

# END OF YEAR TWO REPORT

The co-created Winchester District Cultural Strategy was published in March 2024, and two years on, energy has been galvanised and amazing, creative, dynamic things have happened. Partnerships have formed and grown, funding has been secured, opportunities have been seized and the sector has connected in powerful ways.

This document summarises some of the activity the Winchester District Cultural Strategy Collective has delivered against the strategy priorities.

Each case study is coloured coded to signify the priorities and themes they have contributed to.



# WINCHESTER YOUTH NIGHTS

In our journey to enable and support a youth-led cultural movement in Winchester district, we have been consulting with young people to understand what they recognise as culture and what activity they would like to see.

Following the suggestion of an Open Mic Night, partners secured funding and a team of university students studying event management, marketing, and music production was assembled to design and deliver of the first event in November 2025.

Another youth night took place in February, and consultation and evaluation will continue, with future events and activities further informed, developed and delivered by young people.

 [@WinchesterYouth](https://www.instagram.com/WinchesterYouth)

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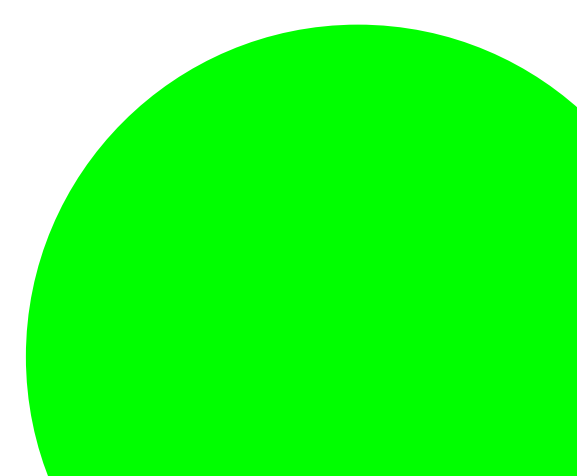
# FASHION WEEK

Winchester Fashion Week has been a staple in the events calendar for over a decade. In 2025 Winchester Business Improvement District formed a partnership with the University of Winchester; with third year students on the Fashion Business and Marketing course organising the event, which was embedded into their course as practical, real-world learning.

The week brought together industry leaders, innovators, and changemakers to explore what sustainability really means across the fashion industry including retail, second-hand markets, beauty, and beyond.

“Our collaboration with Winchester BID is a testament to the power of partnership. Here, students don’t just observe, they create, produce, and execute. They learn what it takes to bring a concept to life, to navigate the business of fashion with confidence, and to deliver experiences that matter. This is where the next generation of fashion leaders takes shape.”

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## CREATIVE DIRECTORY

This directory has been compiled to help inform residents and visitors of the organisations, locations and individuals delivering cultural and creative activity across Winchester district.



## CREATIVE SCHOOL DIRECTORY

This resource has been compiled to support connectivity between cultural organisations and freelance creatives, and schools, colleges, home educators and uniformed groups.



## EVENTS CATALOGUE

This catalogue has been compiled to help inform event organisers of the venues, suppliers and support available for delivering an event in Winchester district.



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# CREATIVE GROWTH PROGRAMME



To support, encourage and grow our creative industries we delivered a Creative Growth Programme and peer group, which supported over 100 creatives with business skills.

Funded via the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and University of Winchester, a curated series of free masterclasses were provided by Evolve Advisory in 2025.

Ten individuals had the opportunity to benefit from further support through a Peer Group. They met at regular intervals throughout the year and offered support and advice to one another in structured sessions.

Feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive with many achieving their growth goals and improving business strategies.

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# LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

Training and workshops have been delivered supporting development in the following areas:

Climate conscious creativity

AI

Simpler Recycling

Martyn's Law

Sustainable Travel for festivals

Carbon Audits

Retrofitting

Using the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

The Arts and Creativity in Education


Designing Immersive Digital Heritage Experiences

Narrating Creative Regions



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***“The workshop was brilliant ... it has made me feel more confident in my business skills by connecting with others in the field. I am more likely to ask for help now that I know so many have similar issues.”***

*Helen Northcott -  
Artist and Educator*

***“I tried very hard to read the last boards but they were very weathered. The new boards are fascinating, full of things I didn't know, and I took a group there last week and they thought they were great!”***

*Winchester Area Tourist Guide  
Ref: Nunnaminster interpretation panels*

# RAW

RAW arose out of a shared commitment to contemporary performance. Piloted in March 2025, with a view to it becoming an annual addition to Winchester's calendar of extraordinary events and festivals.

The A stands for Arts and the W for Winchester...as for the R? Well, it could be Radical, Real, Risky, Rising, Relevant, Rebellious, Redefining, Remarkable ...or just RAW!

With support from UK Shared Prosperity fund, Discarded Nut, Hampshire Cultural Trust and Play to the Crowd, came together to make something new happen. The three organisations are different in scale but were able to work in harness to make a special thing a reality in 2025 and 2026.

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PLAY  
TO THE  
CROWD

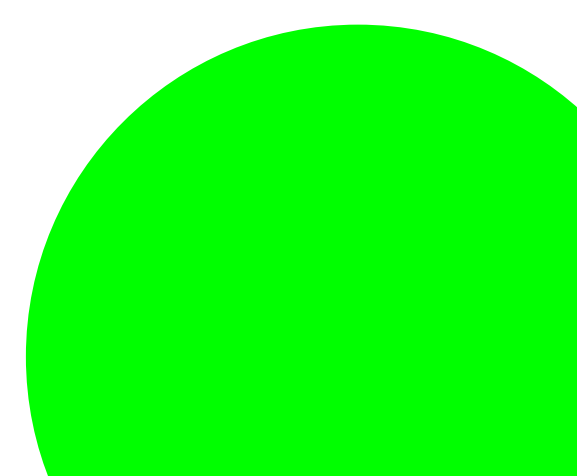
THE  
NUTSHELL

HAMPSHIRE  
CULTURAL  
TRUST

Funded by  
UK Government



[www.rawwinchester.co.uk](http://www.rawwinchester.co.uk)



# SMALL WORLDS



Small Worlds at the Winchester Gallery showcased over 500 hanging spheres made from recycled, repurposed and natural materials. Created by children from more than 30 Hampshire schools and over 40 artists and community groups. The exhibition also featured hundreds of posters and murals by schoolchildren.

Artist Joe Ross, worked with Winchester City Football Club to repurpose old footballs into artworks and Helen Northcott worked with Winchester Litter Pickers to create colourful spheres using repurposed litter. During the exhibition we also brought together a panel of environmental experts and a group of local artists to explore what climate consciousness looks like for creatives.

The project was delivered in collaboration with Hampshire County Council's Climate Unity Project, which aims to raise awareness of climate change.

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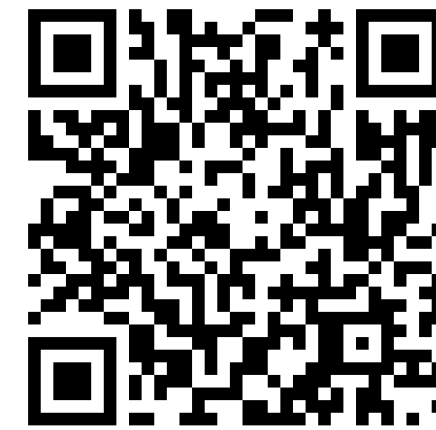
## EVENT PLANNING TOOLKIT

This toolkit contains information, links, phone numbers and templates designed to guide organisers through the event planning process, helping ensure safe, legal and successful events.



## ARTS NEWS

Arts News is a monthly newsletter providing news and information about culture and creativity in Winchester district, including exhibitions, workshops, training, commissions, jobs, events and festivals.



## CULTURE AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES RESOURCE HUB

This page is for those working in the Culture and Creative Industries and looking for information, advice and support delivering work in Winchester district.



# NETWORKING



We have delivered multiple Cultural Network events, allowing 200 people with an interest in arts and culture to network and learn in a variety of creative spaces.

We also hosted quarterly festival group meetings, supporting event organisers with data, funding, and sustainability guidance.

We supported the establishment of Southern Creative Catalyst in Winchester, giving 200 individuals working in commercial creative industries locally an opportunity to connect and grow.

For the first time in 2025, Venturefest featured the Creative Industries as a central theme, enabling 25 local organisations to showcase their work, placing them at the centre of innovation and growth conversations.

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# PLOT LINES



Plot Lines aims to gather, listen to and share stories and anecdotes from living in and near Waterlooville. Plot Lines is about creating space for residents to share their ideas and help to guide creative activity in the area.

Writer in residence Aoife Mannix has been capturing personal experiences of moving to or living in the area. Three publications preserve fragments of everyday life that reveal something larger about what it means to belong to a place and a community.

Workshops with residents of Wellington Vale Care Home were shaped by memories of place and resulted in writing that captures humour, memory, and belonging.

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Funded by  
developer contributions



[www.plotlines.co.uk](http://www.plotlines.co.uk)



***“Thanks for giving us creative folk a forum, it can be lonely ploughing our artistic furrows, and social interaction really adds inspiration for our work.”***

*Artist*

***“By working collaboratively we can still do great things ... this exciting new initiative - a tangible outcome of Winchester’s new Cultural Strategy.”***

*Ref: RAW*

***“The team are really excited about being able to give the young people the opportunity they asked for!”***

*Ref: Young Open Mic Night*

# HAMPSHIRE POET



Working as an advocate for poets and poetry, current Hampshire Poet, Damian, has combined skills gained through his NHS public health experience, with those as a performance poet, to strengthen a sense of community, inclusivity, and belonging through wordplay.

As well as hosting poetry workshops to improve participants' mental and emotional wellbeing, Damian has taken poetry into surprising places for non-poetry-reading audiences - including a vintage bus ride from Winchester to Crawley for Heritage Open Days (HODs) 2024, and, for the HODs 2025 'architecture' theme, at Winchester School of Art's Rotunda encouraging the public to "build a poem"!

His work ranges from schools' visits, to poetry open-mics, to judging the Hampshire Young Poets competition, to commissions (including for Winchester Green Week highlighting their environmental aims), to providing a facilitating platform for diverse local voices. 2025 alone saw Damian reach 2858 people (all ages/abilities); 9000+ online; and 550 through competitions.

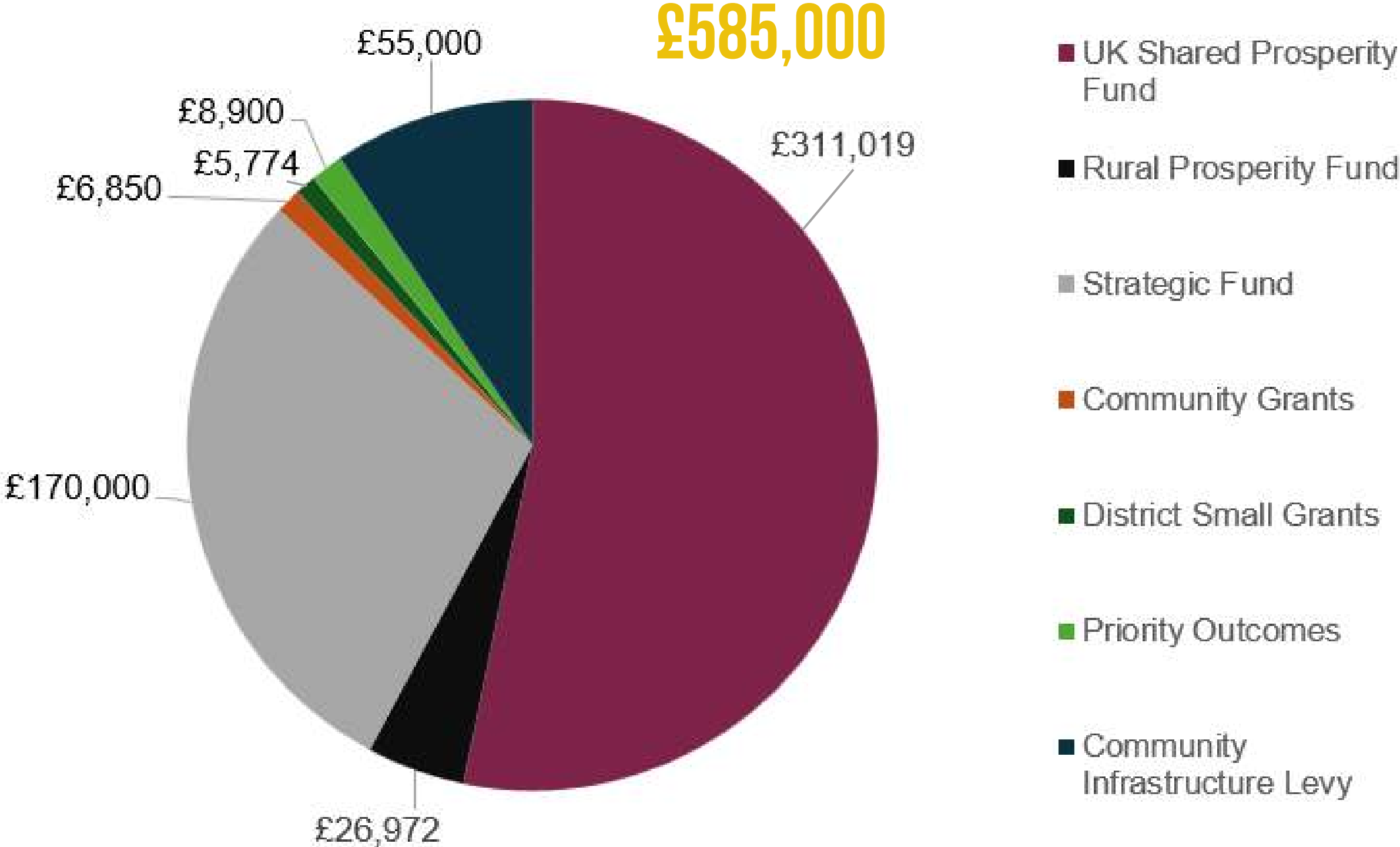
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# INVESTMENT



Grant funding awarded to arts, culture and heritage activity in 2024-2025 by Winchester City Council



# FROM BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

In 2026 we are launching Winchester's first festival of the Creative Industries! Celebrating, platforming and bringing visibility to the breadth and depth of the creatives who often work hard 'Behind Closed Doors'. The festival features three key elements:

Open Studios – over the course of the weekend, studios are invited to throw open their doors and welcome the public in to have a look around. Freelancers will be able to join an open workspace if they don't have a studio.

Exhibition – a central exhibition, featuring 10 respected studios from across the city showing their work and explaining their link with the city.


Design Challenge – a selection of students will get hands-on experience, responding to a social innovation brief and presenting their solution as part of the festival.



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**RODD/**





***“The creative growth course has been instrumental in turning my blurry dream into an actual strategy. I feel lucky to have been able to access the programme for free, and my deepest gratitude for the splendid work done.”***

*Francesco Sarti –  
Writer and Speaker*

***“I am only a very very small business in Winchester but it feels good to be at least a small part of something like this and feel that we are supported.”***

*Creative business owner*

# QUESTION TIME



An expert panel, which included Grammy and Emmy award-winning music producer and composer Giles Martin, answered questions from the audience focusing on arts and creativity in education and the threats posed by a lack of funding, diminished time in the curriculum, and a shortage of qualified arts teachers.

The panel featured Arts Council Southwest area director Phil Gibby, Cultural Learning Alliance co-chair Sally Bacon OBE, Play to the Crowd chief executive Deryck Newland, university academics Dr Marnie Seymour and Dr Laura Lee, and Film Production student Alex Greenwood.

Students played key roles in delivering the event, serving both on the organising committee and as hosts on the night, which featured a thought-provoking discussion on some of the most pressing issues surrounding the role of creativity and the arts in education in all its forms.

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# JANE AUSTEN 250



Jane Austen spent much of her life in and around Winchester, and many partners across Hampshire collaborated to mark the 250th anniversary of her birth through a rich programme of events, projects and campaigns.

Over one hundred themed events were delivered with footfall notably increasing at The Cathedral and Winchester College compared to the previous summer. No.8 college street opened for the first time and welcomed 7k visitors over a limited opening.

The Jane Austen Winchester Trail was downloaded 8k times and 2k printed copies were distributed through the Visitor Information Centre. The campaign page had over 23.5k page views.

We were named as the number one place to visit in 2025 by *The New York Times* and we welcomed national and international press including *The Toronto Star* and *The Boston Globe*.

Delivered by:



[www.visitwinchester.co.uk/jane-austen-250](http://www.visitwinchester.co.uk/jane-austen-250)

# WINCHESTER CULTURAL COLLECTIVE



The Winchester District Cultural Strategy Collective is a strategic partnership that brings together the stakeholders with an ability to influence and drive the successful delivery of the Winchester District Cultural Strategy.

The Cultural Collective members have agreed to work together to accomplish the aims and ambitions of the Winchester District Cultural Strategy.

Arts Council England  
Discarded Nut  
Hampshire County Council  
Hampshire Cultural Trust  
Hampshire ICB  
Jigsaw  
Play to the Crowd  
St John's Winchester

The Gurkha Museum  
University of Winchester  
Winchester BID  
Winchester Cathedral  
Winchester City Council  
Winchester Poetry Festival  
Winchester School of Art  
Wonderseekers



[/company/winchester-cultural-collective](https://www.linkedin.com/company/winchester-cultural-collective)