

Wandsworth Arts Fringe 2023 Public Impact and Learning Report



WANDSWORTH ARTS
FRiNGE





Out of the Deep Blue, Autin Dance Theatre
Photo by David Cotter

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Welcome to our 2023 impact and learning report

WANDSWORTH ARTS FRINGE

Wandsworth Arts Fringe (WAF), co-ordinated by Wandsworth Council, has been shaking up South West London with an eclectic programme of arts and culture for over 14 years.

In 2023 – as Wandsworth Council launched its bid to be borough of Culture 2025 – the fringe returned with **17 days of jam-packed, belly-laughing, awe-inspiring art, dance, music, theatre, comedy, film, circus and street performance**. Offering something for everyone across more than **130 events** in multiple venues around the borough, WAF23 wowed Wandsworth once again, drawing an audience of over 18,000 people and showcasing the talents of more than 1,400 local artists (428) and creatives (928).

Welcome to our 2023 impact and learning report, which spotlights what we've achieved together and what we've learned.

Wandsworth is a vibrant inner borough in south London with a population of 327,500 covering the areas of Battersea, Balham, Putney, Tooting, Roehampton and Wandsworth Town.

The borough has a young and transient resident population, the median age is 33. **Arts and culture play a vital role in making Wandsworth a prosperous, healthy and attractive place to live**, bringing people together and providing a sense of vitality and belonging.

The borough is home to a well-developed cultural infrastructure and network made up of small and agile, as well as world-renowned and mighty, arts and culture organisations, groups, projects and people. A strong collaborative network exists between organisations and a What Next? Chapter encourages partnerships across the borough.



WAF23 at a glance

Headlines:

17

jam-packed, belly-laughing, awe-inspiring days of art, dance, music, theatre, comedy, film, circus and street performance.

130

events across 17 days at multiple venues around the borough with tickets from free to £20.

18,000

people attending WAF events.

1,426

artists (498) and creatives (928) involved.

Artists:

349

creative participants were from a culturally diverse ethnic background, 179 identified as disabled, 19 as D/deaf, 124 as LGBTQ+, and 158 as having been eligible for free school meals.

£38,225

awarded to local artists and creatives through WAF grants. A further four strategic awards of £10,000 were made to production companies for borough-wide engagement.

Audiences:

97%

audiences rated WAF events as very good (85%) or good (12%).

97%

agreed, 'I enjoyed myself and had a good time'.

88%

agreed 'WAF has helped me to feel connected to people in the community'. Connecting with others is one of the NHS's five key steps to wellbeing.

74 NPS

WAF23's NPS rating, a metric that measures loyalty between an organisation and its audience, is considered excellent. This puts WAF23 on par with international festivals like the Hay Festival for audience satisfaction.

Marketing and tickets:

38%

average event capacity (against a target of 30%).

51%

of live ticketed events were at 30% capacity or above.

23

sold-out events.

£17,550

income from advanced ticket sales for creatives and cultural organisations.

42

pieces of media and press coverage.

30

artist interviews on Riverside Radio.

Economic and social value:

£205,758

gross economic value made up of £159,797 gross visitor spend², plus £17,550 ticket sales, plus 317 days of reported artist employment (£28,411 at the London Minimum Living Wage).

317

days of employment for local artists. At the venue hub the Arches at St Mary's Church in Putney, the artists bought their meals at Putney Pantry most days, contributing to a circular micro economy at the hub.

82%

of audience members travelled to WAF by public transport, by foot or by bike.



...**local** and within **walking distance**, so can meet local people... Fantastic event at an amazingly affordable price... It was something I've never seen before, I was very **inspired and moved**... As my first visit to WAF, I experienced a **very high standard** of musicianship and **excellent interaction with the audience and artists**. I really enjoyed the evening.

Amazing, **thought-provoking**... Q&A left me thinking... **Heart-warming local event**... the most wholesome event I've ever been to.

Amazing artists... Amazing **diversity and talent**... Huge diversity of art and artists **happening locally**... Beautiful environment, fun for children and adults...

Loved it. Lots of smiles, clear professional, **involved new performers**. Very interesting. Lovely venue... More **social connections and opportunities** to do something creative with others... **The buzz**, the events from 11 to midday, dancing, painting/arts and crafts...

Autism-friendly... **Great family fun**... Beautiful venue.

The many different activities, local talent and businesses have **shown how phenomenal the Borough is!**...Keep it going!

Great **atmosphere**, bringing the community together... It has made me think about the arts through a different lens... **It inspired me** to start writing short stories again myself... It was an amazing experience and full of vitality... It was very heart-warming, the **sense of community**...



A selected snapshot of comments from audience members and visitors to WAF

*from the 2023 Visitors Survey



Alice d'Lumiere
Photo by James Tye

“To bring brand new artists together and have an opportunity to trial stuff in front of a lovely crowd has been amazing. It pushes audiences outside of their comfort zone, as well as the artists, and **we’ve been really impressed by the community spirit and support for each other.** It’s such an amazing thing for artists to have the chance to put on work in a place like London that can be so restrictive.

There is so much going on as part of WAF, and just seeing other people showcase their talent while networking has been great. **It’s been so nice to have people ask about the Fringe and to point them in the direction of anything they might want to see.** Professionally, WAF gives you an understanding of all the different roles involved in the arts and all the different opportunities that are out there. That’s been really lovely to experience.”

- Sally Tonyton and Phoebe Constantine, I'MNOTAROBOT Productions

“There just seems to be an **enormous creative will here** to do things and make things happen, and just being part of that is wonderful. **Anywhere that can have that kind of level of support to the arts and diversity and culture can’t be ignored.**”

- Alice D’Lumiere, cabaret artist and aerialist

WAF23 Programme

WAF23 was a return to a majority in-person fringe, with the Wandsworth Arts and Culture Service providing production and wraparound support and mentoring to artists, creatives and producers.

More than 130 events took place across 17 days at multiple venues around the borough, with tickets for live performances ranging from free to £20. WAF23 reached almost 20,000 people, showcasing an exciting and eclectic line-up of creativity from

local and international artists.

Comedy, theatre, music, exhibitions, cabaret, workshops and dance featured at venues all over the borough, with our WAF Hub Venues being focal points for WAF activity. Our seven Hub Venues include St Mary's Church and The Arches in Putney, The Bedford in Balham, Holy Trinity Church in Roehampton, National Opera Studion in Wandsworth Town, the Royal Academy of Dance in Battersea and All Saints Church in Tooting.



*Function of X
Photo by Laura Hinski*

HIGHLIGHTS of the fringe

Pegasus Opera's **Windrush 75th Anniversary Concert**, part of Wandsworth Council's Black History 365 celebrations, featured top classical singers with music by composers of African, Caribbean and Asian heritage.

Alton, A Place I Call Home. A multi-generational theatre project, working with Group 64 Theatre, residents of the Alton Estate in Roehampton created and performed the theatre piece which celebrated the past, present and future of Alton.

Entertainment for children from **The Unicornosaurus** at Balham Baptist Church, a yoga adventure **Under The Sea** at Alton Arts Hub and Froggy's Famous Fanclub

Black Heroes Foundation hosted creative events and workshops at Wandsworth libraries telling the story of London's first Black Mayor, John Archer.

The WAF Schools Music Summer Showcase featured music performed by young people from schools across the borough at the Wandsworth Civic Suite.

The Baked Bean Charity brought **Beans on Film**, a film festival created by and for people with learning disabilities.

Joy by Group 64 Theatre explored what it means to be young in the modern world.

Endz Jazz Soul at World Heart Beat showcased the best emerging musicians across London.

A mix of theatre for children and families included faraway ancient adventure **Queen of the East** in The Arches at Mary's Church, Putney. Whilst performances of **Meg and the Magic Toyshop** and **The Little Red Hen** puppet show toured Wandsworth Libraries.

Free family friendly performances popped up in housing estates and public spaces across the borough, with Hallomai Dance touring their interactive dance performance **Joy is Ours** and Jellyfish Theatre bringing their BSL inclusive show **The Jungle Book**.

Green Curtain Theatre's **The Power and the People** told the history of Battersea Power Station through personal stories and memories.

Hazelfest at the Hazelhurst Estate in Tooting featured free family fun, including live performances, football skills and activity stalls.

Live music and community concerts at All Saints Church Tooting.

An art and catwalk show at the Nine Elms Pavilion and a **youth entertainment showcase** at Providence House.

A variety of theatre performances showed in venues across the borough; **Sense and Sensibility** at the Putney Arts Theatre, **Just To Be Safe** and **With Love, Juliet** at the Arches at St Mary's Church in Putney and **Macbeth (A Mind Diseased)** at Holy Trinity Church, Roehampton.



*The Power and the People, Green Curtain Theatre
Photo by David Cotter*



*Angelo Disons
Photo by James Tye*

WANDSWORTH NEW WRITING FEST

Theatre and spoken word fans indulged in Wandsworth New Writing Fest by I'MNOTAROBOT Productions, a two-week festival of new performances at The Arches at St Mary's Church in Putney.

The writing festival **supported emerging artists** and created a vibrant new arts scene, complete with plenty of laughs, captivating storytelling and a riverside bar. The diverse double-bill programming encouraged the audience to see

multiple performances and gave creatives a chance to support each other. The two weeks were packed with entertainment, from theatre to spoken word to scratch nights, all nestled under Putney Bridge, providing a platform for new voices. The experience has helped producers Sally Toynton and Phoebe Constantine hone their production skills, build their networks and grow I'MNOTAROBOT.

*“The outdoor space was buzzing with creatives and new audiences every night,” reflected Sally. **‘Local people told us how amazing it was to have affordable, high-quality entertainment on their doorstep.** Others were happy to find something different on their nights out, and the double bill got people watching something they might not usually choose to see. Creatives were able to network, and many people found others to work with in future. Many of our artists are now taking their shows to other fringes or venues.”*

- Sally Tonyton, I'MNOTAROBOT Productions



Out of the Deep Blue, Autin Dance Theatre
Photo by David Cotter

OUT OF THE DEEP BLUE

Out of the Deep Blue by Autin Dance Theatre is a moving tale about our earth's climate emergency told through dance, movement and masterful puppeteering.

The outdoor spectacle included interactive walkabouts in Tooting and Balham high streets and static shows and activities featuring Eko, a 13-foot-tall Sea Giant Puppet, aimed at children and family audiences. Autin Dance Theatre delivered seven performances – three at Bedford

Hill Place, three at Sellincourt Primary School and a tour of Winstanley as part of this year's WAF launch – wowing a total audience of 1,400 people.

Eko was a hit on the high streets and outside shops and cafes. Children and young people loved meeting Eko, and families appreciated free activities which didn't require booking.

“We enjoyed meeting Eko; three-year-old Louis enjoyed it,” said one parent. ‘We love stuff like this, especially in the local area. It’s nice to just wander down. **I think it’s important for the area, for kids, something for them to see, something different, especially something like Eko the Giant. It inspires them**”

“We loved the walk,” said another parent. ‘**It’s great when there’s stuff like this on in the local area.** And we were impressed by how they moved the puppet up and down the street. It’s wonderful to see.’”



Participation and Reach

64%

of visitors
**attended WAF
for the first
time**

The fringe attracted a significant number of first-time audience members and visitors; approximately 64% attended WAF for the first time, with most finding out about it through specific artists or production companies and word of mouth – highlighting the contribution that WAF artists and creatives make to the success of the fringe.

63%

increase
in **artist
engagement**

The fringe had the **highest level of artist and creative engagement in its history**, with 1,426 artists/creatives involved – a 63% increase over 2019 artist engagement – reflecting growth and interest in the borough’s arts and cultural sector and WAF as a platform for showcasing bold and boundary-pushing work. Almost a quarter, 349, were from a culturally diverse ethnic background, 179 identified as disabled, 19 as D/deaf, 124 as LGBTQ+, and 158 as having been eligible for free school meals.

Approximately **18,000** audience members and visitors attended and engaged with WAF events this year as audience **interest in live events continues to rebuild post-pandemic.**

97%

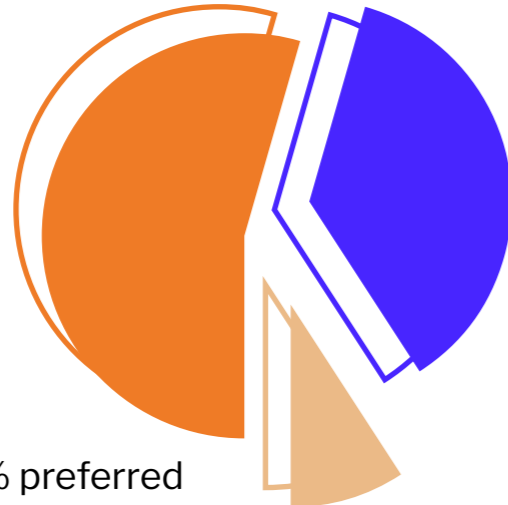
of audience members
rated the events they
attended as **very good**

Audience satisfaction and enjoyment with the fringe continue to be very high; 97% of audience members rated the events they attended as very good (85%) or good (12%). Audience members attended, on average, between 2 and 3 events (mean = 3.3).

WAF23 visitor profile

Gender:

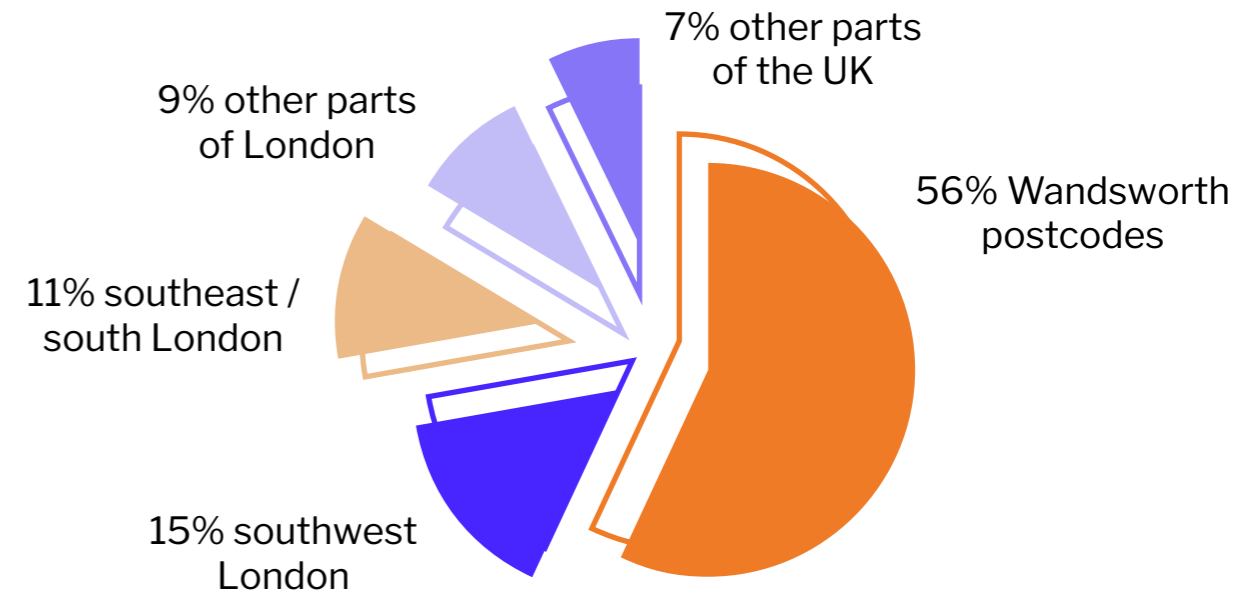
54% said they were female



36% said they were male

9% preferred not to say

Location:

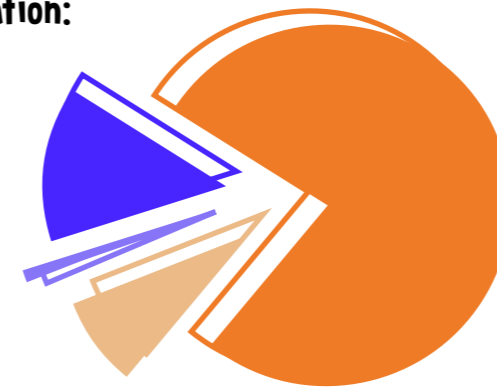


Sexual Orientation:

14% identified as LGBTQIA+

1% preferred to self-describe

8% preferred not to say



76% did not identify as LGBTQIA+

Age range:

37% aged 65 or over

38% aged 25-44

37% aged 45-64



Accessibility:

5% preferred not to say

13% said they had a disability

82% said they did not have a disability



Ethnic groups:

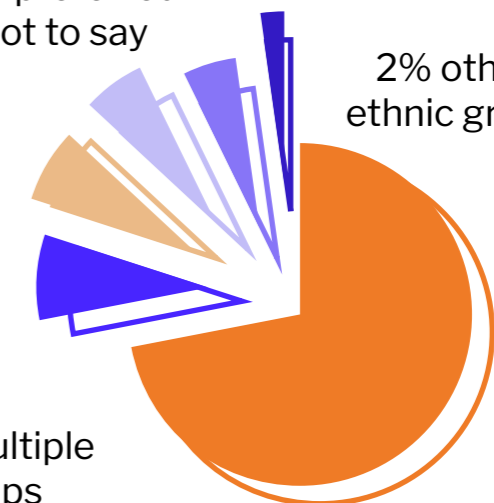
5% preferred not to say

2% other ethnic group

6% Asian or Asian British

7% Black / African / Caribbean / Black British

8% Mixed / multiple ethnic groups



72% White

RAD MAGIC OF DANCE COMMUNITY DAY

The Royal Academy of Dance (RAD) is one of the world's most influential dance education and training organisations.

The Magic of Dance community day saw RAD open its doors for an open day of fun, dance performances, creative arts and crafts, music and activities for all ages and abilities.

The community day showcased RAD's young dance students alongside disability-led companies, including MovementWorks, who worked with autistic young people aged 11-15 to create a new dance piece, Artistes for Autism. RAD also showcased Weave Stories, who have collaborated with D/deaf teenagers from Oak Lodge School in a multimedia work, Our Long Walk. Visitors could participate in fun and supportive workshops

for ages 4-13. Almost 300 people took part in the day in total. The collaboration with WAF has helped RAD welcome new audiences who appreciated the diversity, variety and accessibility of the performances and activities.

"For me, WAF has been about seeing our space buzzing and filled with different people we don't usually see and different music and activities we don't usually have," said Ike Denloye, Community Partnership Builder, RAD. ***"With WAF, it's really brilliant because you're kind of in this midst of this buzz around the borough. For us, it was mainly about welcoming new people. We're a new building, so it's great to have people recognise that we're here and that they can come and connect and be here."***

Some of the talking points from The People's Speak's 'Talkaoke' pop-up talk show, where visitors joined the table of chat to share their thoughts about dance, culture and everything else.

**DANCE MAKES US FEEL
ALIVE, EXCITED, UNIQUE
AND SPECIAL**

**CREATIVITY HAS NO
BOUNDARIES**

**THERE ARE BARRIERS TO DANCE,
SUCH AS PERCEPTIONS ABOUT
WHO CAN DANCE**

**DANCE CAN HELP US LEARN LIFE SKILLS SUCH AS
TEAMWORK AND PROBLEM-SOLVING**

**WE CAN USE DANCE TO TELL
IMPORTANT STORIES AND EXPRESS
OURSELVES**

**PARENTS AND TEACHERS
HELP TO BUILD
CONFIDENCE AND SKILLS**

**UNEXPECTED PLACES FOR
DANCE LIKE CAFES, CLUBS OR
FESTIVALS CAN INTRODUCE
MORE PEOPLE TO DANCE**

Benefits for neighbourhoods and residents

Local audiences are becoming more aware of WAF, and more residents are participating in the life of the Borough through WAF's events.

Most audience members discovered the fringe for the first time this year. **99% of audiences saw the fringe as good for the Borough's image, and 99% agreed that it enhanced the sense of community in Wandsworth.**

Growing awareness about the fringe is also reflected in the increasing interest and engagement of local artists and creatives.

97% of audiences said they enjoyed themselves and had a good time. Audiences appreciated and valued the quality and variety of events, the impact of different

art forms, the power and emotions of the performances, the fun and humour, the quality of venues, the inclusion of artists, the child and family-friendliness of the events, and the positive and welcoming atmosphere. Audiences appreciated seeing quality art and culture in local spaces and places that were familiar and meaningful to them.

WAF continues to provide an essential showcase and platform for emerging artists, offering performers the chance to test ideas with new and existing audiences, collaborate with new partners and networks, build their practices and develop essential producing skills and networks. The artists and creatives shared a sense of pride that came from being able to perform for audiences and share their work with people.

*"I wanted to do something in Wandsworth because that's where my community is. I'm really pleased that I got this opportunity to do that and to share what I love doing with people in my community. I wanted to share this creative side of me. That definitely benefited people in this community. **It's about promoting self-love and community spirit... To me, culture is what brings communities together and what helps people to feel good about themselves. When people have the opportunity to meet people from their own culture but also other cultures, there's more understanding.** It's definitely the way forward to fight racism, and that's something that's very important to me. [It promotes] diversity, community cohesion, and just love, basically."*

- Fée Uhssi, Stylist and ethical fashion designer.

Connection, health and wellbeing

88%

of audiences said **WAF helped them feel connected** to people in the community

Feedback and observation show that **WAF fosters a sense of community and belonging**, creating opportunities for artistic expression and for people and communities to come together to enjoy shared artistic and cultural experiences. **88% of audiences said WAF helped them feel connected to people in the community**, and 24 artists responding to the WAF creatives survey (80% of artist respondents) identified positive contributions of their activities towards people's health and wellbeing.

The NHS's steps to wellbeing – connecting with others, being physically active, learning new skills, and giving/spending time with others – could be seen and heard across the feedback and observation during WAF23.



Oily Cart at Hazelfest
Photo by David Cotter

ALL SAINTS TOOTING ARTS FESTIVAL

All Saints Church in Tooting opened its doors to performers, delighting audiences with jazz, classical, and contemplative music.

With the support of grant funding from WAF, the church organised a successful programme of 9 events, bringing people together for a festival of storytelling, harpsichord, piano and organ recitals, choral music, jazz nights, musical meditation and a community concert.

Audience members appreciated the church's role in **bringing diverse communities together** through culture. They took joy in sharing a love of music in a spiritual setting. Uplifting, special, beautiful, and a sense of surprise

were among the sentiments expressed by audience members.

"I feel exhilarated by the fact that we managed to bring so many different styles together," said said All Saints Church's Revd Professor June Boyce Tillman who, as well as working on the coordination of All Saints Tooting Arts Festival, led her own one-woman musical storytelling performance as part of the programme.

"We managed to bring together people whom it would be the first time or a second time performing together with people who are professionals, for whom it's second nature. We've seen that we can encompass a huge variety of styles from rap to



Senior Street Sextet at All Saints Tooting Arts Festival
Photo by Keith Brazer

jazz, to classical in various kinds, as well community choirs that base their singing around the church.”

“It’s the fact that **people in Tooting could walk down the road to concerts with only a donation if they wanted to.** They may never have gone up to the West End for £50. That was my aim in organising the community concert. It was also led by the community itself, and **it brought us together.**”

WANDSWORTH ARTS
FRINGE
AUDIENCE
CHOICE AWARD:
BEST VENUE!



Economic growth, employability and skills

WAF activities have created paid roles for artists and freelancers.

Those working on events, performances and activities have benefited from **improved self-confidence** and **leadership skills, increased self-esteem** and **self-belief**, and **new experiences**.

£159,796

Gross visitor spend⁴

Audience survey respondents reported spending on average £37.83, equating to £16.44 per individual audience member after group size is factored in. This equates to an estimated total of £159,796 gross in visitor spend.

54%

Shopped locally

Just over half of audience members (54%) reported going out for a drink or meal nearby or picking up a picnic in a local shop as part of their visit or event.

£17,550

Advance ticket sales

income from advanced ticket sales for creatives and cultural organisations.

38%

Average event capacity

On average, WAF events were at 38% capacity, above a 30% target. 51% of live ticketed events were 30% capacity or above, and there were 23 sold-out events (15%).

£28,411

Employment economic value⁵

WAF created a total of 317 days of employment for local artists, generating an economic value of c. £28,411.

Wandsworth New Writing Fest

Over the two weeks, the production team sold a total of **581 tickets**, generating sales income of over **£4,240**, of which 70% went to the artists on a 70/30 box office split, with a further **£1,915** raised from the bar.

The artists bought their meals at Putney Pantry most days, contributing to a circular micro economy at the venue hub. Breaking even overall, Sally Toynton, the producer, reflected that more funding and/or income

generation would be needed to make the initiative financially viable in future years, alongside more hands and feet on the ground to support production.

“We would aim to slightly up ticket prices if we were going to do it again in order to cover costs more effectively and make it more profitable for the artists,” she said.

*“Coming from a theatre background, I see that side of things, but, similarly to Edinburgh, there’s been so much going on, whether it’s art in the park or seeing Eko the giant sea puppet walking about. **There’s just so much life here, and that’s been really inspiring to see. Just the sheer variety of stuff is mind-boggling, really.** I’ve learned a tonne about producing, I’m really new in terms of that, learning how that works, how to budget your shows, how to set up fundraisers, all of that has been really eye-opening. This is the first time I’ve applied to do something in a fringe, so it’s been really helpful and all of the support and workshops, whether that’s evaluation or marketing and how to develop your show for the future, that’s all been super.”*

~ Kevin Martin Murphy, End of the World FM



“I loved playing around with the venue here at the Arches. **There’s such a buzz around it.** It’s become a nice little sanctuary for me. A lot of friends from Galway came over. And it happened: the show exists, it’s a thing, and people seem to like it, so **it’s been a dream come true.** Finding those people who believe in your work and how you can get the best out of each other has been the biggest thing for me. **I’ve been inspired by the sheer scale and variety of all the performances.**”

~ Kevin Martin Murphy, End of the World FM

Kevin Murphy, End of the World FM
Photo by Isabel Sanchez

Communities and partnerships

Partnerships with local community organisations and institutions are vital to the WAF programme and key to reaching target audiences, especially those considered harder to reach.

In 2023, WAF worked with **over 20 local organisations**, including valued hub venues; key partnerships included the Royal Academy of Dance, Wandsworth Music, National Opera Studio, World Heart Beat, Group 64 Theatre for Young People, All Saints Tooting, St Mary's Putney, Work and Play Scrapstore and The Bedford amongst numerous local independent artists and volunteers who are also vital to the success and impact of the festival.

Other key partnerships within the Council include regular engagement with

High Streets, Libraries and Business Development, Estates and Regeneration, Resident Engagement and Children's and Community and Voluntary Services teams.

WAF artists have **gained opportunities to grow their networks, build links with community venues and partners, and connect with like-minded professionals.** Feedback from artist and community members show the importance and value of the Fringe – not only the buzz of performances, putting on work, and sense of being part of something bigger, but also the depth of meaningful connections, collaborations and networking that come about through participation.

83%

of artists reported being able to reach new audiences

77%

of artists were able to try new ideas

73%

of artists gained the opportunity to develop new partnerships

70%

of artists gained the opportunity for networking



Hallomai Dance
Photo by David Cotter

HALLOMAI DANCE

Hallomai Dance, led by Artistic Director Anna Nicholls, is a UK-based contemporary dance company that creates interactive performances and workshops for children and their families.

For WAF23, Hallomai Dance presented Joy is Ours, an outdoor interactive dance performance for families in local housing estates. The 20-minute piece encourages early years children and their families to dance and move together and explores the themes of connection, community and playfulness.

Anna and her team toured the performance over three days at the weekends across Alton Estate, Winstanley and York Road Estate, Doddington and Rollo Estate, Hazelhurst Estate, and Henry

Prince Estate. They also delivered three after-school performances during the week, reaching and inspiring over 300 children, families, and passers-by.

This project took quality dance activities to people in places with limited opportunities and access to arts and culture. It enabled Hallomai Dance to build audiences and partnerships across Wandsworth's estates. It has helped Anna grow her skills in producing and organising, build relationships with local community leaders, and take Hallomai's dance offer to other festivals and communities. Children and families loved the dance activities and found the performance relaxing, inspiring and inclusive.

Learning and education

Through free and accessible creative workshops and activities, people have had the opportunity to explore and express their own creativity.

84% of audience members agreed, **“I have learnt something new and/or developed new skills”**. Through exhibitions and tours, people have been able to explore parts of the borough in new ways.

Creative writing workshops have provided a platform for writers to connect and share their stories. Audiences have been presented with work that has prompted them to think differently about the world and develop a new

appreciation of their environment, culture and heritage.

Artists and creatives have gained skills and confidence in artistic development and production. This year, the WAF coordinating team invested more time developing the wrap-around skills offer for artists and creatives and providing support, mentoring, skill sharing and networking opportunities.

Artists and creatives have valued the support and signposting the Wandsworth Arts and Culture Service have made to develop partnerships and connections to deliver their work and engage local audiences.

WAF has been a platform for wide engagement with local schools and youth groups in the run-up to the fringe, culminating in the school showcase event at Wandsworth Civic Suite to a packed audience, which was celebrated by local pupils and their families and teachers. This has helped develop pupils' creativity and confidence in performing for a live audience.

In the artists survey, almost **60% of artists reported a positive contribution of their activities towards outcomes for children and young people.**

GROUP 64

Group 64 (G64) Theatre for young people is an inclusive young people's theatre company based at Putney Arts Theatre. Group 64 are known for creating challenging and high-quality shows with young people.

For WAF23, the theatre company worked with local young people and residents to produce and perform two shows: Alton, a place I call home, a multi-generational theatre project created and performed by the residents of Roehampton's Alton Estate, and JOY, a powerful, thought-provoking and timely piece of theatre that shares the experiences of a young person in 2023, performed by G64's 15 to 18-year-old members.

The two projects involved **103 participants** and **8 creative practitioners**. They reached and inspired an **audience of 273** people, including local councillors

and the local MP. Alton, a place I call home, helped those involved see Alton positively.

Most audience members who came to see the show said they rarely or never see theatre. They only came because it was local.

A majority said they would like to see more theatre on the Alton. It also encouraged residents to visit Putney Arts Theatre for the first time. JOY positively affected many involved, allowing G64 to reach a broad group of young people and invite them to peer-to-peer chat sessions. It also allowed cast members to take on leadership roles.

Participants were also signposted to support and services. They received a booklet with tips for happiness, and the chat sessions and workshops positively affected their mental health and wellbeing.



Group 64 Theatre
Photo by James Tye

Access for all

Audiences praised and acknowledged the **breadth of artistic talent**, the diversity and variety of events, and the organising efforts which brought the fringe to life.

WAF has provided a space to showcase the talents of performers from culturally diverse backgrounds and with disabilities and has encouraged creativity and positive LGBTQIA+ representation.

Wandsworth Arts Fringe has long been committed to providing an accessible and culturally diverse programme of performances and activities which appeal to a broad range of people in Wandsworth and beyond.

Comments from WAF 2021 and 2022 Audience Choice Award Winners, The Baked Bean Charity, who showcased short films by disabled filmmakers at this year's festival:

“One of a kind, outstanding and inspiring... Well organised... Very good. I was so happy. Good to hear views... Amazing... Thought-provoking and eye-opening... Amazing, such a lovely environment!”

*“The actors were insightful, and the film was amazing, **truly professional** and great to have an insight into how time has progressed since the pandemic.”*



Jungle Book, Jellyfish Theatre
Photo by Andreas Lambis

JELLYFISH THEATRE: JUNGLE BOOK

Jellyfish Theatre is a touring theatre company that adapts classic tales and creates original work for young audiences, bringing the stories to life with songs, puppetry and audience involvement.

Jungle Book is Jellyfish Theatre's first fully BSL-inclusive production. Jellyfish was awarded one of four strategic grants for WAF23 and successfully produced nine performances of Jungle Book in community and housing estates across the borough – at Ashburton Estate, Downshire Field (Bull Green), Henry Prince Estate, Stratham Park Estate, Tooting Market and York Gardens Children –

reaching and inspiring over 360 audience members made up of children, young people and their families. Children and families were enthralled and captivated by the performances and loved the outdoor setting and interaction.

The support and funding from WAF has helped Jellyfish develop their production and enhance it for a wider tour around the UK. **It also enabled the company to showcase a BSL production for the first time**, opening up opportunities to engage with the deaf community and develop a track record of work in housing estates and street markets.



Jungle Book, Jellyfish Theatre
Photo by Andreas Lambis

FURZEDOWN PRIDESTRAVEGANZA

June is Pride Month, and WAF celebrated with LGBTQ+ variety nights, Furzedown Pridestravanganza at The Furzedown pub, and cabaret at The Bedford.

Audiences explored gender fluidity with cabaret artist and aerialist Alice D’Lumiere at National Opera Studio and enjoyed queer re-imaginings of two Shakespeare classics, *The Merry Wives* (Film on Film Entertainment) and

With Love, Juliet (Square One Entertainment). One audience member at Pridestravanganza commented: **“Furzedown has wanted to put on a pride event for years, and thanks to Wandsworth Fringe, we achieved it!”**. Another commented: **“The first Pridestravanganza in Furzedown. We were part of a historical event that feels good! Great atmosphere, happy people, entertaining acts. Free expression.”**

WANDSWORTH ARTS
FRINGE
AUDIENCE
CHOICE AWARD:
BEST EVENT!



Furzedown Pridestravanganza
Photo by David Cotter



Furzedown Pridestraveganza
Photos by David Cotter

Sustainability

Many artists and creatives reported that their activities positively contributed to the sustainability of WAF. Practices included:

Promoting sustainability through the reuse and upcycling of materials, using renewable energy sources and raising awareness about the impacts of buying new.

Promoting ethical and sustainable fashion
Helping people to appreciate green spaces
Producing outdoors, saving on energy costs
Reusing costumes and materials for theatre and performances

WAF events provide a vital opening and platform for dialogue, conversation and connection about issues and causes that matter to people, including the environment and climate change.

82% of audience members travelled to WAF with minimal impact on the environment.

44%
travelled by public transport.

31%
travelled by foot.

7%
travelled by bike.

SUCCESS FACTORS

WAF grants and commissions

The WAF commissions and grants programme attracts the interest of a diverse range of local artists and creatives, empowering those involved to produce a wide range of events and activities.

The grants provided large-scale spine activity reaching all corners of the borough that helped some visitors go to and stumble upon other events and activities in more central genre hubs and locations. The strategic commissions brought an added layer of visibility and coherence.

Diversity, variety and mixing of art forms

This year's WAF generated significant buzz, atmosphere and energy because of the variety and spread of programming involving a diverse range of artists.

Rebuilding relationships with local hub

Venues were key to the success of WAF, with The Arches at St Mary's Church in Putney a key success story.

The producers there were able to connect and invite a wide range and network of local writers, experiment with programming (such as double-bill events), build and strengthen the artistic community, and help foster positive collaborations amongst artists and between artists and producers while raising awareness and interest in the local community.

Community partnerships and neighbourhood working

Artists and partners valued the connections and links to local community leaders, which helped them extend their work into the local community estates and venues.

Branding and marketing

A stronger WAF brand and a clearer, refreshed website, alongside a robust marketing and PR campaign, have helped to raise awareness of the fringe and attract new visitors.

New website features included clearer listings, improved filters, genre tags and an interactive event and venue map. New offers included a refreshed multi-buy offer to encourage audiences to book more events across the festival and a digital brochure for download/print by audiences featuring every event in the festival.

Peer support and the encouragement of collaboration and networking

The importance and value of the artistic network and a sense of being part of something bigger. Artists had the autonomy to experiment and create work. WAF enables people to do what they enjoy and love, leading to richer artistic output.

Working with schools and young people early on

Successful projects working with young people focused on having projects developed before and in the lead-in to the fringe, making it easier for young people to engage with WAF.

Developing the fringe

At the heart of WAF is its strong artist and creative community who power the success, diversity and vibrancy of the Fringe.

Wandsworth Arts and Culture Service will continue to **nurture and develop this network** with year-round opportunities for staying in touch, sharing skills and knowledge and developing networks and collaborations.

The Arts and Culture Service wants to **build on the success of the emerging and establishing venue hubs** by supporting and empowering producers with clear frameworks to guide activity.

The service team wants to **support artists and creatives** to create further opportunities for audience members to

network and connect with each other through wrap-around and companion events and activities (talks, screenings, panel discussions and Q&As) that accompany core events and performances.

The service team wants to **continue diversifying programming with a mix of high-visibility events and activities** in and around Wandsworth's vibrant town centres and neighbourhoods alongside hub and venue-based activity.

There is a shared interest with the Council's High Streets team to look at programming WAF events in and around Wandsworth's high street markets and as part of planned or existing road closures.

Further partnership opportunities include **establishing hubs of activity in Wandsworth's parks and open spaces**, exploring collaborations and joint-funded activity with Wandsworth's National Portfolio Organisations, and working with neighbouring boroughs to jointly promote WAF and co-ordinate activity in cold spots on the edges of the borough.



UNBOSI
Photo by James Tye

UNBOSI

UNBOSI discovered that there is a **lack of awareness** of Wandsworth's cultural offers but interest and willingness to attend WAF events once people are signposted.

UNBOSI is a lesser-known department of the United Nations, established in 1950 to investigate acts of extreme inspiration and the individuals who commit those acts. As part of WAF23, UNBOSI undertook Recruitment Station research across three public-facing days at Tooting Market, St Mary's Square, and King George's Park.

Director Roger Hartley shared a statement with the key points from the investigation:

The genuine sense of interest and pride locals expressed when told of significant local history

The interest and willingness to attend WAF events once signposted to them

The lack of awareness of Wandsworth's cultural offers

The wish for support for environmental action locally

Going forward, the team will focus on increasing the festival profile, widening participation and engagement, delivering the fringe's sustainability objectives, and streamlining evaluation.

Finally... thank you!

Thank you to everyone who helped make this year's jam-packed, belly-laughing, awe-inspiring fringe possible! We couldn't have done it without you.



Wandsworth Arts Fringe Team

Wandsworth Arts Fringe Producer - **Cath Mattos**

Arts and Culture Programme and Partnerships Manager - **Lucy Murray**

Arts and Culture Marketing and Communications Manager - **Hannah Hiatt**

Arts and Culture Marketing and Communications Assistant - **Roisin Kerlake-Sim**

References

¹ NPS is a standardised metric that measures the loyalty between an organisation and its audience, based on their likelihood to recommend to a friend or colleague. An NPS that is positive (above 0) is generally considered to be good, with an NPS of 50+ considered to be excellent.

² In the WAF23 audience survey, 54% of visitors reported going out for a drink, meal or picnic nearby and spending on average £16.44.

³ WAF's audience survey was completed by 435 respondents from a total population of c. 18,000 people, providing a margin of error of 5% in the responses at an industry-standard confidence interval of 95%

⁴ Calculation: 54% of an estimated 18,000 people spending on average £16.44. Removing audience spending that might have otherwise happened has not been incorporated in this calculation, and no multipliers have been applied.

⁵ Calculation: applying the London Minimum Living Wage of £11.95 per hour x 7.5 hours x 317 days.