SOUTHWOLD ARTS FESTIVAL

Report and accounts for the year ended
31 March 2026

Charity Number 1161134

SOUTHWOLD ARTS FESTIVAL

Financial Statements
For the Year Ended 31 March 2026

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Reference and administrative information

Charity name	Southwold Arts Festival
Charity registration number	1161134
Registered office	2 Marsh Cottage Shepherds Lane Reydon Southwold Suffolk IP18 6SB

Trustees

The trustees serving throughout the year were as follows:

David Goodman
Linda Le Versha
Clyde Camburn
Dominic Parravani

Executive committee

Lin Le Versha	Chair, marketing, event organisation
Di Brown	Vice chair, marketing, stewards, first aid
Rosie Carter	Treasurer
Tristan Bray	Marketing
Dominic Parravani	Sponsorship
Paul Fitzgerald	Technical advisor
Ian Lomas	Photographer
Jude Cowgill	Assistant technical advisor
Graham Denny	H&S Officer & Insurance

Bankers

Barclays Bank Plc

SOUTHWOLD ARTS FESTIVAL

Trustees' Report for the Year Ended 31 March 2026

The trustees present their report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2026

Structure, governance and management

The Southwold Arts Festival was established in 2014 as an eight-day celebration of the arts, organised by a group of volunteers who are passionate about the arts and Southwold. Performances take place every morning, lunchtime and evening during the week and comprise concerts, plays, talks, exhibitions, poetry and literary events for all ages and tastes in venues throughout Southwold and in neighbouring Reydon.

The trustees of the Southwold Arts Festival have established the philosophy of the festival, the organisation of which they have delegated to the executive committee. The trustees oversee the development of the programme, to ensure that it is in line with the published objectives of the CIO, monitor the budget and the finances of the festival and receive the annual accounts from the treasurer and the evaluation of events to inform the planning in the following year.

The chair of the executive committee is also a trustee so that communication between the two groups is efficient and the committee is held to account effectively. The trustees hold three formal meetings each year and additional meetings as necessary. The trustees were appointed on a fixed term, rolling programme and replaced in line with the CIO application. Apart from the first charity trustees, every trustee must be appointed for a term of three years by a resolution passed at a properly convened meeting of the charity trustees. In selecting individuals for appointment as charity trustees, the charity trustees must have regard to the skills, knowledge and experience needed for the effective administration of the CIO.

The executive committee comprises volunteers who bring a wide range of skills to support the organisation of the festival. The agendas and notes of all meetings are sent to the trustees to ensure that they are aware of all developments and issues. The executive committee meets each month until May when weekly meetings are held until the end of the festival. Marketing, technical, and programme planning task groups report to the executive committee where actions are agreed and monitored. Volunteers with appropriate skill sets who receive the approval of the trustees replace members of the executive committee who leave.

The festival opens with a free street festival where the High Street in Southwold is closed to traffic from midday and local shops provide stalls alongside, local arts and crafts, food and charities. Children form a fancy dress procession to the town market square where music, dance groups and local choirs perform.

In 2024 the Street Festival was run by an outside agency - Theatre on the Coast. Regular meetings were held to ensure that health & safety and first aid policies were in line with those of the festival and the conditions of the public liability insurance were met. In the final month of planning, additional support was provided by Blyth Valley Rotary and Southwold Town Council to increase the capacity of the external company in delivering the operational and Health & Safety requirements necessary for the success of the day.

Risk management

The trustees carry out risk assessments for each event and submit these to the appropriate authorities.

Related parties

In so far as it is related to the charity's objects, the charity is guided by both local and national policies. No trustee has any financial interest in this organisation.

Objects and activities

The charity's objects and principal activities are to advance education and promote arts, culture and heritage in particular but not exclusively by the organising of an annual arts festival in Southwold, Suffolk.

Achievements and performance

The 2025 Southwold Arts Festival staged a total of eighteen events comprising eight evening events; a Festival service; five young musicians concerts and four talks. It supported a weekend of Crime Writers, organised by Southwold Library, and eight artists' Open Studios in Reydon.

In collaboration with Blyth Valley Rotary, the committee organised a Street Festival on the opening day of the Festival comprising a carnival procession, musical entertainments all day in the market square and market stalls along the main streets in the town. It is estimated that over 3,000 people attended the free arts event.

Public benefit

The Festival created an opportunity for members of the local community to enjoy, attend and volunteer at events which celebrated local and national creativity in the arts.

Financial review

The Festival aims to be self-sufficient, relying on ticket sales and sponsorship to remain sustainable.

All those involved in planning, organising and staging the Festival are volunteers who do not claim expenses. The trustees are extremely grateful to the large number of volunteers, without whom it would be impossible to run the Festival.

Finance continues to be an area for attention as attracting sponsorship is becoming more challenging each year with expenditure exacerbated by the rising fees of performers and the reluctance of audiences to pay more for tickets. For the first time since its inception in 2014, the 2024 festival made a significant loss. To ensure the Festival is sustainable the Trustees agreed to seek additional sponsorship and grants for 2025.

Financial review (cont.)

The sustainability of the festival was assured in 2025 by the successful application to several sources for grants and sponsorships, most of which will not provide funds again for several years in the future.

Reserves policy

The directors have examined the charity's requirements for reserves in the light of the risks to the organisation. Reserves are needed to meet the working capital requirements of the charity and the trustees are reasonably confident that at the present level they would be able to continue the current activities of the charity for another year.

The amount of the reserve is calculated at a level which will provide enough working capital for the following year, bearing in mind the necessary and ever-increasing up-front costs.

Any surplus made is retained to support future festivals and is part of the overall policy.

This policy is reviewed on an annual basis.

Plans for future periods

The trustees and planning group are working hard to continue to provide an entertaining and educational Arts Festival, which meets the needs of the local community and visitors to the area. In the light of lower ticket sales in 2022 and 2023 and the significant loss in 2024, the reluctance of local businesses and other organisations to offer sponsorship alternative sources of income has become a concern. Although extensive appeals for sponsorship and grants were successful in 2025, further applications may not be made for 2026.

Attracting good audiences for the eight-day Festvial is becoming a concern, as the Aldeburgh Festvial now runs over the final week in June, which splits the potential audience. In 2014, when the Festival was introduced, there were very few local arts or cultural events during that week, now several are being staged which compete for a limited audience in a cost-of-living crisis. The possible re-structure of the Festival to a bank holiday weekend earlier in the year will be discussed in evaluating the 2025 festival.

Trustees' Report for the Year Ended 31 March 2026

Responsibilities of the trustees

Charity law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which gives a true and fair view of the affairs of the charity as at the balance sheet date and of its income and expenditure for the financial year. In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to assume that the charity will continue on that basis

The trustees are responsible for maintaining proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that financial statements comply with current legislation. The trustees are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Approved by the trustees on 10 September 2026

and signed on its behalf by

Linda Le Versha
Trustee

SOUTHWOLD ARTS FESTIVAL

Independent examiners report to the trustees of Southwold Arts Festival

I report to the Trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Southwold Arts Festival (the Charity) for the year ended 31 March 2026.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 (the Act).

I report in respect of my examination of the Charity's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5) (b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

P L Small

Date:
15 August 2026

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INCOME STATEMENT
For the year ended 31 March 2026

			2025 Festival £		2024 Festival £
Income					
Sponsorship			10,175		6,104
Ticket sales			21,566		28,463
Venue hire			(4,294)		(4,780)
Bar			181		-
Donations			480		505
Bank interest			371		407
Gift Aid			480		158
Street festival	- income	4,553		568	
	- expenses	(2,955)		-	
			1,598		568
Awards for All (East Suffolk/Awards for All)			-		-
			30,557		31,425
Expenditure					
Insurance			659		725
Fees and subscriptions			-		170
Card fees			14		12
Advertising and publicity			5,272		5,096
Event fees			14,820		27,256
Staging and backstage costs			-		200
Equipment hire			-		1,100
Flowers			-		100
Staging and Backstage Costs			-		245
Printing and Stationery			110		-
Refreshments			267		-
Technician and specialist			5,151		4,855
Miscellaneous expenses			445		-
Friends evening			-		186
			26,738		39,945
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year			3,819		(8,520)