



**"Ripon has built
something that
feels both ambitious
and accessible,
professional and
personal."**

The Yorkshire Times





The Headlines

Ripon Theatre Festival 2025 took place from **1-6 July** with workshops, warm-up performances and community outreach events in the preceding months.

"It was so inclusive and so varied. We really enjoyed it and the atmosphere it generated especially over the weekend. Thank you!" Audience Member

We reached new audiences

**We extended our
Community Outreach Programme**

We worked with new venues

We developed our partnerships

We supported the local economy

We developed our reputation



1,962

Tickets
sold

6,026

Free event
attendances

7,988

Total
attendances

412

Community
performers

78

Professional
performers





Audience 3 Access

Our audience continues to grow and we are working hard to make our festival as inclusive and accessible as possible. We have managed to keep our ticket prices low with the vast majority of our events offered free of charge. We became partners in the Accessible Ripon project.

“It is a fantastic weekend, we come every year” Family Day Attendee

Ticket sales were up by 19%

Total attendances increased by 37%

80% of all available tickets were sold

44% were experiencing the festival for the first time

62% of attendees came from Ripon

**78% of events were free
Tickets cost £5 - £20**

15% of our ticketed audience parties included a disabled member

49% of ticket buyers also attended one of our free events

193 children attended an event with their school

“Really friendly atmosphere and even fun for my two teenagers”

Visitor from Falkirk, Scotland

“As a disabled viewer I was cared for perfectly”

Ripon Resident

“Really nice to reach people who might not ordinarily get to see theatre”

Performer from Notice this Notice

“A great festival yet again. Reasonably priced tickets for interesting shows.”

Ripon Resident



Our Events



We staged 134 events in total, from *Nana Funk* at our Launch Night in March to a Shakespeare finale in July.

We successfully trialled doubling up some evening performance options, worked with new venues and created a Participation Zone for drop-in workshops. We grew our outdoor arts offer and promoted our first Schools' Day.

We attended several performances and they were all very good, many were outstanding, powerful, moving and some raucous theatre! We loved it."

Audience Member

"It was a triumph!"

*The Very Reverend John Dobson, Dean of Ripon Cathedral
The Beloved Son*



95%

Survey respondents:
The quality was
excellent or very
good

"We saw Pirate Princess. What a joy. A lovely hour of silly to cheer up everyone there on a Friday evening. Just lovely."

Audience Member at Trinity Church

"The performance I attended was excellent in all respects. It was both entertaining and informative, and far exceeded my expectations."

Audience Member at Peelers, Poachers, Paupers

Ticketed theatre programme

Highlights included
The Beloved Son, *Third Class* and
Spy Movie: the Play!

Open air theatre

From *The Three Inch Fools*, *Illyria*,
Notice this Notice and
Wrongsemble

Street entertainment & Pop-Ups

Highlights included *Tit for Tat Circus*,
Cloudscapes, *Bee Cart* and
The Calamity Dames

Community Play with Ripon Museums

Peelers, Poacher and Paupers told
local history across 3 sites

New Venues

The Leper Chapel, *The Portly Pig*
and *Ripon Races*

Community art installation

From *Bandstand to Hatstand* with
artist Sharon Hockin

Our first Primary Schools' Day

Swallow's Wings Puppetry
presented *Anansi & the Lost Sun*

our Performers



We welcomed 78 professional artists from across the country with specialisms in puppetry, circus, magic, comedy, theatre, dance and storytelling. We provided a platform for a record 412 community performers from North and West Yorkshire.



"What a fantastic event, it was truly very inspirational to be around so many amazing acts and people."

Lucy Hardy, Lula Hooper

"We've had such amazing feedback - so good to share the veterans memories and get this response."

Helena Fox, Writer/Director, Bomb Happy

"We had such a lovely time. We were so well looked after and the festival (as always) is so well received in Ripon by the people out on the streets."

Gil & Natalie, Kerfuffle Theatre



"Many thanks for the opportunity. It was great to give a stage to Ripon Poets."

Caroline Matusiak, Poet

"We've come all the way from Cardiff and it's been lush!"

Kitsch n Sync Collective





Bringing The Community Together

Our festival belongs to the city and is shaped by our partners, volunteers, supporters and participants. We collaborate to make the most of the city's venues, resources and skills together with the talents of visiting artists.

"It was truly a pleasure to see Ripon come alive with creativity, talent, and community spirit. It was an honour to sponsor and take part in – the dedication and passion of everyone involved were clear to see, and the result was something really special."

Jackie Crozier, Little Bird Markets

76%

"RTF improved my sense of wellbeing"

88%

"RTF is welcoming for the whole community"

Survey respondents agreed strongly or very strongly



"It really feels like Ripon is very invested in this festival"

Natalie Bellingham, Performer with Pif Paf

"You've helped us achieve what we want which is to get this building better known and better used."

Ros Latham, Chaplain at The Leper Chapel

Event collaboration with Ripon Museums and Kirkgate traders

Venue partnerships with Ripon Races, Ripon Cathedral, The Old Deanery Hotel

Pop-up performances in The Portly Pig bar and The Little Ripon Bookshop

Family events with Ripon Library and Ohana charity

Local writers and performers supported with Short & Sweet Yorkshire

28 community groups took part as performers



Empowering People

We developed our team of trustees and volunteers, provided work experience and supported young volunteers.

"This role sharpened my skills and gave me valuable insight into working with a creative team under real-world deadlines. Seeing my work gain engagement which helped boost tickets sales gave me real confidence."

Romily Abbott, Digital Marketing Assistant

48 volunteers including Youth Squad of 9

Volunteer development with Ripon YMCA

1 student internship – Digital Marketing Assistant

1 emerging artist placement – Assistant Director, *Peelers, Poachers, Paupers*

4 new trustees

New volunteer logistics team



"All the volunteers were super helpful and cheerful all contributing towards the fantastic atmosphere!"

Ripon Resident

"The event was well managed, with helpful and friendly staff."

Ripon Resident



"An incredibly rewarding experience, allowing me to grow both professionally and creatively. Being part of this project has expanded my portfolio and experience and also helped me form valuable connections with inspiring individuals."

*Emily Briscombe, Assistant Director, *Peelers, Poachers, Paupers**



Reaching out

Project funding enabled us to deliver more community outreach activities, both during and in the months running up to the festival. We developed our relationship with care homes in the area and held our first Schools' Day.

Dance theatre in 4 care homes with *Bloom* from Spiltmilk Dance

Suitcase puppet show in 3 care homes with Eye of Newt including multiple bedroom performances

128 care home residents and those living with dementia enjoyed a live event

8 papier-mâché hat sessions with learning disabled adults



"We've displayed the hats in our new café area today and they look amazing. The members are suitably proud of their work."

Sue Orrey-Godden, Learning Disability Support Worker, Ripon Walled Garden

"I designed a blue planet style hat. I learnt to do a bit more detail and added a lot of features of the oceans from the tropics to the mysterious dark depths."

William, Jennyruth Workshops



**"It was a brilliant workshop - we were all so impressed.
Captivating."**

Burton Leonard Primary School response to Peter Chand

"It brought back some lovely feelings and memories"

**"When I go back to my room and close the door I will
keep thinking about this, and sing."**

Care home residents' responses to Bloom



**3 creative sessions
with Ripon YMCA young
people**

3 storytelling workshops

**24 care workers attended
Listening With Your Eyes
session with
Vamos Theatre**

**Flamenco, Morris Dance,
African Drumming &
Circus Skills sessions**





Supporting the Local Economy

We worked with Ripon BID (Business Improvement District) and with our corporate sponsors, partner venues and local businesses to make the most of the festival's commercial opportunities. Audiences spent money locally and RTF supported local suppliers.

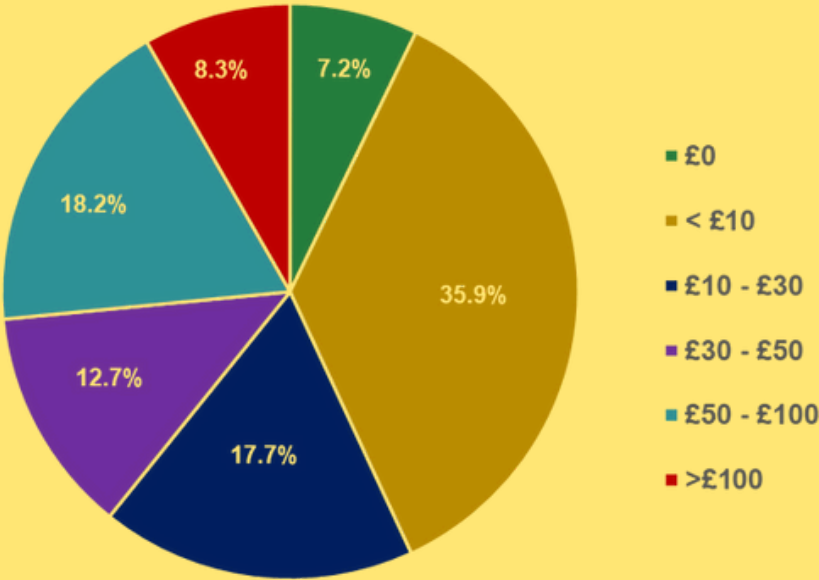


"It was my best ever day since the start of trading here" *The Portly Pig*



"I love Ripon and it was great to see it so buzzy!"
Fiona Hunt, Short & Sweet Yorkshire

RTF ticket purchasers and visitors told us how much they spent



Spent more than £50 with local businesses



"RTF is good for Ripon's image"

Survey respondents agreed strongly or very strongly



Footfall in Ripon across the week of the festival saw a marked uplift. On Festival Saturday, crowds remained longer in the city centre than in previous years.

We developed our partnership with traders on Kirkgate. A road closure enabled outdoor service for restaurants and bars and entertainment was co-curated with Ripon Open Mic Organisers, RoughCutUK.

Food and drink businesses reported significant increase in sales in the Cathedral Zone on Saturday, with product selling out in record time.

"RTF is a beacon in terms of our aspirations for a thriving city; a showcase of what quality, superbly organized and joined up arts and culture can bring to a market town economy."

Richard Hughes, Kirkgate Traders



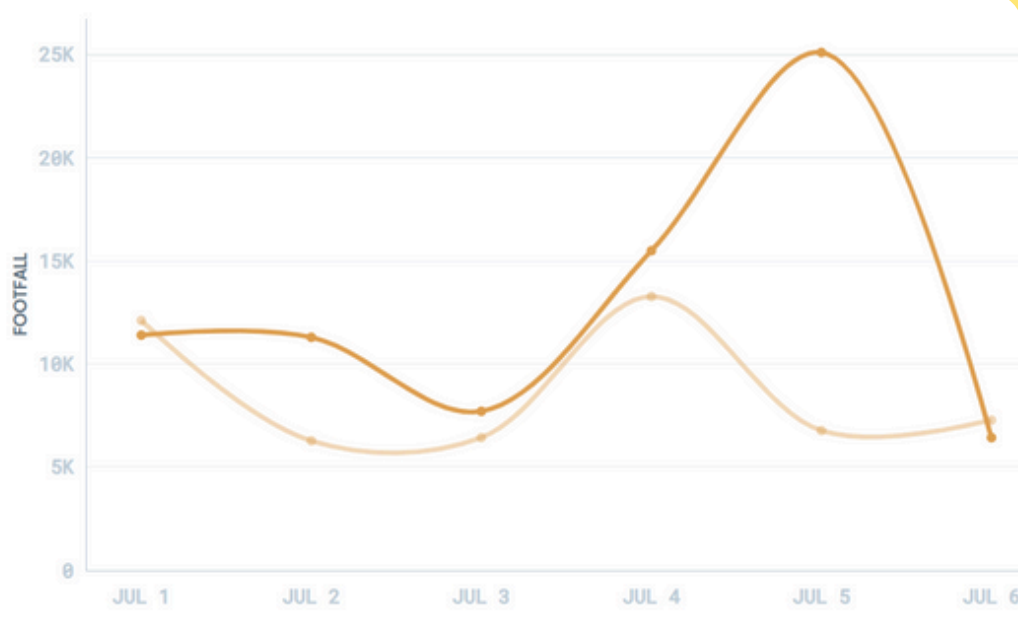
33% increase in footfall over Festival Week

DATES ▾
1 Jul 2025 - 6 Jul 2025

COMPARED TO ▾
2 Jul 2024 - 7 Jul 2024

CENTRE NAME +
Ripon BID

PURCHASING POWER +
All



77.4k +48.5%
12.9k +48.5%

Increasing our Reputation



"Ripon has cracked the code of what modern audiences actually want: intimacy, variety, and genuine connection."

Yorkshire Times

"It was a resounding success and adds cultural attraction to a city primed for expansion and growth by introducing diversity and content for all ages"

Martin Sterne, Sterne Properties

"Just excellent. The heart and the effort and care that went into it was outstanding."

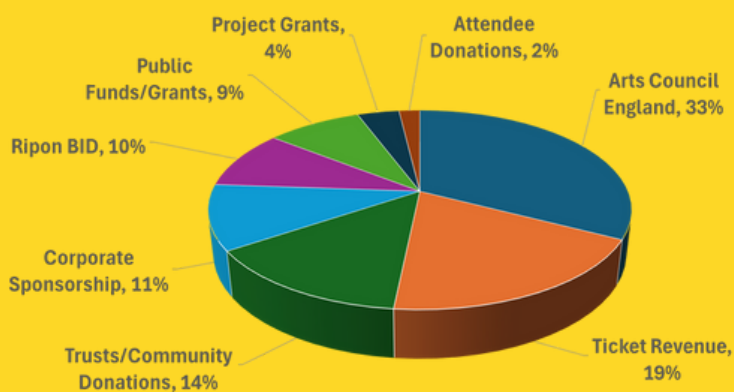
Visitor from West Yorkshire

"You are going from strength to strength. Well done to everyone involved in the organisation of the event, it is much appreciated by Ripon residents and visitors to the city."

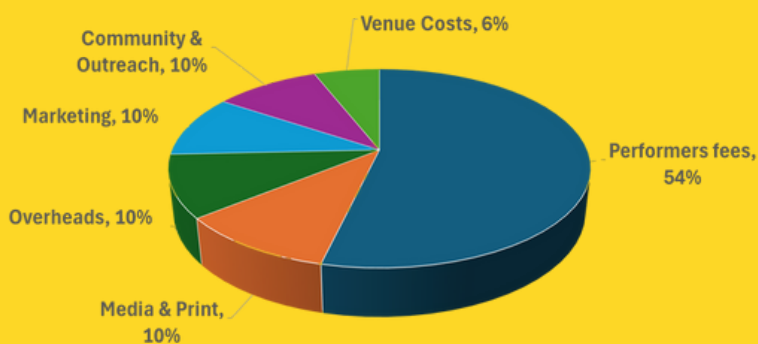
Cllr Barbara Brodigan, North Yorkshire Council



Income



Expenditure



Audience and visitor information gathered from 312 face-to-face and online questionnaires.

Ripon Theatre Festival 2025 was generously supported by:



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

Performers

Nana Funk
Everwitch Theatre
Fell Foss Theatre
Lou Conran
Larry Dean
Andrew Harrison
Olivia Corbin-Phillip
Peter Chand
Russell Lucas
Mary-Jane Holmes
Ripon Ghost Walkers
On a Role Productions
Swallow's Wing Puppetry
Gemma Bond
Theatre Royal (Norwich)
Flamenco de Leeds
Slubbing Billy's
Ripon City Morris
Betty Lupton's Ladle Laikers
Rock Choir
Kerfuffle Street Theatre
Kitsch n Sync Collective
Lula Hooper
Gobbledegook Theatre
Tit for Tat Circus
Stories Alive
Grandly Strange
Dave Ford & Dimitri Ogden
The Wakeman Mummers' Musicians
Chicks on Sticks
Yorkshire Voices
The Fantastic Mr Forster
Catherine Jacob
Ripon Youth Theatre
Drums Agogo
Ripon Dance Academy
Skellside Folk Group
The Daytones
Lily Worth
Grace Hughes
Calle Oche
RoughCutUK
Short and Sweet Yorkshire
Nigel and Band
Illyria
Vagabond321
Glass Rockets
Louise Geller
Pif Paf Theatre
Ripon Trinity Singers

Handmade Theatre
Notice this Notice
Jolly Good Productions
Cricket on the Hearth
Ripon Goes to Bollywood
Wrongsemble
Open the Book
Dishforth Military Wives Choir
Ripon Walled Garden Performers
Medusa
Super B
The Three Inch Fools
Spiltmilk Dance
Eye of Newt

Venues

Ripon Arts Hub
Ripon Library
Ripon Cathedral
The Old Deanery
Holy Trinity Church
Market Place
Minster Gardens
Valentino's Ristorante
The Little Ripon Bookshop
Ripon Courthouse Museum
Kirkgate & City Centre streets
Ripon Spa Gardens
Ripon Workhouse Museum
The Leper Chapel
The Portly Pig
Allhallowgate Methodist Church Hall
Ripon Races
Lister House

Sponsors & Supporters

Arch Consulting	Calmcott Trust
Specsavers, Ripon	The George A Moore
Elstob Auctioneers	Foundation
Ripon Races	Ripon Rowels
Sterne Properties	Rotary Club
Little Bird	Ripon Rotary Club
Valentino's Ristorante	Ripon Library
Arts Council England	Action Group
Ripon BID	WW Spooner Trust
Ripon City Council	The Ramsden Trust
North Yorkshire Council	Ripon Charity
The Charles and Elsie	Pantomime Group
Sykes Trust	Bishop Monkton WI
Alfred Hymas	
Dr F Cole	