



UNIVERSITY OF  
BIRMINGHAM

Centre for  
Urban Wellbeing



# The Neighbourhood Futures Festival Evaluation Report

Festivals, Place-Making, and  
Sustainability in Community Contexts

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# Abstract

The Neighbourhood Futures Festival (NFF) took place over four days (26–29 June 2025) as a free, community-led event hosted by Birmingham Settlement, drawing visitors through two entrances (Selwyn Road and the Reservoir) and featuring a broad mix of creative, learning, and nature-based activities. The evaluation combined a long, in-person survey (n=150), feedback postcards (n=126) and a children’s treasure-map activity, enriched by participant observation. Survey data were analysed in SPSS and visualised in Excel, with qualitative responses thematically coded and presented via charts and word clouds.

Findings indicate the festival reached new audiences (81% first-time participants), felt inclusive (94% agreed), and catalysed social mixing (88% spoke to someone new). A substantial majority felt more or somewhat more connected to their local community during the event (≈96% “yes/somewhat”), and respondents strongly endorsed festivals as sites of informal learning (70% strongly agree; 26% agree). Environmental learning and intention-setting were visible in open-ended responses, with pledges clustering around food and growing, lifestyle/behaviour change, and recycling and waste.

Demographic analysis shows strong engagement among adults aged 31–50 (over-represented versus the local census), a majority-female audience, and a mixed ethnic profile with alignment for Black/Black British participation but underrepresentation among Asian/Asian British residents—signalling a need for targeted outreach. Geographic data indicate strong participation in Ladywood (B16) alongside a wider city reach. Practical suggestions centred on food and drink, shade/weather comfort, clearer organisation/signage and expanded activities; a smaller “Other” set highlighted quick-wins (visible recycling, toddler-friendly materials, engagement pacing, equipment access). Overall, NFF delivered inclusion, learning and connection, with actionable improvements to deepen equity and comfort and extend reach to underrepresented groups.

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# 1. Introduction

Neighbourhood Futures Festival (NFF) is Birmingham Settlement's flagship, place-based celebration of community, creativity and environmental action. In 2025, the festival ran over four days (26–29 June) with over 2000 participants. It activated Birmingham Settlement's site and its more expansive reservoir frontage through a programme of workshops, talks, performances, children's activities, and nature-based learning. Two public entrances (Selwyn Road and the Reservoir path) ensured multiple points of access for the surrounding neighbourhoods.

## Purpose and evaluation questions

The evaluation sought to understand who the festival reached, what participants experienced and learned, and where to prioritise improvements. It is organised around five linked hypotheses spanning: (1) community belonging and social connection; (2) environment, nature and sustainability; (3) emotional experience and wellbeing; (4) activities, engagement and enjoyment; and (5) participant-led suggestions for improvement and ongoing involvement with Birmingham Settlement. These hypotheses are grounded in the literature on social and relational space, as well as civic participation, which frames festivals as accessible, informal public learning environments that can build social capital, place attachment, and environmental citizenship.

## Methods overview

The evaluation employed a mixed-methods design: a researcher-administered long survey ( $n = 150$ ) captured demographics and core outcomes; 126 feedback postcards gathered quick reflections and “one thing to improve/change”; a children's treasure-map activity recorded place-based experiences in accessible, playful ways; and participant observation provided contextual insight. Quantitative data were analysed in SPSS; visuals (bar/pie charts, word clouds) were produced in Excel; qualitative data were thematically coded and triangulated with observation notes. Ethical procedures followed BSA/BERA guidance on consent, anonymity and inclusion. Limitations include opportunistic sampling during a hot weather period, self-report bias, social desirability bias, and interviewer positionality.

## Headline context and what this report covers

Attendance and flow patterns across entrances revealed strong weekend demand, indicating minor wayfinding challenges—an essential lens on spatial accessibility and welcome. The report proceeds as follows: Section 2 synthesises the theoretical framing; Section 3 details methods and ethics; Section 4 profiles who attended and compares to local census benchmarks; Section 5 analyses outcomes thematically (belonging, environmental learning/intentions, wellbeing, engagement), integrates cross-tabs and selected chi-square tests, and concludes with participant-led improvements; Section 6

analyses the feedback from social media; References and Appendices provide instruments and technical detail.

Taken together, the findings highlight NFF's strengths—high inclusivity, first-time reach, social mixing and perceived learning, alongside clear, practical improvements around comfort (shade), amenities (food/drink), information design (signage/wayfinding), and targeted outreach to ensure demographic equity across age, gender and ethnicity. These insights are intended to inform programming, partnership and funding strategies for 2026.



## 2. Literature and Theoretical Review

Festivals are increasingly recognised as fertile ground for fostering environmental consciousness, community engagement, and inclusive access to green spaces. Within the field of human geography, they are often interpreted as “relational spaces” (Massey, 2005) where environmental learning, place attachment, and identity formation coalesce.

### 2.1. Community, Belonging and Social Connection

*Hypothesis 1: Attending the festival will increase participants’ sense of belonging and connection to their local community across diverse age groups and backgrounds.*

Environmental engagement has historically lacked inclusivity, often failing to address intersecting barriers related to class, ethnicity, disability, and age (Capaldi et al., 2014). The field of critical human geography urges a deconstruction of the “universal” environmental subject, advocating instead for pluralistic approaches that recognise diverse ways of experiencing and valuing nature. Ensuring equitable access to green spaces and environmental programming is a matter of **spatial justice** (Soja, 2010), wherein all communities have the right to participate in the shaping of their environmental futures.

Numerous studies have identified the social benefits of community festivals. They are shown to enhance social capital, foster a sense of place identity, and create a sense of community through shared rituals and collective presence (Derrett, 2003; Quinn, 2003). McClinchey (2011) It highlights how multicultural festivals in urban areas enable feelings of belonging and ‘rootedness’ among participants from diverse backgrounds. These festivals enable attendees to participate in the co-creation of local meaning, thereby contributing to the formation of their emotional and cultural identity.

From a geographical perspective, Massey (2005) describes such events as moments of “relational space”, wherein new interactions and attachments are forged. Furthermore, (Derrett, 2003) found that local festivals mediate the relationship between social ties and subjective well-being, particularly when they are inclusive of families, neighbours, and various demographic groups. This, therefore, suggests that the festival experience can foster community connection across social and cultural lines.

## 2.2. Environment, Nature and Sustainability

*Hypothesis 2: The festival will increase participants' awareness of environmental issues and encourage reflection on nature and sustainability.*

*Nature connectedness*, a key focus of the Neighbourhood Futures Festival, refers to the emotional and cognitive relationship individuals have with the natural world, increasingly recognized as a determinant of human wellbeing (Lumber et al., 2017). Nature connectedness is also well-established as a predictor of pro-environmental attitudes and behaviours. Schultz (2002) posits that emotional affinity with nature enhances environmental concern, particularly when experiences are participatory and immersive.

Festivals offer opportunities for experiential learning and reflection. Studies have shown that exposure to and engagement with natural environments can enhance mental health, foster pro-environmental behaviour, and improve community cohesion. Capaldi et al., 2014). In addition, the integration of creative, nature-based tasks can encourage what Gablik (1992) called an “ecological consciousness”- a shift from passive observation to active care. Festivals centered around environmental themes contribute to what Schultz (2002) describe as “emplaced affective atmospheres,” where nature and community coalesce to generate collective meaning. This is particularly relevant for urban populations who may be more disconnected from green space. The Birmingham Settlement festival thus serves not only as an event but as a **relational space** (Massey, 2005), facilitating reconnection to nature within the urban landscape. In multicultural settings like Birmingham, such events also foster intercultural dialogue and belonging, key aspects of inclusive place-making (Derrett, 2003), linking people to both the local setting and the broader cultural identities.

## 2.3. Emotional Experience and Well-being

*Hypothesis 3: Festival participation will contribute positively to participants' emotional well-being, particularly feelings of inspiration, relaxation and joy.*

Community festivals are consistently linked with positive emotional outcomes. Participating in collective cultural events is associated with increased life satisfaction, stress relief, and emotional uplift (Derrett, 2003). Davidson et al. (2005) argue that such experiences form part of the ‘emotional geographies’ of place- spaces charged with feeling and symbolic meaning. Participants in McClinchey’s (2011) research described festivals using terms such as “comfortable”, “energising” and “like home”, suggesting affective responses tied to cultural expression and social safety. These findings indicate that the local festivals offer therapeutic and inspiring experiences, particularly when grounded in familiar, natural, or community-based settings.

## 2.4. Activities, Engagement and Enjoyment

*Hypothesis 4: Participants will report high levels of enjoyment and engagement with festival activities, with evidence of intergenerational and cross-cultural participation.*

Enjoyment and engagement are key predictors of festival success. However, a variety of activities must be offered to accommodate different age groups, abilities, and cultural backgrounds to promote more inclusive participation (Getz et al., 2010). Marks et al. (2016) observed that hands-on activities, particularly those embedded in local environment themes, enhanced engagement and learning across generations. Gruenewald refers to this as “place-based pedagogy” - a method of learning through direct interaction with the local environment, culture, and community. These findings strongly support Hypothesis 4 and underscore the value of diverse and interactive programming.

## 2.5. Suggestions and Ideas for Improvement

*Hypothesis 5: Participants will provide constructive suggestions for future events and services, reflecting a desire to stay engaged with Birmingham Settlement’s work.*

While less explored than other outcomes, participant feedback is an emerging theme in community engagement literature. Participatory design theory suggests that when communities are invited to contribute ideas, they become co-creators of the space and more likely to remain engaged (Pain, 2004). Marks et al. (2016) noted that festivals often spark interest in ongoing local environmental or artistic initiatives.

Participants offering feedback reflect a form of civic ownership. Their suggestions often aim at improving accessibility, inclusion, or extending the impact of the event – indicators of long-term engagement potential. Thus, this hypothesis is supported by evidence that community-led events foster not only participation but also investment in the future.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1. Research Design and Objectives

This evaluation employed a **mixed-methods approach**, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection to assess the outcomes of the Neighbourhood Futures Festival. A mixed design was chosen to capture both measurable patterns of participation (e.g., demographics, attendance, inclusivity) and the more nuanced, experiential aspects of the festival (e.g., feelings of belonging, reflections on nature, and suggestions for improvement). This mixed-methods approach allows for a fuller understanding of social phenomena by integrating numerical trends with lived experiences.

#### *Research Objectives:*

1. To assess how the festival fostered a sense of community, belonging, and inclusion.
2. To explore whether and how participants reflected on environmental issues, sustainability, and nature connectedness.
3. To capture the emotional and affective responses of participants during and after the festival.
4. To evaluate engagement and enjoyment across diverse age groups and cultural backgrounds.
5. To gather constructive feedback and ideas for future festivals and services delivered by Birmingham Settlement.

This evaluation plan was informed by the hypotheses underpinning the project (see Section 3) and aligned with Birmingham Settlement's mission to promote inclusion, well-being, and sustainability within local communities.

### 3.2. Research Plan

Data collection was embedded in the festival environment and took place over the course of the event. The plan was designed to maximise inclusivity and accessibility by offering multiple entry points for participation. Specifically:

Volunteers administered long Surveys to a wide cross-section of attendees during the event. Participants could complete them independently or with assistance if required.

**Feedback Postcards** were distributed at activity stations and collection points, inviting quick, reflective responses that captured participants' "in the moment" experiences.

**Treasure Map Activity** was co-designed as an interactive tool for children and families, encouraging creative expression through drawing, symbols, and emojis.

**Observation and informal conversation** were also used to complement formal tools, helping evaluators contextualise the data.

The use of multiple tools reflects an understanding of **participatory research methods** (Pain, 2004), which emphasise accessibility, co-production, and valuing different forms of expression.

### 3.3. Data Collection Tools and Sampling

**3 main tools** were used:

#### 1. *Long Survey (n=150)*

The primary tool was a structured questionnaire, designed to collect demographic data and in-depth perception information from festival participants. The questionnaire included multiple-choice questions, Likert scale questions, and open-ended questions. This enabled us to study the patterns of different age groups, ethnicity, and genders in terms of experience and participation.

#### 2. *Feedback Postcards*

This method provided participants with a quick and convenient way to express their immediate feelings and inner thoughts. This simple and visually appealing approach had stimulated people's enthusiasm for participating spontaneously, especially for those who were not willing to complete long questionnaire surveys.

#### 3. *Treasure Map Activity*

This is a participatory tool primarily aimed at families and children. Participants were invited to complete word puzzles and answer questions on the hand-drawn map. This visual and participatory approach captured the spaces and emotional connections that traditional surveys might miss.

#### *Sample and Participants*

A total of **150 participants** completed the long survey, with additional contributions gathered through postcards and treasure maps. There were 2246 participants at the 2025 festival, making this a survey sample size of 7%. Participants reflected a wide range of ages, cultural backgrounds, and levels of prior engagement with Birmingham Settlement. Data collection took place during the festival itself, ensuring immediacy of

responses. Participation was voluntary, and no incentives were offered beyond the opportunity to contribute to future planning.

### 3.4. Data Analysis

- **Quantitative data** (e.g., demographics, participation rates, inclusivity ratings) were analysed descriptively through frequencies and percentages.
- **Qualitative data** (open-ended survey responses, postcards, treasure maps) were analysed using **inductive thematic analysis** (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Responses were coded into key themes (community belonging, environment, wellbeing, engagement, and improvement). These were then compared with existing literature in human geography and environmental psychology.

Each tool informed a different layer of analysis:

1. *SPSS*: The survey data were analysed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics, such as age distribution, ethnic composition, and disability status, were generated, and frequency counts and cross-tabulations were used to explore the relationship between different population groups and their festival experiences.
2. *Excel*: Excel was used to create charts and visual summaries for these three methods. The survey data was visualised through bar charts, pie charts and word clouds. The themes of the postcards were classified and counted for presentation.
3. *Participant Observation*: It is used to provide background information for other data sources. For instance, information such as the situation where participants show a reluctant attitude to a particular activity, or the fact that certain groups avoid formal investigations, can help in interpreting the participation patterns and possible access barriers.

#### Data Quality

A total of **150 long-form surveys** and **126 feedback postcards** were completed during the festival. Based on observed attendance, this represents a strong response rate and provides a reliable evidence base. For proportions reported from the survey (n=150), the **95% confidence interval is approximately  $\pm 7.7\%$**  (after applying a finite-population correction). This means that where, for example, 60% of respondents agreed with a statement, the true value in the wider attending population is likely between about 52% and 68%. While the survey was not strictly randomised, this margin of error gives a realistic indication of the level of precision in the findings.

### 3.5. Ethical Considerations and Limitations

The evaluation adhered to principles of ethical research as outlined by the British Sociological Association (BSA, 2017) and the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2018). These principles emphasise respect for participants, voluntary informed consent, and sensitivity to issues of power and inclusion.

#### Ethics

**Voluntary Participation and Informed Consent:** All participants contributed voluntarily. The purpose of the survey, postcards, and treasure map activity was explained verbally by facilitators, and consent was implied through participation. No coercion or incentives were applied.

**Anonymity and Confidentiality:** Surveys did not collect identifying information. Responses were anonymised at the point of collection and are presented in aggregate form in this report. Direct quotes are reproduced without attribution, ensuring confidentiality.

**Accessibility and Inclusion:** The evaluation design incorporated multiple tools (written, visual, creative) to ensure that children, older adults, and individuals with varying literacy levels or for whom English is not a first language could participate meaningfully. This reflects an ethical commitment to inclusivity in line with participatory research traditions (Pain, 2004).

**Minimising Harm:** The evaluation took place in a public festival context with low risk of harm. Nevertheless, care was taken to ensure participants felt comfortable declining questions, particularly those relating to demographics.

**Safeguarding:** Since children contributed through treasure maps and postcards, it's worth noting that their consent was informal, with parental/carer consent implied by their participation. Academic best practice (BERA, 2018) suggests flagging this as a limitation and justifying it by the low-risk, creative, non-sensitive nature of the activity. Staff and volunteers were briefed on safeguarding procedures throughout the festival.

**Researcher Positionality:** Researchers were affiliated with Birmingham Settlement, which may have influenced participant responses due to perceptions of authority or gratitude. This was mitigated by maintaining a neutral, welcoming stance and stressing that honest feedback (positive or negative) was valued.

**Data storage:** All survey and postcard data were securely stored on Birmingham Settlement's internal servers, accessible only to the evaluation team.

**Retention and deletion:** Data will be held for up to 12 months post-festival for reporting and learning purposes, after which it will be anonymised or securely deleted.

## Limitations

As with any community-based evaluation, several methodological limitations must be acknowledged:

**Sampling Bias:** Data were collected opportunistically during the festival, meaning the sample may over-represent those more engaged, available, or willing to provide feedback. This limits the generalisability of findings to all attendees.

**Self-Reported Data and Social Desirability Bias:** As with many community-based evaluations, data are self-reported and may be subject to social desirability effects. The celebratory and communal atmosphere of the festival could have encouraged participants to give more positive responses than they might otherwise have expressed in a neutral setting.

**Researcher Positionality and Identity:** All three primary interviewers were women in their early 20s. While this ensured a welcoming and approachable presence, it may also have influenced participation patterns. For example, women may have felt more comfortable engaging with female researchers, whereas some men — particularly older or younger male participants — may have been less likely to interact. This introduces a potential gender bias in sampling. Future evaluations would benefit from a mixed gender, more demographically diverse team of researchers to mitigate such effects.

**Contextual Conditions:** The festival took place during a period of unusually hot weather. While the warm climate may have enhanced participants' mood and enjoyment (and thus contributed to the generally positive feedback), it may also have limited engagement from older attendees, those with health conditions, or individual's sensitive to heat. Furthermore, prolonged exposure to the sun may have reduced the willingness of some visitors to complete longer surveys, thereby shaping the demographic profile and depth of responses.

**Interpretive Nature of Analysis:** Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) is inherently interpretive. While systematic coding was employed, findings are shaped by researchers' positionality and the theoretical frameworks applied.

**Uneven Response Depth:** While some participants provided detailed open-ended responses, others offered very brief reflections (e.g., single words). This unevenness constrains the richness of analysis in some areas.

**Limited Demographic Data:** Not all participants completed demographic questions, reducing the ability to explore differences in experience across sub-groups (e.g., age, ethnicity, socioeconomic background).

**Language and Cultural Barriers:** While the festival was multicultural, some attendees may not have been fully comfortable engaging in English. This could have led to underrepresentation of certain groups in the longer surveys, even though postcards and visual methods reduced some of this barrier.



**Power Dynamics:** Even in a community festival setting, there is a subtle power imbalance between researchers and participants. People may have felt obliged to respond positively out of gratitude for Birmingham Settlement's free provision, or from a perception that negative feedback could affect future events. A short acknowledgement of this helps demonstrate reflexivity.

In addition to these considerations, it is important to acknowledge broader ethical and methodological constraints. Power dynamics may have influenced responses, with some participants feeling inclined to provide positive feedback given Birmingham Settlement's role as a community charity. While children's participation was encouraged through playful tools such as treasure maps, their involvement was based on implied parental consent, which carries ethical limitations in terms of formal consent procedures. Language barriers may also have restricted engagement for some participants from migrant backgrounds, potentially skewing the demographic balance of responses. Finally, as responses were collected within the immediate context of the festival, they reflect short-term impressions rather than long-term impacts, and the positionality of the young, female research team has shaped analysis. These reflexive acknowledgements align with best practice in qualitative research, ensuring transparency and critical awareness of the study's scope and limits.

Despite these limitations, the triangulation of methods (survey, postcards, treasure maps), the inclusion of qualitative voices, and the theoretical framing provide a robust and balanced evaluation of the festival's impact.

## **4. Festival Demographic Insights and a Comparison to Census Data**

The Neighbourhood Futures Festival drew a highly diverse audience, comprising individuals from various age groups, genders, cultural backgrounds, and household compositions. While the quantitative findings provide essential detail, what is most striking is the extent to which the festival engaged groups across generational and cultural boundaries — a key outcome for Birmingham Settlement’s commitment to inclusion.

This section examines the demographic makeup of festival attendees in comparison to the local population (Census 2021 for Ladywood – B16) and attendees at last year’s festival (2024). This provides insights into community reach, engagement trends, and areas for improved inclusivity. The aim is to assess how representative the festival is of the local community, evaluate changes from the previous year, and identify if any demographics may be under- or over-represented. This insight is vital in shaping future outreach strategies, enhancing community engagement, and ensuring the festival remains inclusive, accessible, and reflective of both local and broader populations.

A total of 150 respondents completed the long survey. Unless otherwise specified, all variables were filled out completely. Descriptive statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS, and charts and visual summaries were created using Excel. Demographic characteristics were further segmented.

## 4.1. Age and Intergenerational Participation

As shown in Figure 1, respondents aged 31–50 comprised nearly half of the festival audience (47%), followed by those aged 18–30 (30%). These groups often represent young parents and working adults, suggesting the festival's programme was relevant and accessible to families and professionals. This indicates the festival is attracting more working-age adults, which may support networking and family attendance. However, participation among older adults (aged 70 and above) remains low, indicating potential barriers such as mobility, awareness, or relevance of activities.

Adults aged 31–50 was the age group with the highest attendance among our survey respondents at the festival. When looking at the immediate local area surrounding Birmingham Settlement (Ladywood) in comparison to the local census demographic. In Figure 2, you can see that adults aged 31–50 from the Ladywood area were significantly overrepresented (58%) compared to the local population of Ladywood (Census 2021: ~27% Aged 31–50). This age group often includes working parents and community decision-makers, suggesting the festival resonates with individuals who may also be caregivers or working professionals. This engagement is valuable for funders focused on family, education, or workforce initiatives.

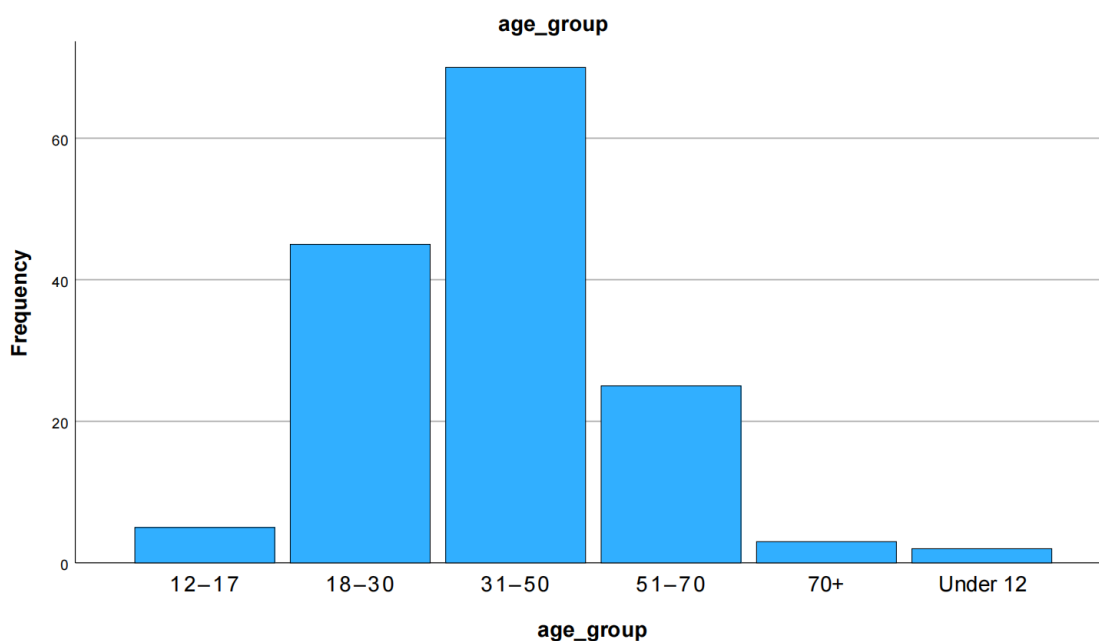


Figure 1: Age distribution of festival attendees

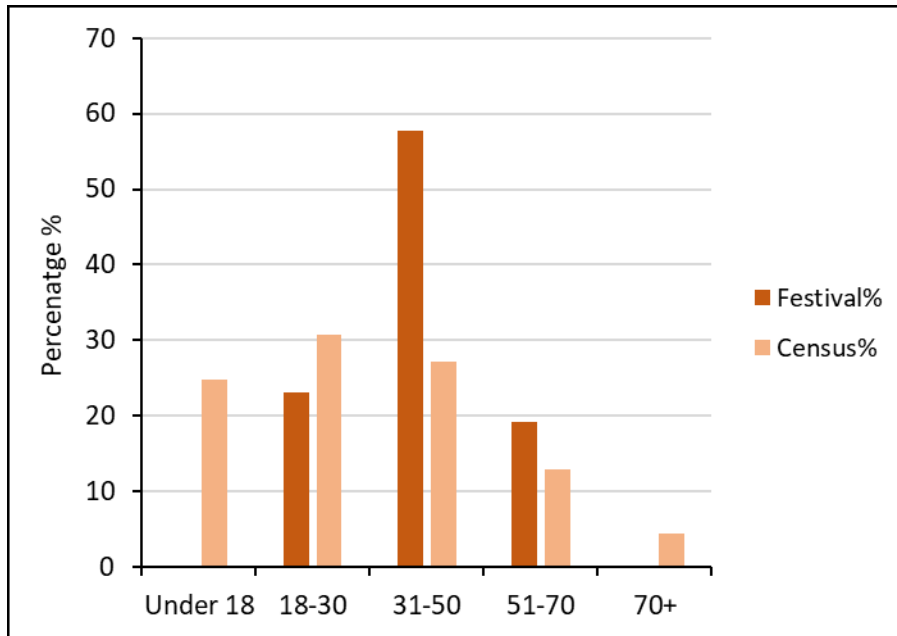


Figure 2: Ages of surveyed festival attendees compared to census data

### Key Observations:

#### 1. 31–50 Age Group: Significantly Overrepresented

- Festival attendance from this group is over double their proportion in the local population (58% vs. ~27%). This is based on the representative sample of the festival survey respondents with the local census data.
- This suggests that the festival strongly appeals to middle-aged adults, a demographic that often includes community leaders, professionals, and parents.
- This could indicate successful outreach to working families or those involved in local initiatives.

#### 2. 18–30 Age Group: Moderately Engaged

- The festival saw slightly fewer attendees in this age group compared to their census proportion (23% vs. ~31%).
- Although this is a key demographic for volunteerism, activism, and innovation, they appear slightly underrepresented.

#### 3. 51–70 Age Group: Appropriately Represented

- Festival attendance for this group aligns reasonably well with census data (~18% vs. ~13%).
- Indicates stable engagement with older adults below retirement age.

#### 4. 70+ Age Group: Low but Consistent

- Both the festival and census show very low proportions (~0–4%) of people aged 70+.
- This demographic may face mobility or access barriers, suggesting a need for age-friendly approaches.
- Addressing isolation or elder care may be of interest in helping increase accessibility for this group. However, it also highlights an opportunity to expand outreach to older residents. With a focus on wellbeing, and intergenerational engagement, we may see this as an area worth investing in.

#### 5. Under 18s: No representation

- Attendance of under-18s was not present from the B16 area.

Figure 1 presents quantitative evidence of impact and outreach across different age groups, highlighting the interest of intergenerational attendees. Therefore, the most present age groups were adults aged 31-50, as well as a consistent presence amongst older adults and young families. There are some apparent gaps and opportunities for expanding elder participation in the Ladywood (B16) area. However, data for this age group was not collected primarily, which explains the absence of data.

## 4.2. Gender and Representation

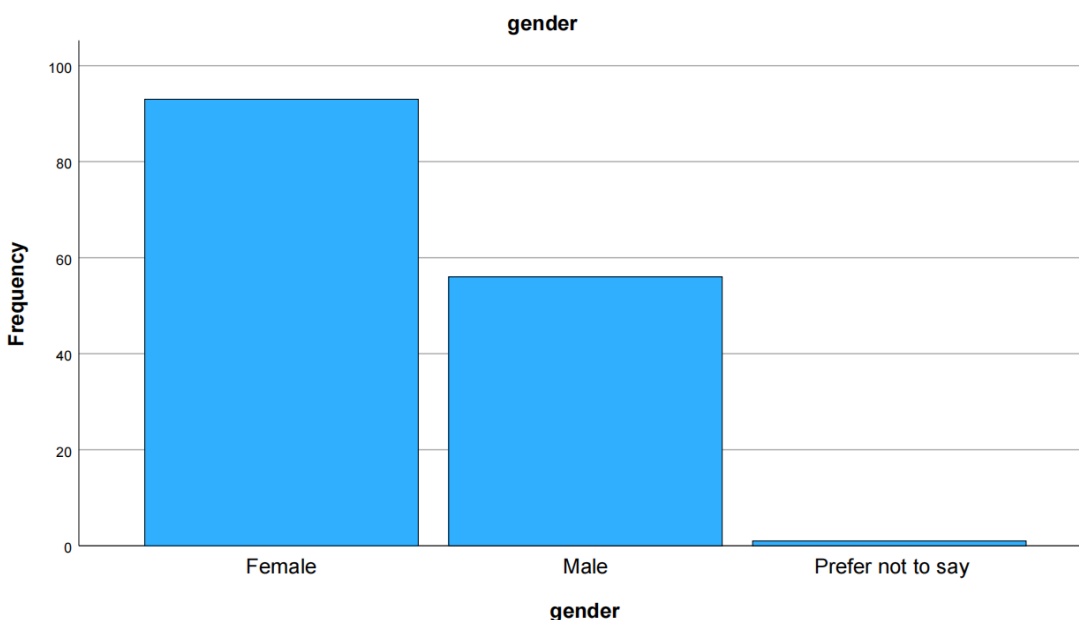


Figure 3: Gender distribution of festival attendees

Female participation made up 61% (n=93) of attendees who responded to the survey. The gender distribution indicates a higher participation rate among women. This aligns with national trends where women more frequently engage in community-based events, particularly those with family or educational elements.

Some notable findings (Figure 3) show that during the festival, the age vs gender distribution was found. Festival attendance shows a higher participation rate amongst women aged 31–50. Following this there was also a high participation from women aged 18–30. Suggesting a higher female attendance across most age groups. This might indicate there are more relevant activities for women in these age ranges, which further implies the family-friendly nature of the festival. Women were frequently observed facilitating group and family participation, echoing findings that women often act as cultural intermediaries in community events (Quinn, 2003). However, in comparison to the female attendance aged 18–30, there was a significantly lower attendance from men in this age group. Therefore, there is room to expand outreach to young men, young people under 18, and older adults over 70. This data underscores the value of tailoring future activities for inclusivity across life stages.

However, it is also essential to recognize potential interviewer bias in this data. As a group of three women conducting these surveys, we may have felt more comfortable approaching women, due to our shared gender identity. Although a few male volunteers assisted us in collecting the surveys, the majority were carried out by women. In the future, a mixed-gender interviewer group will help to avoid this bias.

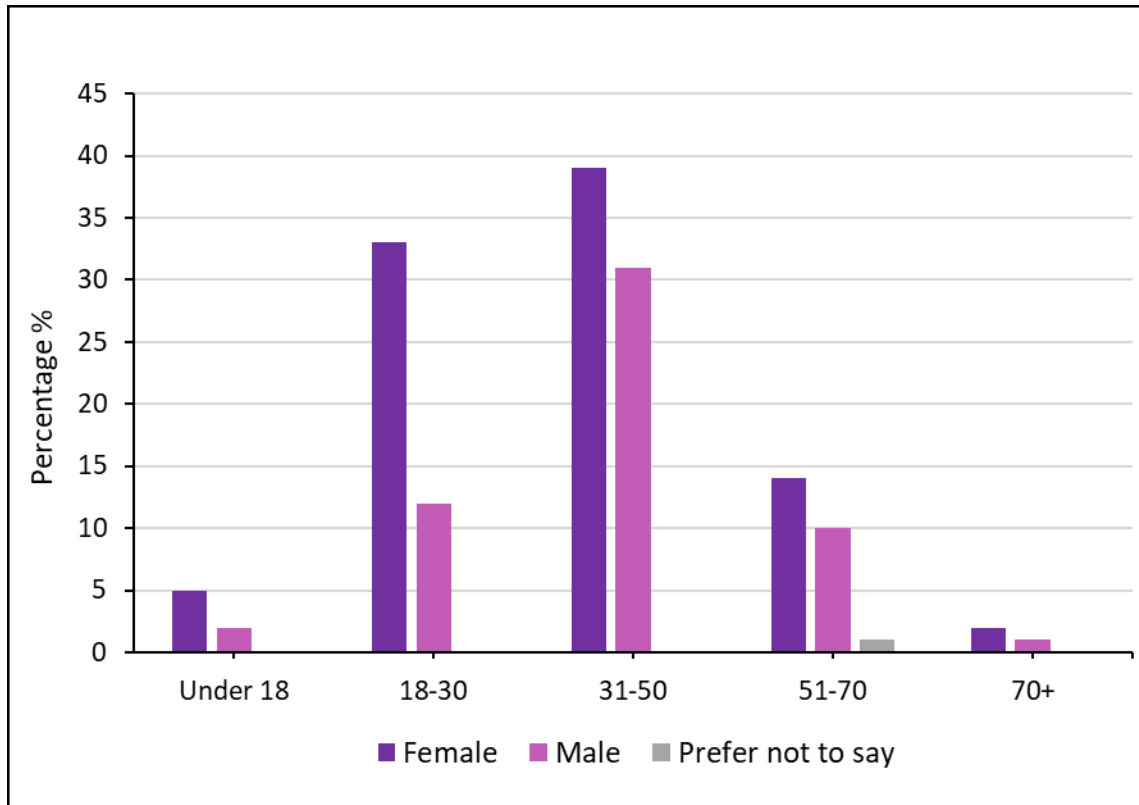


Figure 4: Age and gender distribution of festival attendees

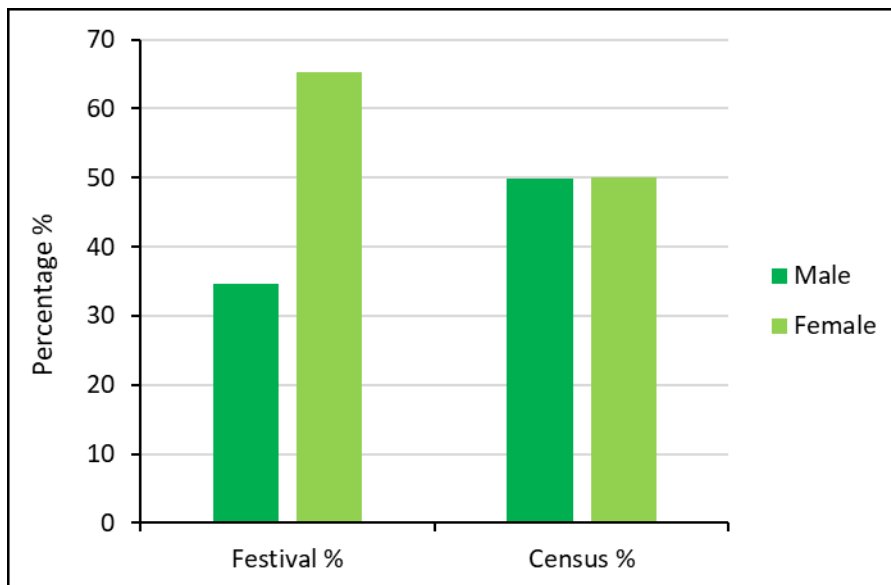


Figure 5: Festival gender distribution compared to census data

Figure 4 shows that The Neighbourhood Futures Festival 2025 successfully engaged a majority-female audience (65%), significantly higher than the 50% female population in the Census of the Ladywood area. This reflects the festival's appeal to women and families, which may suggest there were activities focused on gender-responsive

community development. Conversely, the underrepresentation of male attendees highlights an opportunity for targeted outreach and inclusive programming, for which additional funding and partnerships are being actively sought.

### 4.3. Ethnic and Cultural Diversity

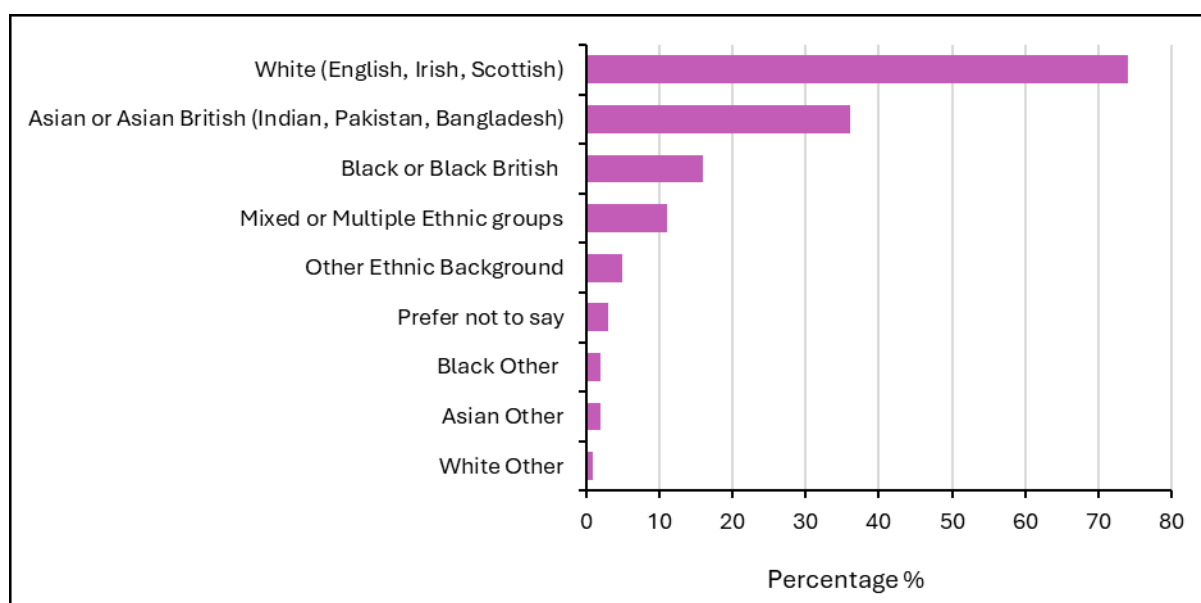


Figure 6: Ethnicity profile of festival attendees

The festival provided a platform to rebuild trust and social cohesion in a ward where feelings of community safety and belonging are below average. Considering Birmingham as a whole — and Ladywood in particular — has a significant global majority population ~77%, according to the 2021 Census. The Neighbourhood Futures Festival 2025 achieved a diverse turnout. White British attendees were overrepresented (49%) – (Census 2021: ~23–30% White), highlighting an opportunity to strengthen cultural outreach and inclusive programming.

Ethnic diversity at the Neighbourhood Futures Festival 2025 reflected a broad cross-section of the community, with particularly strong engagement from Black or Black British groups (27%, aligned with local demographics) (see Figure 7), resonating with McClinchey's (2011) work on multicultural festivals as spaces that foster belonging and cross-cultural exchange. However, Asian or Asian British attendees were notably underrepresented (23% survey respondents vs. 39% Census data), despite forming the largest ethnic group in the B16 area. This insight informs future outreach strategies and underscores the need for funding to support inclusive programme development and partnerships with underrepresented communities. Additionally, 4% of attendees preferred not to disclose their ethnicity, which suggests the value of investing in culturally sensitive engagement and data collection approaches.



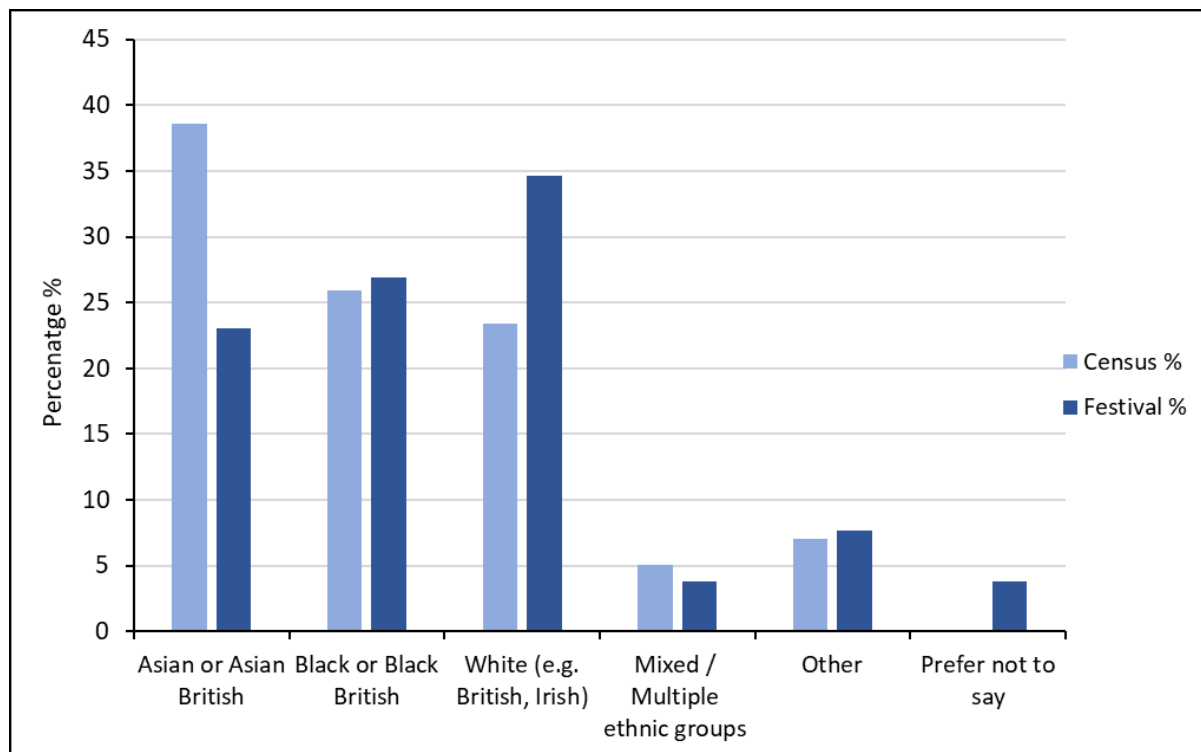


Figure 7: Ethnicities of attendees compared to census data

Participation among key groups from Ladywood, Newtown, and Kingstanding — particularly Black British and Asian British communities — remains lower than expected. This points to a need for targeted, culturally relevant outreach to better serve and reflect Birmingham’s most deprived and diverse neighbourhoods.

Some **future suggestions** for improvement include:

- Collaborate with faith groups, cultural centres, schools, and global majority-led or grassroots organizations,
- Use community leaders or local MPs to improve trust and visibility

### Key Observations:

#### 1. White and White Other– Overrepresented at the Festival

- Census: 23% | Festival: 35%

- White individuals were the most overrepresented ethnic group at the festival relative to their share of the local population.

- This may reflect the festival’s broader appeal to White British communities, or differences in access and engagement across ethnic groups.

## 2. Asian or Asian British – Underrepresented

- Census: 39% | Festival: 23%
- The most significant underrepresentation was seen among Asian or Asian British individuals, despite being the largest ethnic group in the area.
- This gap highlights an opportunity to build more culturally inclusive outreach, programming, and partnerships with local Asian community groups.

## 3. Black or Black British – Well Represented

- Census: 26% | Festival: 27%
- The proportion of Black or Black British attendees was closely aligned with the local population.
- This suggests strong, consistent engagement with Black communities, potentially due to relevant programming or community trust.

## 4. Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups – Well Represented

- Census: 5% | Festival: 4%
- This group's attendance was very closely aligned with the census levels. While not a major gap, it could be improved with targeted messaging or inclusive representation in planning.

## 5. Other Ethnic Groups – Well Represented

- Census: 7% | Festival: 8%
- Individuals identifying as "Other" were proportionately engaged.

## 6. Prefer Not to Say – Present at Festival (4%)

- Census: 0% | Festival: 4%
- A small but notable portion of attendees preferred not to disclose their ethnicity. This suggests a need for culturally sensitive and trusted data collection methods.

By aligning festival attendance with local demographic benchmarks, Birmingham Settlement can demonstrate:

- Impactful community reach, especially among women and working-age adults.

- Progress toward inclusive representation, particularly within BAME groups.
- Data-driven programme planning, showcasing a commitment to continual improvement and reflective practice.

#### 4.4. Accessibility and Inclusion

A significant finding from the demographic data is that 15% of our survey sample of participants identified as having a disability, with an additional 5% preferring not to disclose. This is a notable proportion that similarly aligns with B16's broader population, where census data suggests that 17% of residents (ONS, 2021) report being "disabled under the Equality Act. The strong representation of disabled participants indicates that the NFF was, in practice, accessible to many individuals who often face barriers to participation in public events.

Simultaneously, the proportion of respondents selecting "*prefer not to say*" highlights the sensitivities around disclosing a disability in a festival setting, even though the survey was anonymous. This aligns with more exhaustive research on disability disclosure, which shows that people often withhold such information due to stigma, fear of judgment, or uncertainty about how it will be used.

94% of respondents agreed that the festival was inclusive. Qualitative feedback underscores this. Many participants praised the inclusive atmosphere:

- "*How inclusive it was to all ages*"
- "*Warm, relaxed, accessible*"
- "*RELAXED, welcoming and INCLUSIVE*"

Others highlighted areas where accessibility could be strengthened, particularly given the hot weather:

- "*More shade for guests*"
- "*All was brilliant. Perhaps some more access to colder water and shade*"

Wayfinding and signage were also raised as issues:

- "*Map with numbers and signs at all entry points at reservoir*"
- "*More clear signs and info about stalls, on maps too.*"

These responses reflect the ongoing issues with spatial justice (Soja, 2010), where accessibility is a vital aspect of equitable participation. This suggests that while the festival succeeded in attracting a diverse demographic, there remain barriers linked to

physical accessibility and comfort in public space. These comments illustrate the need for practical adjustments – particularly seating, shade, water access, and navigational clarity.

In sum, these findings indicate that the festival made substantial progress in reaching disabled participants, reflecting Birmingham Settlement's commitment to inclusion. However, the data also suggests the need for continuous reflection on accessibility, particularly in ensuring comfort during hot weather, providing rest spaces and improving signage, to further enhance equitable participation in future festivals.

## 4.5. Education Levels and Employment Statuses

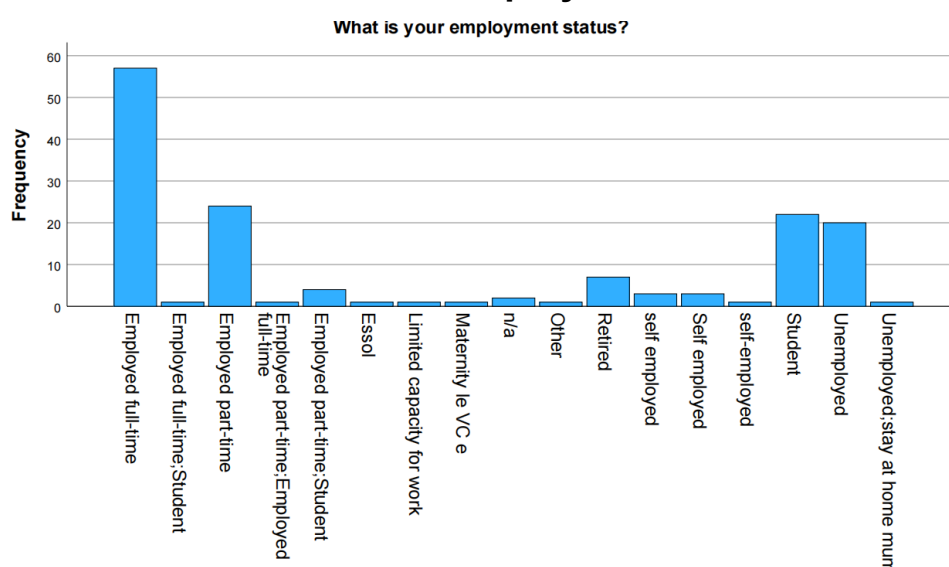
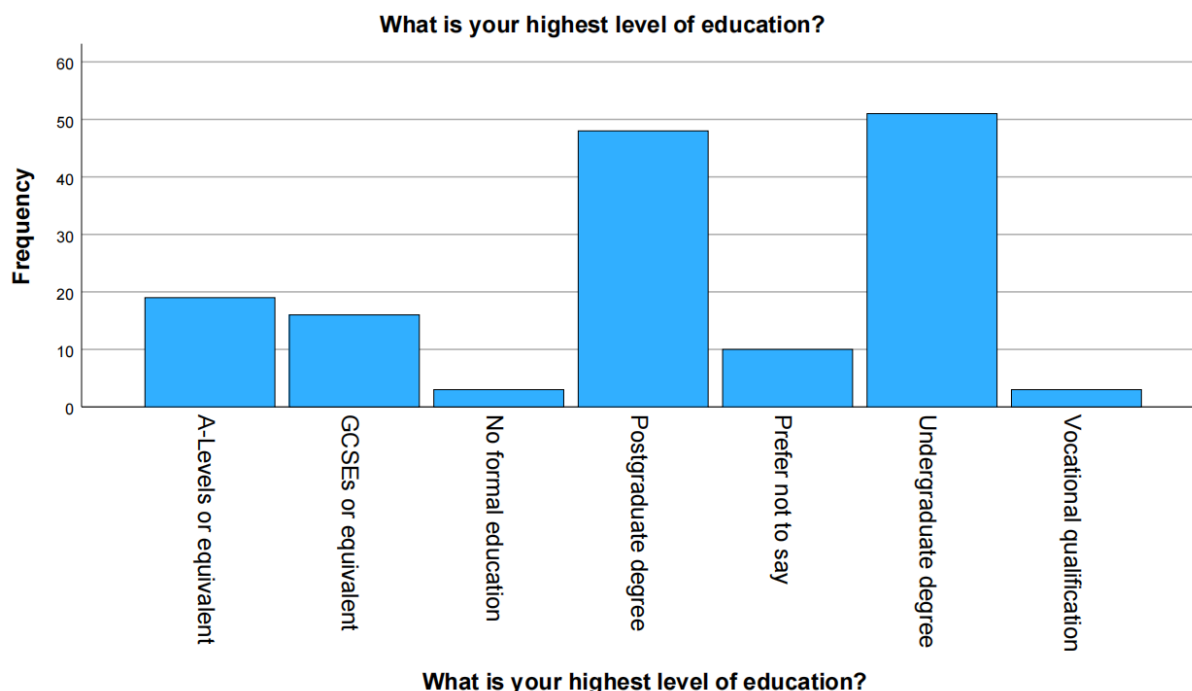


Figure 8: Employment status of festival attendees

The festival attracted a range of attendees from diverse occupational and educational backgrounds, including postgraduate-educated professionals (e.g. researchers, community organisers, pharmacists), early-career workers (e.g. admin support, healthcare assistants), and individuals with no formal education or employment. A large portion of attendees held undergraduate or postgraduate degrees, and many were in skilled professions (e.g. education, finance, cyber-security, pharmacy). A smaller number of attendees had jobs in sectors such as cleaning, construction, or were unemployed — often linked with lower levels of formal education (GCSEs or no qualifications).

Attendees of the Neighbourhood Futures Festival 2025 came from a wide range of occupational and educational backgrounds, with a notable proportion holding undergraduate or postgraduate degrees and working in sectors such as education, finance, healthcare, and cybersecurity. This reflects the festival's strong appeal to highly educated professionals. However, there was a lower presence of individuals in manual,

service, or non-professional roles—such as construction, cleaning, or unemployed participants—which often aligned with lower levels of formal education. This highlights an opportunity to broaden accessibility and relevance to those with vocational experience, fewer qualifications, or non-traditional employment roles, ensuring future festivals reflect the full socio-economic diversity of the B16 community.



*Figure 9: Education level of festival attendees*

The festival attracted a disproportionately high number of attendees with undergraduate or postgraduate degrees (62%, compared to 24% locally). This suggests the event is currently most accessible to highly educated residents. Those with no formal education (8% vs. 19%) and GCSE-level qualifications (8% vs. 15%) were notably underrepresented, highlighting a need to improve inclusivity for lower-qualification groups. These findings indicate both a strength in professional engagement and a clear opportunity to expand outreach and programming for more diverse educational backgrounds.

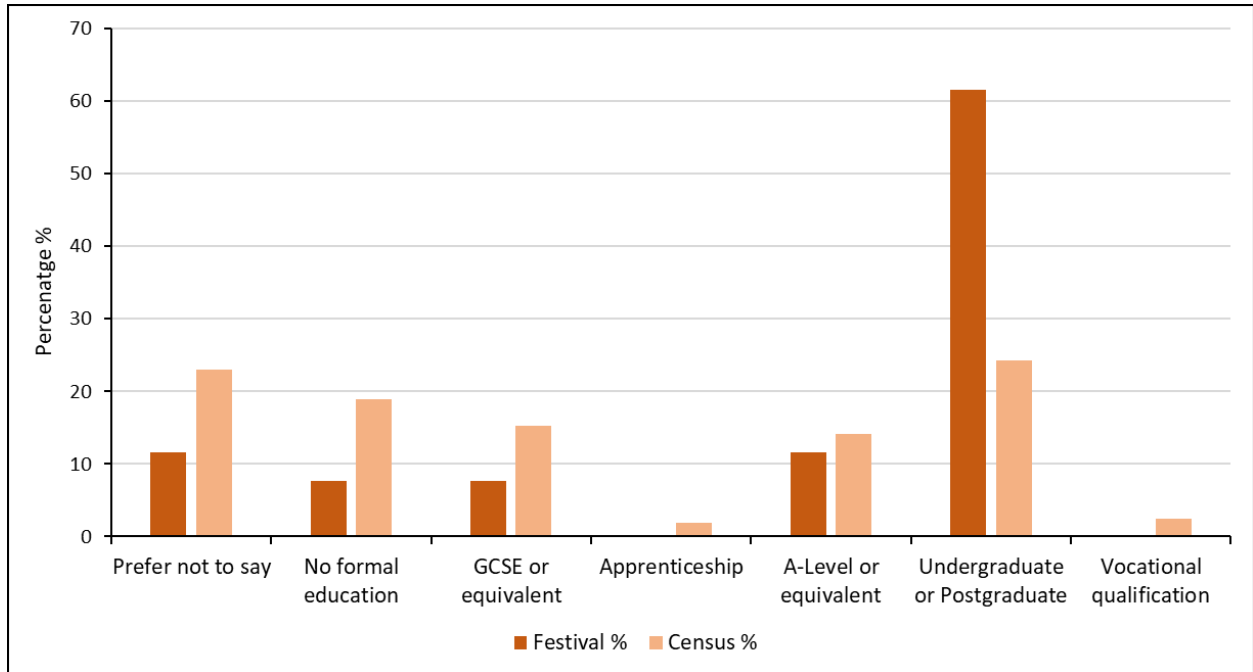


Figure 10: Festival attendees' education level compared to census data

## 4.6. Geographic Reach and Postcode Analysis

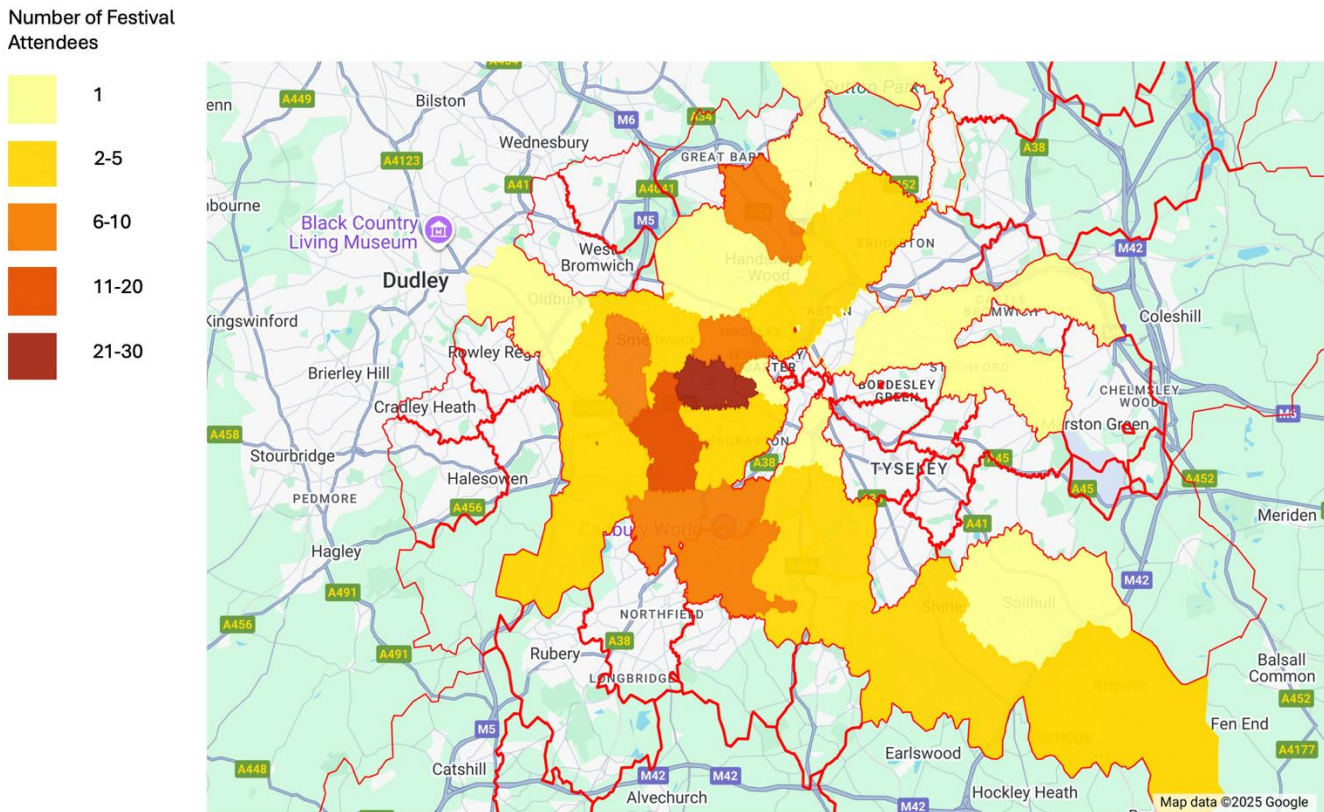


Figure 11: Postcodes of festival attendees in Birmingham

As shown in Figures 7 and 8, at least 17% (25 out of 150 respondents) provided postcodes within the Ladywood (B16) area, indicating strong local attendance. This was the most frequent postcode, followed by B17 and B18 at 7% (11 out of 150 respondents) each, respectively. Other priority areas, such as B18 (Winson Green) and B19 (Newtown), show good attendance (7% and 5% respectively). This suggests that outreach in ethnically diverse neighbourhoods has had a tangible impact. Attendees came from a wide spread of over 10 postcode areas, including B29, B30, and B67, indicating that the festival attracted visitors beyond the immediate locality.

Postcode analysis of festival attendees shows strong engagement from key neighbourhoods in line with the organisation's strategic aims. Ladywood (B16), the primary target area, accounted for 25 of the total attendees, making it the most represented location. This suggests that promotional and partnership efforts in this area were effective. Surrounding areas such as Harborne (B17) and Winson Green (B18) also saw strong participation, indicating healthy community interest beyond Ladywood itself.

However, some high-priority deprived areas — particularly Newtown (B19) and Kingstanding (B44) — had lower visibility. This indicates an opportunity for targeted

outreach and deeper community partnerships in future festivals to improve inclusivity and representation.

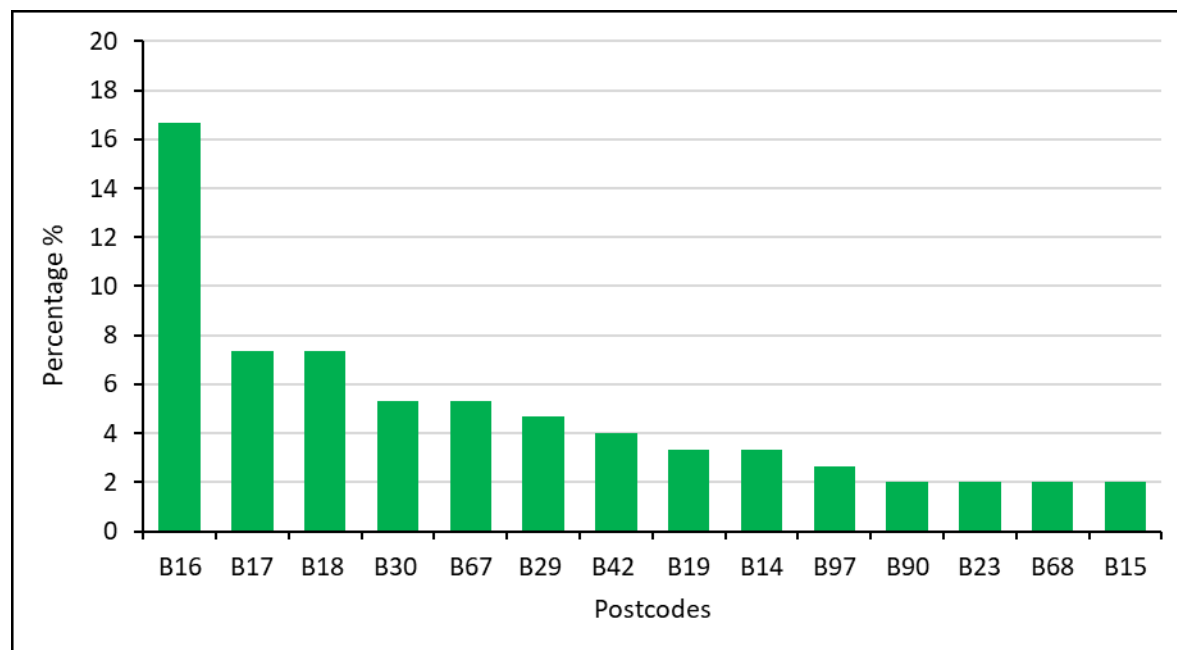


Figure 12: Postcode analysis of festival attendees

The demographic comparison between the 2021 Census data for the B16 area and the Neighbourhood Futures Festival 2025 demographic shows significant engagement with key community groups, as well as some areas for growth. This analysis is critical for demonstrating impact and strategic outreach in fundraising applications.

Given the area's significant economic deprivation, the festival's emphasis on free activities, accessible public spaces, and information stalls aligned with key community needs. Local Insight data highlights that Ladywood is one of the most deprived wards in the country, with a highly diverse population and a relatively young age profile. The festival successfully engaged middle-aged women and families but showed underrepresentation among older residents and some ethnic minority groups. Future iterations could benefit from working directly with local community leaders to ensure broader participation.



## 4.7. Demographic Comparison- Year on Year

One of our evaluation measures was the reach and engagement of the Neighbourhood Futures Festival. We compared visitor and survey data between 2024 and 2025 to assess year-on-year growth. In 2024, 80 visitors completed our feedback survey, compared to 150 in 2025, representing an 88% increase in engagement. Visitor headcount rose from 1396 in 2024 to 2246 in 2025, a growth of **61%**, demonstrating wider community participation.

The largest growth in attendance was among visitors aged 18- 30 (30%) and 31-50 (46%). The increase in survey completions was likely due to our expanded outreach efforts, including partnerships with local schools and businesses and targeted social media campaigns. This indicates a substantial rise in community participation and awareness of the festival. 150 people completed the survey, which represented 7% of the total festival population. Usually for a population of 2246, a 5% margin of error is allowed (which is roughly 329 survey respondents) for the 'sample' to be representative of the population, so our findings should be read with this limitation in mind.

The growth in survey responses and visitor numbers suggests a substantial increase in engagement. This supports the case that the festival's reach has expanded meaningfully year-on-year. The festival's ability to double survey participation and significantly increase attendance demonstrates not only community interest but also the effectiveness of our outreach strategies. With continued funding, we can sustain and further accelerate this positive trajectory.

The demographic composition of attendees shifted between 2024 and 2025, with slight changes in **those who have a disability**. The change in attendees reporting a disability from [20%] in 2024 to [15%] in 2025 indicates, somewhat consistent accessibility and awareness of the event among disabled community members. However, the number of survey respondents this year (150 survey responses) was almost double that of last year's Festival (80 survey responses). The proportion of attendees across all age ranges increased from the year-on-year data.

Gender representation remained balanced, while ethnicity data showed significant increased participation from [Black, Black British, and Asian, Asian British backgrounds]. This suggests the festival is becoming more inclusive and appealing to a broader section of the community.

Average visitor satisfaction improved this year, with attendees reporting a stronger sense of involvement (mean score 4.3/5) and feeling more connected to nature (4.3/5 vs 3.6/5). These findings suggest the festival is strengthening its role in promoting inclusion and cohesion.

### Overview and Summary of Demographics

The majority of the respondents were aged between 18 and 50, with a significant representation of young adults and those in the working age group. Females accounted for a substantial majority in the sample. Ethnic diversity was reflected in the participation of white British, Asian, black, and people from mixed ethnic backgrounds, which roughly corresponded to the local population composition. Specifically, Black or Black British (27% vs. census 26%), Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups (4% vs. census 5%), and Other Ethnic Groups (8% vs. census 7%) were closely aligned with local demographics, while White attendees were slightly overrepresented (35% vs. census 23%). However, the number of participants from Asian or Asian British attendees were underrepresented (23% vs. census 39%). Approximately 15% of the respondents considered themselves to have disabilities or long-term health issues. The educational level was high, with two-thirds of the participants holding a university degree. It was also found that females were overrepresented at the festival (65%) compared to 50% in the census, indicating a strong engagement from women in the community but suggesting a potential barrier to male participation, such as a lack of targeted activities or perception of the festival as more 'female-oriented'. However, this finding should be interpreted cautiously, as the primary data collectors were all female, which may have introduced bias. This presents the opportunity to develop more male-inclusive programming. These data indicate that the event successfully attracted a diverse group of active participants. However, there is still room for improvement in future promotion efforts targeting the elderly and certain ethnic groups.

## 4.8. Event Participation, Engagement and Reflection

This section analyses the key indicators of the participation level of the participants in the "Neighbourhood Future Festival" event. The variables examined include the first-time participation situation, inclusiveness, social interaction, community connection, information sources, as well as the willingness to contribute or to participate again. These indicators collectively reveal the promotion effect, atmosphere, and impact on community building of this festival.

### Attendance at the festival according to the two entrances

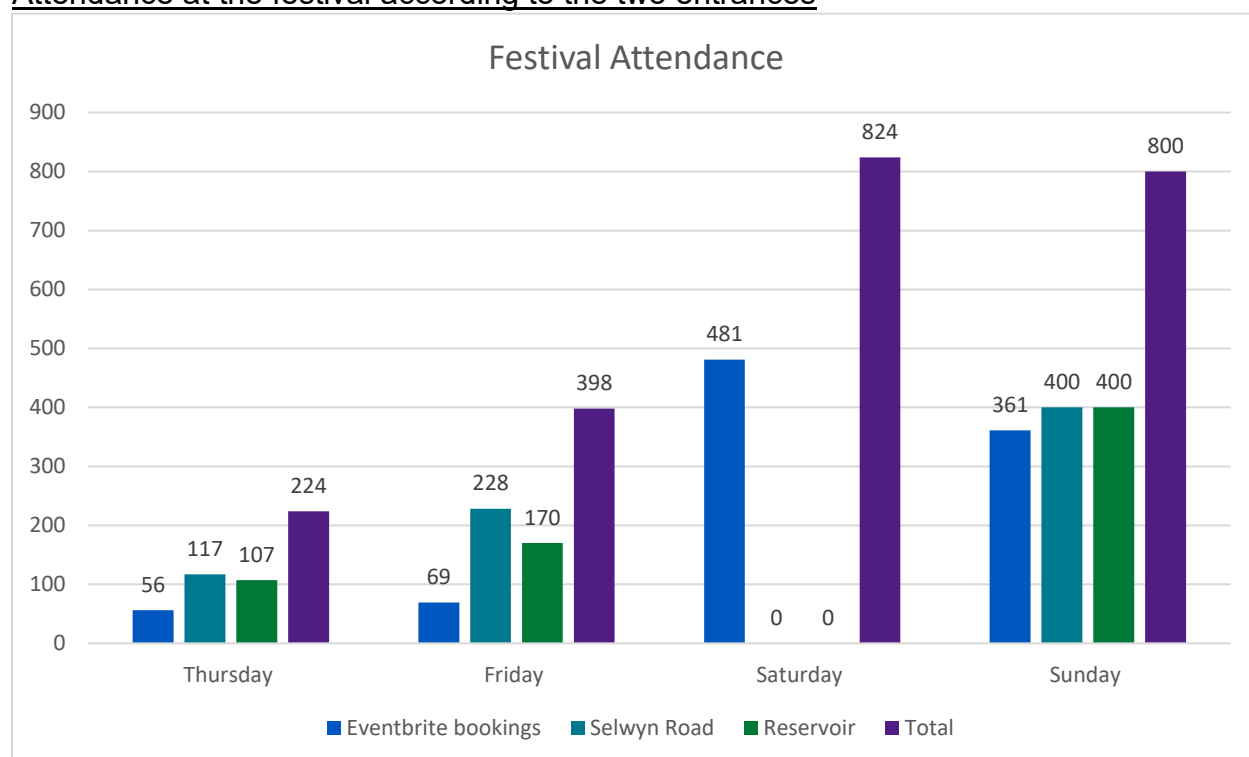


Figure 13: Festival attendance according to the two entrances

Analysis of attendance data provides further insight into accessibility across the festival site. On the opening days (Thursday 27th and Friday 28th), footfall was split between the Selwyn Road and Reservoir entrances, with Selwyn Road seeing slightly higher usage. By contrast, on Sunday 30th, usage was evenly divided (400 through Selwyn Road, 400 through the Reservoir), indicating that by the end of the festival, both entrances were functioning equally well and were accessible to different parts of the surrounding community.

Data for Saturday the 29th, however, was not recorded for the two entrances, meaning that only the totals are represented. This limitation in data collection restricts a complete understanding of movement through the site at its busiest point. Nevertheless, the even split observed on Sunday suggests that when both entrances were monitored, they

were used equally, highlighting the potential of the site to support accessible entry points from different neighbourhood directions.

These patterns align with participant feedback calling for a more precise wayfinding. Respondents suggested:

*“More clear signs and info about stalls, on maps too.”*

*“Map with numbers and signs at all entry points at reservoir.”*

Taken together, the attendance figures and qualitative comments highlight that while the site itself was broadly accessible, **signage and navigational clarity were areas of challenge**, particularly during periods of high attendance. Ensuring that multiple entrances are consistently recorded, visible, and easy to use is essential not only for efficient crowd management but also for promoting a sense of welcome and inclusion across different neighbourhood access points. From the perspective of **spatial justice** (Soja, 2010), this underlines that accessibility involves not just physical entry but also equitable navigability of space, ensuring that all participants can experience the festival on equal terms.

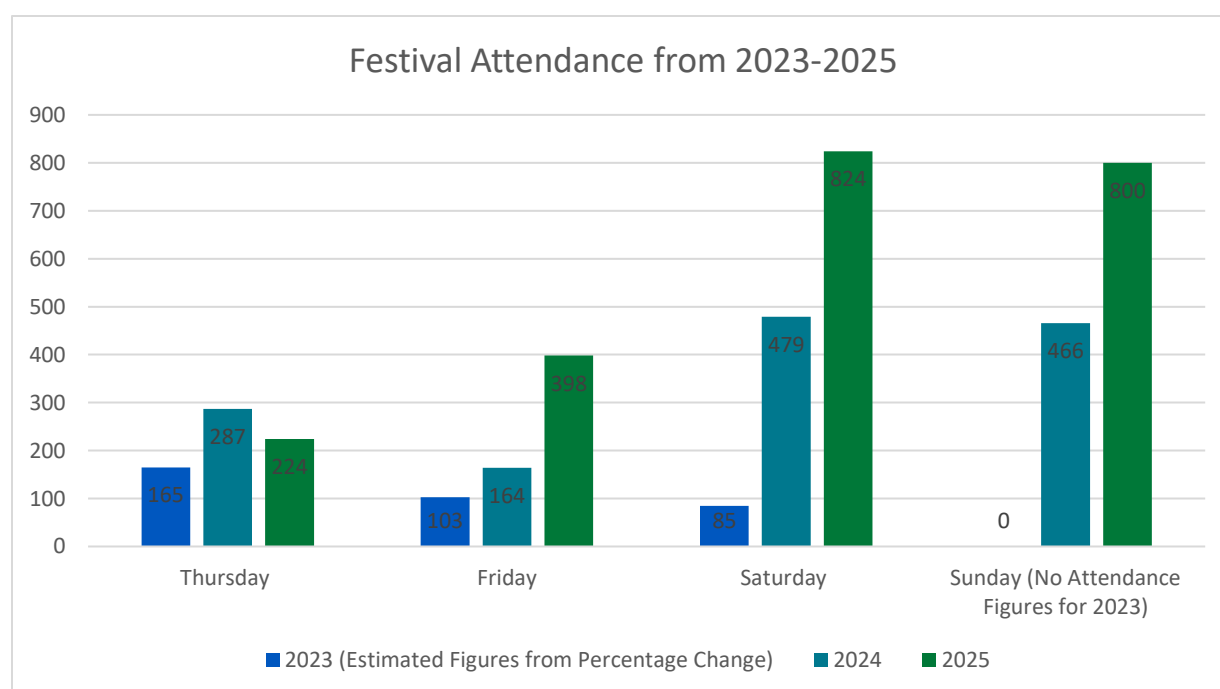


Figure 14: Festival attendance from 2023-2025

### First participation in the festival

The vast majority of participants (81%, n=122) stated that this was their first time participating in the activities of the Birmingham Settlement, while 18% (n=27) had participated in such activities before. Only one person's response field was empty

(0.67%). This indicates that the activity has been highly effective in attracting new community members.

### Inclusivity of the festival

When asked if the activity gave a feeling of welcome and inclusiveness, 94% (n=141) of the respondents answered "Yes", while 3% (n=4) chose "It is somewhat like that". This overwhelming positive response indicates that the activity successfully created an inclusive environment for participants of various backgrounds.

### The importance of community festivals for learning

Regarding the view that "such festivals are of great significance for learning", 70% (n=105) of the respondents strongly agreed, and 26% (n=39) agreed, shown in Figure 13. This overwhelming positive response indicates that people generally recognise the potential of this festival in education and community development.

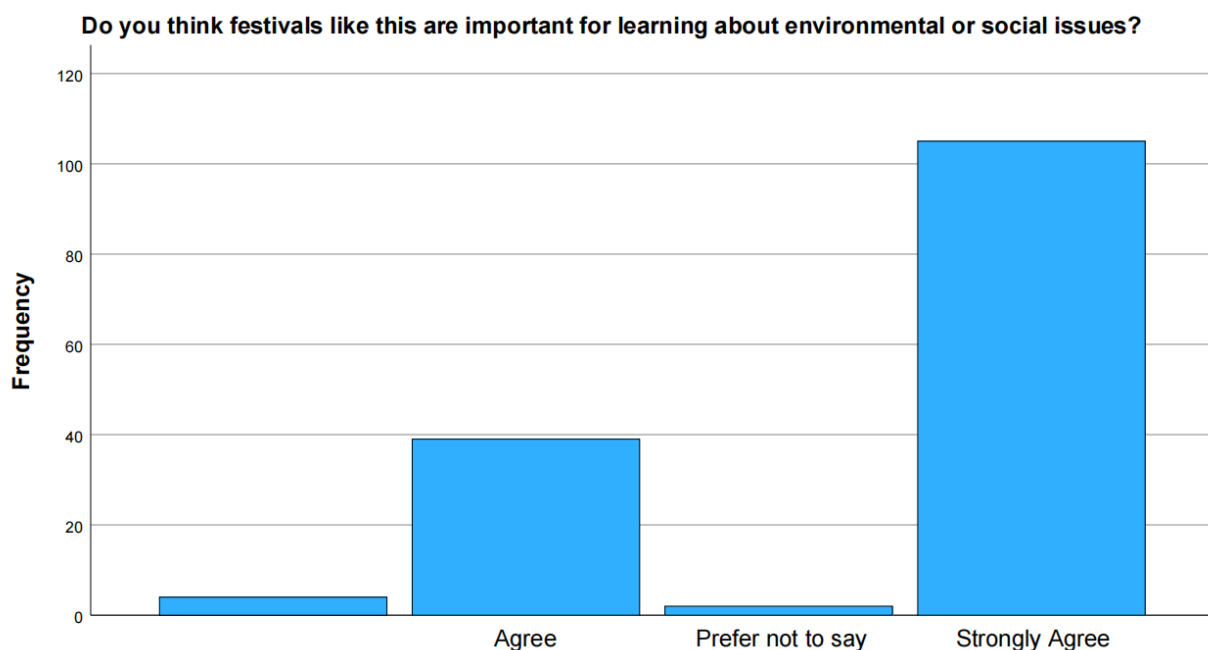


Figure 15: Importance of festivals such as NFF to address environmental or social issues

### Social interaction and new acquaintances

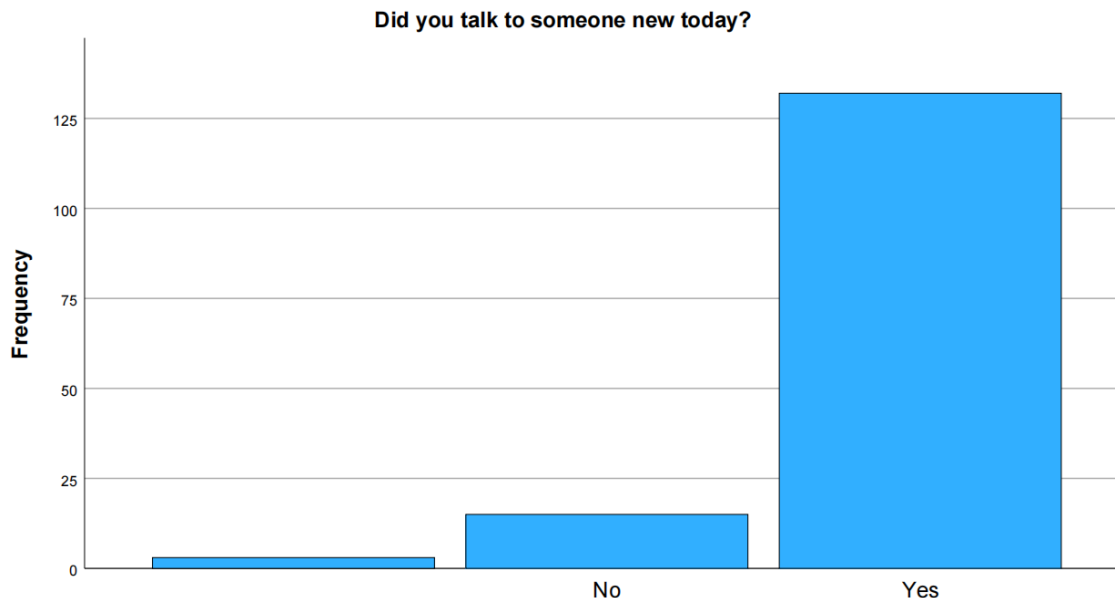


Figure 16: Did festival attendees talk to someone new?

Encouragingly, 88% of the respondents stated that they had interacted with new friends during the event, while those who did not interact accounted for only 10%. This indicates that the festival has played a crucial role in fostering new interpersonal relationships.

### Sense of community belonging

When asked if this event strengthened their connection with the local community, 73% (n=110) of the respondents answered "Yes", and 23% (n=34) answered "somewhat". Only 1% (n=2) answered "No", indicating that this event had a positive impact on the sense of belonging of the participants, as shown in Figure 17.

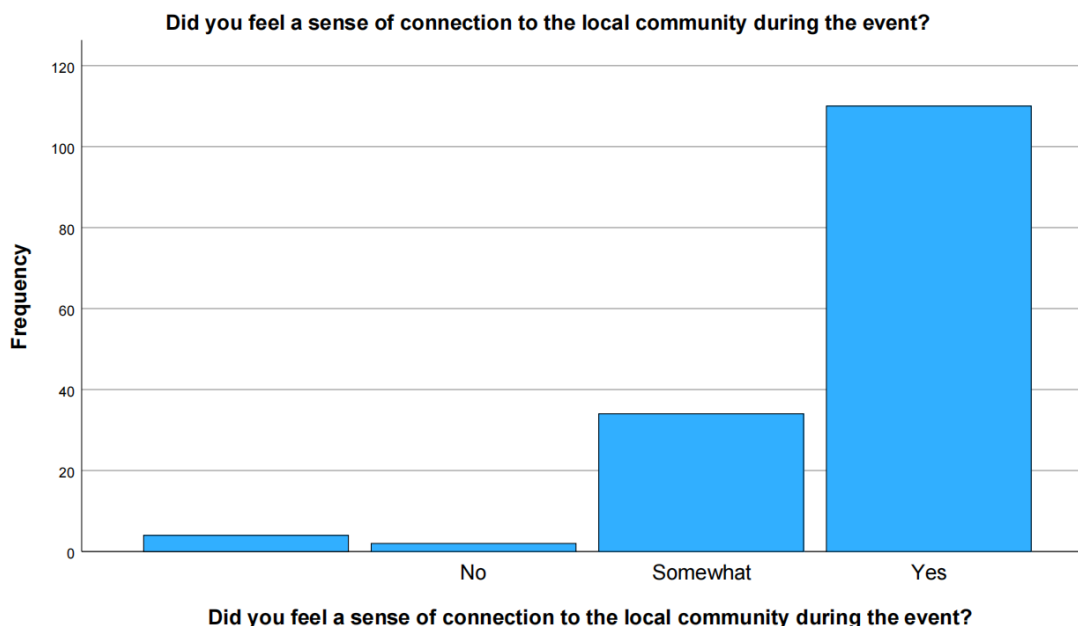


Figure 17: Sense of connection to the local community during NFF

#### Future cooperation with Birmingham Settlement

68% (n=102) of the participants expressed their willingness to participate in the activities of the Birmingham Settlement in the future, while 25% (n=38) said "Perhaps they will participate". Only 4% (n=6) said they refused. These data indicate a high likelihood of continued participation.

#### Feelings towards the participants' neighbourhood after the event

Participants were asked how the event made them feel about their local community:

37% (n=55) said "I feel more connected"

32% (n=48) said "I am more hopeful"

18% (n=27) thought "It is the same as before"

7% (n=10) chose "Uncertain".

This distribution indicates that people generally show positive emotional responses.

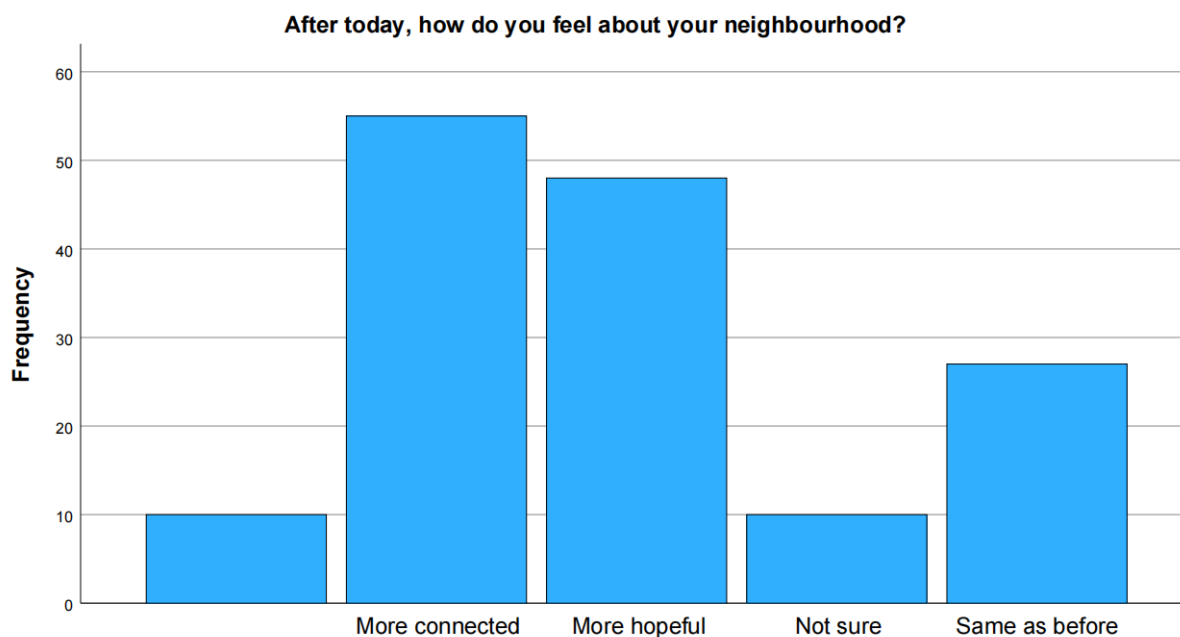


Figure 18: Feelings around participants' neighbourhood after NFF

### How the participants learned of the festival

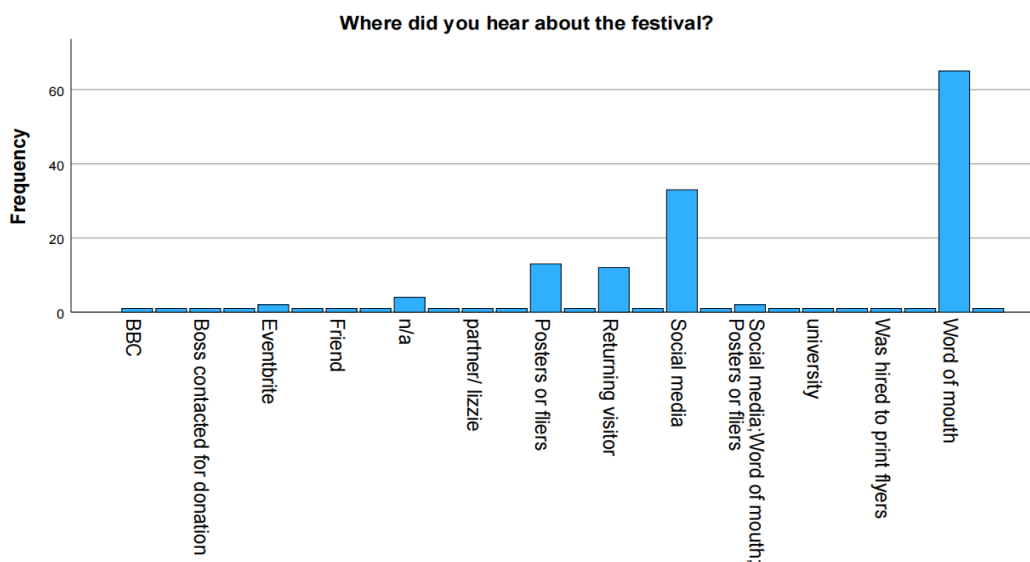


Figure 19: How participants learned of the festival

The main way participants learned about the event was word-of-mouth (43%, n=65), followed by social media (22%, n=33), and posters or flyers (9%, n=13). Repeat



customers (8%, n=12) and "other" sources 18%, n=27) also played a particular role, indicating that multiple promotional methods were effective.

### Annual donation intention

When asked how much they would be willing to donate annually to support the Birmingham Settlement:

47% (n=70) chose the option of 0 pounds to 10 pounds.

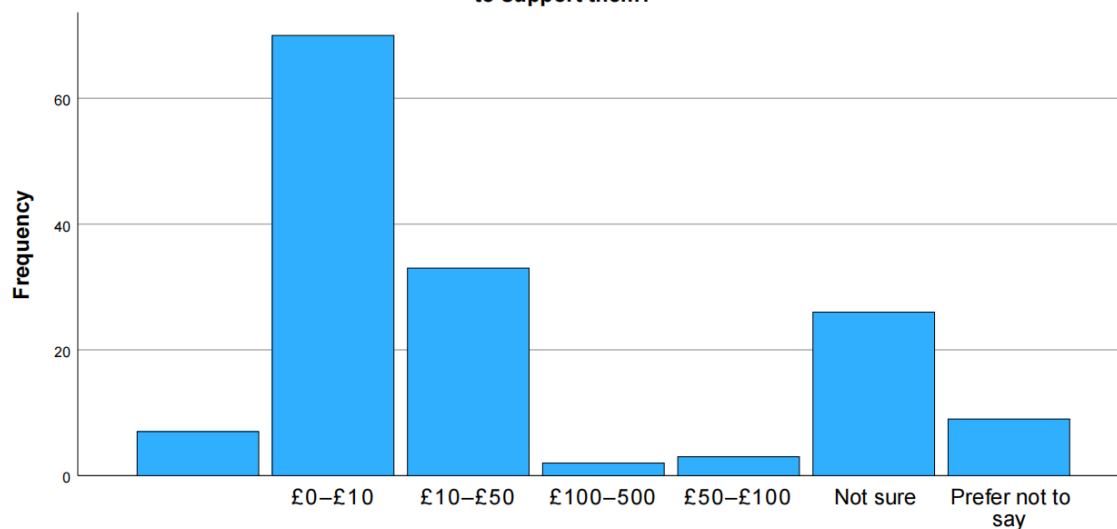
22% (n=33) chose the range of 10 pounds to 50 pounds.

17% (n=26) expressed uncertainty

6% (n=9) chose not to answer. Donations of between £50 and £100 (2%, n=3) and those of between £100 and £500 (1%, n=2) are relatively rare.

This indicates that people are generally willing to make financial donations, although the donation amounts are all within a relatively small range.

**If Birmingham Settlement were to run more events like this, how much would you be willing to donate annually to support them?**



**If Birmingham Settlement were to run more events like this, how much would you be willing to donate annually to support them?**

Figure 20: Figurative annual donation intention

## 5. Social Media Analytics

The marketing and communications activities for the Neighbourhood Futures Festival 2025 played a key role in raising awareness, engaging local communities, and driving attendance. Data from May–June 2025 highlights the value of targeted digital promotion and community partnerships.

### 5.1 Website Performance (May–June 2025)

The website acted as the central information hub, with a 69% increase in sessions during the campaign period. High traffic to the homepage, Youth Day, and event breakdown pages indicates that people were actively seeking details, which likely translated into attendance. The growth in referral traffic (+191%) indicates that partnerships and external platforms have broadened festival visibility beyond the usual reach of Birmingham Settlement.

**7,280 sessions** in total (May: 2,980 | June: 5,041)

Traffic sources:

Organic search (Google): **↑69%**

Direct traffic (URL/bookmarks): **↑31%**

Referral traffic (links from other sites): **↑191%**

Social media traffic: **↑13%**

**User engagement:** average time per visit 1 min 15 sec (↑11% from May), with **35,000 total events** (clicks, scrolls, link opens).

Most viewed pages: Festival homepage, Youth Day page, 2025 event breakdown.

### 5.2 Email campaigns

Email campaigns achieved strong open and click-through rates (up to 45.5% open, 9–13% clicks), showing that subscribers were highly engaged with festival updates. The most-clicked links were the programme and tickets, highlighting that clear, direct communication drove attendance. Email provided a reliable channel to reach committed audiences and convert interest into bookings.

**Eventbrite Subscriber Email (14 June):** 88 delivered, 45.5% opened, 9.1% clicked.

**Mailchimp Campaign (17 June):** 210 delivered, 15.7% opened, 9% clicked, 1.9% bounced.

Top links clicked: Festival Programme (33%), Eventbrite (13%), YouTube Shorts (10%).

### 5.3 Social Media Performance

Instagram was the strongest engagement platform, with major increases in reach (+246%), interactions (+162%), and followers (+101%). The dramatic 4,800% increase in link clicks shows social media's power in directing people to ticketing and programme details. Spikes in engagement around Youth Day suggest that visibility directly influenced turnout, particularly among younger audiences. Video-led content (Reels, TikTok) extended outreach organically and built excitement leading up to the event.

Social media platform: Instagram, May–June 2025

64,336 views (↑**307%**)

9,313 accounts reached (↑**246%**)

1,603 content interactions (↑**162%**)

278 new followers (↑**101%**)

147 link clicks (↑**4,800%**)

Engagement peaked 25–28 June, with the biggest spike on **Youth Day (27 June)**.

Top Performing Posts

Paid/boosted flyers: “Don’t miss out on this amazing FREE festival” (14 June, 8.6K reach).

Organic post: Youth Day flyer/poster (27 June, peak engagement).

Paid posts maximised visibility to new audiences (“Don’t miss out” reached 8.6K people), while organic content like the Youth Day flyer achieved the highest engagement without paid promotion. This shows that creative, well-timed posts encouraged both awareness and attendance, balancing cost-effective outreach with targeted investment in ads.

### 5.4 Referral & Bookings Platforms

Eventbrite and Link tree were key drivers of action, with Eventbrite emails delivering some of the highest engagement rates (45.5% open). These platforms converted social and email interest into bookings, bridging the gap between visibility and attendance. The strong referral growth (+191%) underlines the value of collaborations and cross-promotion with partners in widening outreach.

Link tree clicks: Programme (88 clicks on Nature & Wellbeing Centre Link tree; 11 clicks on Birmingham Settlement Link tree).

Eventbrite listings (26–29 June): Subscriber email achieved a 45.5% open rate and 9.1% click rate, confirming its strength as a booking and engagement driver.

## 6. Thematic Analysis

The assessment of the "Neighbourhood Future Festival" is centred around five interrelated themes. For each theme, based on the expected outcomes of the festival and a review of relevant literature, we have put forward specific hypotheses. These hypotheses provide an analytical framework for the data collected through surveys, creative methods, and participant observations. Blank copies of these data collection methods can be found in **Appendix 3, 4 and 5**.

This section also presents the key cross-tabulation relationships related to demographic variables and experiential variables, aiming to reveal the pattern differences in participation and inclusiveness among different participant groups. Chi-square tests were conducted. Significant associations are highlighted where  $p < 0.05$ , with interpretations based on observed trends in the contingency tables.

### 6.1. Community, Belonging and Social Connection

*Hypothesis 1: Attending the festival will increase participants' sense of belonging and connection to their local community across diverse age groups and backgrounds.*

Promoting social connections is an essential cornerstone of community development, especially in environments affected by fiscal austerity or marginalisation. Power and Hall (2017) emphasised the importance of "placing care" in the local context, arguing that public spaces can counteract feelings of isolation by building inclusive and supportive networks. Gilchrist (2009) further highlighted the role of "well-connected communities", indicating that informal networks and shared public activities can enhance trust, cooperation, and a sense of belonging.

Concurrently, reports from the UK Government's Community Life Survey (2024) found that participation in local activities significantly enhanced a sense of belonging and integration, especially when intergenerational interaction was encouraged. These findings suggest that community festivals can catalyse strengthening social cohesion, particularly when they incorporate participatory, relational, and inclusive practices.

Chi-Square tests on feelings about the neighbourhood (see **Appendix 6**)

*Significance of Gender*

Chi-square  $p = 0.265 \rightarrow$  Not significant

**Finding:** No statistically significant relationship was found between gender and changes in neighbourhood perception following the festival. Male, female, and non-binary respondents reported similar levels of positive community sentiment after attending the event.

**Interpretation:** This suggests the event fostered a broadly inclusive environment in terms of gender, with no noticeable disparities in how the festival influenced community connectedness. The lack of statistical difference may reflect the universal nature of the festival's messaging and accessibility.

### *Significance of Ethnicity*

Chi-square  $p = 0.0371 \rightarrow$  Statistically significant

**Finding:** Ethnic background had a significant association with how participants felt about their neighbourhood after the festival. White participants reported the highest levels of positive change in neighbourhood perception. Other ethnic groups, while generally positive, showed more variability, possibly due to smaller sample sizes in these subgroups.

**Interpretation:** White participants may have felt more represented or comfortable within the event's structure, themes, or cultural framing. The more variable responses among non-White groups might suggest that while the event was broadly welcoming, more work could be done to reflect the cultural identities or priorities of diverse residents.

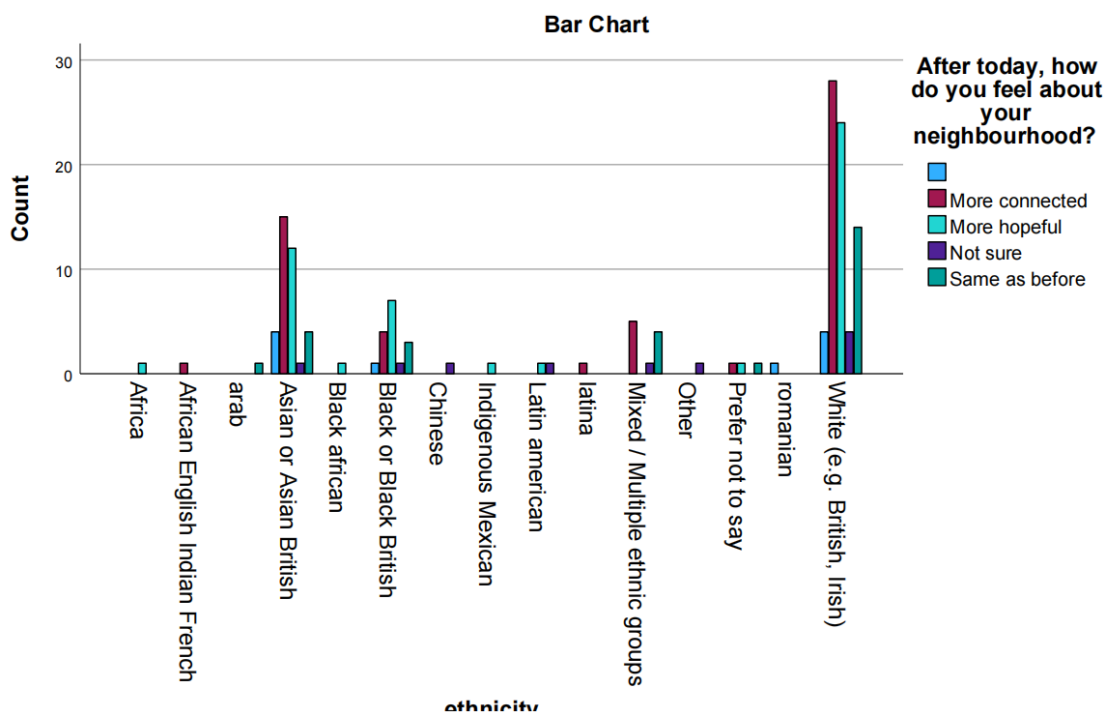


Figure 21: Feelings about the neighbourhood and their ethnicity

### Analysis of the Treasure Map Activity

The Treasure Map activity was designed as a creative, interactive engagement tool for children attending the Neighbourhood Futures Festival 2025. The purpose was to

encourage exploration of festival stalls, participation in a range of activities, and to capture children's perspectives on their community in a playful yet meaningful way. By combining structured questions with open-ended prompts, the activity gathered both measurable participation data and rich qualitative feedback, giving insights into children's experiences, learning, and ideas for their local area. The festival provided a platform to rebuild trust and social cohesion in a ward where feelings of community safety and belonging are below average. Activities like [e.g. the Treasure Map and Forest School] were designed to foster a sense of place and agency, especially among young attendees.

### *Activity Overview*

Children were given a Treasure Map during the festival, with spaces to record answers as they completed various activity stations. See **Appendix 5** for a blank copy of the treasure map. There were five stations, and each station featured a question that was used to find the missing letters of a final word. Attached were survey questions encouraging them to reflect on:

1. Who did they come to the festival with?
2. What did they learn on the day?
3. What would they add to their street?
4. What would they grow in a magical garden?
5. Did they meet anyone new?
6. Which activities did they try, and which were their favourites?
7. How did they feel on the day?
8. What does "community" mean to them?

This approach not only engaged children in a fun treasure hunt but also provided valuable insights for evaluating community engagement and identifying future opportunities.

### *Findings*

The responses from **75** participating children were analysed for key numerical trends:

**Who they came with:** Majority attended with family (92%), followed by friends (6%), and school groups (1%).

**Met anyone new:** 73% reported meeting someone new.

**Activities tried:** Treasure Map (23%), Painting (18%), Clay model (8%), Football (8%), Rock Painting (5%), Arts & Crafts (5%), and the Forest School (4%).

**Favourite activity:** Treasure Map (16%), Painting (11%), Theatre/performances (9%), Sports games (6%).

**Feelings on the day:** 87% selected “Happy”, 3% “Excited”, 3% “Hot” and 1% selected “Very Happy”.

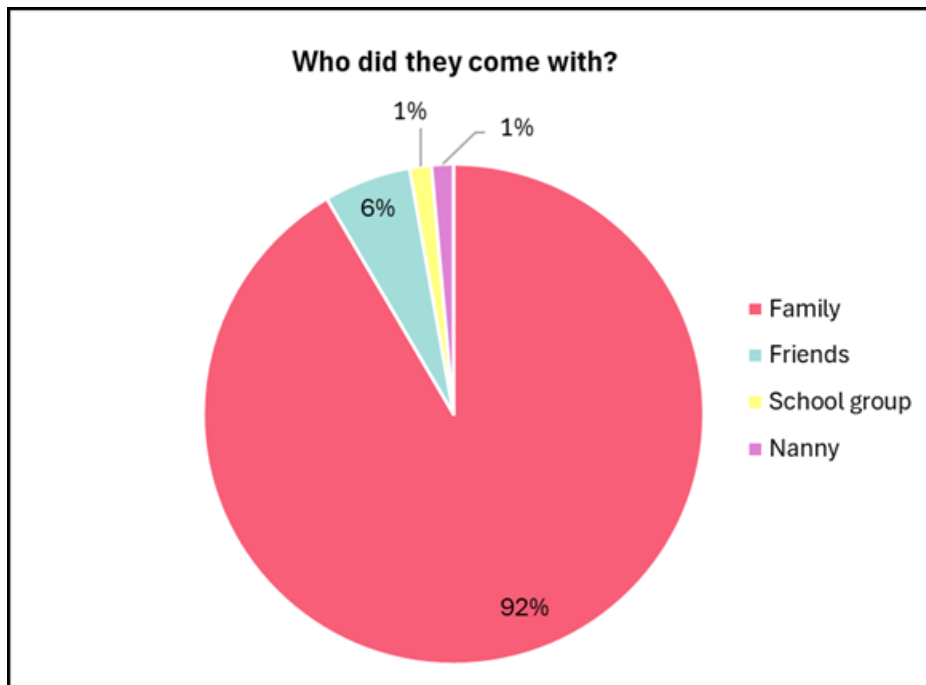


Figure 22: Who did the children come with?

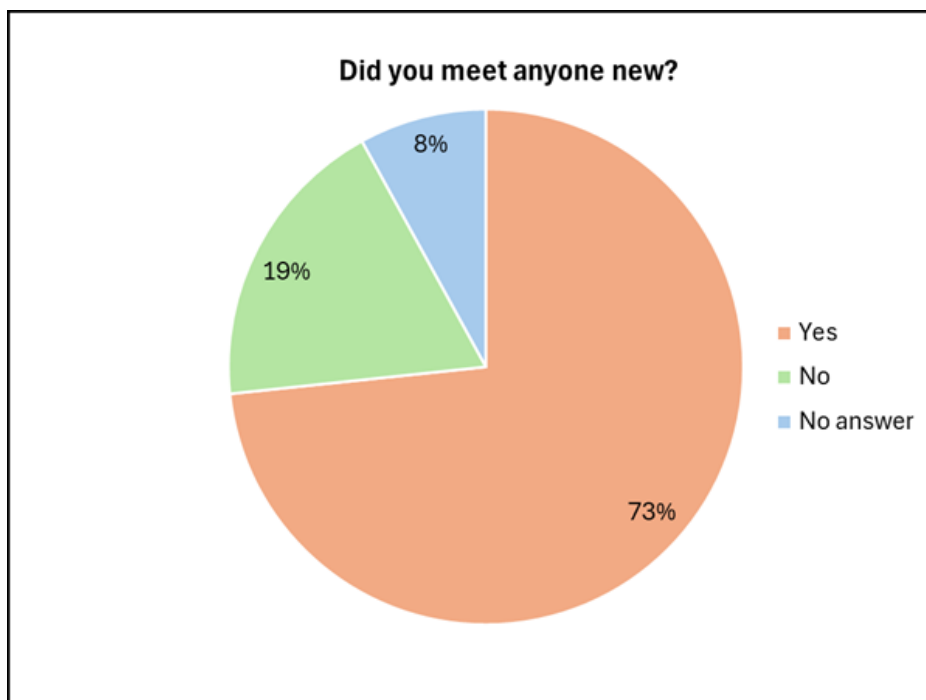


Figure 23: Did the children meet anyone new?

## One-word reflections from the feedback postcards

Of the 126 feedback postcards collected, 90 participants (71% of total respondents) answered the open-ended question asking them to summarize their festival experience in one word. These responses were visualized via a word cloud, where word size indicates frequency of mention.



Figure 24: One-word reflections on the festival

The Word cloud overwhelmingly conveys positive sentiment. Large, prominent terms such as Good, Fun, Amazing, Fantastic, and Excellent dominate the visual, showing attendees widely associated the festival with enjoyment, high quality, and excitement.

Beyond general positivity, additional descriptors reflect more profound experiences: terms like Relaxing, Soulful, Healing, and Wholesome suggest the festival fostered emotional well-being and meaningful connections. Notable thematic threads also emerge. “Crafty” highlights the appreciation for creative activities.

Community and friendship emphasise successful social bonding and a sense of belonging.

Informative and Enlightening show the festival served as a source of learning and inspiration.



The word Hot appears with noticeable frequency, reflecting the day's weather conditions, rather than criticism of the festival itself.

In summary, the feedback visualized in the word cloud confirms participants largely had positive, fulfilling experiences at the festival. The event succeeded in delivering enjoyment, creative engagement, community connection, and inspiration, with Hot providing contextual detail about the day without detracting from the overwhelmingly positive assessment.

## 6.2. Environment, Nature and Sustainability

*Hypothesis 2: The festival will increase participants' awareness of environmental issues and encourage reflection on nature and sustainability.*

Public attention to environmental issues is usually driven by experiential and location-based learning. Activities that include nature-themed activities can deepen people's relationship with the environment and cultivate more sustainable ways of thinking. Chawla and Cushing (2007) found that meaningful outdoor experiences, especially in community activities, are related to enhancing environmental awareness and promoting environmentally friendly behaviours among children and teenagers. Similarly, Dobson (2007) emphasised that environmental citizenship awareness is often cultivated through participatory learning and social participation, rather than just through formal education. Community festivals with environmental protection themes help to unveil the mystery of sustainable development and make it easier to understand, especially for those who do not frequently participate in environmental discussions.

### What did participants learn about the environment?

From the 150 surveys collected, 69 participants (46%) responded to the open-ended question about what they had learned from the festival regarding the environment. The responses were varied, but several themes emerged. The most frequent answers included “nature” (n=5, 7%) and “area” (n=5, 7%), followed by “environment” (n=4, 6%) and “community” (n=4, 6%).



Figure 25: What visitors learnt from the festival

This feedback indicate that the learning content is not limited to the narrow sense of environmental issues but also covers the participants' understanding of the local environment and the role of the community in sustainable development. The frequent mention of the word "nature" highlights the improvement in people's awareness and appreciation of the natural world, while the mention of "area" and "community" indicates that the activity successfully links environmental issues with location-based knowledge and collective responsibility.

These research results demonstrate that the activity fosters the acquisition of environmental knowledge and community participation, which supports the notion that festivals can serve as informal educational venues where people can understand sustainability in relation to their daily lives, the local environment, and society.

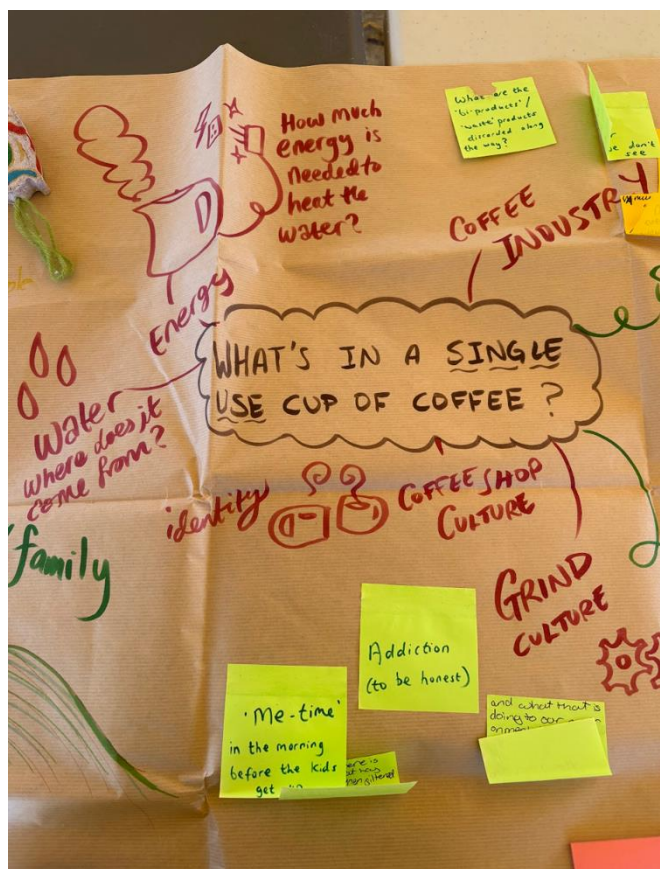


Figure 27: "Generous waste" workshop



Figure 26: Child participating in forest school

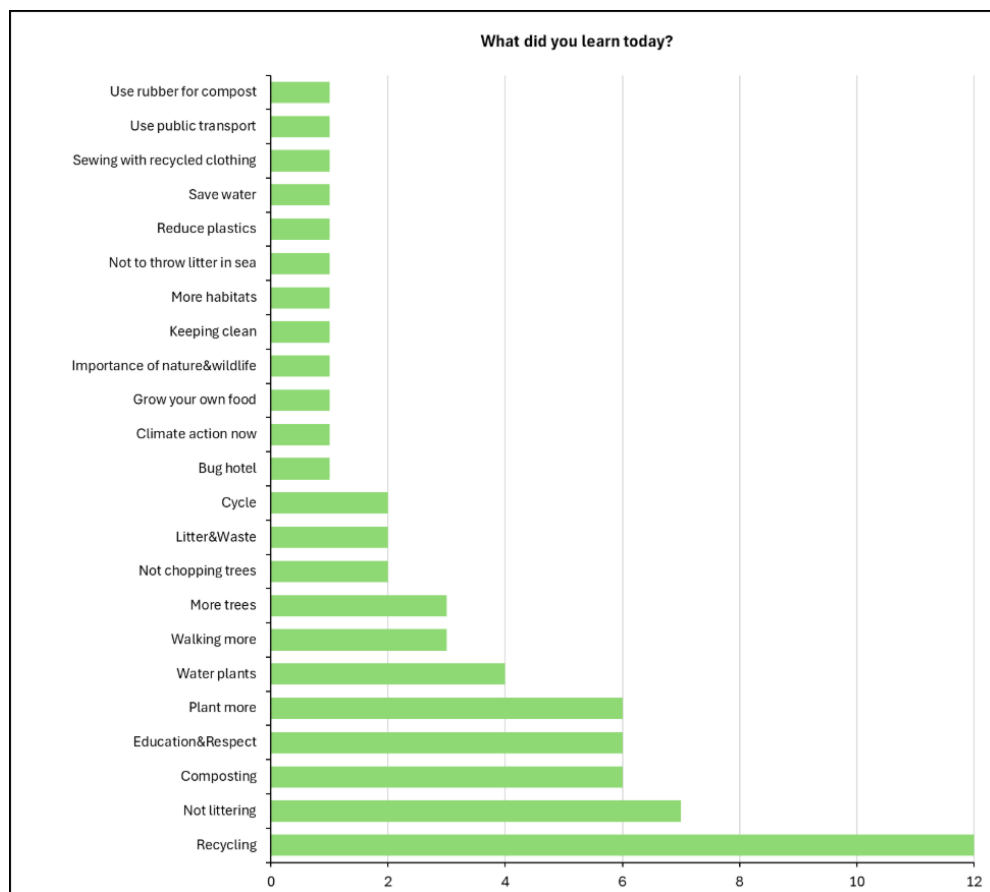


Figure 28: What children learnt at the festival

Certain words were grouped into themes:

What did they learn today?

- Themes: Recycling, composting, respecting nature.
- Quote: *"I learned that composting helps grow plants and helps the Earth."*

What would they add to their street?

- Themes: Play areas, Waterpark/Pool, and Nature-based activity.
- Quote: *"I want a park with a slide and swings and a flower garden."*

What would they grow in a magical garden?

- Themes: Plants, flowers, fruits, and imaginary plants.
- Quote: *"Magical beans and broccoli.", "Flowers and tomatoes", "Roses, apples...pineapples and grapes."*

What does community mean to them?

- Themes: Family, Friendship, helping each other, togetherness
- Most common words were 'together,' 'people,' 'family', and 'friends' with some notable responses such as 'people working together' and 'helping each other.'



Figure 29: Word cloud describing what community means to attendees

### Percentage of who learned something new

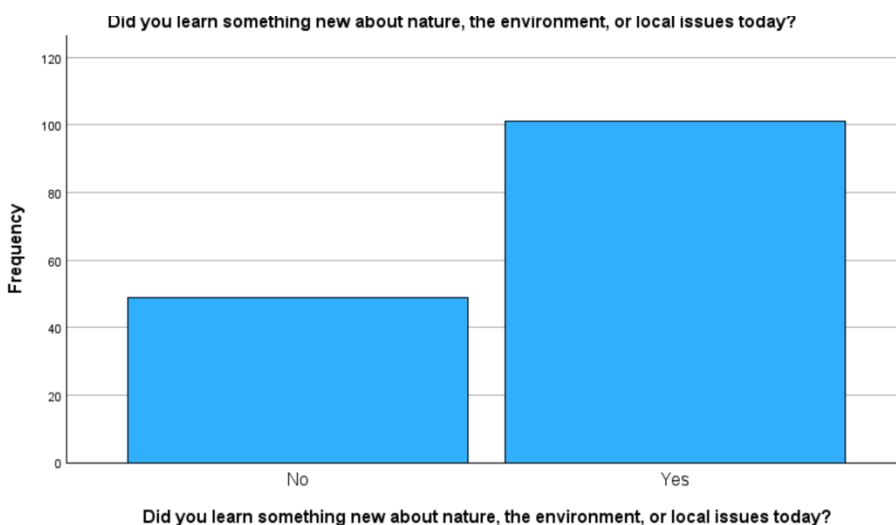


Figure 30: Did participants learn something new



Of the 150 survey respondents, a significant majority (67%,  $n = 101$ ) reported having learned something new about nature, the environment, or local issues on the day of data collection. In contrast, 33% ( $n = 49$ ) indicated no new learning had occurred. This suggests that a considerable portion of the sample was exposed to and actively engaged with environmental or place-based information during that period.



Figure 31: Word cloud of what respondents would do to be more environmentally conscious

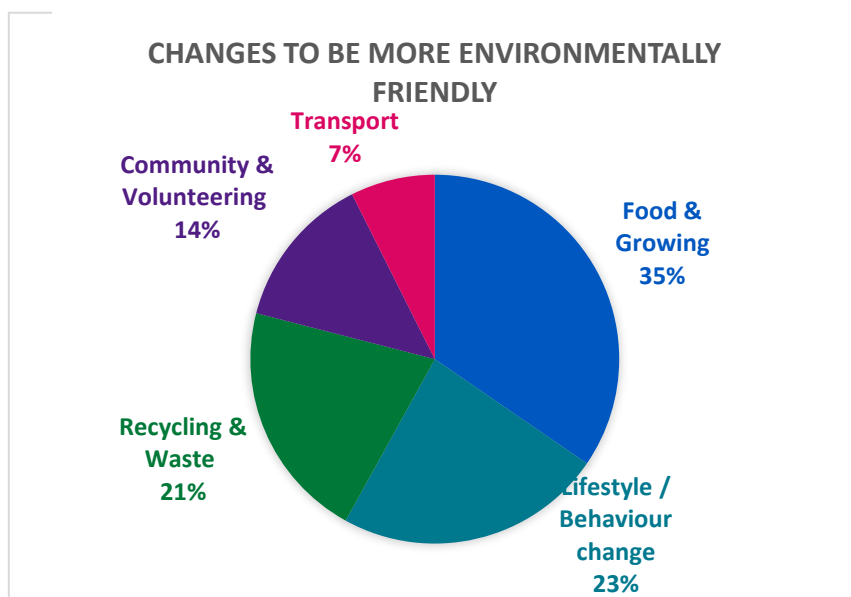


Figure 32: Changes to be more environmentally friendly

Of the 150 participants, 97 responded to the open-ended question, “If you are willing to start doing something more environmentally friendly from today, what would you do?”. This represents a 65% response rate, indicating strong interest in and engagement with the topic.

These responses were categorised into five groups and then counted to represent the proportion of responses, as shown in Figure 32.

### 1. Food & Growing (35%, n=28)

The largest category was related to food production and growing, with almost a third of respondents identifying this as their starting point for sustainable action. Common suggestions included: **“planting,” “gardening,” “grow own food,” “join an allotment,” “create wildlife habitats.”**

This indicates a strong willingness to engage in hands-on, nature-based activities that not only reduce environmental impact but also foster biodiversity and community wellbeing. Importantly, these are practical and tangible actions that participants may feel confident adopting immediately.

**Interpretation:** This suggests participants view **food and land use as tangible, achievable, and community-oriented steps** they can take.



Figure 33: Forest school cooking session

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### 2. Lifestyle / Behaviour Change (23%, n=19)

The second most common area focused on personal consumption and habits. Examples include: **“eat less meat,” “stop buying fast fashion,” “sustainable swaps,” and “reduce carbon footprint.”**

These suggestions reflect a growing awareness of the broader environmental impact of consumption. However, unlike gardening or recycling, these changes often require **longer-term commitment and cultural shifts** in habits.

**Interpretation:** Respondents are aware of the importance of **individual choices** in sustainability, though such changes may be harder to sustain without wider structural or social support.

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### 3. Recycling & Waste (21%, n=17)

A significant proportion of responses focused on reducing waste. Examples include: **“recycle,” “compost,” “upcycle old clothes,” “reduce plastic waste,” “reuse plastic bottles.”**

These actions are familiar and well-publicised, reflecting decades of public campaigns around recycling. They are perceived as **straightforward and achievable steps** toward sustainability.

**Interpretation:** Recycling and waste management remain **core entry points** for individuals to take environmental action, supported by strong public awareness.

#### 4. Community & Volunteering (14%, n=11)

A smaller but notable group expressed interest in **collective action and community engagement**. Examples: *“community volunteering,” “support local community groups,” “litter picking,” “youth action.”*

These responses highlight the recognition that sustainability is not only about individual action, but also about **shared responsibility and collective impact**.

**Interpretation:** Although fewer in number, these responses suggest a group of participants who are motivated to **lead or participate in collective initiatives**, which could be harnessed to drive wider community engagement.

#### 5. Transport (7%, n=6)

The smallest category was transport.

Examples: *“cycling,” “walking,” “drive less.”*

Although transport behaviours are known to have significant environmental impacts, they were less frequently mentioned, possibly reflecting **perceived barriers** such as a lack of infrastructure, convenience, or safety concerns.



Figure 34: Bike repair workshop

**Interpretation:** While individuals may recognise the importance of transport in sustainability, this is an area where **systemic and structural support** is required to make changes more feasible.



### 1. Practicality and Accessibility Drive Action

Gardening, food growing, and recycling dominate because they are visible, tangible, and relatively easy to implement.

### 2. Awareness of Broader Behavioural Impact

Lifestyle changes such as eating less meat or reducing fast fashion consumption indicate growing awareness, though these changes are harder to embed consistently.

### 3. Community as a Lever for Change

Collective actions like volunteering and litter picking, while less common, show that sustainability is also seen as a social and collaborative effort.

### 4. Transport as a Missed Opportunity

Despite its high environmental importance, transport changes were least mentioned, suggesting external barriers that could be addressed through policy or infrastructure improvements.

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## Conclusion

The analysis reveals that participants are most willing to initiate changes in **food growing and gardening, lifestyle modifications, and recycling practices**, reflecting a preference for **tangible and manageable actions**. Smaller but essential groups emphasised **community collaboration** and **transport changes**, pointing to opportunities for collective projects and advocacy for better infrastructure.

Taken together, these findings suggest that initiatives to encourage environmentally friendly behaviour should:

- **Build on enthusiasm for food and gardening** (e.g., allotments, community gardens).
- **Support accessible waste-reduction practices** (e.g., composting workshops, recycling education).
- **Encourage and sustain behaviour change** (e.g., promoting sustainable fashion, plant-based eating).
- **Strengthen opportunities for community involvement** (e.g., volunteer litter picks, repair cafés).
- **Address barriers to sustainable transport** by working with local authorities to promote cycling/walking.

This demonstrates that participants are motivated to act, and with the right support and infrastructure, these small individual steps could collectively contribute to a significant environmental impact.

### 6.3. Emotional Experience and Well-being

*Hypothesis 3: Festival participation will contribute positively to participants' emotional well-being, particularly feelings of inspiration, relaxation, and joy.*

Participating in public cultural activities can enhance mental health by boosting mood, reducing stress, and gaining social recognition. Clift and Hancox (2001) assert that experiences based on collective art can significantly increase positive emotions and emotional adaptability. In the context of local festivals, informal interactions, music, and creative workshops often trigger emotional responses such as joy and nostalgia, thereby creating a brief sense of escape and satisfaction.

For individuals from disadvantaged groups or those with diverse backgrounds, these experiences are particularly significant. Public holidays can serve as a form of informal mental health support, helping to alleviate feelings of social isolation and enhancing emotional adaptability (Grossi et al., 2012; Bungay and Vella-Burrows, 2013).

#### How people felt

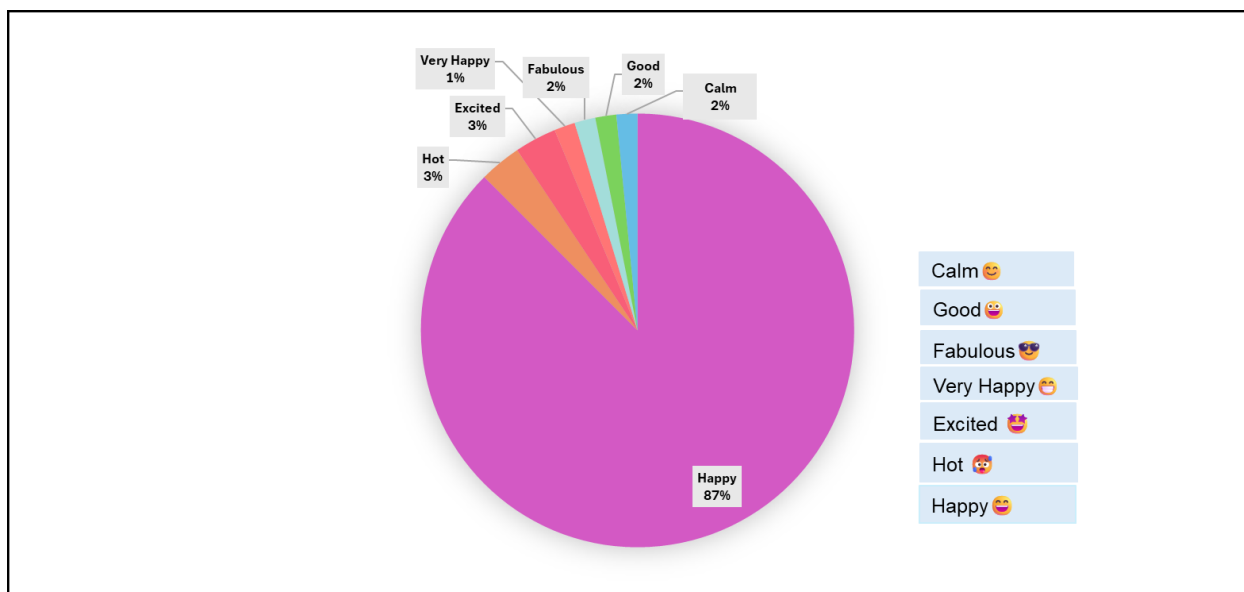


Figure 35: How people felt during the festival

During the festival, children who participated in the Treasure Map were asked how they felt during the festival. With the majority (87%) quoting 'Happy', 3% 'Excited', 3% 'Hot', and 1% quoted 'Very Happy'. The Treasure Map activity highlighted that most of the children experienced the festival positively, with most reporting they felt 'Happy'. This not only demonstrates the festival's success in creating a joyful and engaging environment for young people but also provides insight into areas for improvement, such as managing hot weather conditions.

### Sense of connection to the local community

The data suggests that the event had a positive impact on participants' feelings of community connection. A majority of respondents indicated moderate to strong levels of connection. Roughly 75% selected 'Yes', 23% selected 'Somewhat' and 2% selected 'No'. Based on the responses, the event successfully facilitated social interaction and engagement. This demonstrates that shared activities, such as collaborative workshops or events, can foster a sense of belonging within a community.

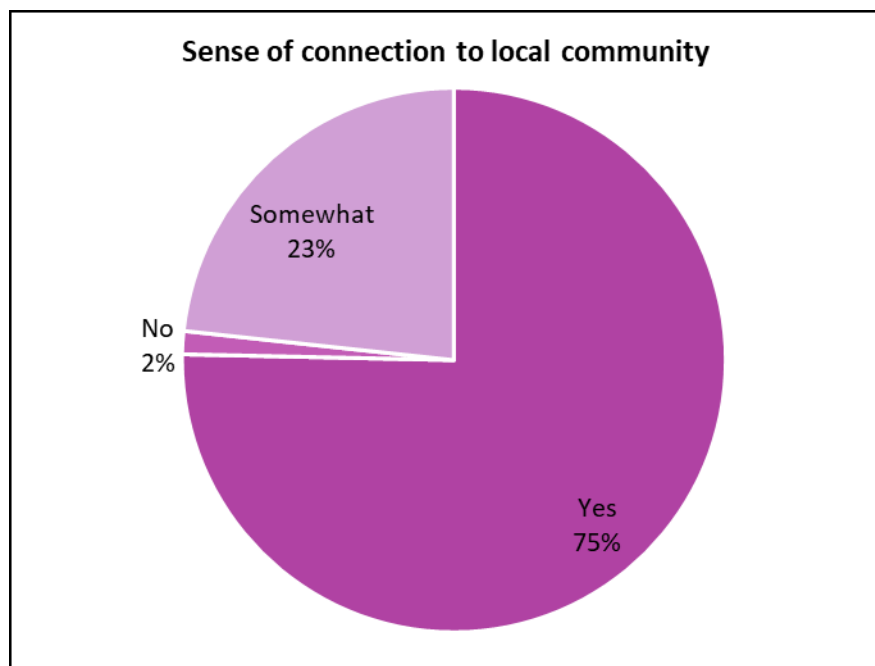


Figure 36: Sense of connection to the local community

### Feelings about the neighbourhood

Responses to how participants felt about their neighbourhood after attending the event show a general improvement in perception and emotional attachment. A notable proportion of participants reported feeling more hopeful (32%) or more connected (36%) to their local area, suggesting that events like this can foster civic pride and strengthen local engagement. Meanwhile, a smaller portion of respondents indicated neutral or uncertain experiences, with 18% selecting 'Same as before', 7% 'Not sure', and 7% providing no response. These results highlight potential opportunities to enhance inclusivity, diversify activities, and ensure that event experiences resonate with a broader demographic. It is also possible that the structure of the question, which did not explicitly allow for critical or negative responses, influenced these outcomes.

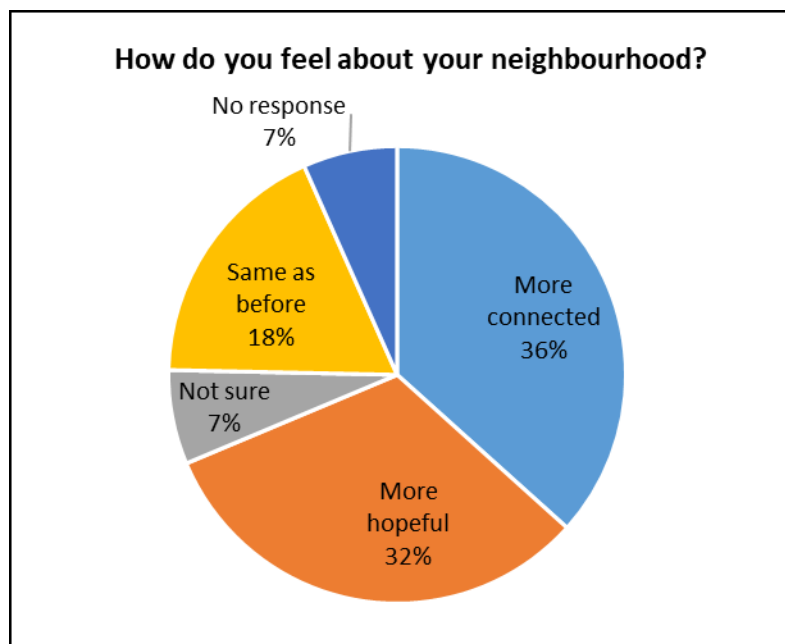


Figure 37: How people felt about their neighbourhoods

### Connection to nature

The survey also measured participants' sense of connection to nature during the event. Respondents rated their experiences on a scale from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very strongly) for how connected they feel to nature. Over half of the participants (50%) selected '5 - Strongly Agree' and 31% selected '4 - Agree'. Higher scores (4–5) indicate that outdoor

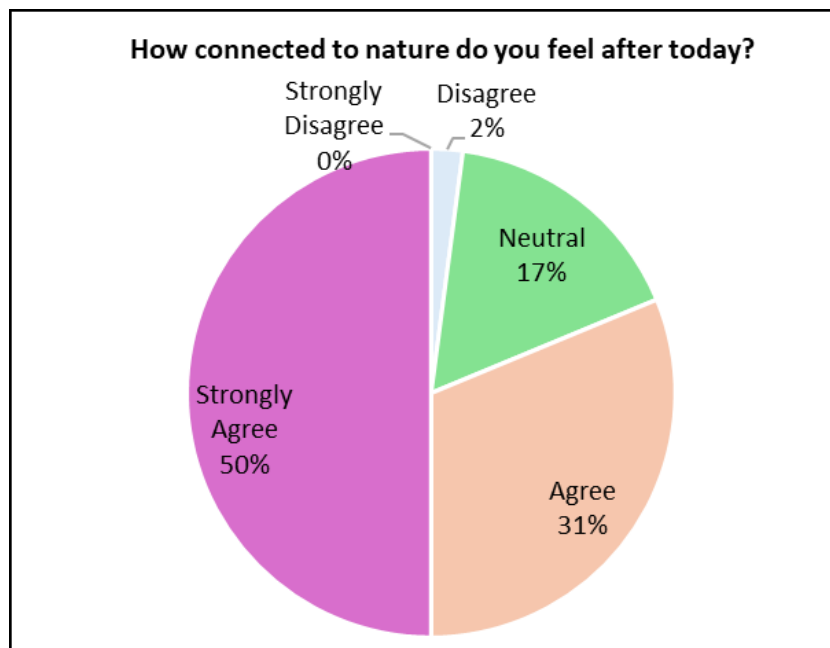


Figure 38: Participants' connection to nature

activities or exposure to natural elements during the event contributed to participants' well-being and strengthened their appreciation of green spaces. This aligns with research suggesting that engagement with nature can boost emotional well-being, as "being outdoors was related to a lower likelihood of anxiety, depression, tiredness, and loneliness, and a higher likelihood of happiness" (Catalan et al., 2023, p3.)

On the other hand, a small portion of participants responded with 17% selecting 'Neutral' and 2% selecting 'Disagree.' Lower scores may suggest that some preferred more structured, social activities over environmental interaction.

#### Did the festival feel welcoming and inclusive to you?

Survey responses indicate that the festival was largely successful in creating a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere. The majority of participants (94%) reported feeling welcomed, which reinforces the festival's aim of fostering an open and inclusive environment. A small proportion of respondents selected 'Somewhat' (3%) or 'No' (3%), suggesting that while the overall atmosphere was positive, there may still be opportunities to explore how inclusivity can be strengthened for all attendees. This is consistent with the other survey responses and showcases Birmingham Settlement's commitment to promoting emotional wellbeing, creating a sense of community and connection to their local area/environment.

One of the central survey questions asked festivalgoers: *"What makes you feel most connected to your community?"* Responses revealed a rich and diverse set of perspectives, but several clear themes emerged that speak to both the **emotional wellbeing** of participants and the festival's wider **community impact**.

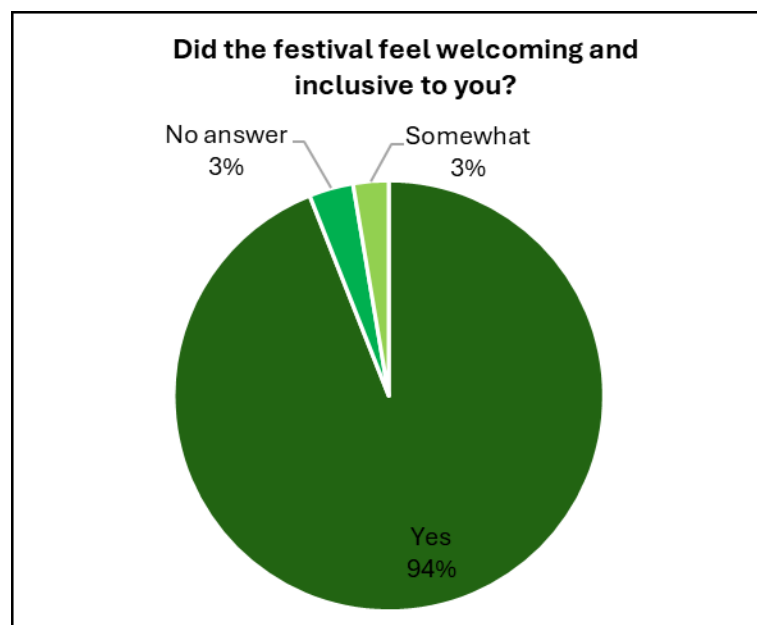


Figure 39: How welcoming and inclusive did the festival feel

#### Community connection

Survey responses show that festivalgoers felt most connected to their community through themes of Learning & Growth (17 mentions), Community & Togetherness (15), and Activities & Fun (15). Other important themes included Friendship & Social Connection (14), Inclusivity (10), and Wellbeing (9). Attendees valued opportunities to

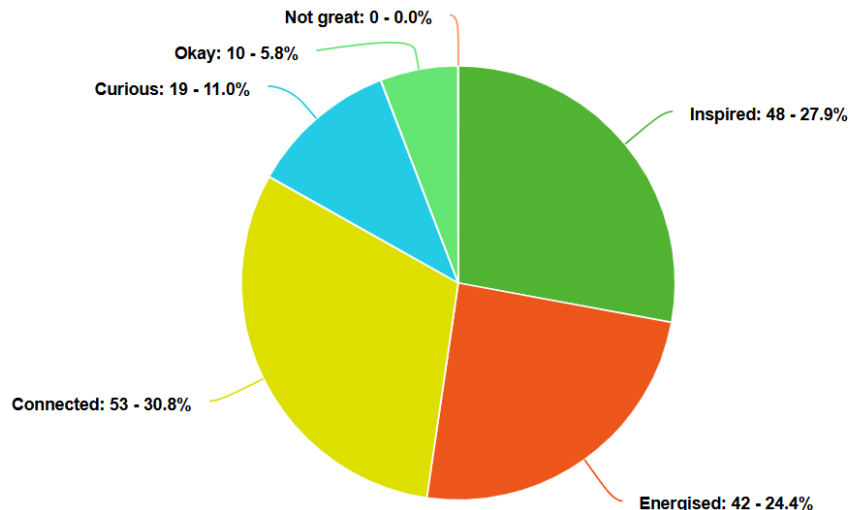
share knowledge, discover new things, and be inspired. As one respondent put it: *"Shared hopes for the future, inspiration, wellbeing."* This demonstrates the festival's role in enabling lifelong learning and confidence-building. A significant theme was the sense of belonging created at the event. One participant highlighted the importance of *"celebration, cohesion, belonging,"* while another simply said: *"Being a part."* The festival provided a platform for connection across age, culture, and background. Enjoyable experiences such as crafts, games, music and food were central to how people connected. Comments like *"Just having fun together"* and *"Things like this, family fun days... really important for the kids"*

Key quotes included: “*Making friends, discover new things, be around people,*” and “*diversity, inclusive, safe*”. These reflect how the festival supported emotional resilience and positive mental health. Many respondents stressed the value of meeting new people, reducing isolation, and creating friendships. The festival fostered **connection, belonging, and joy**, supporting emotional wellbeing and demonstrating its value for deprived communities.



Figure 40: Word Cloud on when festival goers felt most connected to their community

### How did today make you feel?



*Figure 41: How the festival made people feel*

Of the 126 participants from the postcard feedback, the most frequently selected feeling was "Connected" (31%), followed by "Inspired" (28%), "Energised" (24%) and "Curious" was 11%, while "Okay" was chosen on 10 times (6%). Notably, the option "Not great" was not selected by any respondent, indicating an absence of negative emotional responses to the day's activities.

The results demonstrate that the experience generated strongly positive emotional engagement, with feelings of connection, inspiration, and energy being predominant among participants. The complete absence of negative responses and the strong showing of positive affective states suggests that the activities successfully fostered community bonding, personal motivation, and overall well-being among attendees.

## 6.4. Activities, Engagement and Enjoyment

*Hypothesis 4: Participants will report high levels of enjoyment and engagement with festival activities, with evidence of intergenerational and cross-cultural participation.*

Attractive and inclusive event arrangements are the key to creating meaningful and enjoyable festival experiences. According to research by Bianchini and Parkinson (1994), successful cultural festivals typically attract a diverse range of audiences through interactive and easily participatory activities. These activities promote cultural exchange and intergenerational interaction, enhancing community cohesion. Similarly, Matarasso (1997) found that community art participation can enhance the self-confidence, enjoyment, and inclusive participation of different groups. These findings support the view that festival forms that offer both passive and active participation modes can attract a broad and diverse audience.

### Chi-Square tests on where participants heard about the festival: Age group

Chi-square  $p = 0.0002 \rightarrow$  Statistically significant

Findings:

- There is a strong association between age and how participants found out about the festival: 18–30: 49% heard through word of mouth 24% through social media
- 31–50: 40% via word of mouth 26% via social media
- 51–70: 52% via word of mouth Only 8% via social media
- 70+: No word-of-mouth respondents 33% each via “on-site: walking past” and “was performing here”

Interpretation:

Younger and middle-aged adults rely heavily on informal networks and digital media, whereas older participants tend to engage less through online platforms. The 70+ group appeared more connected through physical presence or direct participation, possibly due to the limited sample number.



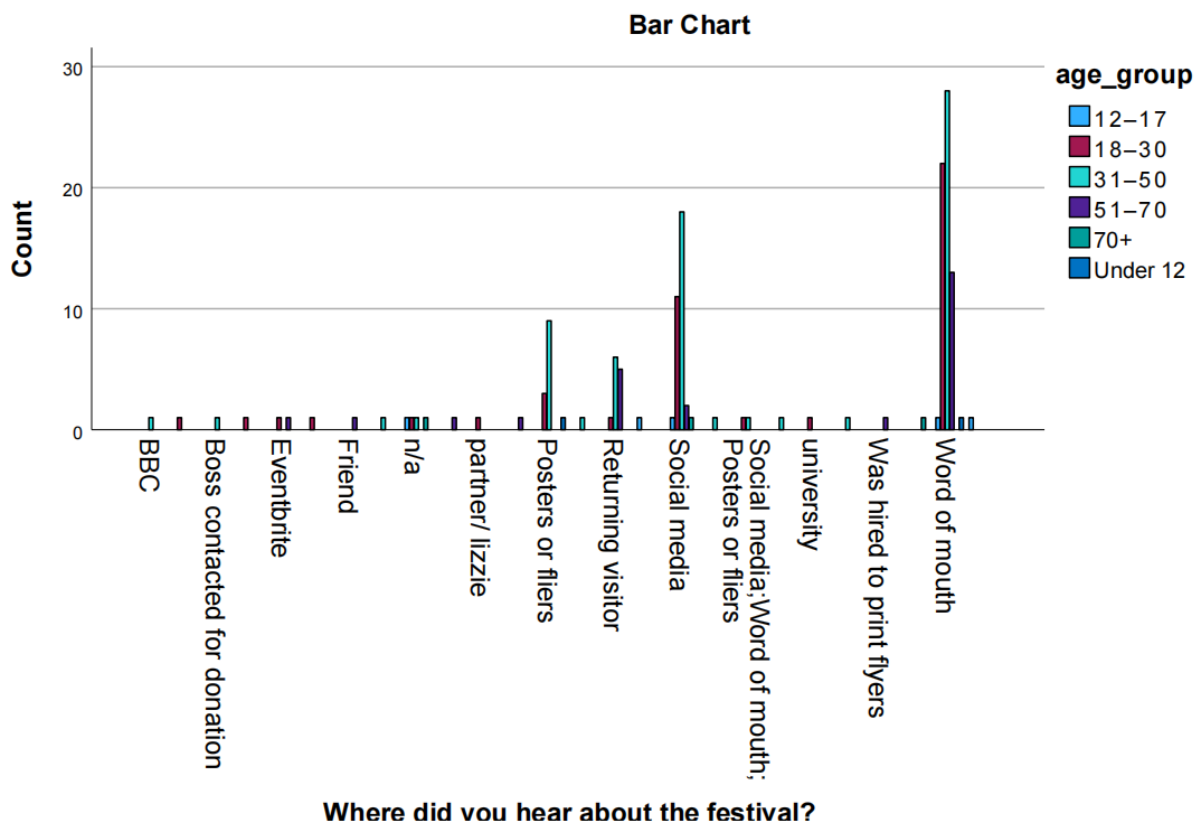


Figure 42: Where people heard about the festival

### Most attended and enjoyed activities

Out of the 150 surveys, 116 participants (77%) responded to the open-ended question about their favourite or most memorable activity. The responses highlight a range of experiences, with three activities standing out in particular: talks and panels (19%), music (16%) and theatre/drama (14%), as shown in Figure 44.

The popularity of these talks and panel activities indicates that the participants value the opportunities for learning, communication, and reflection on issues related to the community and the environment. In contrast, tug of war demonstrates the appeal of interactive and physically engaging activities, which can bring fun and promote team participation. Meanwhile, artistic activities highlight the role of creativity and expression in shaping memorable experiences.



Figure 43: Youth panel discussions

Overall, these findings suggest that the festival has successfully struck a balance between educational content, interactive participation, and cultural expression, ensuring that it can cater to the diverse needs of participants and offer people multiple ways to enjoy and learn.

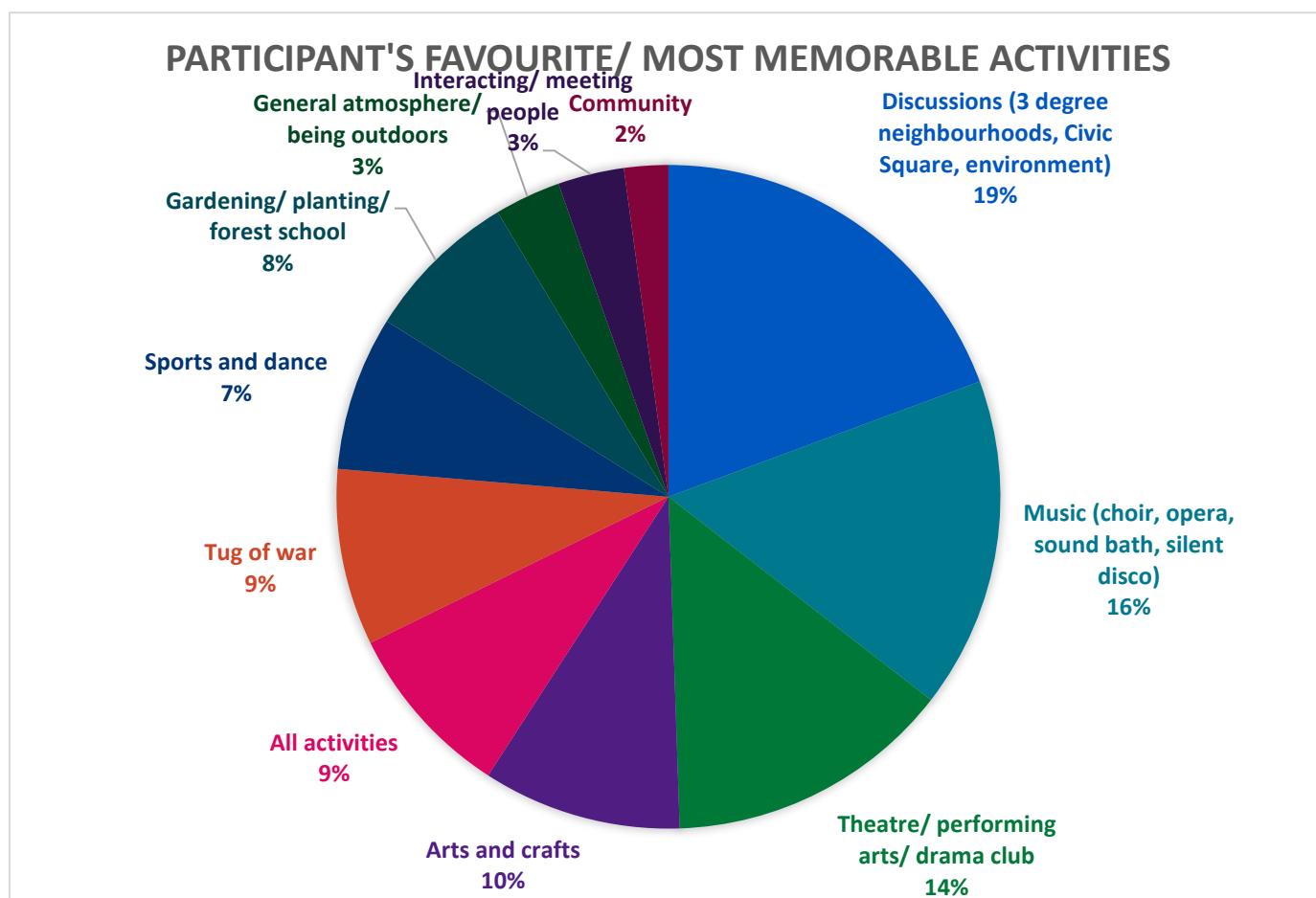


Figure 44: Participant's favourite/ most memorable activities

Out of 75 children who completed the Treasure Map, the most popular activities were the *Treasure Hunt/Map* (16%), *painting* (11%), and *theatre/performances* (9%). These results suggest that hands-on, exploratory, and creative activities were particularly engaging for younger audiences. Several children mentioned enjoying the sense of discovery and play. As one respondent put it, “*I liked finding where the hedgehogs hibernate,*” while another shared, “*I enjoyed the Treasure Hunt, clay, rock painting and the Mud kitchen.*”

This enthusiasm for interactive and sensory activities aligns with feedback to other questions, such as “What did you learn today?” where many referenced learning about nature, recycling, and composting. Similarly, responses to “What does community mean to you?” often mentioned “*helping each other*” and “*playing together,*” suggesting that

these shared experiences may help foster both social connections and a sense of curiosity.

The variety of activities—ranging from physical exploration to arts-based workshops—demonstrates the festival’s success in providing inclusive opportunities for different interests and learning styles. Notably, activities that combined movement, creativity, and social interaction were most likely to be remembered as favourites, which can inform planning for future children’s activities.

Overall, children engaged in over 20+ activities throughout the duration of the NFF. The different activities tried by children during NFF 2025 were recorded. The most common tried activity was the Treasure Hunt, with 23 recorded participations, followed closely by Painting (17) and Clay Model making (8).

Mid-tier engagement activities included Football (7), Rock Painting (6), and Arts & Crafts (5), while activities such as Forest School attracted moderate interest (8). Lower-frequency activities, including Planting, the Maze, and Theatre Performance, each had fewer than 3–4 participants recorded.

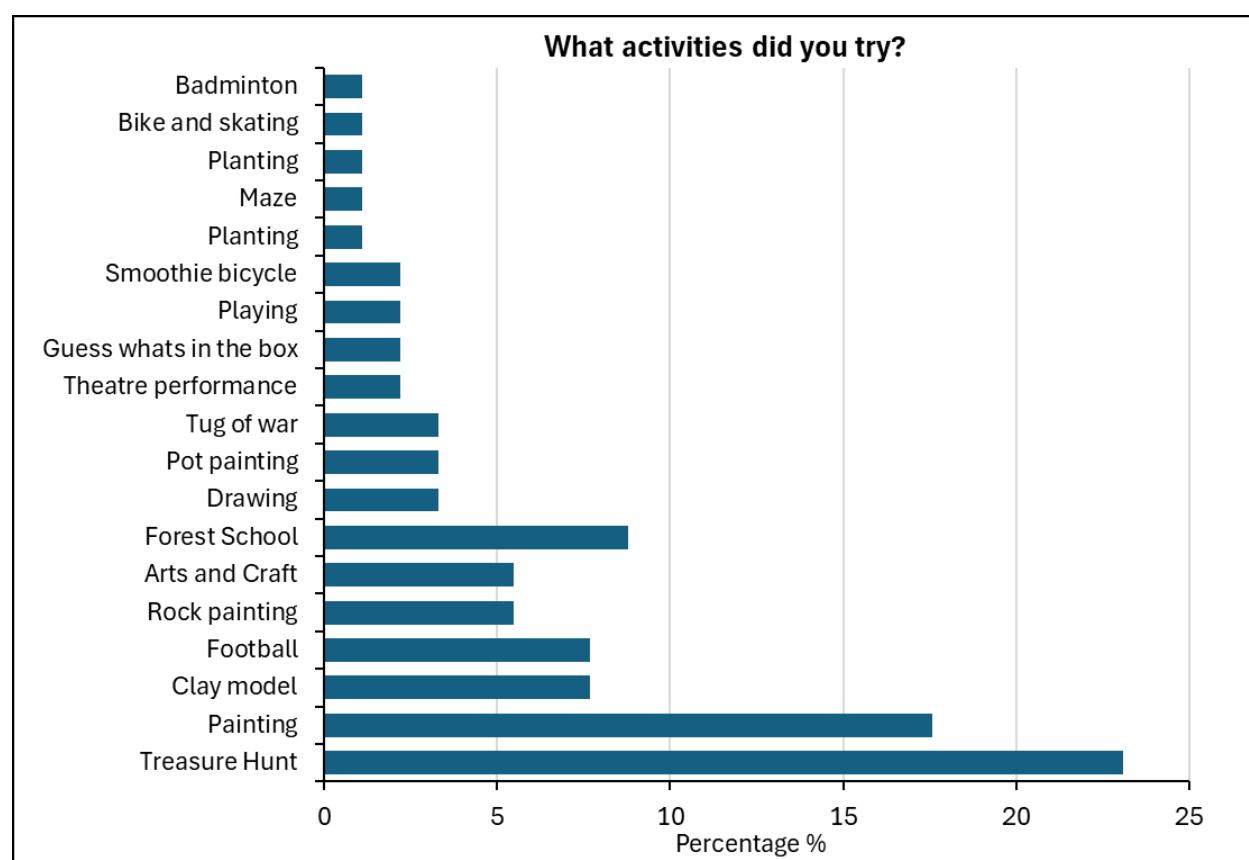


Figure 45: Activities children took part in

Children’s engagement data reveals that creative and hands-on activities were the most popular during the festival. The Treasure Hunt (23 participants) and Painting (17

participants) far exceeded participation in other activities, highlighting the appeal of interactive and creative experiences. While environmental education activities such as Forest School engaged smaller groups, they still played a vital role in connecting young attendees to nature. Children's activity data shows strong uptake for interactive games and creative activities but lower engagement in nature-based activities, suggesting that integrating climate messages into popular formats could boost environmental learning outcomes.

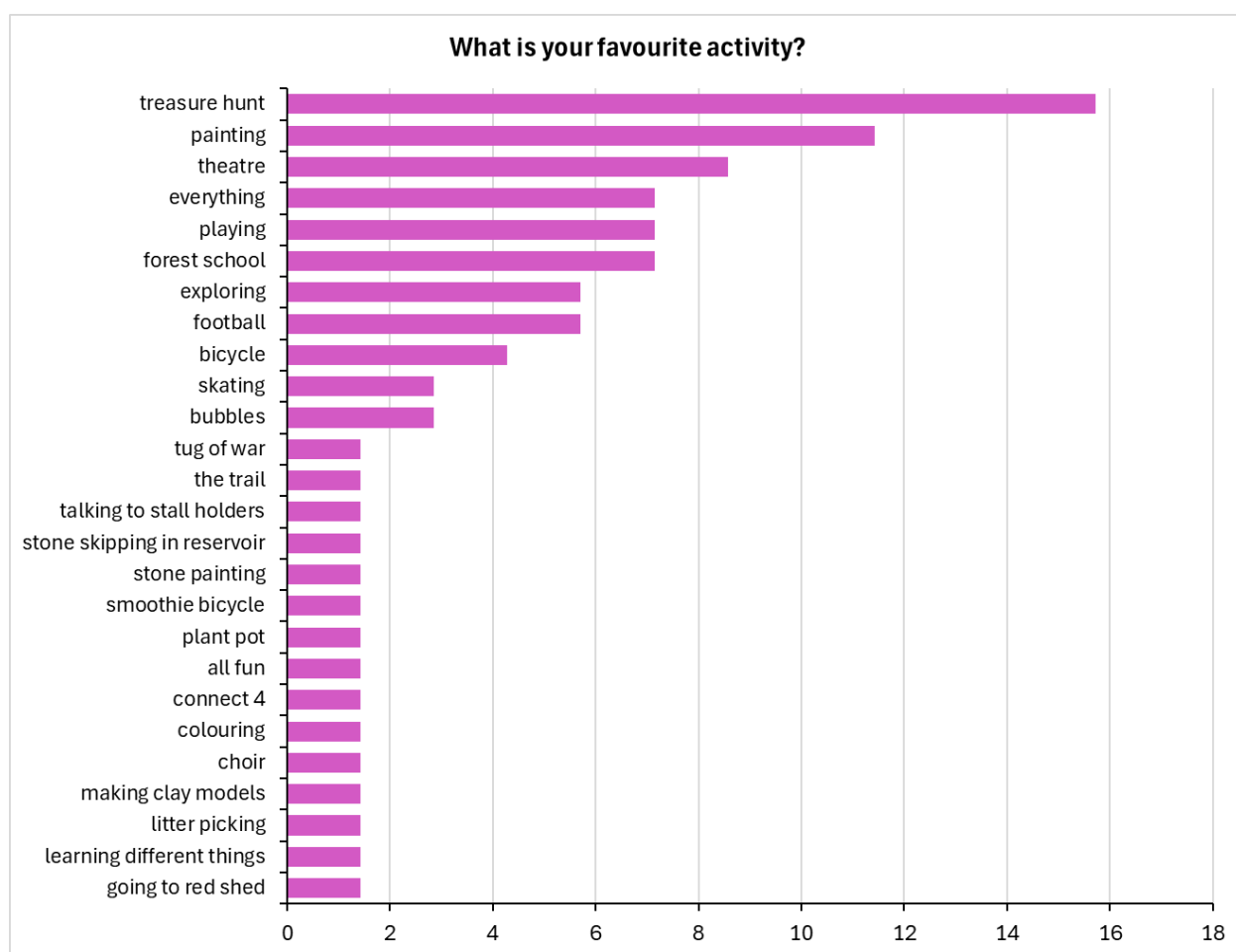


Figure 46: The children's favourite activity

### What brought people to the festival

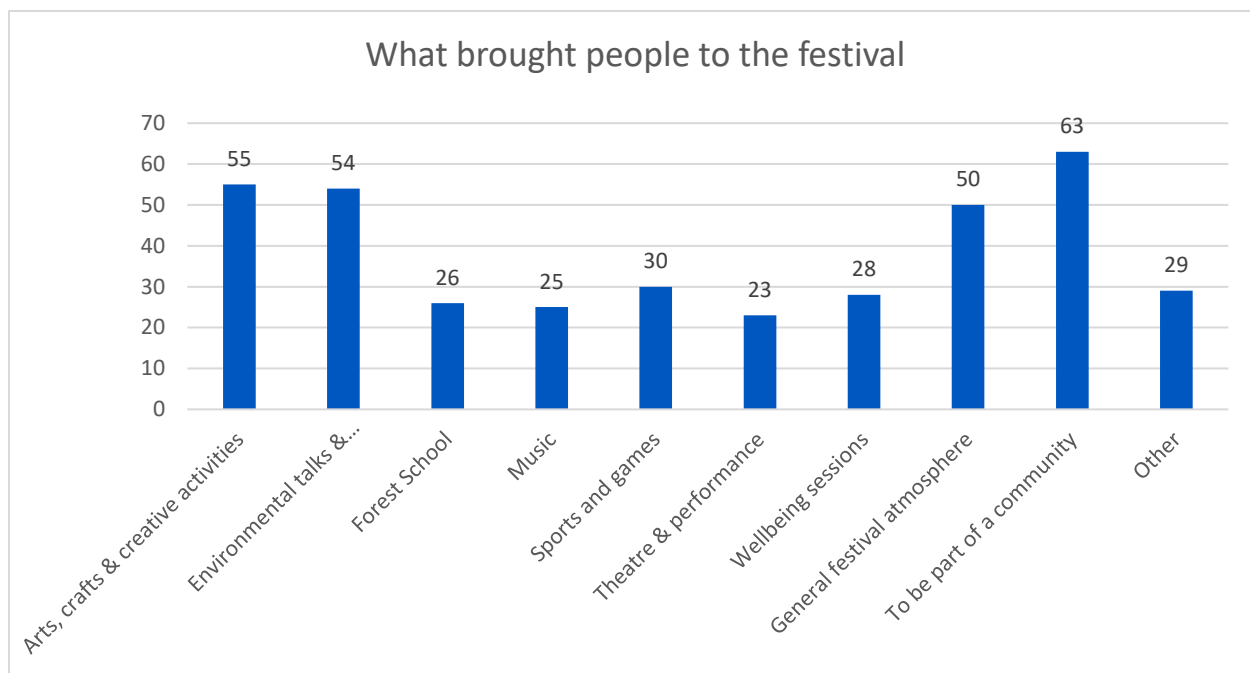


Figure 47: What brought people to the festival

Of the 150 survey participants, all responded to the question asking what brought them to the festival by selecting all factors that applied. The results are summarised in Figure 34, which highlights the most frequently cited reasons.

The three most common motivations were “To be part of a community” (n=63, 42%), “Arts, crafts & creative activities” (n=55, 37%), and “Environmental talks & workshops” (n=54, 36%). These top responses suggest that the event was primarily successful in fostering a strong sense of belonging and attracting attendees interested in active creativity and sustainability. The “General festival atmosphere” was also a significant draw for 50 participants (33%), underscoring the importance of the overall event vibe.

Overall, the survey data indicates that the participants were attracted by various factors such as the community spirit, creative and educational activities, and the overall atmosphere. The quantitative analysis results further confirm that this festival successfully met the various interests of its participants, thereby providing them with a diverse and inclusive collective experience.

### Reflections from “What did you enjoy most?”

Of the 150 survey participants, 115 responded to the open-ended question asking what they enjoyed most about the festival. This represents a 77% response rate for this qualitative question. Since this was a qualitative study open to interpretation, both the frequencies and the direct quotes provide insight into what attendees valued most.

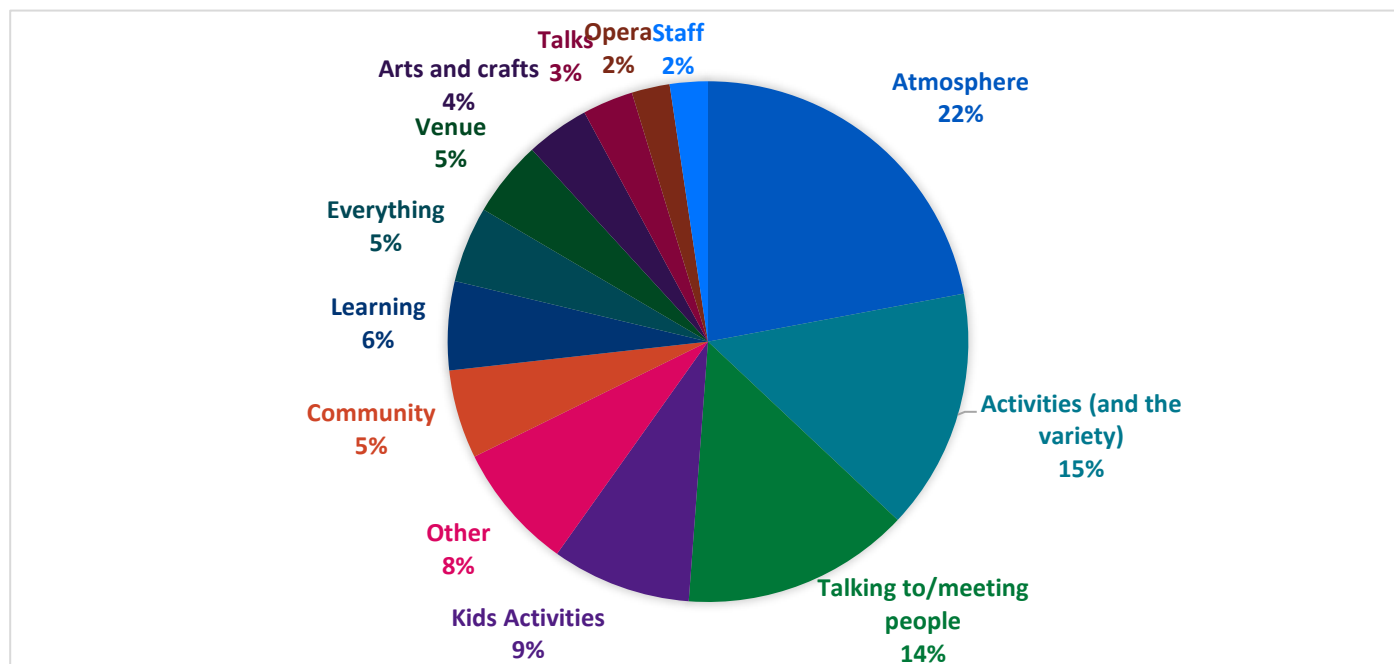


Figure 48: Responses when asked what people enjoyed the most

#### 1. Atmosphere (22%, n=28)

The most frequently mentioned theme was the **atmosphere**, described by many as “**relaxed**,” “**friendly**,” “**inclusive**,” and “**welcoming**.” Attendees appreciated the diversity of the event and the fact that it felt enjoyable and safe for all ages.

Representative quotes include: “**General atmosphere was very relaxed and friendly.**”, “**The sense of community and the welcoming atmosphere.**” “**How inclusive it was to all ages.**”

**Interpretation:** The atmosphere emerged as the defining feature of the festival, underpinning participants’ overall positive experience. It reflects the event’s success in creating a space where people felt comfortable, safe, and connected.

## 2. Activities and Variety (15%, n=19)

The second most common theme was the range and diversity of activities. Participants enjoyed both the **breadth of choice** and the sense that there was always something to engage with, without being overwhelming.

Quotes included: ***“There was always something to take part in.” “The range of activities, but still not too much.” “Diversity of event/activities.”***

**Interpretation:** The activity programme is a key strength, striking a balance between variety and accessibility. This variety allowed participants of different ages and interests to engage meaningfully.

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## 3. Talking to / Meeting People (14%, n=18)

Social connection was another strong theme, with attendees highlighting the opportunity to meet others, network, and engage in stimulating conversations.

Quotes illustrate this: ***“Inspiring conversations with people organising and doing inspiring things in Birmingham.” “Meeting organisations – thinking of how we could connect.” “Connecting with other young people.”***

**Interpretation:** Beyond entertainment, the festival served as a **networking and knowledge-sharing platform**, enabling connections that may lead to future collaborations.

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## 4. Kids’ Activities (9%, n=11)

Families particularly appreciated the provision for children. Activities for kids were described as engaging, stimulating, and providing a safe environment in which to play freely.

Examples: ***“The kid’s activities, getting outdoors, seeing the kids playing.”***

***“Treasure hunt – son exercising and thinking, very stimulating, not something can do at home.”***

***“Kids loving it and no loud music.”***

***“Freedom for the kids.”***

**Interpretation:** Children’s activities were highly valued, reinforcing the festival’s family-friendly appeal. These offerings also created opportunities for parents to enjoy the festival while their children were happily engaged.

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## 5. Community (5%, n=7)

Several responses focused explicitly on the sense of **community and togetherness** fostered by the event.

Quotes: ***“Coming together with community.” “Supporting local community.”***

**Interpretation:** While smaller in number than broader categories like atmosphere, community remains a core thread in participants’ appreciation, particularly the emphasis on **local identity and connections**.

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## 6. Learning (6%, n=7)

Attendees also valued the opportunity to learn from stalls, talks, and local projects.

***“Buying plants, learning about projects, supporting local community.”***

***“Seeing the energy and passion.”***

**Interpretation:** This highlights the educational element of the festival, which complemented the fun aspects by offering meaningful engagement with social and environmental issues.

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## 7. Venue (5%, n=6)

The physical setting of the event was also appreciated.

***“The site itself (beautiful and well looked after).”***

**Interpretation:** The venue contributed to the positive atmosphere, reinforcing the sense of being outdoors, connected with nature, and in a safe, enjoyable space.

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## 8. Arts and Culture (Opera 2%, n=3; Arts & Crafts 4%, n=5; Talks 3%, n=4)

Cultural and creative activities were also highlighted by participants, though less frequently than other categories. Opera was praised: ***“Opera, lovely atmosphere – would come again for that.”*** Arts and crafts were valued as hands-on engagement. Talks were mentioned as ***“interesting,”*** even if they sometimes felt too long.

**Interpretation:** These offerings, while niche, add **richness and diversity** to the programme and were highly appreciated by those who engaged with them.

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### 9. Staff (2%, n=3)

Though mentioned by fewer respondents, the staff received praise for being approachable and attentive.

***“The staff, they were very attentive and engaging.”***

**Interpretation:** Positive staff interactions enhance the welcoming feel of the festival and contribute to its atmosphere.

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### 10. “Everything” (5%, n=6)

A small number of respondents struggled to single out a specific aspect, instead describing the **festival as a whole** as their favourite thing.

This suggests a holistic sense of satisfaction, where the combined experience was greater than the sum of its parts.

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## Key Insights

**Atmosphere was the standout feature**, cited by more than one in five participants, and reflects the festival’s inclusive, welcoming, and family-friendly feel.

**A variety of activities** was highly valued, ensuring there was something for everyone without overwhelming attendees.

**Social connection** (meeting people, community, and staff) was a central theme, highlighting the festival’s role in strengthening networks and fostering local cohesion.

**Children’s activities were essential**, reinforcing the event’s intergenerational and family-friendly nature.

**Learning and cultural experiences** (talks, arts, opera) were important complementary elements, providing depth and enrichment.

**Venue and staff interactions** reinforced the positive atmosphere and contributed to the festival’s success.

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## Conclusion

The analysis shows that attendees most appreciated the **atmosphere, activities, and opportunities for social connection**, while children’s activities, community spirit, and learning opportunities added further value. Less frequently mentioned elements such as opera, talks, and arts and crafts nevertheless contributed to the richness and diversity of the programme.

Taken together, the findings indicate that the festival succeeded in creating an **inclusive, engaging, and community-oriented experience**. Future planning should continue to build on the strengths of atmosphere, variety, and social interaction, while ensuring that family provision, cultural offerings, and learning opportunities remain part of the mix.

## Feedback postcard

Of the 126 feedback postcards collected, 107 participants responded to the open-ended question asking what they learned or enjoyed most about the festival, representing an 85% response rate.

The responses highlighted a strong appreciation for both the content and the enjoyable, interactive nature of the session. A common theme, mentioned by six respondents, was the quality of the session itself, with the specific word “great” being used.



Figure 49: What people learned or enjoyed most about the festival

Analysis of the word-frequency responses revealed three predominant themes:

### Community, Connection, and Inclusivity:

The word cloud prominently features “People” (one of the largest terms), alongside “Community,” “Together,” “Children,” and “Everyone”, reflecting strong appreciation for human connection and inclusive participation. Mentions of “Teacher,” “Choir,” “Opera,” and “Stalls” also suggest attendees valued shared experiences across different groups (including families, learners, and performers), fostering a sense of belonging.

### Nature, Sustainability, and Active Engagement:

Attendees frequently highlighted the festival's focus on the natural world and sustainable, hands-on activities. Terms like "Nature," "Green," "Bike," "Cycling," "Recycling," "Mud," and "Plant" indicate enjoyment of outdoor, eco-conscious

experiences, from cycling initiatives to nature-based workshops (e.g., mud play, gardening). “Climate” also appears, underscoring recognition of environmental themes.

#### Positive Experience and Enriching Content:

The festival’s ability to deliver enjoyable, meaningful experiences emerged as a key theme. Words such as “Great,” “Relaxed,” “Engaging,” “Fun,” “Inform,” and “Learn” capture widespread satisfaction, while “Session,” “Performance,” “Arts,” and “Crafts” reflect appreciation for diverse, creative content that blended education and entertainment.

These top themes indicate that the festival was successful in creating a valuable, positive, and engaging experience which wove together community building, environmental awareness, and rich, interactive activities.

## 6.5. Suggestions and Ideas for Improvement

*Hypothesis 5: Participants will provide constructive suggestions for future events and services, reflecting a desire to stay engaged with Birmingham Settlement's work.*

The feedback mechanism is not only an assessment tool but also a manifestation of civic participation. As Cornwall and Gaventa (2001) pointed out, those spaces that allow individuals to influence services help to build a more responsive and democratic community system. Bennett (2006) also noted that when people feel that their opinions are valued and adopted, they are more willing to participate and support relevant organisations. Breeze (2013) further supported this view, stating that individuals tend to maintain contact with charitable organisations that align with their personal values and experiences, especially when they have the opportunity to participate in the formulation of project plans.

### What people would change or improve

Of the 150 survey participants, 85 responded to the open-ended question asking for suggestions for change or improvement for future festivals, representing a 57% response rate. It is worth noting that 50% (n = 43) of these respondents answered “no”. This suggests that a large proportion of visitors were satisfied with the festival and did not wish to make any changes, indicating great success.

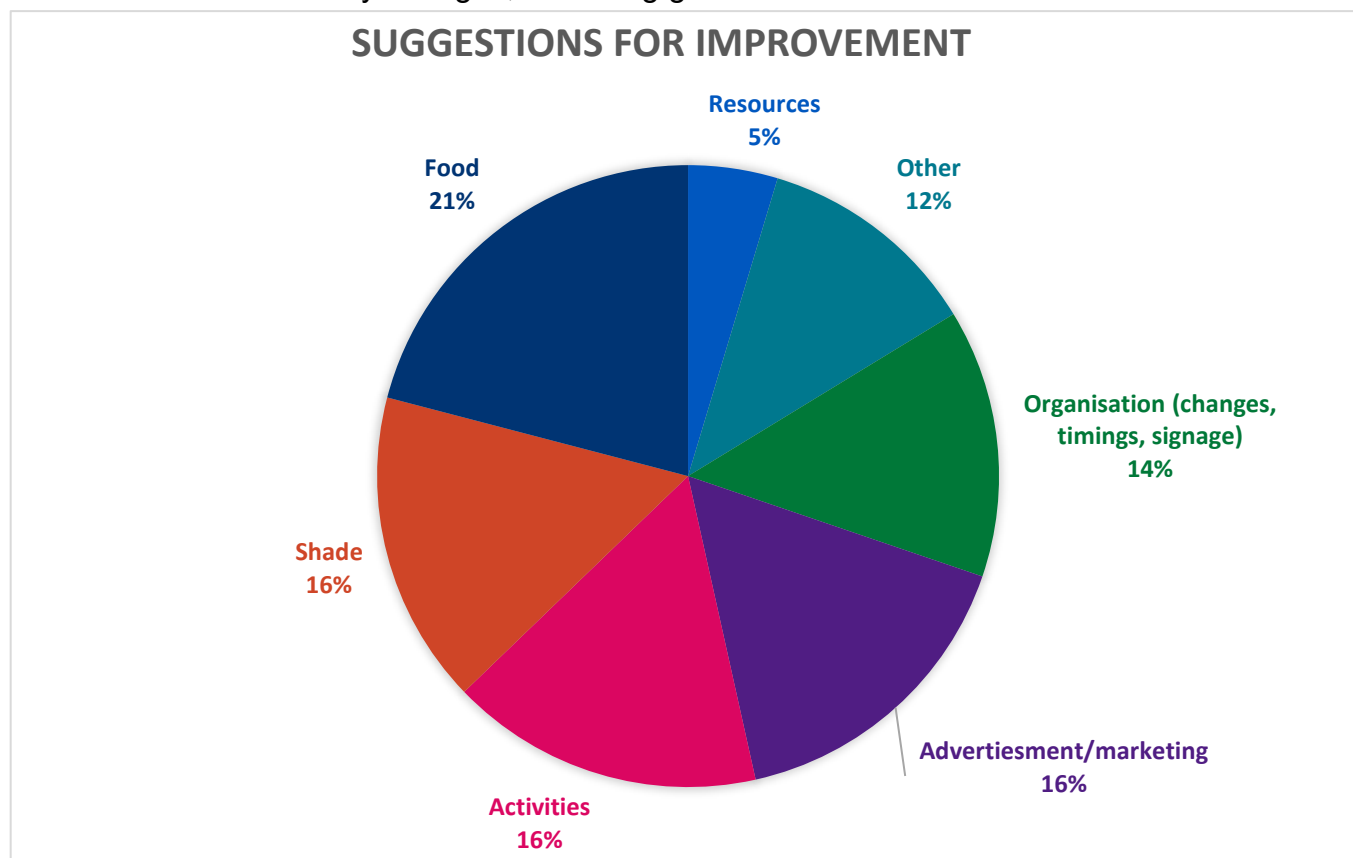


Figure 50: Suggestions for improvements to NFF

Responses were analysed, discounting those that stated “no”, making this sample representative of 28% (n = 42) of the respondents. Analysis of the responses revealed a clear and consistent focus on practical amenities and logistical improvements. The feedback can be categorised into these main areas for enhancement:

**Food and Drink Options (21%) (n=9):** The most prominent theme was a desire for improved food and drink options. Multiple respondents suggested adding "food vendors," "food trucks," and "food stalls," as well as expanding the "food options," including a specific request for "vegan food." One comment went beyond choice to raise a values-based concern, asking the café not to stock Coca-Cola products due to ethical objections, as Coca-Cola is on the official boycott list for Gaza. While only one respondent mentioned this, it highlights the potential for future reflection on whether food and drink offerings align with Birmingham Settlement’s values and community priorities.

**Takeaway:** Food provision is not only about variety and availability, but also about ethics and inclusivity, which may become more important in future planning.

**Shade and Weather Comfort (16%) (n=7):** The second most frequently mentioned suggestion, noted by numerous respondents, was the need for more shade provisions. Specific comments included requests for "shade for guests," "shade areas," and "shade perhaps gazebos" to mitigate the effects of hot weather, which was also directly mentioned as a factor ("hot"). The provision of "cold water" and "ice" was also noted in this context.

**Takeaway:** This is a relatively low-cost, high-impact improvement, directly affecting visitor experience and wellbeing.

**Activities (16%) (n=7):** Although activities were praised overall, several suggestions for improvement emerged. Respondents proposed:

- More interactive and seasonal activities (e.g., “water splash/sports,” “activities on the water at the reservoir”).
- Animal-focused experiences (“alpacas,” “local animal sanctuary”) to encourage engagement with nature and care.
- Opportunities for intergenerational participation and more youth panels which were well-received this year.

Some ideas may be resource-intensive, but smaller-scale versions (e.g., paddling pools, slip 'n slide, intergenerational workshops) could address the exact needs in a budget-friendly manner.

**Takeaway:** There is apparent demand for **greater variety, inclusivity, and intergenerational appeal** in activities, building on current successes.

**Advertisement/ marketing (16%) (n=7):** Some respondents felt that more could be done to reach a wider audience. Suggestions included:

- Greater use of community centres and schools to spread the word
- Involving local businesses.
- More extensive pre-event promotion.

**Takeaway:** Expanding outreach through **local networks and partnerships** could strengthen community engagement and attendance without significant additional cost.

**Organisation (changes, timings and signage) (14%):** Comments pointed to a need for more clarity and communication around festival logistics. Specific suggestions included:

- Clearer signage and maps.
- Better organisation of volunteers.
- Announcements for when events are happening.
- Finishing earlier on the final day.

**Takeaway:** Improvements in organisation largely involve **better communication and clearer information systems**, which are achievable with modest planning changes.

**Other (12%) (n=5):** This category brought together a range of smaller, but still insightful, suggestions:

- **Sustainability:** “More outside/obvious recycling bins.”
- **Child engagement:** “Funny books for toddlers,” “stickers or badges.”
- **Event design:** “Talk was a bit long but interesting (young people have terrible attention spans).”
- **Facilities/activities:** “That the bikes can be ridden easier.”

While these comments were individually less frequently mentioned, they highlight essential considerations: ensuring the festival remains **environmentally responsible**, **engaging young children**, **being mindful of attention spans**, and **making its activities accessible**.

**Takeaway:** The “Other” category reveals **quality-of-life and inclusivity improvements** that, while not dominant themes, are valuable for refining the festival experience and aligning with sustainability and accessibility goals.

### Overall Insights and Prioritisation

#### **Top Priorities (high frequency, high impact):**

- Food and drink provision (variety + values).
- Shade and weather comfort.
- Activity expansion and diversification.

#### **Medium Priorities (moderate frequency, quick wins):**

- Organisation and signage improvements.
- Advertisement and community outreach.

#### **Lower Priorities (fewer mentions, emerging needs):**

- Improved resources.
- “Other” suggestions (sustainability, children’s engagement, accessibility).

### Other suggestions

It is recommended that Birmingham Settlement introduces a live collaborative art element at the next festival, as a low-cost yet high-impact way of fostering creativity, inclusivity, and community pride. This could take the form of a mural on the side of the Red Shed Café or a large standalone canvas/tarp, where attendees, guided by a local artist, contribute handprints, painted tiles, or recycled materials added to an outlined design. Such an activity would be engaging for all ages, provide an accessible entry point for participation, and result in a lasting visual legacy of the festival.

Another recommendation is to strengthen long-term sustainability, donation opportunities could be woven more directly into the festival programme — for example through interactive fundraising elements, or embedding small donation prompts into popular activities. Linking donations directly to community outcomes would help reinforce the impact of giving while making contributions feel purposeful and accessible.

Another recommendation is to conduct a post-event survey, particularly targeting attendees who shared their contact details, to capture richer qualitative feedback and personal stories. This would provide stronger evidence of community impact and valuable insights for continuous improvement.

## Conclusion

The analysis reveals that while attendees appreciated many aspects of the festival, there is a clear desire for **better amenities (food, shade), expanded activities, and stronger logistical support (organisation, marketing)**. Importantly, the feedback shows that improvements are not just about scale, but also about **values, inclusivity, and accessibility**.

Taking a **tiered approach** — focusing first on practical, high-impact changes (shade, food, signage), while exploring more ambitious ideas (animal experiences, water activities, ethical sourcing) for future years — would best respond to the feedback received. The “Other” suggestions, though smaller in scale, provide **quick wins** (e.g., recycling bins, stickers for kids) and highlight opportunities to make the festival more **sustainable, child-friendly, and accessible**.

### Feedback postcard

Of the 126 feedback postcards collected, 60 participants (48%) responded to the open-ended question asking for one thing they would improve or change.





Figure 51: One thing people would like to change or improve

Analysis of the responses revealed three primary areas for improvement, with notable emphasis on elements related to children, families, and environmental comfort (reflected in the word cloud's prominence of "Kids," "Children," "Heat," "Shade," and "Seating"):

### Audience Engagement, Technical Execution, and Family Interaction:

The most frequent suggestions centred on enhancing engagement for all attendees, especially families with children (evidenced by “Kids,” “Children,” “Parents,” “Mums” in the word cloud). Multiple respondents cited the need for stronger “mic” (microphone) projection (for performers, as well as for audience participation during Q&A or interactive segments). Additionally, terms like “Interactive,” “Voices,” and “Interpreter” imply desires for more dynamic or accessible engagement (e.g., interpretive support or interactive activities tailored to kids). The prevalence of “Hot” also indicates that environmental discomfort from heat impacted audience engagement overall.

### Practical Logistics, Comfort, and Environmental Adjustments:

This key area focused on immediate comfort, navigation, and physical space. “Heat” was a dominant concern, paired with requests for “Shade” (including “Umbrellas” for sun protection) and cooling solutions like “Fan” or “Air Con.” Improvements to “Seating” (including “Stalls” or chair arrangements) were also suggested to enhance comfort. For navigation, “Clearer signs” were mentioned to improve information flow and wayfinding.

### Content, Structure, and Activities for Diverse Audiences:

Suggestions here related to the format, length, and type of activities, with strong emphasis on children’s experiences. Responses included making sessions “more interactive” (aligned with “Interactive” in the word cloud) and adjusting duration: both “Shorter” and “Longer” (expectation from different audience). Additionally, the word cloud highlights desires for varied “Activities” (such as “Colouring,” “Exercises,” “Performance”), a cohesive “Narrative,” and “Fun” elements to better engage kids and families.

## 6.6. Recommendations and Implementation Plan

The evaluation demonstrates that the Neighbourhood Futures Festival successfully delivered on its aims of inclusion, community connection, and informal learning. At the same time, participants highlighted clear areas for improvement, and the demographic analysis points to opportunities for strengthening reach and equity. This section distils the findings into a set of actionable recommendations in the table below, then sets out a practical implementation plan for NFF 2026.

Taken together, these recommendations provide both strategic direction and practical next steps. By addressing food, comfort, activities, organisation, and equity, NFF 2026 can build on its successes while tackling identified gaps. Implementing the plan will make the festival more inclusive, more comfortable, and more widely accessible, reinforcing its role as a platform for connection, learning, and sustainability.

| Theme                     | What participants said  | Recommended Action   | Priority |
|---------------------------|---|--|----------|
| Food and Drink            | Desire for more options, including vegan food; ethical concerns raised about Coca-Cola.                                 | Broaden food vendor offer, incorporating vegan/vegetarian options and adopting an ethical sourcing policy aligned with Birmingham Settlement's values.   | High     |
| Shade and Weather         | Requests for more shade, gazebos, cold water, ice.  | Provide shaded seating and water refill/ice stations; explore sponsorship (e.g., garden centres, local suppliers).                                       | High     |
| Activities                | Positive overall, but requests for more intergenerational activities, youth panels, and animal/nature-based engagement. | Expand activity mix with low-cost, family-friendly features (e.g., treasure hunts, splash play, animal/nature sessions); continue youth panel programme. | Medium   |
| Organisation and Signage  | Need for clearer maps, signs, announcements, and volunteer coordination.  | Develop improved wayfinding (large entrance boards, numbered site maps), structured volunteer briefings, and scheduled announcements.                    | Medium   |
| Advertising and Marketing | Calls for stronger promotion via schools, community centres, local businesses.  | Strengthen outreach through schools and community hubs; partner with local businesses for promotion.   | Medium   |
| Other (Quick Wins)        | Recycling bins, toddler-friendly books/stickers, session length for young people  | Add visible recycling bins, family engagement materials (stickers, books), adapt talk lengths, review equipment accessibility.                           | Low      |
| Equity and Outreach       | Aim to bring more men and Asian communities to the festival and attract postcodes outside of B16                        | Partnerships with faith/cultural orgs; translated flyers; engage youth/men's groups in B18, B19, B44.  | Low      |
| Sustainability Legacy     | Positive feedback with environmental engagement- continue   | Promote litter-picks and growing projects; develop ethical suppliers' policy.  | Low      |

## Social Media Recommendations

- Continue prioritising Instagram Reels and expand TikTok use.
- Promote **Youth Day earlier** in the campaign to build momentum.
- Invest selectively in paid ads focused on ticketing and programme promotion.
- Strengthen community partnerships and referrals (e.g. Eventbrite, Link tree, Mailchimp).
- Explore more **inclusive and multilingual promotion** to reach wider audiences.

## Feedback, Key Takeaways and Recommendations

### Facilitator Feedback

This section integrates post-event feedback from facilitators to highlight operational and experiential strengths, identify targeted areas for improvement, and align recommendations with both digital performance metrics and on-the-ground feedback.

### Feedback Overview

To ensure a comprehensive and multi-dimensional understanding of the festival experience, feedback was collected through four different but complementary channels after the event. Each channel aimed to capture unique perspectives and organise them into three stakeholder groups to extract cross-departmental patterns. Feedback collected via email came from institutional partners (e.g., academia, sustainability-focused organisations) and facilitators, focusing on operational coordination, long-term collaboration intentions, and session-specific outcomes. WhatsApp collected brief, emotional feedback from frontline contributors (e.g., youth leaders, volunteers), emphasising on-site participation and the desire to participate again. Social media provided narrative insights from individual attendees and organisational accounts, highlighting individual activity participation, community connections, and public praise. Verbal comments at the entry gates and information stands captured spontaneous, immediate reactions, such as requests for more frequent events and gratitude for family-friendly support.

To further simplify the analysis and identify common themes among different types, the feedback was divided into three stakeholder groups: institutional partners, including academic institutions, community and civic groups, art and culture entities, sustainability-focused organisations, and corporate partners, who prioritise smooth operation, alignment with organisational goals, and long-term cooperation. Volunteers focused on team culture, convenience of participation, and observations on participant engagement, as well as individual participants, who emphasised the fun of the event, the community atmosphere, and the festival's impact on the surrounding area. Feedback was positive, with no major systemic issues reported. Insights focused on operational excellence, inclusive activities, community bonding, youth engagement, and actionable adjustments, complementing the digital success outlined in 6.1–6.4.

### Thematic Analysis

#### **(1) Operational excellence**

All stakeholder groups consistently praised the festival's logistical clarity and team hospitality, reinforcing trust built via digital promotion, with exact feedback including academic institutions noting "Lots of fun was had and everything ran super smoothly - a testament to all your hard work behind the scenes!", corporate partners stating "Thank you for involving us in Neighbourhood Futures Festival, it was a great session and really impressive what you have achieved," volunteers sharing "Thank you so much for the

opportunity. I always love coming there to help! I wish to do this more often,” community groups referencing “Such rich conversations and relaxed and welcoming vibe today...”, front-gate verbal feedback like “Fantastic time,” “Really enjoyed it,” “You all do great work,” and “Great to see so many volunteers,” and organizational social media posts declaring “We had a beautiful time. A very well organised day with so many activities for both adults and children. Loved it. The staff were great too.”

Generalised feedback across institutional partners, including community groups, academic institutions, and corporate entities highlighted consistent praise for on-site staff support. One art and culture partner noting “everyone was really welcoming and helpful” and “lots of yes sayers,” a sustainability-focused corporate partner observing “how much work had gone into organising it.” Volunteers uniformly describing the team as inclusive, and one volunteer shared “the warm and welcoming atmosphere made it easy to join in with other activities,” a sentiment echoed by a cycling-focused organization stating “Everyone was so friendly and helpful, you’ve got a great team of staff and volunteers!”. This cross-sector input confirms broad recognition of the festival’s operational strength, which directly contributed to the 94% of survey respondents who reported feeling welcomed (6.3 Emotional Experience and Well-being) and the universal positive sentiment captured in feedback postcards (e.g., “Good,” “Fun,” “Amazing” in 5.1 Community, Belonging and Social Connection).

## **(2) Inclusive and purpose-driven activities**

Activities that performed well in digital metrics (e.g., Youth Day page traffic, sustainability content clicks) also emerged as on-site standouts, with exact feedback including family-focused comments like “My two daughters loved the forest school, printing their own flags and the On Yer Bike play!” and a mother thanking staff “You have just averted an argument” after receiving treasure hunt materials, a sustainability organization detailing “At our FoodCycle stall, we ran a fun and engaging activity: ‘Guess the Fruit and Veg in the Box’, followed by a creative challenge where participants planned a three course vegetarian meal using those ingredients! It was a beautiful way to spark conversations around healthy eating and bring people together through food,” volunteers praising “amazing performances by RoguePlay Theatre and Paperback Theatre — such a creative and thoughtful productions,” individual attendees noting “Loved silent disco will be there tomorrow” and “Really enjoyed myself today,” and a community network highlighting “The tug of war definitely featured as a highlight (for adults and children alike!).”

Generalised feedback from art and culture facilitators (including arts groups, theatre companies, and choirs) underscored strong attendee engagement with performances, which aligns with survey data (6.4 Activities, Engagement and Enjoyment) showing theatre and performances as a top favourite for children (9%). One arts facilitator shared “the creativity really flowed and the feedback I received was great too,” while a theatre company stated, “we had a lovely time and we hope your audiences did too!”, reflecting positive reception across creative activities. Sustainability-focused groups also

reported meaningful outcomes. One eco-organization said “we had lots of good conversations with different people” at their stall, and a tech-focused workshop facilitator described “fun and meaningful conversations — debunking myths, exploring memories of connection, listening to people’s needs, and creating poems about alternative futures.”, echoing the 67% of survey respondents who reported learning something new about nature or the environment (6.2 Environment, Nature, and Sustainability).

### **(3) Community and institutional bonding**

The strong referral traffic and partner cross-promotion outlined in earlier sections mirrored feedback about strengthened relationships between stakeholders and the community, which complement the survey’s focus on social connection and neighbourhood perception (6.1 Community, Belonging and Social Connection). Exact comments include a local resident stating “It’s been amazing. This place has transformed the area,” an opera company offering “It would be great to chat soon about how we can support some more of your year-round work and if you think there’s a good fit for us... In particular, we are trying to do more work in Kingstanding so working with that strand of Birmingham Settlement would be brilliant,” a corporate partner volunteering “Also, I and the team would be happy to support in future events or with any volunteering requirements so let me know,” an academic institution noting “Was great to (re)connect!”, and a workshop facilitator sharing “Thank you for the space and a few hours of really good community vibes.”

Generalised feedback from residents and community groups (including neighbourhood networks and community alliances) expressed enthusiasm for future participation, which aligns with the survey’s finding that 75% of respondents felt a sense of connection to their local community. One neighbourhood group said, “Looking forward to next year!”, while another community network noted bringing 43 people and “a very good time was had by all”, reflecting strong community buy-in. Academic partners also emphasised campus-community links. One academic facilitator stated “It was great to take part, and to be able to engage with and be inspired by all of the other participants and volunteers,” while an academic centre mentioned “I saw several UoB colleagues yesterday who had popped in over the weekend and had a great time”. This input confirms the festival’s role as a catalyst for cross-sector and community connection, even as Chi-square tests (5.1) noted ethnic background’s significant association with neighbourhood perception ( $p=0.0371$ ), suggesting room to deepen bonding across all demographic groups.

### **(4) Youth day**

Youth Day’s digital performance (peak Instagram engagement 27 June, 5.3) was matched by feedback about meaningful youth inclusion, with exact comments including a youth panellist thanking organisers “for allowing us to share our thoughts and views and be involved with the youth day,” an academic institution calling “The youth panel



was so inspiring!!!”, a youth leadership program describing “Thank you so much for having us down! The day was brilliant,” and a volunteer highlighting “One highlight for me was listening to a powerful youth panel... insight into how studying zoology helped understand how closely connected humans are to nature really stood out.”

Generalised feedback from youth-focused contributors (including youth panellists, youth leadership programs, and academic partners supporting youth initiatives) consistently framed the festival as a space for youth voice. One youth panellist added “Hopefully, we can continue the conversations, happy to help when I can,” while the youth leadership program’s praise for the brilliant day reflects satisfaction with youth-specific opportunities. This aligns with the Treasure Map activity findings (6.1), where 87% of children reported feeling “Happy” and 73% met someone new, and reinforces the survey’s theme of intergenerational connection (6.4). No conflicting feedback from youth stakeholders was reported, confirming the festival’s success in cantering youth engagement as a core pillar of community building.

### **(5) Actionable Improvement Opportunities**

The feedback includes some specific and feasible suggestions rather than general complaints. These suggestions mainly focus on improvements in logistics. The specific feedback points include a workshop host noting, “The workshops in their original form might have been more suitable on Thursday/Friday. However, they were adapted to suit the needs, and a few adults did come and engage in the map according to their own terms.” an eco-organisation asking “There is some interest in running an Eco Together group for volunteers and people who live near the Red Shed. Can you tell me who I need to speak to about this within the organisation?”, a community partner requesting “Would love any feedback from my session too,” and back-gate verbal feedback asking, “Do you do this every week?”

Generalised feedback indicates these requests came from a small number of facilitators and partners. The suggestions target specific, solvable issues, such as workshop timing, post-event coordination, and session feedback, rather than general dissatisfaction, and align with the survey’s top improvement priorities (e.g., “organisation and signage” in 5.5).

None of the input points to major operational flaws, emphasising that these adjustments would refine the festival’s strengths, such as its strong activity variety and community focus, rather than address critical gaps. For example, the request for recurring mini-events (“Do you do this every week?”) builds on the survey’s finding that participants value community connection, while the workshop timing suggestion aligns with the goal of making activities more accessible to diverse audiences (e.g., adults on weekdays, families on weekends) outlined in the implementation plan (5.6).

## Key Takeaways

- **Youth Day** was the standout success, generating the highest traffic and engagement.
- **Video-led content (Reels, TikTok)** outperformed static posts, echoing wider digital trends.
- Referral platforms (Eventbrite, Link tree, Mailchimp) were crucial in driving audiences to festival pages.

The marketing and communications strategy for the Neighbourhood Futures Festival 2025 successfully strengthened visibility, engagement, and attendance. Across platforms, the campaign demonstrated significant growth compared with 2024, with Instagram Reels, Eventbrite emails, and referral partnerships standing out as particularly effective in reaching new and existing audiences.

Youth Day emerged as the festival's biggest success story, showing how targeted, creative content can translate directly into higher turnout. The strong performance of video-led content also highlights the importance of adapting to current digital trends.

Overall, the outcomes show that a mix of **strategic digital promotion, direct subscriber communication, and community partnerships** is key to building awareness and driving participation. By investing further in these channels and continuing to refine outreach—especially around inclusive and multilingual promotion—the festival can expand its reach even further in future years.

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# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Demographic Information

### gender

|       |                   | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Female            | 93        | 62.0    | 62.0          | 62.0               |
|       | Male              | 56        | 37.3    | 37.3          | 99.3               |
|       | Prefer not to say | 1         | .7      | .7            | 100.0              |
|       | Total             | 150       | 100.0   | 100.0         |                    |

### age\_group

|       |          | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|----------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | 12–17    | 5         | 3.3     | 3.3           | 3.3                |
|       | 18–30    | 45        | 30.0    | 30.0          | 33.3               |
|       | 31–50    | 70        | 46.7    | 46.7          | 80.0               |
|       | 51–70    | 25        | 16.7    | 16.7          | 96.7               |
|       | 70+      | 3         | 2.0     | 2.0           | 98.7               |
|       | Under 12 | 2         | 1.3     | 1.3           | 100.0              |
|       | Total    | 150       | 100.0   | 100.0         |                    |

### disability

|       |                   | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | No                | 120       | 80.0    | 80.0          | 80.0               |
|       | Prefer not to say | 7         | 4.7     | 4.7           | 84.7               |
|       | Yes               | 23        | 15.3    | 15.3          | 100.0              |
|       | Total             | 150       | 100.0   | 100.0         |                    |

|       |                                | ethnicity |         |               |                    |
|-------|--------------------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
|       |                                | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Valid | Africa                         | 1         | .7      | .7            | .7                 |
|       | African English Indian French  | 1         | .7      | .7            | 1.3                |
|       | arab                           | 1         | .7      | .7            | 2.0                |
|       | Asian or Asian British         | 36        | 24.0    | 24.0          | 26.0               |
|       | Black african                  | 1         | .7      | .7            | 26.7               |
|       | Black or Black British         | 16        | 10.7    | 10.7          | 37.3               |
|       | Chinese                        | 1         | .7      | .7            | 38.0               |
|       | Indigenous Mexican             | 1         | .7      | .7            | 38.7               |
|       | Latin american                 | 2         | 1.3     | 1.3           | 40.0               |
|       | latina                         | 1         | .7      | .7            | 40.7               |
|       | Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups | 10        | 6.7     | 6.7           | 47.3               |
|       | Other                          | 1         | .7      | .7            | 48.0               |
|       | Prefer not to say              | 3         | 2.0     | 2.0           | 50.0               |
|       | romanian                       | 1         | .7      | .7            | 50.7               |
|       | White (e.g. British, Irish)    | 74        | 49.3    | 49.3          | 100.0              |
|       | Total                          | 150       | 100.0   | 100.0         |                    |

### What is your highest level of education?

|       |                          | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|--------------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | A-Levels or equivalent   | 19        | 12.7    | 12.7          | 12.7               |
|       | GCSEs or equivalent      | 16        | 10.7    | 10.7          | 23.3               |
|       | No formal education      | 3         | 2.0     | 2.0           | 25.3               |
|       | Postgraduate degree      | 48        | 32.0    | 32.0          | 57.3               |
|       | Prefer not to say        | 10        | 6.7     | 6.7           | 64.0               |
|       | Undergraduate degree     | 51        | 34.0    | 34.0          | 98.0               |
|       | Vocational qualification | 3         | 2.0     | 2.0           | 100.0              |
|       | Total                    | 150       | 100.0   | 100.0         |                    |

### What is your employment status?

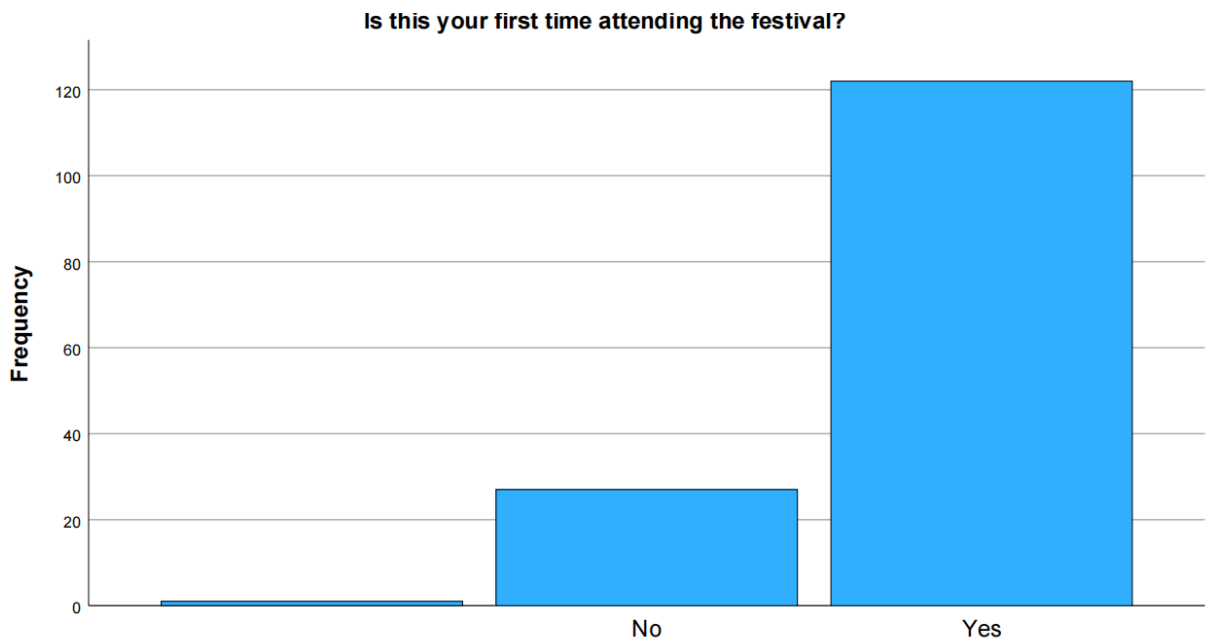
|       |   | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|---|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Employed full-time                        | 57        | 38.0    | 38.0          | 38.0               |
|       | Employed full-time;Student                | 1         | .7      | .7            | 38.7               |
|       | Employed part-time                        | 24        | 16.0    | 16.0          | 54.7               |
|       | Employed part-time;<br>Employed full-time | 1         | .7      | .7            | 55.3               |
|       | Employed part-time;Student                | 4         | 2.7     | 2.7           | 58.0               |
|       | Essol                                     | 1         | .7      | .7            | 58.7               |
|       | Limited capacity for work                 | 1         | .7      | .7            | 59.3               |
|       | Maternity le VC e                         | 1         | .7      | .7            | 60.0               |
|       | n/a                                       | 2         | 1.3     | 1.3           | 61.3               |
|       | Other                                     | 1         | .7      | .7            | 62.0               |
|       | Retired                                   | 7         | 4.7     | 4.7           | 66.7               |
|       | self employed                             | 3         | 2.0     | 2.0           | 68.7               |
|       | Self employed                             | 3         | 2.0     | 2.0           | 70.7               |
|       | self-employed                             | 1         | .7      | .7            | 71.3               |
|       | Student                                   | 22        | 14.7    | 14.7          | 86.0               |
|       | Unemployed                                | 20        | 13.3    | 13.3          | 99.3               |
|       | Unemployed;stay at home<br>mum            | 1         | .7      | .7            | 100.0              |
|       | Total                                     | 150       | 100.0   | 100.0         |                    |



## Appendix 2: Event Participation, Engagement and Reflection

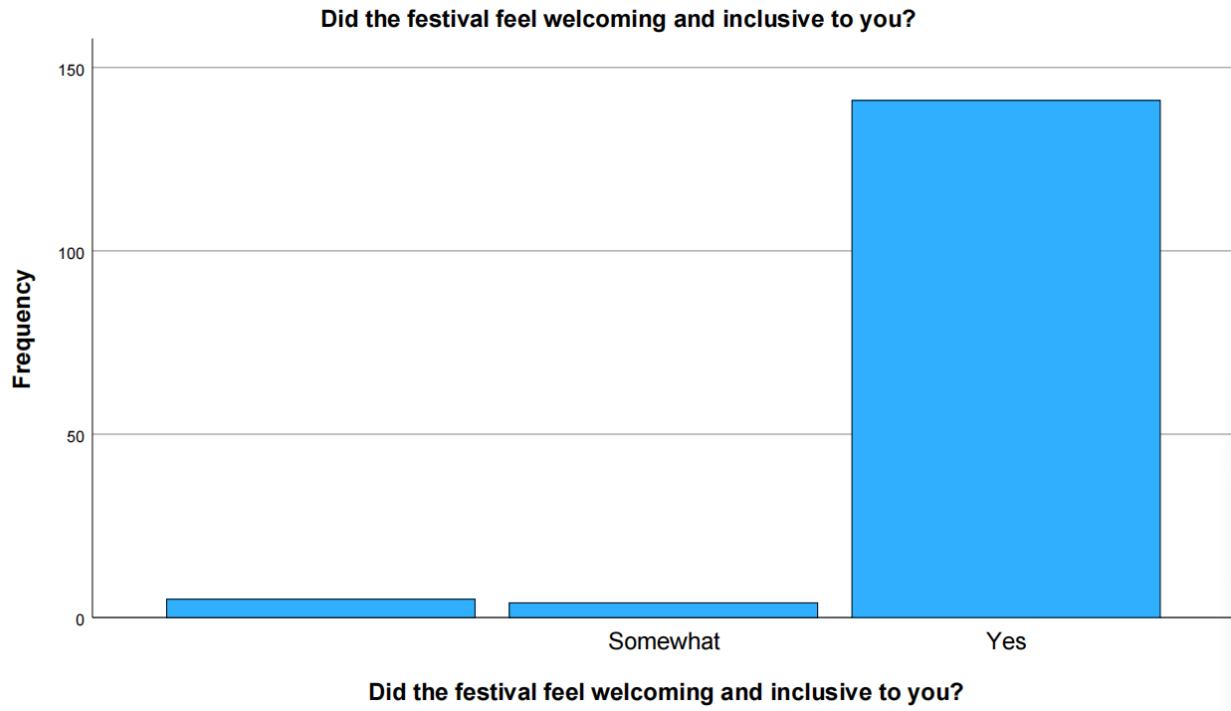
### Is this your first time attending the festival?

|       |       | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid |       | 1         | .7      | .7            | .7                 |
|       | No    | 27        | 18.0    | 18.0          | 18.7               |
|       | Yes   | 122       | 81.3    | 81.3          | 100.0              |
|       | Total | 150       | 100.0   | 100.0         |                    |



### Did the festival feel welcoming and inclusive to you?

|       |          | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|----------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid |          | 5         | 3.3     | 3.3           | 3.3                |
|       | Somewhat | 4         | 2.7     | 2.7           | 6.0                |
|       | Yes      | 141       | 94.0    | 94.0          | 100.0              |
|       | Total    | 150       | 100.0   | 100.0         |                    |



**Do you think festivals like this are important for learning about environmental or social issues?**

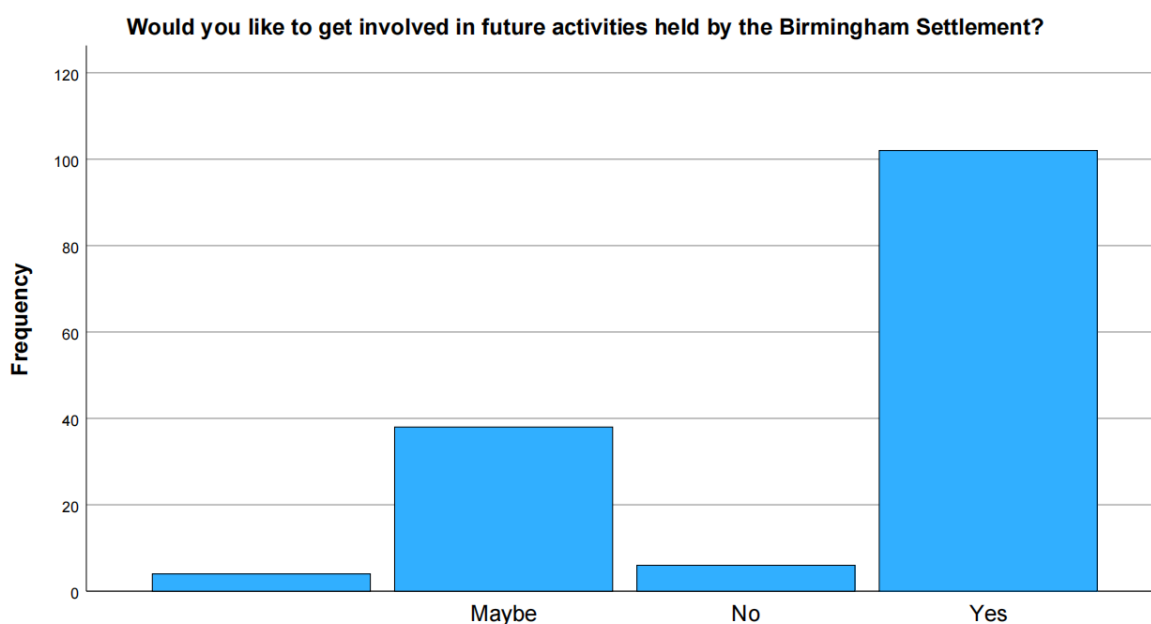
|       |                   | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid |                   | 4         | 2.7     | 2.7           | 2.7                |
|       | Agree             | 39        | 26.0    | 26.0          | 28.7               |
|       | Prefer not to say | 2         | 1.3     | 1.3           | 30.0               |
|       | Strongly Agree    | 105       | 70.0    | 70.0          | 100.0              |
|       | Total             | 150       | 100.0   | 100.0         |                    |

**Did you feel a sense of connection to the local community during the event?**

|       |          | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|----------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid |          | 4         | 2.7     | 2.7           | 2.7                |
|       | No       | 2         | 1.3     | 1.3           | 4.0                |
|       | Somewhat | 34        | 22.7    | 22.7          | 26.7               |
|       | Yes      | 110       | 73.3    | 73.3          | 100.0              |
|       | Total    | 150       | 100.0   | 100.0         |                    |

## Would you like to get involved in future activities held by the Birmingham Settlement?

|       | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | 4         | 2.7     | 2.7           | 2.7                |
| Maybe | 38        | 25.3    | 25.3          | 28.0               |
| No    | 6         | 4.0     | 4.0           | 32.0               |
| Yes   | 102       | 68.0    | 68.0          | 100.0              |
| Total | 150       | 100.0   | 100.0         |                    |



## Would you like to get involved in future activities held by the Birmingham Settlement? After today, how do you feel about your neighbourhood?

|                | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|----------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid          | 10        | 6.7     | 6.7           | 6.7                |
| More connected | 55        | 36.7    | 36.7          | 43.3               |
| More hopeful   | 48        | 32.0    | 32.0          | 75.3               |
| Not sure       | 10        | 6.7     | 6.7           | 82.0               |
| Same as before | 27        | 18.0    | 18.0          | 100.0              |
| Total          | 150       | 100.0   | 100.0         |                    |

**Where did you hear about the festival?**

|       |  | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|--|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | BBC  | 1         | .7      | .7            | .7                 |
|       | BCU bulletin                                     | 1         | .7      | .7            | 1.3                |
|       | Boss contacted for donation                      | 1         | .7      | .7            | 2.0                |
|       | careers connect- UoB                             | 1         | .7      | .7            | 2.7                |
|       | Eventbrite                                       | 2         | 1.3     | 1.3           | 4.0                |
|       | Faith volunteer                                  | 1         | .7      | .7            | 4.7                |
|       | Friend   | 1         | .7      | .7            | 5.3                |
|       | friends  | 1         | .7      | .7            | 6.0                |
|       | n/a  | 4         | 2.7     | 2.7           | 8.7                |
|       | on site walking past                             | 1         | .7      | .7            | 9.3                |
|       | partner/ lizzie                                  | 1         | .7      | .7            | 10.0               |
|       | passing by                                       | 1         | .7      | .7            | 10.7               |
|       | Posters or fliers                                | 13        | 8.7     | 8.7           | 19.3               |
|       | Ran a session                                    | 1         | .7      | .7            | 20.0               |
|       | Returning visitor                                | 12        | 8.0     | 8.0           | 28.0               |
|       | school   | 1         | .7      | .7            | 28.7               |
|       | Social media                                     | 33        | 22.0    | 22.0          | 50.7               |
|       | Social media;Word of mouth                       | 1         | .7      | .7            | 51.3               |
|       | Social media;Word of mouth;<br>Posters or fliers | 2         | 1.3     | 1.3           | 52.7               |
|       | Told at a settlement event                       | 1         | .7      | .7            | 53.3               |
|       | university                                       | 1         | .7      | .7            | 54.0               |
|       | UoB  | 1         | .7      | .7            | 54.7               |
|       | Was hired to print flyers                        | 1         | .7      | .7            | 55.3               |
|       | Was performing here                              | 1         | .7      | .7            | 56.0               |
|       | Word of mouth                                    | 65        | 43.3    | 43.3          | 99.3               |
|       | XR Birmingham newsletter                         | 1         | .7      | .7            | 100.0              |
|       | Total  | 150       | 100.0   | 100.0         |                    |

**If Birmingham Settlement were to run more events like this, how much would you be willing to donate annually to support them?**

|       |                   | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid |                   | 7         | 4.7     | 4.7           | 4.7                |
|       | £0–£10            | 70        | 46.7    | 46.7          | 51.3               |
|       | £10–£50           | 33        | 22.0    | 22.0          | 73.3               |
|       | £100–500          | 2         | 1.3     | 1.3           | 74.7               |
|       | £50–£100          | 3         | 2.0     | 2.0           | 76.7               |
|       | Not sure          | 26        | 17.3    | 17.3          | 94.0               |
|       | Prefer not to say | 9         | 6.0     | 6.0           | 100.0              |
|       | Total             | 150       | 100.0   | 100.0         |                    |

## Appendix 3: Blank copy of the long survey

### Birmingham Settlement Neighbourhood Futures Festival Survey 2025

Thank you for taking part in this survey. Your feedback helps us understand your experience and improve future festivals. This should take no more than 10 minutes. Your responses are anonymous.

Only the researcher and research team will have access to raw data in order to analyse this for the purposes of this research in accordance with GDPR regulations. Birmingham Settlement's full Privacy Policy can be found here:

<https://www.birminghamsettlement.org.uk/privacy/>

Required

#### Section 1: About You

1. What is your age group? \*

- ☐ Under 12
- ☐ 12–17
- ☐ 18–30
- ☐ 31–50
- ☐ 51–70
- ☐ 70+

2. What is your gender? \*

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Non-binary
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Other

3. What is your ethnic background? \*

- ☐ White (e.g. British, Irish)
- ☐ Black or Black British
- ☐ Asian or Asian British
- ☐ Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Other

8. What is your highest level of education?

- ☐ No formal education
- ☐ GCSEs or equivalent
- ☐ A-Levels or equivalent
- ☐ Vocational qualification
- ☐ Undergraduate degree
- ☐ Postgraduate degree
- ☐ Prefer not to say

4. What is the first part of your postcode? (e.g. B17): \_\_\_\_\_ \*

5. Do you consider yourself to have a long-term health condition or disability? \*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say

6. What is your employment status? \*

- ☐ Employed full-time
- ☐ Employed part-time
- ☐ Unemployed
- ☐ Student
- ☐ Retired
- ☐ Other

7. What is your current job or area of work?

## Section 2: Participation and Activities

9. Is this your first time attending the festival?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

10. What brought you to the festival? (Tick all that apply)

- ☐ Arts, crafts & creative activities
- ☐ Environmental talks & workshops
- ☐ Forest School
- ☐ Music
- ☐ Sports & games
- ☐ Theatre & performance
- ☐ Wellbeing sessions
- ☐ General festival atmosphere
- ☐ To be part of a community
- ☐ Other

11. What was your favourite or most memorable activity?

12. Did the festival feel welcoming and inclusive to you?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Somewhat
- ☐ No

13. How involved did you feel today? (Scale 1–5, where 1 = not at all, 5 = very involved)

|   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|

14. How did you feel during the festival? (Tick all that apply)

- ☐ Relaxed
- ☐ Excited
- ☐ Connected
- ☐ Overwhelmed
- ☐ Disconnected
- ☐ Inspired
- ☐ Curious
- ☐



### Section 3: Sustainability and Learning

15. Did you learn something new about nature, the environment, or local issues today? \*

☐ Yes

☐ No

16. If yes, what did you learn?

17. If you are willing to start doing something more environmentally friendly from today, what would you do?

18. How connected to nature did you feel today? (Scale 1–5, where 1 = not at all, 5 = very strongly)

|   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|

19. Do you think festivals like this are important for learning about environmental or social issues?

☐ Strongly Agree

☐ Agree

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly Disagree

☐ Prefer not to say

## Section 4: Community Connection

20. Did you talk to someone new today?

☐ Yes

☐ No

21. Did you feel a sense of connection to the local community during the event?

☐ Yes

☐ Somewhat

☐ No

22. Would you like to get involved in future activities held by the Birmingham Settlement?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Maybe

23. What makes you feel most connected to your community, please use three key words to conclude?

24. After today, how do you feel about your neighbourhood?

☐ More hopeful

☐ More connected

☐ Same as before

☐ Not sure

## Section 5: Final Feedback

25. What did you enjoy most about the festival?

26. What three words would you use to describe the festival?

27. Is there anything you'd change or suggest for next time?

28. Birmingham Settlement provides many services for communities. What would you like to see more of? (Tick all that apply)

☐ Older people's services (social, health & fitness)

☐ Activities for 0-12s

☐ Activities for young people 12-18

☐ Activities for young people 18-25

☐ Sports and wellbeing

☐ Financial inclusion/money advice services

☐ Environmental & sustainability

☐ Other

29. Where did you hear about the festival? \*

- ☐ Social media
- ☐ Word of mouth
- ☐ Posters or fliers
- ☐ Returning visitor
- ☐ Eventbrite
- ☐ Other

30. If Birmingham Settlement were to run more events like this, how much would you be willing to donate annually to support them?

- ☐ £0-£10
- ☐ £10-£50
- ☐ £50-£100
- ☐ £100-500
- ☐ Not sure
- ☐ Prefer not to say

31. Please leave your email address below if you would like to sign up to our quarterly online newsletter with Mailchimp.



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This content is neither created nor endorsed by Microsoft. The data you submit will be sent to the form owner.

 Microsoft Forms

## Appendix 4: Blank copy of the feedback postcard



Session: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

How would you rate this session? (Please circle one)

😊 Excellent    😊 Good    😐 Okay    😞 Poor

One thing you'd improve or change?

On a scale from 1-5, how much did you enjoy the session? (1 = Not at all, 5 = Loved it!)

☐ 1    ☐ 2    ☐ 3    ☐ 4    ☐ 5

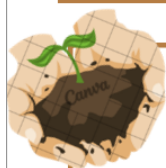
What did you learn/enjoy the most about this session?

How did today make you feel? (Tick all that apply)

- ☐ Inspired    ☐ Energised    ☐ Connected  
☐ Curious    ☐ Okay    ☐ Not great

One word to describe your experience today:

Any other comments for us?



Want to get involved with Birmingham Settlement?

[info@bsettlement.org.uk](mailto:info@bsettlement.org.uk) | 0121 250 0770

[www.birminghamsettlement.org.uk](http://www.birminghamsettlement.org.uk)

UNIVERSITY OF  
BIRMINGHAM



Have more to say? Take this quick 5-10 min survey about your festival experience!



Scan for survey

Appendix 5: Blank copy of the treasure map

# TREASURE MAP



# TREASURE HUNT QUESTIONS

Birmingham Settlement Neighborhood Futures Festival 26 – 29 June 2025

## Station 1 – Welcome & Warm-Up

**Question:** “Who did you come with today?”

**Answer:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Station 2 – Environmental Awareness

**Question:** “What did you learn from today’s activities to help our planet?”

**Answer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Question:** “If you could add one thing to your street, what would it be?”

**Answer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Question:** “What would you grow in a magical community garden?”

**Answer:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Station 3 – Social Interaction

**Question:** “Did you meet anyone new today?”

**Answer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Question:** “Which activities did you try today?”

**Answer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Question:** “Which activity did you like best? ”

**Answer:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Station 4 – Creative Reflection

**Question:** “Draw your favourite part/activity of the day.”  
(separate blank paper for your drawing at this station)

## Treasure Chest Stop – Rewards Station

**Question:** “How do you feel now?”

**Answer (emoji sticker):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Question:** “What does community mean to you?”

**Answer:** \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix 6: Thematic Analysis and Chi-Square Tests

### Chi-Square Tests

|                    | Value               | df | Asymptotic<br>Significance (2-<br>sided) |
|--------------------|---------------------|----|--|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 10.005 <sup>a</sup> | 8  | .265                                     |
| Likelihood Ratio   | 9.546               | 8  | .298                                     |
| N of Valid Cases   | 150                 |    |  |

a. 7 cells (46.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .07.

Test on the significance of gender on feelings about the neighbourhood

### Chi-Square Tests

|                    | Value               | df | Asymptotic<br>Significance (2-<br>sided) |
|--------------------|---------------------|----|--|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 76.273 <sup>a</sup> | 56 | .037                                     |
| Likelihood Ratio   | 51.910              | 56 | .630                                     |
| N of Valid Cases   | 150                 |    |  |

a. 67 cells (89.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .07.

Test on the importance of ethnicity on feelings about the neighbourhood