Holme Valley Parish Council

The Civic, Huddersfield Road, Holmfirth HD9 3AS

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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 Book Festival CIC
Amount of award	**£** 1500
Purpose for which the grant was awarded (Maximum 20 words)	To help fund the updates to our programme and advertising media to promote the Holmfirth Children's Book Festival 2026.

The Story of Your Project

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

For the 2026 Holmfirth Children's Book Festival we wanted to be a lot more ambitious and make even more of an impact for children and their families than in our first year. Our branding and colour palette was tweaked using a local author and illustrator (Danielle Mudd) to reflect the vibrancy of the festival and the age range that it was targeted for (0-13). The programme needed updating for this year's line-up of authors and also to reflect this new colourful design. We were kindly allocated £1500 by the Parish Council towards the cost of the design and printing of the programme and associated banners/posters - this was a significant help for us for such a crucial part of our project.

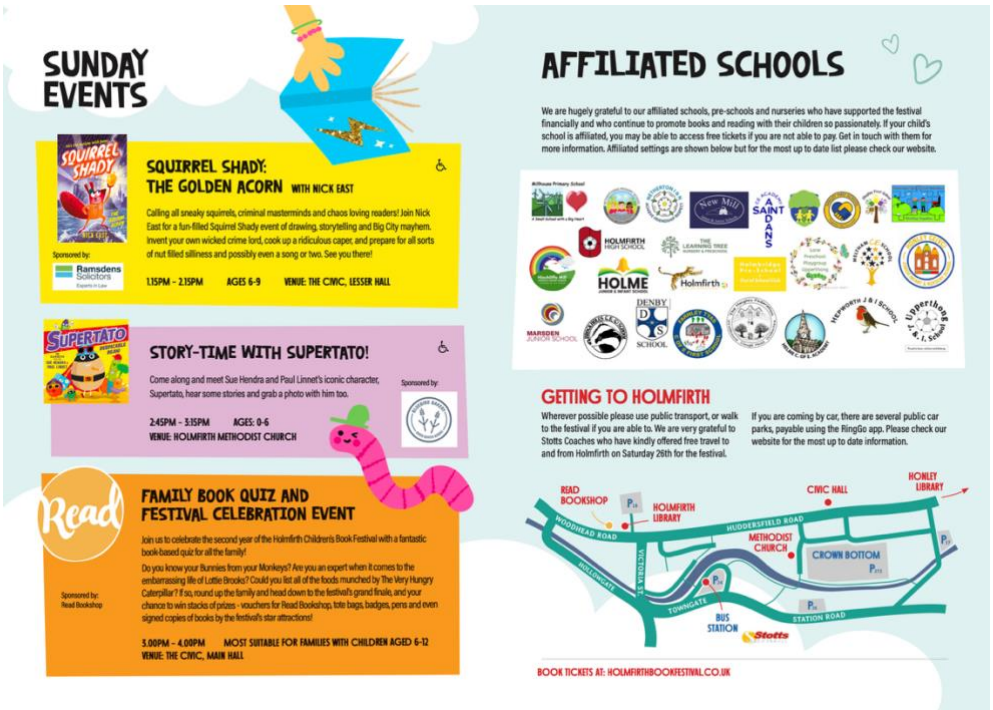
The programme was vital to the success of the festival again this year; 73% of attendees after the event said that the programme was how they found out about the festival (40% received one at school and a further 33% from visiting the bookshop or library). We had

7000 printed, 5000 of which went to local schools. This has continued to be the most effective way of us communicating the line-up of the festival along with banners displayed around Holmfirth town centre.

You can see a copy some of the pages from the programme below but for a full digital version of the of the final programme please go to:

https://holmfirthbookfestival.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/Programme_2026.pdf







The Story of Your Project contd.

Our 2026 festival was a huge success with great feedback received through surveys after the event. Here is a selection of photographs from the day. You can also see more at www.holmfirthbookfestival.co.uk and on our social media account on Instagram - @holmfirth_book_festival.



This was our 'Bone Head' event with author and illustrator Jamie Gregory. Almost all of our events in the lesser hall were sold out this year. We focused on illustration and writing workshops, graphic novels and picture books in the this room and set up tables to allow parents and children to take an active part in the sessions.

Our largest events were also very well attended with a sell-out 260 seater event in the main hall for author and illustrator duo Alice Hemming and Nicola Slater. This included a big group of Brownies and Rainbows who attended free of charge as part of our community engagement programme.

"A huge thank you from Wooldale Rainbows, we loved learning how to draw squirrel and listening to the book being read by the person who actually wrote it!! We love having Rainbow adventures with our group and hope we can do this again next year!" (Rainbow Leader)



Similarly, for Liz Flanagan's Moonlight Dragon event we had a group of 30 Cubs from Crosland Moor who were incredibly positive about their experience and keen to make this an annual event, potentially involving other local Cub packs. This also meant a huge audience for one of our favourite Yorkshire-born authors.



10% of attendees at the festival were also able to attend thanks to free schools' tickets given to families who may not otherwise have been able to afford to come. We focused these on the largest and highest profile events to engage families as much as possible.



This year, we also included some non-fiction events ranging from a book about looking after animals to podcasting sessions and even a Festival Celebration Quiz. We also focused on writing as well as reading with a writing workshop led by Bradford writer, Niyla Farook.

It was incredible to see almost 2000 people coming from all over Yorkshire and beyond to attend the festival and feedback has been extremely positive.



What you achieved

What were the benefits of your project?

(Maximum 500 words)

Inspiring the next generation of readers and writers

64% of those responding to the survey said that they had never been to a book festival before (compared to 68% last year). This indicates that we succeeded in reaching a wider audience this year and not just the same audience as we did in 2025. 99% said that they would recommend the festival to a friend with 100% saying that they were likely to come back to another festival. 100% said that it had inspired them to read the author's books.



"It was a pleasure to go to such a well organised and thoughtful event that championed children's literacy in an inspirational, accessible and fun way. I take my hat off to you and hope to attend more events next year!" (Ticketholder)

Mental health and wellbeing



98% of attendees felt that it improved their well-being and 94% said that it taught them new things. 70% said that it had helped them to meet new people. We observed this year that many local parents and families were attending in groups of several families together. This is a fantastic opportunity for connection as a result of the arts.

Encouraging families to spend time together

It is very important to us that the festival is a family-friendly activity that can be attended by families together, across generations. For the second year running, 100% of survey respondents said that the festival had helped them spend time with family.

	"The session that we attended was fantastic. Jack was so engaging. Both my kids loved it and came away excited to read the book. My daughter had finished the book less than 24hrs later and really enjoyed it. The fact it gave ideas about how to create characters and not just talk about the plot of the book was brilliant. I'm sure both my kids will use the tops and hints in their school work and story writing in future." (Ticketholder) **Footfall and trade** The majority of events took place on Saturday and were centred at The Civic, the Methodist Church and the libraries. Figures for Saturday 26th September show that footfall in Holmfirth was up 53% on the previous Saturday and 53% on the same Saturday last year (this was also the festival weekend). It should be noted that the counter is not located near to The Civic and so the full impact on footfall is hard to determine but anecdotally it felt to us that Holmfirth was full of families. Family/child centred businesses reported increased trade for the weekend of the festival, particularly on the Saturday where many families stayed for the day in Holmfirth.
Who benefited from the project? **(Maximum 200 words)**	**Ticketholders** 65% of tickets purchased online were from families living in HD9, indicating strong local support for the festival. This is where the majority of advertising had taken place and the majority of affiliated schools are local to HD9. However, it was also very encouraging for the town to see that a further 21% of attendees were from HD1-8 and that we had impressive 14% of ticketholders travel from beyond Holmfirth, Huddersfield, Barnsley, Sheffield, Leeds, Wakefield or Manchester. **Local libraries** This year, we also included Honley Library as well as Holmfirth Library as a venue. This was particularly important for us to engage the Honley community who are located slightly further away and would need to travel into the centre of Holmfirth. Hopefully by engaging them in this way this year, they will consider attending more events in future festivals.

Babies and pre-school aged children

This year, we made the decision to include younger children and babies as much as possible, particularly following last year's feedback. Reading and intervention with children in Early Years can have a much greater impact than it does later in a child's time in school (Sutton Trust, Closing the Attainment Gap, 2024) and so we were delighted to include two Baby Sensory book sessions for under 13 months and two Supertato story time sessions for young children. In addition to this, we lowered the age range of some of the larger events to encourage families with children with a range of ages to attend together.



The Methodist Church was a perfect location for this, with parking next door and plenty of room for prams. These events all sold out and were enthusiastically attended. This has meant that we will continue to increase our focus on younger events in 2026.

Schools

Schools were not only given free tickets but also given the chance to design the bookmark used to promote the festival. We had over 800 entries from local schools and the winner was a child from Upper Denby School. Louise also attended many local primary schools to deliver assemblies in the weeks before the festival. This level of school engagement has helped us to promote the festival further beyond just Holmfirth.

Authors

We are proud to say that again we have used predominantly authors and illustrators based in the north. Bethany Walker, Nicola Slater, Gareth Hopkins, Niyla Farook, Kerri Cunningham, Liz Flanagan and Nick East are all located in the north (many from Yorkshire) and Dr James Greenwood grew up locally in Huddersfield. We think that it is important for the festival to show children that they can be ambitious and that northern based writers have achieved success with their writing.

How many people benefited? **(Maximum 200 words)**	1831 people attended events over the weekend of the festival including those with free tickets as part of the schools and community outreach programmes. In addition to this, an estimated 200 people attended the used book sale.
Was the project inclusive? **How were marginalised groups (elderly, disabled, young people etc) able to participate?**	**Age** The festival was aimed at children and their families. While the majority of children were brought to the festival by their parents, there were several larger groups of grandparents bringing their grandchildren and many families coming in big groups across several generations as a day out. **Ethnicity** Other than through our community tickets and schools tickets, the vast majority of website-purchased ticket attendees identified themselves as White British. While this is representative of local demographics, this has become a priority for us in 2027 and we will work with schools and the library services to ensure wider participation from families and children of colour. **Accessibility** All of our events were held in accessible venues, however the lift at The Civic (main venue) broke down before the weekend of the festival. Nobody reported any barriers to accessibility due to this and no tickets were refunded as a result of this unavoidable problem. Our volunteers were on hand to support visitors wherever possible. Our youngest events (those where pram access was required were at ground level for this reason – they took place at the local Methodist Church). **Cost** One of the missions of the festival is to make the festival accessible to those with disabilities but also so that children are not disadvantaged by cost. Last year, not as many affiliated schools tickets were used as we had hoped. This year, physical rather than digital tickets were given to affiliated schools to give to families who wanted to attend. This was a much more successful way of allocating tickets which meant that 10% of ticketholders over the festival weekend had attended free of charge. We had also extended

	the offer of tickets to local groups such as cubs, brownies and scouts which worked well. Honley library also made good use of their community tickets to help families attend. Again, this year we did not want the cost of standard tickets to the festival to be prohibitive to families and so ticket prices were kept as low as possible. All tickets were £4 this year (the cost of the adult tickets were reduced from last year's £5). 98% of survey respondents said that they thought the festival was good value for money.
Reflecting on climate change, did the project address any aspects of the climate emergency? How?	We addressed the climate emergency in two ways: **Travelling to the festival** We promoted through social media, our programme and the website the use of other modes of transport than cars. 27% of people travelling to the festival used environmentally conscious modes of transport. They walked, cycled, used an electric vehicle or a used the free bus provided by Stotts. **Sustainable book sales** On the Saturday of the festival we held a children's used book sale to encourage sustainable book buying. This was very well attended and we estimate over 200 people attended this. £391 was generated in used book sales which supported the festival and Netherthong J&I school who had helped us to organise it. It is often the case that new books can arrive damaged from publishers and this gives us a way of giving these new books a second life.
Did you achieve what you were trying to do? **(Maximum 200 words)**	We are very proud of what we have achieved in such a short space of time. We have produced a festival across five local venues for nearly 2000 people, engaged 28 local schools and a large number of local businesses. Publishers have already been in touch, keen to plan for the book festival in 2027, which is a fantastic position to be in. Our ultimate aim is to produce a children's festival on the scale of other national festivals which would potentially attract thousands of people to Holmfirth. As part of our feedback surveys we asked people to describe the festival in three words. Below are the results as a word cloud and we feel that this demonstrates that our aims have been achieved in 2026.



Thank you for supporting the Children's Book Festival again in 2026. We would not have been able to do this without your support.

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**

Date	Description of expenditure (use another sheet if necessary)	Amount
	Updated branding and images to be used on banners, website and programme – local illustrator Danielle Mudd (£625 used from HVPC)	**£ 625**
	Programme and social media assets (£875 used from HVPC)	**£ 960**
	Total expenditure	**£ 1500**
	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	[redacted]	**Date**	**20th October 2026**

Position in organisation	**Festival Manager/Director**

Send the completed application form, together with all supporting documentation, preferably in PDF format to: clerk@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?