

FIRST LIGHT FESTIVAL

**Bowling Greens,
Kensington Gardens**

Festival Audiences

While we welcomed **40,000+ visitors** to First Light Festival 2023, our priority audiences are those living in and around our town.

Last year, we hit our target of **70% local audiences**, with **22% from the wider region** (target 20%), and **8% coming from beyond East Anglia** (target 10%).

We worked with Audience Agency to survey 800+ festival goers. Of those who attended, our biggest demographic (**21%**) fit into their **Up Our Street** segment of conservative mature households who have a love of the traditional, and typically have a lower engagement in the arts.

We are committed to **creating new and high-quality cultural opportunities** for these audiences as we continue to **shine a spotlight on the vibrant creativity that exists in our town**.



Rooted in Lowestoft

Our work is guided by our **STEERING GROUP** which comprises 16 local organisations, including Lowestoft Town Council, Kirkley People's Forum and Lowestoft Rising LCEP.

We have deep connections to all local schools and colleges, engaging **22 educational institutions** at 2023's festival. That year, we recruited **150 volunteers**, platformed **44 young and local music acts** and involved **30 community groups** in our Welcome to Lowestoft opening parade.

'Having lived in Lowestoft all my life it makes me so proud to have it host such a fantastic event.' Audience Member





An Economic Boost for Lowestoft

‘During the festival there were a lot more customers and our sales went up significantly across the weekend.’
Local Cafe Owner

£20
average spend
per head in
Lowestoft town

£80
average spend
per head on
accommodation

100%
local hotels and
b&bs booked

69
independent
food stalls, local
makers & charity
pitches

Economic Impact

‘The Festival has caught peoples’ imaginations, highlighting the wealth of creative talent right on Suffolk’s doorstep. It has become a gateway event, bringing new visitors into the area and goes from strength to strength, taking the visitor economy along with it. This increased visibility showcased attractions, things to do, places to stay, eat and drink in its wake.’ The Suffolk Coast DMO



Planet Positive on the Green

Kensington Gardens hosts one of our most important zones, 'Planet Positive'. Use of one of the bowling greens allows this zone to house a range of creative, scientific and community partners and activities, including:

- **Planet Positive Tent:** Hands-on scientific research from Cefas, UEA and Natural History Museum
- **Making Waves:** Creative activities and workshops from Norwich University of the Arts
- **Ideas on the Green Tent:** Talks and conversations with leading thinkers on local and national topics
- **Messums East Arthub:** Interactive visual arts from the new flagship Lowestoft gallery
- Other key partners including **Suffolk Wildlife Trust** and **Lowestoft Lowdown's Community Printroom.**



Promoting Sustainability

The whole of Planet Positive on the bowling green is powered by **solar energy**.

In 2023, we **generated 77kWh** in this zone and used 66kWh.

Providing accessible ways of engaging in the latest sustainability research, **56% of Planet Positive audiences agreed that the zone had increased their awareness of environmental and climate issues.**



Implications of not using the Green

Not having access to the bowling green would have huge implications for the Planet Positive zone, with knock on negative impact for audiences, partners, and local stakeholders. These include:

Environment and Power

Re-siting the solar panels will require greater infrastructure, cabling and backup generators - undermining sustainable power usage.

Partners and equipment

Relocating will mean that the specimens and sensitive equipment that CEFAS and Natural History Museum bring to show people, particularly children, will be in jeopardy. In discussion with CEFAS they have expressed concerns about having to move away from the bowling green and proximity to their labs, which will impact what they and Natural History Museum can do, show and share.



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Wider Site implications and Working Together

Jubilee Parade redevelopment works mean that 2024 will see a great deal of disruption on the seafront including access routes to the beach. In this context FLF are working hard to ensure that the festival is accessible to as many people as possible, recognising how important the upper promenade and Kensington Gardens are for people with access issues and how the ability to use the whole of the gardens also benefits the local community groups and charities in there as well as giving strong footfall to the Gardens Tea Rooms.

As with all our projects, we will work with partners to minimise and put right any damage that may occur.

