



Agenda for Arts and Culture Forum Wednesday, 29th April, 2026, 10.00 am

Members of Arts and Culture Forum

Councillors: R Doorbar, O Davey, P Fernley, N Hookway,
V Johns, Sneller, I Barlow, S Gazzard, P Faithfull, M Hall,
S Jackson, J Price, L Wakefield, C Morrison and J Rowland

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Tuesday, 21 April 2026

Meeting of the Arts and Culture Forum

- 1 Public speaking
Information on [public speaking is available online](#)
- 2 Minutes of the previous meeting (Pages 3 - 10)
- 3 Apologies
- 4 Declarations of interest
Guidance is available online to Councillors and co-opted members on making [declarations of interest](#)
- 5 East Devon Cultural Strategy
Verbal update.
 - a) [Screen Devon](#) (Pages 11 - 22)
 - b) [Villages in Action](#) (Pages 23 - 26)
 - c) [Museum Development South West](#) (Pages 27 - 33)
- 6 East Devon Festival Fund
[East Devon Festival Fund Policy](#). Verbal update.
- 7 Sidmouth Folk Festival
Verbal update.
- 8 Manor Pavilion Theatre

Verbal update.

9 EDDC events

Verbal update.

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[Decision making and equalities](#)

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EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL**Minutes of the meeting of Arts and Culture Forum held at Online on 26 November 2025****Attendance list at end of document**

The meeting started at 10.05 am and ended at 12.30 pm

1 Public speaking

There were no members of the public registered to speak.

2 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 April 2025 were agreed.

3 Declarations of interest

4 & 6. Declarations of interest.

Councillor Ian Barlow, Affects Non-registerable Interest, He was a Director of Sidmouth School of Arts, which had received Arts Council England funding.

4. Declarations of interest.

Councillor Nick Hookway, Affects Non-registerable Interest, He was a Devon County Councillor and an Exmouth Town Councillor.

4 & 6. Declarations of interest.

Councillor Olly Davey, Affects Non-registerable Interest, He was an Exmouth Town Councillor and the town council had received Arts Council England funding.

4. Declarations of interest.

Councillor Sarah Jackson, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Her employer ran an arts and culture venue.

4. Declarations of interest.

Councillor Vicky Johns, Affects Non-registerable Interest, She worked for the South West Academy of Fine and Applied Arts, and was the Mayor of Ottery Saint Mary.

4 Arts Council England presentation

The Chair welcomed Simon Jutton, Senior Relationship Manager, Arts Council England to the meeting. He explained that Arts Council England was the national development agency for creativity and culture. It was an arm's-length body accountable to the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and was the distributor of National Lottery funds. It had nine offices, with its headquarters in Manchester and the South West Office in Bristol. The total income for 2024/25 was £843 million, which was split between Grant In Aid (£580 million) and Lottery receipts (£263 million).

Application decisions were based on the Arts Council ten-year strategy, 'Let's Create:

- The vision was that by 2030 England would be a place where everyone had the chance to unlock their own creativity, and have access to a wide range of high quality cultural experiences.
- It was built around three outcomes:

- Creative People.
- Cultural Communities.
- A Creative and Cultural Country.
- It was also built around four investment principles:
 - Ambition and quality.
 - Inclusion and relevance.
 - Dynamism.
 - Environmental responsibility.

Simon explained that the outcomes were about everyday creativity; how culture connected and operated within communities and in partnership with the professional sector, including internationally.

Arts Council work involved advocacy, investment and development.

During 2024/25 Arts Council England (ACE) invested £74 million in arts culture in southwest England:

- National Portfolio Organisations – about £36.6 million.
- Arts Council National Lottery Project Grants – about £12.4 million a year.
- Music Education Hubs – about £12.9 million.
- Strategic Funds - £11 million in 2024/25, but could vary enormously.

Development wise ACE offered expertise, advice and strategic interventions. The South West team held 22 artform and thematic specialisms, from dance to philanthropy, from international work to creative health. To support development in the cultural sector ACE offered a range of funding pots.

In terms of advocacy ACE offered:

- Intrinsic value.
- Economy.
- Health.
- Education.

Simon was thanked for his presentation and answered questions on the ACE application process, future funding for local authorities and support given by ACE to other councils that had gone through Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution in relation to culture.

5 **Villages in Action presentation**

The Forum received a presentation from Mair George, Creative Director, Villages in Action detailing the work of Villages in Action (VIA) and how this related to the East Devon Cultural Strategy. The presentation outlined the success of VIA and the performances that were taking place in East Devon.

Since the last meeting of the Arts and Culture Forum Villages in Action had been successful in securing its fourth consecutive Arts Council England National Lottery project grant to continue to develop the Agri Culture network and activities across rural Devon. Agri Culture started on 1 October 2025 and was a multi-faceted project focussing on four main areas:

- Live performances.
- Active participation workshops and sessions.
- Organisational development.
- Local artist and creative practitioner support.

East Devon was a key area for Villages in Action and with the uplift received from EDDC an East Devon Connector had been recruited. VIA were focussing on connectivity, working collectively and collaboratively, sharing best practice and exploring the potential for joint funding bids over the next six months.

As part of the present performance programme VIA had supported local artists at various stages of their career development and at different stages of their performance development. Various examples were given to the Forum. Feedback from audiences was that people appreciated the work of VIA, rural communities recognised the uniqueness of VIA and enjoyed the intimacy and connection that its activity cultivated.

A network connector event was held in East Devon in October with 13 potential community curators and partners, along with local creative. They represented a diverse mix of spaces and perspectives. It was an opportunity to discover what people wanted for their communities and to find out what motivated the people 'that do' in those communities. A consistent thread was community, well-being and inclusion, as well as affordability. VIA's bespoke model was adapted for differing communities and venues.

Following the presentation, questions were asked about the income from ticket sales, how artists and venues were found, and how connections were made.

On behalf of the Forum the Chair thanked the VIA Creative Director for her presentation.

6 **Museums Development South West presentation**

Jo Cairns, Museum Development Officer for Museum Development South West (MDSW) gave the Forum some background to MDSW. They were a team of museum and heritage development specialists working with the museum and heritage sector in the South West to effect positive, lasting change and deliver public value. MDSW received 53% of its funding from Arts Council England.

£360,000 was invested annually into nine Museum Development Officers (MDOs). 47% of this investment was secured from 18 local authorities across the South West. Local place-based MDOs were essential for the delivery of effective sector development providing:

- Responsive 1-2-1 development support.
- Facilitated access to specialist technical support.
- Understanding the role museums play within local communities.
- Trusted relationships – providing continuity.
- Connect, network and collaborate.
- Vital and informed advocates.

MDSW worked in partnership with EDDC with funding provided through the Shared Prosperity Fund. There were six accredited museums receiving support (A La Ronde, Allhallows Museum, Axminster Heritage Centre, Sidmouth Museum, Fairlynch Museum and Arts Centre, Killerton House) and there were four others not yet accredited, but still receiving support due to funding from EDDC (Axe Valley Heritage Museum, Exmouth Museum, Ottery St Mary Heritage Museum, Whimble Heritage Centre). Priority museums were museums that were accredited through the Arts Council England accreditation programme (Allhallows Museum, Axminster Heritage Centre, Fairlynch Museum and Arts Centre and Sidmouth Museum). Arts Council funding was received by MDSW for accredited museums. The accreditation scheme run by Arts Council England

ensured that museums were adhering to a certain standard. Being accredited showed that a museum was working to a particular standard and opened up opportunities for grants as a lot of funding was only open to accredited museums.

All the priority museums were accessing development support (target 60%), with 50% of the priority museums accessing three or more different development support opportunities. Eight of the ten (80%) museums and heritage organisations in the area were engaged in MDSW development support.

Projects delivered so far in 2025/26 included:

- £2,000 investment in Exmouth Museum and Axe Valley Heritage Museum participating in 'Reducing the Risks: Hazards in Collections' programme funded by National Lottery Heritage Fund.
- MDSW Collaborative Capacity Builder Grant Funding was enabling three museums (Axe Valley Heritage Museum, Exmouth Museum and Whimble Heritage Centre) to take part in a Volunteer Leaders Wellbeing Day at Dartington Hall.
- Axminster Heritage Centre had participated in the MDSW Organisational Health Check Programme.
- Ongoing support for Exmouth Museum to strengthen their governance by converting to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation.

The Museum Development Officer explained that in 2024/25 EDDC received a 247% return on its investment from MDSW. It received:

- £9,900 in local Museum Development Officer support.
- £2,850 specialist and technical services in conservation, collection care and volunteering development, including ongoing support to Exmouth in Volunteering Fit for the Future programme.
- £400 access to technical accreditation advice by three museum organisations.
- £720 training with 12 delegates from 5 museums.

On behalf of the Forum the Chair thanked the Museum Development Officer for her presentation.

7 **Screen Devon presentation**

The Chair welcomed Claire Horrocks, Manager of Screen Devon to the meeting. Claire explained that she worked 2.5 days a week and a Film Officer was employed for 4 days a week. Screen Devon had established strategic partnerships and industry connections over the past year, both locally and nationally. Because work was service-based, the most significant investment was in its people – the Manager and Film Officer. This ensured that funding directly supported high-quality, evidence-based delivery rather than administrative overheads.

Screen Devon was approaching its first year of activity and the 2025-26 Impact Report was about to be published.

2025 priorities were:

1. Attract more productions to Devon by promoting desirable filming locations.
2. Boost the economy by driving investment towards local crew and suppliers.
3. Highlight Devon's potential as a film-friendly location.
4. Support and develop local talent.
5. Track and report on the economic impact of film and TV in Devon.
6. Collaborate with Southwest and national partners.

7. Promote sustainability by developing clear, actionable policies and create a dedicated resource centre for productions whilst looking at neighbouring areas for inspiration.

The headline impact and outcomes across Devon were:

- £9,000,000 projected production spend in 2025-26 (260% increase on 2024/25 and 190% above the projected 2025/26 forecast).
- 1000 web visits per month.
- 254 filming days, 126 prep days and 44 strike days.
- Social media reach increased by over 3000% from July-November.
- 13 local productions supported.
- 19 events hosted/attended by Screen Devon.

As Devon's regional screen agency, Screen Devon had implemented core film office services, opening potential for a streamlined and professional offer for incoming productions, including:

- Production support.
- Location database and scouting.
- Local authority film office network.
- Supplier directory.

Screen Devon were supporting local crew by providing direct guidance, promoting local talent to incoming productions, sharing opportunities, and acting as a key connection point between crew, productions and regional partners. The aim was to ensure that local professionals were visible, informed and ready for work. 120 crew were now registered and 50 crew opportunities were shared. Screen Devon aimed to understand Devon's crew and skill gaps, and to further develop skills.

Screen Devon were seeking a 12-month funding commitment of £10,000 for 2026/27 from each local authority to ensure continuity, attract major productions and deliver measurable economic and cultural benefits for the county. This would:

- Formalise Screen Devon's Screen Agency function.
- Develop the local crew pipeline.
- Enhance economic data capture and reporting.
- Scale services sustainably.
- Support Screen Devon in achieving sustainable long-term results, allowing it to work to an in-depth strategy, plan effectively and build on the new connections made during 2025, leading to more resilience and evolution.

On behalf of the Forum the Chair thanked Claire for her fantastic presentation and again emphasised the importance of networking and developing relationships and connections.

8 **East Devon Cultural Strategy progress and budget request**

The Cultural Producer's report provided the Forum with a summary of progress made on the East Devon Cultural Strategy and set out a request for an internal budget to continue delivering cultural activity. The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) programme funded by central Government would end in March 2026, with no replacement likely to benefit East Devon. Without future funding, there was a high risk that the momentum which had been generated in the delivery of the Cultural Strategy would stall.

The East Devon Cultural Strategy (2022 – 2031) was made up of 31 potential work programmes. Four years (and almost half-way) into delivery of the strategy six of the 31 programmes had been completed, 23 had made good progress and only two were yet to be started. The Cultural Programme had been allocated £37,985 this financial year

through the UKSPF and to date had overachieved on targets, with good value for money observed. As the continued delivery of the Cultural Strategy and the Tourism Strategy was a corporate priority, it was felt that there was a strong strategic case for providing a rolling budget for this.

The Cultural Producer outlined some of the themes of the strategy currently in progress and successes so far. There had been particular focus on the theme of 'strengthen and support the people that do', delivering 23 training sessions to the Arts and Culture East Devon (ACED) network since 2023, recognising volunteers through an annual ACED volunteer of the year award, and highlighting over 80 volunteering opportunities on the ACED website. Another theme that had made significant progress was Cultural Tourism, with the creation of the East Devon Cultural Map.

In terms of the theme 'creative enterprise and skills', the ACED mentoring programme was set up last year and six young people to date had gone through the programme, which provided pathways to employment and increased capacity of the local cultural sector. In terms of 'protecting and enhancing the natural environment through culture' the THG hosted regular climate conversation events and through the Carbon Action Fund (funded through the UKSPF) grants had been given for decarbonisation equipment to cultural venues. Finally in terms of 'connectivity' the Cultural Producer explained that she had co-ordinated nine ACED network meetings at rotating venues across the district.

The culture budget request was:

- Arts and Culture East Devon network: £2,500
- Creative East Devon fund: £20,000
- Villages in Action: £5,000
- Screen Devon: £10,000

This would be in addition to the existing internal Arts Development budget of £14,000 (£10,000 for Villages in Action and £4,000 for Museums Development South West). It was also hoped to accommodate a minor uplift of support for Museums Development South West of 8.8% (£4,355) in 2026/27 and 4.6% (£4,530) in 2027/28. It was noted that the culture budget request sat alongside a tourism budget request in order to continue delivery on the tourism strategy, which was integral to cultural strategy delivery. It was felt that small rolling budgets for culture and tourism should be regarded as investments to help secure additional income whilst protecting the existing revenues already generated.

The Cultural Producer was thanked for her informative report.

RECOMMENDED: that Cabinet approve the request of an internal budget of £37,500 to continue the successful delivery of the Cultural Strategy in 2026/27 as part of the budget-setting process.

9 **Thelma Hulbert Gallery update**

The Gallery Manager and Curator gave the Forum a summary of the Thelma Hulbert Gallery (THG) activity for 2025. The theme for 2025 was 'community and place'. The aim was to strengthen ties with both the local and artistic communities through the following initiatives:

- Encouraging emerging artists.
- Collaborating with local artists and photographers.
- Bringing renowned artists to a rural setting.
- Continuing climate-focused exhibitions.

- Embedding equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and accessibility into programming and delivery.

The Gallery Manager and Curator explained that the current Arts Council England project grant funding of £29,000 to support delivery for 18 months was coming to an end in March 2026. Just under £30,000 was being requested from the Arts Council to ensure the continuation and growth of the Youth Network and engagement programme that enriched the THG exhibition and wider programme. The support would also enable the gallery to maintain its vital focus on key priorities such as:

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.
- Addressing the climate emergency.
- Supporting emerging artists.
- Bringing renowned artists to the rural community.

The current Arts Council funding had seen the gallery interact with over 1,500 people across seven different locations and 50 different events, including schools workshops, community events and gallery workshops.

The Gallery Manager and Curator also outlined to the Forum THG achievements during 2025:

- Refurbishment and refresh from January to March 2025.
- Ashish Ghadiali exhibition – featured three high-profile films focusing on climate and racial justice.
- James Ravillious – An English Eye – this solo exhibition achieved the highest visitor attendance in ten years (3,270), with 42% of the visitors new to the gallery. It was the most viewed exhibition online, with 3,200 website visits to the home page (double the average).
- THG Open 2025 – there were over 460 entries for this biennial exhibition, with 104 artists selected. Sales increased by 50%, rising from £4,387.25 in 2023 to £6,582.46 in 2025.
- CAMP (Contemporary Art Membership Platform) – an exciting and dynamic network of artists based in Devon and Cornwall.
- Present Makers – a record-breaking 90 entries were received and 70 artists selected.

Engagement with the THG had been high with social media success and during the summer over 790 people visited THG's offsite and gallery activities. THG sold out of the five days of Summer Art Week activities for 11- to 17-year-olds.

Oh behalf of the Forum, the Chair thanked the Gallery Manager and Curator for her fascinating report and congratulated her on the success of the Gallery and increase in figures.

RECOMMENDED: that Cabinet note and support a funding bid to the Arts Council to support the Thelma Hulbert Gallery to:

- Enrich the Exhibition Programme by delivering an ambitious engagement programme that benefits the wider East Devon community — including local schools and our expanding Youth Network.
- Develop the Youth Network into a region-wide platform that extends beyond the gallery, engaging young people who may not otherwise have access to creative opportunities — such as those with school-related anxiety and young people leaving care.
- Reframe opportunities for young people by introducing live projects and creative briefs designed to build skills, confidence, and pathways into the creative industries.
- Expand internship opportunities through partnerships with Exeter College and support for care leavers.
- Continue to focus on the climate emergency by developing Climate Conversations into a Climate Symposium – a day to carve out space and time to inspire creatives to protect

and enhance the natural environment through their creative practice, share expertise and network in a participatory, supportive and solutions focused event of interactive workshops and talks.

Attendance List

EDDC Councillors present:

O Davey
P Fernley
N Hookway
V Johns
I Barlow
S Gazzard
P Faithfull
S Jackson

Town Representatives

S Gazzard, Exmouth Town Council
I Barlow, Sidmouth Town Council

Officers in attendance:

Graham Whitlock, Theatre and Arts Centre Manager (Manor Pavilion Theatre)
Gemma Girvan, Gallery Manager and Curator
Mark Barrow, Interim Director Place
Caitlin Davey, Events Officer
Sarah Elghady, Cultural Producer
Sarah Jenkins, Democratic Services Officer
Geri Panteva, Senior Economic Development Officer
Chloe Woodman, Assistant Director - Communications, Digital Services and Engagement
Alethea Thompson, Democratic Services Officer

Also Present

Cllr R Collins
Jo Cairns, Museums Development South West
Claire Horrocks, Screen Devon
Mair George, Villages in Action
Wendy Van Der Plank, Villages in Action
Simon Jutton, Arts Council England

Apologies:

C Buchan, Cranbrook Town Council
M Hall

Chair

Date:

UK Shared Prosperity Fund Report

Project: Screen Devon

Date of Report: March 2026

Project Summary to Date:

In its first year, Screen Devon has successfully positioned Devon as a production-ready destination. Activity has focused on building strategic partnerships, delivering production support, and unlocking the county's diverse locations—laying the foundations for a more connected, competitive, and sustainable region.

A key priority has been commitments to nurturing talent and supporting the regional economy with a growing database of crew, suppliers, and locations, alongside an increasingly engaged community of creatives and industry stakeholders.

In East Devon, this has included targeted partnership activity to champion film-friendly approaches, strengthen connections with the local creative community, and create pathways for skills development through training opportunities and one-to-one filmmaker support.

Significant progress has also been made in strengthening key tools in promoting productions and supporting inward investment. Screen Devon will shortly launch a new, enhanced website, alongside a robust, industry-standard locations directory.

As Devon's screen sector continues to develop, Screen Devon has identified the following priorities:

- Making Devon a film-friendly destination
- Skills development
- Culture, profile and storytelling
- Economic impact and advocacy
- Relationships and partnerships
- Sustainability

A note on the industry landscape. While the UK production landscape remains uneven, with fewer large-scale studio projects impacting the wider production pipeline, there are clear signs of resilience. A gradual return to more stable and sustainable production levels, alongside continued industry demand for distinctive locations, supports a positive outlook for Devon's screen sector. Screen Devon has remained an active member of Film Offices UK, Screen Alliances South West and West Country Film Offices as well as engaging with Filming in England on a regular basis. Screen Devon has also recently joined The Production Guild.



UK SPF Outputs and Outcomes Achieved:

Outcome / output	Target	Target achieved	Details of how this number was achieved
<p>Number of local events or activities supported in East Devon</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>Screen Devon exceeded its target for local engagement activity in East Devon, delivering and supporting a range of events aimed at strengthening connections, building skills, and increasing awareness of screen sector opportunities.</p> <p>Screen Devon partnered with the East Devon Tourism Network to present an overview of regional screen activity at their November event in Sidmouth. The session supported local businesses to better understand how to engage with filming opportunities and position themselves for involvement. The event was well attended, generated a positive response, and resulted in new connections, including potential locations, suppliers, and future collaborations for the Screen Devon network.</p> <p>Through <i>Making Waves</i>, Screen Devon secured grant funding to deliver a four-week documentary filmmaking workshop for 16–19 year olds in East Devon, hosted at Propeller. The programme provided participants with foundational skills in documentary storytelling, while building confidence and enabling them to share personal stories. Targeted outreach ensured accessibility for a broad range of young people, including those harder to reach. The programme engaged 17 participants and resulted in the production of four short films.</p> <p>Screen Devon also presented at the ACED Arts and Culture Forum, engaging directly with the local creative community. This provided an opportunity to raise awareness of Screen Devon’s role and impact, while fostering new relationships and collaborations. The event also enabled greater understanding of the existing creative landscape in East Devon, helping to align Screen Devon’s activity with wider cultural initiatives in the area.</p>



<p>Number of East Devon organisations receiving non-financial support</p>	<p>15</p>	<p>12</p> <p>Screen Devon has supported a broad range of organisations across East Devon through both light-touch engagement and more structured advisory approaches, extending the impact of the programme beyond direct funding.</p> <p>Support has focused on enabling organisations to become more film-friendly and better positioned to benefit from production activity. This has included guidance on unlocking locations, preparing to host production crews, and identifying opportunities within quieter periods of their annual cycle to maximise economic return. Advice has also helped organisations recognise and promote assets that may attract future filming. Examples include Crealy, Clyst St George Fire Station and Escot.</p> <p>Screen Devon has worked with venues to explore how their spaces can be utilised more effectively, broadening cultural activity and creating opportunities to engage new users and audiences through screen-related initiatives. Propeller hosted our Making Waves workshops and conversations have been had with Kennaway House.</p> <p>With a unique insight into Film Exhibition Screen Devon has supported two organisations with advice on acquiring licences, curating programmes and setting up pop-up exhibition formats.</p> <p>In addition, Screen Devon has used its platforms to amplify opportunities from partner organisations, helping to extend reach, connect with new audiences, and strengthen regional networks from emerging production companies to film-watching networks.</p> <p>Engagement has also included collaboration with larger organisations that have strong links to East Devon communities, supporting greater alignment with regional and national screen activity and creating pathways for future opportunities. Including the East Devon portfolio holder for National Trust, and Clinton Estates.</p> <p>Through its industry connections, Screen Devon has further supported organisations to leverage opportunities linked to broadcast activity from productions filmed in East Devon,</p>
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			including <i>Masters of the Universe</i> and <i>Bergerac 2</i> , helping to build visibility and maximise ongoing impact.
Number of East Devon enterprises receiving non-financial support	25	20	<p>Screen Devon has provided non-financial support to a wide range of enterprises and individuals across East Devon, exceeding expectations through a combination of advisory support, skills development, and network-building activity.</p> <p>Engagement has spanned multiple sectors, including tourism, exhibition, filmmaking, and local business owners. This has included participants from the East Devon Tourism Network, who received guidance on how to engage with filming opportunities and position their businesses to benefit from production activity.</p> <p>Targeted one-to-one support has also been delivered to a number of local practitioners and organisations. This includes a festival operator exploring opportunities for film exhibition and events. Major support was offered to a filmmaker and workshop facilitator supported through the delivery and promotion of a locally produced film where introductions were made across the region to unlock further exhibition opportunities. Emerging filmmakers and crew have also been supported, including those transitioning into employment within East Devon's cinema sector.</p> <p>Screen Devon has also supported new and existing locations and businesses to connect with the screen sector. This includes engagement with venue owners to bring forward new locations for the Screen Devon database, collaboration with local markets and independent traders to explore opportunities linked to production activity, and support for unique heritage sites to develop creative programming and strengthen their offer to film and media projects.</p> <p>In addition, Screen Devon has engaged with students and early-career individuals based in East Devon, providing advice, signposting, and industry insight to support progression into the screen sector.</p> <p>Collectively, this activity has strengthened the local ecosystem by increasing awareness of screen opportunities, building confidence across sectors, and creating new</p>



			pathways for East Devon enterprises to engage with and benefit from the screen industry.
Improved engagement numbers in East Devon	30	70	<p>Screen Devon has significantly increased engagement in East Devon through a targeted programme of events and outreach activity. Across the year, a series of key events—including the sponsorship of <i>Two Short Nights</i> film festival social, the East Devon Tourism Network coffee morning, the <i>Making Waves</i> documentary workshop for 16–18 year olds, as well as wider industry events across Devon—have collectively broadened reach and participation as well as making Screen Devon more visible.</p> <p>These activities have engaged a diverse cross-section of audiences, from young people and emerging creatives to local businesses and tourism partners. By working across different sectors and settings, Screen Devon has strengthened awareness of screen opportunities and increased participation in East Devon’s developing screen ecology.</p> <p>Screen Devon was privileged to host the sell out preview of <i>Jo in the Water</i>, an East Devon production which welcomed a significant East Devon audience.</p>
Number of enquiries processed relating to filming in East Devon	12	16	<p>Of the national enquiries received, 16 included locations in East Devon as part of the pitching process. These inquiries spanned a range of production types, including high-end television (HETV) series, mid-budget feature films, and major studio productions.</p> <p>The locations proposed reflected strong demand for East Devon’s distinctive offer, with heritage buildings and natural landscapes most frequently sought after—particularly for period drama, location doubling, and horror genres.</p> <p>This enquiry activity has not only positioned East Devon as a competitive filming destination but has also contributed to the ongoing development of Screen Devon’s locations directory. In several cases, responding to briefs has helped</p>



			identify and unlock new locations, further strengthening the county's production-ready offer.
Number of East Devon suppliers/creatives logged on new database	10	30	<p>21 new East Devon crew entries.</p> <p>There was a spike in new sign ups in autumn as graduates prepared to find work with their new skills. We also saw an increase when we were calling for crew to put forward for a large HETV series filming in Devon.</p> <p>9 new suppliers.</p> <p>This included accommodation, catering and one company who could support filming logistics.</p> <p>Our supplier database increased during a period of support for a major feature film shooting on Dartmoor and our reach broadened as the production needs became quite niche. We have plans to see this increase with further work in partnership with Devon Chamber of Commerce who have invited us to collaborate on their summer event.</p>
Increased number of followers across social media platforms/newsletter subscribers	300	693	<p>Instagram: increase from 396 > 1089 = increase of 693 (175% increase, audience is now 2.75 x larger).</p> <p>Facebook: now just under 1.5k.</p>
Number of successful enquiries/engagements leading to filming in East Devon	4	3	<p>In 2025–26, Devon welcomed 254 filming days, representing a 190% increase on projected outcomes and demonstrating strong regional demand.</p> <p>Within East Devon, Screen Devon engaged with five productions specifically interested in the area, providing location support and film office services. Of these, two productions progressed to filming in East Devon, reflecting the competitive nature of location decision-making while highlighting the value of early engagement and support in attracting inward investment. A number of national enquiries and production engagement is yet to be finalised with conversations for some productions still on going.</p>



			<p>Titles included BERGERAC 2, over two blocks of filming and a micro budget feature GIANTS (confidential) which are in the process of planning their shoot taking advice and support from Screen Devon and reaching into our directories for local crewing. Shooting is scheduled to start later this month and will run into May 2026.</p>
<p>Number of East Devon based individuals mentored</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>Screen Devon exceeded its target for mentoring East Devon-based individuals, providing tailored, one-to-one support to emerging and established creatives at different stages of their careers.</p> <p>Across 2025, Screen Devon delivered over 30 hours of direct mentoring, offering practical guidance, industry insight, and targeted connections to support progression within the screen sector.</p> <p>This support included:</p> <p>Toby (Filmmaker):</p> <p>Exmouth 20-30 Supported through a commissioned short film project, with guidance on script development, crew expansion, and production planning. Screen Devon also facilitated introductions to more experienced filmmakers, enabling the team to navigate specific challenges such as shooting on film and working with young actors.</p> <p>Sam (Sound Recordist & Filmmaker):</p> <p>Exmouth 20-30 Supported through promotion of his latest work and engagement with exhibition opportunities, including attendance at <i>Two Short Nights Film Festival</i>. Ongoing mentoring has focused on festival strategy, audience development, and strengthening industry networks. Sam has also contributed to Screen Devon activity through voluntary support on the <i>Making Waves</i> programme.</p> <p>Becks (Producer):</p>



		<p>Exmouth (40-50)</p> <p>Supported to diversify her skills and explore new career pathways. Screen Devon facilitated access to a regional producer development programme (PPN) and connected her with new short film opportunities. This has led to expanded networks, including female-led filmmaking groups, and potential progression towards BFI NETWORK funding.</p> <p>Rupert (Exhibitor/venue operator):</p> <p>Sidmouth 60+</p> <p>Provided with advisory support on developing outdoor cinema activity within an East Devon venue. Screen Devon offered guidance on licensing, programming, and audience development, helping to align ambition with operational and budget considerations. Further support is planned through site visits and continued consultation.</p>
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Promotional Activity and Opportunities

IMPACT REPORT - [HERE](#)

JO IN THE WATER PREVIEW / MAKING WAVES IMAGES - [HERE](#)

TWO SHORT NIGHTS - [HERE](#)

PRIORITIES - [HERE](#)



EAST DEVON CULTURAL STRATEGY - OUR GOAL IS THAT BY 2031:

1. East Devon's cultural offer is perceived by residents as high quality, interesting, fun, relevant, accessible and well-promoted
2. Residents who have taken part in cultural activity feel that their health, happiness and wellbeing have improved as a result
3. Children and young people across the district feel they have ample opportunities to take part in cultural and creative activities
4. More people work in the cultural and creative industries in East Devon, backed up by more training, skills and pathways to employment
5. Cultural organisations, artists and creative businesses feel connected, resilient and creatively ambitious (professional and voluntary sectors)
6. Investment into arts, museums and heritage through earned income, grants, sponsorship and philanthropy has increased
7. The number and diversity of visitors, audiences and participants in culture and creative activity in East Devon has increased
8. Culture is helping to tackle the climate emergency

We would be grateful if you could help us track progress by completing the following questions, if relevant, using quantitative and qualitative data, for activity between April 2025 and March 2026. Please keep answers to a maximum of 100 words.

- 1. How are you tracking if audiences are finding your work high quality, interesting, fun, relevant, accessible and well-promoted? What feedback have you had?**

Screen Devon gathers feedback through a combination of informal and structured methods, including direct participant feedback at events, follow-up conversations, and ongoing engagement with partners and stakeholders.

Across our East Devon activity, responses have been consistently positive. Events such as the East Devon Tourism Network session and *Making Waves* workshop generated strong engagement, with participants highlighting the relevance of content, the accessibility of sessions, and the value of practical insights into the screen industry.

Feedback from young people involved in *Making Waves* particularly emphasised increased confidence, enjoyment, and the opportunity to tell personal stories in a supportive environment. Industry and community stakeholders have also responded positively to Screen Devon's role in connecting sectors and creating new opportunities.

- 2. What evidence do you have that your audience's and volunteers' health, happiness and wellbeing have improved as a result?**



Programmes such as *Making Waves* have directly contributed to participant wellbeing by creating a supportive, creative environment for young people to build confidence, express themselves, and develop new skills.

Participants reported increased confidence, a sense of achievement through completing films, and improved social connection through collaborative working. The programme's inclusive approach, particularly its outreach to harder-to-reach young people, supported positive engagement and reduced barriers to participation.

More broadly, Screen Devon's activity has fostered a sense of belonging within the local creative community, with events and networking opportunities helping individuals feel more connected, confident and supported.

3. How many children and young people (under 25) have been able to engage with your offer?

Screen Devon has engaged a significant number of young people through its East Devon activity.

Making Waves documentary workshop: 17 participants (aged 16–19)

Additional engagement through events such as *Two Short Nights Film Festival* (student attendance) and outreach activity

Estimated total: 25+ young people engaged directly through targeted activity.

4. Have you been able to offer job opportunities in the cultural and creative industries? Or training, skills and pathways to employment?

Screen Devon has supported pathways through a combination of training, mentoring, and industry exposure.

- Delivery of *Making Waves* (skills development in filmmaking)
- One-to-one mentoring for emerging creatives (4 individuals supported)
- Supporting progression into employment (e.g. volunteers moving into cinema roles)
- Facilitating industry connections, networking and funding opportunities
- Creating a growing database of local crew and suppliers

This activity has helped participants build practical skills, industry awareness, and professional networks—key stepping stones into employment within the screen sector.

5. Which partnerships (eg: cultural organisations, artists or creative businesses) have been key to building your resilience and creative ambition?



Key partnerships have been central to delivery and impact. These include:

- East Devon Tourism Network
- Local venues and cultural organisations - Propeller, ACED Forum, South West Museums, Sideshore and Kennaway House.
- Education partners - Exeter College and wider HE/FE network.
- Regional and national partners (e.g. National Trust, Clinton Devon Estates)
- Pip Piper has been instrumental in the delivery of our activity this year.

These collaborations have strengthened Screen Devon's reach, enabled knowledge-sharing, and supported the development of a more connected and resilient creative ecosystem.

6. Has the funding from East Devon District Council helped you leverage increased funding?

Yes—funding from East Devon District Council has been instrumental in enabling Screen Devon to leverage additional support.

For example, Screen Devon secured external grant funding to deliver the *Making Waves* programme, building directly on the foundations created through SPF support. The funding has also strengthened partnerships and credibility, positioning Screen Devon to attract further investment and collaboration opportunities.

7. How many visitors/audiences/participants in East Devon have you reached this year? And how does that compare to last year?

Screen Devon has significantly increased engagement in East Devon this year through direct engagement, light touch impressions and remote access. This represents a substantial increase in reach, driven by a programme of targeted events, workshops, and outreach activity. This also establishes a strong baseline for future growth.

8. Are you monitoring diversity, equality and inclusion in your audiences and cultural teams? For example do you have a breakdown of your work force/audiences by age groups, ethnic groups, disability, sexual orientation and gender?

Screen Devon is committed to inclusive practice and widening access to the screen sector. Programmes such as *Making Waves* were designed with accessibility in mind, including targeted outreach to ensure participation from a broad range of young people, including those who may face barriers to engagement. While formal demographic monitoring is still developing, Screen Devon is actively working towards more structured data collection to better understand and reflect the diversity of its audiences and participants across age, background, and lived experience.



9. How has your work helped to tackle the climate emergency? Are you monitoring the environmental impact of your work?

Screen Devon supports sustainable practices within the screen sector by promoting local filming, which reduces travel and associated carbon impact, and by encouraging productions to utilise local crew, suppliers, and locations.

By strengthening Devon’s production infrastructure and local supply chains, Screen Devon contributes to more environmentally sustainable production models.

Environmental considerations are also being embedded into future planning, with sustainability identified as a key strategic priority.

10. What challenges have you faced in the last year?

The primary challenge has been the wider context of the UK production industry, which has experienced an uneven recovery, with fewer large-scale productions and reduced studio activity impacting the volume of opportunities.

At a local level, converting initial enquiries into confirmed filming activity remains competitive, particularly within a national and international marketplace. Additionally, as a new organisation, Screen Devon has been building awareness, partnerships, and infrastructure simultaneously, which requires time and resource. Despite these challenges, strong engagement levels, exceeded targets in several areas, and growing industry interest demonstrate positive momentum.



Annual Cultural Strategy Report to East Devon District Council 2025-2026

Summary of Work This Year

This year our East Devon activity was shaped by two priorities: ensuring that East Devon District Council's investment reaches residents directly, and building new long-term venue relationships. We hosted 15 performances for 663 audience members and delivered 8 participatory sessions for 209 participants. A deliberate shift towards subsidised performances, including school-based activity for young people and our Get Together programme for older people living with dementia and their carers, has reduced box office income this year. This reflects a considered choice to direct council investment to East Devon residents rather than attempting to recover costs at the door. Our local producer has brought on 4 new venue partners, all co-hosting events from November 2025 to July 2026, laying foundations for a stronger, more sustainable network. We paid 21 artists to perform in East Devon this year.

Quality, Relevance and Promotion

We collect audience feedback through post-event surveys in paper and digital formats, alongside conversation-based feedback for audiences who are less able to complete written forms, including older participants at Get Together sessions. East Devon audience responses reflect a high quality experience: "Very funny and compelling" "Brilliant entertainment, thanks for coming to my village!" "Excellent- love it, more please." Promoters describe events as "Joyous" and "Intimate and atmospheric", sharing a sense of "such collective enjoyment and inclusive community feeling." Events are promoted through a mix of print, social media, local newsletters and word of mouth. Reaching new audiences in rural areas for shows that are harder to describe remains an ongoing challenge; we continue to develop our promotional support for promoters as part of our network training.

Health, Happiness and Wellbeing

Our Get Together programme offering daytime performances and creative engagement sessions delivered primarily for carers and people living with dementia, provides strong evidence of wellbeing impact. Promoter reports describe moments of profound connection: a participant with advanced dementia singing every word to her favourite songs; a carer describing the programme as "so critical for support and respite"; young performers gaining measurably in confidence and being invited back by the group. More broadly, promoter feedback consistently highlights social value: audiences reconnecting with neighbours, new community bonds formed during and after events. One promoter wrote: "It was just so wonderful to see so many people having a fabulous time and really enjoying the sense of community, chatting about it afterwards and connecting with each other." We do not make wellbeing claims beyond what our evidence supports, given that we also value work that challenges and provokes.

Children and Young People

This year we significantly increased engagement with young people by delivering subsidised school performances in East Devon, with 131 young audiences in small rural schools. Four young musicians (aged 18–21) were engaged as paid performers across our Get Together programme, gaining professional experience and mentorship, and developing confidence with complex and emotionally sensitive audience situations. Young people also appeared as audience members at community events, with several promoters noting the particular value of multi-generational exchanges between young performers and older audiences.

Jobs, Training and Pathways to Employment

We employed 21 paid artists in East Devon this year, providing professional performance fees and the opportunity to perform for rural audiences in non-traditional venues. Our Get Together programme acted as a professional development pathway for four emerging young musicians who received payment, mentorship, and performance coaching from highly experienced arts and wellbeing music practitioners, and developed skills in adapting their work for community-based care settings. Our local producer role provides ongoing monthly employment for an East Devon-based practitioner. We continue to build our First Steps (Touring) bursary in partnership with the University of Exeter, Doorstep Arts and Exeter Northcott Theatre, supporting early-career artists making work for young audiences across the County. Furthermore, we offered support for 5 emerging artists to receive payment and mentoring in relation to the development of new performance work as part of our From Devon With Love development programme. Supporting early-stage work is vital to the health of the cultural ecosystem locally.

Partnerships, Resilience and Creative Ambition

Key East Devon partnerships this year include Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, Devon Music Education Hub, Sid Valley and Honiton Memory Cafés and the Manor Pavilion Theatre in Sidmouth. Three significant new venue partners: The Tiffin Box in Axminster, Kennaway House in Sidmouth and The Old Picture House in Seaton joined our network and are co-hosting events from March to July 2026, laying foundations for a stronger, more sustainable presence across the district.

Our volunteer promoter network is at the heart of our resilience. These are not passive venue-openers: they are skilled cultural animators who collectively contributed 255 volunteer hours this year across 42 volunteers in East Devon alone. They manage complex logistics, support artists, navigate emotionally sensitive situations with care, and build lasting community relationships. One promoter managed a distressing situation mid-event for an audience member, ensuring the rest of the audience remained held and supported, a level of skill and emotional intelligence that is central to what makes our rural model work. Experienced promoters actively mentor newer venues, creating a self-reinforcing network. This human infrastructure is what makes professional live performance genuinely accessible in rural East Devon.

Leveraging Increased Funding

The uplift from East Devon District Council this year, alongside agreed KPIs, has strengthened both our accountability and our ability to leverage further funding. EDDC support was cited as evidence of local embeddedness when securing Arts Council England Project Grant funding (October 2025 to September 2026). Against our agreed targets, we have exceeded expectations: 13 volunteering opportunities provided against a target of 10, with 42 volunteers contributing 255 hours; 209 participatory attendances against a target of 50; 20 events delivered within the agreed range; 2 community-led programmes delivered as agreed; and 1 new East Devon role created as agreed. Training reached 8 practitioners against a target of 10, though the bespoke, relationship-based approach has generated stronger long-term outcomes than a headcount reflects. EDDC investment has been directed primarily into the local producer role, with returns now materialising as new venue partnerships come online and less experienced promoters are supported through to independently hosting events.

Audiences, Visitors and Participants

In 2025-26, we reached 663 audience members across 15 East Devon performances (up from 589 in 2024-25) and 209 participants across 8 participatory sessions (up from 164 in 2023-24). Box office

income of £2,982.86 is lower than the previous year, reflecting a deliberate increase in subsidised and free provision for small rural schools, youth groups and older audiences through our Get Together programme, directing council investment to those who need it most. Across all years, East Devon audience attendance has remained consistent (620 in 2022-23, 645 in 2023-24, 589 in 2024-25, 663 in 2025-26), with participatory activity growing considerably from 61 participants in 2022-23 to 209 this year.

Diversity, Equality and Inclusion

We collect demographic data through our post-event audience survey. From East Devon audience responses this year: Gender: Female (approx. 56%), Male (approx. 41%), prefer not to say (3%). Ethnicity: White British (83%), with White/Irish, White other, Latino/Latinx and Asian/Asian British also represented. Sexual orientation: majority heterosexual, with bisexual/pansexual and homosexual respondents also represented. Age: audiences skew older, reflecting East Devon's rural demographic, however 18-25 and 26-34 age groups are present and growing. Sample sizes are small by the nature of rural venues, and our survey is optional, so we treat this data as indicative rather than definitive.

To actively improve inclusion, we are taking a range of practical steps. For audiences and artists alike, we are developing venue walkthrough videos, access information and social stories to support people with a range of disabilities. To address the younger age gap that reflects our local rural demographic, we take heavily subsidised performances directly into primary schools and offer paid performance opportunities in care settings specifically for artists aged 18 to 30, supporting an underrepresented age group both as audiences and practitioners. For artists, we provide Personal Assistant support and mentoring for minoritised artists entering predominantly white rural spaces, and actively create pathways for younger and more diverse artists through our From Devon With Love programme.

Climate and Environmental Impact

We monitor how audiences travel to East Devon events. This year's survey data shows: car share (71%), walking (17%), driving alone (10%), cycling (2%). The high rate of car sharing reflects both rural geography and the community nature of our events, where attending with neighbours is the norm. We continue to programme work with environmental and rural themes where this aligns with our artistic vision, seeking to prompt genuine conversation rather than didactic messaging.

Challenges

The primary challenge has been the rising cost of professional performance work. Most shows we programme cost a minimum of £800 per performance, and village hall capacities have not grown to match these costs. This creates a structural tension: high production value shows attract larger audiences but venue income cannot cover the gap without subsidy. Building a new network of venues requires significant relationship investment before financial returns are seen. Some contemporary concepts remain difficult to communicate to rural audiences unfamiliar with the form, and promotional copy needs continual refinement to build curiosity rather than hesitation. We are actively diversifying earned income and exploring enhanced performance offering models, such as food and performance at new business venues, to reduce reliance on grant funding over time.



Villages in Action 2025-2026





Museum support 2025/26

East Devon

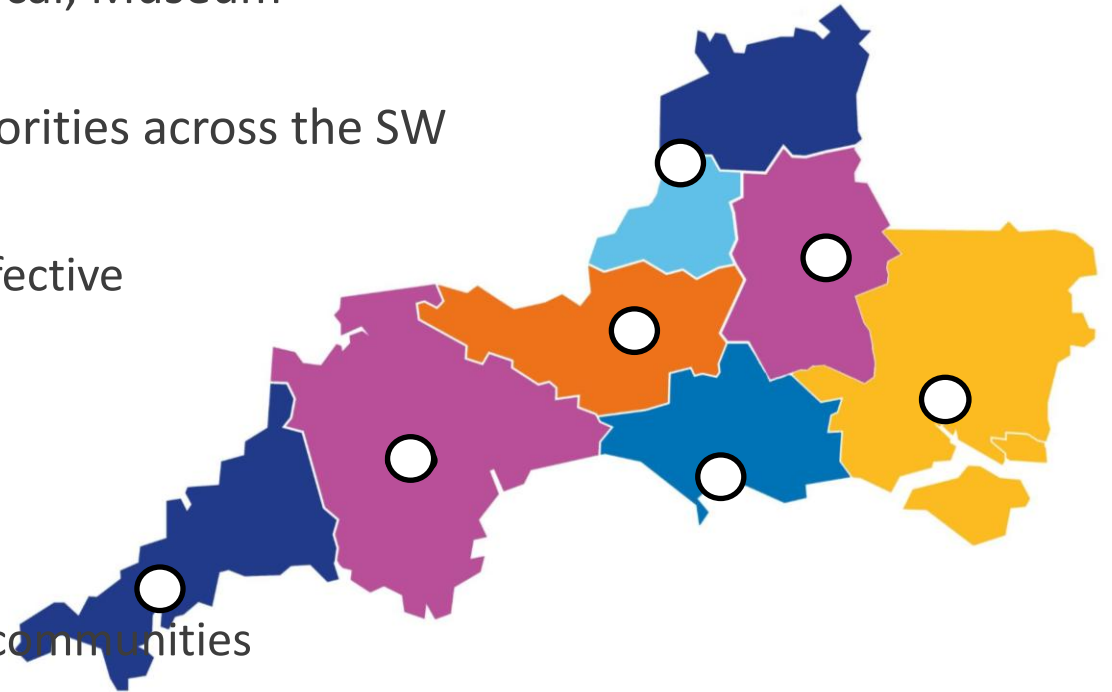
Joanna Cairns, Devon Museum Development Officer
April 2025

Local Museum Development Officer network

- Each year **£360,000** is invested in a network of nine local, Museum Development Officers (MDO)
- **47% of this** investment is secured from 18 Local Authorities across the SW

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Local, place-based MDOs are essential for the delivery of effective sector development providing:

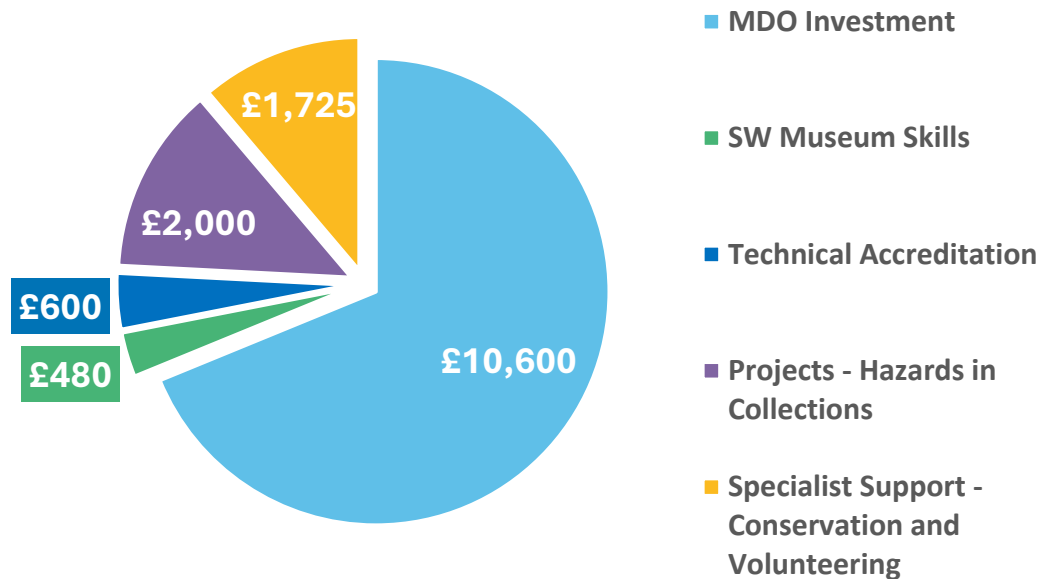
- Responsive 1-2-1 development support
- Facilitate access to specialist technical support
- Understand the role of museums play within their local communities
- Trusted relationship – providing continuity
- Connect, network and collaborate
- Vital and informed advocate



2025/26 Investment – East Devon

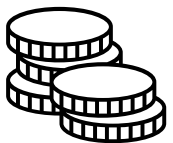


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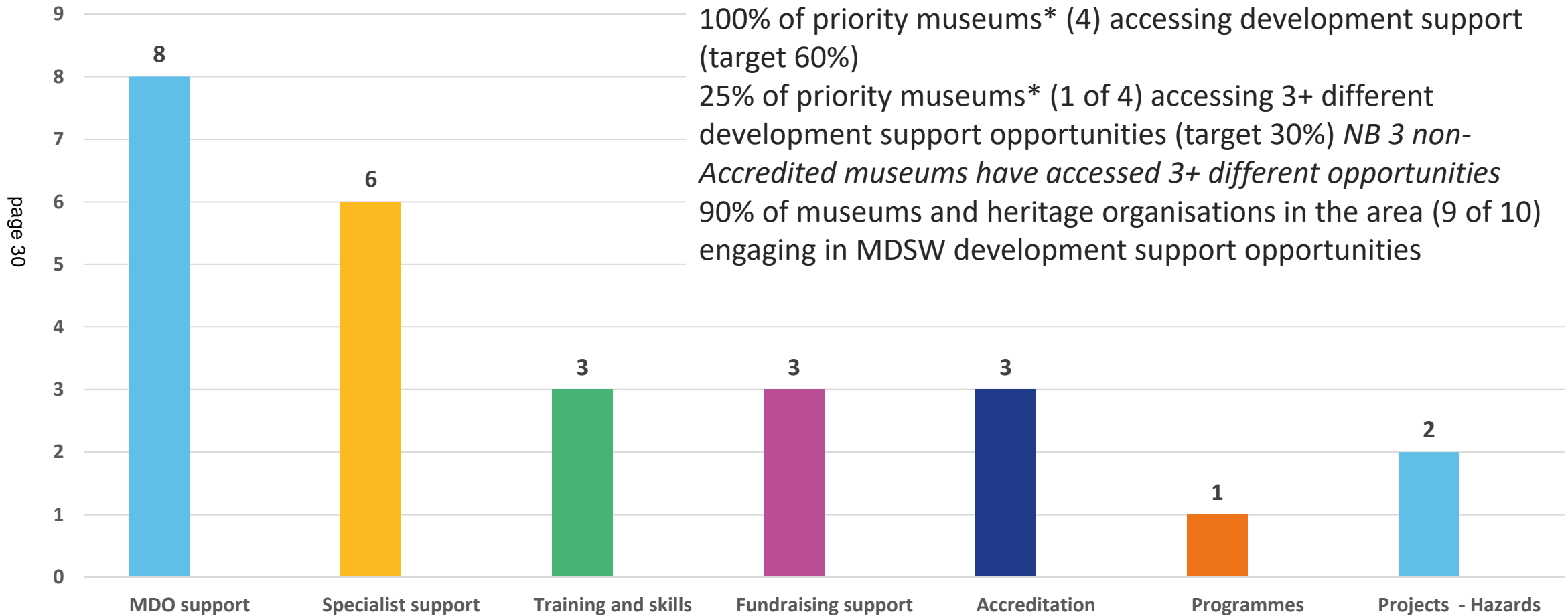
£15,045 investment - 275% return on EDDC's investment

- **£10,600** invested in local MDO support
- **£1,725** specialist and technical services in conservation, collection care and volunteer development accessed by 6 museums including ongoing support to Exmouth in Volunteering Fit for the Future programme
- **£600** access to Technical Accreditation advice by 3 museum organisations
- **£480** training with 8 delegates from 3 museums



Additionally for 25-26 £2,000 investment in Exmouth Museum and Axe Valley Heritage Museum participating in **'Reducing the Risks: Hazards in Collections'** project funded by National Lottery Heritage Fund

Reach and depth of engagement by museums – East Devon



100% of priority museums* (4) accessing development support (target 60%)

25% of priority museums* (1 of 4) accessing 3+ different development support opportunities (target 30%) *NB 3 non-Accredited museums have accessed 3+ different opportunities*

90% of museums and heritage organisations in the area (9 of 10) engaging in MDSW development support opportunities

Number of museums engaging in development support, grants and projects delivered by MDSW in East Devon

Delivery in 2025/26...

- Axe Valley Heritage Museum and Exmouth Museum participation in **NLHF funded [Reducing the Risks - Hazards in Collections](#)** receiving Hazard Kits and access to specialist training and 121 support
- Axminster Heritage Centre participation in our **[Organisational Health Check](#)** Programme
- Ongoing support for Exmouth Museum to strengthen their governance by **converting to a CIO**
- **MDSW Collaborative [Capacity Builder Grant](#) Funding** is enabling three museums (Axe Valley Heritage Museum, Exmouth Museum and Whimble Heritage Centre) to take part in a **Volunteer Leaders Wellbeing Day** at Dartington Hall.



Capacity Builder

Develop professional skills and build confidence with this grant.

[Read more >](#)

"It was good to mix with and get to know people from other Devon museums. To share problems and to have some fun in a supportive environment."

"I learnt how important it is to think about yourself and your wellbeing. Take time out to collect my thoughts and prioritise what work needs to be done first."

Annex 1. Museums in East Devon



Museum name	Accreditation no	Accreditation status	Governance type
A La Ronde	1962	Full Accreditation	National Trust
Allhallows Museum*	798	Full Accreditation	Independent
Axe Valley Heritage Museum (Seaton)	0	Non-Accredited	Independent
Axminster Heritage Centre*	2373	Full Accreditation	Independent
Exmouth Museum	0	Non-Accredited	Independent
Fairlynch Museum and Arts Centre*	855	Full Accreditation	Independent
Killerton House	1969	Full Accreditation	National Trust
Ottery St Mary Heritage Museum	0	Non-Accredited	Independent
Sidmouth Museum *	854	Full Accreditation	Independent
Whimble Heritage Centre	0	Non-Accredited	Independent

*Priority Museums : Museums that are Accredited or Working Towards Accreditation.

Non-priority museums are non-Accredited, non-National or National organisations e.g. National Trust, English Heritage museums in the Area



Thank you

southwestmuseums.org.uk

