

Strike A Light (Gloucester)

Annual Report

2023–2024

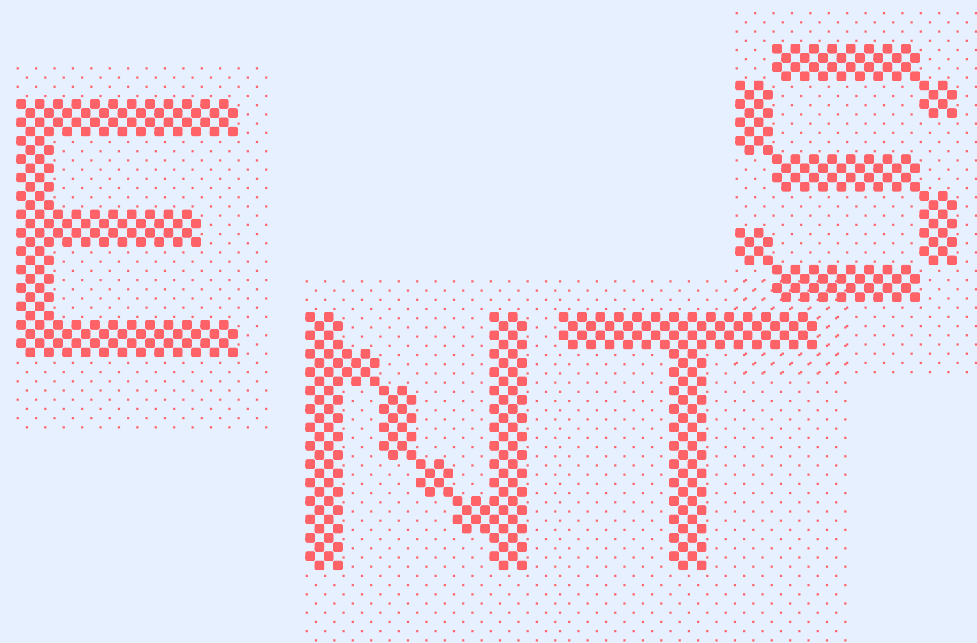
# Annual Report

**STRIKE  
A LIGHT**  
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## Reference and Administrative Information



### The 2023-2024 Trustees:

#### Co-Chairs:

Andrew Zihni

Rachel Bell

#### Trustees:

Zara Portlock

Eleanor Harris

Nadja Gajadharsingh

Thomas Bevan

Alison Byard

F Francis (Secretary)

Danny Thompson

Jay Tyler

#### Resigned 16/10/2023:

I Oakes

D Drew

J May

B Haynes

#### Executive Director:

Lynette Dakin

#### Co-Artistic Directors:

Emma-Jane Benning and Sarah Blowers

#### Charity Number:

1178449

#### Registered Address:

Enterprise Hub, 10 Commercial Road, Gloucester, GL1 2EA

## Chair's Review of 2023-2023



It has been another fantastic year at Strike a Light. The team have brought incredible world-class shows to Gloucester, worked on exciting community projects, continued the ground-breaking 'Let Artists Be Artists' project and spent time sharing their practice with others.

Whilst the cultural sector continues to face challenges in various forms, the impact of Strike a Light's work has never been needed more. Our work is helping people living in Gloucester access art in new and exciting ways: young people are continuing to take part in weekly theatre and dance sessions, learning about and experiencing performing arts sometimes for the first time, and our community producers are bringing world-renowned artists to Gloucester and encouraging people living in communities to experience their shows.

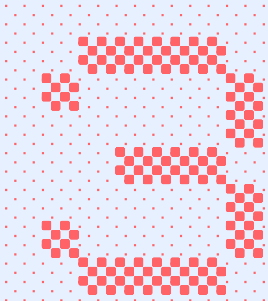
Challenging entrenched beliefs and old-fashioned systemic thinking is key to the way Strike a Light works. Through our NPO uplift, we have begun our 'Let Artists Be Artists' project where we are paying four artists an employment salary to 'just be artists'. Acknowledging the need to give artists freedom to be creative and enabling them to have such creativity is something that we are proud of here at Strike a Light.

**Rachel Bell**

Co-Chair of Strike A Light

*Epic Fail, Kid Carpet, Strike A Light in Schools*





## Artistic Director's Review

**2023-2024 has been another busy year, some big changes, some real embedding of our thinking and strategy from the previous year and some very exciting art and culture taking place in Gloucester, all of which was co-programmed or co-created alongside our fantastic Community Producers. A few highlights to give a taste of the year.**

### New starts

Lynette Dakin joined us in April 2023 as our new Executive Director. Lynette came from Arts Council England and previously worked as a Theatre Producer. She is originally from Gloucester.

Lynette immediately got stuck in and it is now hard to imagine life without her as we see and feel the positive effects of her work. She is a calm leader and has provided robust support for the SLT and the wider team, which continues to grow.

### Gloucester presents...

Working with our four Community Producers this year has been a wonderful experience. Going to see incredible shows with them and then jointly programming those shows here in Gloucester is exactly what we wanted to see happen.

Halima Malek went to see Olivier award-winning dancer *Seeta Patel* and her company's version of Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* at Sadler's Wells Theatre. We brought a digital version of this show and projected it across the walls of Gloucester's Blackfriars Priory with silent headphones and added Strike A Light touches with fire and food. It was an extraordinary evening; a packed audience from all across the city, nationally significant work and performed in a beautiful heritage space.

The Westgate community choir was a new initiative set up by Community Producer Katrina McGonagle and Sarah Blowers. Katrina had booked a choir to come and sing carols for the community and they pulled out, so we started our own choir from the community who beautifully sang four carols including harmonies and a soloist. The choir still meet every week and *Kid Carpet*, one of our employed artists from our Let Artists Be Artists scheme, has now taken over the running of this choir with Katrina. Katrina has selected work from the RTDI menu and is working to find a venue within the community to host the piece *After All* by Solène Weinachter.

Our Community Producers have also been part of new national work. Zariq Hanif has sat on the national consortium *Stomping Ground* which has informed our thinking and future work.

### Participation

The participation department is growing at pace. At the end of March 2024 we began the recruitment for a Participation Producer on a 2-year supported scheme for an emerging global majority practitioner funded by the Paul Hamlyn Trust.

Charlene is running a new training programme over a twelve-month period to support global majority practitioners in the South West in partnership with *Beyond Face* who are based in Bristol.

This is just a snapshot of our annual highlights, but maybe the overlying theme here is our continued commitment to our communities within the city, diversifying who can work within the arts and committing to making that work as well-supported and sustainable as is possible.

As always we extend our gratitude to the kindness of our funders, whose support has allowed us to grow this model of working, run a co-created programme and improve the arts for the communities we serve. We are excited for the years ahead and what we can continue to achieve and grow in Gloucester.

**Emma-Jane Benning  
and Sarah Blowers**

Co-Artistic Directors



Queer Talk - photo credit Cam Adams

**“It is so clear that Strike A Light has been the crucial player in helping to open hearts and minds in the city and in providing the support that has enabled organisations like GL4 to develop”**

**Sir Nicholas Serota,  
Chair of Arts Council England**



## About the Charity

Our charitable purpose is:

**To advance education in and increase appreciation and understanding of all forms of the arts including but not limited to, theatre and dance. To present, produce, organise and promote high quality arts activity for the public benefit and in particular those of the city of Gloucester.**

Strike A Light (SAL) began in Gloucester in 2013 as part of the Collaborative Touring Network (CTN), initially funded by Arts Council England (ACE) Strategic Touring Fund and Esmée Fairbairn Foundation amongst others, spearheaded by Battersea Arts Centre. CTN was a new touring programme bringing national touring work to 'cultural cold spots'. In 2018 SAL became a National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) funded by ACE and received an uplift in 2023-2026 to continue our groundbreaking work with artists and Community Producers. SAL is a registered charity with a board of active trustees with a diverse range of knowledge and expertise.





## Vision, Mission and Values

### Our vision

**World-changing culture and creativity for all.**



### Our mission

**Creating social change through extraordinary performance events, creative projects with communities and participation opportunities for young people.**



## What we do

- ⇒ We co-create and collaborate whenever possible; we 'work with' not 'do to'
- ⇒ We let our community lead the way with programming
- ⇒ We create a city where extra-ordinary things happen in unexpected places
- ⇒ We bring people together to share eye-opening experiences that they talk about for ages afterwards
- ⇒ The people we bring together are from diverse backgrounds and many of them wouldn't normally attend an 'arts' event
- ⇒ People feel welcomed and represented and that their voices are heard
- ⇒ Our staff, our board, audiences, participants and creative leaders reflect the diversity of Gloucester
- ⇒ We create brilliant opportunities for young people which encourage them to dream big
- ⇒ We support artists and producers to create amazing work and to get paid for it
- ⇒ We share unheard stories and we champion under-represented voices
- ⇒ We produce shows that can change our world
- ⇒ We work with national partners and local grassroots organisations to make things happen
- ⇒ We embrace the idea of necessary radical social change and the role that arts can play in that



## Our values

### Diversity

- Stories shape how we see the world and therefore which stories get heard is important
- Everyone, regardless of background and circumstance, should have opportunities to watch, create, lead and participate in culture
- Relevance is as important as excellence
- Communities are better with culture and culture is better when all communities can create and access it

### Generosity

- When you work in partnership with people things get better
- We get stronger by sharing resource, handing over power and multiplying leadership

### Change

- It is important to challenge ways of working, including our own, and to think about who created those structures and who they serve
- Arts can change the world and make people's lives better
- The climate crisis should be at the forefront of our decision-making

## Strike A Light work under 4 strands of work.

### They are:

1. Co-created Programme
2. Participation
3. Let Artists Be Artists
4. This is How We Do It

Through these strands,  
we aim to make Gloucester  
a better place to live.



## Co-created Programme

We're changing the way the arts work, to address systemic inequality. We share power and decision-making, collaborating with communities who are least represented in the arts. We give artists paid time to build meaningful relationships here and work with key partners in the city (Gloucester Council, Cathedral, Culture Trust) to deliver against the city's cultural strategy. We know that unlike 'traditional' programmes, this approach reaches people who never normally engage in arts activity.

This work is all underpinned and driven forward by our Community Producers; representatives from the community who work with SAL to create events, see national touring work and programme shows/events with and for communities. This is a measured shift away from the traditional Artistic-Director lead programming to devolve decision making and ensure that communities have their say in programming. This shift takes time and care. Our AD's will continue to offer programming support and direction to the Community Producers to consider the needs of the community, present a broad balance of artists, consider unusual spaces and locations to present the work and introduce and mentor them through producing until a time

*Residents take part in VR Dance on Matson Roundabout - Photo credit Fluxx Films*





when they can be independent. Looking at the independent success of GL4 we're keen to investigate what could be the development for the Community Producers and what long term support SAL needs to offer. Our approach is deliberately non-venue based. We work with our Community Producers to programme work across Gloucester into unconventional spaces from car parks to church halls. It is important for all of the work that we deliver to reflect the rich diversity of the Gloucester community. We build long-term and sustainable relationships with our local communities that are least represented across the national arts landscape and that deal with significant social and socio-economic deprivation.

**Our vision is of a world-changing culture and creativity for all. We achieve this through:**

- ⇒ a co-created programme of extraordinary theatre and dance performance championing underrepresented voices
- ⇒ supporting diverse artists to build careers and create work of national significance
- ⇒ creative opportunities for young people encouraging them to dream big



Public - photo credit Mark Dawson

**Each year, we:**

- ⇒ programme and create world class cultural events that reach thousands of audience members;
- ⇒ run weekly classes and large scale participation projects where deprived young people get the chance to work with arts professionals
- ⇒ support the development of diverse artists in new ways across all our work, including fully funding 4 artists' careers through our nationally recognised Let Artists Be Artists programme

## What we did

In 2023/24 we staged **16 shows** in unexpected locations with an estimated audience of **2,959** people across the shows.

**75 Years Our Stories:** A celebration to reimagine and celebrate the 75 years of the South Asian Community through music and art. Halima Malek (CP) worked with the South Asian communities of Gloucester over a year to gather stories, culminating in a celebration at the Friendship Cafe.

**The Grip:** A live audience in Gloucester Guildhall for a one-off, one-hour radio production discussing families, separation and the Windrush. Drawing on real interviews and films from filmmaker Daniel Folley and curator Donville Williams made over a year. Hosted by BBC's Kevin Philemon with guests including Bristol's first Poet Laureate Miles Chambers and Gloucester psychotherapist Audrey James. Produced and directed by Philippa Smith (CP).

**Queer Talk:** Led by our Community Producer, Zariq Hanif, a group of LGBTQ+ community members created a verbatim piece of theatre. The project was a Verbatim Headphone project with Kristine Landon-Smith over an 8-week period, culminating in a performance at The Music Works.

**Westgate Stories:** Artists in residence Imogen Harvey Lewis and Jonny Fluffy Punk worked with the Westgate Community over a year; culminating in the Emergency Exit Arts city-wide event 'Led by Katrina McGonagle'.



75 Years

“The artworks are so beautiful, the layers of meaning, colour, language, identity and testament to the communities who made them. Thank you!”

Audience member,  
75 Years





Rite of Spring, Seeta Patel

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**“It opened a whole new world for me. It brought focus, motivation and inspiration to a lot of the vulnerable and isolated people in the community - we’ve done joint activities, shared goals, work, sense of belonging and service to the wider community.”**

**Katrina,  
Resident of Westgate**

**“I just wanted to say thank you so much for putting on things like this. I’ve been experiencing a really low point in my life, and this project was my one bit of love and belonging that kept me smiling. The love and memories are staying with me forever”**


**Participant in Queer Talk  
by community producer Zariq Hanif**

**Our 4 Community Producers consulted with their communities to bring the following:**

**Rite of Spring (programmed by Halima Malek):** Seeta Patel's *The Rite of Spring* is a reimagining of Igor Stravinsky's iconic ballet in the Bharatanatyam dance style, performed by the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra. It was programmed into Gloucester's Blackfriars Priory as a dance projection.


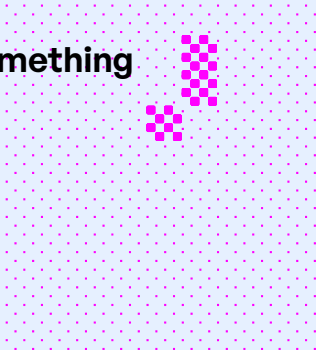
**Bonded by Alleyne Dance as part of Jamaican Independence Day and (programmed by Philippa Smith):** *Bonded* is an outdoor production that explores the construct of human dependency, especially that of siblings – and how time and external conditions can affect the synergetic connection. It was performed in Gloucester Park as part of Jamaican Independence Day.

**Mone Rekho by Soumik Datta (commissioned by Strike A Light and the Guildhall):** *Mone Rekho* is a relaxed-concert style performance led by Soumik Datta, who shared reflections on identity and memory to a soundtrack of incredible Sarod music. It was performed in Gloucester Guildhall.



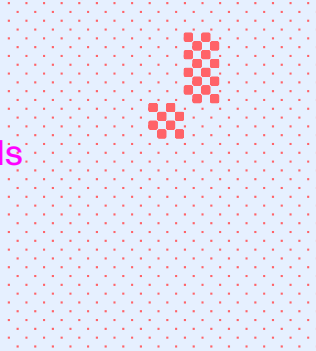
**"I really enjoyed coming to something different"**

Audience member,  
Rite of Spring



**"I saw this and said we have to have that in Gloucester. It took my breath away. The music, the performance, it's absolutely beautiful"**

Halima Malek, after attending  
Rites of Spring at Sadler's Wells





## Case Study

### Bonded

The process of seeing a piece of work and putting it on in Gloucester takes time and Go See trips help us identify work to programme. Philippa saw Bonded in September 2022 at Newbury and wanted to bring it to Gloucester.

Bonded, a performance by Alleyne Dance, took place in Gloucester in August 2023. Two showings were held at Gloucester Park as part of Gloucester's Jamaica Independent Day Celebrations. Originally it was programmed elsewhere, but Philippa pushed for her to be part of this day so it could effectively reach her community.

A unique outdoor production featuring the exceptional talents of twin sisters Kristina and Sade, exploring the bond between siblings. Alleyne Dance has established itself as one of the UK's foremost innovative dance companies in the world.

The performance was part of a broader project produced by Strike A Light Community Producer, Philippa Smith, The Grip-created by and for the families separated by migration and immigration and how this affected the various family members; particularly those left behind in their country of origin and what they experienced when they eventually joined the others in Gloucester.



*Bonded, Alleyne Dance - Photo credit Daniel Folley*



As a result, we reached a crowd traditionally underrepresented in Arts Programming:

**56% were Black/Black British or Mixed background - Black Caribbean & White**

**78.5% were from areas in the top 20% of deprivation nationally**

**64% attend arts and culture experiences once or less a year**

### Audience response:

**“More things like this should happen in Gloucester”**

**“Loved the event so much!”**



*Bonded, Alleyne Dance - Photo credit Daniel Folley*

**“Amazing performance!  
Please can we have more  
shows in Gloucester”**

**“The best dance I have ever seen  
in my life... More shows like this  
need to happen in Gloucester”**



## Partnership Programming

**In 2023-2024 we continued to focus on programming and commissioning events people could never have imagined coming to their city. Spectacle in Public Spaces creates the space for things people didn't know they needed until they saw it.**

**We wanted these events to enable residents to:**

- see the city in a new light
- be uplifted
- feel more positive about where they live
- bring about a shift in perceptions and different ways of thinking

**This year this included:**

**Little Murmur by Aakash Odedra Company:** A dance piece for 7+ centred around dyslexia. Performed at Gloucester's Guildhall to Robinswood School and to an open audience.

**Donuts by Extended Play:** A contemporary dance show staged at Gloucester's Guildhall as part of the Rural Touring Dance Initiative.

**Anyday by Max Calaf:** A trampoline show, touring to Gloucester as part of Circus Around and About II, and staged in Gloucester Academy for pupils.

**Kid Carpet & The Noisy Garden Centre:** A family show for children 4+. A theatre show with music, catchy songs, puppetry and audience participation! Performed at Gloucester Guildhall to families.

As part of our partnership work, we also brought *Public* by Ockhams Razor to King's Square in Gloucester:

**Public: Spectacle in King's Square Case study, Saturday 17th June 2023**

*Public* is a new outdoor performance by a groundbreaking circus company Ockham's Razor about the ownership of public space. In *Public*, a graduate company of 10 young performers create an image of a reality where they are able to be utterly without guard in a public arena. Incorporating acrobatics, parkour and dance they move through the architecture of the streets, lifting each other over and around walls, stairs, obstacles - dancing with the fabric of the world.

Ockhams Razor worked across 8 weeks with different schools and groups to create a bespoke piece performed by local Gloucester people within the professional piece. A total of 201 people worked with the company, with 90 of them performing in the final piece in King's Square.

Participants came from: Churchdown High School, Tredworth Junior School, SAL Youth Juniors, Your Next Move, Ambitions Dance, Inclusion Gloucester, GL1 Gymnastics and Gloucester College.

You can see the *Public* video [here](#)

### Audience response:

**“Brilliant, just what Gloucester needs more of” “Really great to see the square used and so full and lively. Events like this are great for the community - Gloucester needs it”**

**“This was completely unexpected in town. They all looked like they were having lots of fun and it was amazing to see”**

**“Would like to see more events like this in Gloucester. Give people a reason to come and love the city again”**

*Public - photo credit Mark Dawson*



### Artistic Director, Ockham's Razor:

**“We have performed the show across England and never have we had such a successful performance as the one in Gloucester. With the support of Strike A Light, we were able to create a far deeper level of engagement with the participants and to reach an incredible number of people. This was for us the most successful collaboration we have experienced and we have nothing but praise for the vision, integrity and professionalism of all the team at Strike A Light”**



## Commissioning

At SAL we want to invest in new, exciting work on a national level. In 2023-2024 we continued to do this by commissioning the following:

**Soumik Datta Mone Rekho:** Leading on from the success of Hope Notes programmed at Gloucester Guildhall by Community Producer Halima Malek. SAL supported the development of the show and, in turn, supported 2 new NPOs to build on that success and further embed in the city and with audiences.

**Stomping Ground:** SAL sits as a partner in the national project offering the largest outdoor dance commission in England. Community Producer, Zariq Hanif, joins the group and has an equal and valued voice around the table. This year we commissioned Richard Chappell's *Land Empathy*, a piece with environmental themes that will premiere at the Greenwich and Dockland International Festival (GDIF) in September 2024.

**Stacked Wonky:** We first discovered Stacked Wonky at GDIF 2023 with Community Producers Zariq Hanif & Halima Malek. They were shortlisted through Stomping Ground. We have joined a co-commissioning partnership with GDIF, Fabric, Landmark Theatres and Sadler's Wells to support *Are You Here for the Meeting?* We expect to present this in Gloucester in 2025.



Mone Rekho



## Artist Development and Let Artists Be Artists

**SAL offers opportunities for diverse and emerging artists and producers to progress their careers. Through residencies, employment training and artist support, we develop local and national talent and advocate for new ways of supporting careers in the industry.**

This strand ensures that Gloucester and South West creatives can start and sustain careers, particularly those underrepresented in the sector.

### What have we done?


#### Artist Development - Residency Programme

We awarded money, time and resources to our residency programme. We supported 77 artists through our residency programme with the University of Gloucester and Hawkwood. We held residencies at the University of Gloucestershire in Easter 2023 - 7 groups took part with 18 artists in total. This included: Can't Sit Still, Corrine Walker, Luca Macchi and Lizzie Grashion Hewitt.


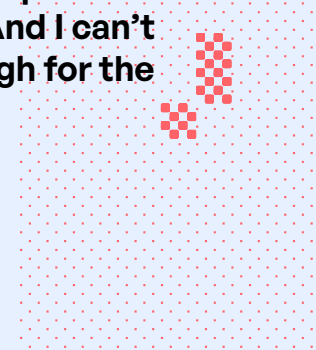
We held residencies at the University of Gloucestershire in Summer 2023 - 11 groups took part with 47 artists in total. This included: Zariq Rosita Hanif, Shivaangee Agrawal, Anjali Dance Co, Jamaal O'Driscoll, Jamaal Burkmar and Your Next Move.

In December 2023 we held residencies at Hawkwood for global majority led companies/artists - 3 groups took part with 12 artists in total. This included: Gayathiri Kamalakanthan, Radhika Aggarwal and Sonny Nwachukwu.


### Responses from those who took part in the residencies:




**"It gave me the space  
that I needed! And I can't  
thank you enough for the  
opportunity!"**



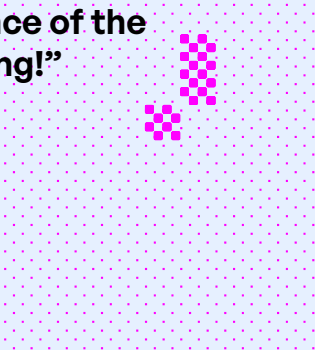
**"As an organiser, Strike-A-Light is  
amazing and the venue, University  
of Gloucestershire, is equally  
fantastic too. Thank you so much."**



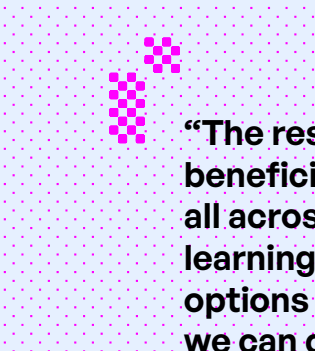





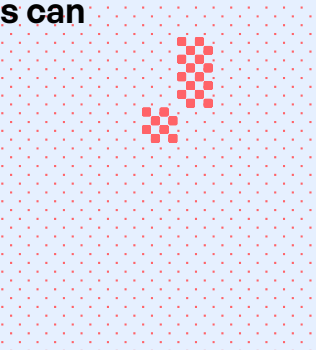
**“The overall experience of the residency was amazing!”**



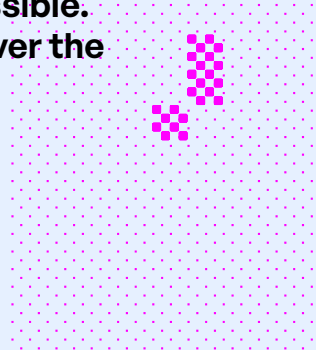
**“ A lot of emerging artists or fresh immigrant artists like me should be given the similar opportunity like this.”**



**“The residency was hugely beneficial! Our dancers are from all across the UK and due to their learning disabilities, residency options are often the only way we can do longer, deeper artistic work as their access needs mean regular long travel to/from venues or changing of environments can unsettle them.”**



**“We can't thank you enough for the space, time and support for our artistic work but also the opportunity for our dancers to gain invaluable life experience. Some of the dancers were quite emotional as they thought they would never get to experience what it was like to be a university student (due to their disabilities) and they were excited to FaceTime their siblings who had been to university, as they felt they could relate to them in a way they never thought possible. We noticed a huge difference in them over the week!”**



## Let Artists Be Artists

### “Huge credit and thanks to you all for smashing barriers and breaking moulds!” - LABA 2023 applicant feedback

In 2021-22 we ran a radical employment experiment to test out a different way for arts organisations to work with artists: Let Artists Be Artists (LABA), employing 3 artists in full or part-time roles for a year to be an artist without preconceived outcomes. This was challenging the norms. Artists are exhausted & restricted by the project treadmill. People talked about “fighting for scraps”, putting their own work on hold all the time & feeling “broken” by the usual commissioning & project funding processes. 400 artists applied in the first pilot and we knew this way of working had to happen. In 2023 we launched the scheme fully. We employed 4 more artists on 0.5 FTE contracts; all from different art forms and with a range of barriers to maintaining their freelance careers in the arts, all from global majority and/or working-class backgrounds. The artists work to no predetermined outcomes but some of their practice has to be based in Gloucester. This allows for collaborations to arise, stimulate new companies/partnerships between organisations, artists and producers and continues to offer the cultural infrastructure to grow in our city.

## The artists are:

**Ed Patrick (Kid Carpet):** Kid Carpet is a musician, video and theatre maker who produces simple, catchy songs and disruptively charming shows, creating superheroes out of everyday people and ordinary things

**Jamaal O’Driscoll:** Jamaal is a professional dancer working across a variety of dance styles, especially breaking.

**Munotida Chinyanga:** Tida is an ‘anti-disciplinary practitioner’, creating work primarily through direction and sound design

**Viv Gordon:** Viv is a theatre maker, survivor activist & arts and mental health campaigner

All of the artists above have faced multiple barriers to working in the arts. LABA has allowed them to take risks, pursue new work and take time. Nationally, this has drawn attention, with Lyn Gardner writing about the scheme in [The Stage](#).





## Future producers

Gloucester Future Producers is a chance to develop skills and learn more about being a producer in the city. For this year's cohort, they worked on Queer Talk, the verbatim project led by Zariq Rosita Hanif, over 8 weeks. The cohort was the same as 2022 as we felt they needed further time and development.

Future Producers is open for applications for anyone over the age of 18, who lives in Gloucestershire and wants to get involved in the Gloucester arts and events scene. We found that through the programme we have been able to engage those who are underrepresented in the arts. The Future Producers from 2022 (who were mostly involved in this project) were:

**33% gender identity is different from the sex they were assumed to be at birth**

**33% identify as deaf or disabled person or have a long term health condition**

**44% identify as neurodivergent**

**44% identify as queer**

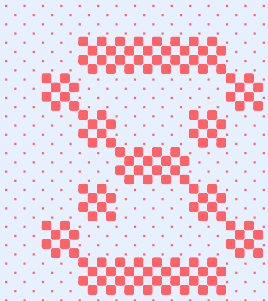
**33% identify as global majority**

## Future Producers comments:

**"Without this course I would not have even thought about applying for Arts Council funding for my latest project, it has opened so many doors. The support from Strike A Light has been unbelievable with one-to-one sessions and support even after the course has finished. I am thinking bigger, I feel empowered and resourced to make my dreams happen"- Future Producers course member**

**"Overall, I feel like being part of Future Producers has been a turning point for me in my career, and so many opportunities have opened up for me. I really am so glad I applied!"- Future Producers course member**

**"I felt so safe and understood - I've never felt a sense of community and family(?) in the same way before. I just felt like I belonged with everyone and that was a new experience for me." - Future Producers course member**



## Learning and development

**Provides year-round opportunities for Gloucester residents from all backgrounds to actively participate in regular creative activity. Our participation work develops new skills, improves wellbeing & nurtures our next generation of creatives.**

### What did we do?

In 2023/24 we continued to deliver weekly classes for children and young people in Gloucester including;

- Youth Theatre for 7+ in Tredworth (new after school provision)
- Youth Theatre for 12-18 in Matson and City Works
- Youth Dance Juniors at Gloucester Guildhall
- Youth Dance Company at the University of Gloucestershire

We continued to deliver the weekly classes for children and young people (CYP) in Gloucester in accessible community spaces with low access to culture. This year, 53 CYP attended our classes and over 80% of those attending qualified for free spaces based on need. 2024 saw the launch of a new Youth

theatre in the Tredworth and Barton area of the City. The youth theatre is aimed at 7-11 years old who can then progress into the 11-18 group, providing clear pathways for development.

**“One person turned up crying because she had been kicked out of her home. One person turned up telling us their brother and uncle had been killed, another person’s mum was starting her next course of chemo. Them being at Strike A Light sessions definitely helped them.”**

– Youth worker Group Leader’s journal

**Case study:** Youth Theatre show “Brainstorm” was performed by our senior Youth Theatre group at Gloucester Guildhall on Tuesday 7th May 2024. The show, which they spent a term working towards, was a devised piece and the small group of 12-18 years have an insight into their lives as teenagers. Here was the feedback from the young people’s friends & family:

*It was great. // My sister started crying. // It was so enjoyable. // My Stepdad absolutely loved the ‘Dad Dancing’ section. // They really enjoyed it, so cool to watch. // My sister cried the whole way through – she was so proud. // They loved seeing me on stage! // My Mum was laughing all the way through. // My Mum said it should be taken on tour around schools in the UK. // They thought it was brilliant. // Bessie is such a cutie. // Everyone was great. // My Dad loved playing the never have I ever game. // Lorelei has come out of her shell – amazing to see this.*

*‘If you’ve had like a bad day or a bad week you go and you immediately feel better’ – Youth theatre participant*



## Strike A Light in Schools

Our Strike A Light in Schools programme placed three national organisations, Coney Theatre, Multistory Orchestra and ACE Dance and Music in Robinswood Primary Academy. Each genre had a callout for a local practitioner at the start of their career to work with one of the organisations to be able to develop their skill set and provide on the job training. For an academic year we provided a continuation of co-creating work with 60 young people, developing audiences and providing training opportunities for 3 local practitioners (two of which have since been able to access paid work with SAL) and built the performances into a programme of work.

### Aims of Strike A Light in Schools:

1. To improve health and wellbeing of CYP through theatre, dance and music
2. To build confidence and resilience in the CYP we work with
3. Provide a primary school with long-term support to provide a high quality cultural offer and ensure arts and culture is not lost in schools due to budget constraints
4. To improve the spaces and places that matter to people - bringing families together to share in performances and build pride of place
5. Provide paid traineeships to local artists to work alongside a national arts company, improving employability and skills

In 23/24 we delivered three Strike A Light in Schools, partnering exceptional artists and companies with schools. They each did a residency at school and then performed a piece of work.

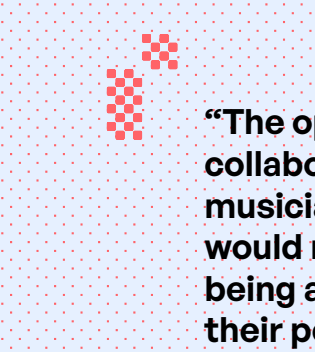
These were:

**ACE Dance and Music:** Robinswood Primary Academy. Performance as part of Next Generation Dance.

**Akasha Odedra:** Tredworth Junior School. Performance of Little Murmur.

**Kid Carpet:** Tredworth Junior School. Performance of Epic Fail. The opportunity allows the CYP to have access to 2 hours a week of high-quality cultural provision free of charge. All of the work over the term culminated in a performance piece which other CYP and families could watch.

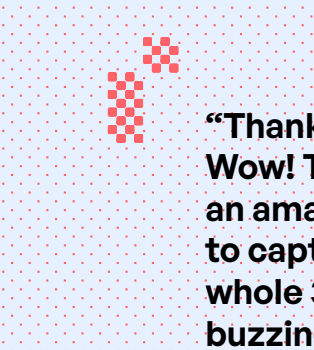
### Feedback from the teachers involved:



**“The opportunity to work collaboratively with live professional musicians - an opportunity that they would not usually have access to; being able to present their work to their peers and parents, and be proud of what they had achieved”**


Teacher, Tredworth School





**“Thank you so much for inviting us!!  
Wow! The children (& adults) had such  
an amazing time - it takes something  
to captivate 50 7 & 8 year olds for a  
whole 35 mins. They loved it and are  
buzzing now on the bus... Thanks  
again”**

**Robinswood teacher after watching  
Little Murmur**





## Case Study: New Gen Dance

In June 2023 we decided to create a performance platform called Next Gen to showcase work from local dance groups as well as providing a platform for our Strike A Light in Schools participants. The combination of local talent supported by exciting and professional dance companies like ACE Dance and Music, elevated the platform in an amalgamation of opportunity and aspiration.

One of the participants who started dancing with us after a call out for local dancers to participate in the launch of King's Square in 2022, Kyani, has gone on to perform in multiple dance opportunities with us and has created an after school dance group in her secondary school. Having been exposed to different professionals and opportunities, Kyani has been inspired to share her passion for dance and engage other young people to join in. This is a clear demonstration of our aims in action to provide brilliant opportunities for young people which encourage them to dream big and to give everyone, regardless of background and circumstance, opportunities to watch, create, lead and participate in culture.

With over 100 young people participating alongside a DJ, host and professional companies, Next Gen has the potential to continue to be a new annual showcase in Gloucester City.

## Workshops for CYP and family performances

Alongside our programmed work we offered workshops and engagement activity to the partner schools we work with. This year this included:

- Any Day: Max Calaf performed in a hall in Gloucester Academy for 100+ CYP at no cost
- Epic Fail (as part of Strike A Light in Schools) in both the Guildhall and the school, to allow the largest amount of CYP and families to enjoy it



*The Grip - photo credit Daniel Folley*

## Practitioner Training

We delivered two sets of practitioner training in the last year, one of those being specifically for practitioners from the Global Majority.

In June 2023 we delivered, in partnership with Cheltenham Everyman, a full day of training which was delivered by Twocan Theatre and Beyond Face Theatre, both South West organisations.

With a strong focus on inclusivity, particularly around working with people with physical and learning disabilities, the practitioners were led by an expert from Twocan on how to adapt their practice for better engagement. Beyond Face placed emphasis on working with young people from diverse backgrounds and reflecting culture in delivery.

In January 2024 we held our first practitioner training session for practitioners from the Global Majority. There is a clear disparity of black and brown practitioners being trained and paid in sustained roles as practitioners and we want to see a shift in the sector. The training was led by playwright and actress Yolanda Mercy who created a safe environment for the practitioners to discuss current work environments and sector challenges as well as giving them creative tools to hone in on their practice. Through this session we discovered new practitioners in the Southwest who felt there hadn't been adequate support or didn't know how to get support for their careers. As a result of this we have seen a need to continue to offer this training every year.

## Internships

This year we have partnered with the University of Birmingham to deliver 2 part-time internships for 10 weeks with University of Birmingham students with a living wage and travel to the office covered.

**The following is a blog post by our intern Tanishka:**

I've been interning at Strike A Light (SAL) for the last 10 weeks, and the team there has truly been my biggest cheerleader throughout, constantly encouraging and supporting me. Working in the charity sector has taken me through purpose-driven marketing, where SAL actually focuses on bringing artful entertainment and extraordinary experiences to people. Just pure entertainment for the people of Gloucester!

I've spent my weeks in the marketing team, learning about different facets of marketing – ranging from writing copies for email marketing to designing creatives for socials. This internship has given me the opportunity to work on HubSpot CRM, Mailer Lite, Adobe Photoshop and honed my inbound marketing skills.

I've learnt how marketing is not about taking it up like a checklist, task by task, it's actually about finding the right balance between what your audience expects from you, and how can you as a brand meet those expectations with keeping the brand core and values intact.

It involves thinking backwards, and finding your audience on the right channels, and talking to them in a language they speak, about things they want to hear.

The thing I loved the most was that I had the chance to work



things that were completely new to me, with full support from my manager!

I learnt basics to code a website, work on the back-end of it and then taking it live. While interning I also got my hands into the event side of things, on bringing an event to life, from paper to the stage, with a massive audience.

And I truly enjoyed every bit of it, it's such a team effort! The whole experience has left me super motivated to work in a team, achieve big things and then celebrate wins together. And, like I said in the beginning, people at SAL will be your biggest cheerleader whenever it comes to trying something new, or even making a mistake. It's such a happy, sunny environment in the office!

The team has really taken care of me, being an international student at UoB, away from home. My experience at SAL provided me opportunities to explore Gloucester and its rich culture, and I'll cherish the memories I made here.






## This is How We Do It

An expanding part of our work is ensuring we share our practice, develop discussions and learn from each other. We don't think we have all the answers but we believe conversations and collaboration is the way we can create a more positive and hopeful future for the arts, particularly in such a challenging time for our industry. In 2023-2024 we reached 3,875 engagements digitally through our blog posts as part of This is How We Do It.

### We delivered:

- ⇒ 6 digital sessions for up to 30 people per session with invited partners on a particular topic we've been requested to consult on (previously place-making, Let Artists be Artists, the development of GL4). We invited other organisations, artists and community members to join us in discussions.
- ⇒ 6 blog posts from a range of voices we work with; sharing our work and practice and opening up the conversation on how these things could be better.
- ⇒ We spoke at 6 conferences to learn and grow as an organisation and share our ways of working.
- ⇒ We offered continual, free support to local organisations,

including Gloucester Guildhall and GL4, to provide advice and coordinate our programmes of work.

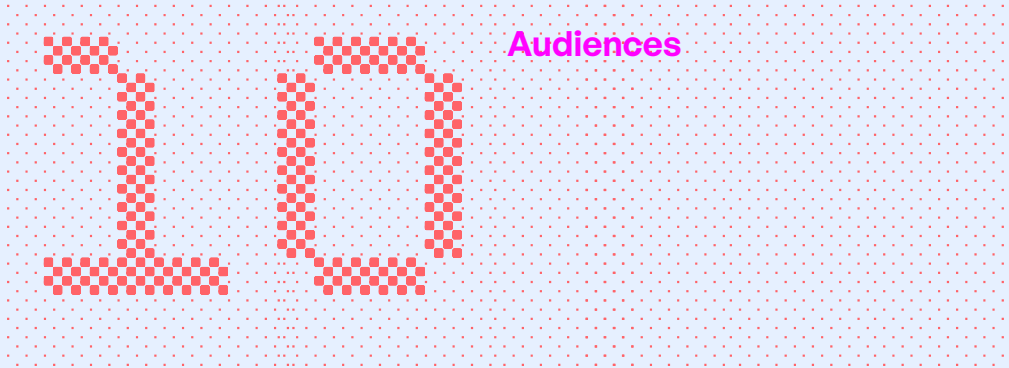


**“You created a genuine and safe space for all staff to share and listen, and there has been a real buzz of interest and engagement around our approach to co-creation since”**

**Trinity Centre on Strike A Light's Training session**







Our work continues to reach a range of communities over Gloucester.

**In 2023-24 we reached over 3,000 audience members in our events. We engaged 12,103 community members, young people and families in world class arts and engagement activity.**

We saw once again our audience representing the communities we serve. Our audience in 2023-2024:

**24% of audiences identify as Deaf, disabled or have a long-term health condition**

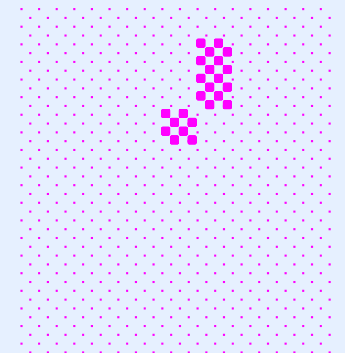
**57% were global majority**

**57% live in the top 20% of deprived areas nationally.**



**"Amazing - feel very fortunate to have this in Gloucester"**

**Audience Member,  
Rites of Spring**





Public - photo credit Emma Brookes

Strike A Light

Annual Review 2023-2024



"It was an amazing experience and exciting to see other cultures..."

Audience Member,  
Rites of Spring



We work with 4 Community Producers who work in areas traditionally underrepresented in arts provision and in cultural investment. This is reflected in the audiences that come to their work. The below shows the audience statistics for each co-created piece of work:

**Queer Talk by Zariq Hanif:**

78% LGBTQ+

57% trans

21% global majority

64% living in the top 20% deprived areas nationally

**The Grip by Philippa Smith:**

90% global majority

68% living in the top 20% deprived areas nationally

57% non-regular arts attenders

14% first-time arts attenders



### **75 Years by Halima Malek:**

50% Asian/ Asian British Indian  
15% Asian/ Asian British Pakistani  
30% White British  
5% Any other White Background  
34% non-regular arts attenders  
50% Barton & Tredworth residents


### **Westgate Stories as part of High Street Heritage Action Zone project by Katrina McGonagle:**

60% first-time attenders to a SAL event  
33% non-arts attenders

*Queer Talk - photo credit Cam Adams*



*The Grip creative team - photo credit Daniel Folley*



## Governance, management and staffing


We are a registered charity (we reviewed our structure and governing document for suitability, re-registering as a CIO in 2018) and have a well-established independent, voluntary board. Our diverse, active trustees ensure we deliver against our arts and education objects, with a particular focus on Gloucester communities.

Communication is based on real conversation and relationships of trust between board, staff, artists and freelancers. This is underpinned by a rigorous structure of accountability and reporting, ensuring compliance, that we deliver against our funding agreements and that decision making is data informed.

This includes:

- Monthly financial reporting
- Quarterly board reports on programme, accounts, funding and partnerships
- Quarterly updated risk register
- Regularly reviewed policies which include a robust conflict of interest policy
- A paid secretary to the board to ensure compliance and accurate record keeping

Board and staff work closely together, and establish working groups for key funding agreements or big decisions. Our business plan is created collaboratively in away days with the board and wider staff team, with trustees overseeing, feeding into and signing off an annual plan, fundraising strategy and budget. Our board terms of reference reflect this.



**"Wow! Fun! Want more things to take the kids to like this in Gloucester"**

Audience member, Donuts



## Board Recruitment and Staff Development

The team has grown considerably in the last year. We now have 14 staff PAYE, all part time. The demands of an expanding organisation means leadership and governance must be robust. This year, we did a significant round of trustee recruitment as the Chair and several members were at the end of their terms. We worked hard on recruitment; making personal approaches and finding where people felt aligned with our values. We recruited a board of 9 Trustees and two Co-chairs, to mirror our co-leadership model. The board now better represents the work we do and the community we serve.

We have:

- ⇒ One youth member (under 21) who had worked with us previously as a climate activist
- ⇒ A young board, with the majority under 35. This makes it more representative of who we serve and changes the very structure and perception on who can be on a board
- ⇒ 44% identify as global majority; reflecting better the communities we serve
- ⇒ 2 Trustees attended our partner school, Widden Primary School
- ⇒ 50% identify as LGBTQ+

We have employed a new board secretary, on salary, to support the board and set a board expenses line for the first time. We have set up formal appraisals between the Executive Team and 2 Co-Chairs to ensure management and accountability across the organisation. We are ensuring accountability and identifying together where there may be gaps within knowledge to work on, for example, a recent focus on reading financial documents.

We have a fundraising sub-committee set up and a board representative who will complete Level 3 safeguarding training.

We also have integrated artists and Community Producers within the organisation; with LABA artists and Community Producers on PAYE contracts and attending team meetings regularly.

Our process and procedures have improved. We have implemented new budget procedures with our accountant; to ensure stronger accountability and a formalised approval process. We have worked with a freelance HR consultant to develop our policies, such as Absence and Leave and recently a Menopause Policy, to ensure we are being robust, vigilant and adaptable.



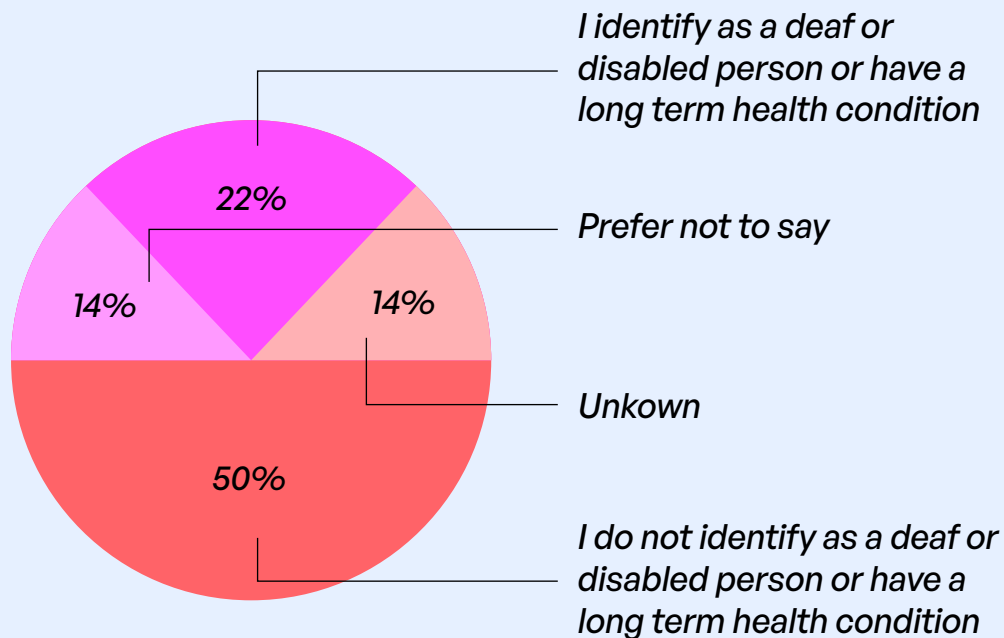
## Staff and Board Structure

The team are supported by a wider team of freelancers. In 23-24 we contracted 38 freelancers and worked with 16 different artists/companies on live events.

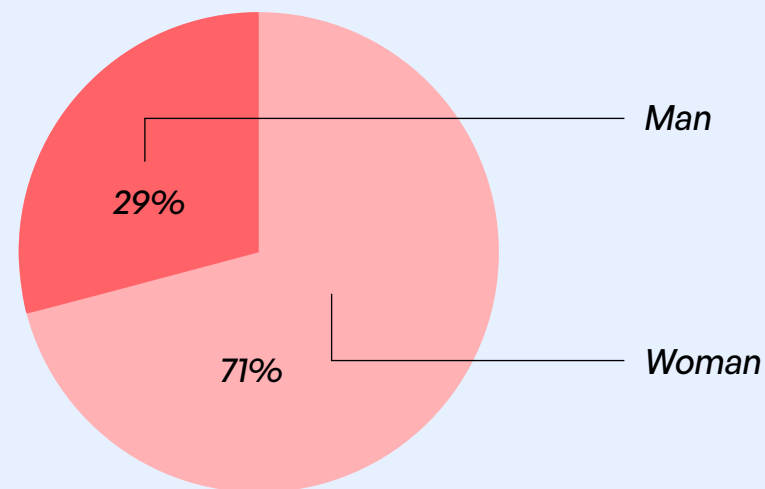
Out of the 16 productions, over 50% were presented by Global Majority companies/artists.

Below are our responses from the Arts Council England (ACE) annual survey 23-24 of staff and freelancers. Please note that this is on the basis of 26 responses.

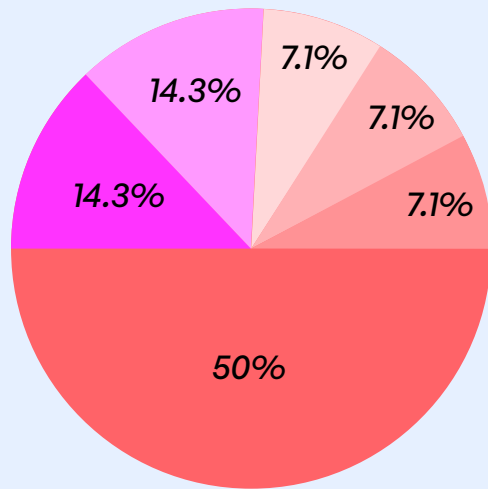
### Disability



### Gender Identity

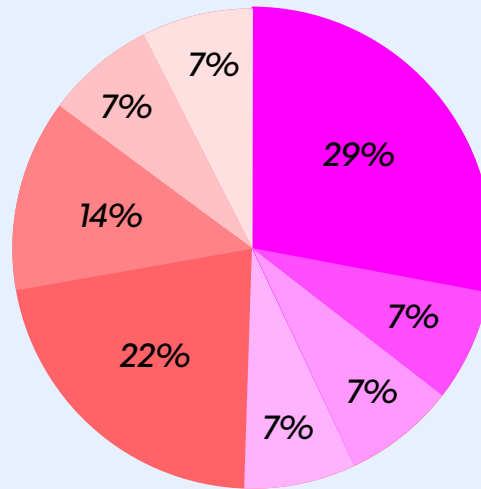


## Ethnicity



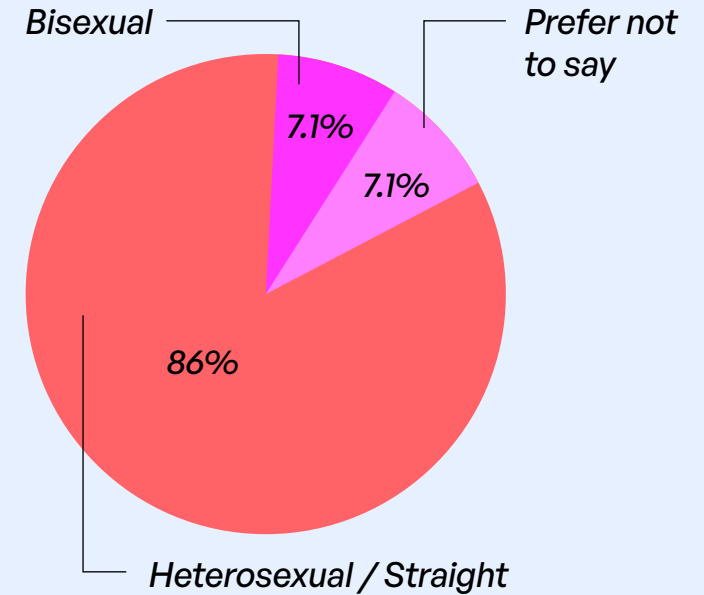
- White British
- White & Black Caribbean
- Any other Mixed Background
- Indian
- Any other White Background
- Any other Ethnic group

## Socio-economic Background (Occupation of main/highest income earner in household at age 14)

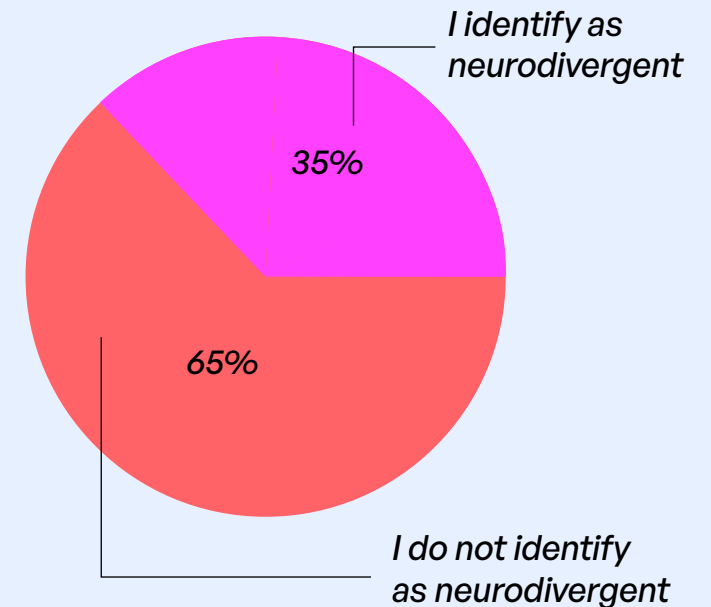


- Modern Professional Occupations
- Clerical & Intermediate Occupations
- Senior Managers & Administrators
- Routine Manual & Service Occupations
- Traditional Professional Occupations
- Long Term Unemployed
- Don't Know
- Other

## Sexual Orientation

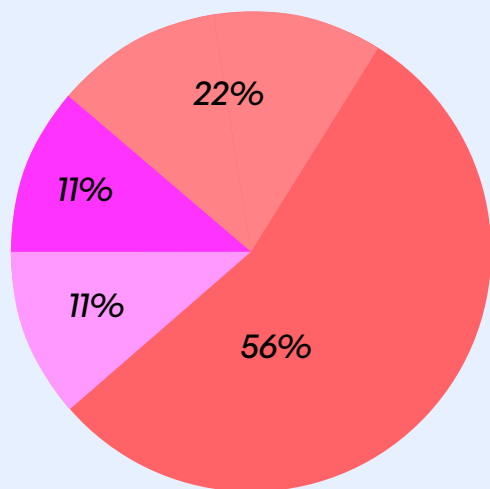


## Neurodivergent



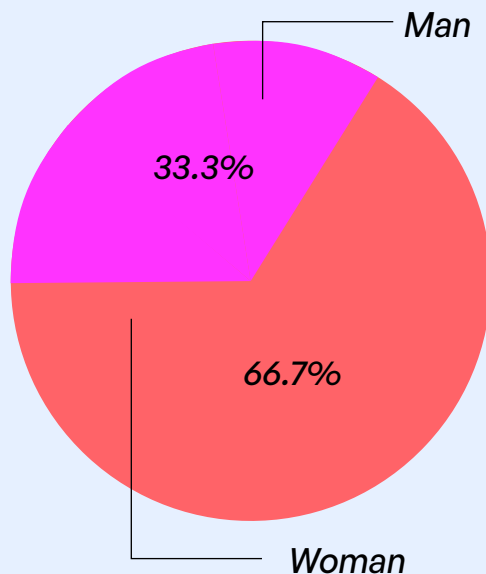
## The Board:

### Ethnicity

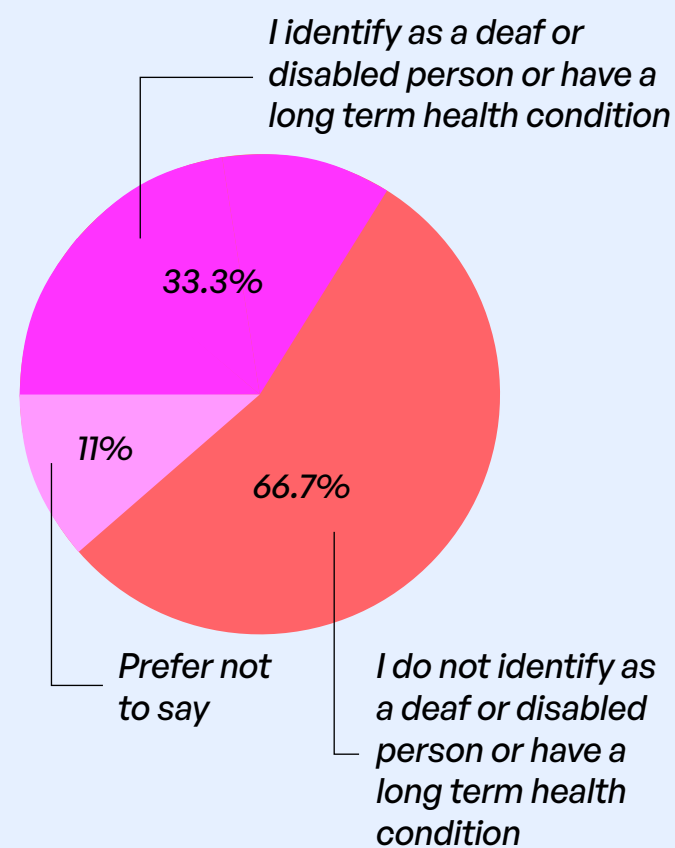


- White British
- White & Black Caribbean
- Chinese
- White & Asian

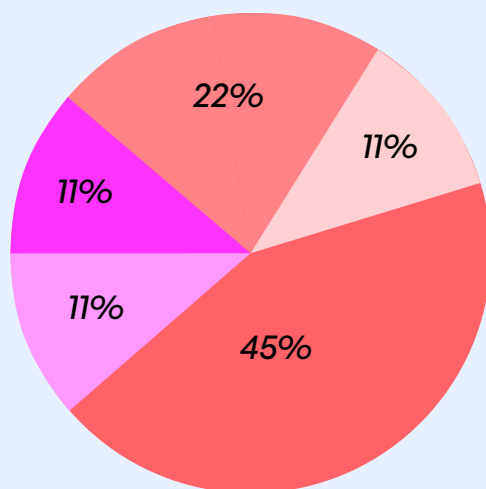
### Gender Identity



### Disability



### Sexual Orientation



- Heterosexual / Straight
- Gay Man
- Queer
- Bisexual
- Prefer not to say





**The final annual accounts presented show our current position.**

SAL has reviewed its reserves policy and it has been increased to £95,000 (3 months running costs). We have increased reserves to this level this year.

We have a surplus this year of £53,332. This is due to a later start of activity on our Let Artists Be Artists scheme and underspend on our staff costs (due to later recruitment). £10,000 of the surplus has gone towards our reserves to reach the current target. The rest of the surplus has been put towards the fundraising target for this year.

Registered Number:- 1178449 / CE014141

Report of the Trustees and  
Unaudited Financial Statements  
for the  
Year Ended 31 March 2024

for

Strike a Light (Gloucester)

Strike A Light (Gloucester)  
Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

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Statement of Financial Activities	4
Balance Sheet	5
Notes to the Financial Statements	6 to 7
Detailed Statement of Financial Activities	8



Strike A Light (Gloucester)

Registered Number:- 1178449 / CE014141

**Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Strike A Light (Gloucester)  
for the Year Ended 31 March 2024**

I report on the accounts of the Trust for the year ended 31 March 2024, which are set out on pages 2 to 8

**Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner**

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:-

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act.
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

**Basis of independent examiner's report**

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosure in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a "true and fair view" and the report is limited to the matters set out in the next statement.

**Independent examiner's statement**

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:-
  - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act and
  - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act have not been met or
- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached



J HARRIS, ACMA, CGMA, MA, FRSA  
SUITE LP61812, 20 WENLOCK ROAD  
LONDON N1 7GU

Independent Examiner

31 August 2024

Strike A Light (Gloucester)

Registered Number:- 1178449 / CE014141

**Report of the Trustees  
for the Year Ended 31 March 2024**

The trustees present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2024. The trustees have adopted the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities' issued in January 2019.

**REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS**

**Registered Charity Number**  
1178449

**Trustees**

I Oakes	Resigned 16/10/2023
D Drew	Resigned 16/10/2023
J May	Resigned 16/10/2023
B Haynes	Resigned 16/10/2023
R Bell	
A Byard	
D Thompson	Appointed 16/10/2023
E Harris	Appointed 16/10/2023
Z Portlock	Appointed 16/10/2023
N Gajadharsingh	Appointed 16/10/2023
J Tyler	Appointed 16/10/2023
A Zinhi	Appointed 16/10/2023
T Bevan	Appointed 09/05/2023

**STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

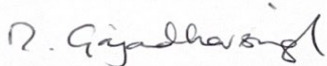
**Governing Document**

The charity is controlled by its constitution and constitutes a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO).

**Risk Management**

The trustees have a duty to identify and review the risks to which the charity is exposed and to ensure appropriate controls are in place to provide reasonable assurance against fraud and error.

Approved by order of the board of trustees on.....24 July 2024... and signed on its behalf by:



Mrs. Nadja Gajadharsingh  
Trustee

Strike A Light (Gloucester)

Registered Number:- 1178449 / CE014141

Statement of Financial Activities  
for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	31.03.2024 Total Funds £	31.03.2023 Total Funds £
<b>INCOMING RESOURCES</b>				
Incoming Resources from generated funds				
Voluntary income	55,332	434,917	490,249	424,192
<b>RESOURCES EXPENDED</b>				
Charitable activities				
Production	-	435,543	435,543	470,466
Insurance		1,256	1,256	1,154
Governance costs	-	118	118	118
<b>Total resources expended</b>	-	436,917	436,917	471,738
<b>NET INCOMING/(OUTGOING) RESOURCES</b>	53,332	-	53,332	(47,546)
Total funds brought forward	96,845	-	96,845	144,391
<b>TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD</b>	150,177	-	150,177	96,845



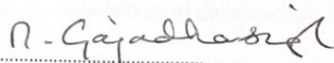
Strike A Light (Gloucester)

Registered Number:- 1178449 / CE014141

Balance Sheet  
for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	31.03.2024 Total Funds £	31.03.2023 Total Funds £
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>					
Cash at bank and in hand		150,177	147,798	297,975	232,406
Debtors and prepayments	3	-	5,302	5,302	15,978
		<u>150,177</u>	<u>153,100</u>	<u>303,277</u>	<u>248,384</u>
<b>CREDITORS</b>					
Amounts falling due within one year	4	-	(153,100)	(153,100)	(151,539)
<b>NET CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>150,177</u>	<u>96,845</u>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>					
		150,177	-	150,177	96,845
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		<u>150,177</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>150,177</u>	<u>96,845</u>
<b>FUNDS</b>					
Restricted funds				-	-
Unrestricted funds	5			150,177	96,845
<b>TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD</b>				<u>150,177</u>	<u>96,845</u>

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees on...24 July 2024... and were signed on its behalf by:



Mrs Nadja Gajadharsingh  
Trustee

Notes to the Financial Statements  
for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

## 1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

**Accounting convention**

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, and in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland, the Charities Act 2011 and the requirements of the Statement of Recommended Practice, Accounting and Reporting Charities.

**Incoming resources**

All incoming resources are included on the Statement of Financial Activities when the charity is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy.

**Resources expended**

Expenditure is accounted for on a cash basis and have been classified under the headings that aggregate all the cost relating to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings, they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

**Taxation**

The charity is exempt from tax on its charitable activities.

**Fund accounting**

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the trustees.

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

## 2. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

**Trustees remuneration and expenses**

There were no trustees' remuneration or expenses paid for the year ended 31 March 2024 or 31 March 2023.

## 3. DEBTORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2024 £	2023 £
Trade debtors	5,302	15,978
Accrued income	-	-
	<u>5,302</u>	<u>15,978</u>

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)  
for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

## 4. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2024 £	2023 £
Trade creditors	11,753	8,840
Accruals and deferred income	141,347	142,699
	<u>153,100</u>	<u>151,539</u>

## 5. STATEMENT OF MOVEMENTS

	As at 01.04.2023 £	Net movement in funds £	At 31.03.2024 £
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>			
Designated fund	85,000	10,000	95,000
Core fund	11,845	43,332	55,177
<b>Restricted funds</b>	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>	<u>96,845</u>	<u>53,332</u>	<u>150,177</u>

Net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming Resources £	Resources Expenses £	Movement in funds £
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>			
Designated fund	10,000	-	10,000
Designated fund 2	-	-	-
Core fund	43,332	-	43,332
<b>Restricted fund</b>	<u>434,917</u>	<u>(434,917)</u>	<u>-</u>
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>	<u>488,249</u>	<u>(434,917)</u>	<u>53,332</u>



Strike A Light (Gloucester)

Registered Number:- 1178449 / CE014141

Detailed Statement of Financial Activities  
for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

	2024		2023	
	£	£	£	£
<b>INCOMING RESOURCES</b>				
<b>Voluntary income</b>				
Grant income from Trusts	232,747		293,584	
Arts Council NPO Grant	215,534		86,564	
Local Authority Funding	14,250		20,166	
Partnership Income	2,064		-	
Julia and Hans Rausing Trust	-		10,000	
Government Funding	5,602		-	
Corporate Giving	50		-	
Earned Income	7,943		2,968	
Individual Giving	8,232		296	
		486,422		423,578
<b>Other income</b>				
Government furlough payments	-		-	
Bank interest received	3,827		614	
		3,827		614
<b>Total incoming resources</b>		490,249		424,192
<b>RESOURCES EXPENDED</b>				
<b>Charitable activities</b>				
Production costs		435,543		470,466
<b>Support costs</b>				
Insurance		1,256		1,154
<b>Governance costs</b>				
Accountancy		118		118
<b>Total resources expended</b>		436,917		471,738
<b>Net Income/(expenditure)</b>		53,332		(47,546)