work and present it at South Hams Festival 2025.
- Artist development support from Festival Producers.
- Access to local venues and outdoor spaces.
- Marketing and promotion support + your work highlighted in the festival programme.
- Access to festival volunteers to support your event on the day.

## Who can apply?

Individuals based in Totnes, Dartmouth, Kingsbridge, Salcombe and Ivybridge & the surrounding villages aged 18 and over.

This programme is not open to established groups or organisations as we want to support individual artists who may not have access to other grants or funding.

Your work should be based in 1 of the 4 disciplines: theatre, circus, dance or visual arts. These are currently underrepresented in the South Hams.

Your project can be based indoors or outdoors.

## How do I apply?

Simply fill out our online application form which will ask 3 main questions about your intended work/project and how you will allocate the fee.

Your application will be assessed by 2 Producers, if you progress to the next stage, you will be invited to an in-person interview where we will ask some more questions about your work and planning. The interview will be led by 1 Producer and 1 Director.

After the interview we will let you know the outcome.

## What are you looking for?

We are looking for work that address the festival theme, CLIMATE CHANGE, and has a strong focus on communities. Ideally your planned work will have a community engagement or participation element.



# Projections

**PROJECTED FOOTFALL OVER FESTIVAL PERIOD: 50K**

**BOX OFFICE REVENUE: £25k**

**FREE EVENTS: 50**

**TICKETED EVENTS: 50**

**ARTISTS: 100**

## Rationale

We have based the above on the data gathered from Totnes Festival in 2022 which took place over 10 days and brought 12k footfall to the town with 70 events at 30 venues. The South Hams Festival should almost treble this in terms of footfall given the expanded geographic area, no. of venues and population size. Our aim is to work with 100 artists on 100 events, with 50% of the festival programme being free.

The box office revenue projection is based on our experience of bringing Shakespeare's Globe to the festival in 2022 alongside a range of smaller ticketed events which brought in a total of £20k. For the 2025 festival we would aim to have a similar national level headline event with a range of other ticketed events produced by the festival itself, to balance out the free programme and fill the budget shortfall.

Collaborating venues will, of course, retain their own box office revenues and footfall enhanced by the festival which will multiply the total revenue and footfall to the district considerably. A big incentive for venues and local businesses to collaborate with the festival.

# Team Structure



Assoc Curators will work on their own projects for up to 3 months before the festival with the support of one of the producers. They are not freelance or paid staff. They will be offered a micro grant from the festival budget (500 – 1.5k) to use to create their own performance/installation.

## Rationale

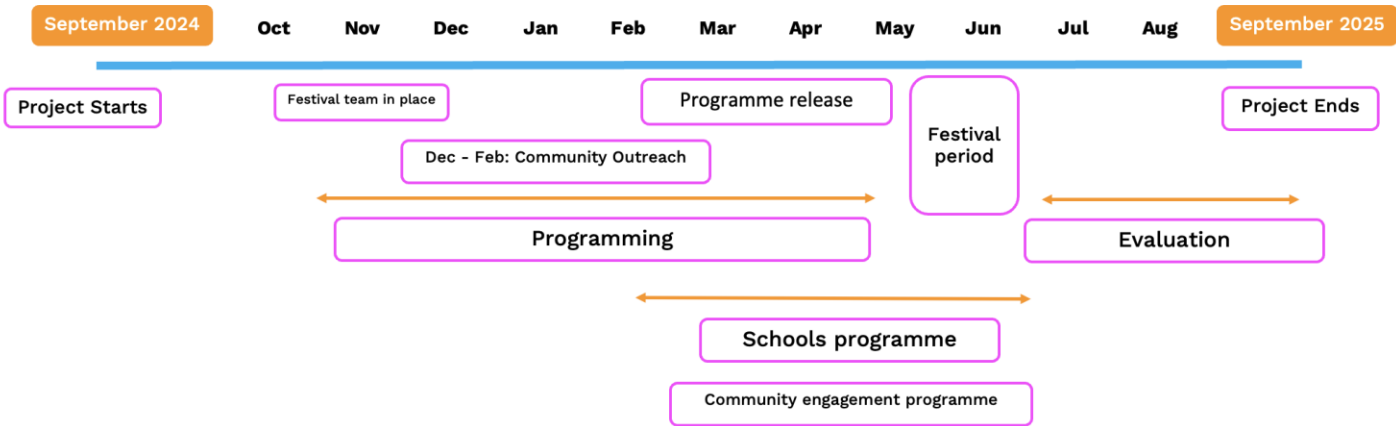
We have developed the above structure after many years of on the ground research, looking at festival teams in other regions and our experience producing the Totnes Festival in 2022. One of our main findings from the Totnes Festival was the amount of time and effort needed to work on community engagement. In 2022 we had just four months to deliver an engagement programme, this was not enough time to develop the meaningful engagement we needed with schools and community groups. The ideal timeframe for this is nine months, with a dedicated member of staff. As this festival would be working across 5 towns and multiple villages, we have projected 2 community engagement staff who would work under the direction of one of the producers.

The nature of the producers' work means their roles could be split across participation and engagement, programming, event management, evaluation, project management, fundraising and artist liaison. With 4 producers working part time, a programme which covers the geographical scope and caters to the population size is feasible.

As a result of having good producer capacity, the festival team would also have the capacity to line manage the community engagement officers and therefore the volunteers. The producers would also undertake artist development support which is crucial for a festival at an early stage, and working in the South Hams context, where there are no arts institutions delivering this and very few arts umbrella organisations catering to artist development.

A separate marketing team is needed as adequate promotion and marketing is crucial to deliver the economic benefits, drive box office sales and ensure high levels of attendance. Due to the level of skill required to adequately market a programme of this size, it is not possible for other roles to take this on – without significant risk to the success of the festival.

# Timeline



These timelines are indicative and subject to change. The below is not a project plan and provides an idea of how the project will progress over the 12 months with the main milestones included.

Month	Activity
June	Consultations with schools ,youth groups,partners,councils etc R and D across district
September	Consultations with 5 town councils to understand needs & programming partners Call out to partners & kick off community meeting
October	Recruitment of Producers & Marketing team Logo & Website rebrand (TF to SHF)
November	Producers & Marketing in post Arts Council Bid Submission
December	Community outreach & rural programme starts Schools prep & outreach Programming starts
January	Set up hubs in five towns (5 empty shops etc) Marketing plan starts
February	Schools programme starts Community workshop & engagement prog starts
March	Associate Curator programme launch Associate Curator application assessment & decision making Information gathering from artists, venues & groups
April	Programme Release (soft) (online) Parade prep & planning
May	Programme Release (final - print)
June	Production starts 22/06 - 02/07 Festival Period
July	Postproduction - evaluation starts Festival film release
Aug	Data collection & analysis Post festival meetings w/ local authorities Report writing
Sep	Impact Report presentation

# Budget Overview

We see the South Hams contribution to the festival as an investment into the arts infrastructure of the district. By putting the festival in motion, together we can move forward to implementing a cultural strategy. This could be the basis for a future arts department within South Hams District Council. Work of this magnitude and quality can only be sustainable with long-term support from local authorities and funders.

**Overall expenditure: 175k**  
**September 2024 – September 2025**

## Breakdown

Staffing (14 people x 6-9mths p/t)	£95k
Programming & Commissioning	£40k
Marketing & promotion	£12k
Infrastructure	£12k
Administration, travel & insurance	£8k
Postproduction (evaluation, impact report, festival film)	£8k

## **Proposed South Hams District ,Town and Parish Council's contribution: £65k**

Remaining £110k to be sourced from:  
Arts Council England and other funding bodies (60k)  
Festival Box Office (25k)  
Local Business Sponsorship (25k)  
Delivery partners will be supported to tap into further funding enabled by the above.

Detailed budget can be provided on request.