

# STRIKE A LIGHT

GLOUCESTER

# ANNUAL REPORT



STRIKE  
A LIGHT  
|||||

2024  
2025

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*Photo credit: Alastair Brookes*



## THE 2024-2025 TRUSTEES

### Co-Chairs:

Andrew Zihni

Rachel Bell

### Trustees:

Zara Portlock

Eleanor Harris

Nadja Gajadharsingh

Thomas Bevan

Alison Byard

Jay Tyler

Danny Thompson

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Lynette Dakin

## CO-ARTISTIC DIRECTORS

Emma-Jane Benning and Sarah Blowers

(Sarah Blowers stepped down in December 2024)

## CHARITY NUMBER

1178449

## REGISTERED ADDRESS

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

*Photo credit: Lesley Andrew*

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REFERENCE AND  
ADMINISTRATIVE  
INFORMATION

Photo credit: Jess Gibbs

This year has been a powerful reminder of what Strike A Light stands for: bold ideas, deep community roots, and the courage to keep evolving.

Our *Community Producers* and *Let Artists Be Artists* projects are established, leading to some truly powerful moments and deep connection with Gloucester. Some highlights include our co-creation of “She Spoke Out” which went across international boundaries, communities coming together to watch Peaceophobia in Asda car park and a dance takeover of King’s Square. This is the result of long-term, thoughtful investment in people and places. We’re especially proud that this work is consistently reaching those who face multiple barriers to the arts. It’s proof that inclusive, community-led programming works.

We have remained financially responsible and ambitious. We’ve grown our reserves, taken bold creative risks, and continued to embed long-term work that genuinely makes a difference in Gloucester.

This year we have adapted to change, marking the departure of our Co-Founder and Co-Artistic Director, Sarah Blowers, whose leadership has shaped the very DNA of Strike A Light. We thank her for her extraordinary vision and impact.

Thanks to our team, trustees, partners, and the continued support of funders, we’re entering a new chapter with energy and clarity. We’ll keep listening, keep learning, and keep delivering work that brings people together and changes lives.

Here’s to another year of art that is rooted, risk-taking, and life-changing.

**RACHEL BELL, CO-CHAIR OF STRIKE A LIGHT**



# 2 CHAIR'S REVIEW OF 2024-2025



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EXECUTIVE  
TEAM'S REVIEW

2024-2025 has been a busy year; our work has continued to grow and evolve and the organisation has taken a shift with it. This year the programmes and models of working we began in 2023, Community Producers and Let Artists be Artists, have had time to take root, develop and grow. Stand out moments have included: audiences gathering outside the barriers of Peaceophobia at ASDA car park to fit into the show's final performance, or the installation of our "Promise Board" as part of *Public Trust* during the election campaign, with our new MP coming the day after election to make his promise to Gloucester. Away from the larger-scale outdoor programme, we also have had other moments of joy. Such as the Westgate Community co-creating lyrics and music with our Let Artist be Artist, Ed Patrick, and recording them professionally at the Music Works studio, watching our Youth Theatre show performed at Gloucester Guildhall to a sellout crowd, or witnessing the development of 4 Global Majority artists as part of the Take Space to Lead scheme, delivered in partnership with Beyond Face.

We are so pleased to see, year on year, the audiences we achieve at our work, with 69% in the top 20% of areas of deprivation nationally and 49% from the global majority. It is evidence that the long-term engagement work we do with communities does translate to reaching those audiences regularly.

Despite a challenging environment, we have been dynamic to still take risks on big projects, while ensuring we are financially viable for the future. We were able to grow our reserves last year but still delivered large-scale, outdoor projects and longer-term, embedded community work. We have utilised partnerships, sought new funding opportunities

and have been led by our communities in the creation of our programme. Building on that work we continue to identify the successes and challenges within the organisation and looking forward we will continue to refine and redefine Community Producers and Let Artists be Artists programmes to ensure best practice.

The end of 2024 saw our Co-Artistic Director and Co-Founder, Sarah Blowers, step down after 11 years. Since co-founding Strike A Light in 2013, Sarah has led with ambition and drive, bringing endless integrity, skill and vision to her work and a fierce passion for the world-class creative potential of our city and its communities. She will be missed and we thank her for her time and ambition which made Strike A Light what it is. The ripple effect has been a wider change on the organisation's structure and, while always a challenge, with support of our board, we have been able to adapt effectively to the current funding environment and our programme of delivery.

As ever, we are thankful to our funders, partners and supporters who continue to support our mission. We were delighted at the end of 2024 to receive 4 more years of funding from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation which supports the longer-term nature of our work. We also thank our trustees for their support and guidance and the whole team who dedicate themselves to the work we do. We are looking forward to another year delivering work, led by our communities, which changes lives

**LYNETTE & EMMA-JANE**  
**(EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & ARTISTIC DIRECTOR)**





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.

SAL is a registered charity with a board of active trustees that have a diverse range of knowledge and expertise.

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## ABOUT THE CHARITY





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# VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

OUR VISION

**WORLD-CHANGING CULTURE  
AND CREATIVITY FOR ALL.**

**CREATING SOCIAL  
CHANGE THROUGH  
EXTRAORDINARY  
PERFORMANCE EVENTS,  
CREATIVE PROJECTS  
WITH COMMUNITIES  
AND PARTICIPATION  
OPPORTUNITIES FOR  
YOUNG PEOPLE.**

OUR MISSION



- 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

## 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

## HOW WE DO IT

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

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.

Strike A Light work under 4 strands of work. They are:

**CO-CREATED PROGRAMME**

**PARTICIPATION**

**LET ARTISTS BE ARTISTS**

**THIS IS HOW WE DO IT**

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

**IN 2024/2025 WE STAGED 16  
SHOWS TO AN AUDIENCE OF  
3848 AUDIENCE MEMBERS.**



Photo credit:  
Alastair Brookes



Photo credit: Leyla Ozkan

A photograph of a man with a beard, wearing a black and red jacket, working on the engine of a blue car at night. The car's hood is open, and the scene is illuminated by artificial light. In the background, other people and structures are visible but out of focus.

# 6 STRAND ONE: 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 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 Artistic Director continues 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 when they can be independent. 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.

## THE COMMUNITIES WE WORK WITH

We fund the work of the 4 Community Producers and support them to become cultural leaders, developing their experience and presence within the organisation and on a local and national level.

In 2024-2025 we built on our learning to co-create a vibrant cultural programme and decision-making with Gloucester's Black, Caribbean, Muslim, working class and LGBTQ+ communities for an audience of 10,000+.

Specifically we:

- Continued to employ 4 Global Majority, working class &/or disabled CPs on 1 day per week PAYE contracts to develop and sustain their careers in Gloucester with tailored individual support.
- Co-programmed and/or co-created 8 events per year with CPs and city partners creating live events in public and community spaces with linked engagement for 100 community members.

The Community Producers and communities we work with are:

**HALIMA MALEK** works with the South Asian community in Gloucester and has worked with SAL for over 4 years. Halima's work focuses on the oral histories of female South Asian migrants and their families.

**PHILIPPA SMITH**, a long-term supporter and member of SAL, works with the African and Caribbean communities of Gloucester, and in particular the stories of the Windrush

generation, focusing on the trauma of families separated by this migration.

**ZARIQ HANIF** joined us in 2023 when she was in the process of receiving her refugee status. Her work focuses on offering support to LGBTQ+ migrants coming into the city, and to raise awareness of their experiences.

**KATRINA MCGONAGLE** lives within the Westgate Community and began as a volunteer on the Heritage High Street Action Zone project in 2022. Katrina's work aims to restore a sense of pride of place amongst her community in the Westgate ward, ranked amongst the 10% most deprived areas in the country.

**"I WANT TO WORK WITH MY  
NEIGHBOURS IN THE WESTGATE  
COMMUNITY TO UNDERSTAND  
THE HISTORY OF OUR FLATS...  
WE NEED TO BUILD SOME PRIDE  
IN OUR COMMUNITY AND NOT  
FEEL ISOLATED"**

**KATRINA MCGONAGLE**



## WHAT WE DID

# A. CO-CREATED NEW PIECES OF WORK IN COMMUNITY VENUES

We co-created 4 new pieces of work with our Community Producers and communities. These were performed in community settings and were created by our 4 Community Producers (CP). They included:

## SHE SPOKE OUT (LED BY HALIMA MALEK) 28TH JANUARY 2025:

A project created between Strike A Light and Fragments Theatre (Palestine) in June 2024. The project looked at a poetry exchange between a poetry group, She Spoke, set up by Halima Malek in Gloucester and a group of women in Palestine, recruited through our partnership with Fragments Theatre. Each week the women met online to exchange their poems, with professional facilitators Tasneim Zyada and

Haneen Ameen who translated to Arabic and English. Through additional support from Together Gloucester, the project was able to be staged at Gloucester Guildhall in January 2025 as a live exchange with live performances and Palestinian food.

## THE AUDIENCE FOR THIS EVENT WERE:

**74%**  
**GLOBAL  
MAJORITY**

**36%**  
**DISABLED**

**73%**  
**BASED IN GLOUCESTER IN THE  
TOP 20% OF DEPRIVED AREAS  
NATIONALLY**

**"BEAUTIFUL, INSPIRATIONAL,  
MOVING, IMPORTANT. THE FOOD  
AND STAFF WERE EXCELLENT."**

**AUDIENCE MEMBER, SHE SPOKE OUT**

## THE GRIP (LED BY PHILIPPA SMITH) 20TH MARCH 2025

The Grip first took place at Gloucester Guildhall in 2023. In March 2025 we replicated The Grip in Bristol in a rare moment of touring work for the organisation, at Trinity Arts Centre. The Grip is 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. New stories were added to the piece, following a longer engagement programme in Bristol led by Philippa Smith (Community Producer), hosted by BBC's Kevin Philemon with guests including Bristol's first Poet Laureate, Miles Chambers, and Gloucester psychotherapist, Audrey James. Philippa produced, directed and took part in the recording.



Photo credit: Alastair Brookes

### THE AUDIENCE DATA FROM THIS EVENT SHOWED US:

**80%**  
**GLOBAL**  
**MAJORITY**

+

**62%**  
**CARIBBEAN**

**88%**  
**THOUGHT**  
**THE EVENT**  
**WAS "AMAZING"**

**OVER**  
**88%**  
**WERE**  
**OVER 60**



**MUSES OF GLOS (LED BY ZARIQ HANIF)  
26TH OCTOBER 2024:**

Zariq programmed and curated Muses of Glos, an independent LGBTQIA+ cabaret and arts group aiming to bring more diversity and inclusivity into the queer scene in Gloucester. Zariq worked with the group to curate a selection of performances and a night of performance.

**90%**  
**OF THOSE WHO ATTENDED WERE  
FROM THE LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY**

**37.5%**  
**IDENTIFIED AS DISABLED**

**"ABSOLUTELY INCREDIBLE LINE  
UP OF TALENTED PERFORMERS,  
I WAS THRIVING IN THE QUEER  
CHAOS OF IT ALL"**

**AUDIENCE MEMBER, MUSES OF GLOS**

**"HAVING A SAFE INCLUSIVE  
QUEER SPACE IN GLOUCESTER  
JUST MEANS SO MUCH AND IS  
EXACTLY WHAT IS NEEDED!"**

**AUDIENCE MEMBER, MUSES OF GLOS**



*Photo credit:  
Bobby Johnstone*

**WESTGATE CHOIR "SACRED FOLK" AND FESTIVE WINDOWS  
(LED BY KATRINA MCGONAGLE)  
THROUGHOUT NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER 2024:**

Katrina worked in the Westgate community throughout 2024, delivering a weekly choir and a series of art classes, which culminated in a Christmas celebration in December 2024 and window art displays. The group is made up of individuals who feel low self-worth, identify as neurodivergent and have a low income status; most also have mental health and physical health difficulties. Over tea, biscuits and choral music every week, Ed (Kid Carpet) worked with the group to bring out their stories to form lyrics, supported by our Co-Artistic Director, Sarah Blowers, who provided piano accompaniment and choral expertise. The Westgate Choir takes place in a bunker underneath a housing estate in the Westgate area of Gloucester, located in the top 10% most deprived area of the country (IMD, 2019). The group did a local professional studio recording in March 2025 and has led to further development of the piece, with the hope it will form part of the prestigious Three Choirs Festival in July 2026.

**"IT WAS SO GOOD TO BE ABLE TO TAKE THE GROUP TO THE MUSIC WORKS RECORDING STUDIO FOR TWO SESSIONS. X, WHO HAS LIVED EXPERIENCE OF BEING SECTIONED, HAD TOO MUCH DIFFICULTY WITH THE ENCLOSED SPACE OF THE STUDIO AND UNFORTUNATELY HAD TO LEAVE....MIRACULOUSLY WE MANAGED TO COAX HER BACK IN AND SHE EVEN CAME INTO THE RECORDING SPACE IF WE LEFT THE DOOR OPEN, AND X SANG OUR SONGS WITH US THAT SHE HELPED TO WRITE. I'M REALLY PROUD."**

**KID CARPET, COMPOSER**



## WHAT WE DID

# B. CO-PROGRAMMED WORK IN COMMUNITY SPACES

3 of our Community Producers and our Future Producers consulted with their communities to bring the following pieces to Gloucester:

## PEACEOPHOBIA BY COMMON WEALTH THEATRE AND FUEL THEATRE (PROGRAMMED BY HALIMA MALEK)

**26TH-28TH SEPTEMBER 2024:** An unapologetic response to rising Islamophobia around the world, conceived and created in Bradford. Featuring cinematic lighting, modified cars and an original electronic sound score. The piece was performed over 3 days at ASDA Car Park, in the centre of Gloucester.

**INSCRIBED IN "ME" BY ALETHIA ANTONIA (PROGRAMMED BY ZARIQ HANIF) 14/09/24:** Incredible contemporary choreographer, Alethia Antonia, and 2 local dancers brought this intense dance performance to Gloucester Pride. A fierce piece about feminine blackness and self-authorship.

**THE DISSIDENT ASSEMBLY CREATED BY THE "FUTURE PRODUCERS" 14TH JULY 2024:** An installation performance piece with each marking a different group standing up for justice in our city – from asylum seeker's rights to LGBTQ+ Pride to climate action, finishing in a musical performance. The piece was performed by local artists and programmed by 12 producers on a development scheme with Strike A Light.

*Unfortunately Katrina's programmed piece "After All" was cancelled due to ill health of the performer.*

**"SOME AMAZING PERFORMANCES  
ALL ABOUT SOCIAL JUSTICE. OUR  
YOUTH CLIMATE GROUP LOVED IT!"**

**AUDIENCE MEMBER, THE DISSIDENT ASSEMBLY**



## CASE STUDY: PEACEOPHOBIA

A recent example of how our approach has worked successfully was in September 2024; we held performances of Peaceophobia, by Common Wealth Theatre and Fuel Theatre, which took place in Gloucester's Asda car park in September 2024. The piece was initially seen by Halima Malek in Bradford, who stated, "this has to come to Gloucester".

It took 2 years for the SAL wider team to negotiate bringing it to Gloucester and, when it did, it had an extraordinary effect. We sustained 5 performances and, on the final night, had local people crowding outside the barriers to try and catch the show. We found that 28% of the audience were under 25, 60% were Global Majority, 68% non-regular arts attendees and 40% walked to the event. The performance resonated with the community Halima brought to the event as these audience responses demonstrate:

**"I FOUND THE WHOLE EVENT REALLY INSPIRING AND MOVING...I FEEL DEEPLY SAD AND ANGRY ABOUT THE LEVEL OF DIVISION BETWEEN US AND I'M GRATEFUL TO EACH OF YOU FOR CREATIVELY ENGAGING WITH MY FAMILY."**





Photo credit: Lesley Andrew



**“I LOVED IT! IT WAS SUCH A CREATIVE USE OF SPACE AND STORYTELLING AND MADE MY BRAIN LIGHT UP WITH IDEAS. THE STORIES WERE SO PERSONAL AND YET SO FAMILIAR TO THE STORIES OF MEN IN MY LIFE.”**

Peaceophobia could have been programmed and marketed via traditional routes (targeting an arts-attending audience) but, by working collaboratively with Halima over a sustained period, our marketing team worked hard to ensure it reached her community. Halima also gained the experience of working with a national show and companies over a prolonged period, supported by the SAL team. This experience and networking adds to her own development as a future leader, and her employment on 1 day a week meant she was involved in each step of the process.

## WHAT WE DID

# C. PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMMING

In 2024-2025 we continued to focus on programming and commissioning events people could never have imagined coming to their city. By working in partnership, we have been able to bring national and international work into the city, creating extraordinary moments and raising aspirations.

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:

**PUBLIC TRUST BY PAUL RAMÍRES JONAS (4TH-6TH JULY 2024):** Public Trust was programmed in Partnership with Global Streets and Fierce Festival. The partnership allowed us to bring a striking art installation and event into Gloucester City Centre, with the piece placed in Kings Walk

Shopping Centre. On the weekend of the UK general election, Gloucester audiences came to take a pause for a totally unique experience all about promises. The experience lasted about 15-20 minutes and each person was able to make a promise, place it on the board and take an artwork home.

**FUTURE DANCE FEST (6TH JULY 2024):** A full dance takeover of Kings Square which platformed our young people and performances by nationally recognised artists including Stacked Wonky, ConTakt Circus and Jamaal O'Driscoll. We engaged just under 600 audience members during the day and had 100 young people performing as part of the day.

**SHED BY NORTHERN RASCALS (6TH MARCH 2025):** Shed was delivered in partnership with Rural Touring Dance Initiative. Performed by a cast of four skilled young dancers in a wooden shed, the show invites its audience to be on the outside and look in. Real-life experiences told in a series of three shorts. A group of local young people worked with the company over 8 weeks to create a curtain raiser performance inspired by the themes of SHED. The piece was performed at G11 Leisure Centre.

**WHAT CAN I DO? (1ST SEPTEMBER 2024):** Created in partnership with Gloucester Culture Trust and Creative Sustainability CIC at Jolt. The event delivered music, food, talks and workshops for inspiring activists and artists. The day festival built and celebrated youth activism in Gloucestershire.

**STRIKE A LIGHT YOUTH THEATRE X COMPLICITÉ (2ND APRIL 2025):** An ensemble piece devised by Strike A Light's



## "I FEEL PROUD THAT I WORKED SO HARD AND STUCK AT IT"

CHURCHDOWN PARTICIPANT



Photo credit:  
Jess Gibbs

Youth Theatre, in association with Complicité and directed by the company's associate artist, Mae Munuo. Strike A Light Kitchen was an exploration of community and connection when everything else falls away. All of the pieces were devised by the young people in our Youth Theatre and performed at the Guildhall on Wednesday 2nd April.

### CASE STUDY: PUBLIC TRUST AND FUTURE DANCE FEST

On Saturday 6th July we took over King's Square in Gloucester's city centre to perform our Future Dance Fest to an audience of 600 people throughout the day. The festival looked to showcase the work of national talent alongside young people from Gloucester who have a passion for dance. The 1 day dance event brings together local youth dance groups, local musicians and professional dancers. A day intended to engage young people both as participants and audiences to experience high quality engagement and performance in their own city. We staged:

- Youth Dance outdoor commission: 100 local young dancers from 10 groups worked across 8 weeks with a professional company (Alleyne Dance) to create a new piece for the outdoors.
- Next Gen youth dance platform: brought last year's highly successful dance platform, previously hosted at GL1 outside to King Sq, in partnership with Your Next Move.
- National programming: Stacked Wonky - 2 young, dynamic, risk-taking teenage men - pushed outdoor dance to its limits; Foley by Contakt circus collective, a 55 min acrobatic performance; Jamaal O'Driscoll, a work in progress solo

dance performance.

- Music performances: performances between dance performances from local young musicians in partnership with The Music Works.

All of the day was performed in a public square with no cost to audience members.

**“OUR CHILDREN WOULD NEVER GET THE OPPORTUNITY TO DO SOMETHING LIKE THIS, MOST OF THESE CHILDREN HAVE ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE SO TO SEE THEM SO ENGAGED IS INCREDIBLE. KAMEEL HAS BEEN FANTASTIC WITH THE CHILDREN AND IF THERE IS A POSSIBILITY WE WOULD LOVE TO BE INVOLVED IN MORE THINGS. IM SO PROUD OF THEM”**

**GEMMA BISHOP, WIDDEN TEACHER**



*Photo credit: Lesley Andrew*



**“IT’S AMAZING, SINCE YOU BUILT THIS, THERE’S SO MANY NEW DANCES, SO MANY NEW STYLES AND I FEEL LIKE EVERYONE HAS SEEN THE DIFFERENT STYLES AND DIFFERENT CULTURES IN DANCE... YOU CAN BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER AND THEN YOU CAN HAVE A FUTURE IN DANCE”**

**RENE NISTOR, UOG STUDENT**

A video [here](#) shows the impact of the day.

The day sat along our installation of Public Trust, a giant billboard in the middle of Kings Walk Shopping Centre by artist, Paul Ramíres Jonas, and delivered in partnership with Fierce Festival and the Global Streets Project. The experience allowed a 1 on 1 performance experience where promises were discussed and people were invited to make a promise which formed part of the installation. We offered translations and a BSL interpreter to ensure the performance was as accessible as possible. 42% of our audiences were Disabled/deaf, and or have a physical or mental health condition or illness.



**“DAYS LIKE THESE ARE IMPORTANT TO GLOUCESTER SO THEY CAN SEE THEMSELVES ON STAGE, SO THEY CAN SEE AMAZING ART HAPPEN IN PUBLIC SPACES AND TODAY IS ALL ABOUT ANIMATING GLOUCESTER CITY.”**

**EMMA-JANE**

*Photo credit: Lesley Andrew*



Photo credit: Lesley Andrew

**"IT WAS FANTASTIC TO BE IN KING'S SQUARE TODAY FOR THE FUTURE DANCE FEST-SO MANY TALENTED LOCAL PERFORMERS FROM SCHOOLS AND ORGANISATIONS ACROSS THE CITY...ART AND CULTURE ARE SO IMPORTANT TO THE FUTURE OF OUR CITY AND THIS FREE EVENT BROUGHT LOTS OF FAMILIES INTO THE CITY CENTRE FOR THE DAY."**

**ALEX MCINTYRE, GLOUCESTER'S MP**



**“ONE PARTICIPANT THAT HAS STUCK IN MY MIND WAS A PERSON IN RECOVERY FROM SUBSTANCE MISUSE. THEY WERE SO THANKFUL FOR GETTING INVOLVED AND PROUD ABOUT MAKING A PROMISE TO THEMSELVES.”**

SAL STAFF MEMBER, PUBLIC TRUST

**“WE NEED MORE EVENTS LIKE THIS IN GLOUCESTER!”**

AUDIENCE MEMBER

**“WE HAD PEOPLE OF ALL AGES, ABILITIES, AND BACKGROUNDS”**

SAL STAFF MEMBER, PUBLIC TRUST



Photo credit: Lesley Andrew



## WHAT WE DID

# D. COMMISSIONING

At SAL we want to invest in new, exciting work on a national level. In 2024-2025 we continued to do this by commissioning the following:

- The Money Show By Ed Patrick (Kid Carpet) commissioned by Pentabus and Strike A Light. A piece for children and families.
- Something Outta Nothing by Jamaal O'Driscoll. We have supported financially and with further R&D sharings and development in Gloucester. Jamaal's piece has gone on to be successful in selection for the Rural Tour Dance Initiative menu.
- Viv Gordon for Cutting Out, a piece in development and to be performed later in the year
- Stomping Ground commission Francesca Baglione (Miss High Leg Kick) 2025 recipient National partnership with FABRIC, FESTIVAL.ORG, The Place, Strike A Light, Appetite and Sismògraf Festival Olot, Catalonia.
- Are You Here For The Meeting? By Stacked Wonky. This was a piece to come out of the Stomping Ground application process. The piece was not successful in being awarded the commission, it was picked up and supported by GDIF, Sadlers Wells, Fabric and SAL. A piece of outdoor, co-created work by a group of young dancers.

Photo credit: Jess Gibbs



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.

## A. RESIDENCY PROGRAMME

We awarded money, time and resources to our residency programme. We worked in partnership with Hawkwood to offer our 4 LABA artists a week each at Hawkwood and they each had the opportunity to take collaborators with them. 12 artists attended in total and they had rehearsal space, accommodation and food provided for them for the week so they could fully concentrate on their creative practice away from distractions of the real world. October & December 2024.

### COMPLICITÉ MUDLARKS INTERNATIONAL RESIDENCY: 10-14 MARCH 2025

We became a partner on Complicite's Mudlarks Residency this year. We partnered alongside In Good Company, Polish Cultural Institute London, DanceEast, Nederlands Dans Theater, Cambridge Junction, Brixton House, Opera North, Theatre Royal Plymouth and Activate Performing Arts. We supported Munotida Chinyangam to take up the residency as part of her LABA time where she joined 14 other artists. The artists had access to Complicite's expertise and were allocated a mentor for the period.



**7**

**ARTIST  
DEVELOPMENT  
AND LET ARTISTS  
BE ARTISTS**



## Artist feedback:

"It's been a long time since I spent a week on my own writing - I discovered I pace a lot (I walked miles around that lovely room). I wrote rubbish, I wrote things that made me laugh out loud. Most importantly, I wrote and now have at least half of the skeleton of a new show. Hawkwood, with its beauty, kindness and daily rhythm, holds creative, radical work gently and implicitly. The grounds and beyond are beautiful. Creativity, thoughtfulness and care are in the bones of the place. For me, meals were shared with a table of others working alone that week - and what started as polite enquiries into our solo practices unfolded into a gorgeous accompanying of each other, belly laughs and new friendships and collaborations."

- Viv Gordon on the residency programme

## B. LET ARTISTS BE ARTISTS

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. In 2023 we launched the scheme fully thanks to support of an uplift from Arts Council England. 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. This experimental and bold programme allowed us to ask what can happen when you employ artists and give them wider freedom to make and develop their work.

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.

The artists have been working hard to produce work, develop their craft and embed themselves within Gloucester. All of the 4 artists state the work they have been able to achieve in the last year would not have been possible without LABA.



This has included:

- **ED PATRICK** has really embedded in Gloucester and has delivered multiple shows in the area and delivered participation work twice with local schools over 2x 8 week periods. He has recently completed a further project, working with Katrina to deliver the Westgate choir and a project of songs. LABA has allowed time for Ed to work on a new commission, perform shows, work with a producer, secure additional funding and put in funding bids alongside. Ed now works as a full-time artist, something he would have given up pursuing without LABA.
- **JAMAAL O'DRISCOLL** continues to create networks in the city. He delivered his R&D as part of the Future Dance Fest. His new piece has been accepted onto the Rural Touring Dance Initiative menu and as part of Breakin' Conventions in May. He was recently successful in an R&D application which will be performed in Gloucester. He is also working on a school's project about black identity. LABA has allowed Jamaal to quit his other job to work as an artist full-time. It has also allowed him to take annual leave as a holiday and given space to develop his company fully.
- **MUNOTIDA CHINYANGAM** has taken part in a range of pieces of work in the city; including working with the Young Programmers at Gloucester Guildhall and designing sound for a local scratch night. She has received a PHD placement with Central (fully funded) as a result of her work on LABA. Munotida has been working on developing her show and applied for a Project Grant to fund an R&D of a production

in Gloucester. She has been able to turn down sound design work, for the first time now with a combined FT salary, and focus on her own practice. She has also begun work with different groups in Gloucester including helping Fifi with the youth theatre project and Halima's She Spoke Group.

- **VIV GORDON** has been working with Halima Malek and local charities to develop her work. Viv took up a residency in an empty shop in Gloucester at the end of March for a week & performing a Restless punk gig. She has her piece "Cutting Out" programmed at Gloucester Guildhall in May 2025 which is touring to other venues. LABA has allowed Viv to leverage additional funding and bring together a touring programme for her show. It has also leveraged additional funding, including from local funder, the Barnwood Trust.

**"OMG I HAVE DONE SO LITTLE OF THIS PREVIOUSLY: NETWORKING, FUNDING RESEARCH, FUNDING APPLICATIONS, MENTORING, BOOKING IN SOME TRAINING, GOING TO A SHOW IN THE DAYTIME"**

**ED (LABA)**

## C. FUTURE PRODUCERS

Gloucester Future Producers is a chance to develop skills and learn more about being a producer in the city. The programme is delivered in partnership with Gloucester Culture Trust and Gloucester Guildhall. What is it?

Gloucester Future Producers is a chance to develop your skills in, and learn more about:

**MANAGING EVENTS**

**PRODUCING FESTIVALS**

**TOURING SHOWS**

**PROMOTING GIGS**

Over 10 weeks the cohort of 10 individuals worked with other aspiring producers and met and heard from different arts and events professionals to build their network.

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.

This year, supported by Gloucester Guildhall, the course culminated in the producers delivering “The Dissent Assembly” at Gloucester Guildhall.

*Photo credit: Jess Gibbs*



**THE FUTURE PRODUCERS FROM 2024 WERE:****22%****IDENTIFY AS  
TRANSGENDER****44%****IDENTIFY AS  
BEING DISABLED****67%****LIVE IN  
GLOUCESTER IN  
AN AREA IN THE  
TOP 10% AREAS  
OF DEPRIVATION  
NATIONALLY****44%****IDENTIFY AS BEING  
NEURODIVERGENT****44%****18-25 YEAR  
OLDS****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."

"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!"

"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."



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?

# A. WEEKLY CLASSES

In 2024/25 we continued to deliver weekly classes for children and young people in Gloucester including;

- Youth Theatre for 7+ at Tredworth School (after school provision)
- Youth Theatre for 12-18 at the City Works
- Youth Dance for 7+ at Widden Primary School (after school provision)

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, 157 young people 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 and Youth Dance at Widden Primary School. The after school provision allowed easier access for young people, and their families, to access the provision and increased numbers.

A young woman with dark hair, wearing a bright pink Adidas t-shirt and large black headphones, is smiling. She is sitting next to a young child who is also wearing large black headphones and a green and white jacket. The child is looking down at something in their hands. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people and what appears to be an outdoor setting.

# 8

# LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

The schools we have provided after school provision have a high rate of pupil premium: 45% of pupils at Widden Primary School are eligible for Pupil Premium (22-23), 55.9% of pupils at Tredworth Schools were eligible for Pupil Premium (22-23). Launch of new youth theatre and dance in the Barton and Tredworth area of Gloucester increasing the diversity of young people attending the provision. 60% of CYP who attended the Tredworth school provision were from the Global Majority and 100% of CYP were from the global majority.

Quotes from those taking part in weekly classes:

**"PERFORMING WAS SO FUN, IT WAS GOOD TO WORK WITH A CLOSE KNIT GROUP, SOME OF MY FRIENDS NOW WANT TO JOIN YOUTH THEATRE AFTER SEEING THE SHOW"**

**YOUTH THEATRE MEMBER**

**"STUDENT F STARTED OUT SAYING THINGS LIKE "I CAN'T DO IT" AND WENT ON TO SAYING "THIS IS HARD" AND "I CAN'T DO IT YET" SHOWING INCREASED SELF-BELIEF THAT THE MOVEMENT WAS NOT IMPOSSIBLE."**

**PRACTITIONER JOURNAL**

**CASE STUDY:  
YOUTH THEATRE SHOW WRITTEN BY FIF DELANEY**

On Wednesday 2nd April 2025 we delivered the youth theatre show. The young people, who form our Youth Theatre, were part of a rehearsal process starting in January 2025 with a Complicité director. Fifi, our Participation Producer, who worked on the show reflects on the process:

"This creative process boosted the group's confidence and their bonds with one another. It was a chance for them to share creative ideas and personal stories which shaped the piece of theatre they made and performed together. At the start of the process, we had a few new participants and some of the older participants had moved on. A few participants left the group during the process due to GCSE pressures. Even though the group had these shifts throughout, the group grew closer and gained genuine friendships with one another. The group at the end of the process was a real ensemble that



had built trust when working together. This enabled some participants to move away from their shyness and use their voice in a big and impactful way. One of the participants' parents said "I've never heard her sound like that!" As the piece we made was devised from their ideas, the participants could see their input which meant they could be proud it was something they created. One participant said "We created everything. It was funny that they started as little scenes of improv and then it was pieced together to make a coherent show." - Fif Delaney

## B. STRIKE A LIGHT IN SCHOOLS

Our *Strike A Light in Schools* programme delivers 3 terms of Theatre, Dance and Music into a local junior school and is led by national organisations and artists. In 2024-2025 these were delivered by Ed Patrick, Multi Story Orchestra and ACE Dance and Music (delivered in June 2025). 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. It was through this program we started working with undergraduate Kameel Myrie, who has gone on to be supported to attend dance festivals such as GDIF, be a paid supporting artist on projects such as SHED

Photo credit: Jess Gibbs





with Northern Rascals and facilitate our after school dance programme. Kameel is an example of what continued support at early career stages can provide to an artist.

For an academic year we provided a continuation of co-creating work with 80 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. This year we also delivered an additional term at Widden Primary School working with an extra 35 pupils and reaching over 145 pupils and parents as audience members.

The schools programme is proving to be a successful model in engaging children who attend a school that currently sits within the top 20% IMD. It improves children holistically, as the Year 5 Teacher explains:

### **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

### **TEACHER FEEDBACK**

Feedback from the teachers of the CYP involved showcase the positive effects the work has had:

“One of the biggest things I wanted to do with these children is develop their confidence. If we have confident children whatever we’re doing, if people have a bit of self belief about them, they can take that into so many different aspects of their lives....sometimes as teachers we need help from experts to really bring out people from themselves to be performers, to have confidence and to work as a group and that's where the school have been so fortunate to have the services from Strike A Light. From what I've seen of these children working with Ed (Kid Carpet) and Fifi (SAL practitioner) they’ve had a huge amount of fun but actually some of the things they have been able to develop are very difficult to measure; being able to stand up, perform, work together, sing and at some point even laugh at themselves is a great testament to the work that Strike A Light do.”

- Year 5 class teacher

“Many children were involved in the shared element of composition through openly contributing ideas. It allowed for EAL children to participate in the rhythmical games even if vocabulary was a challenge at the beginning, A few children find it very challenging to respond emotionally to music but your workshops saw these children participate fully in the performance of the composition with life, vigor and genuine enjoyment. The children were so pleased with themselves in being part of a working ensemble performing to a live

audience. Initially, there were nerves for the performance, but once they were performing, nerves ceased and genuine enjoyment and confident musicianship took over. By the nature of our school's demographic, these opportunities are not always available outside of school."

- Year 5 Class Teacher, Tredworth Junior School

## C. WORKSHOPS FOR CYP AND FAMILY PERFORMANCES

Alongside our regular weekly work and SAL in schools work we have had the opportunity to provide some fantastic moments of engagement for young people across Gloucester with our programmed work of 24/25.

As part of our large scale work, in 2024 we took over Kings Square to hold performances that would platform and embrace family audiences.

Future Dance Fest was a combination of programmed work from National Artists and created work with young people. Over 10 weeks 90 young people worked with Alleyne Dance to learn a dance as part of their Close to Home series exploring immigration and communities. Through this we worked with 4 schools and two community dance groups. Supporting the

day we offered other local dance groups the opportunity to perform in the City centre without any cost to them removing barriers to groups who wouldn't be able to platform their work.

This year we have been able to work with schools we have had little or no engagement with. Al-Ashraf Girls school opened their doors to us and took part in a workshop as part of the wrap-around activity for Peaceaphobia in September 2024. The workshop acted as a platform for the girls to attend the matinee performance supported by their teachers and gave some great feedback on their experience;

**"THE SHOW WAS THE BEST I HAVE EVER COME TO SEE. HONESTLY MADE MY ENTIRE DAY AND IT COULDN'T BE MORE PERFECT, I APPRECIATE ALL YOUR EFFORTS WHICH CLEARLY PAID OFF. MY ENTIRE CLASS WAS TALKING ABOUT THE EVENT FOR AGES, EVERY ASPECT WAS EYE OPENING, IT WAS A GREAT EXPERIENCE AND WILL DEFINITELY COME TO SEE IT AGAIN INSHALLAH"**

AUDIENCE MEMBER

In March as part of the Rural Touring Dance Network we worked with Northern Rascals over an 8 week period to choreograph a curtain raiser for the main performance SHED. Building upon our relationship with Churchdown school we also engaged with a school we haven't been able to work with for sometime, Barnwood Park. Over the 8 weeks practitioners engaged with 27 pupils and raised aspirations for both schools who have dance within the curriculum to extend their learning and provide professional insight for the pupils who are interested in taking dance as a career path.

### KAMEEL MYRIE (CASE STUDY)

My name is Kameel, and I have worked for Strike A Light as a dance practitioner for nearly 3 years now. I originally began working for Strike A Light as a student looking for more experience in the teaching field. As a mixed race, neurodiverse artist, who grew up poor and in the social services system, from a young age I have had to find my place in the world and approach it creatively; I have always known I looked 'different' and acted 'differently', dance for me has always been a place that accepts my creativity and difference especially within the street dance scene. My past and childhood are why I have such a passion for teaching all age ranges and abilities. I aspire to make dance a safe place for everyone as it was for me, but I needed and still need direction to make this happen. Strike A Light have provided multiple platforms for me to build myself as a professional artist and have offered opportunities that have refined my skills as both dancer and teacher. I have faced many challenges whilst building my career to which Strike A Light have always offered the support needed to conquer

those challenges and given me the tools needed to improve as an artist. Without Strike A Light I would not be the professional artist I am today, and for that I am eternally grateful for the time and effort Strike A Light have put into me. The work Strike A Light do is a credit to the performing arts industry and is absolutely necessary to us in the Gloucestershire community.

## D. PRACTITIONER TRAINING AND TAKE SPACE TO LEAD

This year, we were able to go beyond our original ambitions and offer a new type of practitioner training.

Our Head of Participation, Charlene, has been working with partner organisation, Beyond Face, to offer a series of practical workshops to support practitioners from the global majority. This has expanded into a full programme, supported by ACE, called Take Space to Lead. On this programme the candidates received:

- 12 face-to-face training days and 3 Masterclasses



- £1,200 Fee + travel expenses
- Bespoke mentoring

The 5 month programme allowed practitioners real opportunities across Strike A Light, Beyond Face and associate Travelling Light.

The program, over the last 5 months has allowed four practitioners at different stages of their careers to shadow leading practitioners across sessions and they have been able to identify through mentoring areas of improvement and areas of challenge for them and their practice. Each individual has finished the pilot programme with a wider network and plan for moving their careers forward.

**“I HAVE ENJOYED WORKING ALONGSIDE EXCELLENT PRACTITIONERS. I HAVE GAINED VALUABLE INSIGHTS INTO THE INDUSTRY, INCLUDING HOW TO STRUCTURE A PROGRAM AND VARIOUS OTHER TEACHING TOOLS. THIS COHORT HAS ALSO HELPED ME WITH MY MANAGED AND ORGANISATIONAL SKILLS”**

**KIERON, TAKE SPACE TO LEAD PRACTITIONER**



*Photo credit: Jess Gibbs*

## ADDITIONAL PRACTITIONER TRAINING

We continued to offer open Practitioner Training to practitioners across the Southwest who want to develop their practice whilst being led by exceptional performing arts specialists who have included Complicité, Yolanda Mercy and Aisha Ali. We have also continued to develop our first cohort of Strike A Light In Schools local practitioners with ongoing training and paid work with national artists such as Northern Rascals, Complicite and Alleyne Dance.

The training, delivered in partnership with The Everyman, will continue into 2026 which will also attach some R&D to make sure we are delivering what practitioners need in order to enhance their work.

## PARTICIPATION PRODUCER SCHEME

As part of our Paul Hamlyn Foundation funding we have funded a 2 year scheme for a global majority Participation Producer to join the team on a development programme (2 days per week). As part of the scheme, the Producer delivers the weekly classes programme in schools but also has access to a CPD pot and mentoring. Fifi Delaney took up the post and has been thriving in the post:

“It’s rare to come across an opportunity that has the purpose of supporting your development. It alleviates the pressure of getting everything perfect because there is space for me to grow with the support of SAL.

I feel very lucky to have a job in this industry and budget for CPD. It allows me to do things that would be harder to do on my own. An example of this would be an Origin Story workshop I took part in with Punchdrunk Enrichment. It taught me how to build worlds from scratch which, creatively, would help me in theatre-making, writing, directing - in a lot of different areas of my practice. It’s also learning I can pass on to the young people I work with, making the workshops I facilitate richer.

It’s even pushed me to look further for training than I may have before as usually, I would prioritise being creative, however I took part in a funding bid workshop that gave me useful tools when it comes to writing bids. I’ve been able to learn new techniques and skills that have enabled me to develop as a person.”

- Fifi, Participation Producer

“In the year that Fifi has been with us she has undertaken a range of tasks and opportunities which is progressing her development steadily. Being able to have contact time with myself and the team creates a safe environment to learn and not be expected to know everything all at once. It also is giving her the opportunity to gain more awareness of the Arts sector through partnership meetings, sector gatherings and networking, and the areas she wants to develop in her career.”

- Charlene, Head of Participation



Photo credit: Jess Gibbs



## INTERNSHIPS

We're one of the organisations working with the University of Birmingham's 'B-Experienced' Internship Programme. In 2024-2025 we delivered 2 part-time internships for 10 weeks for University of Birmingham students at a living wage and travel to the office covered. The internships are aimed at those less able to secure work experience placements. Below is a blog from intern, Sheryl, who joined us in September 2024:

"When I'd begun applying for internships, I'd been quite nervous, not knowing what to expect in a foreign country. As I write this post, I feel a bit sad but only in the best way, because my time with Strike A Light (SAL) has only made me hopeful about everything that's out there. I couldn't have imagined a workplace that felt the way SAL has, and boy have the last 10 weeks flown by...Everyone here in the office has created a space perfect for learning. Questions were not entertained but encouraged. Every meeting I've been a part of has taught me a little more about not only the logistics of hosting an event and targeted marketing, but also how to communicate with the different stakeholders involved in the production process. I was never restricted to any type of work that didn't interest me. This type of flexibility was unexpected but so important; the week where I worked front-of-house instead of marketing gave me a whole new perspective on SAL's work and if I hadn't been given that chance, I'm not sure I would've been able to appreciate my time here as much as I do now."



# A. ONLINE SESSIONS

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 2024-2025 we reached 421 engagements digitally through our blog posts as part of our "This is How We Do It" strand.

## WE DELIVERED:

- 3 digital sessions for up to 30 people per session with invited partners on a particular topic we've been requested to consult on. For 2024-2025 this included: Co-Creation, Pitching to Non-Arts Attenders, Environmental Consultancy. We invited other organisations, artists and community members to join us in discussions, including GL4 and Create Gloucestershire.
- 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. This included a blog about our trustees journey from Assistant Producer to Trustee and a blog by Head of Participation, Charlene, on breaking the loop of inequality to access.



**THIS IS HOW  
WE DO IT**

- We attended 5 conferences to learn and grow as an organisation and share our ways of working. We spoke at 2 conferences to share our ways of working.
- We offered continual support to local organisations, including Gloucester Guildhall and GL4, to provide advice and coordinate our programmes of work.

**"I ATTENDED ONE OF YOUR PRODUCING WORKSHOPS ON PITCHING TO NON-ARTS AUDIENCES A COUPLE MONTHS BACK! WANTED TO SEND MY APPRECIATION TO BEN FOR CONDUCTING THE WORKSHOP (ALTHOUGH I HEARD HE'S LEFT)! I THINK IT WAS PIVOTAL FOR ME IN SHIFTING MY PERSPECTIVES FROM FILM PRODUCING TO ARTS PRODUCING - VERY DIFFERENT BRAINS!"**

ONLINE SESSION ATTENDEE

## **B. CONSULTANCY**

We continued to offer a consultancy service to a range of organisations this year consulting on our co-creation model, offering peer support and a reflection on our youth board members. This year this has included: Trinity Arts Centre, Malvern Feast Festival, Severn Arts, Artswork, Knowle West Media Centre and Esmee Fairbairn.

**"SO COMPREHENSIVE AND GENEROUS. THE SESSION REALLY INFORMED THE BID WRITING TODAY. SO MUCH GRATITUDE FROM US."**

MALVERN FEAST FESTIVAL



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

In 2024-25 we reached over 3848 audience members in our events. We engaged 8137 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 2024-2025:

**26%**  
**DISABLED**

**14%**  
**BLACK/BLACK  
BRITISH  
CARIBBEAN**

**49%**  
**GLOBAL  
MAJORITY**

**9%**  
**ASIAN/ ASIAN  
BRITISH INDIAN**

**61%**  
**IN THE TOP 20% AREAS OF  
DEPRIVATION NATIONALLY  
(IN GLOUCESTER)**

**10**  
**AUDIENCES**



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.

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## GOVERNANCE, MANAGEMENT AND STAFFING

# BOARD & STAFF

## STAFF

We currently have 14 staff PAYE, all part time. In 2024-2025 we worked with an additional 73 freelancers to support and deliver our work.

In 2024-2025 we went through a shift as an organisation. Our Co-Artistic Director and founder, Sarah Blowers, stepped down over a prolonged period. She officially resigned in January 2025 after 11 years of incredible work and dedication to Strike A Light. Our Marketing Manager, Ben, of 6 years also left in October 2024. This meant a reflection on the overall structure of the organisation and led us to reshape the job roles within the organisation to best serve our mission and respond to the current challenges within the wider arts environment. The new structure has been in place since March 2025 and has allowed:

- An overall saving on core costs
- More capacity in Producing, including the creation of an assistant producer post for an up and coming producer
- Further freelance capacity in Fundraising to allow to the changing environment
- A reconfiguring of the marketing department to better suit the organisation's needs

This has resulted in the redundancy of the following posts: Co-Artistic Director, Marketing Manager and Producer and the creation of new posts: Artistic Director, Senior Producer, Assistant Producer and Marketing and Communications lead.

## TRAINING

This year we ensured to respond to the priorities identified within our Arts Council Investment Principles and the aims of the organisation. We received training in:

### NEURODIVERSITY AWARENESS IN SEPTEMBER 2024

The workshop covered how to ask for and accommodate the needs of neurodivergent staff, Access Riders and Access to Work. Tom shared insights from his co-working project DIVERGE (which he runs monthly in Cardiff for neurodivergent creatives) and some of his lived experience of managing his own ADHD and dyslexia at work and in his personal life.

### TRANS & NON-BINARY AWARENESS IN JANUARY 2025

An introduction to trans inclusion, understanding the terms and who might use them, key concepts crucial to understanding trans and non-binary people, the main legislation relating to trans identities and exploring ways organisations can work towards being trans-inclusive.

## THE BOARD

Our board retained its existing members from the previous years. Our Co-Chairs, Rachel Bell and Dean Andrew Zihni, continued to brilliantly lead the organisation and navigate through these changing times. This was supported by the organisation's 9 trustees who continued to offer their broad range of insight and perspectives.

Our process and procedures have continued to evolve and improve, with new financial procedures.

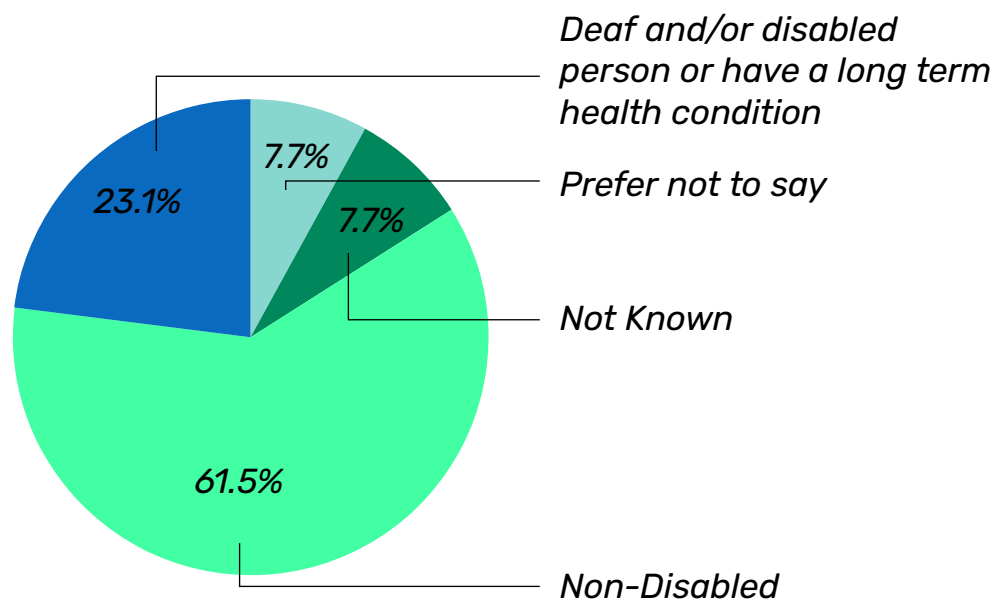
## STAFF AND BOARD STRUCTURE

The team was supported by a wider team of freelancers. In 24-25 we contracted 73 freelancers and worked with 50+ different artists/companies on live events. 50% of productions were presented by Global Majority companies/artists.

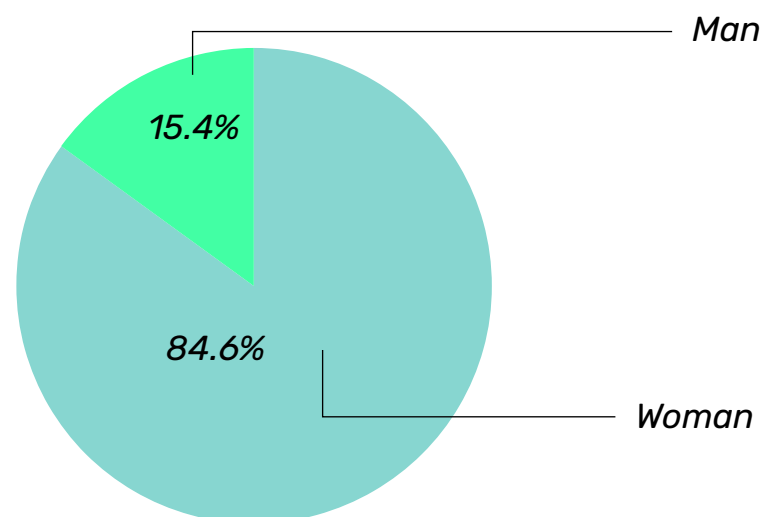
Below are our responses from the Arts Council England (ACE) annual survey 24-25 of staff and freelancers. Please note that this is on the basis of 55 responses.

### STAFF TEAM:

#### DISABILITY

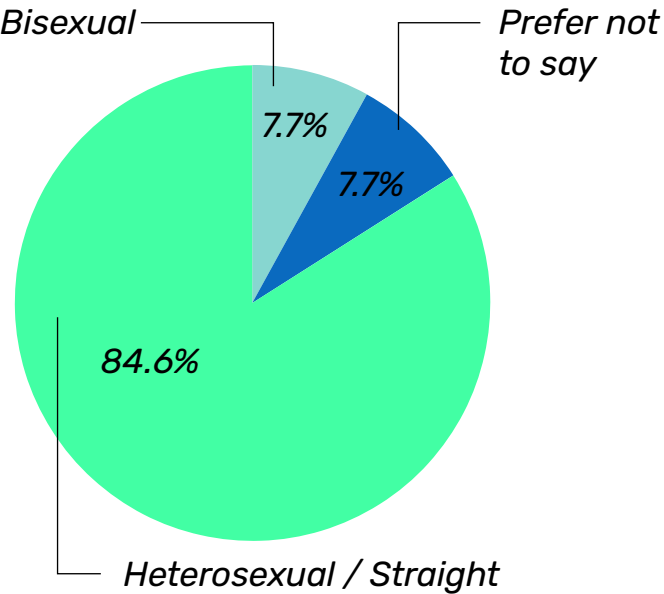


#### GENDER IDENTITY

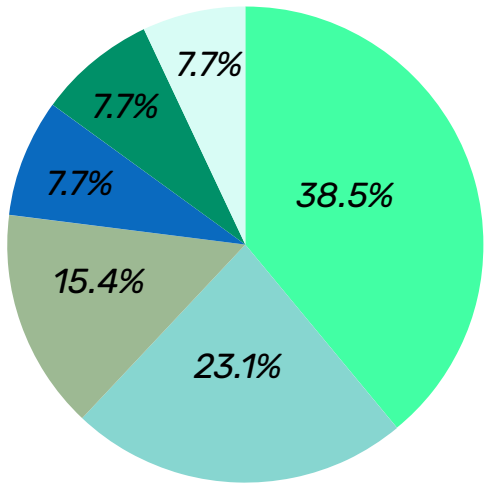




SEXUAL ORIENTATION

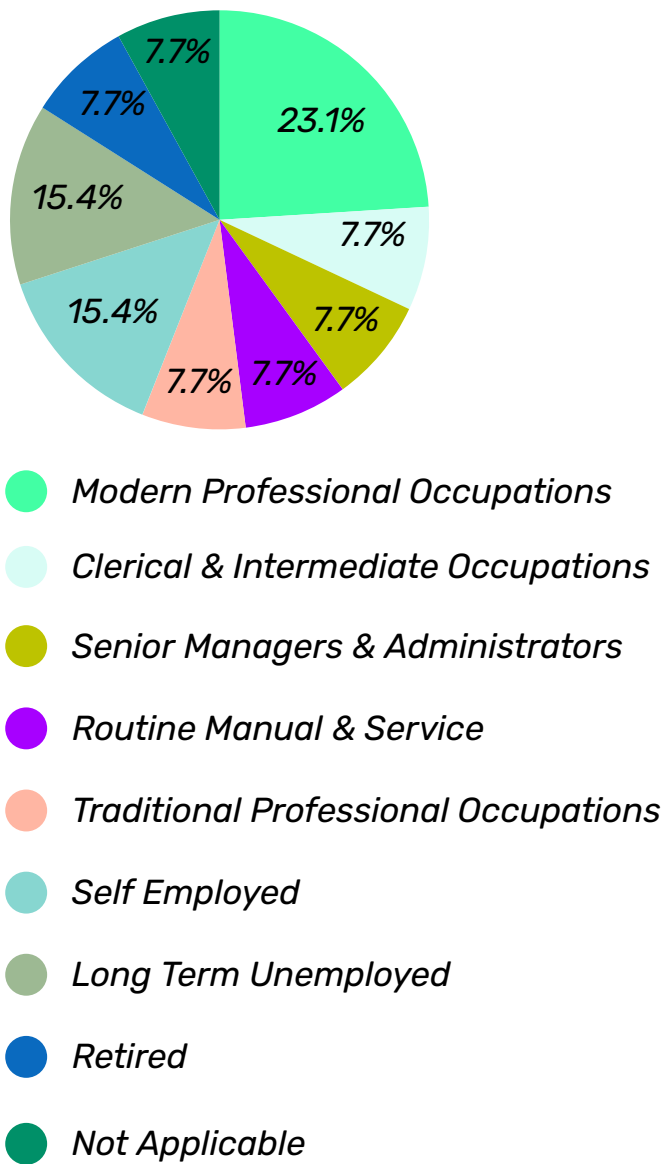


ETHNICITY

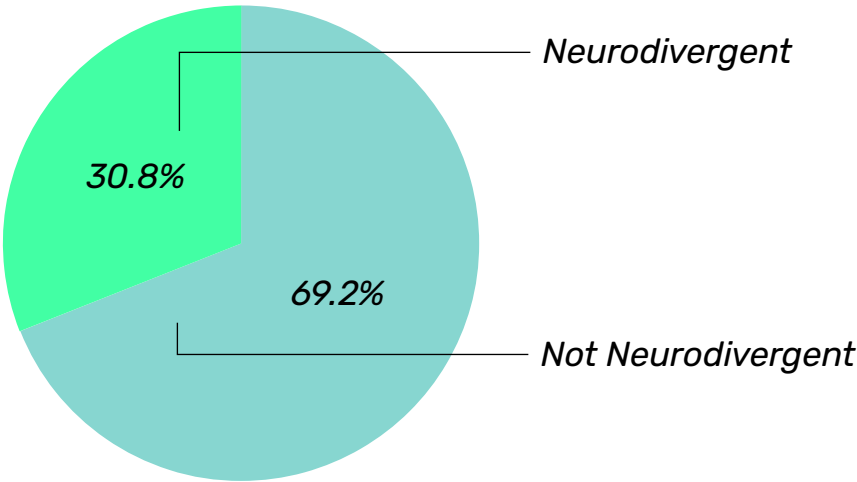


- White British
- Mixed Background White & Black Caribbean
- Any other Mixed
- Asian British
- Black British
- Any other Ethnic group

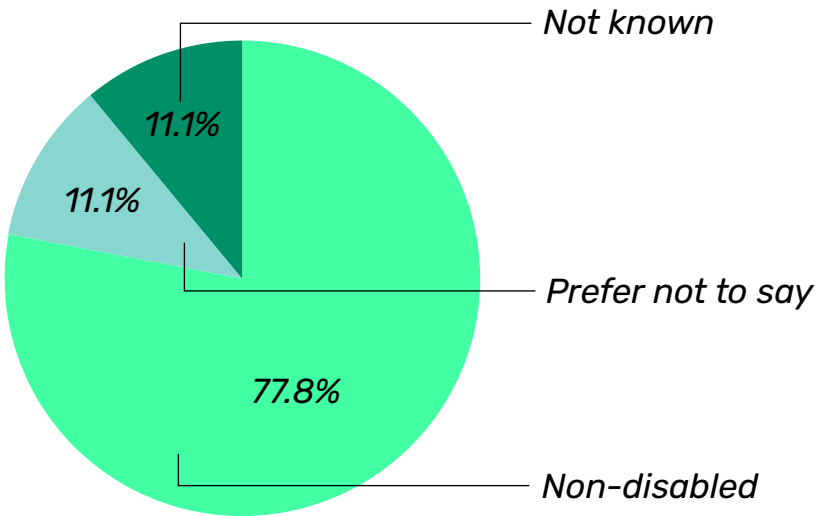
**SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND  
(OCCUPATION OF MAIN/HIGHEST INCOME EARNER IN  
HOUSEHOLD AT AGE 14)**



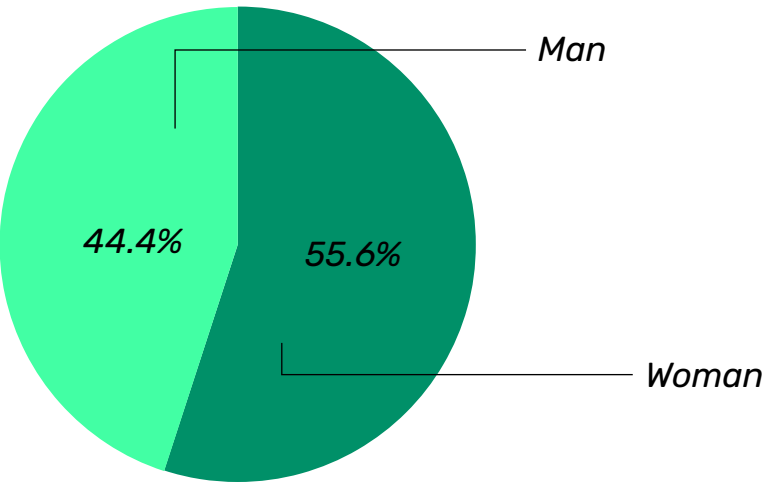
**NEURODIVERGENT**



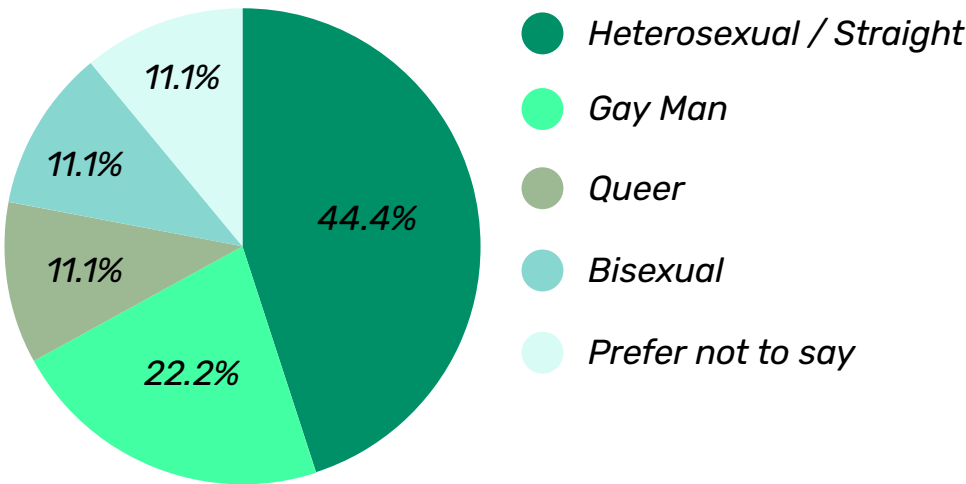
DISABILITY



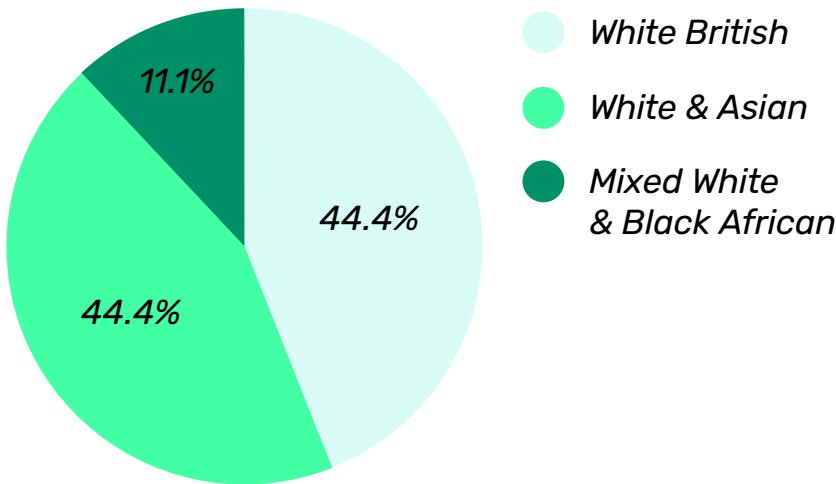
GENDER IDENTITY



SEXUAL ORIENTATION

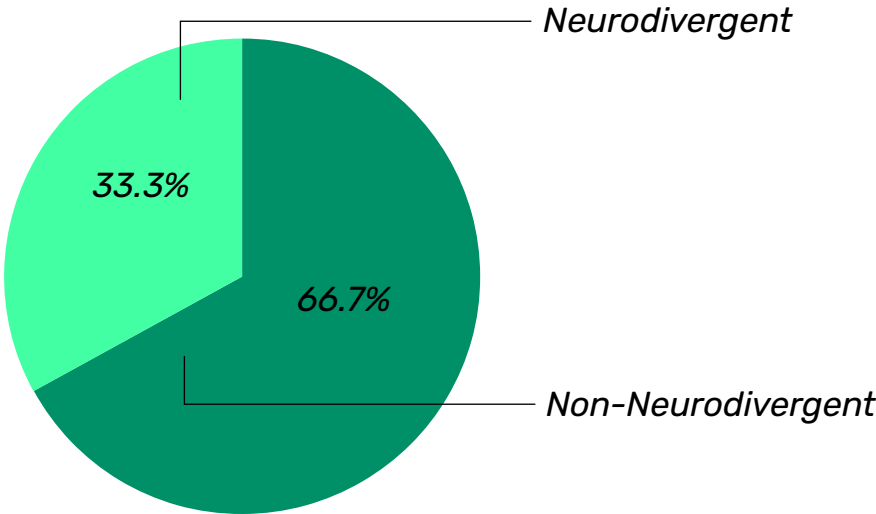


ETHNICITY





NEURODIVERGENT



The final annual accounts presented show our current position.

We have a surplus this year of £50,066 due to some savings on projects and staffing costs. Of this surplus, £10,000 will be put into reserves to raise the reserves to £105,000.

The remaining surplus has been used towards our fundraising target for the 2025-2026 year.



# 12 ACCOUNTS

Registered Number:- 1178449 / CE014141

**Report of the Trustees and  
Unaudited Financial Statements  
for the  
Year Ended 31 March 2025**

**for**

**Strike a Light (Gloucester)**



## Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

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Notes to the Financial Statements	6 to 7
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**Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Strike A Light (Gloucester)  
for the Year Ended 31 March 2025**

I report on the accounts of the Trust for the year ended 31 March 2025, 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, Accounting4Actors Ltd  
Independent Examiner  
7 Oct 2025

**Report of the Trustees  
for the Year Ended 31 March 2025**

The trustees present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2025. 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**

R Bell  
A Byard  
D Thompson  
E Harris  
Z Portlock  
N Gajadharsingh  
J Tyler  
A Zinhi  
T Bevan

**STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

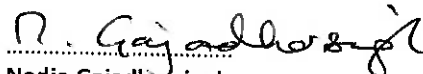
**Governing Document**

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.....9 July 2025... and signed on its behalf by:



Nadja Gajadharsingh  
Trustee



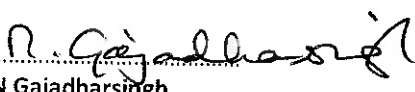
Statement of Financial Activities  
for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	31.03.2025 Total Funds £	31.03.2024 Total Funds £
<b>INCOMING RESOURCES</b>				
Incoming Resources from generated funds				
Voluntary income	51,633	416,319	467,951	490,249
<b>RESOURCES EXPENDED</b>				
Charitable activities				
Production	-	416,319	416,319	435,543
Insurance	1,250	-	1,250	1,256
Governance costs	317	-	317	118
<b>Total resources expended</b>	<u>1,567</u>	<u>416,319</u>	<u>417,886</u>	<u>436,917</u>
<b>NET INCOMING/(OUTGOING) RESOURCES</b>	<u>50,066</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>50,066</u>	<u>53,332</u>
Total funds brought forward	150,177	-	150,177	96,845
<b>TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD</b>	<u><u>200,243</u></u>	<u><u>-</u></u>	<u><u>200,243</u></u>	<u><u>150,177</u></u>

Balance Sheet  
for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	31.03.2025 Total Funds £	31.03.2024 Total Funds £
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>					
Cash at bank and in hand		200,243	166,671	366,914	297,975
Debtors and prepayments	3	-	3,606	3,606	5,302
		<u>200,243</u>	<u>170,277</u>	<u>370,520</u>	<u>303,277</u>
<b>CREDITORS</b>					
Amounts falling due within one year	4	-	(170,277)	(170,277)	(153,100)
<b>NET CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>150,177</u>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>					
		200,243	-	200,243	150,177
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		<u>200,243</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>200,243</u>	<u>150,177</u>
<b>FUNDS</b>					
Restricted funds				-	-
Unrestricted funds	5			200,243	150,177
<b>TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD</b>				<u>200,243</u>	<u>150,177</u>

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees on...9 July 2025... and were signed on its behalf by:

  
N Gajadharsingh  
Trustee

**Notes to the Financial Statements  
for the Year Ended 31 March 2025**

**1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES**

**Accounting convention**

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the charity's Memorandum and Articles of Association, the Companies Act 2006 and "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019)". The charity is a Public Benefit Entity as defined by FRS 102. The charity has taken advantage of the provisions in the SORP for charities applying FRS 102 Update Bulletin 1 not to prepare a Statement of Cash Flows.

**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 2025 or 31 March 2024.

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

	2025 £	2024 £
Trade debtors	1,000	5,302
Accrued income and prepayments	2,606	-
	<u>3,606</u>	<u>5,302</u>



Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)  
for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

4. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2025 £	2024 £
Trade creditors and accruals	17,742	11,753
Accruals and deferred income	152,535	141,347
	<u>170,277</u>	<u>153,100</u>

5. STATEMENT OF MOVEMENTS

	As at 01.04.2024 £	Net movement in funds £	At 31.03.2025 £
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>			
Designated fund	95,000	10,000	105,000
Core fund	55,177	45,066	95,243
<b>Restricted funds</b>	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>	<u>150,177</u>	<u>55,066</u>	<u>200,243</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
Core fund	41,633	(1,567)	40,066
<b>Restricted fund</b>	416,319	(416,319)	-
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>	<u>467,952</u>	<u>(417,886)</u>	<u>50,066</u>

**Detailed Statement of Financial Activities  
for the Year Ended 31 March 2025**

	2025		2024	
	£	£	£	£
<b>INCOMING RESOURCES</b>				
<b>Voluntary income</b>				
Grant income from Trusts	150,102		232,747	
Arts Council NPO Grant	249,113		215,534	
Local Authority Funding	20,950		14,250	
Partnership Income	14,715		2,064	
Julia and Hans Rausing Trust	-		-	
Government Funding	-		5,602	
Corporate Giving	-		50	
Earned Income	18,581		7,943	
Individual Giving	11,703		8,232	
		465,164		486,422
<b>Other income</b>				
Government furlough payments	-		-	
Bank interest received	2,787		3,827	
		2,787		3,827
<b>Total incoming resources</b>		467,951		490,249
<b>RESOURCES EXPENDED</b>				
<b>Charitable activities</b>				
Production costs		416,319		435,543
<b>Support costs</b>				
Insurance		1,250		1,256
<b>Governance costs</b>				
Accountancy		317		118
<b>Total resources expended</b>		417,886		436,917
<b>Net Income/(expenditure)</b>		50,066		53,332

