



Grant Evaluation

- The Parish Council likes to hear how community groups have used the money awarded to them
- As the money awarded is public money, we also need to make sure that the money has been spent appropriately and as agreed

Name of Organisation	Holmfirth Art & Music Ltd (Holmfirth Arts Festival)
Amount of award	£ 1500
Purpose for which the grant was awarded (Maximum 20 words)	Creative Confluences Arts Programme (1 year 2026) now FLOW year 3+

The Story of Your Project

- *Tell us what you did with the money awarded to you (Maximum 500 words)*
- *Attach a few photos*

We originally applied for a new three year programme called Creative Confluences but due to local elections only 1 year of funding was granted so we renamed the programme Flow year 3+. The grant of £1500 supported the same arts programme. The programme focused on inclusion and relevance, showcasing local creativity and regional talent to engage Holme Valley's rurally isolated young people and families of all ages. It took inspiration from the River Holme which flows through our Pennine landscape (the backbone of England) and plays a fundamental role in the area's ecology, heritage, economic growth, and cultural identity.

2026 programme achievements:

A: PARTICIPATORY PROGRAMME April to mid June

Rising Tides - practical support and paid performance opportunities for 6 grass roots musical artists/ensembles (Grass Roots Music funding dependent). *This planned three year project was subject to a successful Arts Council England funding bid which was not successful so could not go ahead.*

New Streams - supporting emerging talent culminating in a showcase. *This inaugural project did go ahead and exceeded our expectations. Held at the Picturedrome on 28 June in partnership with the Jam Factory and Patchwork Music, the showcase featured the awesome talent of 45 young performers from HD9 Community Brass, Holmfirth High School, Jam Factory and Patchwork Music, headlined by local up and coming band, Deadwax. 310 people attended the showcase*

Townships in Flow - a community co-created parade inspired by the brass band history of the ancient constabulary of the Graveship of Holme. *The parade was co-created by the people of the Holme Valley working with The Children's Art School and featured the Mass Brass project which introduced around 90 children to brass music for which the first new brass march for 50 years was composed for the Holme Valley. 400 participated in the parade, which also provided 40 days of work for local artists and was seen by over 1000 people*

River of Art - a community co-created art trail along the banks of the River Holme. *Led by local forest school artist Sarah Branson, River of Art involved 474 local people in 10 local groups working with 15 local artists. The displays along the river bank inspired by the Holme Valley included water themed hangings, owls, Fenella the tiger and a Yorkshire cream tea.*

Diverse Currents – ensuring access to the arts and the festival for people who are rurally, socially, culturally, or economically excluded, or living with mental or physical health challenges. *We continued to work with a freelance access and inclusion liaison, provided accessible viewing points, updated our town access video to our festival venues and provided BSL interpretation for all but 1 of our live events.*

B: BIG FREE FESTIVAL WEEKEND Saturday 13th June to Sunday 14 June

Townships in Flow - community co-created Graveship of Holme Parade – Saturday including Mass Brass Community Music Project. *See above +- 2000 people saw the parade*

Rising Tides pop ups - outdoor performances from grass roots performers – Saturday. *Festival Saturday saw performances from Café Orchestra, Wooldale Warblers, The Bees Knees and Beaumont Music Academy with Bhangra Dancing from Hardeep Sahota and Breton Music and Dancing from Le Vendredi Danse.*

Creative Streams - Family Art and craft activities - Saturday and Sunday. *Participants took part in pond dipping with River Holme Connections, parade making with The Children's Art School and Busy Bee making for the River of Art. On Sunday more than 450 people took part in a VR swing experience whilst around 100 people viewed Holmfirth Writers' performance and writing workshop*

High Tides - High quality professional street theatre co-commissions and new touring

work - Sunday

River of Art – a community co-created art trail along the banks of the River Holme. *On Sunday professional street performance included Gaia and Maia by Bev Adams Arts, Enchanted Woodland by Chicks on Sticks and for the Love of Stuff by Earthbound.*

C: TICKETED EVENTS

New Streams Showcase Sunday, June. *See above, 310 people attended and 45 young people performed*

Festive Footstomp - Big Weekend Opening Party. *100 people joined us for samba with Dr Pete's Salsa Band and 80 people joined us for the Big Weekend Closing Party with the Happy Daggers on Sunday 14th June, at the Picturedrome.*

The Story of Your Project contd.

This is what people said:

"Thank you for all your tireless work and everyone's creativity and commitment. The festival brings smiles to so many faces, which feels important now more than ever."

"I loved the installations along the river. It would be great if they could be left in place longer than just the weekend."

"Thank you. It's great for bringing people together. Loads of people participated in the parade and it brought a good audience into the centre. Good for local businesses. Also creatively enriching."

"I think the puppetry and children's events are delightful and really well done - thanks for that and please carry on!"

"Make sure it keeps going"

What you achieved

**What were the benefits of your project?
(Maximum 500 words)**

In May and June 2026, we wrapped up the final year of our three year Flow programme, with a huge celebration of creativity, community, and the stunning landscape of the Holme Valley. Through a vibrant mix of performances, new commissions, workshops, and local events, we brought together artists, volunteers, and friends to create some unforgettable cultural experiences right here in the heart of our community.

The festival continued to place participation at the heart of its

programme, bringing together professional artists and local communities to co-create ambitious cultural experiences. The River of Art trail and the Townships in Flow parade became defining moments of the festival, while performances, workshops and exhibitions celebrated local creativity alongside artists from across the UK and beyond. Audience feedback consistently described the festival as welcoming, inclusive and community centred.

Heritage and Place

Celebrating the distinctive heritage and landscape of the Holme Valley remained central to the festival. Community groups, schools and local artists explored stories of place through creative projects, while the River of Art and Townships in Flow highlighted the area's rich cultural identity and strengthened local pride.

Behind the Festival

Alongside delivering the festival itself, 2026 marked the completion of a significant three year programme of organisational development. A strengthened governance structure, robust evaluation framework and long term strategic planning have provided strong foundations for future growth. As Bev Adams prepares to step down as Artistic Director, the festival enters a new chapter with clear strategic direction, strong partnerships and an evidence base to support the next generation of leadership.

Looking Ahead

The conclusion of the three year+ Flow programme marks the beginning of an exciting new chapter for Holmfirth Arts Festival. Building on strong community partnerships, ambitious artistic programming and a growing commitment to environmental sustainability, the festival is well placed to continue celebrating the creativity, heritage and communities of the Holme Valley for years to come.

Three + years of Flow

Delivered ambitious community led arts programmes

Embedded environmental sustainability

Strengthened governance and organisational resilience

	Created a strong foundation for the festival's next chapter
Who benefited from the project? (Maximum 200 words)	The project reached local families and participants of all ages. The youngest recorded participant was 2 with the eldest being in their 80s.
How many people benefited? (Maximum 200 words)	In total across the 2026 festival we reached a live audience of 5570, providing paid work for 161 artists and engaging 1147 people directly in participatory activities. Our online reach was the highest ever, peaking at nearly 82000 people who saw our social media posts on Facebook, Instagram and Threads
Was the project inclusive? How were marginalised groups (elderly, disabled, young people etc) able to participate?	Creating an accessible and welcoming festival for everyone remained a priority throughout 2026. British Sign Language interpretation, accessible viewing areas and a dedicated Nurture Tent helped ensure the festival could be enjoyed by a wide range of audiences. Participants and audiences consistently praised the friendly atmosphere and inclusive approach, highlighting the festival as a place where people of all ages and backgrounds felt able to take part. Of the 1147 participants we counted, 148 (13%) had protected characteristics. Marginalised participating groups included Ability Options, Support 2 Recovery and Globe Arts with children with additional needs at Beavers, New Mill and Outdoor Learning Forest Schools. All activities, including the three indoor events were free of charge.
Reflecting on climate change, did the project address any aspects of the climate emergency? How?	Environmental sustainability continued to be embedded throughout the festival programme. Creative work explored themes of landscape, rivers and nature, while the organisation continued developing its environmental practice through carbon monitoring and sustainable planning. The festival's commitment to celebrating and protecting the natural environment remains central to its future development.

	Operationally, we are working towards carbon neutrality by reducing print, working with the Parish Council and Stotts Coaches to provide free buses and monitoring our carbon footprint with a view to reducing it. We aim to educate people about care of the landscape and the planet by programming work that is inspired by these issues. Examples of climate change themed programming this year included Gaia and Maia by Bev Adams Arts and for the Love of Stuff by Earthbound which encouraged people to care for the planet and consume less.
Did you achieve what you were trying to do? (Maximum 200 words)	Besides not being successful with funding to delivery the Grass Roots Music Project, we achieved

Finance and Expenditure

We ask groups to retain their receipts and invoices, and to keep a record of what they've spent for auditing purposes

Grant awarded	£ 1500.00
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Date	Description of expenditure (use another sheet if necessary)				Amount
					£1 000.00
	Description	Budget	Actual Spent/Evidenced	Amount claimed from HVPC	
	Festival Manager £225/day for 20 days	£4,500		£1000	
					£ 500.00
	Description	Budget	Actual Spent/Evidenced	Amount claimed from HVPC	
	Production costs: Road closure for parade £1990,	£2,690		£500	

	marquee hire £700				
	Total expenditure				£ 1500.00
	Amount of grant remaining (if any)				£ 0

Any amount of the award unspent may have to be returned to the Parish Council

Person completing this form		Date	29 July 2026
Position in organisation	Festival Director		

Send the completed application form, together with all supporting documentation, preferably in PDF format to: deputyclerk@holmevalleyparishcouncil.gov.uk

Alternatively, you can send the paperwork to: Holme Valley Parish Council, The Civic, Huddersfield Road, Holmfirth, HD9 3AS.

Have you considered inviting a Member of the Parish Council to come and see your project and how your grant money has been spent? Why not give the Parish Council a ring and arrange a visit 01484 687460?

Photos

All photos please credit Holmfirth Arts Festival 2026 photos by Neal Rylatt.









www.holmfirthartsfestival.co.uk

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