

OUR STORY

Annual Report
2025-26



 **OCTAGON**
THEATRE
YEovil


WESTLANDS
YEovil

Box Office: 01935 422884
octagon-theatre.co.uk
westlandsyevovil.co.uk



WELCOME

On behalf of our brilliant team of staff and volunteers, thank you for making the last 12 months a celebration of creativity, fun, and entertainment. We have enjoyed sharing amazing performances, inspiring events, and seeing people develop their talents through classes and workshops. It's always a privilege to witness people coming together, feeling at home in our venues, and experiencing the buzz of excitement before a show, as well as the quiet moments of solace and support when needed. Our creative community grows stronger every day.

We are pleased to see strong progress being made with the development of the Octagon Theatre. Planning permission has been secured, and the final design stages are generating excitement and anticipation for the theatre's transformation.

Through the support of Yeovil Town Council, Somerset Council, and Arts Council England (ACE), we are ensuring that more people benefit from the creative arts. Over the past year we have seen first hand the transformative effect access to the arts and culture can play. Across our Arts Engagement and Outreach programme we

see and hear how important access to the arts and theatre is for enriching the local area, improving health and wellbeing and in giving so many a sense of belonging. I am really pleased that our venues and activity programmes have become places where people from all backgrounds can come together, share experiences, feel a sense of connection and take pride in their local community.

I hope you will enjoy looking back over the last twelve months as we reflect on what has been achieved and the impact our programme has had on the lives of patrons, participants, and guests. Each year brings new challenges and opportunities, and with our amazing team of staff and volunteers, along with the support of our patrons, we can look forward to good times ahead where arts and creativity inspires and brings joy to everyone, every day.



Adam Burgan
*Director of Culture for Yeovil Town Council,
Arts & Entertainment Venues
Manager for Somerset
Council*



OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

Our aim is to unleash creativity, connect our communities, improve access to the arts, and nurture talent here in Somerset and across the South West.



A year of performance

204 stage shows

brought live theatre, dance, comedy, musicals, music, and entertainment to Somerset.



Culture on the doorstep

23 performances

by world-class touring companies reached **7,238 people** in community locations across Somerset.



A thriving audience

105,259 people

joined us to watch live theatre in our venues – **an increase from 90,377 the previous year!**



Learning and participation at scale

1,531 workshops and activities

engaged **16,221 people** across Somerset, recording a whopping total of **34,468 participations** (where participants took part on more than one occasion) – a staggering increase from the 22,341 participations across 1,291 workshops and activities the year before!



Cinema that connects

245 screenings

brought audiences together through the magic of film.



A platform for local talent

2,980 local performers

took to our stage, performing in a large variety of amateur and community productions staged throughout the year.



A community hub

Over 200,000 people visited

our venue over the year, for coffee, meetings, screenings, shows, workshops, and events.



Affordable Tickets

771 people received £3 tickets

through our Accessible Ticket Scheme, opening the doors to the magic of theatre for those who otherwise couldn't afford the experience.



Powered by volunteers

6,272 hours of support

from our brilliant volunteer teams.



A space to work, meet, and be entertained

455 meetings, conferences, and events were held at Westlands over the 12-month period.

OUR NUMBERS

Our Box Office figures from the last four years demonstrate how we continue to grow our offer, serve residents and respond to external challenges. The closure of the Octagon Theatre at the end of April 2023 has impacted the overall number of performances and screenings we have been able to stage, however with the programme established at Westlands Entertainment Venue we continue to see year on year growth of visitors and revenue.

	2022-23	2023-24*	2024-25	2025-26
Attendance (Total number of tickets sold)	108,377 (O) 49,422 (W) 157,799 (T)	9,180 (O) 80,918 (W) 90,098 (T)	90,377 (W)	105,259 (W)
Number of performances	195 (O) 68 (W) 263 (T)	21 (O) 210 (W) 231 (T)	211(W)	204 (W)
Number of screenings	346	237	299	245
Gross Box Office income	£2,926,312	£1,952,792	£1,712,187	£1,834,096
Annual income	£1,416,481	£1,236,161	£1,028,980	£1,383,744

Key: (O) Octagon, (W) Westlands, (T) Total
*Westlands only from 1 May 2023 following Octagon closure for redevelopment

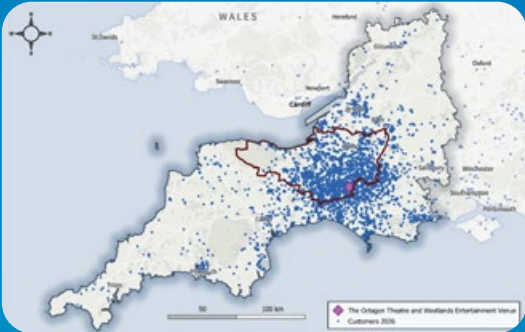
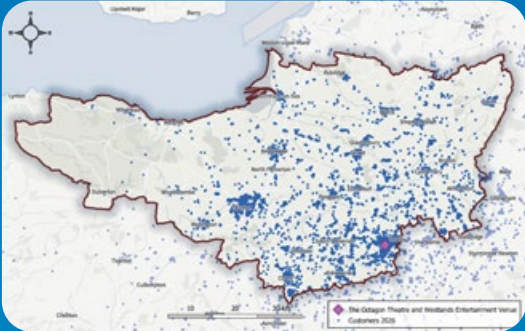
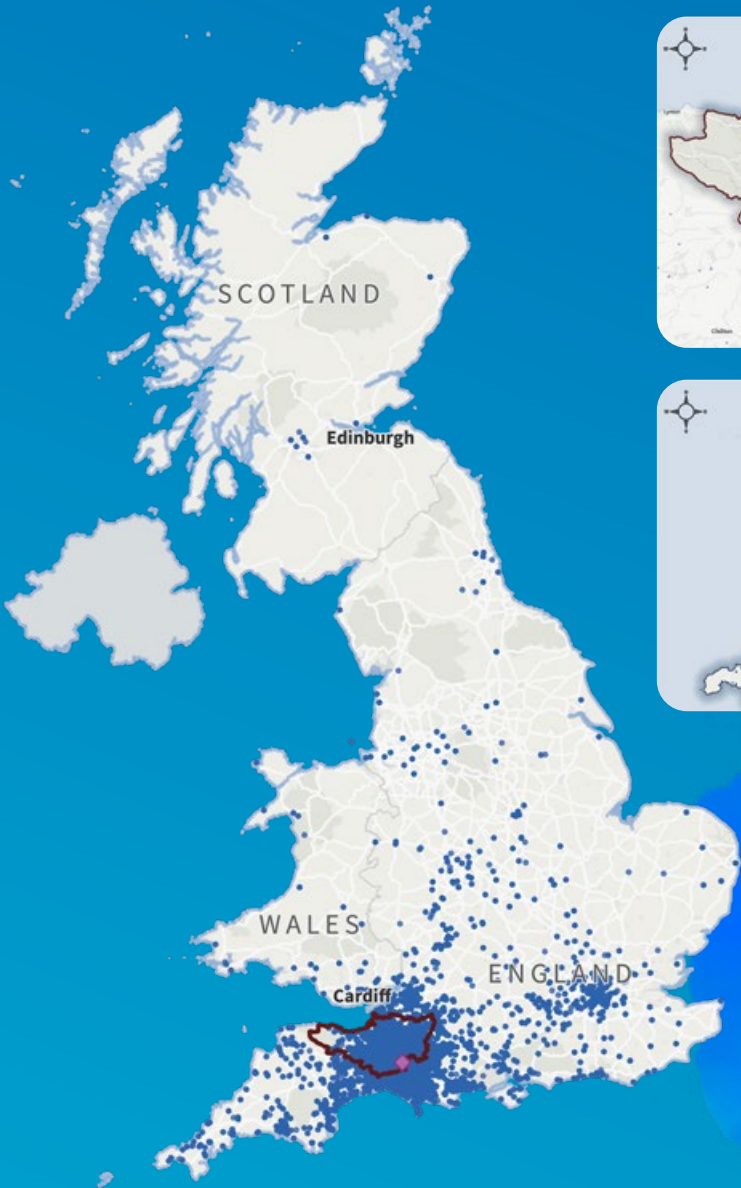
Our Arts Engagement & Outreach programme has grown in extraordinary ways over the last 3 years. In 2025-26, the programme attracted over £328,000 in external investment into our community projects, free public events, and creative activities. Investment which is reflected in the growing number of activities we stage across Somerset, where growth in attendance and participation indicates the need and appetite for creative opportunities locally.

	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Participation activities (Number of workshops, classes, sessions hosted)	982	1,291	1,536
Participants	6,159	10,748	16,221
Participations (where participants took part more than once)	12,699	22,341	34,468
Employment hours (Number of paid employment hours for creatives working on our projects and activities)	Not recorded	3,601	4,438

WHERE DO OUR CUSTOMERS COME FROM?

These maps show just how far people travel to experience performances at Westlands Entertainment Venue. Each dot represents someone who purchased at least one ticket between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026, revealing an audience reach that extends across Somerset, the South West, and beyond.

The maps tell only part of the story. Tens of thousands more visit Westlands each year for conferences, meetings, community events, participation classes, banquets, and to enjoy our café. While the maps do not show how many tickets each person purchased or how often they returned, they highlight the remarkable reach and diversity of the communities we welcome through our doors.



“My friend and I travelled from Exeter to see the show. We were impressed at how clean and modern the venue was, and the free car parking was a great addition.”

Audience member

OUR HIGHLIGHTS

Our stage at Westlands Entertainment Venue welcomed brilliant and inspiring acts throughout the year, with something for everyone.

The biggest names in comedy brought much laughter, including Al Murray, Dara Ó Briain, Harry Hill, Henning Wehn, Jason Manford, Jimmy Tarbuck, Joanne McNally, Joel Dommett, Josh Widdicombe, Sara Pascoe, Stewart Lee, Sue Perkins and The Horne Section.

Younger audience members enjoyed productions of *Ministry of Science*, *Fireman Sam*, and *Tom Gates EPIC Stage Show*, while adults enjoyed a night of club nostalgia with DJ Judge Jules.

Audiences of all ages relished superb live music from Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, The Manfreds, The Overtones, G4, Paul Young, Francis Rossi, The Steampunk Orchestra, *Q The Music – James Bond Concert Spectacular* and Jason Donovan.

We felt inspired and thoroughly entertained by enlightening talks from Sir Tim Rice, Lucy Worsley, Aggers and Tuffers, Guenther Steiner, Michael Rosen, Mary Beard, Pam Ayres, Hamza Yassin, and Sir Geoff Hurst.

Dance lovers were treated to a feast of performances, including James Wilton with *Bach Reimagined*, *ekatA* by Nina Rajarani, *Flamenco Origenes* from Lourdes Fernández Flamenco Company, and The Monocle from Rendez-Vous Dance.

Theatre productions included *Murder, She Didn't Write*, *The Haunting of Blaine Manor*, *Buddy – The Buddy Holly Story*, and the Ukrainian National Opera with a spectacular production of *Carmen*.

This is just a taste of the 204 performances that left everyone inspired and thoroughly entertained over the last twelve months.

“Event staff on the night were lovely, professional and very polite. Your team are a real credit to your success, and I value everyone who helped on the night and those who work back of house to keep the venue clean and presentable. What a gem of a venue you have and a fantastic team. You get my vote for future family events as I think the drive is worth the experience.”

Audience Member

Festivals, Conferences, Banquets, and Meetings

As a multi-purpose venue, every day at Westlands Entertainment Venue is different. Spend a day here, and you'll see a range of events and activities taking place throughout the day.

- The venue is a popular choice for festivals including the Yeovil Beer and Cider Festival, Somerset Jobs Fair, Christmas Arts & Crafts Market, and Yeovil Together.
- Westlands also hosts corporate events, conferences, and banquets for companies such as Leonardo's and Screwfix, with banquets including the Funtasia Charity Ball.
- Each month, we host around 29 meetings – approximately 350 per year.



OUR CHRISTMAS PANTOMIME

Beauty and the Beast roars at the Box Office

For our second in-house pantomime production, we took all the lessons we learnt with Jack and the Beanstalk and added even more magic, spectacle, and glitter! It certainly proved to be a recipe for success, as our creative team worked incredibly hard and pulled out all the stops to bring a truly magical production to the stage. A brand-new script, costumes, and production saw more opportunities for South West artists and creatives to work in Somerset.

The production welcomed 22,744 audience members, setting a new record for pantomime at Westlands Entertainment Venue.

“PANTOMIMES come in many different guises... Some have a special place in their community, and that is squarely where the Yeovil pantomime sits. This is a town that loves its theatre.”

One of the Yeovil pantomime’s secret weapons is choreographer James Bamford – a home-grown talent who took his first performing steps at the Octagon.”

The Fine Times Recorder

Christmas at Westlands

The festive season is always a highlight for us, drawing the community together to celebrate and enjoy time with friends and family. This season was alike no other, as Westlands Entertainment Venue was alive with celebration, hosting a vibrant mix of seasonal events. From our *Back to the 80s Christmas Party* to wreath making workshops and many other gatherings, the building was filled with laughter and seasonal sparkle. None of it would be possible without our dedicated staff and volunteers, whose hard work helps make this time of year truly magical.

YEOVIL LITERARY FESTIVAL

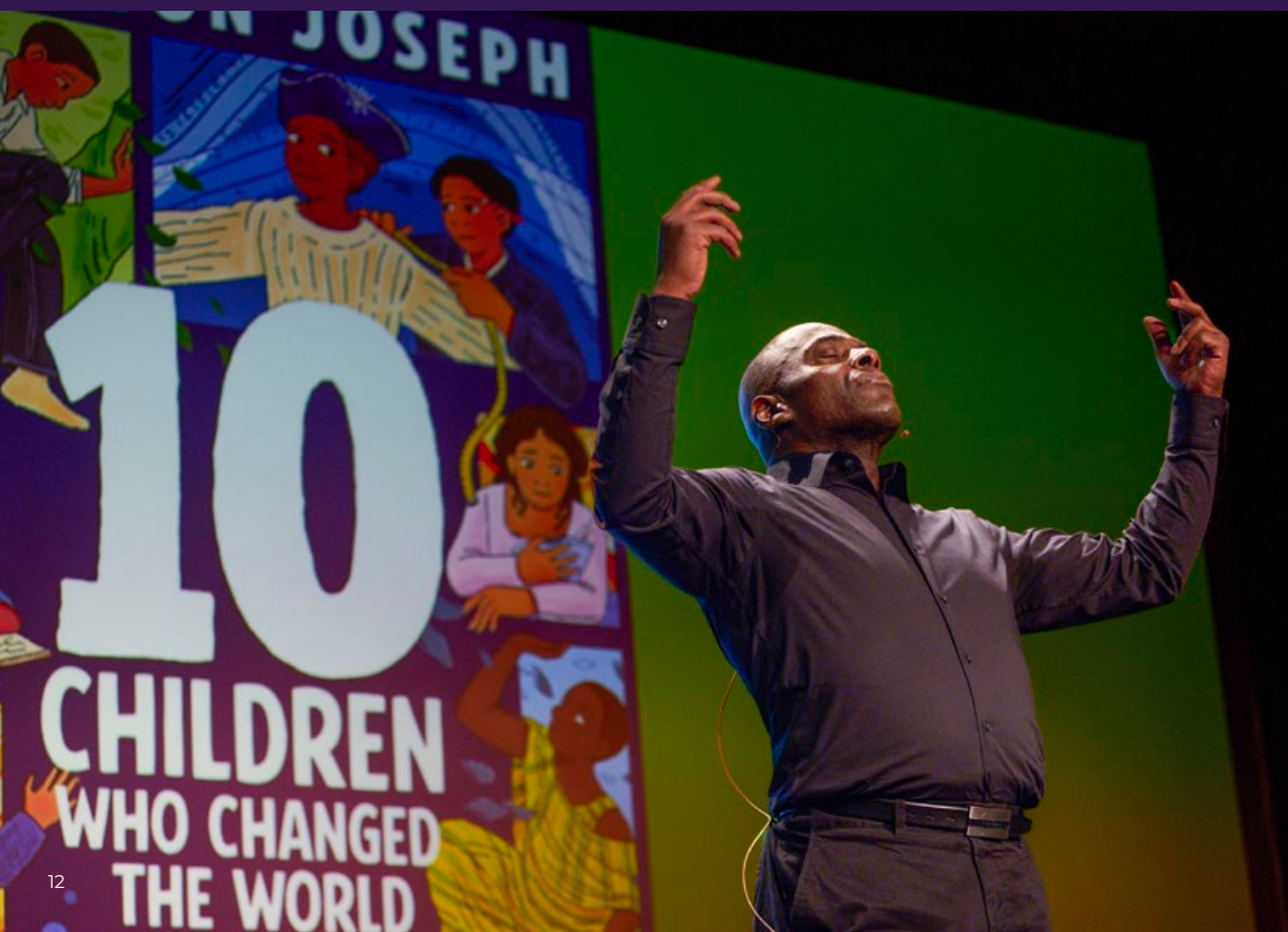
Chapter 13

13 might be considered unlucky for some but that proved not to be the case for our 13th Yeovil Literary Festival. A total of 8,636 tickets were sold across 61 events, setting a new record for attendance.

2025 brought an amazing line-up of authors together over a shared love of literature. In addition to local and emerging authors we were delighted to welcome well known authors, including Sandi Toksvig, Sebastian Faulks, Lyse Doucet, Sir David Suchet, Paterson Joseph, Jung Chang, Michael Palin,

Petroc Trelawny, LJ Ross, Joanna Page, Alison Steadman, Larry Lamb, Michael Morpurgo, Rose Aylin-Ellis, Billy Bragg, and Dame Mary Berry.

The festival is a non-profit partnership between the Octagon Theatre and Westlands Entertainment Venue, Waterstones Yeovil, Yeovil Library, and Yeovil Community Arts Association (YCAA). Together we continue to create opportunities for discovery, connection, and inspiration through literature.



OCTAGON THEATRE UPDATE



Over the last 12-months plans to transform the Octagon Theatre into one of the South West's leading cultural and entertainment venues achieved a number of critical milestones.

Design work continued throughout the year and in February 2026 Somerset Council's planning committee approved plans submitted by a partnership between Yeovil Town Council and Somerset Council, that will see the development of a £15m plan to not only secure the structural integrity of the 50-year-old building for decades to come but will include major improvements to access both front of house and backstage.

Following the submission in October 2025 of an outline business case to the Department of Media, Culture and Sport, which is providing the bulk of the funding, the team have begun the tender process to appoint a contractor. Once appointed, the project team can prepare the final business case for submission, with building work expected to begin in early 2027.

The capital investment includes £10m from Department for Culture, Media and Sport, £3.75m from Yeovil Town Council from a loan and reserves, plus just over £1.25m of ticket levy income, fundraising and 106 contributions via Somerset Council. Thank you to everyone who continues to support

our fundraising efforts, we cannot wait for building work to start and get another step closer to opening night. You can keep up to date on progress with the Octagon Theatre development by visiting our website.

The refurbishment includes:

- Replacement/renewal of the plant, machinery, and physical infrastructure of the building.
- Improvements to accessibility, including additional accessible toilets, changing places facility, and accessible dressing room.
- Renewing and improving the auditorium and rehearsal space.
- Reorganisation and improvement of front-of-house facilities.
- Improvements to the environmental impact of the venue - energy efficiency measures/sustainable practices.
- Technical improvements to the stage and backstage area. Raising the roof will enable the team to fly cloths out and a backstage crossover will support the ambitions of the theatre programme and talented local community groups.

PRODUCTIONS & COMMUNITY EVENTS

Staging world-class performances in the heart of our community

We bring culture to doorsteps by programming a vibrant range of world-class performances in public spaces across Somerset. We also provide countless opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to perform on our regional stage.

Throughout the year, local groups and societies bring our stages to life, from Castaways Theatre Group, Yeovil Amateur Operatic Society (YAOS) and Yeovil Amateur Pantomime Society (YAPS) to Helen Laxton School of Dance, Keri Hill Dance, Eminence Dance, Miss Natasha School of Dance, Project Dance, and many more. We are proud that our venues sit at the heart of Somerset's creative community.

5 mesmerising outdoor theatre productions, bringing world-class theatre directly into local communities.

3 classical music concerts, by the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, creating special shared experiences for babies, parents, people living with dementia and their families.

1 interactive walkabout performance, filling public spaces with laughter, movement and joy.

2,980 local performers took centre stage, building confidence, skills, and unforgettable memories.

39 performances by community groups, staged at Westlands throughout the year.

A space to play

Our PlayDay events continued to grow across 2025–26, with families embracing free, high quality creative opportunities in the February half term and summer holidays.

In August 2025 we staged 4 outdoor events in Chard, Langport, Wincanton, and Yeovil, featuring hands on music, circus, and craft workshops, with face painting and 4 incredible outdoor theatre productions. We invited Sonia Sabri Co. with Mughal Miniatures: The Awakening, Tit for Tat Circus Theatre's BOOKS!, Jellyfish Theatre's The Dragon Wagon, and Scratchworks Theatre Co. with The Mushroom Show to perform for families. Each event was supported by local organisations including Freedom Leisure, Somerset Rivers, Young Somerset, Somerset Libraries, Avon and Somerset Police, Abri, and Somerset Film, with an estimated attendance of 4,635 across all 4 events.

Our Winter PlayDays then transformed community halls into warm, welcoming creative spaces, offering music, circus skills, woodcraft, clay modelling, mask making, and collaborative art, with support from South West Heritage Trust, Girlguiding, Somerset Libraries, Balsam Centre, and Chard Community Hub. Attendance increased from 1,468 to 2,336, showing how valued free indoor creative spaces are when outdoor play is limited.

"After an unsettled night with my newborn, this was the perfect peace I needed — what a wonderful BSO Time Together Concert!"

Audience Member

"Thank you for giving us the opportunity to be a part of SHiNE 2026. We all thoroughly enjoyed watching and cheering on the other groups' performances, and the group absolutely loved having the chance to perform on stage. The experience has clearly left a lasting impression on them, as they've all been asking when the next SHiNE show will be!"

Local teacher

PARTICIPATE

Inspiring the region to take part, get creative, and stay active

We offer a range of activities for people of all ages and abilities to take part in. From our weekly classes, workshops, and holiday activities to our popular Winter and Summer PlayDay events, all participants are encouraged to unleash their creativity, grow in confidence, and develop their talents.

25 weekly classes from parents and babies dance classes to our youth dance, choir and theatre, plus our community choir and adult dance classes, enabling people of all ages and abilities to keep fit, form friendships, and learn new skills.

10,148 people took part in our activities, classes, and workshops - a **36% increase** from 2024-25.

6,971 children, young people, and families attended our free Summer and Winter **PlayDays** held in, Chard, Langport, Wincanton, and Yeovil.

2,273 employment hours were created for practitioners and creatives.

29,865 hours of active participation recorded across our programme.

More than a class

Ruth has enjoyed dancing since childhood and as an older woman wanted to find a welcoming, supportive environment where she felt comfortable attending classes and reconnecting with dance. She now regularly attends our Silver Swans and Tap classes, and joins CHiCHi Fit when time allows. Ruth shares: **"The classes have given me so much. Dance is a great form of exercise and such a great help with poise, posture and balance — it can only be beneficial for the body."**

Performance opportunities have also become an important part of her experience: **"We are lucky to have the opportunity to perform in the annual SHiNE Showcase. There is no pressure to do so, but for me it provides something different in life to think about and focus on."**

For Ruth, the benefits extend far beyond the physical. She highlights the social and wellbeing impact of attending: **"I would highly recommend the classes at Westlands to keep active, make new friends and enjoy a great sense of wellbeing."**

"Jill Newton's workshop totally transformed my outlook on my ability to draw."

Participant

"These PlayDay events are important because it's so difficult to get the kids out somewhere fun without costing an arm and a leg! It has been so enjoyable doing something a bit different and a brilliant way to use our wonderful community spaces."

Parent

"Absolutely the best experience I've ever had — meeting new people, dancing on stage again and making new friends. I would 100% attend a summer school again."

Summer School Participant

ARTS FOR HEALTH & WELLBEING

Supporting people to live longer happier lives and establishing networks of support

Our specialist creative projects provide emotional and physical support to individuals with mental health and long-term health conditions, delivered in partnership with NHS, community organisations, and voluntary services.

127 specialist support-led sessions delivered, that support treatment, recovery & long-term wellbeing.

351 participants supported across our 5 health & wellbeing projects.

100% of participants reported sessions are helping them better manage their health and wellbeing.

Reduced isolation and loneliness, with participants forming meaningful connections.

Increased recognition among healthcare professionals of the powerful role creative activities can play in supporting the health and wellbeing of their patients.

Projects include:

- **Movement Through Cancer in Yeovil**, a creative movement & dance project designed for people at any point in their cancer journey.
- **Octagon Memory Choir in Yeovil**, a singing project aimed at people living with dementia or memory challenges, and their carers.
- **Parkinson's Dance in Langport**, a creative movement & dance project designed specifically to address the symptoms of Parkinson's.
- **Somerset Wellbeing Orchestra in Chard**, a music-making project aimed at adults who have reported mental health challenges or would like extra support, delivered in partnership with Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra.
- **Time Together in Wincanton**, a sensory and creative music-making project aimed at parents feeling low after the birth of their child, delivered in partnership with Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra.

"Movement Through Cancer has been wonderful for my whole body and my mind, I feel so much better after coming here. This has helped me to find myself again."

Movement Through Cancer Participant

More than movement

Before joining our Parkinson's Dance project in Langport, Peter took part in online exercise sessions to help with his Parkinson's. While helpful, they left him missing the connection and sense of community he craved. That changed the moment he stepped into his first Parkinson's Dance session. Surrounded by warmth, encouragement and shared understanding, Peter—along with his wife Nicky—quickly felt inspired and formed meaningful connections with new friends.

Over the following weeks, Peter noticed positive changes in his physical wellbeing too. He began to move more freely, rebuilding strength, balance and control to support him in everyday life. **"I've noticed I'm more confident now, and worry less"**. His balance and walking have improved so much that although he still uses his rollator for longer walks, he started to swap his rollator for a stick in the garden and feels more at ease navigating busy public spaces.

For both Peter and Nicky, the project has become a weekly highlight—bringing not just physical benefits, but renewed confidence, friendships and joy.

CREATIVE LEARNING & EDUCATION

Bringing learning to life

We collaborate with schools throughout Somerset to create meaningful opportunities for teachers and students to be inspired by world-class companies. Our programme involves Continuing Professional Development (CPD) training to support and empower teachers, free in-school workshops for pupils, opportunities for students to watch captivating performances and perform live on regional stage.

184 schools engaged with our programme from in-school workshops, to live performances, career workshops, and CPD events.

16 Somerset primary & secondary schools took part in dance, theatre, and music programmes with Emma Rice Company, Motionhouse Dance, and Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra.

1,975 students benefitted from hands on workshops with inspirational performers, musicians, and arts specialists.

2,171 students experienced live professional performances.

56 teachers benefited from specialist CPD training.

Access to high quality arts education in-school

This year, Motionhouse worked with Holyrood Academy in Chard, where opportunities for Dance within the KS3 curriculum are limited. Their workshops offered students meaningful access to high quality arts education, introducing them to a professional artform many had not previously experienced.

*For Eliza, a Year 9 student, the experience opened up a new creative pathway. She reflected on how she wouldn't have had the chance to explore this style of dance without the programme, and how working with Motionhouse challenged her both physically and creatively. **"I really enjoyed the challenge of working with Motionhouse, and understanding the physical stamina needed by their performers,"** she said. **"The workshops have made me consider taking Dance at GCSE."***

By bringing specialist practitioners directly into school settings, the programme is widening access to Drama, Dance, and Music, raising aspirations and helping young people discover subjects they can pursue with confidence.

"The CPD workshops have really inspired me! I can't wait to use some of the techniques learnt today with my GCSE students tomorrow!"

Teacher

"The in-school singing workshop was fantastic, the students were responsive and engaged from the get-go! Without these workshops being funded we wouldn't have been able to give our students this opportunity."

Teacher

TALENT DEVELOPMENT & ARTIST SUPPORT

Supporting creatives to work, study and train in the creative industries in the South West

We shine a light on creatives across the county and open young people up to the wide range of careers available in the creative industries. We empower the next generation of artists to imagine and build futures within these fields while nurturing and supporting creatives to live, work, and study in Somerset.

20 work experience students got hands-on experience and insight into running a busy receiving arts venue.

3 apprenticeships across our Marketing, Technical and Catering teams, with distinction.

145 students experienced lighting, sound and stage management, and became producers, directors, and performers for the day at our Creative Careers Events.

1,589 students learnt about different career opportunities within the arts.

124 hours of free studio space for creatives to create, develop, and rehearse new work.

20 Piano Nights & Acoustic Afternoon sessions giving paid performance opportunities to local musicians.

44 creatives received 1:1 mentoring support and advice.

Discovering new possibilities

Sarah, a Year 10 student, completed a week-long work experience placement at Westlands, exploring a wide range of creative and behind the scenes roles — including Arts Engagement & Outreach, Programming, Front of House, Marketing, Finance, Events, and Technical Theatre.

Arriving with little previous experience in theatre, Sarah quickly found herself welcomed and supported by staff across the venue. Throughout the week, she gained first-hand insight into how an arts organisation operates, discovering the breadth of roles that bring a venue to life. Hearing staff share their own career journeys had a powerful impact, helping her discover the many routes into the creative industries, and opening her mind to different careers within the theatre which she wasn't aware of before.

"I enjoyed learning about the variety of roles within theatre and hearing about people's journeys into the industry. The experience has given me ideas about future career options and is something I'll always remember."

An example of how we are empowering young people to see themselves in the creative industries.

"This workshop gave me practical tools and confidence for auditioning. The insights on preparation and mindset have directly supported my journey as a singer. I left feeling empowered and ready to take the next step."

Participant

ACCESS & INCLUSION

Creating space for everyone to belong and feel truly valued

Our **Accessible Ticket Scheme**, **SHiNE Bursary Fund**, **Octagon Buddies**, **School Travel Bursary**, and **Octagon & Westlands Inclusion Group** support individuals of all ages and abilities to attend and take part in creative participation classes, workshops, live shows and events, who might not otherwise be able to access these opportunities.



771 tickets provided at just £3

to low-income individuals and families across **41 performances**.



New sensory bags

introduced to support visitors who may benefit from additional sensory resources during their visit.



Secured Sport England funding

to expand our Inclusive Dance project, with a year-round programme of dance sessions for disabled adults.



Travel costs subsidised for 8 schools,

helping **599 students** experience the magic of live theatre.



Improving access

by actively listening to disabled, D/deaf, and neurodivergent people and addressing barriers they face.



Supported the Boys Need Bins campaign

installing sanitary bins in male toilets throughout our venue.



Free buddy support

available for anyone who feels unable to attend shows and events independently.

"Thanks to you and the Accessible Ticket Scheme. You have made it possible for me to bring my daughter to see the pantomime and Nutcracker — something I never thought I could do."

Accessible Ticket Scheme Member

ENVIRONMENT



Taking steps towards sustainability

We are committed to responding to the climate emergency with meaningful, everyday action. Sustainability guides our planning, our operations, and the way we work with our communities across Somerset. Through staff training, careful energy monitoring, and localised programme delivery, we're building a greener future one step at a time.

Cleaner energy choices

We source all our electricity from renewable providers, ensuring every pound supports the transition away from fossil fuels. This year we've continued to lower our energy consumption through efficient lighting, smart sensors, and ongoing monitoring across both venues.

Empowering staff through training

The Carbon Literacy Project gives staff accredited training that supports confident, sustainable decision making. Environmental Staff Champions from each department help keep momentum strong and ideas flowing.

Localised activity = Lower carbon footprint

Over **6,970 people** joined our **PlayDays** in community locations across Somerset. By delivering activities locally, we reduce travel for families, participants, and staff, making creativity accessible while lowering our carbon footprint.

Reducing waste & boosting recycling



79.75% of all waste recycled, supporting a circular economy.



54% of tickets sent as e-tickets, reducing paper use and improving accessibility.



100% diverted from landfill, ensuring responsible disposal.

SUPPORTING ROLES

Our Volunteers

Our venues and outreach projects are powered by an amazing community of over 80 volunteers whose energy and generosity shape everything we do. Their support helps us deliver inspiring programmes, create welcoming spaces, and memorable moments for everyone who walks through our doors.

Over the past 12 months, our volunteers have generously given an incredible 6,272 hours of their time to support our work - we couldn't do it without them!

A special thank you to our Foyer Club volunteers, who check your tickets, show you to your seat, and serve at the ice cream and merchandise stands. As a registered charity, they also play a vital role in fundraising for our venues, helping us to continue to grow and thrive.

We are deeply grateful for every volunteer who chooses to be part of our story.



Our Partners

The success of our programme is built on the strong relationships we've developed with our incredible partners. Their support has been instrumental in helping us bring creativity, culture, and joy to communities across Somerset. This year, we've been able to deliver a wide range of activities thanks to the invaluable contributions of:

Abri Housing Group
Alzheimer's Society
Ark at Egwood
Avon & Somerset Police
Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra
Chard Community Hub
Chard WATCH CIO
Emma Rice Company
Exeter University
Fingerprint Dance Company
Frantic Assembly
Freedom Leisure
Langport & Huish Youth Group
LiveWest
LOVE Yeovil
Motionhouse Dance Company
Somerset Activity & Sport Partnership (SASP)
Somerset Council
Somerset Film
Somerset Libraries
Somerset NHS Foundation Trust
Somerset Rivers
South West Heritage Trust
The Balsam Centre
Thrive
University of the West of England
Yeovil Art Space
Yeovil Diversity Project
Yeovil Town Council
Young Somerset

OUR THANKS



The programme at the Octagon and Westlands has been made possible thanks to support from Yeovil Town Council, Somerset Council and Arts Council England.

In 2023, the Octagon Theatre became one of Arts Council England's National Portfolio Organisations (NPO) with an investment to support arts and cultural activities in Somerset. The Octagon Theatre's Arts Engagement and Outreach team continue to provide affordable, accessible arts activities and opportunities in the heart of local communities, as supported by national and regional bodies.

In addition, we received support from Somerset Activity & Sports Partnership (SASP), Somerset Community Foundation, Sport England, Music for All, Norman Family Trust, Abri Housing Group, Leonardo UK, Wincanton Town Council, Langport Town Council, Brympton Parish Council, and Yeovil Without Parish Council.

With Sponsorship received from Bakers Coaches of Yeovil.



Special thanks goes to our Octagon Arts Engagement & Outreach Board:

Cllr Federica Smith-Roberts (Chair)
Cllr Nicola Clark (Vice Chair)
Amelia Thompson
Cllr Heather Shearer
Cllr Mike Best
Cllr Val Keitch
John Clark
Jusna Mustafa
Lucinda Langdon
Sara Skirton

"This internship is beyond what I could have imagined. The experience I've had at The Octagon & Westlands has broadened my understanding of how the arts such as theatre, singing and dancing, provide the local community with a chance to come together in huge cultural events or performances, creating formative memories for those who may not have had the chance otherwise."

Intern



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