

Grants for the Arts Case Study

---

# Young Norfolk Arts Festival



Image courtesy of Young Norfolk Arts

Lucy Farrant, Producer, Young Norfolk Arts



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

# Case Study Introduction

What will I learn and is it relevant to me?

## Themes...

- Youth Arts
- Festivals
- Partnership working

## Learning...

- Developing cultural opportunities for young people
- Developing a festival from scratch
- Building successful partnerships

## Relevance...

This case study is relevant to:

- Arts organisations keen to work with young people
- Directors, CEOs and Producers keen to professionalise work by and for young people
- Grants for the Arts applicants who want to find out more about funded projects

Steffan Griffiths, Headmaster of Norwich School, had the idea of a multi-arts festival specifically for young people and made it happen.

# Background

## Young Norfolk Arts Festival

### Introducing Young Norfolk Arts Festival

Young Norfolk Arts Festival (YNAF) was originally launched by Norwich School in 2013 to celebrate the creativity and achievement of young people from the region.

It was inspired by Norfolk and Norwich Festival, which is a cultural highlight but has a limited young people's offer because it happens during the May exam period.

Steffan Griffiths, Headmaster of Norwich School, had the idea of a multi-arts festival specifically for young people and made it happen.

The festival is now an established event at the end of each academic year, presenting performances and activities by and for young people.

### Our audiences

Young Norfolk Arts Festival is aimed at anyone interested in the arts. Our participants are generally young people of school age. For the 2015 festival, the Jeff Koons Collaborative was made up of sixth formers and undergraduates aged 16 - 21 years. For 2016, we have recruited a Young Norfolk Communications Team who are aged 16 - 18 years and will be working with undergraduates to devise events.

### The project

We applied to Grants for the Arts for support with the 2015 festival and the development of a year-round programme of work to lead up to the 2016 festival.

### Long-term ambitions

- To make the festival an established part of the cultural calendar
- For every school in Norfolk to have it on their calendar for the end of the academic year
- For the Trust to be in a secure financial position
- To gain recognition for the quality and educational benefit of the festival
- To achieve personal development of young people
- To have an established programme of author events at least once a half term
- For the festival to be seen as a good reference point for professional companies working with young people

# Developing the festival

## Increasing opportunities for young people

### Building partnerships

For the first festival in 2013, we contacted arts and cultural organisations who were already working with young people in Norwich. By drawing on existing groups and resources we were able to build the festival and audiences quite quickly.

We've continued to work in this way and also to be open to approaches from organisations who want to be involved.

There were 25 creative partners for the 2015 festival. They included everyone from BBC Voices to Norwich Arts Centre and Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts.

Partners have contributed in a variety of ways. Some worked with groups to create performances and others hosted events or ran activities. Eastern Daily Press set up Young Norfolk Daily Press to give ten aspiring journalists aged 16 - 18 the opportunity to create festival supplements for the paper.

### Developing the programme through listening

The festival and year-round programme have evolved quite naturally. We've listened and responded to feedback from audiences, participants, partners and groups such as the Cultural Education Steering Group.

For the 2015 festival we partnered with the library service and Norfolk and Norwich Festival Bridge Organisation to present a talk by Michael Morpurgo. We promoted the event to families and groups of looked-after children and the library service launched a reading scheme as part of it. It went down really well and people wanted more of it to support literacy.

We partnered with the library service and a local bookshop to bring author Tom Bowler in to deliver a creative writing workshop a few months later. We wanted to test whether schools were interested and they bit our hands off. 150 pupils attended from nine high schools.

Another 50 children from different schools worked with Mahogany Opera Group to perform Brundibar as part of the festival and wanted to continue. The Opera Group has since run a workshop on its new work The Rattler. Further workshops and rehearsals will take place throughout 2016 and the final performances will be part of YNAF 2016.

### Shining a spotlight on opportunities

We see the festival as a brilliant opportunity to shine a spotlight on things that young people can get involved in throughout the year.

As well as showcasing local groups through performances and activities led by our partners, we were keen to highlight national opportunities.

The National Youth Theatre worked with schools to create a devised piece for the 2015 festival. The National Youth Dance Company are coming to Norfolk for the first time in 2016. We are continuing to talk to both groups about how the festival might act as a conduit to get young people from Norfolk involved in the companies.

### Youth-led activity

The ethos of the festival is to enable young people to participate in activities at all stages of their development.

As well as programming work for or including young people, it was important for us to allow young people to do their own thing.

Norwich Puppet Theatre offered us use of their space for the festival. We took the decision to keep that space free of charge to any groups of young people. In 2015 it was used for a variety of drama performances, a youth choir performance and drama workshops. On one day it was used for a Somewhere\_to initiative by the University of East Anglia drama society, who now use the Puppet Theatre as their base.

### Cost

The project cost £110,000, of which Grants for the Arts contributed £25,000.

The additional funds came from partner organisations, ticket income for events, trusts and foundations, the county and city councils, Norfolk and Norwich Festival Bridge and sponsorship from big local companies such as Norse.

# Results and recommendations

## Changing the world one piece at a time

### The results

- 45 events took place during the festival
- Over 2,000 young people from over 100 schools and educational establishments were involved in some way in the festival events
- 60 artists were involved in the 2015 festival
- 25 creative partners in the Young Norfolk Arts Partnership worked with an additional 15 creative organisations/venues to deliver the 2015 festival
- The festival turnover has gone from £25,000 in 2013 to £110,000 in 2015
- The festival was nominated for the Hy Kurzner Arts Entrepreneur Award at Norfolk Arts Awards
- Since the festival Young Norfolk Arts has delivered 2 skate park gigs, 1 author event, 1 music workshop to develop a 2016 performance, several workshops leading to the Friday Afternoons performance and coordinated National Youth Theatre coming to North Norfolk to run auditions
- Approximately 300 young people were involved in events following the festival from September - November
- Norwich School and Young Norfolk Arts Festival have been nominated for the TES Community Initiative Award

### Benefits to Young Norfolk Arts Festival

The project has helped us to achieve our objectives and enable young people to learn and develop life skills. We've been able to bring diverse backgrounds together and provide really valuable opportunities for young people in Norfolk.

We have begun shaping a year-round programme. That will give young people clear paths to continue their involvement in the arts beyond the festival. It will also feed into the next festival, increasing the quality of work we're able to deliver year on year.

### Benefits to young people

Young people have reported increased confidence and ability to work as part of a team.

They have had the opportunity to experience new artforms and to create something spectacular.

One Festival Assistant said 'events and outreach projects were an excellent platform for self-development, making contacts and putting skills into action.'

### Recommendations

- Have broad-based partnerships - work with as many cultural organisations as possible
- Foster relationships with schools - do things with them and do them well
- Listen to ideas from young people, partners, and the community and respond
- Involve young people in making and doing
- Make use of existing communications channels - all of our partners promote the festival through their websites and social media channels, giving us access to a wide audience
- Harness the energy of local media - we did an interview with Eastern Daily Press about a new opportunity and received 15 applications over the weekend

### Find out more

<http://www.ynaf.org.uk/>

[View the 2015 Young Norfolk Arts Festival Brochure](#)