

WOLVERHAMPTON



ARTS CENTRE

# ANNUAL REPORT

2024-5



# CHAIR'S INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our annual report which sets out what we achieved during the year April 2024 to March 2025. In our last year as Newhampton Arts Centre we completed our recovery from the disruption to our work caused by first COVID and then a major heating system failure. 2024-5 saw a full programme of live events and exhibitions and we saw increased interest in our workspaces as well as new courses and classes in the studios.

We now turn our focus to the future and securing the future of our beautiful and historic site, the Wolverhampton Municipal Grammar School, through a major capital programme. To aid in this, and to recognise the hard work all involved in the centre have put in to make us Wolverhampton's arts centre, we will change our name next year to Wolverhampton Arts Centre.

Wendy Stephens



# LIVE EVENTS & EXHIBITIONS PROGRAMME

Our programme of live music, comedy and theatre continued to go from strength to strength – evidenced by an increase in ticket sales across the board. We again brought world-class touring musicians to the city and highlights included concerts by Thea Gilmore, The Wedding Present, Dreadzone and the Bluetones (acoustic). Jazz at Wolverhampton brought artists of the calibre of Emma Rawicz, Ivo Neame, Empirical and Eddie Parker to our venue while folk highlights included Megson, Wakefire, the Carrivick Sisters and Winter Union. A very strong year for comedy saw Sukh Olja, Paul Foot, Rob Newman, Fesshole and Richard Blackwood entertain Wolverhampton audiences.

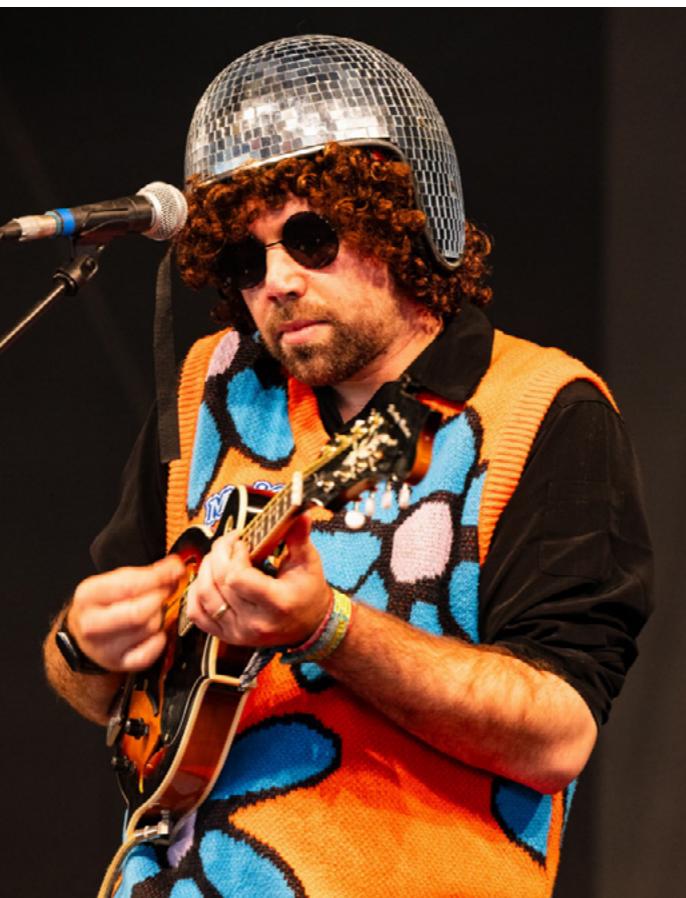
We remained a vital venue for youth and community groups to perform, including Central Youth Theatre, Stagecoach Wolverhampton, Studio 61 and the Amy G school.

In the Gallery Hall our exhibitions programme included the hugely successful Wolverhampton Print Fest, Wolverhampton University fine art students, Penn Fields School and the Good Shepherd. Our community visual arts event Paint The Day returned for another popular edition.



**“I MAY HAVE FOUND MY NEW FAVOURITE UK VENUE. AN AMAZING SPACE, ELEVATED BY INCREDIBLE ATTENTION TO DETAIL AND TRULY FRIENDLY STAFF.”**

**- SCOTT DOONICAN**



## **“BEST EXHIBITION I HAVE BEEN TO IN 10 YEARS!”**

**“IT HAS TO BE THE **BEST GIG VENUE** LOCALLY FOR SOUND AND LIGHTING SET UP”**

**- VISTOR FEEDBACK**

**“WHAT AN AMAZING VENUE THIS IS, AND A REAL ASSET TO WOLVERHAMPTON. EVERYONE HAS BEEN SO HELPFUL AND ENCOURAGING AND THE STUDIOS ARE ALL CLEAN AND WELL SIZED.”**

**- AUDIENCE MEMBER**



**“WENT TO SEE A PRODUCTION WITH THE LITTLE ONES, VENUE IS GREAT, VERY COSY AND WELCOMING”**

**- AUDIENCE MEMBER**



**“THIS IS A GREAT VENUE WITH LOTS OF DIFFERENT THINGS TO OFFER. I WENT THERE FOR A LIFE DRAWING CLASS ORGANISED BY HANNAH BOYD WHICH WAS EXCELLENT.”**

**- VISTOR FEEDBACK**



**“EVERYONE I PUT IN THE VENUE LOVES IT, YOU RUN A TIGHT SHIP, TAKES THE STRESS OUT OF ALREADY DIFFICULT TASK OF PROMOTING, PASS ON MY THANKS TO YOUR STAFF”**

**- CROSSTOWN PROMOTIONS**

# COMMUNITY ARTS PROGRAMME

## 01902

The 01902 Urban Rooms Project, a collaboration between the West Midlands Combined Authority, Wolverhampton City Council, and Wolverhampton Art Centre, transformed a shop in Queens Square into an urban room: a dynamic community and cultural hub geared towards creative place making. The project hosted diverse exhibitions, showcased local



artists and provided space for artists groups and students to develop their work. The project began with a set-up phase involving local artists and residents, culminating in an opening exhibition with 24 local artists. Over summer 2024 the space hosted residencies, workshops, exhibitions and regular open days to encourage public participation. In autumn 2024 the focus shifted to urban regeneration and cultural celebrations. The space hosted the unveiling of the masterplan for Old Market Square and hosted exhibitions by local arts collectives and students, alongside community feedback sessions and family

### **“A GREAT SPACE LOVING WOLVERHAMPTON / MIDLANDS ARTISTS GETTING SHOWN OFF” - VISTOR FEEDBACK**

art workshops. During winter, the space celebrated Wolverhampton's history with a exhibition about the battle of Tettenhall and a photography exhibition featuring portraits of Wolverhampton residents and charity pop up markets, while also holding space for for a variety of organisations to engage with the public, have meetings and host events. Overall, the Urban Rooms successfully engaged residents, supported local talent and contributed to civic place making and cultural development, establishing itself as a vibrant hub for community participation and creative engagement and place making within Wolverhampton.



**SHOWCASING LOCAL ARTISTS & PROVIDING SPACE FOR ARTIST GROUPS & STUDENTS TO DEVELOP THEIR WORK**

# PAINT THE DAY

In 2024, Newhampton Arts Centre successfully hosted its annual "Paint the Day Wolverhampton," a yearly art challenge held over the summer. The event engaged a diverse community of artists and photographers of all ages and skill levels, encouraging them to capture Wolverhampton's essence within a three-mile radius using any visual art form, from painting and drawing to photography. Participants approached the theme with creativity, producing a wide variety of artworks that reflected the city's vibrant character. The challenge attracted strong participation, with many eager to test their skills, explore new techniques, and compete for prizes across categories such as painting, drawing, photography, and a public vote. Following the event, a free exhibition was held in the NAC's Gallery Hall, showcasing the diverse artworks created during the weekend. Visitors had the chance to view, bid on original pieces, and vote for their favorites.

The event celebrated local talent, fostered community pride, and highlighted Wolverhampton's artistic spirit. Overall, "Paint the Day Wolverhampton 2024" was a major success, strengthening the city's cultural calendar, supporting local artists, and reinforcing Newhampton Arts Centre's role as a key supporter of Wolverhampton's creative community.

**"I REALLY ENJOY  
PAINT THE DAY  
EVERY YEAR, ITS  
GREAT FUN ESPE-  
CIALL WITH THE  
KIDS"** - PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK





COLLECTIVE ARTWORK ON DISPLAY AT SOMERSET HOUSE - LONDON

# COMMUNITY ART ROOM / SATURDAY ART LAB (START OF)

In early 2025, Newhampton Art Centre launched a Community Art Room, a dedicated space to support ongoing community arts activities.

The first project, New Art Lab, was a youth-focused art program as part of the National Saturday Art Club initiative. Guided by artist facilitator Joe Loki, the first four months of the program provided a creative environment for 11-16 year olds to develop artistic skills through hands-on activities such as drawing, painting, sculpture and digital media. Participants played an active role in shaping an evolving curriculum, gaining valuable insights through participation in national events like masterclasses led by industry professionals.



**“A DEDICATED SPACE TO SUPPORT ONGOING COMMUNITY ARTS ACTIVITIES.”**

These experiences deepened their passion for the arts and expanded their understanding of creative careers. Held every Saturday morning, the weekly sessions were well-attended and received positive feedback from both young people and their families.

All materials and resources were provided free of charge, ensuring accessibility. The initial taster sessions in January successfully introduced participants to the program, many of whom expressed enthusiasm about continuing. Overall, the first four months of New Art Lab have fostered strong community engagement, skill development, and artistic exploration among Wolverhampton's youth. The program is on track to nurture talent, encourage creativity, and build a supportive environment for young artists in the city.



# CAPITAL PROGRAMME

If 2023-4 was a dark year for our historic site then 2024-5 saw real progress on the gigantic task of refurbishing and redeveloping to ensure Wolverhampton has an arts centre fit for purpose for the next thirty years.

Over the summer the boilers that had failed two years ago were replaced and the Gallery Hall once again had heating and hot water. A Fundraising Feasibility Study was commissioned from Achetes Consulting and a full feasibility study was undertaken by APEC Architects which set out a phased timetable for capital works over the next decade.

Negotiations advanced between City of Wolverhampton Council and City of Wolverhampton College to resolve the long-standing ownership issues and to provide WAC with a secure long-term lease to enable fundraising to begin in earnest. As the year ended we began the task of recruiting a capital campaign manager to lead this work.



**“AS THE YEAR ENDED WE BEGAN THE TASK OF RECRUITING A CAPITAL CAMPAIGN MANAGER TO LEAD THIS WORK.”**



# WOLVERHAMPTON- CITY OF YOUTH CULTURE

## YEAR 1 SUMMARY

Wolverhampton: City of Youth Culture is a three-year programme designed to increase young people's engagement in cultural activity, strengthen pathways into creative careers, and support the development of skills, confidence and resilience. Year 1 focused on establishing strong partnerships, piloting delivery across multiple artforms, and embedding a robust evaluation framework.

Across the year, the programme engaged thousands of children and young people through live events, festivals, workshops and skills development opportunities.

Two large-scale music events at The Halls Wolverhampton reached over 5,000 young people from 55 schools, with more than 2,300 pupils and 217 teachers attending the orchestral concerts alone. These events ensured access to high-quality cultural experiences for children across the city, many experiencing live orchestral performance for the first time.

The Same Difference Festival, delivered in partnership with the Cultural Education Partnership, attracted 1,115 visitors across two fully accessible sites in West Park and Newhampton Arts Centre. The festival featured inclusive, drop-in workshops, performances and sensory-led activities, supporting participation from young people aged 7-25, including those with access needs, and showcasing the breadth of Wolverhampton's creative sector. Targeted progression activity was delivered through Creative Tasters led by Gazebo Theatre in Education. Across two programme rounds, 19

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SCHOOLS, WITH MORE  
THAN 2,300 PUPILS**

WOLVERHAMPTON  
CITY OF  
**YOUTH  
CULTURE**

young people aged 18-24 participated in hands-on workshops spanning theatre, technical production, digital media and performance. Seven participants completed Bronze Arts Awards, 100% reported improved confidence and skills, and 72% progressed into employment, further training or other opportunities, demonstrating strong early-career impact.

**100% REPORTED IM-  
PROVED CONFIDENCE  
AND SKILLS.**

# THE VISUAL ARTS TRAIL

The Visual Arts Trail engaged 48 young people to co-create four large-scale physical and digital artworks reflecting youth culture and Wolverhampton's key cultural sites. Local artists were commissioned and upskilled in digital practice, with three works currently being developed into augmented reality pieces, leaving a lasting creative legacy within the public realm.



Digital and creative careers exploration was further supported by LearnPlay Foundation, who delivered 23 sessions reaching 383 young people, exceeding targets. Schools reported exceptionally positive feedback, highlighting increased awareness of digital pathways and strong engagement with technologies such as coding, VR and game design.

WOLVERHAMPTON  
CITY OF  
**YOUTH**  
**CULTURE**

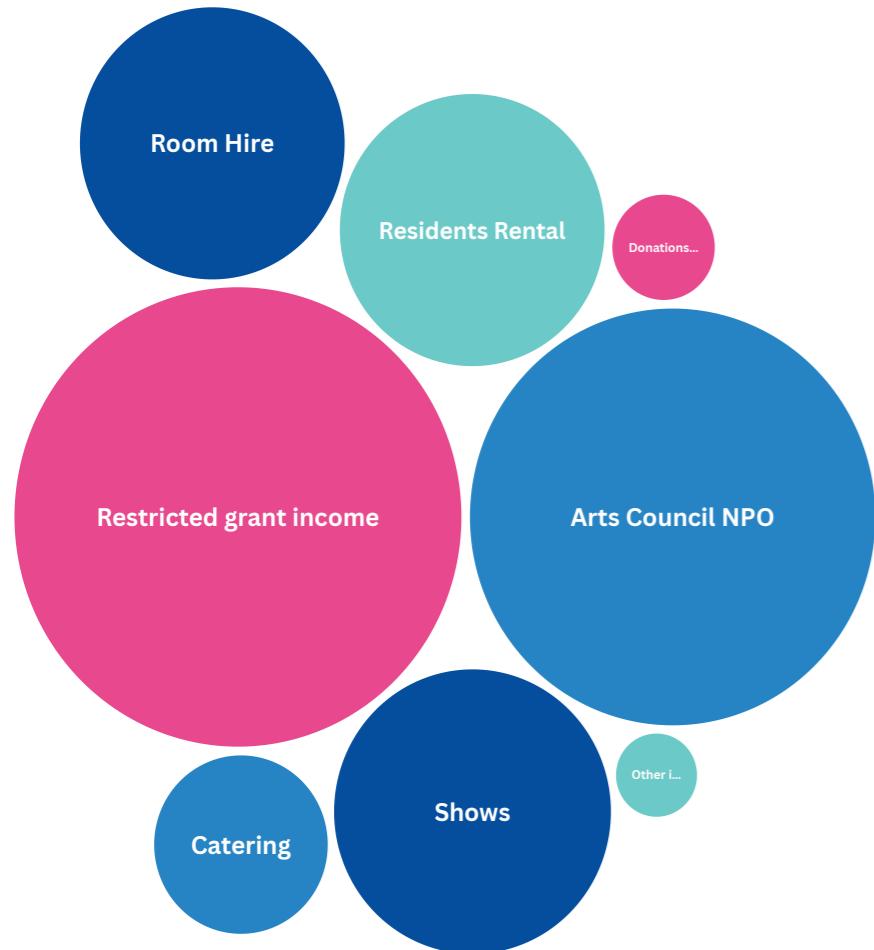
## EVALUATION ACTIVITY

Evaluation activity, led by the University of Wolverhampton's Institute for Community Research and Development, established a Theory of Change and trained seven Community Peer Researchers, embedding young people's voices within programme learning and development as the project moves into Year 2.



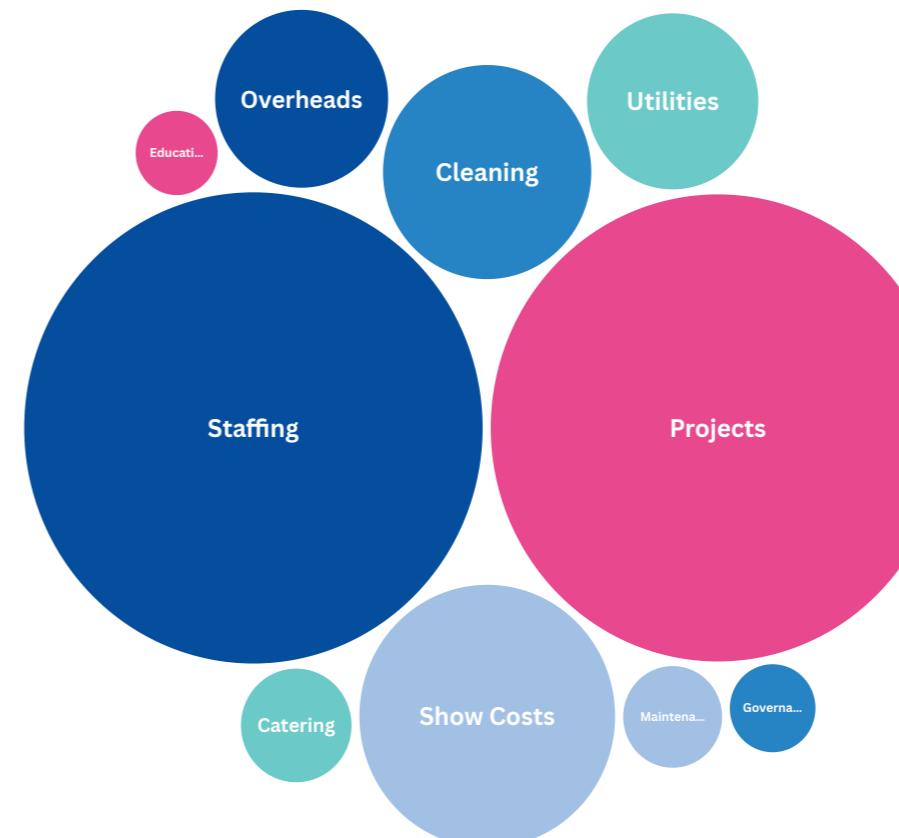
# FINANCIAL INFORMATION

TAKE A LOOK AT THE LAST THREE YEARS OF NEWHAMPTON ARTS CENTRE'S ADMISSIONS AND TICKETING DATA



## Annual Turnover

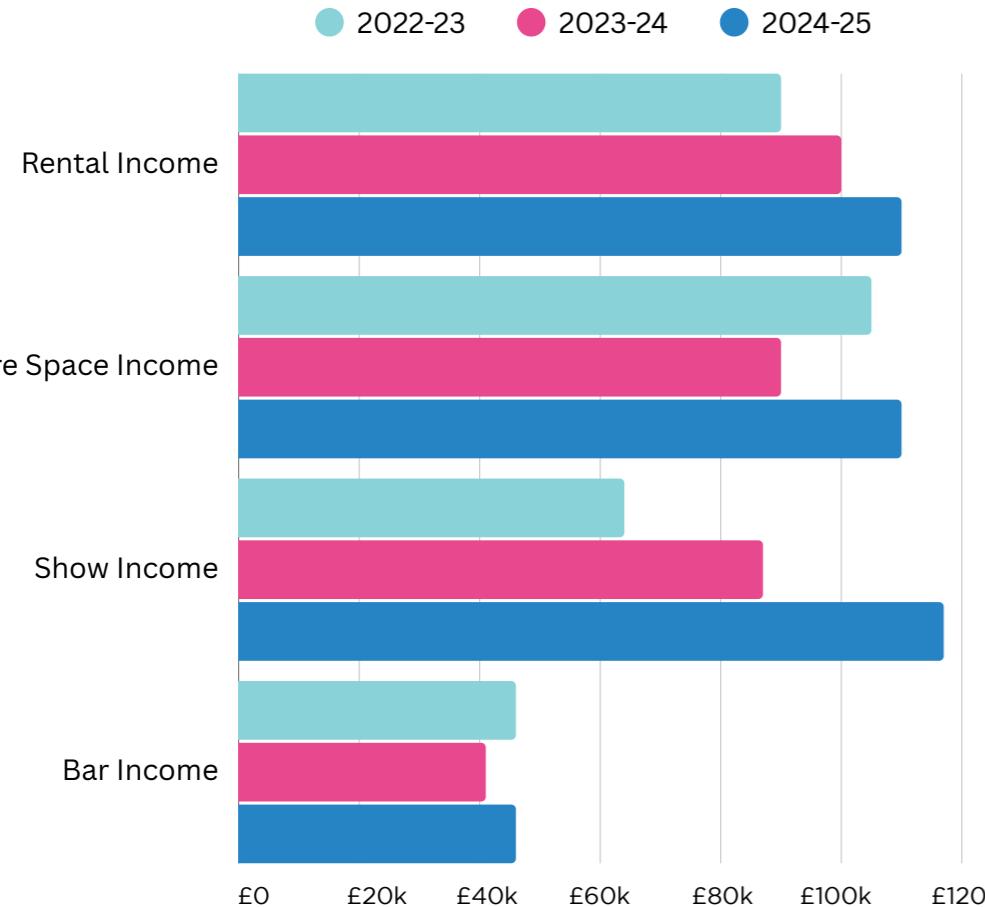
Income Total	£958,835
Residents Rental	£107,259
Room Hire	£106,505
Shows	£116,908
Catering	£46,038
Arts Council NPO	£251,145
Restricted grant income	£304,777
Other income	£10,092
Donations & legacies	£16,111



## Cost

# FINANCIAL INFORMATION CONTINUED

## EARNED INCOME PERFORMANCE OVER THE LAST THREE YEARS



Thank you to our funders 2024 - 25



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**



**2022-23**

Rental  
Hire  
Show  
Bar

**2023-24**

Rental  
Hire  
Show  
Bar

**2024-25**

Rental  
Hire  
Show  
Bar

# OUR BOARD OF TRUSTEES

as of March 2025

**Richard Ashwell**

**Martin Cartwright**

**Lynn Court**

**Keith Fraser**

**Olivia Kerr**

**Sunita Pallan-Jhali**

**Fred Richings**

**Tom Roden**

**Curtis Shelton**

**Wendy Stephens** (Chair)

**Ryan Taylor**

## OUR STAFF

as of March 2025

**Jessica Bradley** – Site Assistant

**Chris Brown** – Site Supervisor

**Stacey Cross** – Marketing Officer

**Mark Dunn** – Site Supervisor

**David Dorricott** – Senior Technician

**Chris Emery** – Site Assistant

**Suzanne Elkin** – Marketing Officer

**Hollie Fellows** – Front of House Manager

**Darcie Foxall** – Site Assistant

**Aneta Jedynasty** – Finance Manager

**Kelly Jeffs** – Programme Manager

(Wolverhampton City of Youth Culture)

**Rae McCampbell** - Administrator

**Chris Meddings** – Front of House Manager

**Liam Moore** – Site Assistant

**Rose Powell** – Site and Finance Assistant

**Dan O'Reilly** – Assistant Technician

**Maya Sharma** – Site Assistant

**Trevelyan Wright** – Chief Executive

## OUR RESIDENTS

as of March 2025

Altar Collective

Amy G School

APS

Bay Ten – Reece Hayden & Liam,

Dan & Christos

Beatsabar

Central Youth Theatre

Eden Support

Ewan Johnston

G5 Studio Group – Paul Owen

Gecko Programmes

Include Me Too

Jacky Fellows & Lindsay Pritchard

Jenny Wren

Kesia Pennington-Yates

Komlaish Achall & Susan Pitt

Mouseflower Ceramics – Helen

Brown

Nic's Wellbeing

Pillar and Ink

RML

Sam Harding

Satinder Parhar

Shenaz Hafees

Stagecoach – Hannah James

The Art Room

Women of Wolverhampton

Zachary Boachie-Barrance



# THANK YOU



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