Bishop Auckland Town Council

Kingsway Court, 54 Kingsway, Bishop Auckland, Co. Durham DL14 7JF

Tel: 01388 207110 **Email:** council@bishopauckland-tc.gov.uk
Website: www.bishopauckland-tc.gov.uk

Mayor: Cllr Michael Siddle **Town Clerk:** Sarah Harris

09 October 2026

Members of the Community Committee
Councillor L Zair, (Chairman) and Councillors Elliott, Fox, Harker and Redmond

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of **Bishop Auckland Town Council Community Committee** on **Thursday 15 October 2026 at 3.30pm** at the Town Council Offices, 54 Kingsway, Bishop Auckland, Co. Durham DL14 7JF.

Members of the Public and Press are welcome to attend. We request that attendance is registered with the Town Clerk prior to attending to ensure that the meeting space is large enough to accommodate everyone safely. To register attendance please call 01388 207110 or email council@bishopauckland-tc.gov.uk by noon on Wednesday 14 October 2026.

The Chairman advises members of the Council and the public that the meeting or part of the meeting may be recorded by audio and may be by video.

Yours sincerely
S Harris
Sarah Harris
Clerk to the Council

Community Committee Agenda - 15 October 2026 3.30pm

1. **Apologies for Absence -** To receive apologies and approve reasons for absence
2. **Declaration of Interest -** To record declarations of interest from members on any item on the agenda, including. any interest prejudicial or personal as recorded on the Members register of interests.
3. **Action Log of Previous meetings** – to look at completed and outstanding actions of the committee.
4. **Community Fund Applications.**
    - **a.** Community Fund Applications
        - **i.** Bishop Auckland Rugby Club
        - **ii.** Baptist Church
        - **iii.** Bishop Auckland Community Partnership
5. **Events/ Community Engagement**
    - a. Feedback from Word Fest
    - b. Flying Scotsman
6. Community Support 2026-27 plus Proposals for 2027-28 and Events 2026-27 plus Proposals for 2027-28
7. **Public Participation -** To hear from any members of the public subject to Public Participation Policy

DO I HAVE AN INTEREST?

DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

Does the matter to be discussed affect:-

1. You, or your spouse's/partner's, business, employment or profession
2. Anyone that employs or has appointed you or your spouse/partner
3. Anyone that you or your spouse/partner has received sponsorship from.
4. A contract with the Council, land or licence in the Councils area, corporate tenancy or securities in which you or your spouse/ partner has an interest.

YES →

YOU SHOULD DECLARE THAT YOU HAVE A DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST

You should take no part in the discussion or vote

If your Standing Orders dictate you should withdraw from the meeting by leaving the room.
Do not try to influence the decision.

NO ↓

OTHER REGISTERABLE INTERESTS

Does the matter to be discussed affect:-

1. A body where you are in a position of general control or management and to which you have been appointed or nominated by your Council.
2. Any body which
   (a) exercises functions of a public nature
   (b) is directed to charitable purposes or
   (c) whose principal purpose include the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union) of which you are a member in a position of general control or management
3. Any gifts or hospitality with more than an estimated value of £50

YES →

SHOULD DECLARE THAT YOU HAVE AN OTHER REGISTERABLE INTEREST

You should not vote on the matter but you may make representations or answer questions about the matter if members of the public can do so.

If your Standing Orders dictate you should withdraw from the meeting by leaving the room.

NO ↓

OTHER NON-REGISTERABLE PERSONAL INTERESTS

Does the matter to be discussed affect:-

1. A financial interest of a friend, relative or close associate.

YES →

DECLARE THAT YOU HAVE A NON-REGISTERABLE PERSONAL INTEREST

You should not vote on the matter but you may make representations or answer questions about the matter if members of the public can do so. If your Standing Orders dictate you should withdraw from the meeting by leaving the room.

NO →

You can participate in the meeting and vote

This flowchart provides assistance for Councillors to help determine whether you have an interest in a matter being discussed at a Council meeting.

However it is a Councillors own responsibility to comply with the Code of Conduct and declare an interest where appropriate.

Failure to disclose or register a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest is a criminal offence under section 34 of the Localism Act 2011.

Item: 4

Bishop Auckland Town Council

Community Committee

14th October 2026

Community Fund Applications

The Community Fund grant has a total budget of £15,000 for 2026-27 financial year.

So far applications to the sum of £5,824.35 been approved as follows:

- In Bloom Railway Garden awarded £700 spend to date £562.99
- Army Cadets – tablets and IT Equipment – Awarded £1000 Spend to date £880.33
- Men's Group Woodhouse Close awarded £1000 spend to date £1000
- Friday Friends Group - Bridge Creative CIC - awarded £1000 - £0 claimed to date[1]
- Durham Amateur Football Trust – Leaflet -awarded spent £303.06
- Bishop Auckland Community Partnership – Summer Trips - £1000 awarded, £0 Claimed to date (expecting October at latest)
- Renaissance CIC – Training - £150 outstanding from award made last financial year.
- Choral Society – support with concert– awarded £1000 claimed £1000 to date.

This leaves a remaining £9,175.65 for allocation. An advert is being placed to advertise the fund further within the community in the Bishops Press and will be shared on social media.

The Committee has received two applications, and a third will be tabled at the meeting. If all applications are approved, it leaves £6685.70 to be allocated by the end of the financial year.

Application 1 Summary:

Bishop Auckland Rugby Club have applied for £990 to help fund their young referee training course which totals at £1125. As with most sports and activities they rely heavily on volunteers, and require accredited match officials. There is a gap in availability, and the club have devised a new pathway to secure future referees. They put a call to action with the eligible age grades and 25 volunteers from the u14s age grade and above have come forward to volunteer to undertake the referee training. The RFU has agreed to fund 3 places. The club do not want to select 3 people they deem all those young players who have a passion for the sport and are keen to coach to benefit from the opportunity.

Each volunteer is able to enrol in a Ready2Referee course at a cost of £45 per person, this requires online training modules and a full day of in person training and assessment. Once qualified the young

[1] The planned event was not able to take place due to unforeseen circumstances therefore they wish to utilise and carry it out in 2027.

people will be able to referee club matches and support school events which frequently take place at the rugby club.

It is estimated that over 350 people will benefit from them completing the course.

All required accompanying documentation has been received and is all correct and up to date.

Recommended:

- that member note the request and consider supporting the initiative as it encourages sport, initiative and engagement skills.

Application 2 Summary:

Bishop Auckland Baptist Church have applied for £499.95

The church is open three days a week. We welcome 20-40 people each day. We have a wide variety of visitors, we have the homeless, lonely, those with mental health issues as well as those with addictions, asylum seekers and those who come to play board games or for social interaction. We provide a hot meal cooked on the premises each day and every Wednesday we provide a food bank including fresh fruit and vegetables. Also on a Wednesday we host the health squad who provide health services, there is a gardening club and a litter picking team. We also signpost to other organisations and provide a listening ear to who want to be heard. The Community Hub is a warm, safe place run by a team of welcoming, experienced and committed volunteers. The Community Hub has become a lifeline to many and is highly appreciated by our guests

The funds are to purchase a carpet and upholstery cleaner. (£299.95). Some visitors are incontinent, spill food and drink, bring in support animals etc and the furniture is becoming smelly and grubby.

The funds will also be used to purchase 12 cotton aprons which would clearly identify the volunteers (embroided logo) as well as provide protection when working in the kitchen. (£200)

All required accompanying documentation has been received and is all correct and up to date.

Recommended:

- that member note the request and consider supporting the Community Hub.

Application 3 summary

Four clocks community partnership, for £1000. For the purchase of a laptop and ancillary equipment for their family support worker for their family support worker who works 20hrs per month to support the family contact centre.

All required accompanying documentation has been received and is all correct and up to date.

Recommended:

- that member note the request and consider the community partnership with their request.

Bishop Word Fest

BISHOP WORD FEST - TURN THE PAGE

END OF EVENT REPORT



SEPTEMBER 2026

Prepared by

ALISON CURRY

Prepared for

BISHOP AUCKLAND TOWN COUNCIL & EVENT PARTNERS

DISPEL

DISPEL ETHOS

dispel verb : Make a doubt feeling or belief disappear



Dispel (known locally as Dispel Art) recognises that barriers to creativity exist in all shapes and sizes and can be specific to a particular place or person. They can also be something that affects wider groups within communities.

Drawing upon over 20 years of experience working within the vast and varied communities across the North East of England, with participants from 0-95 years old, Alison navigates routes around these barriers supporting individuals and/or organisations to unpack problems together, challenge assumptions, unpack stereotypes and suggest possible ways forward.

Creativity is everywhere - Opportunity is not

Co-creating environments which allow people space to thrive, create & connect - believe in the power of people

Together change is a doing word - we are stronger together

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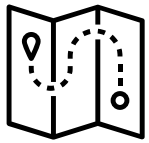
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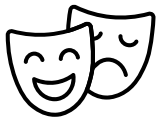
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SOCIAL IMPACT



EXPLORATION

Word Fest **encouraged** families to explore parts of the town through the magic and mischief of the Brilliant Beasts Word Trail Hunt.



OPPORTUNITIES - YOUNG PEOPLE & CHILDREN

Word Fest **supported** children and young people to engage with books, drama, art and storytelling.



OPPORTUNITIES - ADULTS

Word Fest offered adults **opportunities t**o **share** writing, listen to poetry, enjoy music and meet local authors.



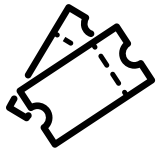
SHOWCASING

Word Fest **strengthened** community **pride** by **showcasing** local talent and **celebrating** Bishop Auckland's heritage.



INCREASED ACCESS TO BOOKS

Word Fest **increased** access to books for families who may not have them at home. It contributed to the National Year of Reading 2026 and the Go All In campaign



FREE EVENTS

Word Fest provided **free** cultural experiences during a time of rising costs for households



BUILT CONNECTIONS

Word Fest **built** and **revisited established connections** between local organisations, artists, businesses and volunteers.

Bishop Word Fest created a welcoming, inclusive space where people could enjoy reading, writing, a love of words and creativity together.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Bishop Word Fest

Word Fest: Turn The Page was a two week celebration of reading, writing, words, creativity and community in Bishop Auckland. Delivered by Dispel from The Artists' Hub with funding from Bishop Auckland Town Council supported by multiple partner organisations and individuals.

The festival brought together local residents, families, schools, artists, authors and volunteers to explore words in many forms; reading, writing, drama, puppetry, music, illustration and hands on making.

Across the fortnight, **1,797** people engaged in festival activities and engagement invitations and **1,056** people visited the Artists' Hub exhibition/showcase.

1,797

PEOPLE ENGAGED IN FESTIVAL ACTIVITIES

The festival offered **free** access to books, creative workshops, performances and family activities, helping to **strengthen** reading and writing for pleasure and widened cultural participation in the town.

TURN the PAGE

The theme **Turn The Page** encouraged people of all ages to rediscover writing and reading, share memories, and take part in imaginative experiences that celebrated Bishop Auckland's heritage, creativity and **community spirit.**

The festival delivered strong social impact, excellent value for money, and clear evidence of public **enthusiasm** for making Word Fest a regular part of the town's cultural calendar.

BACKGROUND

SEE IT BE IT - RAISING ASPIRATIONS

It is important that within Bishop Auckland, young people and those seeking career changes know **creative jobs exist** in the town, driven by local education, manufacturing marketing needs, and regional heritage and regeneration projects. With time Bishop Word Fest has the potential for overlap and collaborative connections with education,employment and skills development within the town.

A CREATIVE VISION FOR THE TOWN

Following the news that the town had not made the next stage of The Town of Culture bid, Mayor of Bishop Auckland, Cllr Michael Siddle said: **"Although this is not the outcome that was hoped for, the relationships, ideas and momentum forged through this process will not be lost. The bid has strengthened the determination of those involved to continue celebrating the town's heritage, investing in its cultural offer, and creating opportunities for people of all ages to enjoy and participate in culture."**

https://bishopauckland-tc.gov.uk/bishop-auckland-proudly-reflects-on-town-of-culture-2028-bid/

A TOWN OF STORIES - JOYFUL & HOPEFUL KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS OPENS DOORS TO PROSPERITY

Bishop Auckland has a remarkable story to tell and has undergone a significant cultural transformation in recent years. From nationally significant heritage sites such as Auckland Palace and Binchester Roman Fort, and internationally acclaimed attractions including the Spanish Gallery and Faith Museum, to the creativity on display at Bishop Auckland Town Hall and the enduring appeal of Kynren, culture has become central to the town's identity and future.

https://bishopauckland-tc.gov.uk/bishop-auckland-proudly-reflects-on-town-of-culture-2028-bid/

CONTEXT & OVERVIEW

WHY BISHOP WORD FEST? AND WHY NOW?

The journey here

The Artists' Hub is a space...

- to create and establish a more cohesive, collaborative & creative network that is capable of delivering projects which address issues which are significant, important and relevant to the individual communities within Bishop Auckland
- for ensuring the arts and cultural sector is accessible to everyone regardless of social or economic background & location
- to be curious
- to test ideas
- to experiment
- to make your place
- to connect to find your people
- to collaborate
- to make change

"...parents in 'left behind' neighbourhoods are likely to lack the confidence or capacity to support their children's learning at home. A volunteer at Gaunless Gateway Big Local in Bishop Auckland, identified by our research as 'left behind', noted that adult literacy is a particular challenge in their area. ... "it is difficult to teach children things that you haven't quite mastered yourself". This is a common feature in 'left behind' neighbourhoods, where 36% of adults have no formal qualification and places additional stress on parents.
https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/9170/pdf/

BISHOP WORD FEST RESPONDED TO KEY ACTIONS FROM THE TOWN PLAN

ACTION 10

Work with various organisations involved in the Town Centre Master Plan to influence the outcome and encourage positive sustainable change.

ACTION 15

Hold more specialist events in town

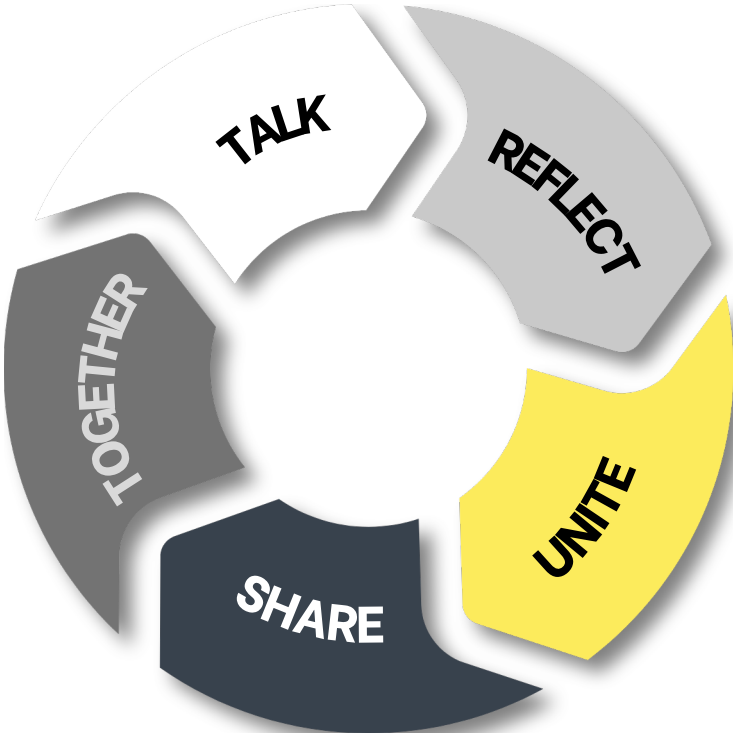
Bishop Auckland Town Council Parish Plan Report

Bishop Word Fest

PARTNERSHIPS

CATALYSING - CHEERLEADING - CONNECTING

METHODOLOGY





Talk - with, to and alongside communities in which the event is being delivered

Reflect - on the findings, assumptions, suggestions, emotions of those involved with the process of delivering the event

Unite - connect and support those who wish to be heard, and involved with the event

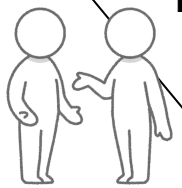
Share - knowledge, build teams, assign roles and responsibilities, ensure all are valued and transactions are reciprocal both in energy and kind, explore spaces and places where people involved can do so showcasing the best version of themselves without prejudice or hesitancy of feeling excluded

Together - create spaces/places with embedded structures which allow new ideas, connection, growth and celebration to be woven into work within the areas taking those involved - from showing - to doing - to growing

CONVERSATIONS



During the planning and development phase and for the following duration of event delivery, conversations, mapping and listening to a wide and varied number of the community was essential in establishing possible potential paths for engagement and or activities/themes which were meaningful to them* both for Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 in 2027



BISHOP AUCKLAND TOWN HALL

HEARTH

THE POVERTY TRUTH COMMISSION

NO MORE NOWT

BISHOP AUCKLAND COLLEGE

LOCAL ARTISTS

LOCAL SCHOOLS

PEOPLE IN SHOPS

PEOPLE ON PARK BENCHES

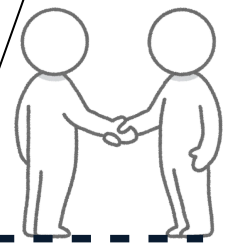
THE NATIONAL LITERACY TRUST

PEOPLE OUT AND ABOUT

PEOPLE IN PUBS

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL LIBRARY SERVICE

DAISY ARTS CIC



USHAW COLLEGE LIBRARY

DURHAM UNIVERSITY PALACE GREEN LIBRARY

ENGLISH HERITAGE

LOCAL BUSINESSES

THE AUCKLAND PROJECT LEARNING TEAM

LOCAL ILLUSTRATORS

BACCANALIA

LOCAL AUTHORS

BISHOP PRESS

KYNREN

BISHOP TOWN HALL WRITERS GROUP

BISHOP FM

LOCAL AUTHORS

CREATE NORTH

TEESDALE WRITERS

NORTH EAST YOUTH ALLIANCE

PEOPLE ON BUSES

BRIDGE CREATIVE



*illustrative not exhaustive

Bishop
Word Fest

THE PROGRAM

SNAP SHOTS IN TIME

EVENT CHALLENGES

- Tight timeline for delivery
- Communication internal/external - took place during a time of annual leave and some significant larger scheduled events within the town
- Scepticism & fatigue - things have been tried before and rarely work
- Fear, misgivings, apprehension from within the community - Does Bishop Auckland really need this event
- Restrictive scope/budget due to tight timeline
- Egos
- Turf and perceived ownership of audiences and or locations
- Disinterest - unable to fully visualise the concept notion and purpose of what a Word Fest may entail and become
- How it can enhance not monopolise or constrict existing provision, projects and work currently in progress within Bishop Auckland around all things literacy, writing drama etc
- Scheduling and connecting while multiple partnership projects are evolving
- Small team - large vision = exploring the middle ground for successful timely delivery of objectives

EXPLORATION
ENGAGEMENT
ENLIVENMENT

TOTAL ENGAGED



1797

KEY



WHERE



WHEN



WHAT



WHY



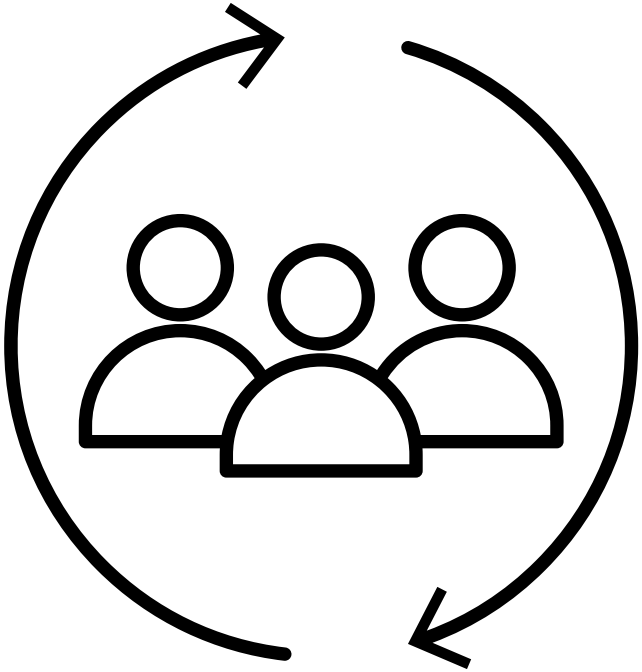
CHALLENGES & LEARNING



ATTENDEE FEEDBACK

EMBEDDING INCLUSION

CONVERSATIONS & CONSIDERATIONS



THE ARTISTS' HUB
DL14 7NP

THROUGHOUT EVENT PLANNING & DELIVERY

Collaboration is the core of Word Fest planning and delivery – all of the ideas and workshops were developed by working in partnership with the hub users and some of the disability advocates Dispel has worked alongside previously on other projects.

The power of the purple pound and the richness of experience inclusive environments can nurture was essential to be included within their practice going forward within Word Fest planning.

Both the Word Fest Crew and community participants were keen to ensure that any models which may be developed going forward should have embedded inclusion from the start. Making as much of the event activity as accessible and inclusive as it possibly can be rather than retrofitting it into any policy or practice at a later stage.

- An increased awareness of barriers to accessing cultural and creative activities within Bishop Auckland
- A tight timeline meant that some of these conversations and deeper questions around inclusion and accessibility weren't able to be explored in as much depth as the team would have liked. This will be built into the Chapter 2 (2027) Word Fest during the planning and research and development process.
- The venue is very accessible for a variety of needs and this was positively commented on.
- A spoken word element was included in the program which can be developed for Chapter 2 allowing opportunities for less confident readers to take part in the event.

'This space is so welcoming and accessible it is great to be in and create'
[A visitor to the venue during the event]

TIMELINE

1 PLANNING
23RD JULY - 13TH AUGUST

2 PREPARATION
14TH AUGUST - 6TH SEPTEMBER

3 DELIVERY
7TH SEPTEMBER - 20TH SEPTEMBER

4 EVALUATION & REFLECTIONS
21ST & 22ND SEPTEMBER



Bishop Word Fest

THE ARTISTS' HUB



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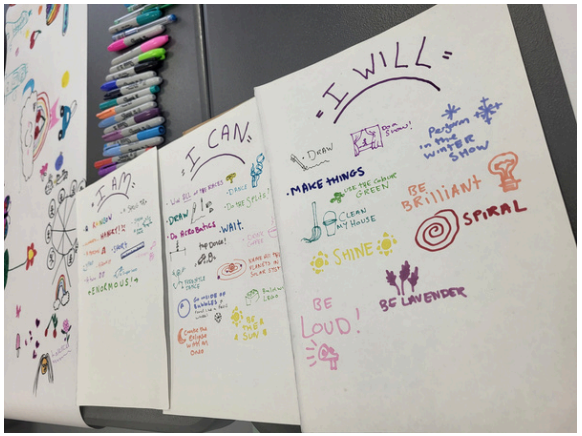
- POETRY DROP IN
- EXHIBITION
- OPENING NIGHT
- THE SONG OF THE DEER PARK
- OPEN MIC NIGHT
- THE LONGEST ZINE
- ONE WORD MANY STORIES
- THE PUPPETRY WORD MACHINE
- RALPH & SPROUT BOOK
- WILL O BURN AND THE FRIENDS WHO REMEMBER BOOK

ENGAGEMENT POETRY DROP IN

PEOPLES POETRY: MAKE A PORTRAIT WITH WORDS

THE ARTISTS' HUB
DL14 7NP

18TH AUGUST





Award winning poet Lizzie Lovejoy spent time in The Artists' Hub prior to Word Fest. She chatted with visitors to the space using the three poetry prompts, 'I can, I am and I will'. Lizzie then crafted a poem from the responses which was used to open the Open Mic event at the festival. She encouraged visitors to explore their own poet potential.

- **RAISING THE PROFILE:** This session was beneficial in spreading the news of the upcoming Word Fest, word of mouth was a great marketing tool this year.
- **BUILDING CONFIDENCE:** The workshop helped families grow in confidence around poetry and dymystified the process making it feel more accessible to those attending
- **REFLECTION:** The process also encouraged visitors to reflect on their own strengths and abilities and ways in which they could be small parts of positive change in the places in which they lived

- School holidays ensured solid footfall throughout the day
- Taking the engagement elements out to the community when there is a longer event lead time will ensure deeper responses for Chapter 2.

'I didn't know I was a poet till today - it was fun!"
[Visitor to the session]

EXHIBITION | EVOLVING SHOWCASE

CREATIVE RESPONSES TO - 'TURN THE PAGE'

THE ARTISTS' HUB
DL14 7NP

7 - 20TH SEPTEMBER



This curated display featured a dynamic mix of written, spoken, and visual word art generated through our recent community workshops. Exploring how local people have used words to capture the history, future, identity, and spirit of Bishop Auckland.

From poignant verses to bold typographic installations, these pieces offer a powerful snapshot of our collective imagination.

We encouraged those passing by to pop in and immerse themselves in the stories of their community, and perhaps even leave a word of their own on our interactive fuzzy felt and letter tile installations.

- **Increased "Dwell Time":** Passersby typically spend more time standing in front of text-based pieces to read and digest the content, leading to longer, more meaningful interactions.
- **Direct Communication:** visual art can be ambiguous, text allows creators to convey specific social or emotional messages with clarity and punch.
- **Emotional Resonance:** Words carry historical, cultural, and emotional weight. Seeing a powerful statement scaled up on a gallery wall gives the language physical gravity, amplifying its emotional impact.
- **Interactive Opportunities:** Word exhibitions easily lend themselves to community participation. We included an interactive poetry wall, and invited ongoing written contributions throughout the duration of the exhibition where the audience helped build the exhibition.

'Very interesting – the wings are fantastic. Good to inspire a love of reading."
[Family of 3]

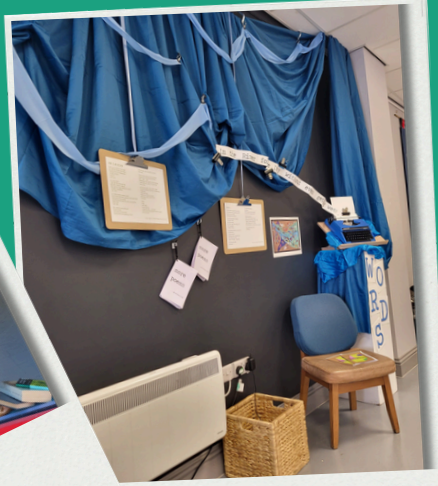
- A longer lead time for development and engagement would have enriched the display offer
- A longer time for install and a wider team would allow for a less stressful countdown to opening the event.
- There was a great appetite for this type of exhibition and lots of interest for next year



'That fuzzy feeling'



'Dream'



'In the river without getting wet'



'Magic Ink'



'Words of What Could be'



'A Word In Your Eye'



'Our Bishop'



'Wings of Words"



'Chapter i'



'Bishop is...'



'Boris the Bookworm'



'Imagine if'



'Moving With The Times'

OPENING NIGHT

PASTE UP & VISIT FROM SHAKESPEARE

THE ARTISTS' HUB
DL14 7NP

MONDAY
7TH SEPTEMBER



Word Fest: Turn the Page began with a first look at the wonderful writing, artwork and creative installations created by local people. There was the opportunity to meet artist and storyteller Sarah Calavera, who gathered words, thoughts and memories from visitors to create a unique community poem. It was an opportunity to share stories and be part of the festival's opening chapter.

In partnership with Kynren – The Storied Lands, there was a chance to meet Shakespeare, hear tales from the past, snap a photo, and discover how their stories have shaped our lives for generations. Kynren also generously donated complimentary tickets for two groups of creative local children and their families for an adventure to the day park on the 6th of September.

'Great exhibition and I enjoyed listening to the poetry'
[A & R Watts]

- Openings are important and we wanted to mark the start of this adventure together in a memorable and inclusive way.
- Bishop Word Fest felt this was a great opportunity to build a relationship between Kynren and The Artists' Hub – looking at ways in which families and local young people can benefit from the growing opportunities born from this unique theme park on our doorstep.

- The dates of finding an offer that worked during peak season at the Kynren site was challenging but not impossible and a great result was possible even within the tight turnaround. The children added creative responses from the visit to the evolving showcase
- Wider publicity and a larger hard opening would be fantastic for Chapter 2

THE SONG OF THE DEERPARK

BOOK READING AND SELF LED BOOKMARK TRAIL

THE ARTISTS' HUB
DL14 7NP

THURSDAY
10TH SEPTEMBER



Families were invited to join author Jilly Johnston for a reading of The Song of the Deer Park at the Artists' Hub, collect a free copy of the book, and then explore the Deer Park, the real-life setting that inspired the story using a specially commissioned Word Fest bookmark made in partnership with English Heritage which provided creative prompts for youngsters to explore alongside the story at the Deer Park.

- **Imagination:** Stories allow children to create new places, magical creatures, and different worlds boosting creativity and language capacity.
- **Problem solving:** Being outdoors in nature encourages children to think through and solve their own problems.
- **Family Time:** The workshop allowed families a creative pause to explore the familiar location in a different way - encouraging dwell time at the palace grounds and nearby attractions

'Do it again!'
[Sarah]

- Explore other audiences as well as local families via local nurseries and nearby church family group story sessions
- Take authors into settings as well as encouraging families to come to the space
- Longer planning time would allow for an outdoors reading and exploration of the Deer park as a facilitated session as well as self led for Chapter 2

OPEN MIC NIGHT

LIZZIE LOVEJOY & JANE CRAWFORD

THE ARTISTS' HUB
DL14 7NP

FRIDAY
11TH SEPTEMBER



Hosted by award winning poet Lizzie Lovejoy, with a featured guest spot from local poet Jane Crawford. There was an opportunity to share your work or simply enjoy an evening of poetry, stories, and spoken word in a friendly, supportive, and welcoming environment.

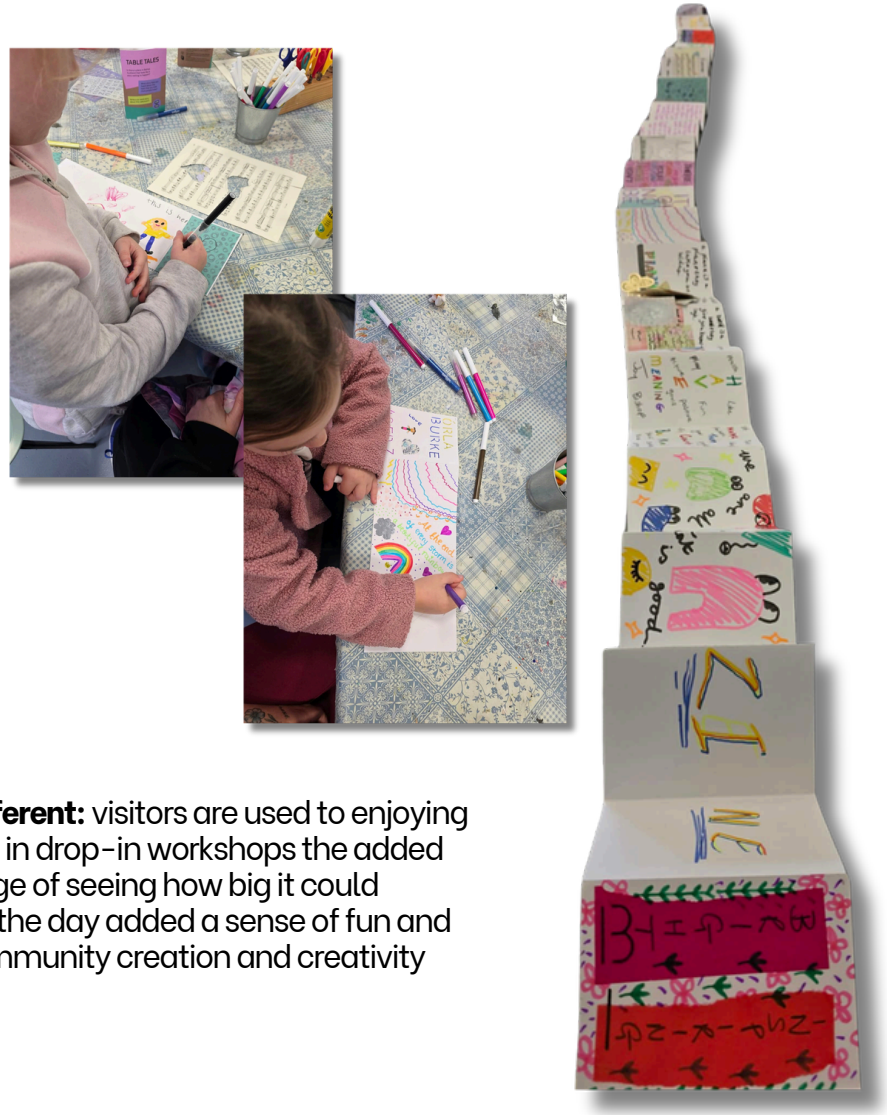
- **Meet local writers:** It provided an opportunity to connect with like minded creatives from the local area
- **Experience of inclusive art:** Spoken word events can support the breaking down the belief that poetry is stuffy or inaccessible, this event welcomed people of all skill levels and writing styles

- Three musicians attended - there is scope to develop this
- Feedback was positive to make this a regular event outside of the Word Fest Festival window
- A more intimate venue would work better acoustically but would need to be accessible
- Attendees liked the idea of potentially having the opportunity to buy refreshments and felt the evening had potential to be longer in duration.

'Lush wee night up here in Bishop supporting and doing words with some class people'
[@husbandmaterialpoetryand prose]

THE LONGEST ZINE

DAISY ARTS CIC



THE ARTISTS' HUB
DL14 7NP

SATURDAY
12TH SEPTEMBER

A Book in a Day: The Longest Zine

How long can a book be?

Daisy Arts embarked on a quest to create 'The Longest Zine'. People were invited to add their own page through drawing, writing, collage and wordplay.

The collective book grew throughout the day.

Unusual & different: visitors are used to enjoying creating zines in drop-in workshops the added extra challenge of seeing how big it could become over the day added a sense of fun and collective community creation and creativity

- Timings of the sessions to be revised based on constructive feedback from families
- families really enjoyed the drop-in relaxed format of these activities and loved that they could stay as long as they wished to create

'The best thing in the world is books!'
[A workshop participant]

ONE WORD MANY STORIES

DAISY ARTS CIC

THE ARTISTS' HUB
DL14 7NP

SUNDAY
13TH SEPTEMBER



Daisy Arts invited families to choose a word and see where it takes them. They were supported to turn it into a poem, story, drawing or collage. Building on the idea that one word can spark a thousand ideas ... encouraging imagination and playful language. Attendees were encouraged to explore what words would tell their story

Connection: Families working alongside each other to create provides creative pauses to be together using imagination and problem solving skills away from home and screens
Role models: Families experiencing Word Fest together can grow in confidence together. Children seeing adults reading for pleasure can help support and build a culture of inquisitive learners.

- Dynamic re-configuring of the activity to make the most of the lovely weather on delivery day led to positive engagement from a wider footfall
- Wider advertising and communication and the day of the week for hosting - Sunday in town was quiet .
- Word Fest for Chapter 2 can encourage more footfall to a usually quiet day in town.

'Very interesting and friendly staff...lots of educational things to do. Bishop Auckland is getting nicer by the day'
[A udrey]

THE PUPPETRY WORD MACHINE

DAISY ARTS



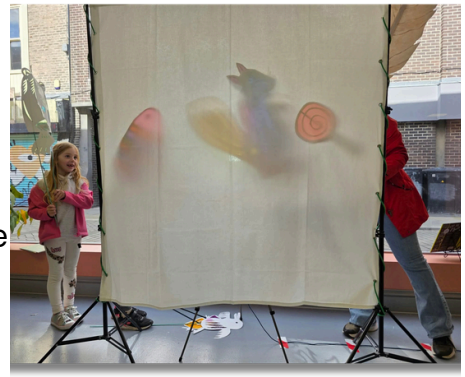


THE ARTISTS' HUB
DL14 7NP

SATURDAY
19TH SEPTEMBER

Families were invited to step into the world of puppetry and words with Daisy Arts!

Choosing puppets, picking a word and see where your imagination can take you.
Create characters, stories and playful moments together as words come to life.



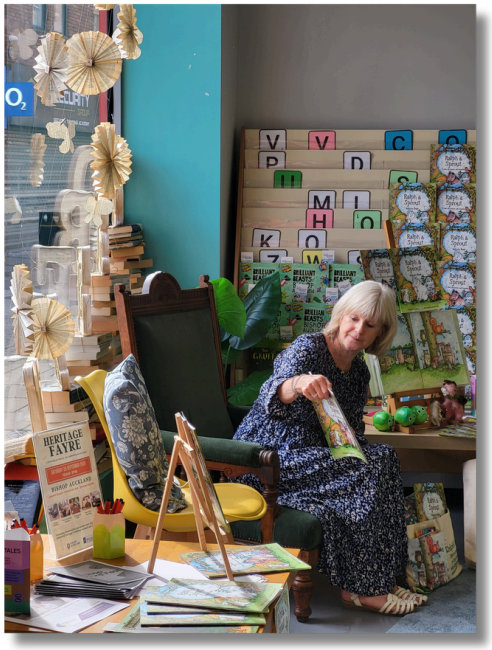
Imagination: This workshop provided an opportunity for the joy of creating without rules or direction - creating stories as they appear in the mind - live in the moment
Collaboration: The activity was accessible in design so even those visiting without children or young people would feel comfortable 'having a go'
Language exploration: Simple puppet workshops can be the ideal environment for language exploration away from a conventional educational setting

'Leave the phone, pick up a book, what a great idea!'
[D Ebdon]

- This activity was really well received and may work well next year in a darker venue in the town where the lighting element can be better controlled for effective shadow puppet shows
- Having some pre-made story lines for less confident families would be a great addition for Chapter 2.

RALPH & SPROUT

LINDA LEE & LORRAINE HALL BOOK READING & WATERCOLOUR SESSION







THE ARTISTS' HUB
DL14 7NP

SUNDAY
20TH SEPTEMBER

Families were encouraged to step into a world of stories, creativity and imagination with Ralph & Sprout. The family-friendly session combined storytelling with a hands-on creative watercolour activity, inviting audiences of all ages to explore, create and discover together.

- **Language/Vocabulary:** Listening to stories introduces people to new words, sounds, and sentence structures naturally. This fits well with the Word Fest objectives of dispelling the 'scary myths' surrounding reading and writing which are often passed across generations unintentionally
- **Imagination and Creativity:** Stories allow children space to picture characters and worlds in their own minds invent new stories from familiar tales or new adventures for those they have just been read to about.

- More of this type of activity on Chapter 2 program, for a range of ages and feedback suggested for adults too!
- The watercolour activity was enjoyed by a range of generations equally.

'Very good for the community'
[Anon]

WILL O BURN AND THE FRIENDS WHO REMEMBER

VICTORIA DOWNES
BOOK READING & GARDEN STONE PAINTING



THE ARTISTS' HUB
DL14 7NP

SUNDAY
20TH SEPTEMBER







Local author Victoria Downes delivered a family-friendly storytelling experience filled with creativity, participation and fun.

Through stories and engaging activities, this interactive session invited everyone to become part of the adventure.

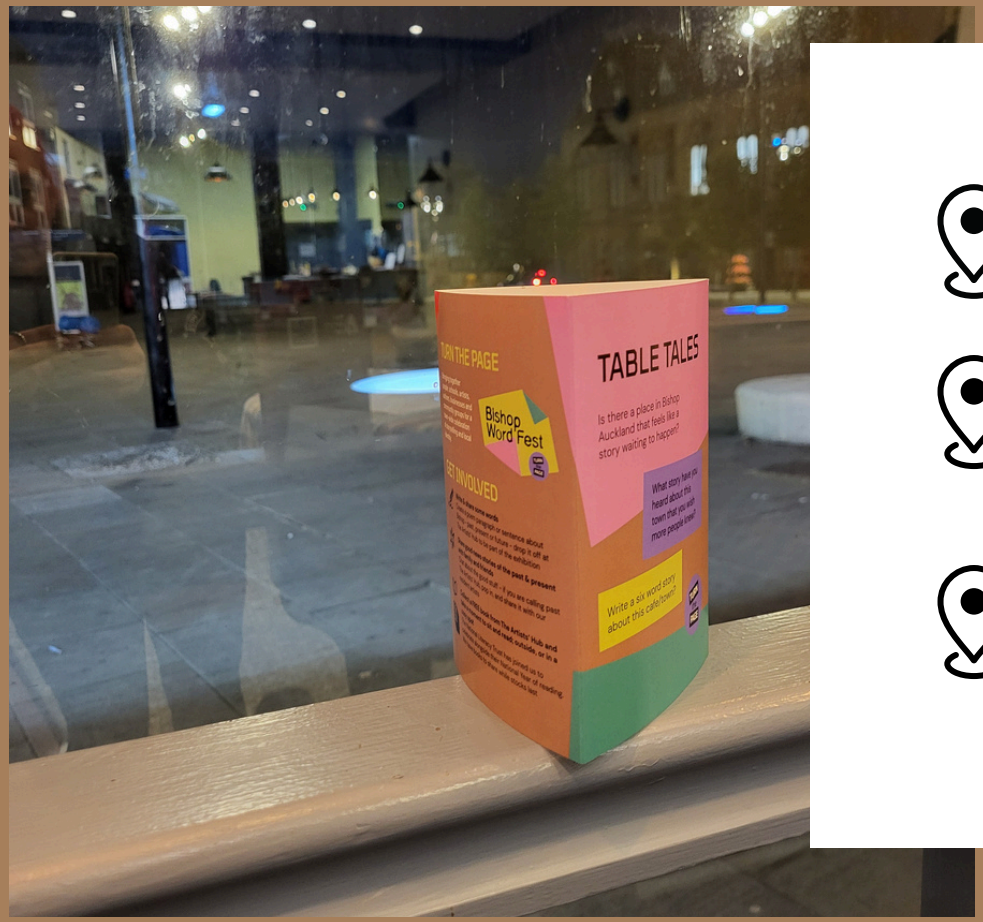
- **Empathy:** This session provided children with a safe way to explore feelings like sadness, anger, or fear and learn empathy.
- **Challenging topics:** This session tackled hard topics such as grief and encouraged the creation of something beautiful with room to have conversations with trained individuals on hard subject matter providing confidence and support to adults navigating these conversations

- A tender tale of a difficult subject with the creative activity alongside has given the team confidence to schedule similar workshop sessions for Chapter 2 - books that encourage the reader to think and explore

'Well organised, great to have something new in town'
[Anne]

Bishop Word Fest

HEARTH



SIP & STORIES

ONCE UPON A TIME DRAMA WORKSHOPS

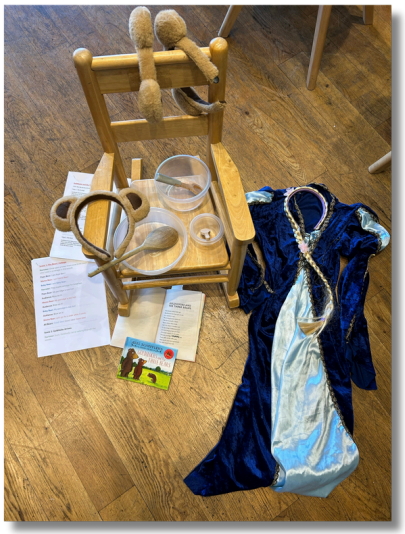
SHANTY SINGERS SING ALONG

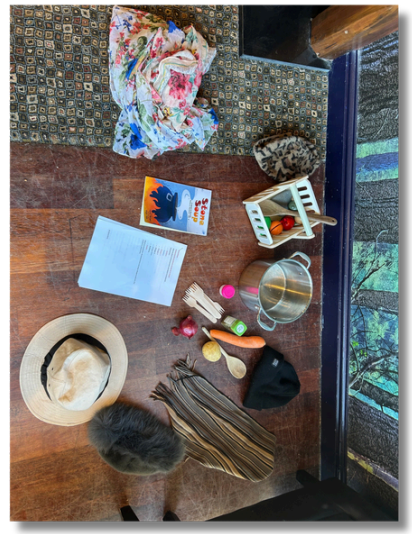
ONCE UPON A TIME DRAMA SESSIONS

DELIVERED BY HEARTH

THE HEARTH
DL14 7NJ

SUNDAY
13TH SEPTEMBER





HEARTH facilitated two engaging drama sessions full of creativity, storytelling and performance. They were suitable for all ages, these interactive activities encourage participants to explore stories, characters and imagination through drama and play.

Partnership working: Word Fest wanted to explore how partner programming could increase what is deliverable within a tight time frame and budget
Additional activity to program: It was great to be able to offer drama as part of the offer as Daisy Arts who would have delivered in house were already delivering on other elements of the program

- Lead times for elements like this will need to be addressed as HEARTH's program cycle has limited flexibility for nimble events outside of their core programming
- Great experience to establish partnership working between the Artists' Hub and HEARTH
- Activity well attended and can be built upon in Chapter 2
- Links to be built with WASH and Kynren for drama offer

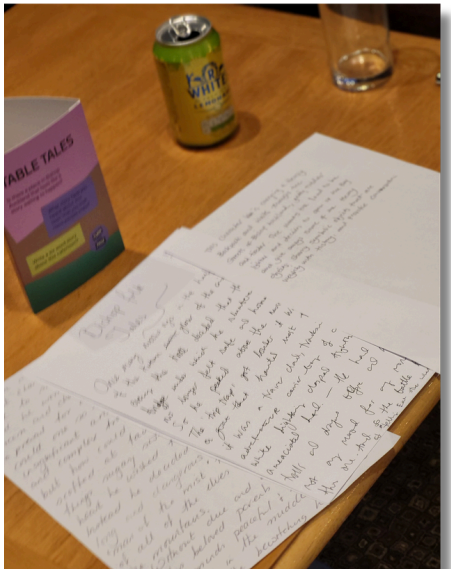
'I loved it! Where else can I do drama Mam'
[Child to parent after the workshop]

SIP & STORIES

HOSTED BY HEARTH

FUNDED BY BISHOP AUCKLAND TOWN COUNCIL





THE HEARTH
DL14 7NJ

SATURDAY
12TH SEPTEMBER

Local writer and poet Laura Roberts facilitated an evening of folklore, local history, legends, and lives brought to life through storytelling and spoken word. Hearth provided bar provision so attendees could relax with a drink and enjoy tales that celebrate the character, heritage, and spirit of our community.

Social: The session provided an opportunity to listen to stories and write in an informal environment with like minded individuals.
Creative: An opportunity to be creative in a low pressure environment and experience the joy of creating written work pleasure
Over 18's only: A place where those with children could experience something 'just for them' and where those that don't have children don't need to worry about chatting about topics which aren't suitable for younger ears

- Scope to develop this partnership for next year
- Solid format – enjoyed by those who attended
- Will benefit from a longer lead in and pictures to help describe the concept for Chapter 2

'A lovely performance, enjoyed the writing and it got me out of the house!'
[A visitor to the venue during the event]

SHANTY SINGERS SING ALONG

FUNDED BY HEARTH

HOSTED BY THE ARTISTS' HUB

THE ARTISTS'HUB
DL14 7NP

SATURDAY
12TH SEPTEMBER





People were invited to the Hub to experience a selection of traditional sea shanties and folk songs with the Shanty Singers from Bishop Auckland.

This adults-only performance at The Artists' Hub celebrated the rich heritage of railway and coal related music, bringing powerful harmonies, engaging stories and plenty of good humour to an entertaining hour of song.

Relaxing: Singing is a great way to relax and unwind and many people forget that song lyrics a can be a great pathway back into reading for pleasure. Word Fest wanted to help people remember the joy that can be found in singing as a group.
Community: Group singing has strengthened communities for many years and providing this opportunity allowed for people to connect with strangers in a united aim

- A different venue may be better acoustically for Chapter 2
- Management of this cross collaboration needs tweaking to become familiar with both parties processes and capacities and ways of working

Excellent, educational'
[A joyful singer]

BISHOP WORD FEST - TURN THE PAGE

LOCAL BUSINESS

Bishop Word Fest



CONTENTS

WORD HUNT TRAIL

TABLE TALKERS

WORD TRAIL HUNT

BRILLIANT BEASTS OF BISHOP AUCKLAND

THE ARTISTS' HUB
DL14 7NP &
8 LOCAL BUSINESSES

SATURDAY & SUNDAY
12 & 13TH SEPTEMBER



Word Trail booklets were available to collect from the Artists' Hub. Families were encouraged to follow the trail around North Bondgate and Fore Bondgate. Finding the curious creatures hiding along the route and unscramble the letters to discover what they have been up to. They then returned the completed booklet to The Artists' Hub to receive a free book

Connection: Increase footfall and exploration around nearby local shops:
Imagination: Exploration of the town through a local story:
Aspiration: To show children of the town they can be authors and illustrators too:

- Shop opening hours made planning difficult but not impossible
- Longer trail or multiple trails for next year
- Potential to create another book with a local school for Chapter 2 to add to a mini-series which could be stocked in shops for tourism and locals alike
- Positive response from shops

"The Word Trail was a great experience... I loved getting a book!"
[Max]

TABLE TALKERS & BOOKMARKS

CHAT - CONNECT & SHARE





LOCAL BUSINESSES & CAFES

7 & 20TH SEPTEMBER

Table talkers and bookmarks were distributed across the town in places people would sit and read the information on them. Venues included; The Park Head, Bishop Auckland Town Hall, McIntyres, FifteasTea Room and many more. The intention was to combine advertising and conversation to spark interest and drive footfall to the showcase/exhibition. The bookmarks were also distributed in the free books to boost awareness of the event.

Memorable: Traditional marketing such as leaflets often end up in the bin - the concept was to keep the 'leaflet' in one spot while the audience ebbed and flowed naturally in cafe settings.
Relevant: Bookmarks instead of flyers appealed to the target audience as they were bookish in nature and a tangible practical keepsake of their visit.

- Placing them in a variety of locations beyond the town centre would increase awareness of the event and resulting additional footfall
- Making sure they were in place ahead of the event would drive curiosity and promotion for future events
- Lots of visitors over the two weeks mentioned that it was a table talker that sparked curiosity to swing by and see what was going on in The Artists' Hub.

'Wonderful experience – the poems were excellent, especially the children's''
[A Pratt]

Bishop Word Fest

ORGANIC ADDITIONS



CONTENTS

PETRICHOR

EILEDON BOOKS

THE NATIONAL YEAR OF READING

DURHAM UNIVERSITY

ENGLISH HERITAGE

ORGANIC CROSS POLLINATION EVENT ACTIVITY



There were people who had been involved during the planning stages of Word Fest who were eager and motivated to instigate some activity and ideas independently - this was explored to test bed the potential for organic growth in Chapter 2 (2027) and what - if - any different support may be needed.

PETRICHOR & EILEDON BOOKS

The owners at these two local shops (also supported through the Stronger Towns funding) have been the festival's biggest cheerleaders from day 1. Their support has added energy and a positive feel to the process. They are genuinely invested in the prosperity of the town and the Hub team is looking at ways to continue connections throughout the year for other events and activities. They are keenly looking forward to Chapter 2 and ways to be involved with it.

NATIONAL YEAR OF READING

Partnership with The National Year of Reading allowed Word Fest to be able to share free books with the local people of Bishop Auckland during Word Fest - a total of 450 books were kindly donated.

Creative producer Alison is in the process of completing ambassador training with the National Literacy Trust so that the Artists' Hub can continue to develop this relationship and have the possibility of more free books and opportunities in the future.

DURHAM UNIVERSITY

Durham University were keen to champion Word Fest and they circulated the information within their networks.

This led to some very interesting connections with authors whose details have been passed on to the local Bookshop for them to work together to explore the potential for author nights in the future.

They also offered potential connections with their Palace Green library and their student volunteer team for Chapter 2.

ENGLISH HERITAGE

English Heritage supported by funding a small selection of activity bookmarks for 'The Song of The Deer Park' book event. Families were gifted with the beautiful book and generous use of the imagery was granted by author Jilly Johnston. Possibilities for developing this relationship alongside The Artists' Hub is in discussion with English Heritage who are very keen to be more involved with Chapter 2.

CONNECTIVITY WITH

Bishop Word Fest

BISHOP AUCKLAND COLLEGE

CONNECTIVE THREAD

- STUDENT POEMS
- TABLE TALKERS
- MCINTYRES

POEMS

COLLEGE LIFE & BISHOP AUCKLAND



BISHOP AUCKLAND COLLEGE **7 & 20TH SEPTEMBER**

The students and staff at Bishop Auckland College were invited to respond to some creative prompts about the college and the town as part of the Word Fest outreach element of the program.

Civic pride: Students were encouraged to talk positively about the place they call home
Partnership working: Building relationship with the college as part of the developing Artists' Hub space
Creativity and imagination: Encouraging staff and students to be creative beyond the classroom and discover joy in the journey of writing and reading

- Timing was a little challenging due to college new intake arriving after the summer
- Great to work on something together and build on established and growing connections and partnerships with the students and staff.

'What a lovely space …free books a bonus …loved the poetry."
[Anne]

FEEDBACK

"Word Trail was a great day out for the family, well done." [Anon]

'I Love it!' [child age 6]

"What an amazing way to get everyone reading! Hope this becomes a regular event." [Jordan & Lyra]

'It was the best hunt ever!' [Eva]

"A lovely imaginative festival, allowing all ages to participate and share memories. Absolutely perfect... truly heaven for someone who loves the written word. More of this please." [G. Faulkes]

"Had a great visit to the Word Fest, lovely jubbly, met some really nice people." [Janey]

"Today was amazing, I loved the Word Trail." [Millie]

"I think it is brilliant! Dolly Parton would be thrilled with your work for children in Bishop Auckland. Loads of bookworms are the future." [Adele]

"Brilliant way to explore the joy of literacy and storytelling in our town. Some little ones may not have access to the written word – absolutely brilliant." [Anon]

"As an ex Durham head, I love to see how education, local life, creativity and heart are coming together. May it become a permanent feature." [H. Williams]

Bishop Word Fest

BUDGET OVERVIEW

BUDGET

OVERVIEW

ALLOCATED FUNDING BISHOP TOWN COUNCIL	£6,000.00
EVENT SPEND	£5,999.10

EVENT SPEND BREAKDOWN

ARTISTS & CREATIVE FACILITATORS	£3,680.00
POETS, AUTHORS & ILLUSTRATORS	£1,574.50
MARKETING & PROMOTION	£ 744.60

Estimated IN KIND contribution

£12,743.62

THE TOWN COUNCIL'S INVESTMENT ENABLED

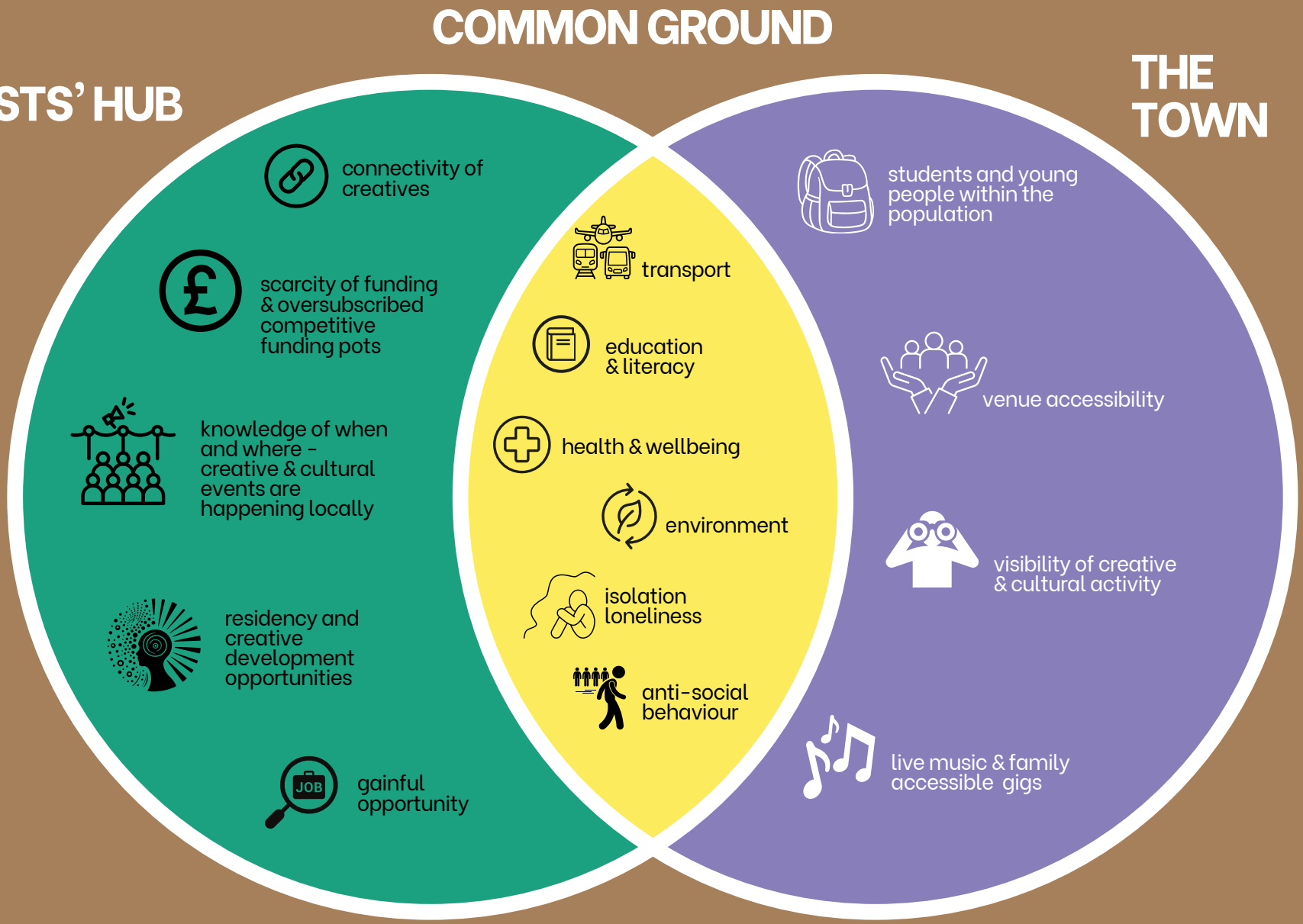
- A two week festival with free access for all
- Over 1,700 meaningful engagements
- A high quality exhibition open daily
- Free books for families
- Professional artists, authors and facilitators
- Activities for all ages, from early years to older adults
- Strengthened partnerships across the town
- Increased footfall in the town centre on traditionally slower trading days
- A cultural offer that would cost significantly more if delivered commercially

Bishop Word Fest

WHAT & WHERE NEXT

RECOMMENDATIONS

EMERGING ISSUES/TOPICS TO INFORM PLANNING FOR 2027



EACH PARTNER HAS THEIR UNIQUE ISSUES ROOTED IN THE TOWN - WITHIN THIS ARE ELEMENTS OF COMMON GROUND

OPERATIONAL LEARNING FROM CHAPTER 1

KEY REFLECTIONS TO CARRY FORWARD



COMMUNICATION

Early communication with partners will enhance program quality and reduce pressure on core event team



SIGNAGE

Clear signage and friendly staff and volunteers made the festival welcoming and easy to navigate



VENUE

The Artists' Hub proved an excellent central venue, retaining this is important but identified scope to use multiple venues for Chapter 2



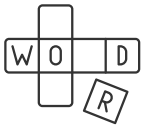
PUBLIC APPETITE

The appetite for reading/writing/word focused events is strong. Many of the visitors asked for the festival to become permanent



FREE BOOKS

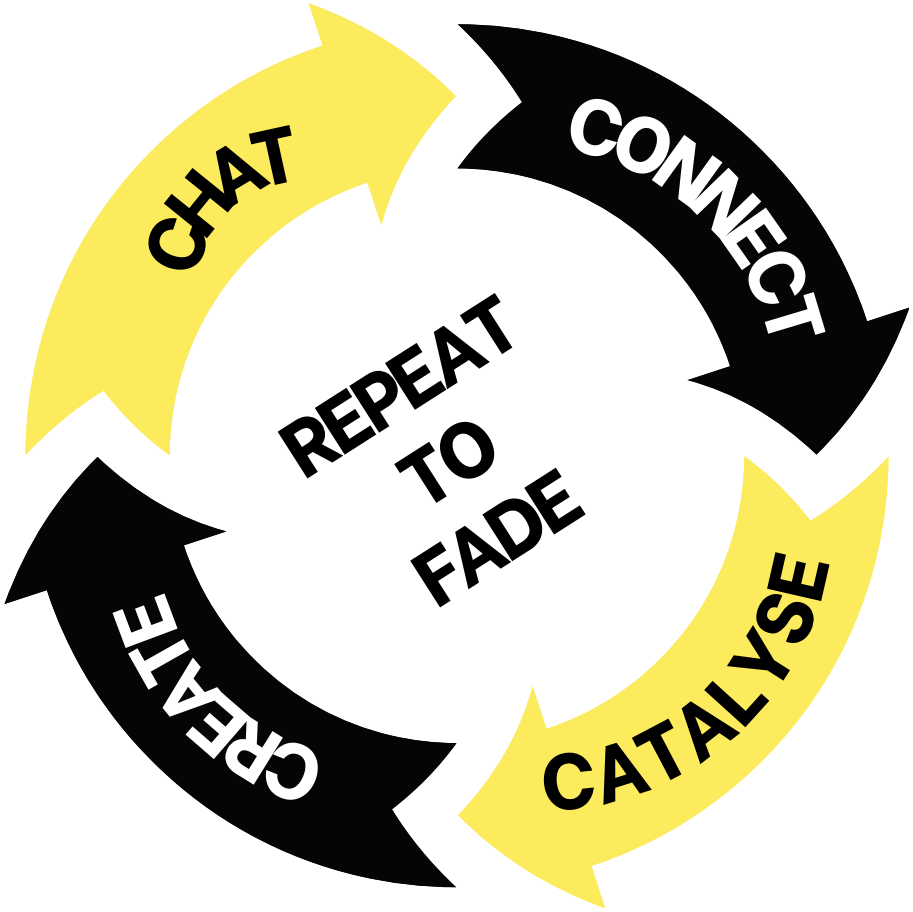
The free books were a major draw and where possible should remain part of the core offer



ACTIVITIES

The activities were well received and a mixture of all types should be developed for Chapter 2 including development of the Word hunt trail which encouraged footfall to local businesses and movement around the town

SUGGESTED PATHS FORWARD



Widen the call for interested/curious people wishing to become involved

Use both online and in person methods/strategies to reach a wide varied audience and event team

Go to the places from which their enthusiasm, is sparked - explore possible creative and cultural progressions from that spark

Continue to liaise with original supporters and creators while simultaneously creating new connections

Support - develop - repeat to fade

As the core grows in size and enthusiasm so too will the natural progression and connectivity and communication across the town. People based Word Fest pollination through generosity and collaboration

CONNECTIVITY & COMMON GROUND

REGENERATION



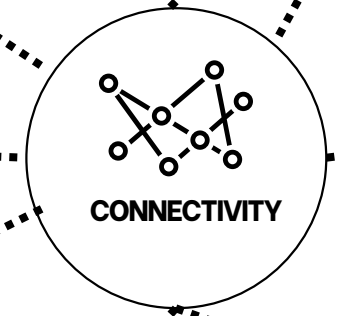
Catalysing through skills, support and curiosity based project seeds - each inquisitive participant comes attached with a postcode. Allow capacity for people based creation. Where the enthusiasm is evident activity will naturally begin to grow and with nurturing and the right environment will thrive allowing for the event to become embedded as part of the town's cultural growing offer



Simplified processes allowing nimbleness to act when opportunities and ideas/ concepts germinate to ensure sustained interest by those involved

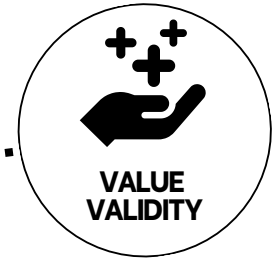


Creating safe, nurturing environments will be essential for ensuring genuine authentic responses and engagement in conversations moving forward

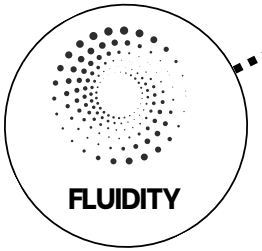




An environment of trust and transparency between all involved in the Word Fest process at all levels and stages



Value and remuneration inline with artist rates of pay



All emerging activity - to embrace fluid creative approaches alongside traditional 'project' style activities/engagements Throughout the development & delivery stages

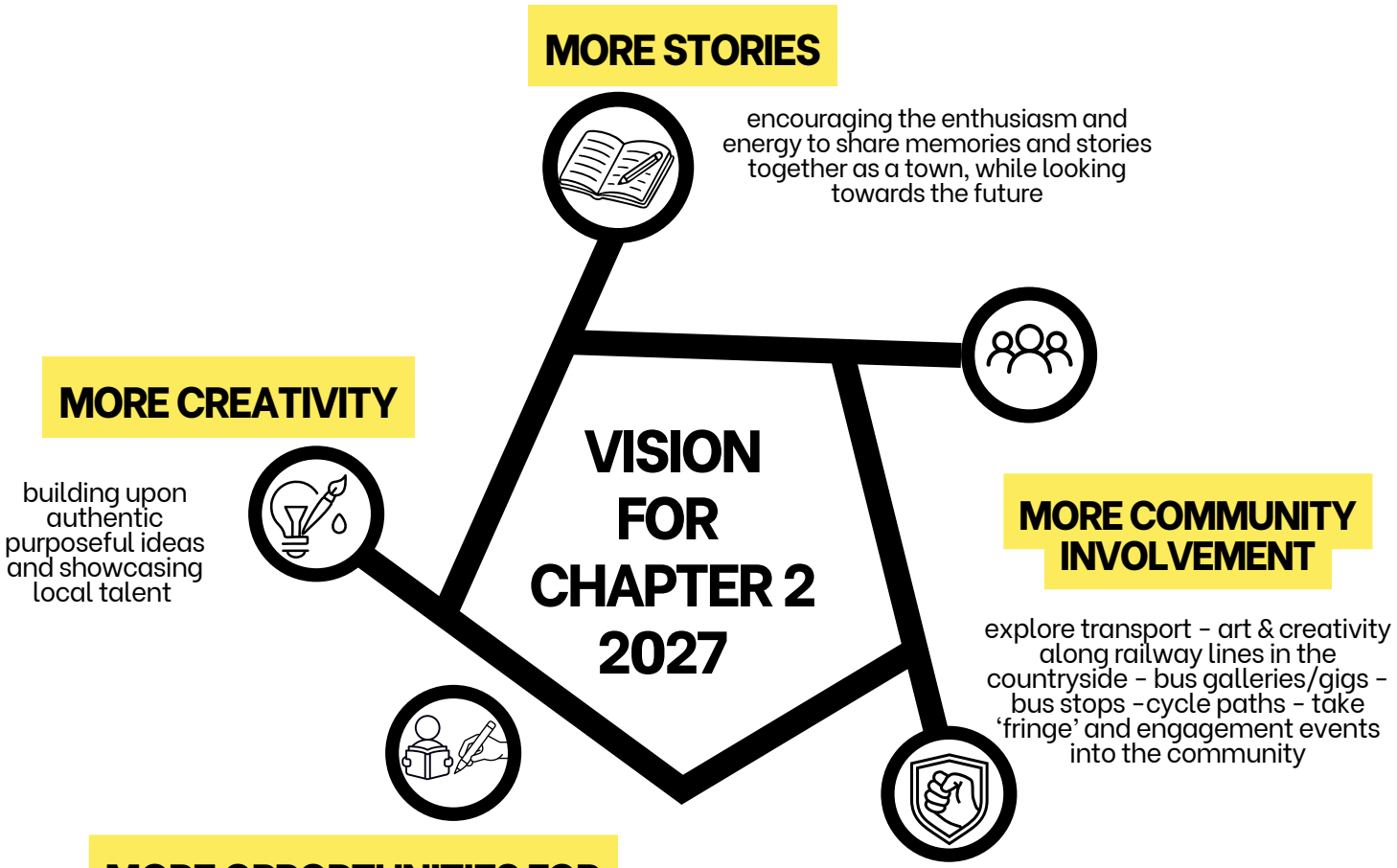


Clear event comms, key purposes & intended outcomes/expectations



Democratised decision making - genuine inclusion within decision making and processes

BISHOP WORD FEST - TURN THE PAGE:
CHAPTER 2 will build on everything achieved this year



MORE

OPPORTUNITIES

Be responsive, listen to existing creatives/artists/community members - explore cultural 'associated' opportunities /front of house/behind the scenes. Get curious explore further what exists that can be woven into the emerging plans for 2027

CONNECTIONS

Explore the continuation of the collection of interested partner organisations

COLLABORATIONS

With early planning, committed partners and continued support from Bishop Auckland Town Council , Word Fest can grow into a flagship annual event that celebrates the town's creativity, heritage, love of words and community spirit.

PREPARING FOR CHAPTER 2

Word Fest: Turn The Page has shown that Bishop Auckland is ready for a regular, community led celebration of all things words and creativity. The strong public response, high engagement numbers and wide partner involvement make a clear case for planning "Chapter 2" well in advance. To build on the success of this year, the following next steps are recommended:

STRENGTHENING LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

Early planning will allow the team to deepen relationships with organisations who played a key role this year and bring in new partners who can expand the festival's reach. Key Delivery Partners for 2027

- **Baccanalia** Proposed lead partner for programme delivery. Their experience in cultural programming, community events and creative coordination makes them an ideal anchor organisation for Chapter 2.
- **Creative Director; Community Engagement Strategy** – Alison Curry Alison's leadership, vision and community connections were central to the success of Chapter 1. Her continued role will ensure the festival remains rooted in local voices and community pride.
- **Drama; Creative Performance Partner** – Jane Crawford Jane's contribution to the Open Mic and her wider creative practice were standout elements of the festival. Her ability to inspire confidence, nurture new voices and bring storytelling to life makes her an invaluable partner. Her involvement would elevate the drama, spoken word and performance offer for Chapter 2.
- **Bishop Auckland College** The college has expressed interest in supporting future festivals. This could include student involvement, creative production, volunteering, media support or hosting activities.

FUNDING STRATEGY

To secure a stable foundation for Chapter 2, the following funding approach is recommended:

- Begin applications as early as possible (autumn/winter 2026).
- Combine local authority funding, heritage funding, arts funding, and community grants.
- Explore sponsorship from local businesses who benefited from increased footfall.
- Continue offering free books through literacy partners such as the National Literacy Trust.
- Build a multiyear funding plan to allow the festival to grow sustainably.

POTENTIAL FUNDING PARTNERS FOR 2027

- Bishop Auckland Town Council | core funder
- English Heritage | potential programme and venue partner
- Kynren / The Auckland Project | heritage storytelling, performance and family engagement

These partners align strongly with the festival's aims: literacy, creativity, heritage, community and place-based pride.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Learning from this year's success, Chapter 2 should:

- Maintain a balance of family activities, adult events, drop ins, and performances.
- Keep the Word Trail as a signature activity – it was one of the most loved elements.
- Expand drama, spoken word and storytelling through Jane Crawford's creative leadership.
- Strengthen links with local authors, illustrators and makers.
- Continue offering free books to support reading for pleasure.
- Build more opportunities for schools, youth groups, and inter-generational participation.

SUGGESTED DATES FOR 2027

Based on venue availability and partner capacity, two possible festival windows are recommended:

15 August – 29 August 2027
(Summer holidays = strong for families, schools not back)

13 September – 25 September 2027
(Aligns with term time = strong for school engagement and town centre footfall)

A decision should be made early to allow partners to reserve space and begin planning.

CONCLUSION

Word Fest: Turn The Page delivered a **joyful**, **creative** and **community** centred celebration of all things words in Bishop Auckland. The festival reached a wide range of people, **strengthened** local **partnerships**, increased access to books, and brought new cultural activity into the town centre.

Public feedback shows strong demand for Word Fest to continue and **grow**.

With ongoing **support**, the festival can become a regular part of Bishop Auckland's cultural life, **inspiring** readers and writers of all ages and **helping to build a town where stories, creativity and community thrive**.

MAIN CONCLUSIONS & LEARNING



CONTINUE AS A COLLABORATIVE, CO-CREATING INITIATIVE CHALLENGING ASSUMPTIONS/BIAS WELCOMING DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES



TRUST
RESPECT A VARIETY OF EXPERIENCE
MAINTAIN CLEAR AND HEALTHY BOUNDARIES FOR COLLABORATIVE PARTICIPATION WHICH ALLOW SCOPE FOR A VARIETY OF PERSPECTIVES TO BE EXPLORED



OPPORTUNITIES FOR CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT & PEER SUPPORT ARE ESSENTIAL FOR DEVELOPING CONNECTIVE TISSUE ACROSS THE TOWN



SPACE + TIME + PEOPLE + SAFETY = THRIVING

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS & THANKS

***BLUE SKY THINKERS STAR GAZERS DREAMERS CREATORS COLLABORATORS CONTRIBUTORS**

Daisy Arts CIC | The Auckland Project | Bishop Auckland Town Hall | Baccanalia | Bridge Creative | HEARTH | Durham County Council Libraries | National Literacy Trust | English Heritage | Durham University | No More Nowt | Kinship | Sawdust | Local businesses | Community partners | Volunteers | Supporters

*Illustrative not exhaustive

END



DISPEL [@DISPELART]

Email/

dispel.develop@gmail.com

Website/
www.dispelart.com

Bishop Word Fest

BISHOP AUCKLAND TOWN COUNCIL

Item: 5b

Bishop Auckland Town Council

Community Committee

14th October 2026

The Flying Scotsman – Drive through

Summary:

- The Weardale Railway have the flying Scotsman coming from Darlington to Stanhope twice a day on 13, 14 and 15th November 2026. This is a historic moment for the line and for the train as it has never been through Bishop Auckland. Note: it will not be stopping at Bishop Auckland but will drive through slowly.

- The itinerary will be:
    - Darlington at 8.40am – arriving at Stanhope at 10.15 departs Stanhope at 11.15 arrives in Darlington 12:30
    - Darlington at 13:40p m – arriving at Stanhope at 15.15 departs Stanhope at 16.15 arrives in Darlington 12:30

- It is anticipated there will be a high demand for the event and a lot of people wanting to view the train.

- The station will be marshalled and due to the size Bishop Auckland will have a limited number of platform tickets at the Weardale platform (the Mayor has been invited separately to Stanhope station). The railway is currently liaising with Bishop Trains about their platform usage.

- The Weardale Railway are keen to work in partnership and facilitate some groups to be involved in the event. If possible it would be good to have some involvement on each day but may have limitations at across the weekend.

- Our Community Engagement Officer has been tasked to speak to:
    - Unformed services (cadets/ scouts/ college UPS students) to help marshall the platform
    - On the Friday - a School group up to 30 to be invited to wave at the train. The schools that were involved with the planting at the railway garden will be offered attendance first.
    - Sat and Sunday – have an invited group of up to 30 to wave at the train.

Recommended:

- that member note the report, and the collaborative work with the Weardale Railway and bring a post event briefing to the appropriate Community Committee.

Item 6

Bishop Auckland Town Council

Community Committee

Thursday 15 October 2026

Community Support 2026-27 plus Proposals for 2027-28 and

Events 2026-27 plus Proposals for 2027-28

It is often hard to distinguish fully between community support and community event activity as sometimes there is a grey area between the two. This report sets out:

- Community support for 2026 – 27 and Proposals for 2027-28
- Events for 2026-27 and Proposals for 2027-28
- Proposed budget recommendations for 2027-28 and the proposed event calendar and community support programme.

Community Support 2026-27

The table below shows the cost codes and budget allocations along with the spend to date and the remaining balances. The next section of the report will look at each of those allocations for 2026-27 and then it will move on to proposals for 2027-28.

Cost Centre	Cost Code	Budget allocation 2026-27	Spend to date	Balance unallocated
Community Support	Grants and Donations (Com fund)	£15,000	£5,896	£8,984
	Community Organisation Support	£15,000	£11,000	£4,000
	School Holiday Support	£15,000	£5,000	£10,000

Community Fund

Total budget Available: £15,000

Allocated as follows:

- In Bloom Railway Garden awarded £700 spend to date £562.99

- Army Cadets – tablets and IT Equipment – Awarded £1000 Spend to date £880.33
- Men's Group Woodhouse Close awarded £1000 spend to date £1000
- Friday Friends Group - Bridge Creative CIC - awarded £1000 - £0 claimed to date[1]
- Durham Amateur Football Trust – Leaflet -awarded spent £303.06
- Bishop Auckland Community Partnership – Summer Trips - £1000 awarded, £0 Claimed to date (expecting October at latest)
- Renaissance CIC – Training - £150 outstanding from award made last financial year.
- Choral Society – support with concert– awarded £1000 claimed £1000 to date.
- Applications for consideration by the committee have been made under item 4 of this agenda. If all applications are approved, it leaves £XX to be allocated by the end of the financial year.

Recommended: that member make a commitment to ensure that the budget allocation remaining is reviewed in January 2027 to ensure that all funds are allocated for this years budget by the end of the financial year.

The following report sets out the proposals for the remainder of the 2026-27 for the events budgets and the community support budgets which are managed by this committee as well as proposals for 2027-28.

Community Organisation Support

Allocated as follows:

- £5,000 Woodhouse Close Community Centre
- £5,000 Auckland Youth and Community Centre
- £1,000 Chef Academy agreed for 2026-27 and 2027-28 - 2 year commitment.

Funds remaining for 2026-27: £4,000

At the last Community Committee meeting it was agreed that meetings would be held with Bridge Creative CIC, Bishop Auckland Community Partnership. These have taken place. At the last meeting the report outlines what both organisations do. Like most community support organisations they are all struggling with utility costs in particular as well as finding most grant funding is always for new projects not established long standing proven projects.

Bridge Creative CIC – operate from the Henknowle Ward, they were founded to improve employment opportunities for adults with learning disabilities and autistic adults across County Durham. Through real work experience, skill-building, and exciting opportunities, they aim to raise the aspirations of the people they support and ultimately support people to lead the best life possible. They have stepped into a community role within the ward, and offer a Friday friends group with lunch where members of the community come to the centre. Bridge Creative are going to attend full council to talk about their expansion into the former community centre and the role they hope to place in the community of Henknowle.

Bishop Auckland Community Partnership – is a charity which operates from the Four Clocks Centre Bishop Auckland. The centre houses a range of organisations and the Time for You Tea Room/ Café.

[1] The planned event was not able to take place due to unforeseen circumstances therefore they wish to utilise and carry it out in 2027.

The council had received a request from the **Bishop Auckland Football Club Museum and Shop** – who operate from a small shop space in the Market Place have approached the council seeking support, as they are financially struggling, primarily to cover rent. This was discussed at full council and more information has been requested from the organisation.

Recommended:

- that members note the update and agree that the remaining £4,000 of the budget is allocated as follows:
    - £1000 to Bridge Creative CIC for their Friday Friends group and agree that the Community fund allocation can transfer to the Friday friends group too.
    - £3,000 to the Bishop Auckland Community Partnership to support their wide range of work and groups.

Organisation support for 2027-28

All organisations are struggling at the moment with funding, and utility costs. For 2027-28 there is a demand to be able to support more organisations with the cost of them just being themselves and the support that they deliver. Members have always wished to see a even split between organisations across the wards, however there are very limited organisations which are operating in the Cockton Hill Ward. The council are limited on what funding they can provide to schools, it has to be for non- curricular activities, under double taxation rules. The proposal would be if budget and precept setting allowed would be to increase this budget allocation and distribute as follows:

Organisation	Location	Areas it supports	Amount
Woodhouse Close Community Centre	Woodhouse Close	Predominantly Woodhouse Close and Henknowle but all residents can access the groups, services and facilities.	£6000
Auckland Youth and Community Centre	Woodhouse Close	All of Town. it is the youth centre for all of Bishop Auckland	£6000
Bishop Auckland Community Partnership Four Clocks Centre	Town Ward	All of Town	£6000
Bridge Creative CIC	Henknowle	Henknowle for community activities but all residents are welcome to attend from any area.	£3000
St Annes	Town Ward	Available to all residents to Support with the annual uniform bank	£1000
Chef Academy – BA College and TAP	Town Ward	Open to all areas	£1000
Other	TBC	Other areas	£2000
		Totals	£25000

From a £25,000 investment, over ten key community organisations can be supported. The Town Council recognises the vital role that community and voluntary organisations play in enhancing the wellbeing, resilience and vibrancy of the town. Through the provision of grant funding, the Council is able to support local initiatives that address community needs, promote social inclusion, encourage volunteering and deliver positive outcomes for residents. Investment in community organisations represents excellent value

for money, often leveraging additional funding, volunteer support and wider community benefits. Grant funding therefore enables the Council to maximise its impact by supporting community-led projects that contribute directly to the Council's strategic priorities and improve the quality of life within Bishop Auckland.

***Recommended**:*

- that members consider and recommend to full council as part of budget setting that the community organisation support funding allocations are a vital life line for community organisations and their people they support, and the budget should be increased to £25,000 for 2027-28.

School Holiday Support

Total budget Available 2026-27: £15,000

Summer Time Activities 2026-27: £3,000

Allocated as follows:

- £4,000 Auckland Youth and Community Centre for summer activities.
- £1,000 Wear Valley Community Action for events in school holiday periods.
- £1,000 Woodhouse Close Community Centre for summer trips.

Funds remaining for 2026-27: £9,000

This is one of the areas which has a cross over between events and support. The funding is used to facilitate events and activities for families across the town. The wider workshop activities which the council funded via the 2026-27 summer activities budget have proved to be very popular and well received as an activity for families in the school holidays. A mix of funded trips facilitated by the partner organisations with workshop activities worked well over the summer. This can be replicated with different themes in each of the school holidays. This involves partner collaboration and coordination.

The Enchanted Bricks trail was funded via the summer activities and in collaboration with DCC. This is included below in the summer trail entry. At the last meeting at the council agreed they wished to have a summer trial in 2027, more than £6,000 will be needed if partner funding can not be secured. Full costs are being coordinated and will be in time for budget setting in full.

Period	Activities	Amounts
October half Term	Scheduled activities	£1000
	Wear Valley Community Action	£250
Christmas Holidays	Scheduled activities – winter blues linked	£1000
	Wear Valley Community Action	£250
February Half Term	Scheduled activities	£1000
Easter Holidays	Scheduled activities	£2000
	Wear Valley Community Action	£250
Summer Half Term	Scheduled activities	£1000
Summer break 6 weeks	4 weeks of Support at AYCC	£4000
	Trips and Activities from WHCC	£1000
	Wear Valley Community Action	£250
	Contribution to Summer Trail	£6000*
	Total	**£18000**

Recommended:

- that members consider and recommend to full council as part of budget setting that the school holiday support is merged with summer activities, and allocated to the above. But members may need to re-consider the amount if partnership cannot accommodate a professional summer trail.

Live it local booklet

For 2026 the council developed the live it local booklet which listed events and activities across the summer 2026. This was very well received and would like to be repeated. This is community support but it is funded from the engagement and marketing budget managed by the Policy and Resources.

Recommended: that members encourage Policy and Resources Committee to champion that the booklet is developed again for 2027.

Events 2026-27

The table below sets out the 2026-27 budget allocation and the spend to date, the balance unallocated. The remaining section of the report sets out the proposals for the remaining funding for 2026-27.

Cost Centre	Cost Code	Budget allocation 2026-27	Spend to date	Balance
Events	National Regional (Freedom of Town)	£10,000	£5417.42	£4,582
	Christmas Town	£35,000	£25,000	£0
	Wider Christmas Activities	£10,000	£7,000 (£3,000 Committed in full)	£0
	Youth Awards	£10,000	£ 6871.17[2]	£4,462.42
	Remembrance	£3,000	£291.67	TBC
	Food Festival Grant Support to DCC	£15,000	£15,000	£0
	Heritage Fair	£5,000	£2,442.02	£2,557.98
	Recognition Awards	£3,000	£0	£3,000
	Ward and In Year Events	£20,000	£15,600.36	£4,399.64
	Summer time activities	£3,000	£3084.97	-£84.97

Christmas Town

At the last Committee meeting Members agreed they would consider the budget allocations for 2027-28 following the 2026 event. (minute Ref CC020/26g).

Recommended: that members await the outcome of the 2026 event and agree the budget with full council as part of budget setting.

[2]Total spend was £6871.17 the Youth awards generated £1750 in sponsorship and 5537.58 of budget was used.

Wider Christmas Activities

At the last Committee meeting Members agreed that they wished for this allocation to remain in the budget for 2027-28 as they felt that this budget enabled the council to reach more residents that single events. (minute Ref CC020/26h).

Previous recipients, along with other community organisations are being contacted to seek applications for funds, and this also be advertised via social media and the press, to maximise the reach to community organisations. Applications to be considered and awarded at the October 2026 meeting.

Applications will be tabled at the meeting.

A festival vehicle parade has been discussed, however, timescales mean that it is not possible for 2026. If the Council wished to include a vehicle parade for 2027, this would need to be costed separately and an event management company appointed to coordinate the road closures and necessary health and safety requirements that this could bring.

Recommended that members consider the applications and agree the recommended levels of funding, and agree that a vehicle parade is not feasible for 2026, and if they wish to have one for 2027 a separate budget would be needed, and this budget needs to be agreed along with appointment of a management company.

Proposals for unspent allocations

There are unspent event allocations of:

- **National/ Regional Celebration** £4,582 – propose to allocate to activities in 2027:
  - £1,000 Sponsorship of the High Sherrif's Carol Event at Auckland Palace 12 November 2026 see appendix 6
  - Town Quiz in December 2027 – see proposed calendar for more information
  - Annual meeting of the Parish in March 2027. see proposed calendar for more information
- **Youth Awards** £4,462.42
  - Allocate underspend to International Women's Day activities
- **Heritage Festival** Underspend – Propose to allocate to activities in 2027:
  - Heritage on Tour February 2027
  - Edible Auckland/ Bishop Bites
- **Ward and In Year Events** £4,399.64 – propose to allocate to events in January 2027:
  - £2399.64 Winter blues event Jan 2027
  - £2,000 Bishop Auckland Together Jan 2027

Events 2027-28

From the last meeting members were in support of themed floral planting for 2027-28 this could be expanded further as the town council embrace the year of the Bishop Blues – a themed programme linked to the town colours of two blues, and the celebratory heritage and achievements of the town. Over the page is a proposed calendar of event/ activity which includes partnership activity and support.

The strategy consultation was clear in its recommendations that the public like to see free events for the community. Free family events play an important role in supporting community wellbeing, social inclusion and civic pride within Bishop Auckland. By removing financial barriers to participation, the events provide accessible opportunities for residents of all ages to come together, enjoy shared experiences and engage with their local community. In addition, such events increase footfall within the town centre, support local businesses, promote the positive use of public

spaces and contribute to the wider profile of Bishop Auckland as a vibrant and welcoming destination. The provision of free family activities aligns with the Council's objectives of supporting residents, strengthening communities and enhancing the quality of life within the town.

There is a proposal to add additional events and support to events to the proposals for 2027-28. Through the proposed community support and events budgets, the council will be able to support over 30 events and activities. By supporting through partnering, via sponsorship and grant agreement the council can support a range of events and activities across the town. if the council were not to partner with others, they would not be able to support such a wide event programme, with a small number of key events delivered through a tendering process with an event management company.

Potential calendar October 2026 - March 2028

October 2026

- **Recognition awards for Allotments and Environment**
  Funded from 2026-27 recognition awards.

November 2026

- **Remembrance Parade** and service See Appendix 3
  Funded from Remembrance 2026-27

- ***new* Sponsorship of the High Sherrif's** – Carol Event at Auckland Palace
  Funded from underspend from 2026-27 National/ Regional Events. See appendix 6

- **Christmas Fair** with Wear Valley Community Action
  Funded from the Ward and In Year Events 2026-27

December 2026

- **Christmas Town** – Principal partner with Bridge Creative and Baccanalia CIC
  Funded from the Christmas Town 2026-27 budget allocation (£35,000)

- **Wider Christmas activities** with a range of partners
  Funded from the Wider Christmas 2026-27

- ***New* Town Quiz** – to take over the hosting of the annual town quiz from the Civic Society. This a strongly supported town event. It is used as a fundraising activity to support community organisation of choice. C
  Funded from the Underspend of National/ regional celebrations for 2026-27

- **Christmas School holiday** activities
  Funded from the School holiday 2027-28

January 2027

- Don't get the Winter Blues a series of free family friendly event with winter warmer soup, quiz etc at the likes of AYCC, Woodhouse Close Community Centre and the Four Clocks Centre.
  The provision of free family-focused events during the winter period supports the Council's objectives relating to community wellbeing, and social isolation. Such events provide accessible opportunities for residents to engage in community activities, help reduce seasonal isolation, create positive shared experiences for families and strengthen community connections across Bishop Auckland. Events like this have been trailed previously. Funding could be allocated to cover room hire/ refreshments and entertainment and any additional staffing.

Funded from: ***Ward and In Year Event funding 2026-27 unallocated funds.***

- **Bringing Bishop Auckland Together**
  Networking event for organisations/ businesses/ CICs there is an opportunity for the council to facilitate some networking and sign posting activity to raise awareness of the great organisations within the town as well as facilitating some partnership Activity. This event will help to set the scene and build relationships for better communication. A business and engagement network will form from this and then will be the collection point for the data for the 2027 Live It Local guide to events and activities.
  Funded from: **Ward and In Year Event funding 2026-27 unallocated funds.**

February 2027

- **Half term school holidays** – '*can you beat the blues'* – game themed holiday activates
  Series of gamed themed activities, for families to access at a range of locations across the town.
  Funded from the School Holidays Support Budget 2026-27

- **Heritage on Tour** – see appendix 3
  Funded from the Heritage Festival underspend from 2026-27.

March 2027

- ***new* Bishop isn't just Blue- event 1 –** Linked to International Women's Day
  - *New* **The new shade of blue – is Pink**
    - To recognise the rise in importance of women – a campaign aimed at celebration and recognition. Inclusion of partnership working with the college and female sport with recognition of
      - Bishop Girls (known as the pinks)
      - Growing female rugby sides across ladies and Girls
      - Funded from the underspend of the Youth Awards 2026-27

- **Easter school Holidays** – free family activities at a range of venues, at to include additions of cookery workshop activities to link to the food festival.
  Funded from the School Holidays Support Budget 2026-27

- **Easter Fair** with Wear Valley Community Action
  Funded from the Ward and In Year Events 2027-28

- ***new* Annual Meeting of the parish**
  Wider annual meeting of the parish to encourage residents to participate and see the work of the council. A partnership event which will showcase the range of activities and organisations which the Council have supported for 2026-27 and opportunity for the council to launch the work they are doing moving forward into 2027-28
  Spend will be minimal with room hire and refreshments.
  Funded from underspend of National and Regional Events 2026-27

April 2027

- ***new* Bishop Bites/ Edible Auckland** - food trail – engagement with the businesses of the town to have a special themed Bishop item on their menu – launched for the food festival. Would predominantly be a media focused campaign with participating businesses, having a window sticker and a themed item on their menu with a themed icon.

  The development of a Bishop Auckland-themed food trail would support the Council's objectives relating to town centre vitality, tourism, community engagement and economic development. By encouraging residents and visitors to discover and support local food businesses, the initiative has the potential to increase footfall, promote civic pride and contribute to the wider regeneration and promotion of Bishop Auckland as a destination.

Funded from underspend from budgets from 2026-27 as it will need to be planned and costed before the end of March for delivery in April.

May 2027

- ***new*celebrating all of the 'Blues'** – opportunity for the Council to look to Sponsor the teams start/ end of season celebrations and to have a sponsor board at the grounds.
    - End of the football season
    - Rugby end of Season
    - Start of the Cricket season

Supporting local sporting awards evenings aligns with the Council's objectives of promoting community cohesion, health and wellbeing, and civic pride. Sponsorship enables the Council to champion the volunteers and grassroots organisations that make a significant contribution to the social fabric of Bishop Auckland and the development of young people.

Funded from Community Organisation Support 2027-28 (this will need increased budget allocation).

June 2027

- **Town Youth Awards** – see Appendix 1 – funded by 2027-28 Recognition awards
- **Bishop Auckland In 'Blu-om'**
    - Celebration of the work of Greener Together and Bishop in Bloom which are theming the town planning for summer of Two Blues
    - Ties to Volunteers week which is the 1-7th

  Funded from Recognition Awards 2027-28

- ***new* Bishop isn't just Blue- event 2**
    - Support of **Bishop Auckland Pride** Event
      Funded from Ward and In year events 2027-28
- ***new* Armed Forces Day – at BA College**
    - Support the college event through sponsorship from Ward and In Year Events 2027-28

July 2027

- ***new*Bishop Brass**
    - Funded event in partnership with Durham Brass
      Approx Cost £8,000 - Funded from Ward and In year events 2027-28

- ***New* BATC 'Blues' Cup**
    - Celebratory sports events linked to school sports days where teams compete for the Bishops Blues cup. Decisions to be made about if it is a secondary or primary initiative.
    - Largely a campaign, cost of cup to be bought
      Approx Cost £1000 - Funded from underspend of Heritage festival 2026-27 to purchase the cups, on going future costs would be the cost so engraving.

August 2027

- Summer **Time Activities and school holiday** activities
    - Summer trail - School Holiday support 2027-28
    - Family Festival – Supported though Ward and In year events funding 2027-28
    - Other free family activities supported through School Holiday support 2027-28

- **Connecting Communities event** with Wear Valley Community Action
  Funded from the Ward and In Year Events 2027-28

September 2027

- Bishop Auckland **Heritage Festival** (see Appendix 2)
  Funded by the Heritage Festival Funding 2027-28

October 2027

- **Halloween event** with Wear Valley Community Action
  Funded from the Ward and In Year Events 2027-28

November 2027

- **Bishop Auckland Remembers**
  Wider remembrance events as shown in appendix 3.
  Funded from the Remembrance Budget 2027-28.

- **Christmas Event** with Wear Valley Community Action
  Funded from the Ward and In Year Events 2027-28

December 2028

- **Christmas Town** – Principal partner with Bridge Creative and Baccanalia CIC
  Funded from the Christmas Town 2027-28 (£TBC)

- **Wider Christmas activities** with a range of partners
  Funded from the Wider Christmas 2027-28

- ***New* -Wishing tree** – where members of the public can add a blue ribbon to remember a loved one – look to do in partnership with Newgate Centre or St Annes Church or a range of Venues
  Funded From Wider Christmas Activity 2027-28.

January 2028

- Don't get the Winter Blues – see January 2027.
  Funded from: ***Ward and In Year Event funding 2027-28 unallocated funds.***

- **Bringing Bishop Auckland Together**
  See January 2027
  Funded from: **Ward and In Year Event funding 2027-28**

February 2028

- **Half term school holiday** activates
  Funded from the School Holidays Support Budget 2027-28

- **Heritage on Tour** – see appendix 3
  Funded from the Heritage Festival 2027-28.

- ***New* Wider Town Awards** – see appendix 4.
  Funded from Town Awards 2027-28

March 2028

- **Bishop isn't just Blue- event 1 –** Linked to International Women's Day
  - See March 2027 for information

- **Easter School Holidays** – see March 2027
  Funded from the School Holidays Support Budget 2027-28

- **Easter Fair** with Wear Valley Community Action
  Funded from the Ward and In Year Events 2027-28

- **Annual Meeting of the parish**
  See march 2027
  Funded from ward and in year events 2027-28

Proposed budgets for 2027-28

The table below shows the 2026-27 allocations and the proposals based upon the spends suggested as per the calendar.

Cost Centre	Cost Code	Budget allocation 2026-27	Proposed allocation 2027-28
Community Support	**Grants and Donations (Com fund)**	£15,000	**£15,000**
	Community Organisation Support		
	Woodhouse Close Community Centre	£5,000	£6,000
	Auckland Youth and Community Centre	£5,000	£6,000
	Bishop Auckland Community Partnership	£3,000	£6,000
	Bridge Creative	£1,000	£3,000
	Chef Academy	£1,000	£1,000
	St Annes Uniform Bank	-	£1,000
	Other Org Support	-	£2,000
	Sub Total	**£15,000**	**£25,000**
	School Holiday Support	£15,000	**£18,000**
	Summer Time Activities (lego Trail)	£3,000	
		Sub total	**£58,000**
Events	**National /Regional (freedom of Town)**	£10,000	£6,000
	- Annual meeting of the parish		£3,000
	- Town Quiz		£1000
	Sub total		**£10,000**
	Christmas Celebrations		
	- Christmas Town	£35,000	£35,000
	- Wider Christmas Activities	£10,000	£10,000
	Sub total	**£45,000**	**£45,000**
	Recognition Awards		
	- Youth Awards	£10,000	£10,000
	- Recognition – envir./ volunteers	£ 3,000	£ 3,000
	- Wider Town Awards	0	£10,000
	Sub total	**£13,000**	**£23,000**
	Remembrance	**£3,000**	**£4,000**
	Food Festival Grant Support to DCC	**£15,000**	**£15,000**
	Heritage Fair	**£5,000**	**£5,000**
	Recognition Awards	**£3,000**	**-**
	Ward and In Year Events		**-**
	• Wear Valley Community Action	£1,000	£1,000
	• Street food Carousel	£1333	-
	• Word Fest	£6000	-
	• Pride	£3334	£5,000
	• Family Festival	£4660	£7,000
	• Winter Blues	£2,500	£2,500
	• Bishop Auckland Together	£1,173	£2,000
	• All the Blues	-	£6,000
	• Bishop Brass	-	£8,000
	• International Women's day	-	£2,000
	• BATC Blue Cup	-	£1,000
	• Edible Auckland/ Bishop Bites	-	£1,000
	• Armed Forces Day BA College	-	£2,000
	• Other ward activities	-	£1,000
	Sub total	**£20,000**	**£38,500**
	Totals	**£159,000**	**£198,500**

Recommended: that members consider the report and agree that:

- The underspend from the 2026-27 events are allocated as recommended in this report, as per the calendar of events contained within this report.
- That the budget allocations for 2027-28 be recommended to council as per the calendar of events contained within this report, the table above, and that the events recommendations contained with the appendices of this report are adopted.

Appendix 1 – Town Youth Awards

At the last Committee meeting Members agreed to include this allocation in the 2027-28 at a reduced rate of £8,000 a reduction of £2,000 as this has historically come under budget. It was also agreed that the Council should continue to have sponsors of the awards. That consideration be given to review the event to make it bigger or change it up again and If the event is to be larger a reconsideration of the budget is needed. (minute Ref CC020/26f).

The Youth Awards is one of the most resource intensive events which the council coordinates, the lead in time starts 6 months in advance of the event. Every year the council struggles to receive applications across all available categories. 2026 saw an improved online application process, and engagement has grown annually with the schools and community groups, this is continuing through the Community Engagement Officer.

The Council are limited by the maximum capacity of the town hall, which limits the options for the Council to bring finalists and runners up to the event. Improvements to the event could include:

- Additional video support for ongoing media promotion.
- Enhanced room decoration, to make the event feel even more special
- Seek alternative catering options to bring some added wow factor.
- Consider additional VIP guests to give awards, such as local sports stars or celebrities, or influencers.
- Consider having a disco type entertainment at the end of the evening.
- More enhanced activity with runners up – such as attendance at school assemblies to present prizes.
- Council to sponsor an individual prize at each school/ college as part of their own annual awards. This gives exposure of the council to each of the schools.

Recommended: that members consider if they wish to add any enhancements to the youth awards programme.

Appendix 2 Heritage Festival

The 4th Heritage festival which took place at the end of September 2026 was successful with great footfall and visitor numbers. The event focused around the Car Show in partnership with Northern Bygones Society, Heritage Stalls, and Craft Activities. The event has always fallen on the same weekend as Harvest/ Horticulture, but only operated for 1 day.

The remaining funding from the event could be used to take the heritage festival on tour, to the likes of the Care homes, community Centres and groups. A facilitator could be sourced, to help to bring the programme interactive. Bishop FM would be keen to work in collaboration to collect the memories of those that the tour visits. The display board and artifacts could be used from the main event.

In advance of planning for 2027 there is an issue that the Northern Bygones have a prior commitment for the Saturday and Sunday so they wouldn't be able to attend on that day. We had four guest speakers, but not all sessions were well attended.

The remaining funds from the 2026-27 budget could be used to deliver the heritage on tour programme, and the council could look to work with a facilitator to make this easier to undertake.

The options for 2027 would be to

- Operate on the same day but partner with a different car show provider or run our own, but additional staff in and volunteers would be needed.
- Operate on a completely different Saturday when the Car show could come.
- Not to have speakers, as this is resource intensive and removes one staff member from other operational duties.
- Refine the heritage stalls further, to limit to and include local organisations only, and ensure that each of them to have their own interactive element on the stall.
- Have more 'artifact' stalls as this generated lots of interest
- Ensure that there are more staff and council volunteers available to help with the event as only, 2 Elected members assisted at the event.
- Have more heritage craft activities as these were well received.

Recommended: that members consider

- Using the remaining 2026-27 budget to work with a facilitator to enable the heritage festival on tour.
- the options for 2027 and agree the direction of travel and the budget to be allocated to the event.

Appendix 3 Remembrance Parade and Service 2027

Indicative costs show that more funding may be needed to run the event successfully. In 2027 there is a possibility of St Anne's not being available for the service after the acts of remembrance at the War Memorial. Therefore consideration needs to be given to looking to use St Peters Chapel at the Castle or holding an alternative service in the Town Hall. Additional stewards, and event management is becoming necessary to ensure that the event runs smoothly.

Doing wider engagement activity with the community, businesses and local schools, where we ask they children to decorate windows, etc would be beneficial, as the schools cover remembrance and armistice as part of their curriculum and it gives them avenues to display their work, and drives footfall and the parents will visit the locations.

Recommended: that members consider increasing the budget to enable more specialist event management, and wider engagement activities.

Appendix 4 Town Awards and Recognition Awards 2027

The 2026 allocation is for a recognition event for allotments and environment to recognise the volunteers and the achievements they have made with the town planting and environmental projects. This is it recognise the council volunteers and allotment holders.

It has been suggested for some time and was agreed at the last meeting (minute ref CC020/26k) that a wider recognition awards to be explored, and to have a volunteer thanks event.

For 2027 it would be recommended that a format similar to the youth awards is developed, with sponsors sought to make the event more affordable. A budget of £10,000 could make this possible at the town hall.

Suggested categories are:

- Community Champion
- Volunteer of the Year
- Community Group of the Year
- Environmental Champion
- Allotment Plot of the Year
- Independent Business of the Year
- Heritage/ culture award
- Sports Volunteer of the Year
- Good Neighbour Award
- Young Leader Award
- Lifetime Achievement Award
- Mayor's Special Award

The budget would need to be similar to that of the youth awards, taking place at the Town Hall, with Photographer, red carpet etc.

Recommended: that members agree to include the two events Volunteer recognition event and the town awards event for 2027-28 programme, and the recommended budget.

Appendix 5 - Durham County Council - Bishop Auckland Food Festival

Historically the Council have supported DCC with a donation towards the delivery of the annual food festival. This was £10,000 which increased to £15,000 in 2024-25. The event is across a weekend in April. This year the Town Council were named as sponsors of the Children's cookery tent which had interactive FREE workshops across the weekend. These were well received. The council was also named in publicity, and had our logo on banners around the site. It was agreed at the last meeting to keep the funding level the same for 2027. (Minute Number CC020/26j).

For 2026 the council did some plot to plate planting activity in the Artists Hub which linked Heritage festival and Horticulture show. However only 6 people brought their activity back to the horticulture show, and the promotion of the wider council activity booklet worked well and meant that people had advance warning of all events in the town across the spring and summer period.

Recommended: that members agree to continue to support the festival to the sum of £15,000 and to consider which wide activity they wish to do at the event, if any and consider how they wish to fund it.

Appendix 6 – Sponsorship opportunity – High Sheriffs Carol event Auckland Castle

The current High Sherrif for County Durham Dr Anab Bassu MBE DL launched the 'Giving Coalition' which aims bring together businesses, organisations, and individuals to support youth-focused initiatives across County Durham, Darlington, Hartlepool, and Stockton.

The coalition aim is to establish a lasting network of supporters—including businesses, charities, philanthropists, and individuals—dedicated to helping youth clubs, special schools, mentoring schemes, and community organisations.

Developed in partnership with Point North, the Giving Coalition will help raise funds for the High Sheriff Youth Awards 2027.

These awards provide grants to grassroots organisations that help young people build confidence, develop aspirations, and access new opportunities.

Since 2012, more than 120 organisations have benefited from the awards, impacting the lives of over 46,000 young people across the region.

The High Sheriff Youth Awards recognise organisations that help young people become positive role models, support those facing mental health challenges, offer creative opportunities, and work to reduce crime and antisocial behaviour.

Dr Bassu aims to raise £100,000 for the giving coalition by the end of his term of office in March 2027. He is 50% to his target.

On the 12th November he is hosting a drinks reception and carol service at Auckland Castle which will include an fund raising auction. The council have been asked to look to sponsor the event to ensure that all funds raised go into the coalition to support young people across our areas as well as wider County Durham.

Recommended: that members consider the update and agree to support the event for 2026 to the sum of £1000.

Appendix 7 Ward and In Year events funding

There are remaining funds available for the 2026-27 budget. At the last meeting members considered if they wish to have further events, (minute ref CC020/26m) and they agreed that they would like to utilise the funding to cover events in the period between January and March.

Options for this include

- *£2,000 - Winter blues events – where there are free craft/ family activities facilitated at key community venues.*
- *Bishop Auckland Together - Networking event for organisations/ businesses/ CICs there is an opportunity for the council to facilitate some networking and sign posting activity to raise awareness of the great organisations within the town.*

For 2027-28

- £1,000Wear Valley Community Action x 4 events (Halloween, Easter, Christmas Fair, and conneting communities event)
- £5,000 Bishop Auckland Pride
- £7,000 Bishop Auckland Family Festival
- £2,500 Winter Blues Programme
- £2,000 Bishop Auckland Together – CIC/ VCS/ Organisation Collaboration event
- £2,000 International Women's Day
- £8,000 Bishop Auckland Brass
- £1,000 BATC Blue Cup Sports Awards
- £2,000 Edible Auckland / Bishop Auckland Bites
- £6,000 All the Blues
- £2,000 Armed Forces Day BA College
- £1,000 Other ward and In year activities – small budget to support other events and activities.

For 2027-28 it is not proposed that Street Food Carousel or Word Fest are continued. They could be but additional funding would be needed to support.

However there is a £1000 allocation for the council to be able to support smaller or bespoke pop up event or the members may wish to add another element such a farmers market etc.

Summer window Trail will be funded from School Holiday and Annual Meeting of the parish and town quiz are to be funded through the Regional and National Events.

Recommended: Members to consider which events they wish to support via this fund for the 2027-28 period.