

OUR IMPACT 2024-2025



High Peak Community Arts **Annual Report**

Copies of the accounts for 2024-2025 are available on request (mail@highpeakarts.org) or can be viewed online via the Companies House Website (companieshouse.gov.uk).

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Welcome

This has been a year of change for High Peak Community Arts—one of creativity, connection, and exciting modernisation.

We have embraced change whilst staying true to our mission, strengthening our ability to reach more people, explore new partnerships, and innovate delivery methods. We've welcomed participants of all ages and backgrounds, often facing significant personal challenges, and witnessed benefits to their quality of life.

Whether through therapeutic workshops, profound achievement when sharing their creative work, or vital connections that become support, these experiences demonstrate our powerful impact on people's lives.

Our modernisation programme has seen us develop stronger governance, invest in staff development, and implement better evaluation frameworks. These changes haven't diminished our grassroots approach—they've amplified it, extending our reach into previously underserved communities.



None of this would have been possible without our remarkable team of staff, volunteers, artists, and trustees, plus the partners and supporters who share our vision.

Their adaptability and dedication have enabled us to pioneer approaches that deliver real impact.

Looking ahead, we remain ambitious and optimistic. We'll continue building on our foundations whilst innovating for tomorrow, ensuring the arts remain a dynamic source of joy, connection, and transformation throughout the High Peak.

Barbara Walmsley

Chair of Trustees

Our Story

Since 1979, High Peak Community Arts has been sparking creativity and connection in the High Peak. We believe everyone should have the chance to make, share, and enjoy art, no matter their circumstances. From hands-on workshops to vibrant exhibitions and performances, we've spent nearly fifty years bringing people together, nurturing wellbeing, and celebrating the power of creativity to change lives.



1985 Performance, Hayfield

OUR VISION

A community where the arts are accessible and inspirational, belonging to everyone.

OUR MISSION

We provide opportunities that inspire people to make arts and creativity their own. We promote the social and educational benefits of the arts, challenge barriers to taking part and celebrate the voice of our community and local area.

Team & Trustees

We have a small and dedicated team that work part-time across multiple roles. They are supported by a team of amazing volunteers, freelancers and practitioners.



Team

Sophie Mackreth - Creative Programme Manager
Lucy Dean-Moore - Operations, Fundraising and Communications (Joined March 2025)
Georgia Tyler - Project Assistant
Elinor Coakley - Project Assistant

Alison Bowry - Wellbeing Programme Manager (Retired in October 24)
Lidija McKnight - Operations & Fundraising (Resigned January 25)

Trustees

Barbara Walmsley - Chair
Caroline Storr
Andrew Worrall
Lorna Young
Maia Preston
Dawn Bryan
Catherine Bellis
Victoria Richardson
Susan Nathan

Gillian Scott - (Resigned February 25)
Pamela Garside - (Resigned February 25)
Jean Rushby - (Resigned May 24)

Volunteers



We're proud to be supported by over 10 regular volunteers.

This year, our volunteers helped us provide:

855 HOURS OF SUPPORT

Thank you for all you do.

Lifelong Journeys

Young people who have attended our workshops, often become volunteers and take on further work experience with our team.

Thank you to our young volunteers for their dedication.



OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS

We supported:

519

Individual
Participants

We provided:

2,597

Participant
Sessions

In

221

Creative
Workshops

63%

of these
supported children
and young people
under 25

62%

of participants
reported living with a
disability or other
additional need

269

Sessions
of freelance
employment

370

People attended
our events and
showcases

Feedback from an end-of-year survey revealed:

91%

reported feeling
happier because of their
involvement in a project

88%

said participation improved
their communication with
others.

54%

experienced reduced
anxiety through their
engagement.

76%

noted an increase in
their confidence thanks
to their participation.

* survey of our 21 most engaged participants.

WELLBEING PROJECTS



- **PROJECT EARTH**
- **SPACE TO EXPLORE**
- **FILM CUTS CLUB**

Wellbeing Projects

While all our initiatives contribute to overall wellbeing, these particular projects were created with a focused mission to support mental health and personal wellness.

In today's increasingly digital world, where people often feel disconnected, creating opportunities for genuine human connection has become more important than ever.

By creating spaces for authentic connection and creative self-expression, we've witnessed remarkable transformations—participants discovering newfound confidence, forming meaningful friendships, and cultivating a stronger sense of wellbeing through their workshop experiences.

“I’M QUITE A LONELY PERSON, BUT COMING TO THE GROUP HAS HELPED ME TO GAIN CONFIDENCE AND MOTIVATED ME. I FEEL A PART OF THE COMMUNITY.

- PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

Project eARTh

This year saw the final few months of Project eARTh, a long-running Creative Health programme that ran from 2010 till Summer 2024.

The programme explored a connection with nature, championing collective working to create both indoor and outdoor artworks for the community.

The programme was made up of smaller projects and offered free workshops every week led by professional artists, supported by mental health workers and volunteers.

“I really enjoyed making new friends as I don't leave the house much; this is the highlight of the week.”

- Participant Feedback





River Corridor Project

New Mills participants embarked on an inspiring adventure, exploring the hidden stories of the Goyt and Sett river corridors through vibrant collage, innovative gel printing, mystical lumen printing, and intimate storytelling. Head over to our YouTube channel to watch the final video.

Ceramic Planters Project

The Buxton group created ceramic planters, using the process as a mindful and creative outlet. In the final week, they planted succulents in their planters, bringing a touch of nature and calm into their homes for ongoing wellbeing.

Origami Project

New Mills participants discovered the joy and mindfulness of paper folding, creating beautiful rabbits and elegant cranes while experiencing the therapeutic benefits of this ancient art form.



Group Visit to Exhibition by LoveArtPix

Space to Explore

This new programme brings together neurodivergent adults in an inspiring small-group setting where creativity becomes a powerful tool for self-discovery and community connection.

From personal photography and shadow puppet storytelling to gel printing and miniature "cabinets of curiosity," the group explored diverse creative techniques throughout the year.

Throughout the year, participants developed new skills through hands-on artmaking.

We also launched our comprehensive neurodivergence training programme, delivered by Autistic UK.

This has empowered our entire team - staff, trustees, volunteers, and artists with knowledge and understanding.

Here are a few examples of the artforms explored throughout the year:

Photography

Participants documented local places that were meaningful to them—buildings, natural areas, wildlife, and urban spaces. The project celebrated different ways of experiencing the world, with a focus on details and perspectives that might often go unnoticed.

Shadow Puppets

The group explored their personal interests through creative writing and shadow puppet making, using materials like stained glass and painted cardboard. Each participant's unique attention to detail contributed to building a collaborative story that became a final performance.

Collagraph Printing

Participants used gel press techniques to explore nature, wildlife, and shapes. This hands-on process allowed them to capture unique details and textures.

“The group helps us to feel that we fit in, because we’re getting used to socialising”

- Participant Feedback

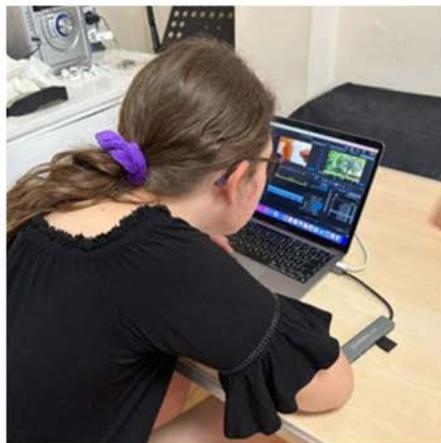


Film Cuts Club

Futures Through Film

Our film club supports children with additional needs, guided by young volunteers who once took part in the group themselves. Their experiences make them powerful role models while also giving them the chance to explore their own growth and development.

We launched the new season with team-building and training sessions for our volunteers and young workers. From there, we introduced a range of workshops led by different team members, offering inspiring role models and showing younger participants the many pathways open for their future.



Movie Highlights

Highlights from the year included the festive short Christmas – 'Find the Spirit' and 'It's in Our Nature'— a film created as part of a wider community programme, exploring our connection with the natural world.



Gruesome Glossop

Participants looked forward to creating a film for the county festival 'Derbyshire Makes' later in the year. They delved into Glossop's more colourful and contested historical stories, transforming them into an entertaining script full of local character.

“IT’S GREAT TO SEE THE YOUNG PEOPLE ENJOYING THEMSELVES IN ACTIVITIES THEY MIGHT NOT USUALLY BE ABLE TO TAKE PART IN.

IT’S A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR PEOPLE TO BE THEMSELVES - THEY ARE LISTENED TO AND SUPPORTED TO FOLLOW THEIR OWN IDEAS.”

- PARENT FEEDBACK

CREATIVE GROWTH PROJECTS



- **EARLY YEARS**
- **TALL TALES**
- **YOUNG CREATIVES**
- **ARTS AWARDS**

Creative Growth Projects

Our creative growth initiatives serve young people from infancy through young adulthood, addressing the unique developmental needs at each life stage.

Recognising that rural communities often face constraints in youth programming and educational resources, our projects are specifically designed to bridge these gaps through comprehensive support.

We focus on four core objectives: developing creative skills, enhancing education, supporting wellbeing, and creating pathways to employment and further education.

Our youth-centred approach ensures all programs are developed through direct consultation with participants, keeping our offerings relevant and responsive to community needs.

“IT GAVE ME THE CONFIDENCE TO CONTINUE MY CREATIVE WRITING AND MAKE SOMETHING OF IT.”

- PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

Early Years

The 'For the Love of Books' program brings together young children and their parents through a carefully designed format that combines storytelling with hands-on creative activities.

Families first read a story together, then participate in activities designed and led by creative experts. This approach provides an excellent opportunity for parents to get involved in being creative with their children, making literacy fun while creating meaningful bonding experiences.



Throughout the first half of 2024, we delivered early years music and sensory arts workshops in New Mills East and Gamesley, continuing until July. Following this successful period of delivery, our team undertook a strategic redesign of the For the Love of Books workshops to enhance their effectiveness in nursery settings.



Tall Tales

The Tall Tales project combines script, music, dance, animation, and props into one cohesive production, created in collaboration with participants from economically disadvantaged areas.

This approach helps to create an immersive experience where every creative element contributes to the larger story, and young people learn new skills, find community connection and learn leadership skills.



“IT’S NOT ABOUT THEM BECOMING SINGERS, DANCERS, ACTORS OR ANIMATORS. IT’S ABOUT THEM LEARNING VALUABLE SKILLS AND LEARNING HOW TO COOPERATE.”

- SUPPORT WORKER FEEDBACK



THE LEAD UP

Young people had the freedom to choose what they wanted to create within a particular art form. Workshops began with writing classes, followed by script writing, music, props, drama, costume, dance, and film-making.

THE SHOW

Participants performed 'Murderous Circus', which followed the fight for control of the forest when a destructive circus arrives. The show featured their own original songs, dance and drama, with pre-filmed clips and animations that were projected into a 'big top'.

Young Creatives

In October, we were delighted to introduce **Creative Training Camps** for participants aged 13 to 25. These intensive programmes are specifically designed to equip young people with the essential skills needed to thrive in the arts and creative industries, providing them with valuable hands-on experience and practical knowledge.

Topics

- Group Leadership
- Facilitation
- Fundraising
- Programming
- Publicity
- Project Management



At the project's conclusion, participants collaborated to create a collective plan for an ongoing teen project: The AI Debate, which examines the role of artificial intelligence in creative arts practice.

Building on this momentum, the group developed a comprehensive funding proposal to continue their work, laying the groundwork for the project's continuation in the coming year.

Arts Awards

Arts Award recognises the creativity, communication, planning and problem-solving skills that young people develop through arts participation, focusing on personal growth rather than technical ability.

Participants from other projects were invited to join the programme to further their development. We also collaborated with home-educated young people, providing a wide range of creative opportunities such as music, visual arts, filmmaking, and digital VR experiences.

Attendees developed leadership skills by sharing their knowledge with others, while building confidence and independence in a supportive community setting.

- **16 Bronze Awards**
- **2 Silver Awards**
- **8 Explore Awards**



PLACE PROJECTS



- IT'S IN OUR NATURE
- DERBYSHIRE MAKES

Place Projects

Our place-based creative initiatives encourage people to explore, understand, and celebrate the unique character of where they live, fostering connections to their local environment and community.

Rural communities possess rich cultural heritage, natural beauty, and distinctive stories that often go uncelebrated; our projects help to illuminate these unique qualities through creative exploration and expression.

We focus on engaging with place through creative practice, building intergenerational connections, developing environmental awareness, and fostering community pride and belonging.

**“IT MAKES ME APPRECIATE
WHERE WE LIVE AND THE
COUNTRYSIDE AROUND US.”**

- PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

IT'S IN OUR NATURE

This innovative mixed media creative project engaged the entire High Peak community in exploring our natural environment and its profound connection to our well-being.

We were delighted to collaborate with participants across all generations. Children, young people, and adults alike, created a truly inclusive community experience that celebrated our shared sense of place and belonging.

Here's just some of the incredible workshops created as a result of the project:

Signage and Illustration

Nature Inspired Theatre

Felted Animals

Poetry

Podcasts

Printing & Painting





The project culminated in a transformative community showcase, bringing everyone together to explore our relationship with the natural world and strengthen community bonds.

96% of participants who completed the end-of-project survey said that taking part had helped them to learn about nature and the environment and 71% said that taking part had changed their views on how nature can affect health and wellbeing.

“I HAVE BECOME MUCH MORE AWARE OF THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT, ESPECIALLY COLOURS AND DETAILS.

FOCUSING ON DETAILS HELPED ME TO RELAX AND REDUCED MY ANXIETY.”

- PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

Derbyshire Makes

Glossop



Credit: Richard Tymon

We were thrilled to be commissioned by Derbyshire County Council to lead the Glossop hub for **Derbyshire Makes**, a three-year programme celebrating creativity and skill-building across the county.

Preparations began, ready for the festival's final weekend in April.

Four community projects were commissioned from an open call, pairing artists with local groups—including schools, clubs, and businesses — to create new work and to celebrate the heritage and history of The High Peak.

The Lost Stories of Glossop

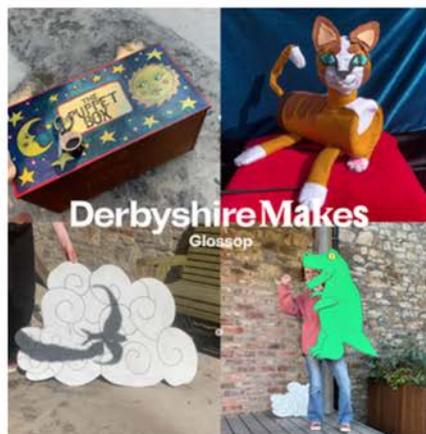
Artist: Gordon MacLellan

Workshop participants started to create a pop-up world inspired by stories of Glossop.

The Cat and the Swift

Artists: Fenn Bartels and Deborah Pitman

Young people across the High Peak helped to create puppets ready for a puppet-show featuring the story of swift migration to Glossop.



Longdendale Tales

Artist: Clare Savory

To complete a sound map, unique audio and video clips from different parts of Glossop were recorded.

Gruesome Glossop

One of our regular groups - Film Cuts Club started to create costumes, scripts and use VR to create a film exploring the history and origins of Glossop.

A HUGE THANK YOU to the many local businesses, organisations and charities that took part, and attended steering groups throughout the year.

Thank You

Thank you to all of the dedicated supporters and funders who have helped to make it a great year!

Proudly Funded By

Arts Council England
BBC Children in Need
Derbyshire County Council
Foundation Derbyshire
Friends of High Peak Community Arts
High Peak Borough Council
Northern Rail Community Fund
The Bingham Trust
The Garfield Weston Foundation
The National Foundation for Youth Music
The National Lottery Community Fund
The People's Projects
UK Shared Prosperity Fund

Partners & Supporters

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High Peak Lottery
Local
Milestone Studios
PAC CIC
Starling CIO
Swizzels Matlow Ltd
Zink and High Peak Foodbank

Artists & Practitioners

Benn Turton
Charlie Collins
Charlotte Singleton
Clare Savory
Deborah Pitman
Fenn Bartels
Frances Walker
Gareth Carbery
Gordon MacLellan
Jo Allen
Jo Brewerton
Joseph Doubtfire

Karl Harris
Liz Wewiora
Lucian Emmett
Lucy Jackson
Mandy Collins
Mark Turton
Nia Williams
Rizzy Stephenson
Sue Blatherwick
Toby Barnes
Trixi Bold

We are deeply grateful to everyone who supports our work, especially our monthly individual donors. **Thank you for making a difference.**

We also want to extend a heartfelt thank you to Alison Bowry, our former employee and co-leader, who retired in October 2024 after dedicating 30 years to supporting the people of the High Peak.



Alison & Gerri (The charity's first staff member)

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