



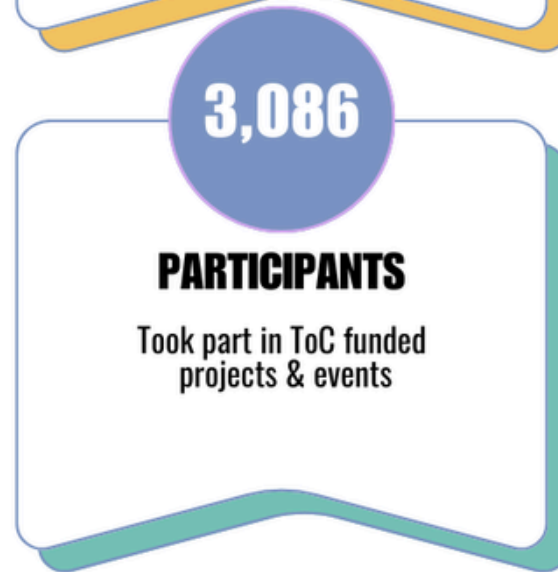
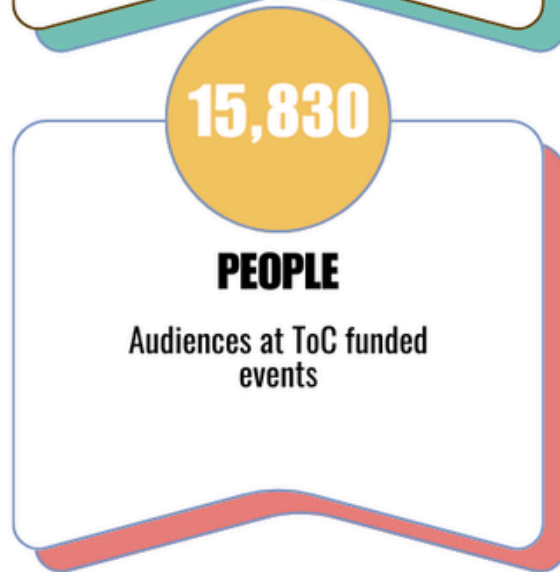
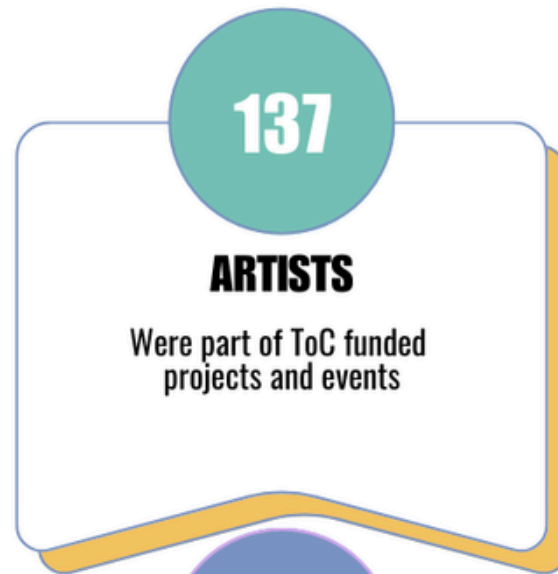
# Headline Feedback Report

Towns of Culture  
**2025**

PORTLAND & WEYMOUTH

 **REVEAL**





## Towns of Culture in numbers

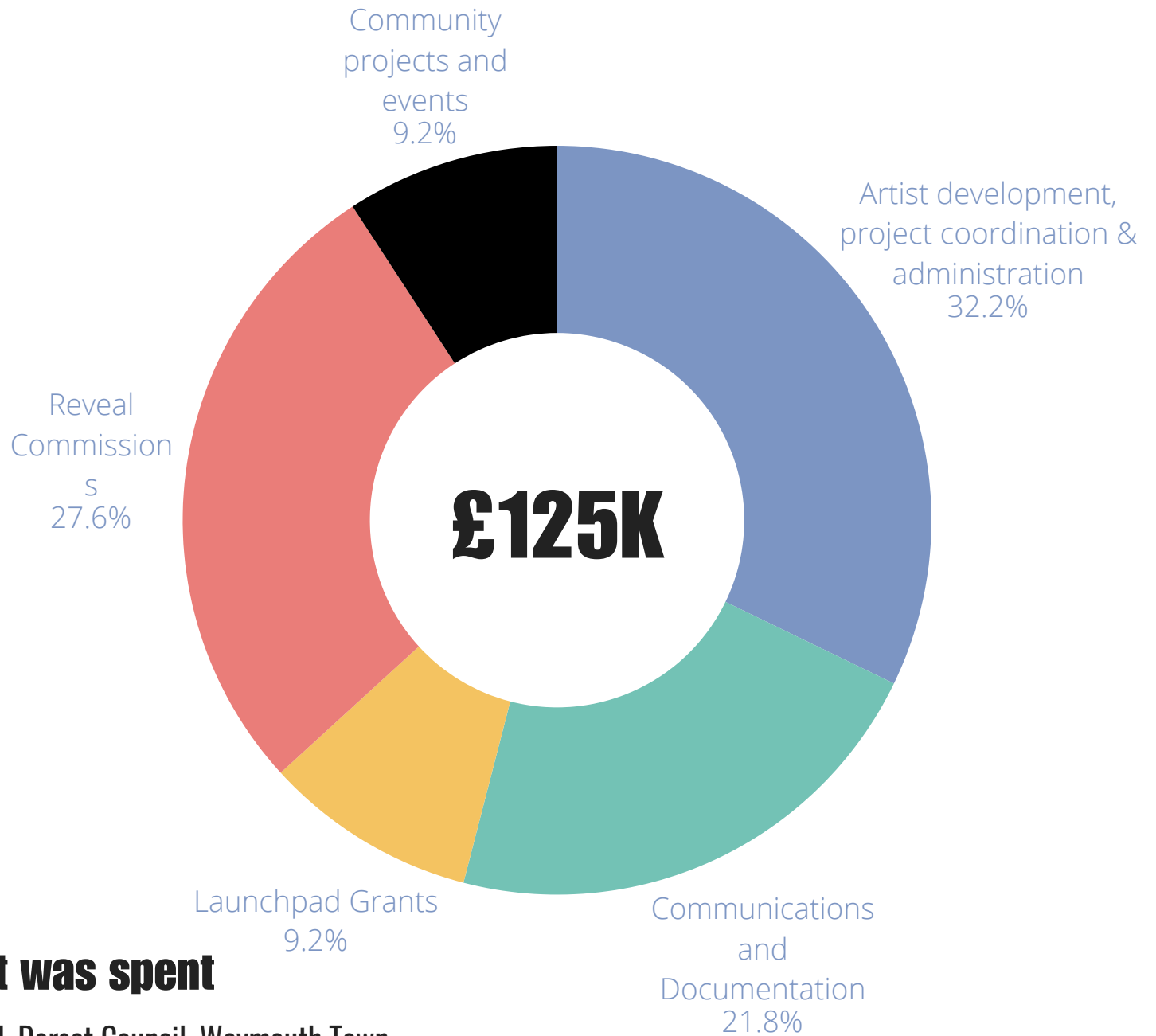
April - Dec 2025

**“We worked with so many different artists and collaborated with companies and freelancers, developing relationships massively. For Destination:Opera CIC it was huge, it has given us a large catalogue of work and significantly changed our place in the conversation as a company within Dorset. Just today I received a message from the Mowlem in Swanage to see if we can do something for them - this is the first time that we have been approached rather than us going to people.”**

**Destination Opera**



Advent(ure) by Destination Opera



## How the budget was spent

Income from Arts Council, Dorset Council, Weymouth Town Council & Portland Town Council

“I was surprised how many small groups contributed and I feel it shows the huge potential Portland has got in the creative sector. With creative sector I mean all projects, the yarn bombing Project by the ICA crafters should be valued equally to bigger projects, like the opera project. The legacy will also be the projects which carry on. I believe the opera choir is carrying on and the wind phone will stay, also a death café grew out of the Final Journey project and the exhibition will travel and be shown in different places. I'm sure some other projects will keep going, but if not I believe all projects have inspired the people from Weymouth and Portland and have shown the potential.”

Antje Rook , The Final Journey Project

The Final Journey by Antje Rook





Yule Be Merry by Brave Bold Theatre

# SIX GO DOWN TO THE SEASIDE

AN EXHIBITION OF PHOTOGRAPHS  
TAKEN IN WEYMOUTH & PORTLAND

AUCTION  
INCLUDED

**PETER DENCH**  
**SI JUBB**  
**IAIN MCKELL**  
**MARTIN PARR**  
**PAUL RUSSELL**  
**FINNBARR WEBSTER**

2025 REVEAL

7TH - 9TH NOVEMBER 2025

No work by Martin Parr is included in the auction.

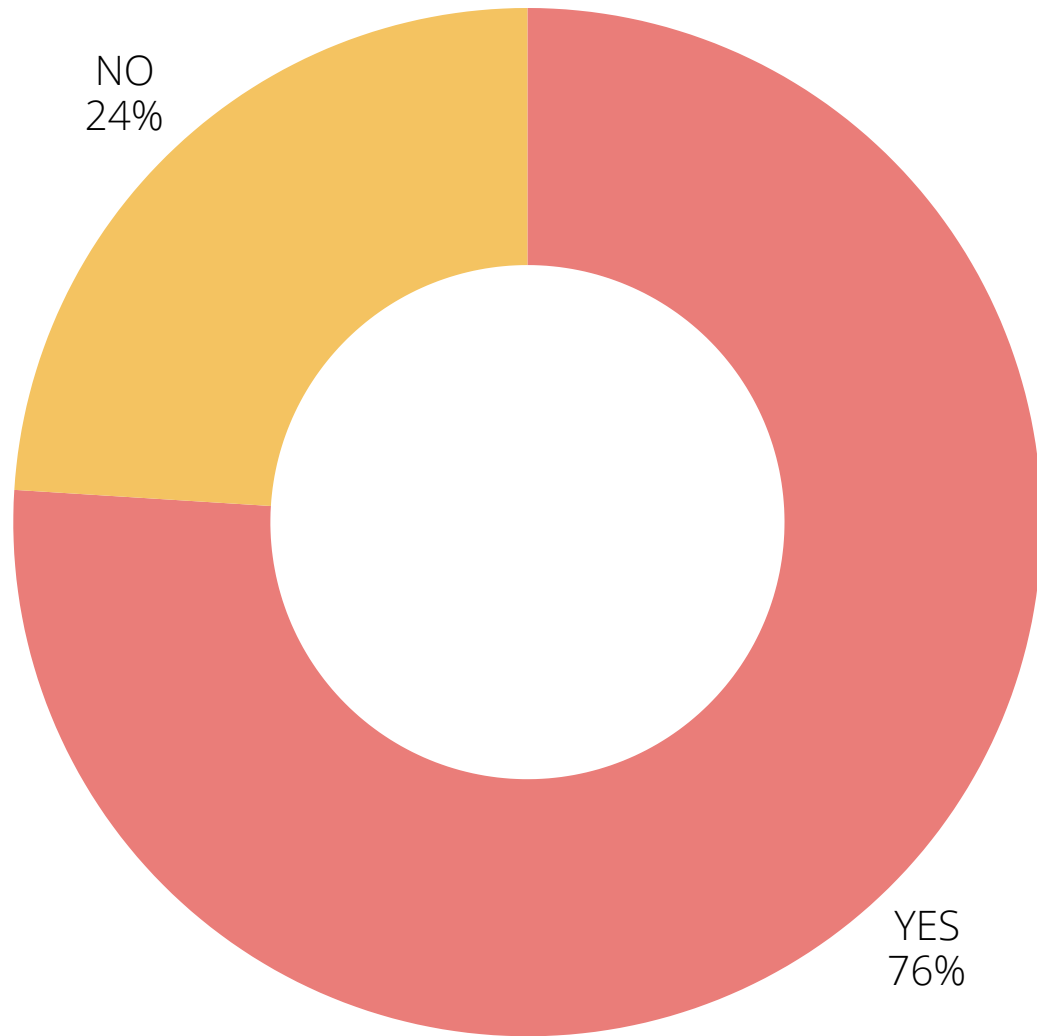
ST NICS GALLERY,  
11 ST NICHOLAS ST,  
WEYMOUTH DT4 8AA

“This made me stop and really look at places I pass every day, it’s so refreshing to see Weymouth and Portland shown honestly, without nostalgia or gloss.”

“It’s rare to see work that feels this rooted in real life here – please do more like this.”

Exhibition Visitor

Six Go Down to the Seaside by St. Nic’s Gallery



## **Working Together**

Have you collaborated with other organisations more this year because of ToC?



Bankfest by Bank of Dreams & Nightmares



“I was so pleased to have a chance to speak to some of the speakers offstage. It was lovely to be able to interact with such amazing people in a relaxed setting. I felt so thankful to be able to do a workshop with Podium as it actually prepared me for an upcoming interview! Being both the interviewer and the interviewee reminded me that it’s just as difficult to question someone you don’t know as to answer the questions. This helped my interview greatly, confidence-wise. I realised that I already knew the answers to the questions, I just had to say them! Thank you Bankfest!”

Participant at Bankfest



Tudor Christmas at Tudor House



**“Towns of Culture helped raise the profile of some of our existing treasures i.e Tudor House and remind people what we have in the the Town get people excited about what can be in the future.”**

**Chris Wilson**



**“The grant enabled us to invite an outside musician to be the workshop leader, creating an extra buzz and freshness. The event was in a more expensive venue than we would have considered using without financial support, but it was worth it from the point of making what we do more visible, and hosting a large number of people in a central location.**

**As a result of SongFest we have some new singers and audience on our mailing lists, have acquired more confidence at putting on a bigger than usual event, have celebrated what we do week in week out, have strengthened connections between the 6 choirs that took part... There were many decisions to be made, each of which seemed difficult at the time. However, now that we've done it once, it will be much easier another time”**

**Julia Harwood**

**“From the personal perspective of a young artist working to establish myself, this project has been an incredibly rewarding experience. It not only allowed me to connect with a wider audience and establish myself better as an artist, but also helped me build stronger ties within my community.**

**Being awarded grant funding to bring accessible art experiences to my low-income area has been deeply meaningful, and I’m grateful for the opportunity to make creativity more inclusive and visible in my hometown. As a young disabled woman, being able to deliver a project of this scale has been incredible.**

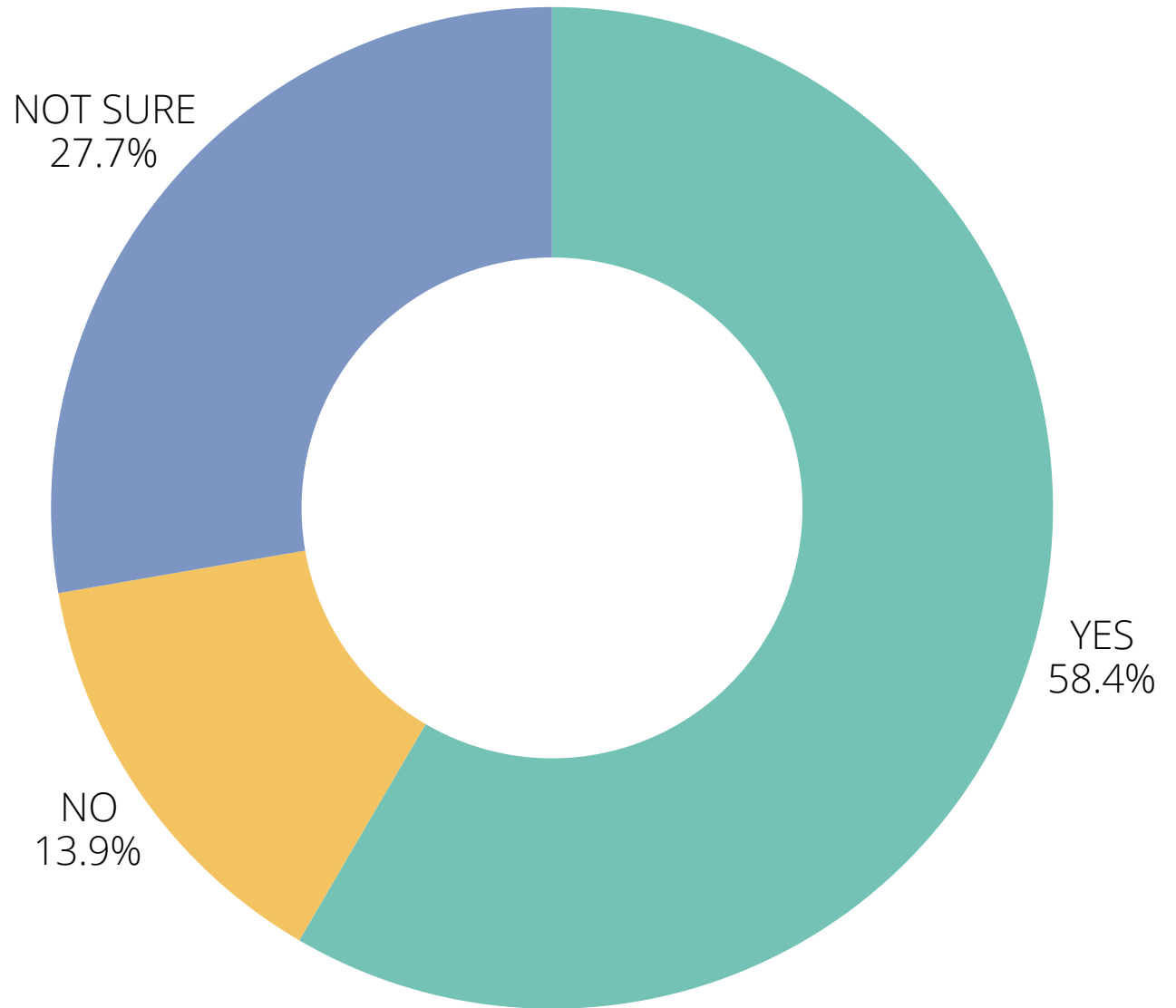
**Overall, this project has been a success in every sense: artistically, personally, and socially, and I’m excited to continue building on its momentum in the future.”**

**Charlie Pascoe**

**“Absolutely love these. Hope I see one when I’m down in two weeks. What a wonderful initiative.”**



Free Art Fridays by Charlie Pascoe



## Looking ahead

Has ToC influenced how you're thinking about you, or your organisation's future?

“We had so much fun making night life! Through our interviews/filmmaking we managed to meet so many new members of our community with quirky night-time pursuits, including a few amazing artists i’d never encountered before. The night itself was super succesful, the Portland Arms pub was absolutely packed and we got such good feedback that people enjoyed the event... and it helped support a local business which was also great!”

Sophie Fretwell



Nightlife by Sophie Fretwell & Dan Babei



## **New or Different Activity**

**Did you deliver any new or different events as a consequence of ToC?**



Portland Dinky Dough Buns by Bees Knees Bakery

**“The grant enabled us to provide 1000 dinky Dough Buns for free to our community, along with a printed information card revealing some of the history and the stories behind these locally famous buns. The stories prompted some real talking points with members of the public sharing with us their own memories of growing up and how the Portland Dough Bun formed a part of their own childhood and local history. I think food projects should always be given consideration. Many projects concentrated on literacy and the arts, which has a hugely valuable place in a project like this, but the history of local foods should not be overlooked and be given equal opportunity to be represented.”**

**Jen Norster**





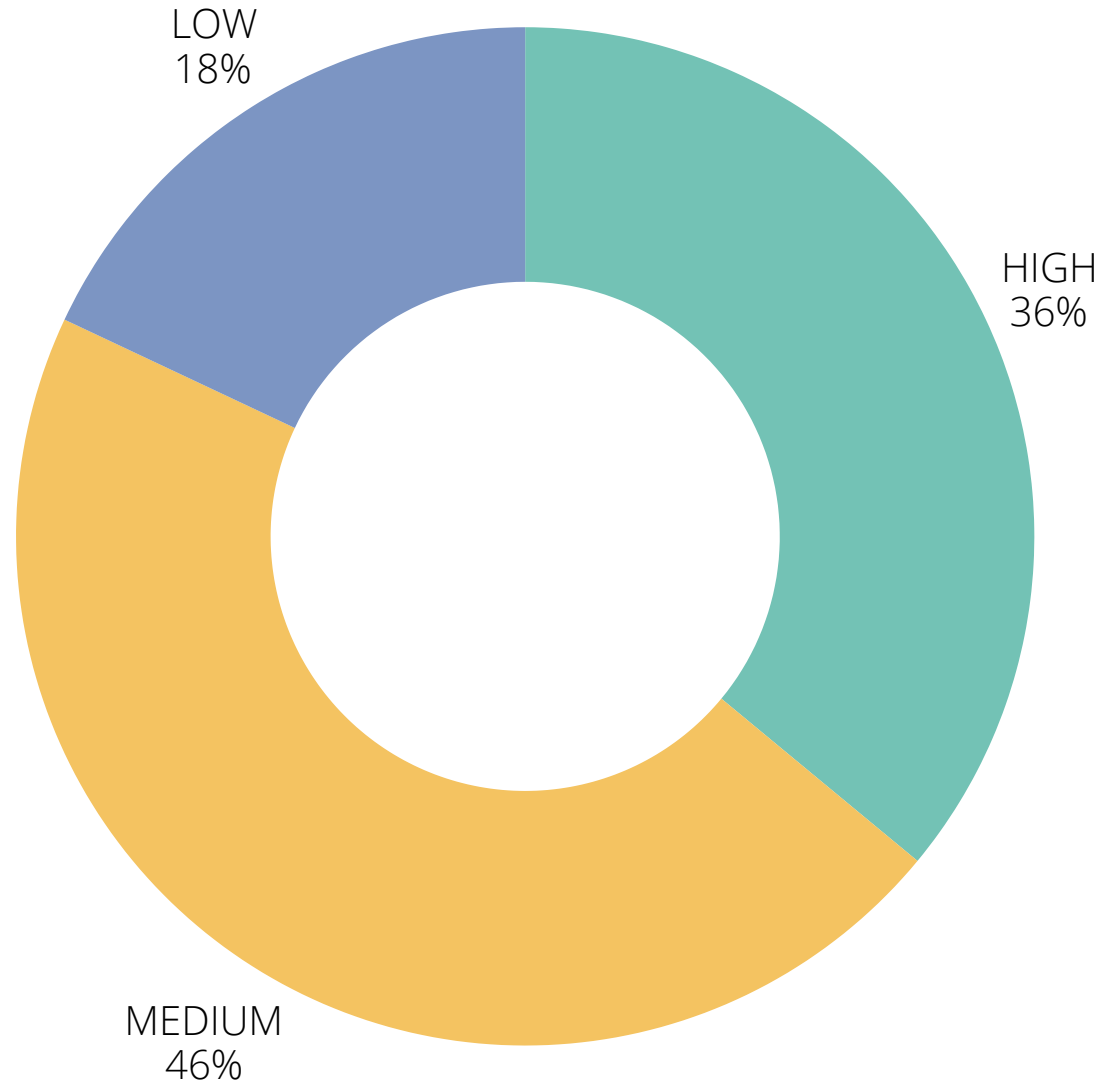
“Amazing night! Thank you to the audience and performers for your support!  
@cafeineweymouth  
@bsidefestival what a poetic month July is turning out to be. If this is a dream, don't wake me up”  
Audience member





Woolly Wonderland by Island Community Action

**"As a long term resident of Easton Square, I want to say how fantastic the Woolly Wonderland I.C.A. have organised has been. I would like to say a big thank you to everyone involved. It's been really amazing, especially with so many people coming into the park to enjoy it, even in the evenings, you've got to wonder if it's what's helped to reduce the incidents of anti-social behaviour we'd been experiencing." Sally Phillips, Easton Square resident.**

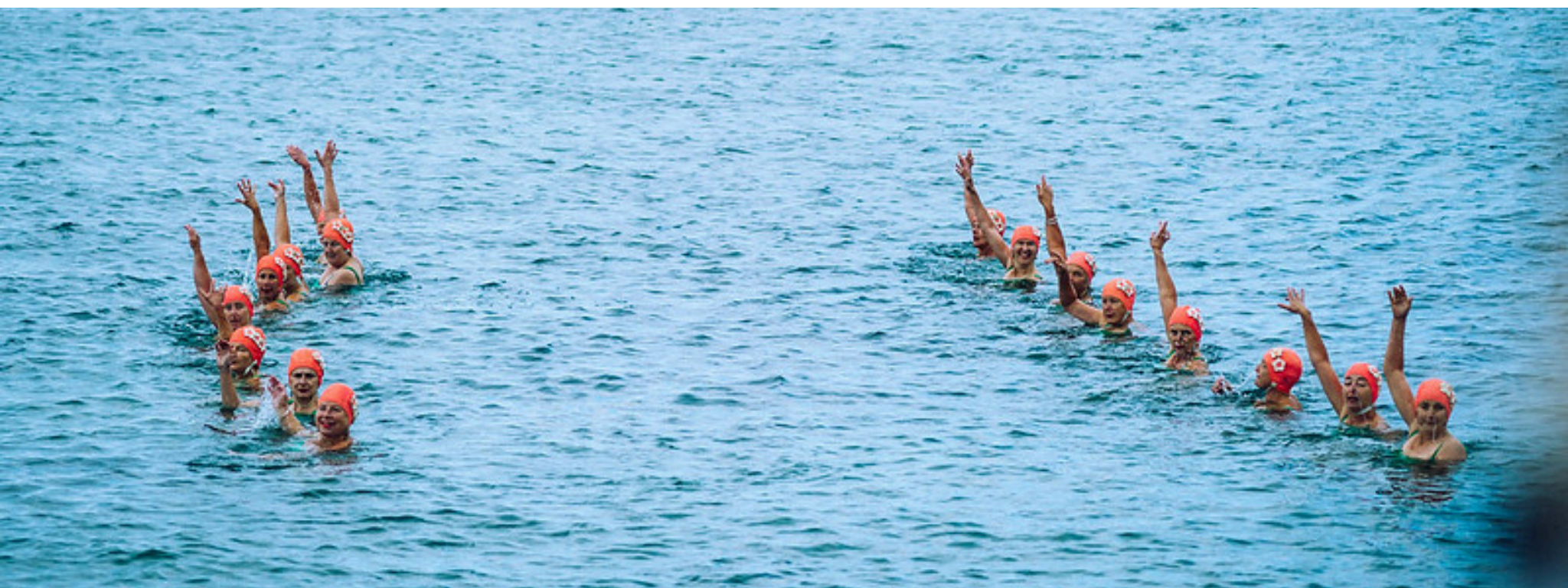


## Overall Impact

What impact has ToC had on you or your organisation?



Almost Synchro





EuroTrash at Hats Off!!

“I think the legacy will be less about a single headline moment and more about a lasting shift in confidence. Portland and Weymouth will come out of it knowing that culture already belongs here, that local stories and ideas have value, and that you don’t need outside permission to matter. That kind of belief sticks.

It will also leave behind stronger relationships — between artists, venues, community groups and organisers — and a clearer sense that culture isn’t just for a certain type of person or place. When people remember Towns of Culture, it’ll be as the moment they first took part, showed their work, or realised they could make things happen locally. In the long run, that mindset change is the real legacy.”

Claudia Webb

All photos by Pete Millson, b-side team and grantees. The information in this report has been gathered from the following sources:

- Launchpad Grant feedback forms
- Reveal Commission feedback forms
- Legacy evaluation report by Simon Raynes
- Visitor feedback
- See all the project and event films here <https://www.portlandweymouthculture.com/>



King George's Dipping Day by Weymouth Museum

Towns of Culture 2025 was made possible by the generosity, commitment and enthusiasm of the following organisations. b-side, Activate, Island Community Action, Houseworks CIC, Saint Nics Gallery, Portland Sculpture & Quarry Trust, Nothe Fort, We Are Weymouth, Weymouth Drama Group, Dorset Food and Drink, Weymouth Town Council, Portland Town Council.

Towns of Culture is an initiative created by The Arts Development Company and funded by Dorset Council. Reveal – Towns of Culture 2025 is funded by Arts Council, Portland Town Council and Weymouth Town Council.



You Can't Stop the Beat by The Remix