



The Headlines



Ripon Theatre Festival 2024 took place from **2-7 July** with workshops, warm-up performances and community outreach events in the preceding weeks.

“Huge thank you for your ambition, expertise, inclusivity, it was an excellent festival year!”

We developed our artistic offering and extended our reach into the community, resulting in larger audiences and greater inclusion.

“Well done... we’re excited that Ripon has a theatre festival”

We staged high-quality and sometimes unique experiences for a wide range of age groups and interests.

“A wonderful event that we are so lucky to have in Ripon”

The festival is an increasingly important date in the local calendar and becoming recognised as a player to watch out for in the region’s cultural landscape.



1,652

Tickets sold



4,048

Free event attendances



5,820

Total attendances

256

Community performers

71

Professional performers



Our Audience



Our audience has grown and as we reach people from a wider geographical area, we are monitoring numbers, finding out more about our visitors and listening to their views.

“It was a fantastic weekend , my family came to visit especially for the event . Saturday was a wonderful day of really good and free entertainment we had a lovely time”

Ripon resident



Ticket sales were up by 18%

Growing segment from Harrogate (13%)

Total attendances grew by 25% with a greater proportion of our audience coming from outside Ripon

Approx 64% from Ripon

65% of our ticket buyers also enjoyed free events over the festival weekend

Visitors from within a 40-minute drive time include residents of Thirsk, Northallerton, Wetherby, Ilkley, Leyburn, Middlesbrough and Stockton-on-Tees.

48% were experiencing the festival for the first time

“This was our first experience of the Ripon Theatre Festival and absolutely loved it. Booking tickets was easy and smooth, we were always welcomed very well and the events themselves were fabulous. Such a brilliant advert for a very lively city. Thank you”

Harrogate resident

Our Events



We welcomed 71 professional performers from across the UK's four nations and provided a platform for 256 local community performers. This year saw more day-time performances during the week and a busier evening schedule as well as a full weekend of free family entertainment.

"The performances inspired by our literary heritage are really interesting and appealing."

Ripon resident

"Monoliths was incredible"

Ripon resident

"I love the variety and the way it infuses it way through the city. It generates a wonderful and gentle carnival atmosphere"

Weekend visitor



95%

Survey respondents:
The quality was
excellent or very
good

"The Frankenstein mini theatre was brilliant"

Audience member at Lempen's Theatre for One

"A brilliant performance in a superb setting"

Audience member at Mr Owen's Pocketbook in Ripon Cathedral

"Congratulations on presenting such a varied, high-quality programme"

Ripon resident

Ticketed theatre programme

Highlights included Red Ladder Theatre, Natalie Bellingham, George Egg and Barrie Rutter OBE

Open air theatre

From Folksy Theatre, Illyria, Rhubarb Theatre and Wrongsemble

Street entertainment & Pop-Ups

Highlights included Logy on Fire, Thingumajig, Lempen Puppets & Full Stilt

Our first digital theatre experience

Monoliths from Pilot Theatre

Our first Storyteller-in-Residence

Ilaria Passeri

Community art installation

Brollies in the Bandstand

Interactive dance event

ARCADE from Casson & Friends



Bringing The Community Together

We aim to bring people together each year, working collaboratively and making the most of local skills and partnerships.

We strengthened our links with local community venues and organisations and partnered with local businesses to add theatre to their customer offer.

“Performing alongside such a diverse range of talent was a rewarding experience for us all”
Henshaws Performing Arts Group



76%

“RTF improved my sense of wellbeing”

88%

“RTF is welcoming for the whole community”

Survey respondents agreed *strongly* or *very strongly*



We developed our team of volunteers and provided work experience and youth volunteering opportunities.

“Feels good - can tell it's a community festival and very inclusive”
Visitor from Letchworth

We further developed our reputation for being accessible and inclusive.

“I have an autistic son and a paraplegic husband so we are tricky to cater for as a family but the Ripon Theatre Festival was perfectly accessible for all of us!”

Venue partnerships with Ripon Arts Hub, Ripon Library and Ripon Cathedral

Collaboration with Ripon Museums

Opera Brunch in Italian restaurant and twilight storytelling in local wine bar

Collaboration with Kirkgate traders & Little Bird Artisan Market

38 volunteers including Youth Squad of 13

1500+ volunteer hours

19 community groups took part as performers

Performances from 3 disability-led community groups

18% of survey respondents said their group included someone who identified as deaf or disabled

Reaching out



Project funding enabled us to deliver more community outreach activities, both during and in the run-up to the festival.



8 upcycling/craft workshops with learning disabled adults led by community artist Sharon Hockin

1 upcycling/craft workshop for students with special educational needs

1 creative writing workshop with Key Stage 1 pupils

1 inclusive drama workshop

"People went to the theatre & the theatre went to the people - excellent!"

Ripon resident.

108 workshop participants in total

Goofus Theatre visited 3 care settings with non-verbal theatre

Singer Nicola Mills visited 3 care homes

71 older people attended a daytime singalong event with free afternoon tea



Supporting the Local Economy



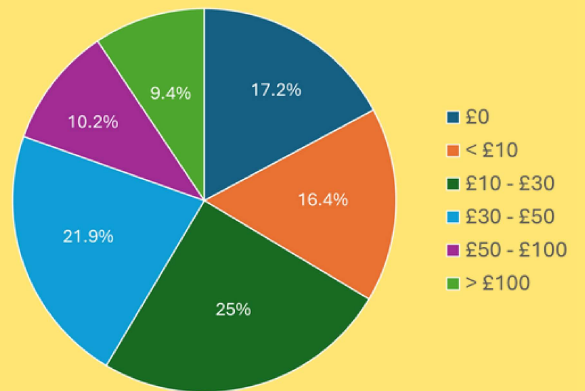
RTF aims to contribute to the development of Ripon as a vibrant place to live, work and visit, supporting local suppliers and working with local businesses, heritage sites and attractions.

“You have definitely found something that Ripon was crying out for in the Theatre Festival.

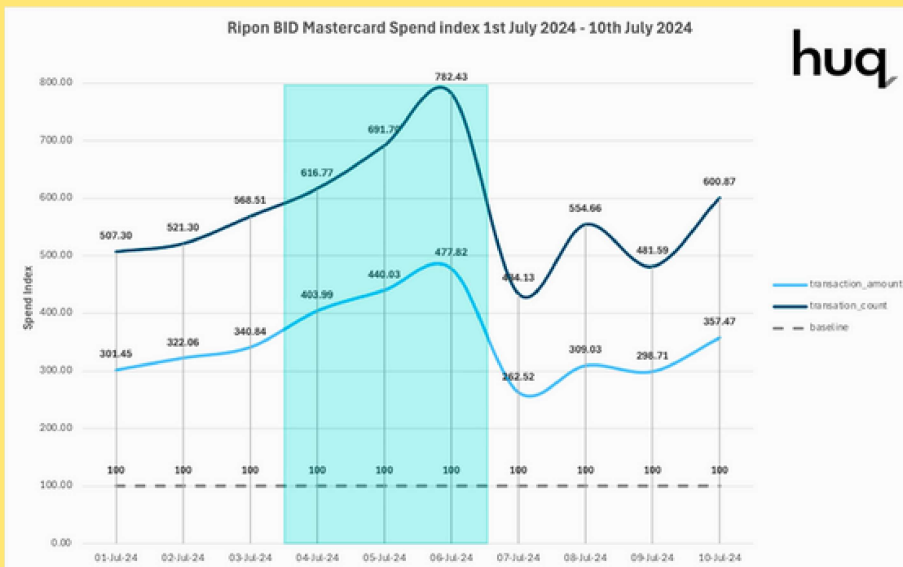
A major achievement and such a boost for Ripon”

Specsavers

RTF ticket purchasers and visitors told us how much they spent



Data from Mastercard shows a clear uptick in spending in the Ripon BID area over the festival weekend.



£12,613

RTF spend with local businesses in 2024

96%

“RTF is good for Ripon’s image”

Survey respondents agreed strongly or very strongly

Final Quotes



“Brilliant! Gorgeous puppetry, fantastic storytelling... Just to say that we absolutely love this festival and the volunteers are amazing. So welcoming and helpful”

Visitor from Halifax

“Amazing, done a few things. Brilliant for kids and adults. So good that it’s free”

Visitor from County Durham

“Fantastic we come back each year for it. Such a range of things to see”

Visitor from Manchester

“Absolutely fantastic! A great array of shows for all the family. Love it!”

Ripon resident

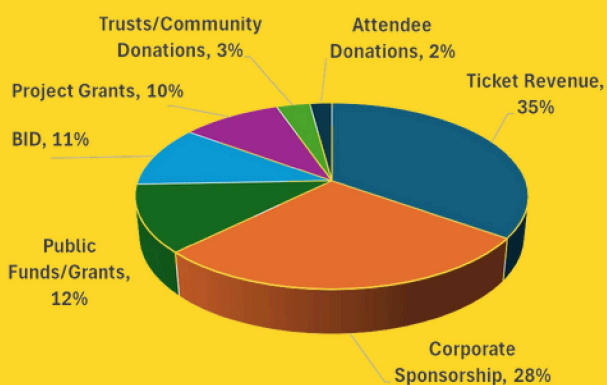
“Awesome!”

Thirsk resident

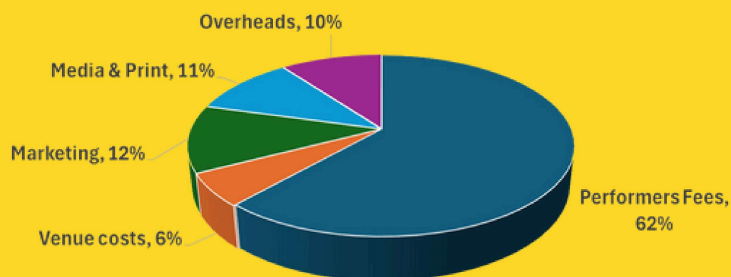
“A great range of performances seemed to be rewarded with large audiences from a diverse cross section of people. A gift to the city and the region”

Ripon resident

Income



Expenditure



Audience and visitor information gathered from 259 face-to-face and online questionnaires.

Ripon Theatre Festival 2024 was generously supported by:



Performers

400 Roses
Barrie Rutter OBE
Casson & Friends Dance
Cricket on the Hearth
Eye of Newt Theatre Arts
Fell-Foss Theatre
Folksy Theatre
Freddie Cleary
Full Stilt
George Egg
Ghost Walk Team
Goofus Theatre
Hazelsong Theatre
Henshaws Performing Arts
Hilarity Bites
Hoglets Theatre
Ilaria Passeri
Illyria
Jolly Good Productions
Kitsch n Sync Productions
Lempen Puppets
Lily Worth
Logy on Fire
Mark Mark Productions
Medusa
Natalie Bellingham
Nicola Mills – Opera for the People
Open the Book
Passion for Movement
Paulus the Cabaret Geek
Pilot Theatre
Redheart Theatre
Red Ladder Theatre
Rhubarb Theatre
Ripon City Morris
Ripon Goes to Bollywood
Ripon U3A Ukulele Band
Ripon Walled Garden Performers
Rock Choir
Struzzo & Maxim
Tell Tale Hearts
The Great Mandavi
The Wakeman Mummers
Thingumajig Theatre
Trinity Singers
Wrongsemble
Yorkshire Voices

Venues

Ripon Arts Hub
Ripon Library
Ripon Cathedral
Newby Hall & Gardens
The Old Deanery
Holy Trinity Church
The Cabmen's Shelter
The Unicorn Hotel
The Storehouse Bar
Market Place
Minster Gardens
The Ripon Inn
Valentino's Ristorante
The Little Ripon Bookshop
Ripon Courthouse Museum
Kirkgate & City Centre streets
Ripon Spa Gardens
Ripon Workhouse Museum
Fountains Abbey Mill & Swanley Grange

Sponsors

Arch Consulting
Elstob Auctioneers
Golden Frog Marketing
Kettlewell Fuels
Lightwater Quarries
Little Bird
Ripon BID
Ripon Races
Solo Estate Agents
Specsavers Ripon
Sterne Properties
The Inn Collection Group
The Stray Ferret
Valentino's Ristorante

With support from

Michael Abrahams CBE
North Yorkshire Council
Ramsden Family Trust
Ripon Charity Pantomime Group
Ripon City Council
Rotary Club of Ripon
Rotary Club of Ripon Rowels
The Brelms Trust
The Charles & Elsie Sykes Trust
The Two Ridings Foundation