

Nairn Book and Arts Festival 2025

The annual celebration of literature, art, music, drama and film in the
Scottish Highlands



Economic and Social Impact Report

December 2025

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PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The Nairn Book & Arts Festival has been running for 22 years, and over that time, it has grown from strength to strength. The purpose of this report is to present the economic and social benefits that the festival brings to the Nairn community. Although the festival is supported through grant funding, it also generates significant ticket sales and other revenue, and brings wider economic benefits to the town and its businesses. This is over and above the social and cultural benefits it brings to people in the area.



BACKGROUND

The Nairn Book and Arts Festival is an annual celebration of literature, art, music, drama and film in the Scottish Highlands. It is held in the historic coastal town of Nairn on the Moray Firth. The festival was founded in 2003 by the local independent bookshop owner with the help of the local creative community and formally incorporated in 2004, making it one of the longest-running arts events of its kind in Scotland. The population of Nairn is around 9,500¹, but the festival attracts people from the wider Nairnshire area, other parts of Highland and Moray, and further afield. The festival is a registered

¹ 2022 Census

charity and is committed to supporting community-focused arts. At the same time, the festival attracts speakers and performers from across Scotland and the UK. The annual programme offers talks and readings by high-profile authors, inspirational speakers, new and established writers, Gaelic and Scots language events, live music events, theatrical performances, art exhibitions, film screenings, artist talks, tours and creative workshops.

In 2025, the festival ran for 9 days, from 30th August to 7th September. The festival is supported by many funders and partners, both from the local community and further afield (see list at the end). Support is not always financial, although grants and donations make a big impact on the ability of the festival to offer the breadth and quality of activities that it holds, whilst also helping to make the events affordable and accessible to all. Along with the festival team, a bank of local volunteers ensures that the festival runs smoothly.

There is a range of events offered throughout the duration of the festival, from tours and talks to school visits and live music performances. The festival also includes drama and dance performances, film and visual arts exhibitions, and creative workshops for people of all ages and abilities. The festival has its own Fringe, with local creative groups staging their own events in festival week.

Event type	Number of events
School visits	17
Exhibitions (inc. one showcasing work of school pupils and one of poems by care home residents)	4
Workshops	14
Tours	8
Live music	8
Author events	20
Talks	5
Other events (inc. finale parade)	15
Total	91

A total of 91 events were offered over the period, aimed at a wide variety of ages and interests within the community. Real efforts are made to involve all sections of the community, through: the locations of events; an outreach programme; the incorporation of the work of people and artists within the community; and the involvement of local businesses. It offers opportunities for children and young adults to showcase their own creativity, and takes the festival to people through an outreach programme for local schools, care homes and rural locations.

A lot of support for the festival comes from within the community, in terms of volunteers, participation at events, and in-kind support from local businesses.

“I really love how the festival brings the community together and I also enjoy the parades and how the festival provides events, activities and entertainment for anyone and everyone from 0-100 years old. It is making me so, so happy”

METHODOLOGY

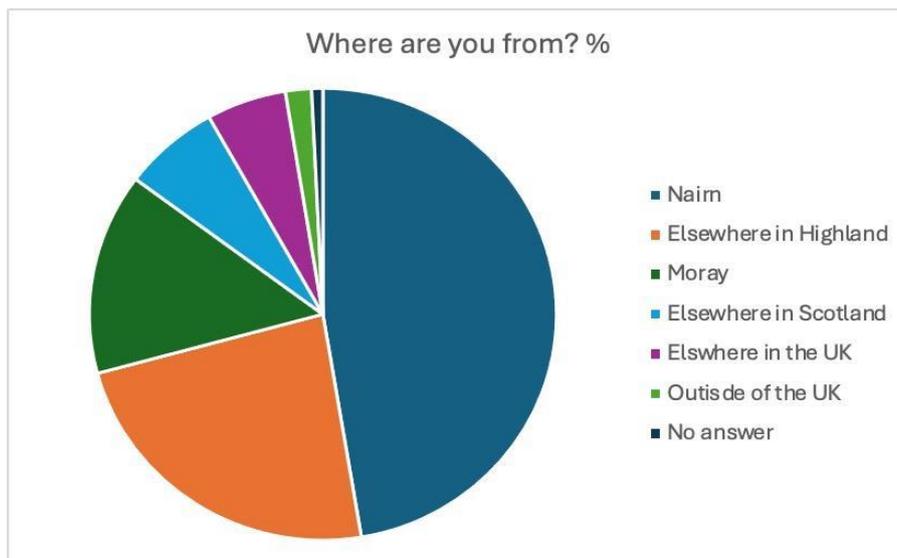
The basis of this report is hard data collected by the festival team, such as ticket sales, volunteer input, and direct spend by the festival etc., and quantitative and qualitative data and feedback gathered during the festival week. Each year, the festival tries to capture the views of people involved in the festival, whether that be from audiences at paid and free events, school pupils and care home residents who have taken part in the outreach events, volunteers, or artists and performers. Various means are used to do this, including a questionnaire (which incorporates questions from Event Scotland), case studies, and informal feedback. In 2025, feedback was gathered in the following ways:

- Case studies
- Short online and paper surveys for audience members – 115 and 662, respectively, a total of 777. NB – there is some double-counting of responses as the survey was an exit survey at each event, and some people completed it more than once because they attended multiple events. It was not possible to only include unique answers in the analysis accurately so all responses are included in the data below. Total audience figures were 6024, giving a response rate of 13%.
- Finale day surveys (24), and Vox-Pops style interviews (6)
- Informal feedback from Schools
- Surveys and informal feedback from Care Homes
- Data on spend, volunteering, income generation and in-kind support collated by the Festival team.



PROFILE OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

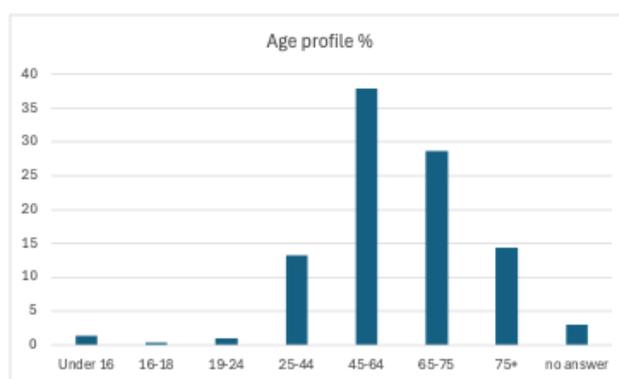
Almost half (47%) of survey respondents were from Nairn itself, and a further 23% were from elsewhere in Highland. A further 14% came from neighbouring Moray. A small percentage (2%) of attendees were from overseas, 7% were from the rest of Scotland, and the final 6% were from the rest of the UK. It is clear, then, that the festival’s reach is much wider than simply Nairn and its immediate surroundings. It is an effective draw for people to the area, giving the possibility that they will return again, both to the festival and the town more generally, now that the connection has been made.



Of the 777 surveys returned, 12% (93 responses) of attendees were staying overnight for at least one night. The chart below shows the length of stay of those 93 respondents who were staying overnight. It was clear from some of the survey responses that some people were visiting family and friends at the same time as coming to the festival. In some cases, it seemed that the timing of the visit was intended to coincide with the festival.



There was a good spread of age amongst respondents, although the older age groups were over-represented, with the majority of respondents being in the 45-64 age bracket (38%), and 29% were aged 65-75 years. Almost the same proportion were aged 25-44 as were over 75 years (13% and 14% respectively). Just under 3% were aged 25 or younger. When asked about their ethnicity, over 70% declined to say or gave no answer, and of those that did, almost all were white. In terms of the gender profile, 70% of respondents were female, 24% were male, 5% gave no answer, and less than 1% said they were either trans or nonbinary. 63% of respondents had been to the festival before.



The events were highly rated by respondents, with 98% saying the event they had attended was either excellent (82%) or very good (16%). More than half of the respondents had attended more than one event, with just over a quarter having attended 3 or more.

Event rating	%
Excellent	82
Very good	16
Good	2
Average	1

No. of events attended %	
1-2 events	41
2-3 events	22
3-4 events	18
5 or more	16
No answer	3

ECONOMIC IMPACT

There are many ways that the festival generates economic impact for the businesses and community of Nairn, from the income into the local economy from services commissioned by the festival, to additional monies spent by those attending the festival.

FESTIVAL INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

Overall, there were a total of 2,437 ticket sales, giving a festival income of £33,992. This, along with grants and sponsorship, is then spent on services in the local area and on salaries for festival staff.

A total of £45,029 was secured for the festival in grants, with £20,050 in public grants from Creative Scotland, Event Scotland, and Highland Council, and a further £24,979 in charitable grants. All of this income goes towards the festival, with much of it being spent in the local area.

In addition to ticket sales and grants, the festival also secures sponsorship, both in terms of ticket sales for sponsored events and in direct money into the festival. For 2025, the breakdown was £21,400 in cash sponsorship, and £1,190 for ticket sales, giving a total of £22,590 in sponsorship income. In addition, £5,600 was generated from other sources such as raffles and other fundraising, giving a total income generated of £107,209.

In previous years, some income has been generated for local artists and for the Festival from the sale of artwork. In 2025, a small amount of artwork was sold but the value of the sales and the commission were very small and so are not included in the figures here.

The total income generated from ticket sales, grants, fundraising and sponsorship was £107,209.

Local suppliers

The Festival understands that money that is re-spent in a local area is the same as attracting new money into the area² and therefore aims to buy from local suppliers wherever possible. In the 2024-25 year, the Festival purchased goods or services from 33 suppliers, of which 98% were from within the Nairn/Inverness area. As a result of this purchasing policy, **£44,522** was spent with local businesses. This includes:

- Overheads: Accountants, venues, staging, Portaloos, First Aider, transport supplier, storage supplier, sound/lighting technicians - £15,598
- Creative: Local authors, musicians, performers, workshop leaders and speakers - £15,570
- Hospitality: Accommodation and subsistence, event suppliers - £3,800
- Marketing: Printing, photography, design, signage suppliers, local media advertising spend - £9,554

² Money Trail, NEF

Local employment

As a community-based organisation, the Festival employs a number of local people. There are two members of staff employed part time year-round by the Festival, who:

- live within the Nairn and its environs
- are paid at or above the living wage
- work part-time.

Additionally, there is one part-time member of staff employed for 4 months who is also based locally. The total staff budget is £28,500 per annum.

Hiring local staff helps keep money in the community and strengthens the local economy. This can be seen by measuring the impact of staff spend. Using recognised financial proxies for personnel expenditure, local staff spend 66% cent of their total income locally, while non-local staff spend 33% of their income locally³. This means that using the net pay of Festival staff, all of whom live locally, around **£18,810** is re-spent in the local area. This spending triggers further activity throughout supply chains and therefore supports more GDP, sustains additional jobs, and generates tax receipts for the government.

AUDIENCE SPEND IN THE AREA

In assessing how much people spent in the area whilst attending the festival, data was drawn from the survey. People were asked about their average daily spend on items other than event tickets. They were also asked how many days they stayed in Nairn to attend the festival. It is clear from looking at the surveys that some people completed the daily spend section based on that day's spend only, others did an average, and others still did a total for their whole stay. The question was also completed by some people who lived locally. In trying to get an estimate of additional spend in the locality, two calculations have been made – one based simply on the stated amount spent, which totals £10,095.50 from the 777 surveys, and the other based on spend multiplied by the number of days of a visit, which totals £15,270.96. It is likely that the more accurate figure is somewhere in between these two amounts, so for calculation purposes, a midway figure of £12,683.23 is used.

On the basis that the survey captured 13% of the audience, scaling the responses up from there would give an additional non-ticket expenditure into the area of **£97,563**.

³ Financial proxies are used for personnel expenditure come from LM3. Gross direct employment costs are divided between those who live within the chosen local area and those from outside. The system then uses a formula to calculate the local impact of this staff spend. This formula is based on the system's global data, using the historic results that LM3 that the system has generated over time.

Average daily non-ticket spend	No. of responses	£ value
£5 or less	16	80
£6-£9	4	28
£10	32	320
£12-£18	25	387.5
£20	44	880
£25	11	275
£30	22	660
£35	5	175
£40	5	200
£50	24	1200
£60	5	300
£80	5	400
£100	15	1500
£120	2	240
£150	4	600
£200	3	600
£375	6	2250
Total	228	£10,095.50

Sales from the venue bar totalled £2,200 over the festival period. Some, but not all of this, will be included in the spend by visitors to the area.

VOLUNTEER AND IN-KIND SUPPORT

In total, there were 2,690 hours of voluntary input over the year into the festival, including board time and support during the events. Using the Living Wage rate of £12.50 gives a total value for volunteer input of £33,625. Using the Living Wage rate probably underestimates the value of the input, some of which will have been quite technical and specialist. Using the UK median hourly wage for 2025 of £19.67⁴ gives a total voluntary input of £52,912. This figure may overestimate the value, so for the purposes of this report, both have been calculated and are presented as a range.

Living wage -(£12.50) - £33,625

Median wage - (£19.67) = £52,192

Taking a midpoint between these two gives an average of £42,908.50.

This is over and above the intangible benefits that volunteering brings.

⁴

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/bulletins/annualsurveyofhoursandearnings/2025#main-points-april-2025>

Other in-kind support, from free or heavily discounted services offered by local businesses, from bookkeeping to printing, was valued at £15,435. Therefore, the total volunteer and in-kind support given to the festival has a value of **£58,343.50**.

SUMMARY OF ECONOMIC IMPACT

A focus on local suppliers, putting **£44,522** into the local Nairn and environs economy

4 part-time posts, whose local expenditure is estimated at **£18,810** a year.

Estimated additional spend by attendees, over and above ticket sales - **£97,563**

Audience spend in bars (some of which will be covered by additional spend above) - **£2,200**

Estimated volunteer and in-kind support - **£58,343**

Collectively, this equates to an estimated economic input into the local economy of £221,438. In addition to this, there is a local multiplier effect that means that the economic input into the local area re-circulates several times at a decreasing rate. This means that the economic impact is even greater than the direct input of £221,438.

SOCIAL IMPACT

The social impact of the Festival is multi-faceted, ranging from its active inclusivity, volunteering opportunities, and fostering a sense of wellbeing and community.

INCLUSIVITY

“Lot of people saying how great the diversity was, the quality, the welcome, interesting”

“Loved having a queer space so close to home”

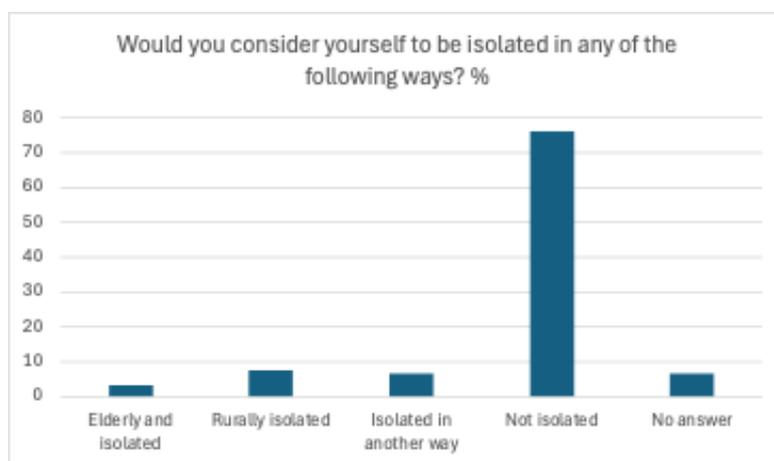
In 2025, the festival aimed to increase financial accessibility for various groups of people in the community, reducing the ticket price for events for anyone aged under 18 to £1, and free for Young Scot cardholders, Nairn Academy Pupils, and University of the Highlands and Islands students. A concession was also introduced for those in receipt of Universal Credit. In total, 24 people took up the option of reduced-rate tickets as Universal Credit recipients, and 241 free tickets were issued to qualifying audience members.

“Appreciate the UC payment fund, or I couldn't afford it”

In order to reach the very young and the very old, the festival had an outreach programme which took performances and creative activities into primary schools and care homes in the area. These were very well received. More detail on each outreach setting is provided below.



Attendees were asked whether they would consider themselves to be isolated in any way, and the results are shown below. While around three-quarters of respondents said that they did not consider themselves to be isolated in any way, a small proportion considered themselves to be isolated as a result of their age or rural location, or in some other way. A very small proportion of respondents considered themselves to be isolated in multiple ways.



VOLUNTEERING

“Loved how involved local people were in organising it - kids loved it.”

As well as a voluntary board of 16 people who give generously of their time, a pool of an additional 58 volunteers also helped out before, during and after the festival itself. Collectively, volunteers contributed 2,690 hours over the year. Survey respondents were asked about their willingness to volunteer in the future to help the festival - 101 respondents said they would be, representing 13% of those who replied. This shows a significant level of support for the festival, based on the appreciation that people had for the event(s) they had been part of and the festival as a whole. As the feedback from the volunteers this year, shown below, it is clear that they get a lot out of being part of the Festival team, as well as giving a lot that enables the Festival to run smoothly.

Volunteer Case Study

Cath Raitt, now 48 years of age, joined the festival as a volunteer in 2021, helping out as a marshall at the festival opening event on Nairn High Street. She also assisted at music events during festival week in front of house roles. She had recently moved to Nairn with her partner and was looking to make new contacts and be a part of community activities in the area. She had a particular interest in the environment.

In 2024, she offered to assist environmental artist and storyteller Gordon Maclellan at his creative workshops in Nairnshire primary schools. She supported Gordon in four primary schools and at the final festival parade which some of the children who had taken part in the workshops attended. Although she had never worked in a school environment or with children before, she really enjoyed this experience and it boosted her interest and confidence in working with children. So much so that she applied for, and was appointed to, a job as a Pupil Support Assistant (PSA) at Millbank Primary School in Nairn the following month.

Cath's work with children at the festival, and at Millbank, had led to further roles with children in Nairnshire and the Highlands: she is now a Panel Member with Children's Hearings Scotland, making legal decisions with and for children and young people at children's hearings; and following the end of her contract at Millbank, she continues to volunteer at the school on a regular basis.

As Cath says “ Supporting Gordon with his creative workshops last year was a magical experience and I discovered that working with children is fun, fascinating and fulfilling. After a long career in office-based roles in the civil service and pharmaceutical industry, volunteering at the festival has opened up a whole new world of rewarding opportunities supporting children and young people in my local community. I would not have had the confidence, or relevant experience, to apply for the PSA role prior to volunteering at the creative workshops and I am very grateful to Nairn Book & Arts Festival for the opportunity.

Many volunteers have a long-standing relationship with the Festival, returning year after year to help out. Some of them contribute to the Festival throughout the year as well as during Festival week. The case study above shows the potential evolution of the volunteer journey over time, and the benefits engagement brings to the volunteers.

Volunteer feedback

Volunteer 1 - I've been regularly involved the NBAF for several years. As a volunteer I love the feeling of really being part of the whole festival - it's a two-way thing - helping out in practical ways but also personal benefit - interest, fun, community and general buzz! This year I could only take part on the sidelines but even sitting at the art exhibition I felt I was being useful and was a part of it all. Thank you Tanera, Vic and the committee for looking after your volunteers so well - pre-festival, briefing, guidelines, contact info - and chocolate biscuits! I'll be back!

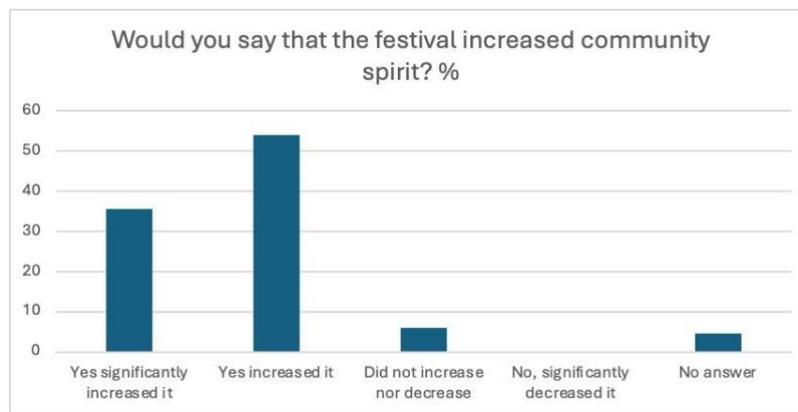
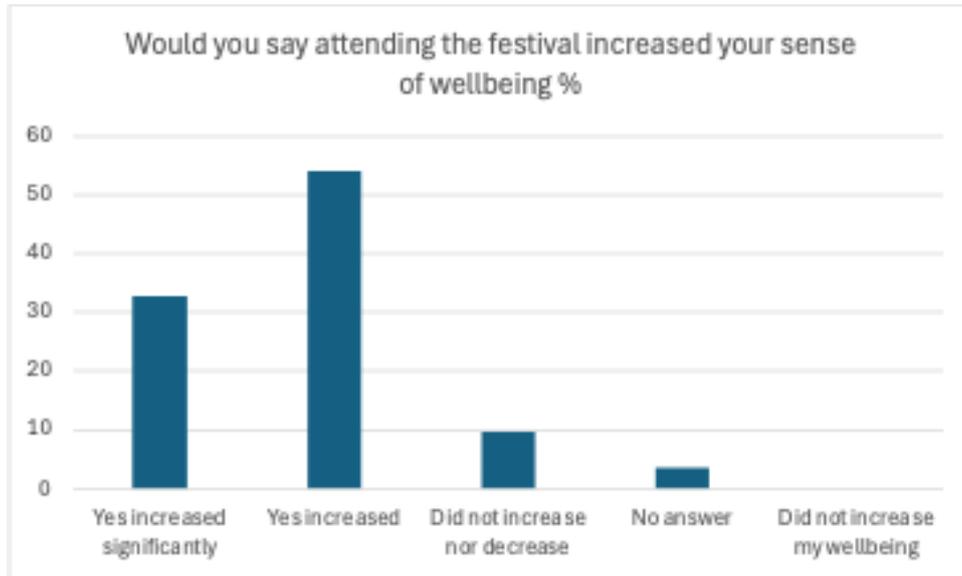
Volunteer 2 - Enjoyed my time as volunteer and found that I learned much from the experience, especially talking to some of the local artists and visiting authors. There is real value in meeting so many contributors face-to-face. I found the whole Book and Art festival was amazingly organised. Thank you (new volunteer in 2025)

Volunteer 3 - Helping out as a volunteer at the Book and Arts Festival is always an enjoyable and fulfilling experience. Even playing a small part in making events run smoothly is very rewarding. Every volunteer is well briefed before undertaking any duties and someone is always available to help with queries or on the very rare occasion when problems arise. As a volunteer you are also part of a great team of volunteers who all play their part in making the festival such a great success each year. Long may it continue.

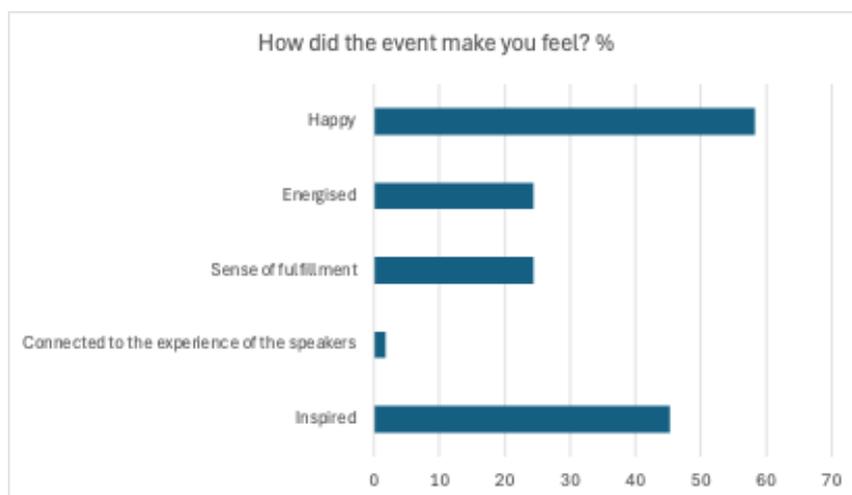
COMMUNITY SPIRIT AND WELLBEING

A broad programme, fantastic achievement - Nairn on steroids!

Nearly 90% of respondents agreed that attending the festival had increased their sense of well-being, either significantly (33%) or just increased (54%). Nobody said that their attendance had had a negative effect on their sense of well-being. Over 90% of respondents said that they felt the Festival had increased the sense of community spirit. While some said the Festival had had no impact, positively or negatively, on their sense of wellbeing and the sense of community spirit, nobody said it had had a negative impact.



The online survey also asked a broader question about how attendance at the festival had made respondents feel. The results are shown below. Almost 60% said the event they had attended had made them feel happy, and a further 45% said they had felt inspired by the festival.



A number of local respondents made reference in their feedback about how important it was to have access to arts of the calibre on offer throughout the Festival, right on their doorstep. There was a real sense in the feedback of the appreciation respondents felt for the access to arts and cultural events locally that the Festival gave them.

“The interview with Donald Murray was the standout event for me, and the talk with Jen Stout left me in awe both of the author and calibre of the interviewer - a very fitting finale for a quality programme of events. The musical concerts were a real treat, just so lovely to have this on our doorstep, more please.”



CARE HOME AND SCHOOL FEEDBACK

The response to the survey of care home residents who took part in the outreach activities was overwhelmingly positive, with every person saying how much they had enjoyed the session and that they had been inspired by it. The approachability and helpfulness of those running the sessions were commented on positively, as was the benefit of doing something creative to bring people (residents and in some cases their families) together. The delivery style was remarked upon as being ideal for the residents, including those with dementia. Many of those who took part had a long-term condition, including dementia, physical disability, impaired vision, and painful arthritis.

The sessions were said to have been therapeutic and relaxing, and some commented on the joy they got from their creations and having achieved ‘a picture’. There was “a lot of laughter and chatter”. All survey respondents and other informal feedback from staff stated that the residents would love to do more of the same, as they had enjoyed it so much.



The session was reported as informative and inspiring, and also to have boosted confidence: “I enjoyed the success of finishing a picture”. Participants described feeling proud of the work they had created, and some were delighted to have made something they would give as a gift to a family member. As one member of staff said:

“The residents enjoyed the collaboration of artists and families so much and the smiles on their faces showed it”, and

“the time spent in the company of families and friends, creating together unique memories and a piece of art, so precious and relaxing”.



Below are some vignettes of those who took part.

Care Home Vignettes

One lady living with cognitive changes affecting her immediate memory and ability to process information was interested in the session but very anxious about joining in. She shook her head, saying it was not her thing at all and declared that she could not use scissors and had never used glue in her life. By creating a calm space around her and offering reassurance, the lady was able to cut wonderful wave patterns out of material by herself. After a few attempts, she was also able to glue the fabric and decide (with support) where to place the waves on her image. The lady continued being creative alone. She picked up her picture, exclaimed it was beautiful, and asked who had made it. When told she had made it, she said she could never make anything like that. This triggered her 'loop' of not being able to do anything. However, she began a second piece of artwork. When the lady was given her pictures, she asked who made them. She was told she had created them, to which she replied 'I thought I did. I think I made this a long, long time ago. They are lovely.' There was a sense of pleasure and pride.

A gentleman living with cognitive changes following a stroke was new to the care home. His wife supported him by placing the fabric pieces where he pointed. This became a stunning piece of art. 'This has given me a chance to be with my husband in a relaxed way. We haven't really had much time just to be like this, and I really enjoyed it.'

A 90 year old lady decided to join the session because (she said) "it's important to try new things and keep my brain and hands active." The lady declared she was entirely non-art, but once shown the process, she got on with every aspect of artwork. "Doing this helped me make lots of decisions about what to put where, and which colours go with one another. That's all good stimulation. Very enjoyable. I'm very pleased with this. I think it will make a lovely gift for Christmas."

A mother and daughter each made beautiful artworks. The daughter appreciated how well prepared the session was and that the activities were at 'just the right level' for her mother who has cognitive changes affecting her memory and mood. "Mum wasn't for joining in to begin with but became more interested and was fully involved by the end of the afternoon. She even signed her name on one of the pictures. This activity was both a delight and a huge relief for me, as mum has been taking a while to settle. Your session really enabled her to relax and enjoy what she was doing, both in the moment and with a positive afterglow too... a very real example of the power of art to enable wellbeing.

A Little Bit of Northern Light was a musical storytelling production designed for children aged 5-7. Four performances of the production took place as part of the 2025 Nairn Book & Arts Festival.

The production was a reimagining of Scottish Opera's original children's production of the same name which the opera company generously offered Nairn Book & Arts Festival to reproduce with kind permission from the composer Marion Christie, illustrator Iain Percy and lyricist Jane Davidson. The 45-minute performance tells the atmospheric tale of a lonely lighthouse standing resilient against the fierce storms of the North Atlantic. Set in the near future, the story celebrates Scotland's maritime heritage while exploring themes of safety, resilience, and guidance.



A new adaptation of the piece was creating, amending the script to incorporate elements of Nairn's local landscape and incorporating a distinctly Scottish folk music inspired flavour to the musical score. Featuring a trio of exceptional young musicians – Graham Mackenzie (fiddle), Hannah Rarity (voice), and Innes White (guitar) – the production incorporated folk instrumentation to bring fresh, evocative energy to the score, connecting the story deeply to Scotland's cultural traditions. The production was narrated by Nairn-based author and teacher Corrina Campbell, who portrayed Albie the Albatross, the story's engaging guide. Her background in

education and storytelling along with her strong connection to Nairn made her uniquely suited the role.

The production was performed to P1-P3 pupils from four local primary schools in and around Nairn – Rosebank, Millbank, Cawdor, and Auldearn. Over 180 children attended the performances. The schools serve rural and socioeconomically diverse communities with limited access to live arts performances. By introducing children to music and drama at this formative age, the project aimed to nurture creativity, collaboration and confidence.

School Case study

The 45-minute performances included audience participation, inviting children to learn and perform two specially composed songs alongside the musicians and storyteller. To ensure every child could actively participate, teachers received a supporting video and educational worksheets developed in collaboration with the Nairn Museum. These resources:

- Introduced children to the music and themes of the performance.
- Highlighted Nairn’s maritime heritage, including the history of Nairn’s own lighthouse and coastal landscape.
- Created a sense of anticipation and excitement ahead of the performances.

Teacher feedback:

The teaching Assistant at Cawdor Primary said it was the best visiting production they had had since she had been at the school (at least 15 years), and the live music really brought something special and different to the school for the children.

The teacher at Auldearn Primary said: *“I would like to say a huge thank you to you all for a brilliant performance. It was pitched very well for the age of the children involved. The story was exciting; the children learned new things, and the way that it was presented made sure the children were involved during the whole performance. You could see this by the big smiles on all the children and teachers. Thank you so much! Hope we see you again next year!”*

I would just like to say a huge thank you on behalf of all the pupils and staff at Auldearn Primary School. We had such a lovely week with visits from authors, artists and musicians. The feedback from everyone has been hugely positive.”

FINALE DAY

An additional 24 surveys were completed specifically about Finale day. Finale day was an environmentally themed day of free creative performances and activities, including 'The Wave', a community parade of large-scale sea creature puppets, an afternoon of live music by local musicians, and a performance by UHI drama students and a local sword-fighting club. Local environmental community groups also took part.

All those who completed the survey said they were enjoying the day, and that being part of the day had increased their sense of well-being and the sense of community spirit. People commented that they enjoyed the relaxed atmosphere and seeing people coming together in public spaces, just for the enjoyment of it.

“Seeing people conveying what Nairn has to offer!”

“People, dogs everywhere, lovely park, arts are welcome to people of all ages and talents”



In the Vox Pops interviews on Finale Day, audience members were asked about their enjoyment of the festival and whether it had boosted their wellbeing. There were high levels of enjoyment expressed, and everyone interviewed stated that it had boosted their well-being. One person also commented that it was a boost to community spirit. Key to this was the general appeal of the event to all ages, with people attending as part of a family group: in one case, three generations of a family had come to the event as

one group. As one person said, “Great for the family, just loved to see my kids having fun”. Being outdoors, the high quality of the music on offer, and being able to connect with other people were all cited as reasons why it had boosted their wellbeing.

SUPPORT FOR LOCAL ARTISTS

Nairn-based author and illustrator, Corrina Campbell, was one of a number of local artists who took part in the Festival. Corrina's journey with the festival began in 2023 as part of the outreach programme, where she visited local schools to discuss her children's books. She has also led workshops and readings at Nairn Library, connecting directly with young readers.

Her involvement grew significantly in 2025. She was invited to introduce the festival programme at the June launch event before taking on a central role in the major schools music project, *A Little Bit of Northern Light*. This musical storytelling production, designed for children aged 5-7, served as a key platform to showcase Corrina's talents and connection to the community. The school case study above gives more details.

As part of the preparation for the production, the Festival funded Corrina to travel to Scottish Opera's rehearsal studios in Glasgow to work with the musicians ahead of the performances in Nairn.

By placing a talented local figure like Corrina Campbell at the heart of the Festival's major community project, the festival demonstrated its commitment to both fostering local artists and nurturing creativity in local schools.

As Corrina Campbell herself said:

“Working with the Nairn Book & Arts Festival, first in schools and the local library doing solo workshops and then this year as the narrator for A Little Bit of Northern Light (ALBNL), has been an amazing experience. The festival’s vision to weave in elements of the Nairn landscape and give ALBNL a strong Scottish folk twist made it feel like a special and unique homegrown production. This, and my previous involvement in the festival, has also demonstrated to me how much the festival values putting local voices at the centre of its work.”

SUMMARY OF SOCIAL IMPACT

- Increased sense of wellbeing of volunteers and event attendees
- Reduced rate/free tickets for eligible groups made it more accessible and inclusive (24/241 tickets respectively)
- Inspiring
- Confidence boosting

- Opportunities for intergenerational activities and engagement
- Opportunities to learn and participate in new activities
- Exposure to high-quality art in all forms, which can be difficult for people to access otherwise because of circumstance, distance, etc
- Value of the outreach programme to reach different sectors of the community, from young to old
- Involvement of a wide range of local groups and other stakeholders, building connections and broadening impact (e.g UHI, care homes, schools).
- Supporting other third sector organisations such as the Nairn Community and Arts Centre, which increases its sustainability and ensures its continued availability for wider community impact all year round.
- Volunteering opportunities, giving an increased sense of self-worth, gains in confidence, and supporting community integration and cohesion.
- Focus on local resources, both in terms of artists and performers, as well as the local environment and culture.

APPENDIX - SPONSORS

Principal sponsor: Haventus

Headline sponsor: Tornagrain

Funders: Creative Scotland; Event Scotland; The Highland Council; The Davidson Trust; The Hugh Fraser Foundation; The McGlashan Charitable Trust; Winds of Change; WM Mann Foundation; Encomm; The Russell Trust; The William Syson Foundation.

Associate sponsors: Fred Olsen Renewables; Gordon Timber; Places for People; Churchgate Partners.

Festival partners: Nairn Community & Arts Centre; The Little Theatre; Xplosive Entertainments; Green Hive; Naturally Useful; Moniack Mhor; University of the Highlands and Islands; Signed Graphics; Music Nairn; Highlands & islands Climate Hub; Rotary Club of Nairn; Nairn BID; The United Reformed Church; Muthu Newton Hotel; Sun Dancer; Vitamin Sea Nairn; Nairn Academy; The Highland Weigh; St Ninians Church; Nairn Library.

Patron sponsors: Boath Stables; Cawdor Castle; Nairn Golf Club; The Bandstand; Rathbones; Nairn Books; Ashers.

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Supporters: Brambles of Nairn; Ink Pink; Castle Gallery; Nairn Literary Institute; Strut.

Individual patron supporters: Hans and Andrea Heimerdinger.