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Evaluation of Year of the King

Final Report

February 2024



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Wavehill: Social and Economic Research

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List of abbreviations

JDA	Jack Drum Arts
DCMS	Department for Digital, Culture, Media, and Sport
WODMC	Willington Open Door Methodist Church

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1. Introduction

In March 2023, Wavehill were commissioned by Jack Drum Arts CIC to undertake an independent evaluation of the Year of the King, a year-long arts-based community engagement programme delivered in Crook, a market town based in rural County Durham. This report provides detail of the main research findings from the evaluation study.

Jack Drum Arts is a creative social enterprise based in Crook, which has been delivering arts and culture-based activity programmes to the local community since its establishment in 1986. As part of its stated mission, the organisation aims **‘to increase access to arts activities and cultural events for people of all ages’**, targeting specifically people who maintain low degrees of involvement with the arts and culture sectors. To involve harder-to-reach groups in creative and community-oriented activities, the enterprise facilitates **‘innovative and transformative arts opportunities’** that aim to promote self-expression, wellbeing, learning and community cohesion. Activities delivered within the organisation’s core programme, which are delivered on a weekly basis, include educational and experimental music sessions, youth theatre, games nights, and wellbeing sessions.

Through the provision of accessible, holistic and collaborative activity programmes, Jack Drum Arts aims to disseminate a positive ripple effect across the local community, achieving wider impacts such as promoting pride of place, increasing feelings of community ownership and social cohesion.

In April 2023, Jack Drum Arts launched Year of the King, a multi-strand project engaging a local school and community groups to partake in intergenerational creative workshops; the hosting of carnival and gala events celebrating King Charles III’s Coronation in May (this will be referred to as the ‘Coronation event’ throughout the report) and phasing out with the establishment of two Legacy Groups to engage in workshops which aimed to sustain the project after the Coronation event. These Legacy Group workshops aimed to develop upon the creative themes promoted and drawn upon over the duration of the project in alignment with the King’s own personal values, with the aim of producing artwork for a final exhibition event hosted in January 2024.

The importance of evaluating Year of the King is to ensure that its impact is felt across all sections of the community. As noted by Spirit of 2012 in their inquiry into the impact of national events¹, evaluating projects is crucial to guarantee that the benefits are inclusive and extend to all, rather than favouring predominantly wealthier groups or individuals. Understanding how to remove barriers to participation and engagement is therefore a vital aspect of post-event evaluation. By examining best practice and lessons learned, this report aims to fulfil that objective, contributing to the ongoing effort to bridge divides and

¹ [Spirit of 2012 \(2023\) How can events help build connected, happy, and thriving communities?](#)

strengthen community bonds. Below details our evaluation approach as well as the aims of our research.

1.1 Evaluation Approach

1.1.1 Research aims

The central aim of the evaluation of Year of the King was to understand how the Coronation, as a national major event, served as a catalyst for local connections through the delivery of a community-based initiative. The primary areas of focus within this research included:

- **Review of project strands:** to analyse the effectiveness of the project's three strands – workshops, the Coronation event and parade, and the Legacy Group workshops. Our aim was to investigate how these strands complemented each other, contributed to the overarching goals of the project, and whether they collectively contributed to community engagement and connections.
- **Local partnerships impact:** to evaluate the impact of local partnerships, such as the collaboration with Wellington Open Door Methodist Church, on the project's design and delivery.
- **Community-based and led approach:** to investigate the extent to which the community-based and led approach was maintained throughout the project, and to evaluate the role of participants in shaping various elements of the project.
- **Assessing alignment with community expectations:** to examine how the design and delivery of the project aligned with the local context, and to understand the extent to which the project met or exceeded anticipated community engagement levels.
- **Impact on participants and communities:** to assess the impact of the project on individuals, including changes in confidence, wellbeing, and artistic skills, and to explore broader community-level impacts, such as increased social cohesion and civic pride.
- **Opportunities for future projects:** Identify lessons learned from Year of the King that can inform the planning and delivery of future community-based initiatives, as well as highlight opportunities to refine strategies.

1.1.2 Research methods

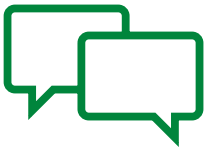
The findings of the report are based on the following data collection approaches:



Online surveys to the following:

- Participants of creative workshops (N=18)
- Gala and parade event attendees (N=84)
- Pre and post surveys to participants of Legacy Groups (N=26 and N=26)

Online surveys were shared by both Jack Drum Arts and on social media.



Data from management and delivery staff

We engaged in discussions with management and delivery staff, discussing various themes related to the project's design and delivery. This included aspects such as engaging participants and the local community, challenges and successes encountered during delivery, and the overall impacts on participants and the local community. We also analysed all monitoring data provided by the delivery team.



Observation evidence gathered at both workshops and the Gala event and carnival parade

The evaluation team attended creative workshops at the project's start and end, as well as the Gala event and parade. This allowed us to assess participant engagement, creative processes, community involvement, and overall project impact.



Participant case studies

We conducted in-depth interviews with selected participants, focusing on understanding their personal experiences and the impact of their involvement in the project. The emphasis was on those engaged in the Legacy Groups, indicating a higher likelihood of their involvement throughout the project's duration.

1.1.3 Limitations

Readers should note that the following limitations affect the evidence in this report:

- Lack of data from workshop participant registration forms: The absence of complete data from participant registration forms created a gap in understanding participant demographics for the initial workshops. However, due to the evaluation team's attendance at the workshops observational evidence has been used on demographics like age.
- Some non-answers in the surveys: This could introduce incomplete perspectives. However, by employing alternative data sources, particularly through in-depth case study discussions, diverse and comprehensive information was still collected.

1.2 Report Structure

This report is structured into the following sections:

- [Section 2: Project Background](#)
- [Section 3: Review of Project Design and Delivery](#)
- [Section 4: Project Impact](#)
- [Section 5: Conclusions and Recommendations](#)

2. Project Background

Jack Drum Arts CIC is a social enterprise based in Crook, County Durham that aims to increase access to arts activities and cultural events for people of all ages, particularly those facing barriers to engagement. The Year of the King project was a natural extension of this work and was centred on celebrating the Coronation of King Charles III. The project comprised three key strands of activities: creative workshops, a community Gala event and parade, and the development of two Legacy Groups producing work for an art exhibition. The project is funded by Spirit of 2012's Moments to Connect Initiative which aims to explore how the major national events and moments of 2023 can increase social cohesion by connecting individuals and communities, and building common ground across social divides.

2.1.1 Creative workshops

The project was initiated with participatory creative workshops running throughout April 2023, engaging local residents, a local school and community groups in Crook and Willington. These workshop sessions, guided by facilitators, explored key themes tied to King Charles III's values. The school crafted carnival gear from recycled materials and adults in social prescribing activities contributed visual artwork. Young Leaders within Jack Drum Arts and freelance creative practitioners also facilitated sessions with groups of all ages in sessions such as drumming and dance for young people and music making for adults with complex needs.

2.1.2 The King's Coronation Community Gala and Parade Event

The Coronation event was held in Crook, and the celebratory carnival parade featured the creations of workshop participants, parents, and community groups, complemented by street theatre and large-scale puppets parading through the town's streets. The festivities concluded at the local cricket club, hosting a day of entertainment with community music groups, local bands, and different vendors.

2.1.3 Legacy Groups

The final phase of the project has established two intergenerational Legacy Groups which have met weekly at participatory workshops to create artwork for a final exhibition. Aimed at keeping people connected, engaged in creative activities, and fostering social cohesion, the Legacy Groups were intended to be a key continuation of the project.

2.2 Rationale and Context

2.2.1 The Moments to Connect Fund and Year of the King

Inspired by the findings of the Spirit of 2012 inquiry into major events, the Moments to Connect initiative sought to explore how major national events and moments of 2023 can increase social cohesion by connecting individuals and communities, and building common ground across social divides. The inquiry notes that moments such as the King's Coronation offer a rare and important point of commonality between individuals and, when genuinely inclusive, offer the chance of social contact between people from different backgrounds.²

The rationale for Year of the King is firmly rooted in the inquiry's evidence, emphasising the potential of major events to contribute to long term wellbeing through sustained increases in community participation. The inquiry also suggests that projects offering participation opportunities spanning several weeks and months, as opposed to one-off spectator experiences, hold greater weight for delivering sustained impacts on wellbeing.³ In alignment with this, Year of the King spanned a 10 month duration and the establishment of Legacy Groups highlight the project's commitment to creating enduring impacts that extend beyond the King's Coronation event.

Year of the King was also centred around **using the King's Coronation as a platform for creative and participatory artistic workshops and events to enhance both individual and community wellbeing**. This participatory, arts-based approach has a well-established evidence base emphasising the positive impacts of arts and culture on wellbeing. For example, the APPG on Arts, Health and Wellbeing in their 2018 Creative Health publication, provides a comprehensive set of recommendations for using the wellbeing benefits of the arts.⁴ Similarly, DCMS further underscores the positive effects of music and arts on wellbeing in their 2020 Evidence Summary for Policy. According to this summary, qualitative studies indicate that engagement with music and arts contribute to a sense of purpose, empowerment, personal growth, improved self-esteem, and enhanced confidence.

Moreover, community-based initiatives, as demonstrated in Year of the King, are pivotal in improving emotional, psychological, and social wellbeing, specifically targeting mental health service users.⁵ It is worth noting that Jack Drum Arts actively contributed to this by involving their social prescribing groups within the project, more information on this can be found in [Section 3.1.1](#). Additionally, community arts festivals, exemplified by the integrated Coronation event, are recognised for fostering self-efficacy and creating positive emotional responses.⁶

² [Spirit of 2012 \(2023\) How can events help build connected, happy, and thriving communities?](#)

³ Ibid.

⁴ [Howarth, L \(2018\) Creative Health: The Arts for Health and Wellbeing.](#)

⁵ [Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport \(2020\) Evidence Summary for Policy: the role of arts in improving health and wellbeing](#)

⁶ Ibid.

Crook, County Durham

Shaped by agricultural and industrial legacies, Crook, like many other towns in County Durham, exhibits a strong attachment to its history. This connection is deeply rooted in the County's settlement pattern and the cultural self-sufficiency prevalent within its small communities.⁷ The town's unique character and history has provided the backdrop to the Year of the King project, reflecting the aspirations of its community.

The town faces its share of challenges, including economic deprivation and youth antisocial behaviour. In terms of deprivation, 15.8% of Crook's population lives in the top 10% most deprived lower super output areas, surpassing the County Durham average. The town also exhibits a higher percentage of people without any educational qualifications (23%) compared to the national average (18.08%). Further, Crook has a notable lower proportion of residents (>5%) describing their health as very good, deviating from the national average for England (48.49%). **Such indicators highlight the importance of initiatives such as Year of the King for areas like Crook where community-driven projects vital for fostering local pride, resilience, and social cohesion.**

This also resonates with Spirit of 2012's report on the social value of community-based events and initiatives, emphasising that seemingly 'soft' outcomes, such as positive social interaction and the opportunity to explore new skills or community spaces, collectively contribute to an improved quality of life, increased civic engagement, and enhanced community participation⁸ – demonstrating the importance of these projects in areas like Crook.

2.2.2 Alignment with local policy

Aligning community-based projects with local policy initiatives is emphasised in Spirit of 2012's inquiry on the influence of national events. The inquiry underscores that **integrating events with broader objectives of where they are being delivered and longer term policy goals improves the likelihood of achieving a more significant impact.**

Year of the King is well aligned with local policy initiatives, particularly those emphasising the role of arts and culture in community development and placemaking. Durham County Council's recent announcement of a £1.2 million Place Partnership award from Arts Council England reflects a commitment to culture-led regeneration and community-led activities.

The Into the Light programme, supported by this funding, aims to enhance cultural engagement through world-class events, skills development, and community-led activities. The focus on culture and arts-based activities as a driving force for regeneration mirrors the ambitions of Year of the King, which aimed to use creative arts to connect individuals and communities.

⁷ [County Durham Cultural Strategy](#)

⁸ [Spirit of 2012 & Local Trust \(2021\) Social Value of Community Events](#)

In particular, the project's emphasis on community-led activities, collaborative art creation and engagement aligns with the Place Labs concept within the Council's programme, which recognises the power of culture in fostering community connections, enhancing local identity, and contributing to economic and community growth.

Year of the King also aligns closely with Durham County Council's objective of eliminating barriers to participation in the arts. The Community Arts Programme, for example, actively engages large numbers of people in community arts activities; promoting the benefits for improved health, lifelong skills and confidence, as well as the enjoyment of taking part. The alignment between the project and local policy initiatives shows a collective commitment to using arts and culture for the benefit of individuals and communities both in Crook and across County Durham.

3. Review of Project Design and Delivery

Year of the King employed a multi-strand approach, including creative workshops, a Coronation event, and the establishment of two Legacy Groups. The King's Coronation had been considered alongside other national and international events as a potential focus for a local celebration event; other alternatives, for example, included the Eurovision Song Contest and 75th anniversary of the NHS. The project team concluded however that the Coronation would act as the most meaningful and unifying event for the local community, holding the greatest potential to cut across social group, identity and demographic with event themes connected to the King's values. Themes such as **youth empowerment** and **environmental responsibility** were deemed to reflect well the interests and concerns of Crook residents, with the former identified as particularly relevant due to recent rises in youth anti-social behaviour and high rates of unemployment within the area.

This section examines the project's design and delivery, aiming to assess its efficacy in engaging diverse groups, particularly those less inclined to participate in the arts. This section will also explore the co-creation element in the project's design and the impact of a participatory approach on the project's delivery, including the use of locally based volunteers. Additionally, this section delves into participants' motivations and expectations, evaluating the alignment of these factors with the actual delivery of the project. Through our analysis, this section will outline how the project was structured and implemented, with a focus on community engagement and inclusivity.

This section draws on evidence from a range of sources, including:

- Findings from the workshop participant survey (N=18)
- Findings from the Gala event survey (N=84)
- Consultations with Legacy Group participants
- Findings from two pre-and-post Legacy Group surveys (N=26 and N=26, respectively)
- Observational evidence from workshops and Gala event

3.1 Creative Workshops

The initial creative workshops took place in April and August 2023. The workshops included:

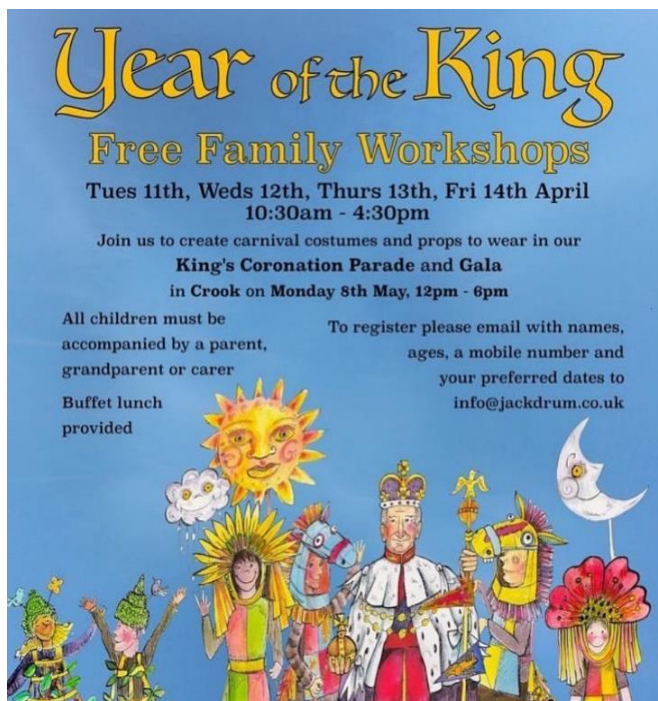
- Runaway Samba
- Family Carnival Arts Making
- Puppet Making
- Carnival Arts Making for Regular JDA Groups
- Music Making for Adults with Complex Needs
- Movement with Adults with Complex Needs
- Drumming and Dance with Young Leaders for Young People

The initial workshops aimed to create content for the Coronation event, covering various aspects such as puppetry, carnival arts, and learning songs and dances for the carnival parade. Additionally, they aimed to explore thematic areas, including youth empowerment, environmental responsibility, and the notions of community, both local and global, as well as exploring the past, present, and future – aligned with the interests and values associated with King Charles III. A local primary school also participated by creating carnival costumes and props with artists, emphasising the use of recycled materials.

The workshops were also designed to cater to a diverse group of adults involved in regular weekly social prescribing activities. This mixed-ability group contributed visual artwork for the event. Additionally, special workshops conducted during the Easter holidays provided extended opportunities for participants to collaborate across generations. These sessions focused on creating carnival banners, props, and a parade centrepiece.

3.1.1 Engaging participants

Engaging participants in arts-based community projects is intricate, and it is important to explore how Year of the King removed barriers to engage participants with the creative workshops. As shown by research undertaken by Spirit of 2012, events and community projects, when designed without due care and attention, can reinforce divides between different groups or increase experiences of exclusion among those who are unable to participate. Similarly, there is often a risk that those attending arts-based community projects are drawn from a narrower section of society – more likely to be affluent, educated and in employment, healthy, non-disabled, and are already participants in culture.⁹



To effectively engage various groups, especially those less likely to participate in the arts, Year of the King employed several strategies. The workshops were advertised plainly, avoiding artistic jargon on flyers and focusing on the practical aspects of participation.

The decision to advertise and communicate the workshops in a straightforward manner is a deliberate strategy aimed at **removing barriers to participation**. By avoiding references to specific artistic mediums and techniques, the project delivery team noted that this made the workshops more accessible to a wider audience.

⁹ Spirit of 2012 (2023) How can events help build connected, happy, and thriving communities?

The delivery team also noted that in the past people were hesitant when artistic language was used, likely due to a perceived lack of familiarity with artistic processes or fear of not having the required skills.

All activities were promoted as free and family orientated. The project delivery team noted that by offering all activities for free, the project was able to eliminate financial constraints that may have prevented individuals or families from participating. Further, artistic activities often entail costs for materials or workshops, and the decision to make participation free underscores Jack Drum Arts' commitment to enabling access to cultural and artistic experiences for the local community. Moreover, the emphasis on family-orientated activities encouraged the participation of both individuals and families.

The project delivery team also stated that workshops were designed this way due to the recognition that people, particularly parents and grandparents, are more likely to participate when activities are designed to be enjoyable for the entire family, which not only provided a shared experience, but also facilitated inter-generational involvement. Observational evidence collected by the evaluation team attending various workshops also noted their intergenerational nature, with many of the workshops involving both young children and older adults.

“We know from our previous work that the engagement of young people often leads to their responsible adults becoming involved too, and this was true of Year of the King too” – **Project delivery team member**

By designing the workshops to be as inclusive as possible, it also meant logistical barriers were removed. Through discussions with participants, the evaluation team noted that **families with various commitments and schedules felt that they were easily able to attend workshops due to their welcoming and inclusive nature**, with some parents feeling comfortable bringing babies and young children to workshops.



The workshops were also targeted towards Jack Drum Arts' existing social prescribing groups, including adults with complex needs and mental health issues. This is important given that research consistently shows that people who could gain the most from participating in arts-related activities often participate the least.¹⁰¹¹

¹⁰ [UCL \(2022\) The Impact of Arts and Cultural Engagement on Population Health](#)

¹¹ [UK Research and Innovation \(2017\) Improving Access to the Arts for Mental Health](#)

This is particularly true of individuals with personal experiences of mental illness, who encounter specific challenges and unequal access to engagement opportunities. These challenges include reluctance to join activities due to the stigma surrounding mental health, difficulties in social interactions, and a lack of programmes tailored to their needs. Research indicates that these challenges can be effectively overcome through carefully designed community-based projects.¹² In essence, the dedication to inclusivity in the workshops through specifically targeting social prescribing groups highlights **how the project was designed to engage those who are more likely to face barriers in creative arts engagement.**

“We worked with different age groups and different levels of disability which made me more understanding of the difficulties they faced” **Workshop participant**

3.1.2 Co-creation approach

The creative workshops embraced a co-creation approach, aligning with Jack Drum Arts’ philosophy that communities benefit from positive, social experiences. During the workshops, participants actively contributed to the subsequent Coronation event by creating artwork and costumes, as well as music and dances for performance.



This co-creation meant that **participants felt a sense of belonging**, investing their time in something they cared about, leading to significant wellbeing benefits. This approach is also further backed up by Spirit of 2012’s evidence on effective community-based activities which notes that sustained participation over weeks or months profoundly impacts wellbeing, which is particularly true for groups deeply involved in events, whether as volunteers, co-creators, or participants.¹³

“The co-creation process was focused on the creation of props and costumes for the parade. Our facilitators had to do preparation to create basic templates upon which participants could let their creativity run wild” – **Project delivery team member**

¹² Ibid.

¹³ [Spirit of 2012 \(2023\) How can events help build connected, happy, and thriving communities?](#)

3.1.3 Partnership working

Partnership working, particularly the use of different venues, impacted the delivery of the workshops. The collaboration with various local organisations brought diversity, inclusivity, and a richer community engagement experience. The decision to use different venues, such as Willington Open Door Methodist Church, Bradbury House (a local residential care home), and Our Lady St Thomas' Primary School, added diversity to the project's reach. The delivery team emphasised that each venue served as a unique setting, allowing for a range of different experiences that catered to the specific needs and interests of the participants at these locations.

For example, in the primary school, children engaged in hands-on activities to craft parade costumes, using practical skills. At the care home, the focus shifted towards music making and movement sessions designed to match the abilities of participants in order for outputs to be entirely driven by participants, including a soundscape composition.



3.1.4 Participant motivations and expectations

It is important to note participants expectations and motivations to attend the creative workshops. The primary reasons for attendance were:



Community involvement: Many participants noted that they wanted to become more actively involved in their local community.



Learning new skills: A common theme was the motivation to learn something new, indicating a keen interest in learning new artistic and creative skills.



Social connection: Participants wanted to meet new people and foster friendships within their local community.



Celebration of the Coronation: Some workshop participants specifically wanted to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles.



Wellbeing: A notable theme amongst responses was to attend to have a positive impact on mental wellbeing.

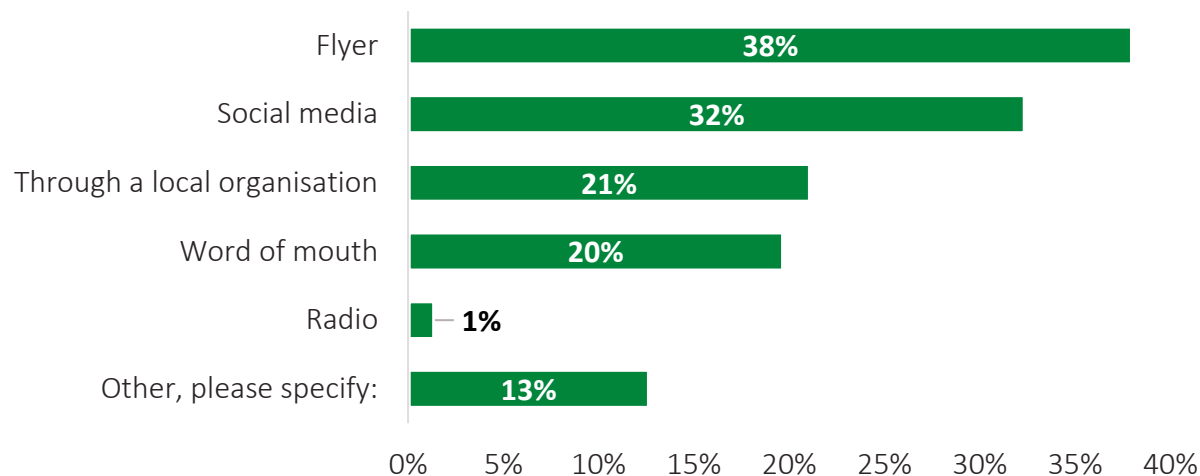
The findings show that although the workshops were themes around celebrating the Coronation, participants were motivated by a variety of factors. **For many, the primary motivation came from the chance for social interaction and the positive effects on wellbeing,** which the design of the workshops is well aligned to. This also reflects the insights from Spirit of 2012's Inquiry, emphasising that while national events such as the Coronation serve as opportunities for collective celebration at a broader level, at the local level, they hold the potential to create moments fostering social connections and contributing to both individual and community wellbeing. These motivations are also well aligned with the design of the workshops.

3.2 The King's Coronation Gala Event and Parade

The Coronation event took place on the 8th May 2023 at Crook Cricket Club. The event was designed to be inclusive for all residents of the community and surrounding areas, and featured all workshop participants and their work as well as existing community carnival groups, street theatre, and large-scale puppets winding through the streets of Crook and finishing at the Cricket Club, which hosted entertainment for the rest of the day, including community music groups, local bands, and vendors.

Jack Drum Arts chose to use various strategies to disseminate information about the event. This included both on-the-ground initiatives, such as distributing flyers, and online marketing through social media channels and their website. Leveraging established connections with local organisations such as Willington Open Door Methodist Church who also shared information, further increased outreach efforts. Figure 3.1 overpage illustrates the effectiveness of this multi-strand marketing approach. Respondents frequently cited various sources, including flyers, social media, and referrals from other organisations, underscoring success in the design of the marketing campaign. It should also be noted that a minority of event survey respondents mentioned that more information should have been included about the event within the advertisement.

Figure 3.1: How event survey respondents found out about the Coronation event



Source: Wavehill event survey. N=71

The event's primary focus was centred on celebrating the Coronation, making it important to explore how the event's delivery accommodated this theme while ensuring broad engagement from a diverse audience. Starting with the parade, it featured a striking giant Green King puppet and intricately crafted paper horses, whilst also showcasing bright and colourful costumes of participants in the parade. Participants, including both young people and parents, also displayed signs conveying conservation messages (pictured below), thereby showing the event's environmental theme rooted in King Charles' commitment to the cause, as well as youth empowerment.



Moreover, whilst it can be presumed that most of the audience comprised friends and family of the performers or families seeking a bank holiday activity, the event also drew in passers-by, who out of curiosity, watched the spectacle and went on to join the further festivities. Event attendees noted that the inclusion of a parade added an element of surprise and ritual, which was fitting in terms of it being a royal theme, and aligning with sentiments

in Spirit of 2012's inquiry that events should generate excitement and have surprise elements.¹⁴

The parade also included music from Jack Drum Arts' community band 'Runaway Samba', which attendees noted as a key motivation for watching the parade.

"I went to watch the drumming" Event attendee

"I enjoy drumming with Jack Drum and wanted to do something for the Kings coronation" Event attendee

Following the parade, the Gala event took place at the local Cricket Club. There was a diverse range of family-friendly activities, catering especially to children with activities such as facepainting, raffles, games, and other entertainment for young people. Respondents to the event survey highlighted that the family-centric atmosphere was an important factor influencing their decision to attend, as it provided engaging entertainment for their children. As a result, the effort to make the event family-orientated played an important role in attracting people who were not solely interested in celebrating the Coronation but sought an opportunity to come together and share in a collective celebration. There were also performances from live bands, including Beyond Madness and the Jack Drum Ukulele Ensemble, along with various food vendors.

"It was something good to take the kids to. It was a day out for them" Event attendee

"Good to socialise with family and friends also great for the community" Event attendee

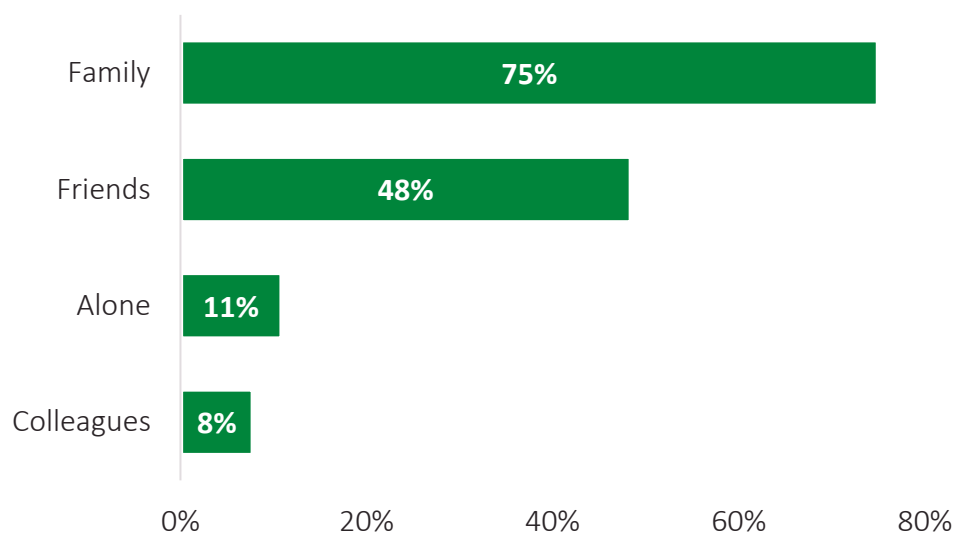
"It was something to entertain my children and to celebrate the coronation" Event attendee

"I enjoyed seeing the children enjoying themselves" Event attendee

Figure 3.2 over page also demonstrates that most attendees (75%) attended with family, reflecting the event's approach in fostering family-friendly atmosphere.

¹⁴ Spirit of 2012 (2023) How can events build happy and thriving communities?

Figure 3.2: Who event survey respondents attended the Coronation event with



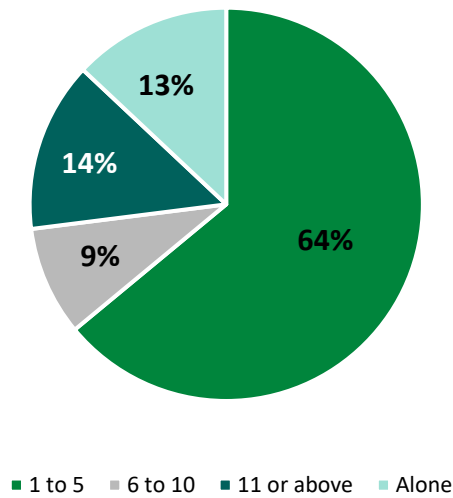
Source: Wavehill event survey. N=64

The event was also designed with a strong emphasis on inclusivity and accessibility. With free admission, financial barriers to engagement were minimised, fostering widespread community participation. This was also supported by the venue location, the local cricket ground. The location was recognised as a familiar and communal space at the centre of the local community, which further resonates with the inquiry's evidence indicating that utilising shared and open spaces, where people can come together and mix, is an effective approach for bridging people from different backgrounds.¹⁵ Additionally, Jack Drum Arts also prioritised inclusivity for individuals with diverse needs, creating a welcoming atmosphere. Survey responses underscored how the event was a good opportunity for attendees to get out of the house to alleviate anxiety and take their mind away from other challenges.

Additionally, figure 3.3 shows most respondents (64%) reported that they attended the event with between 1 and 5 people, 14% with between 6 and 10 people, 13% came alone, and 9% with 11 or more people. This further demonstrates the community and family friendly nature to the event. This question also allows us to extrapolate the findings. 70 people responded to this question, indicating via various ranges how many people attended with them. Taking a mean of within each range, we can multiply the data to show that the 70 respondents to this survey question accounts for 387 of those attending the event. Furthermore, as we know the number of survey respondents was 84, we can further increase that total by a factor of $84/70$, which provides a **total of 464 attenders** ($387 * 84/70 = 464$). Further, from observational evidence, it was noted that many people came to watch the carnival parade from the surrounding area, **making the total more likely to being nearer 1000**.

¹⁵ Ibid.

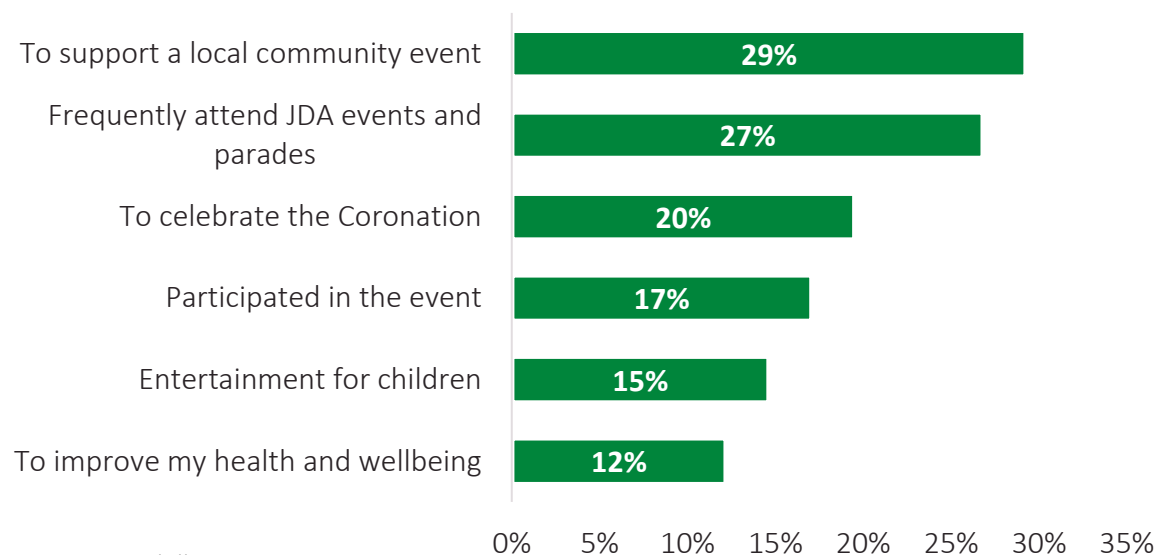
Figure 3.3: How many people respondents attended with



Source: Wavehill event survey. N=70

Figure 3.4 both illustrates the diverse motivations for attendance, while also underscoring the influence of Jack Drum Arts’ established presence in Crook. This emphasises the event’s goal to maintain and build upon their past involvement in arts and cultural community events.

Figure 3.4: Event survey respondents motivation to attend the Coronation event



Source: Wavehill event survey. N= 41

“The parades are always excellent and a great start for the live bands. Unbelievable that these events are free. They are amazing for us to bring the children and for them to experience all of the street theatre and music”

Event attendee

The event’s inclusivity is further illustrated by examining the demographic data of its attendees, as detailed below.

Figure 3.5: Age distribution of event survey respondents.

This shows a diverse age range, evidencing that the event attracted families, young people, and older people. Notably, from our observational evidence we can state that there was a high number of children and young people attending the event who may have been unable to fill out the survey themselves.

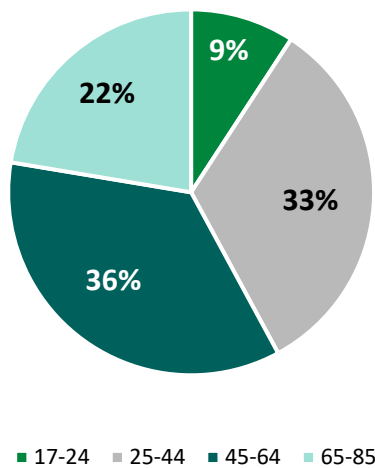


Figure 3.6: Gender distribution of event survey respondents.

This shows that most respondents were female, while the event still attracted a male audience.

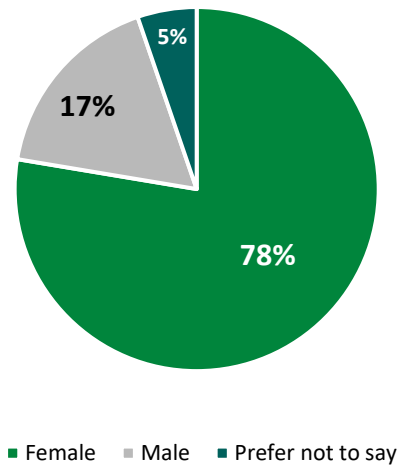


Figure 3.7: Respondents from ethnic minority backgrounds.

To contextualise, 98.3% of residents in Crook identify as White, while 0.7% identify as being from Mixed/Multiple ethnic backgrounds. This also aligns to the wider County Durham demographic, with 96.8 identifying as white. Given that this event was intended to be hyper local, this distribution of ethnicities is therefore consistent.

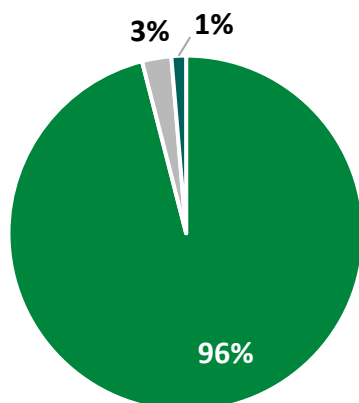
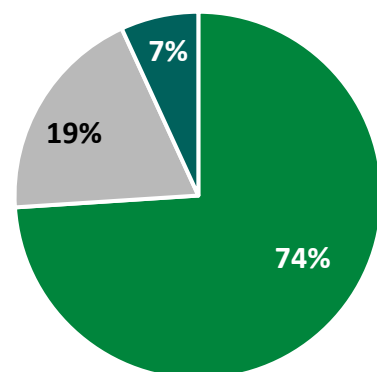


Figure 3.8: Respondents with disabilities.

This shows a relatively high proportion of respondents with a disability, indicating the events inclusivity and accessibility.



■ White ■ Prefer not to say ■ Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups

■ No ■ Yes ■ Prefer not to say

Volunteering

The choice to use locally based volunteers for the Coronation event is well aligned with findings from the Spirit of 2012 inquiry, which states that events, large or small, that use volunteers have been recognised as key drivers for promoting connected communities. Jack Drum Arts were able to ensure that volunteers reflected the local community by largely recruiting them through their prior involvement with Jack Drum Art’s core programme, representing a cross-section of locals who made regular attendance at previous workshops and the weekly Friday Group. Members of the organisation’s Board of Directors were also engaged to volunteer as marshals during the event, with one member additionally filling the role of Event Safety Officer. **The use of volunteers which were local and recognisable therefore aimed to create a more connected and engaging Coronation event.**

3.3 Legacy Groups and Final Exhibition

Year of the King was designed to include a legacy stage, marked by the establishment of two Legacy Groups – one hosted at Jack Drum Arts and the other at Willington Open Door Methodist Church (WODMC). These groups participated in workshops, which provided a creative space for participants to produce artwork aligned with thematic elements related to King Charles. The chosen themes, such as environmental responsibility and youth empowerment provided a guide to the work produced by participants, which were displayed at a final exhibition which took place from 20th to the 25th January 2024 at WODMC.

3.3.1 Community led and inclusive

Similar to the initial workshops at the start of the project, the Legacy Group workshops took on a community-led approach, but with a heightened emphasis on co-creation and local participation. In particular, the planning of the workshops was a collaborative effort that actively involved key participants, creating an inclusive and community driven approach to the legacy stage. As highlighted by the project delivery team, **collaborative planning sessions with participants shaped the design of various aspects of the workshops**, including the choice of artistic mediums and which would resonate the most with the local community, the selection of facilitators, and how the final exhibition would be hosted. This collaborative planning also meant that workshops were not only tailored to the preferences and interests of the community, but also created a stronger sense of connection and commitment among Legacy Group participants. As the project delivery team noted, this inclusive planning model reinforced the project’s community-driven ethos, resulting in a more meaningful experience for participants.

“We [delivery team and participant] worked together to programme the content for all the sessions. We bounced ideas back and forth...and agreed that [participant] could deliver workshops sessions herself” – **Year of the King delivery team**

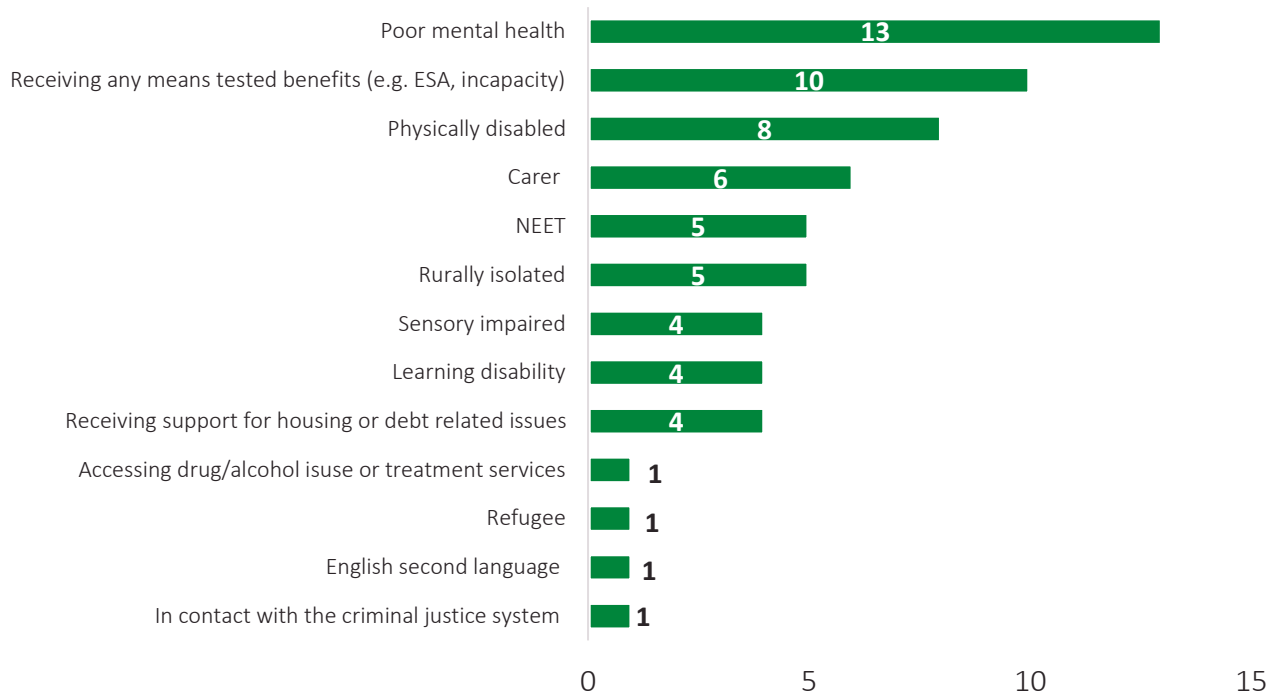
This model of co-creation also extended to the delivery of the Legacy Group workshops at partner organisations. Participants played important roles in facilitating the workshops taking place at WODMC, reinforcing their active involvement. Further, the delivery team at WODMC noted that **the choice to incorporate participants into the delivery of the workshops added a relatable and recognisable dimension to the activities** as there was already levels of trust between them and the other participants.

“The facilitators were so relatable to people from the community, and they were so passionate about the activities which made them very good at connecting with people” – **WODMC staff**

“We agreed that [participant] would deliver the workshop themselves. They ran with the opportunity and through their facilitation, it imbued the participants with confidence, self-belief, and pride in the work they had created together. [Participant] was the glue that held the final phase of the project together” **Year of the King delivery team**

The inclusive nature of this co-creation approach is further supported by data on participants’ protected characteristics. Although Figure 3.9 only represents a small number of participants, it illustrates a diverse mix of characteristics. Some participants were dealing with mental health challenges, others were receiving means tested benefits, some had physical disabilities, and others had caring responsibilities. This diversity underscores the inclusive nature of the workshops. Moreover, in the post-legacy group survey, 62% of respondents (16 out of 26) indicated that they had a disability.

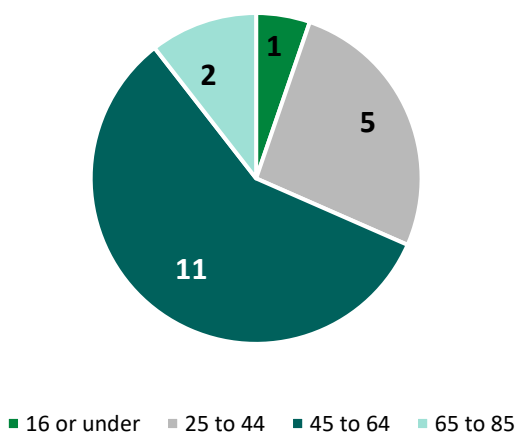
Figure 3.9: Protected characteristics



Source: Jack Drum Arts Monitoring Data

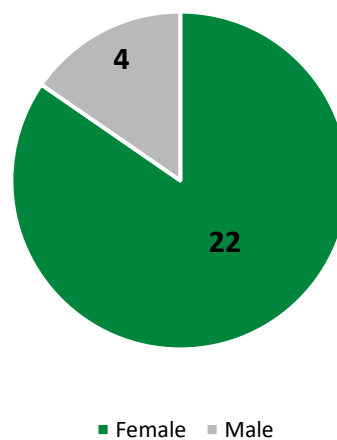
The inclusive nature of the workshops is also evidence by the post-legacy group survey. For example, 62% of respondents (16 out of 26) indicated that they had a disability, reflecting the commitment to accommodating diverse abilities and designing workshops with the aim of ensuring that individuals with varying needs could actively participate. Moreover, the figures below show the diverse distribution of ages and genders of participants, further reflecting the inclusive nature of the workshops.

Figure 3.91: Age distribution of Legacy Group post survey respondents



Source: Wavehill Legacy Group workshop post survey. N=19

Figure 3.92: Gender distribution of Legacy Group post survey respondents



Source: Wavehill Legacy Group workshop post survey. N=26

3.3.2 Participant motivations

Similar to the motivations to attend the workshops before the Coronation event, participants were motivated by various factors to be involved in the Legacy Groups.



Joined to be more involved in the local community



Hoped to make new friends



Some participants had been involved in previous stages of the project



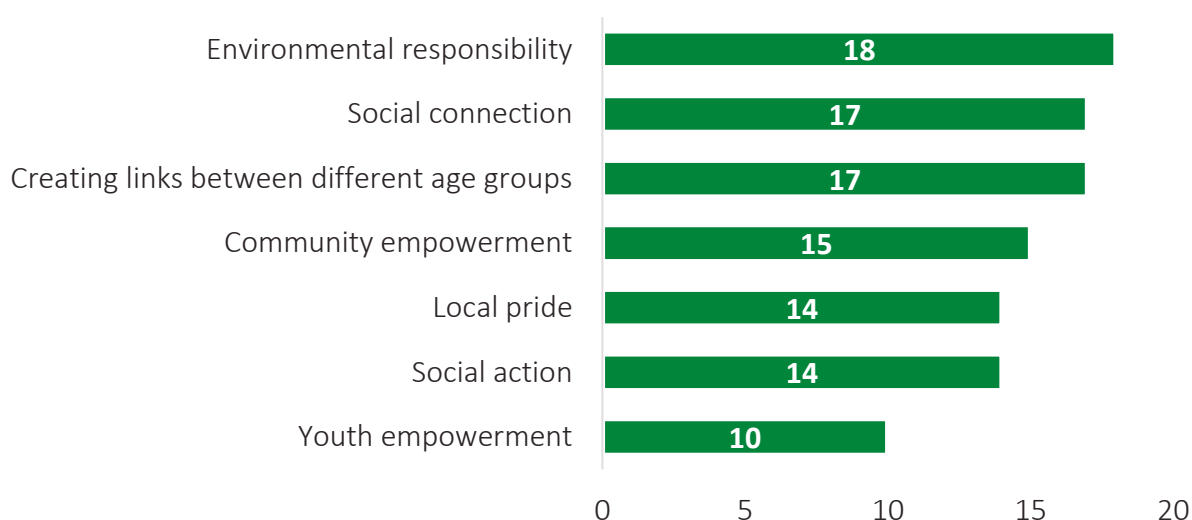
Wanted to celebrate the King's Coronation



To improve mental health and wellbeing

Importantly, these motivations and expectations are well aligned with the key themes that stood out to participants from the Legacy Group workshops, underscoring the workshops' thoughtful design and effective delivery. Figure 3.93 shows that the social connectedness aspect emerged as a key feature, indicating participants found the workshops to be a way of fostering a sense of connection within the local community. Participants also highlighted an emphasis on environmental responsibility, aligning with King Charles' interests, which was integrated into the artwork created during workshops and reflects a fitting way to celebrate the Coronation.

Figure 3.93: The key themes that came across the Legacy Group participants through the workshops



Source: Wavehill Legacy Groups Survey. N=24

3.3.3 Addressing timescale challenges

It is important to note that time constraints posed challenges to the delivery of the Legacy Group workshops. The delivery team noted that this was a highly ambitious project to begin with, and coupled with the need for constant funding applications and community showcases (particularly in the form of the Final Exhibition for the legacy stage) led to a tight schedule. The delivery team acknowledged the need for a balance between project intensity and quieter periods, emphasising the importance of effective time management and strategic project planning to address these challenges.

Timeline issues were also effectively addressed by forming partnerships with local organisations, particularly Wellington Open Door Methodist Church (WODMC) for the hosting of Legacy Group workshops. Collaborating with WODMC provided important support in addressing time constraints, given the Church's established network of participants and its deep understanding of local residents' needs and context. As the delivery team at Jack Drum Arts noted, leveraging the Church's existing networks facilitated a smoother process of community engagement. At the same time, to optimise time and resources, Jack Drum Arts converted their regular Friday group into a Legacy Group. This approach proved beneficial; as any members of the group had actively engaged in earlier phases of the project as performers, makers, and volunteers, ensuring continuity in project participation.

3.3.4 Wellington Open Door Methodist Church partnership

WODMC were crucial in the legacy stage of Year of the King, and hosted most Legacy Group workshops. They became involved in Year of the King after Jack Drum Arts were exploring opportunities for collaboration and based on their prior successful engagement. Recognising the benefits of art and creative spaces for wellbeing, WODMC found alignment with their aim of improving the lives of the people they work with.

WODMC's involvement in overcoming potential barriers to community engagement was notable, especially for individuals with complex needs, autism spectrum disorders, and communication challenges. The Church's existing networks contributed to attracting participants to workshops. Moreover, the delivery team at WODMC also noted the importance of making people feel welcome, as well as the need for flexibility in attendance due to health and physical factors.

Table 1 presents attendance numbers for the workshops conducted before the Coronation event and those of the Legacy Group workshops. WODMC hosted workshops in the August to November period. Notably, a higher proportion of individuals attended fewer than 10% of Legacy Group workshops compared to the April workshops. The data suggests a shift in attendance patterns, with more consistent participation observed during the April workshops. It is important to understand that WODMC, as highlighted by their delivery team, operates differently from Jack Drum Arts.

WODMC does not follow a model of consistent groups attending every week, emphasising that even a single attendance by an individual with highly complex needs represents a significant achievement. The team underscored impacts on wellbeing, confidence, and the alleviation of social isolation resulting from such engagement. As such, the design of the Legacy Group workshops at WODMC were intentionally flexible, allowing participants to engage without the requirement for prior or consistent involvement with Year of the King, which proved more suitable for the individuals associated with the Church.

Table 1: Attendance figures for workshops delivered in April and Legacy Group workshops delivered between August and November

Date	Below 10%	Between 11% and 30%	Between 31% and 60%	Between 61% and 75%	Above 75%
April (N=21)	2	4	6	3	6
Between August and November (N=53)	17	16	10	5	5

Source: Jack Drum Arts Monitoring Data

Designed to create long-term impacts

The legacy group stage of Year of the King and the delivery of Legacy Group workshops is well aligned to the principles highlighted in the evidence from the Spirit of 2012 inquiry. The inquiry emphasised that major events, such as the King’s Coronation, to achieve the greatest economic and social impact, should be treated as a long-term project with planning, preparation, and a legacy period.¹⁶ At the local level, **Year of the King demonstrated a proactive approach for a continuation of activities beyond the Coronation event.** The community-led Legacy Groups served as a model for facilitating post-event activities and transitions for participants who had been involved in earlier phases of the project, while also attracting new people to the project.

Moreover, the inclusion of a Final Exhibition event at WODMC aimed to be a culmination of participants creative activities within the legacy stage. The exhibition was designed to give participants a platform to present their artwork, and therefore be a representation of the lasting impacts of the project. Further, by giving them a say in how their work was displayed and actively involving them in curating the exhibition, the exhibition also aimed to give participants a



¹⁶ [Spirit of 2012 \(2023\) How can events help build connected, happy, and thriving communities?](#)

sense of ownership over the legacy stage of the project.

This approach also further reflects findings from Spirit of 2012's Inquiry, which emphasised the long term impacts on wellbeing when events can be used to encourage people to engage in extended participatory activities, in line with the participatory and community-led design of the Legacy Group workshops.

4. Project Impact

In exploring the impacts of Year of the King, this section explores the effects experienced by both individual participants and the broader community. This includes the role in bringing people together, fostering creativity and skills, promoting wellbeing, and addressing social divides. This section breaks down these impacts to gain a clear understanding of how the project has contributed to the community of Crook, especially in the face of unique challenges like economic struggles and health issues.

This section will draw from various data sources, including;

- Findings from the workshop participant survey (N=18)
- Findings from the Gala event survey (N=84)
- Consultations with Legacy Group participants
- Findings from two pre-and-post Legacy Group surveys (N=26 and N=26, respectively)
- Observational evidence from workshops and Gala event

4.1 Community Engagement

Year of the King promoted a substantial amount of engagement from the local community, fostering connections and leaving a lasting impact on individuals involved. Initial workshop participants, Legacy Group participants, and event attendees expressed a range of similar positive sentiments, highlighting the profound effects on their sense of community.



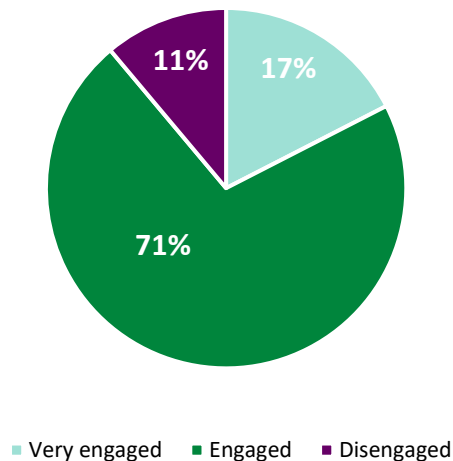
A common theme among initial workshop participants and event attendees was the opportunity to meet and connect with new people. Participants noted that they had met new people through attending the workshops and met people that they would now regard as friends. As the activities were designed to be hyper local, participants also noted that workshops were a good way to meet people who lived in the local area, with some now being able to regularly see each other outside of Jack Drum Arts.

“The workshops help people to feel more engaged with the community, makes you feel proud” – **Workshop participant**

“The workshops gelled us as a group with a purpose” – **Workshop participant**

Community engagement resulting from the Coronation event displayed similar themes to community engagement from the workshops, albeit on a larger scale. Event attendees were asked about how engaged they were generally within the local community to understand their meaningful connections with others and the community as a whole. The results, illustrated in Figure 4.1, indicated that the majority (88%) either feel very engaged or engaged and 11% feel disengaged in the local community.

Figure 4.1: How engaged event attendees generally feel in their local community.



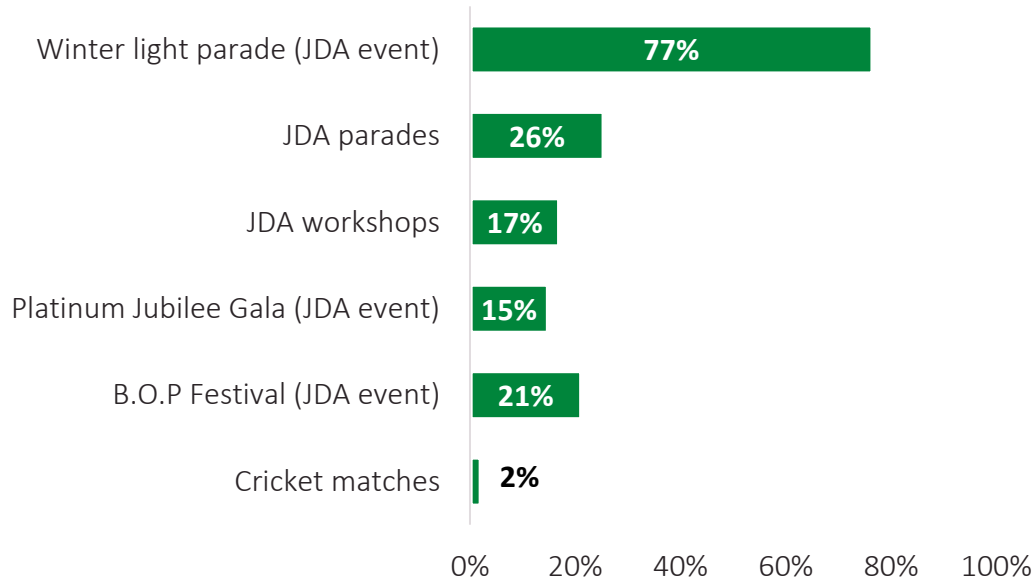
Source: Wavehill event survey. N=63

It is notable that most attendee respondents already generally felt engaged in their local community. To contextualise this, Jack Drum Arts played a crucial role in fostering community engagement, and Year of the King and the event aligns with the trend of Jack Drum Arts projects sustaining such engagement. To evidence this, respondents were also asked about their attendance at previous community events, with 85% (58 out of 68) confirming they had attended such events. Figure 4.2 shows that the majority cited one or more Jack Drum Arts events/activities, with the Winter Light Parade being the most popular at 77%. This underscores the Coronation event's alignment with the ongoing community engagement facilitated by Jack Drum Arts, with a further 98% of respondents (65 out of 66) emphasising the importance of such events to help people feel included and overcome social isolation.

This is also well-aligned to the delivery team at Jack Drum Arts expressing that they have a successful and established proactive approach to community engagement and integration through events like this. As a result, despite experiencing lower-than-expected attendance which the team put down to weather conditions, the event follows the trend set by previous successful community gatherings, underscoring the importance of the project in promoting inclusivity and addressing social isolation. Moreover, in terms of improvements suggested by event survey respondents, the majority related to the poor weather conditions and making provisions for bad weather such as tents or marquees. However, to note, as the event was held at the Cricket Ground, and it is unlikely that Jack Drum Arts would have had permission to do this.

“Creating cultural events for our local community to come together is high on our agenda year round, so that level of integration is expected” **Year of the King delivery team**

Figure 4.2: Community events/activities previously attended by respondents



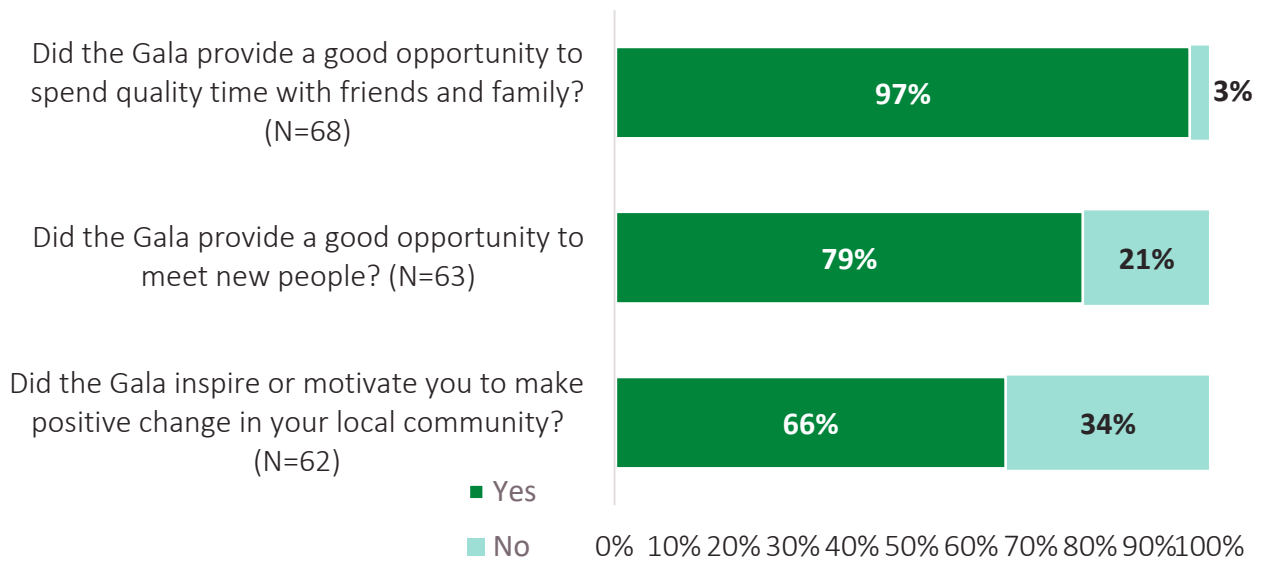
Source: Wavehill event survey. N=47

“I attended the event because I know how fabulous Jack Drum Arts are” – **Event attendee**

“I attended because I support everything that Jack Drum Arts do, and will continue to do so!” **Event attendee**

This is further supported by the Coronation event playing an important role in facilitating community engagement on the day. As shown in Figure 4.3, **the event offered a chance for attendees to connect with friends and family while also providing opportunities to meet new people**, aligning with the experiences and sentiments shared by workshop participants.

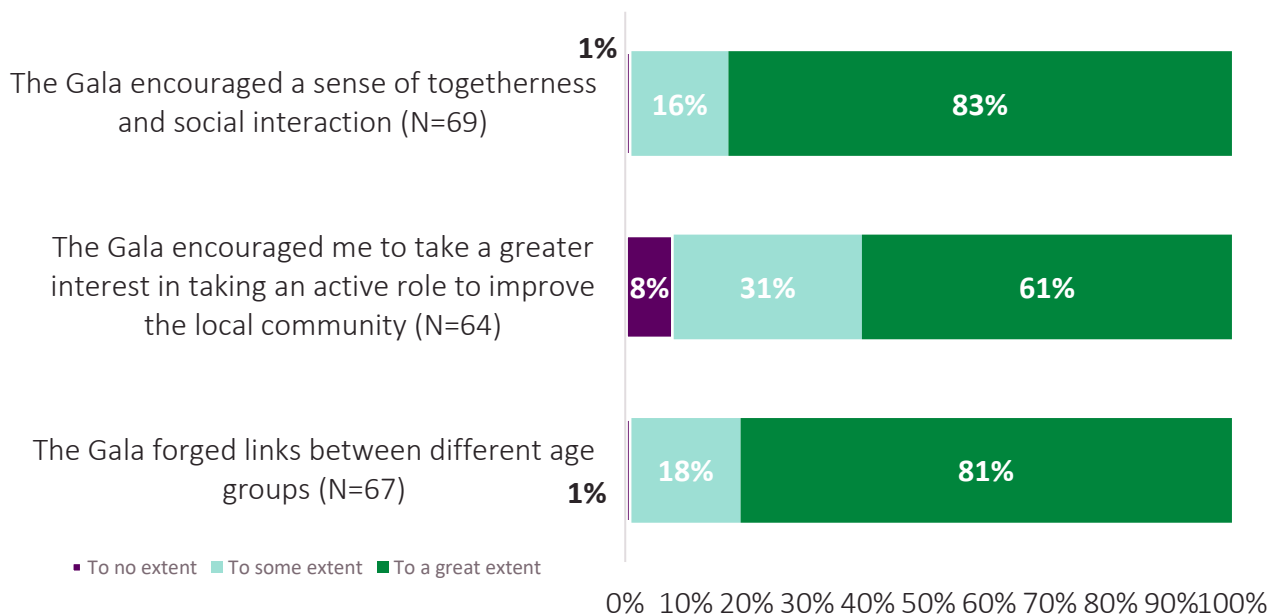
Figure 4.3: Community engagement on the day of the Coronation event



Source: Wavehill event survey

Additionally, the Gala event had lasting impacts on community engagement that reached beyond the event day. As illustrated in Figure 4.4, the event played an important role in establishing new connections across various age groups, motivating individuals to actively contribute to local community improvement, and foster a stronger sense of togetherness – underscoring the event’s ability to create enduring connections and inspire ongoing community involvement.

Figure 4.4: Community engagement beyond the Coronation event



The addition of a legacy stage to Year of the King has played an important role in **sustaining community engagement**. The delivery team at Jack Drum Arts emphasised their commitment to creating cultural events and community engagement throughout the year, but it is in the legacy group stage that a sustained level of community integration has been observed and even heightened. The delivery team noted that both Legacy Groups have not only attracted new participants, but have also deepened the engagement of Jack Drum Arts within the local community, forming a reciprocal relationship.

“We’ve seen greater integration through the delivery of the legacy group workshops. As time is the biggest facilitator for methods of integration to become ingrained and self-perpetuating, the legacy groups have brought new people into our participant pool, and vice versa, we have integrated ourselves further into the local community” **Year of the King delivery team**

Similarly, as expressed by Legacy Group participants, **the workshops were highly successful at building community cohesion, bringing members of the local community together, and fostering a sense of a collective identity**. Participants highlighted the groups camaraderie, emphasising a supportive and welcoming environment where individuals, regardless of physical abilities or creative ideas, were all embraced as valuable contributors, which allowed participants to see the value in community engagement. Participants also noted that this meant making new connections with other residents was easy, which meant they were able to continue their engagement within the community.



“It was great to bring the locals together and unite them into becoming a stronger community together” **Legacy Group participant**

“We were a team who supported each other. We welcomed new people to the group. We taught and helped those who struggled both physically and with ideas. It was a welcoming environment where we all had the same goal”
Legacy Group Participant

“It’s great to get people from local communities together to develop skills and meet new people” **Legacy Group Participant**

Pam and Andy’s case study (overpage) highlights experience in the legacy group, demonstrating the impacts of their community engagement

YEAR OF THE KING



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Social and economic research

CASE STUDY

Pam & Andy

Participation in Year of the King

Pam and Andy engaged in the Year of the King project throughout its timeline, including the Legacy Group. Pam took part in earlier workshops over the Easter holidays with her grandchildren and participated in the following Coronation event. Andy has been involved with Jack Drum Arts for two decades, finding it a way to get out of the house, especially when he visited their warm space last year. For the Legacy Group stage of the project, Pam contributed her time and creativity to the project by informally volunteering as the group leader and facilitating art sessions in Wellington Open Door Church, where they made windmills and flowers out of recycled materials with the local community. Pam also helps with choosing visiting artists, recruitment, and provides pastoral support to the participants during sessions.

They both had various motivations for participating. Firstly, they both share a deep support for the monarchy and saw this project as an opportunity to celebrate it. Andy's background in the Armed Forces further fuelled this. They also valued the sense of purpose it gave them and the chance to continue to meet new people.

Impact

Pam and Andy worked alongside people from different age groups which broadened their understanding of different generations, as well as observing that the children and young people worked respectfully with the elderly. They also formed enduring friendships through the project and their wider involvement in JDA, notably with people who they had previously known as neighbours but now count as close friends. Their connections also extended to various group members and newcomers to the group from Ukraine.

Both Pam and Andy also acquired new skills, including DIY skills and artistic development, providing them with engaging activities to share - Pam has now taken up drawing as a frequent hobby.



Overcoming barriers

Pam and Andy's involvement in Year of the King acted as a motivator for getting out of the house and putting their energy into something productive. For Andy, the project offered a sense of purpose and fulfillment, which significantly contributed to his overall wellbeing and happiness. It provided a distraction from health-related concerns and a means to connect with others who shared similar interests.

Beyond the emotional and mental support, the effective support systems in place played a crucial role in removing obstacles for their participation. The local accessibility of events and workshops was key, as it ensured that members of the local community who have physical disabilities could attend without transportation challenges. Andy, recognising the importance of this, provided transportation to those with disabilities, demonstrating the supportive community spirit within the project.

"We both have chronic health conditions so we can't do the things we'd like to. Coming to JDA and being involved in this project has provided much needed respite from that and has given us the opportunity to put something back into our local community, its been invaluable."

4.2 Creative Arts Engagement & Skills



The project’s creative workshops at the project’s inception in April were designed to create content for the Coronation event, and as a result, played an important role in promoting creative arts engagement and skill development among participants.

The diverse range of activities offered the opportunity for people to explore various artistic mediums and techniques, fostering both individual and collective creativity. Participants evidenced learning new skills, including mask-making and the use of different materials and how to create a silk banner using a wax-resist technique (pictured to the left). Participants also noted improvements in drumming, playing instruments, singing, and dance skills.

Engaging in creative arts activities also had an impact on workshop participants confidence levels. Participants noted that the hands-on and inclusive nature of the workshops provided a supportive environment for them to explore their artistic sides, fostering a sense of accomplishment and confidence to do something outside of their comfort zone. As participants saw their creations come to life and played a role in the broader artistic efforts to create content for the event, they developed a stronger appreciation for creative activities, contributing to a **boost in their self-esteem.**

“People were very inclusive, no one was judged” **Workshop participant**

“Learning with others was a highlight from the workshops” **Workshop participant**

“A highlight from the workshop was the boost in my self-confidence”
Workshop participant

Legacy Group workshop participants also expressed a strong sense of pride in their creative outputs. They appreciated the freedom to choose fabrics, colours, and designs, which helped to create a personal connection to their work and a sense of ownership over it.

Some participants also noted that the emphasis on individual ideas and contributions allowed each participant’s work to stand out distinctly, while also contributing to a collective sense of accomplishment, and seeing their creations thoughtfully presented for the community added to this positive sense of achievement. As a result, this indicates the Legacy Group workshops participatory design was successful.

“I was very proud to see the work I'd created presented beautifully for the community to see” **Legacy Group workshop participant**

“We had our own ideas and everyone did their own thing. We were all encouraged to have ownership and pride in our work” **Legacy Group workshop participant**

Further, from attendance at Legacy Group workshops, the evaluation team noted that **individuals said they felt inspired from their engagement in arts-based activities**. Participants also conveyed a desire to incorporate more artistic activities into their daily lives, considering new hobbies such as drawing, photography, and woodworking. Moreover, participants also noted the various skills they had learned from the workshops themselves, including sewing, using a pinhole camera, textile work, and tie dyeing.

Exploring the Coronation through the creative arts

Exploring themes related to both King Charles III and the Coronation proved to be a successful and engaging approach for both the workshops at the start of the project and the Legacy Group workshops. While some participants may not have attended with the specific intention of celebrating the Coronation, they found enjoyment in creating art around broader themes such as environmental responsibility, community, and youth empowerment. Moreover, the delivery team at WODMC observed that residents in Wellington appreciated the focus on creative art inspired by the Coronation theme, underscoring how the chosen theme served as an opportunity for meaningful and enjoyable creative arts engagement within the community.

Anne and David’s case study (overpage) shows the impacts for them of engaging in creative activities.

YEAR OF THE KING



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Social and economic research

CASE STUDY

Anne & David

Participation in Year of the King

Anne & David have been engaged with Jack Drum Arts (JDA) since early 2022 and have participated in a wide range of art-based activities and events, including hosting welding lessons and constructing costumes for the King's Coronation Parade and Gala. The couple were introduced to JDA through a Facebook advert, reporting that the interactive and therapeutic nature of the activities helped them to move out of a physical and mental rut in the aftermath of COVID-19 and successive lockdowns.

After initially being drawn to JDA due to its artistic and creative focus, the couple are currently facilitating and participating in creative sessions contributing towards the construction of a collective artwork as part of the Year of the King Legacy Group.

Impact

The couple reported that their involvement with the Legacy Group and wider project have allowed them to foster meaningful connections with attendants across age and social group. They view Legacy Group sessions as inclusive and welcoming spaces whereby people from different generations and backgrounds can build a rapport and break down social barriers through the medium of the arts. They further commented that the sessions help participants to understand different perspectives and individual support needs and thus lay down a framework to build understanding and friendship between different peoples.

Anne & David's involvement in Year of the King has greatly enhanced their feelings of community belonging, and has encouraged them to consistently involve themselves in efforts to give back to their locality.



Overcoming barriers

Anne and David have found the range of activities on offer, ranging from willow-weaving to gardening and sculpture-making, to be a particular highlight of the project and its legacy groups. Such activities introduced the couple to artistic mediums which could then be developed upon at home, allowing for further opportunities for self-development and a more holistic engagement with the creative arts. This engagement has afforded significant therapeutic and mental wellbeing benefits for the couple, whilst providing them with valuable opportunities to connect and spend an enriching time together.

"If (anyone) says that they can't attend due to illness, there's absolutely no judgement... it's inclusive. It feels like a family"

The couple emphasised that the Legacy Groups have not stopped at making the arts accessible for the community; they have also taken specific measures to meet any of their participant's accessibility needs. This had been demonstrated during their attendance at a session at South Shields beach, whereby both those with and without physical and mental accessibility needs collected materials for a collective project artwork. Specialised equipment had been provided by the charity Beach Access North East to ensure that all participants could partake equally within the sessions, creating a highly-cooperative and inclusive atmosphere. Anne and David have highlighted that this degree of consideration for those with accessibility needs reinforces community bonding within the legacy groups and helps to establish connections between locals.

4.3 Wellbeing

Year of the King has demonstrated **significant positive impacts on both individual and community wellbeing**, with the combination of workshops and the Coronation event contributing to a sense of connection, inspiration, and improved mental health.



Conversations with participants involved in both the initial workshops and the Legacy Group workshops highlighted the substantial positive impact on individual wellbeing. Workshops played an important role as an essential outlet and escape from life's challenges, providing participants with a creative space to collaborate on shared goals and foster teamwork. Against the backdrop of the post-pandemic era and economic hardships, these workshops not only served as a creative outlet, but also instilled a sense of purpose.

“It was a great opportunity to meet new people and take part in new activities, some of which were out of my comfort zone. It was really good for mindfulness and took my mind off any worries or blues in my life” **Legacy Group participant**

“The social aspect was great. It calmed my anxiety and took my mind to a nicer place” **Legacy Group participant**

“It got me out of bed, brought me out the house. I got to talk to people with the same experience and support one another” **Legacy Group participant**

“It got me out of my bedroom and helped me socialise and get to know some other people in the community. It made me happy” **Legacy Group participant**

Notably, conversations with male participants in the creative workshops prior to the event also revealed that there is a lack of such opportunities in their local area and the encouragement of men's participation in the arts is limited. Therefore, as they noted, activities and programmes need to be welcoming and inclusive to attract male participants – which the workshops exemplified. Men reported feeling comfortable in the environment, describing the activities as relaxing and a valuable respite from other life stresses. Moreover, based on observational evidence from the evaluation teams attendance, the workshops accommodated participants of all genders and age groups.

“People were very inclusive about other people, and no one was judged”
Workshop participant

“Participants worked together for everything to work as a whole” **Workshop participant**

Both the workshops prior to the Gala event and the Legacy Group workshops are well integrated with Jack Drum Arts’ existing offerings, with participants noting that they regularly engage in their activities. However, it is important to recognise a potential concern highlighted in the Spirit of 2012 inquiry indicating events and activities may primarily involve individuals already active in cultural and creative activities, potentially limiting additional wellbeing benefits.¹⁷

Importantly, and to contextualise, Jack Drum Arts play a vital role in providing cultural and creative opportunities to the residents of Crook, holding a significant position in the local cultural scene, which is evident in most respondents to creative workshops surveys who mentioned that their involvement in community-based arts projects had been through Jack Drum Arts. As a result, as one of the primary avenues for the community’s access to such offerings, Jack Drum Arts serves as a crucial hub. As a result, even if participants are already involved in the creative opportunities through Jack Drum Arts, their options for similar opportunities in the area are limited. Therefore, the wellbeing gains from workshops remain substantial as Year of the King was a natural extension of their ongoing involvement, ensuring sustained wellbeing benefits. The establishment of the Legacy Groups further reinforces this point, showing the project’s success in supporting long-term participation and community engagement.

“Thought it was great. It had a great impact on my mental health who doesn’t get out much” **Workshop participant**

Jessica’s case study (overpage) demonstrates the profound impacts of Year of the King on her wellbeing.

¹⁷ [Spirit of 2012 \(2023\) How can events help build connected, happy, and thriving communities?](#)

YEAR OF THE KING



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CASE STUDY

Jessica

Participation in Year of the King

Jessica initially got involved with Jack Drum Arts through seeking mental health support. She was interested in participating in Year of the King as it aimed to celebrate the coronation and provided a good avenue for her to engage with the local community, as well as be involved in something creative. Jessica also saw involvement in the project as a way to combat the isolation she felt after having her baby, and do something productive for herself.

Impact

Jessica's involvement in the project allowed her to work alongside people of varied age groups, broadening her understanding of different generations and positively impacted her interactions with them. She was also able to form personal connections and friendships during the project, improving her wellbeing and combatting feelings of isolation and loneliness.

Jessica's participation in the Legacy Group changed her attitude towards volunteering and community activities, and she has since become more inclined to participate in similar community based activities, recognising the positive impact they can have on both individuals and communities. Jessica also learned various new skills through her participation in the Legacy Group, including learning how to produce wax print fabric and print making using cyanotype.

Jessica also shared that participating in Year of the King and getting involved in the parade boosted her self-esteem. She felt proud of her involvement and even volunteered after the parade, performing in the Green King Gigante Puppet at another event later in the summer.



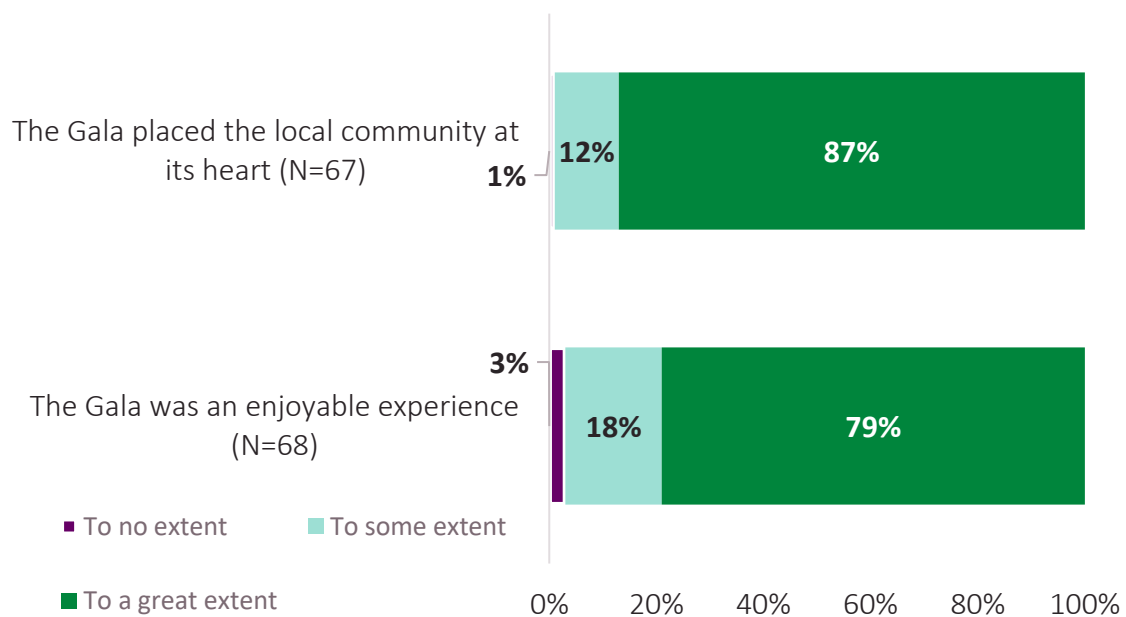
Overcoming barriers

Jessica's involvement in Year of the King helped her to overcome personal challenges relating to her wellbeing, providing her with a sense of belonging and support, as well as the opportunity to put something back into her local community. Jessica experienced a boost in her self-esteem, a decrease in stress levels, and an improvement in her mental health. The sense of belonging and the friendships formed during the project were key in combating feelings of isolation which she had previously struggled with. Further, knowing that she could bring her baby and children to the events and activities made it even more accessible for Jessica, as well as the the welcoming and inclusive environment provided by the workshop facilitators and participants.

"Being involved in Year of the King has been great mental health wise. It has been fantastic to come along and mix with people from all sorts of backgrounds. I wouldn't have done half the stuff I did before the project if it wasn't for Jack Drum - I danced, I wore costumes, and I volunteered, its been great."

At a community level, the Gala event and parade provided a valuable platform for people to come together and celebrate a common cause, contributing significantly to community wellbeing. Figure 4.5 illustrates that most attendee respondents (87%) felt that the event effectively placed the local community at its heart, with 97% expressing that it was an enjoyable experience to some or to a great extent. Respondents frequently noted that they **appreciated the community focus of the event**, allowing individuals of different ages and backgrounds to unite and celebrate something together, fostering a shared identity within the community.

Figure 4.5: How attendee respondents felt about the Coronation event



Source: Wavehill event survey.

“The Gala brought the community together, even in the rain; everyone was cheerful, happy and proud of our town. It brought in people from surrounding areas also” **Event attendee**

This is also well aligned with the objectives of the Moments to Connect Fund and the insights from Spirit of 2012’s Inquiry into the influence of events in bridging divides within local communities and therefore enhancing the wellbeing of an area. The Inquiry noted that mega events, such as the Coronation, possess a unique ability to reach wide sections of society, creating a shared experience for participants and contributing to a collective narrative¹⁸ – underscoring the importance of national events that can be celebrated and interpreted locally.

¹⁸ [Spirit of 2012 \(2023\) How can events help build connected, happy, and thriving communities?](#)

“It was a brilliant day of togetherness and involved such a diverse mix of people” – **Event attendee**

“People of all ages came together, shared experiences, and had a laugh together” – **Event attendee**

“It was so heartening to see everyone working together and supporting all ages, all enjoying events together. This event had a really wide reach, it included all sections of the community” – **Event attendee**

The event’s use of locally based volunteers, many of whom had participated in prior workshops, also contributed to its success, with event attendees noting that this created a welcoming atmosphere that resonated with the community. Equally, volunteers also noted that the role and opportunity to support the event positively impacted their wellbeing and encouraged them to feel like a valuable member of the community.

“From attending Jack Drum, I feel we have become a part of a family with no judgment, it was lovely to be able to offer support to the Gala whilst also enjoying it.” **Event volunteer**

“It was great helping out as a volunteer, and to feel valued in that role” **Event volunteer**

4.4 Bridging Divides

Year of the King served as a platform for connection within the local community, and acted as a bridge that connected different segments of the community. Rooted in the celebration of the Coronation, the project’s aim was to foster shared experiences and collaborative activities. This section explores the ways in which Year of the King bridged divides, socio-economic inclusivity, and the overall sense of unity and pride within the local community.

The intergenerational nature of Year of the King featured as a prominent theme throughout its three phases. Workshop participants and event attendees consistently emphasised meaningful interactions across different age groups. Both the initial workshops and the Legacy Group workshops, in particular, stood out for the collaborative artwork, featuring families, grandparents, and children working alongside each other in creative activities. The impact of this **intergenerational dynamic resonated strongly with participants**, with many noting that it fostered a sense of unity and shared purpose, while also deepening their understanding of different generations. These divides, which some participants often characterised by differing values and use of technology, were effectively mitigated by the inclusive and collaborative nature of the workshops. Workshop survey responses echoed this sentiment, emphasising how the diverse age representation made workshops unifying spaces. Moreover, in discussions with participants during our evaluation team’s workshop visits, people frequently shared how they found inspiration and fresh perspectives from the younger generations. Equally, younger participants valued the opportunity to engage in activities with their grandparents.



“The workshops fostered a sense of shared identity because they brought young and old together” **Workshop participant**

“The workshops were successful because people of different ages were all involved from the local community” **Workshop participant**

The workshops were also praised for **fostering connections among individuals from diverse backgrounds**. Participants highlighted the value of collaborating with people with disabilities, noting that it provided them with a better understanding of their experiences. This indicates that workshops allowed for mutual learning and acceptance between people from diverse backgrounds.

“We worked with different age groups and different levels of disability which made me more understanding of the difficulties they faced” **Workshop participant**

Similarly, the Legacy Group workshops also showed how arts-based activities created connections between different groups. As discussed, the workshops were specifically

designed to contribute to the Final Exhibition (artwork pictured over page), resulting in a substantial level of engagement in various creative activities. In particular, the WODMC staff noted the importance of incorporating arts-based activities as a motivator for attracting people to the workshops. They pointed out that, in contrast to other activities such as sports-based ones, arts-based activities are non-competitive, and the creative arts environment allowed people to unite, fostering a collaborative spirit as they worked together on a shared project.



One of our aims is to provide a safe space and allow people to engage in the way that they want to. These creative activities have really stood out as crucial in this” **WODMC staff**

“The power of art is wonderful. I just think it gives people life, it gives purpose and a sense of achievement and community. We are here to build community and make people see the value of community.” **WODMC staff**

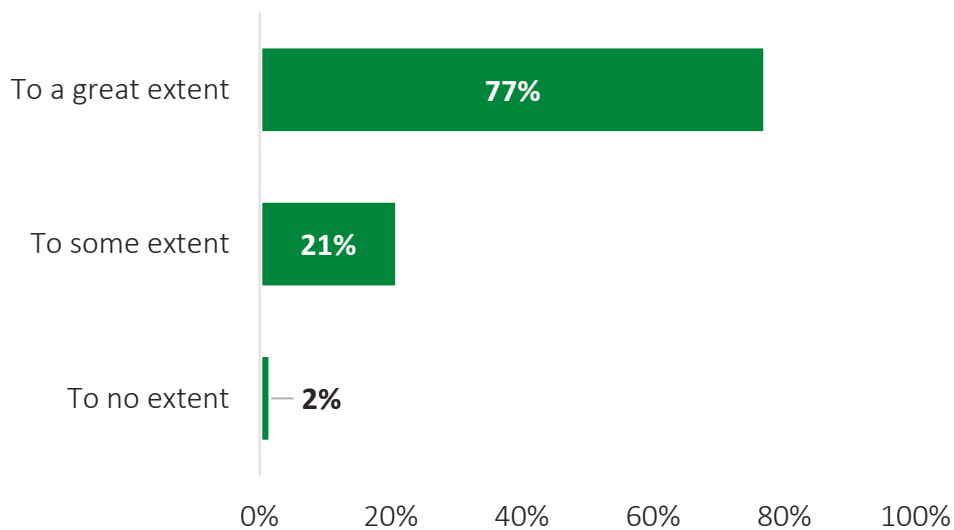
Local Pride

During the Coronation event, connections between people were formed through a shared sense of pride in their town. The evaluations teams conversations with event attendees highlighted that **many felt like their town can sometimes get overlooked, and events like this are important opportunities to instill pride and a sense of community.**



Regardless of their backgrounds, attendees found unity in the shared pride they felt for their town. Figure 4.6 also shows that most event survey respondents (77%) felt like the event created a sense of pride to a great extent.

Figure 4.6: Respondents were asked to what extent the Coronation event created a sense of pride



Source: Wavehill event survey. N=57

“The Gala brought the community together, even in the rain; everyone was cheerful, happy and proud of our town” **Event attendee**

“A great inter-generational event WODMC. It was lovely to see groups of families enjoying the day even though the weather was lousy” **Event attendee**

“I felt a sense of local pride watching the community come together and at the hard work put in to make the parade a possibility” **Event attendee**

“It was a brilliant day of togetherness and involved such a diverse mix of people” **Event attendee**

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

Year of the King stands out as a successful community-driven initiative that provided the people of Crook with a valuable opportunity to come together in a shared celebration of King Charles III's Coronation. The project embraced a participatory approach across its three strands, ensuring that both workshops and the Coronation event were community-led, inclusive, and accessible. Moreover, the collaboration with partner organisations, particularly in delivering activities like the Legacy Group workshops where participants had the opportunity to facilitate, proved highly beneficial, broadening the project's reach.

Both the strategies of partnering with local organisations and involving workshop participants as facilitators emerged from time constraints. Given the significant benefits observed from these approaches, it would be recommended for future projects to proactively establish partnerships with organisations at the project's outset. Additionally, creating a team of local residents who regularly participate in Jack Drum Arts offerings to serve as facilitators for arts-based workshops or other activities. This proactive approach ensures facilitators would have the opportunity to receive guidance and training, enhancing their skills in delivering community-based activities. Moreover, this also opens up opportunities for them to volunteer in other community-based initiatives beyond Jack Drum Arts. The evident positive impact on the wellbeing of those who facilitated highlights the effectiveness of this approach.

Key recommendation: Establishing partnerships with organisations at the start of the project and encouraging local residents to serve as facilitators within the project's activities.

Community engagement stood out as a central focus for the project, with Jack Drum Arts' well-established presence playing an important role in fostering participation and engagement. The use of their social prescribing group for workshops proved advantageous, particularly in enhancing participants' wellbeing. The Coronation event was also praised for engaging a wide ranging audience, made up of people from all ages. However, an observed challenge was a limited awareness of general information of the event, possibly attributed to tight timelines.

Key recommendation: While acknowledging the difficulty of extensive advertising campaigns with time constraints, providing more information could enhance future initiatives.

Overall, Year of the King serves also as a compelling demonstration of the impact major events like the Coronation can have in uniting diverse groups, particularly within the distinctive challenges faced by small towns like Crook. In these close-knit, but economically challenged communities, major events evidently play a role in connecting people from different backgrounds and fostering a shared sense of pride in their community. Year of the

King stands as a project that can mitigate the impacts of challenges faced within the community, as well as on an individual level, providing a platform for community cohesion, individual wellbeing, and overall community welfare.

In its successful culmination, Year of the King emerges as an example of the power in community-driven initiatives. Uniting the residents of Crook in a celebration of the Coronation, the project not only showed efficacy of its approach but also demonstrated the impact of major events in bridging diverse groups on a local level. It stands as a testament to the strength in the community's connections and sets a precedent for continued collaborative efforts that continue to enrich the local communities through arts and culture.

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