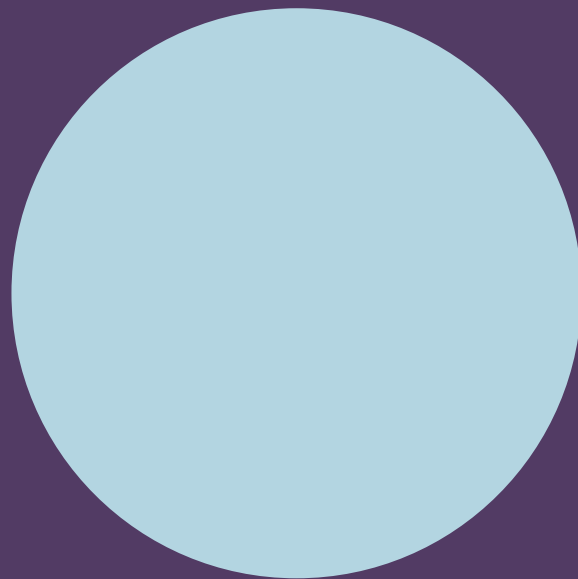


Summary Report 2024



Photo: Lisa Evans



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Executive Summary

Falkirk Council's 2024 Hippodrome Silent Film Festival was a triumphant blend of in-person gatherings and innovative online offerings, resulting in our highest attendance to date – a remarkable 50% increase from our busiest year in 2019. The Festival is integral to Falkirk Council's placemaking and cultural agenda to increase and broaden participation in culture, and to help secure recognition for the Falkirk area as a vibrant place for both local communities and visitors.

In-person audiences were treated to a diverse and engaging programme, featuring 18 screenings with live music, two illustrated talks with live music, three group tours, four hands-on workshops, one exhibition, and one excursion. The Festival was spread across six venues, and attendees enjoyed a rich cultural experience with the chance to hear from seven speakers and ten acclaimed musicians, as well as Falkirk's young musicians, junior and senior trad bands. Our HippFest at Home initiative live-streamed three features and hosted three pre-Festival talks, connecting with our global community. Our monthly podcast 'HippCast' kept our audience engaged and informed.

We strengthened partnerships within the town, fostering a vibrant and inclusive Festival village. The recognition of our screening of *The Flying Scotsman* at the Barony Theatre in Bo'ness, as the winner of the annual Audience Award, mirrored the Festival's community-centric ethos.

Highlights of the Festival's 14th edition included the sold-out premiere performance by Inge Thomson and Catriona Macdonald of their new score for *The Rugged Island: A Shetland Lyric*, which was enjoyed by an additional 100+ audience members tuning in online for the live stream.

From a cooking workshop inspired by Joan Crawford, to discovering the sites of big screen filming locations nearby; from the memorable heritage railway platform outdoor screening (complete with unexpected but fortuitous fireworks), to the colourful free exhibition at Bo'ness Library (mid-Feb to mid-Apr), the Festival catered to diverse interests, extending its reach well beyond the Hippodrome's walls.

Falkirk Council's **vision** is that HippFest is a world class Festival for silent film, cultivating an international community with an adventurous appetite for extraordinary cinema.



Mission: The Hippodrome Silent Film Festival (HippFest) is Scotland's first and only festival of silent film with live music, centred in and inspired by Scotland's first and oldest cinema, featuring exceptional screenings, commissions, workshops, community events and touring.

Inclusive

Our Team are friendly and approachable.
Our programmes embrace a multitude of styles, genres and nations.
Our programmes can be accessed and enjoyed by all.
We value equally the overlooked and the celebrated.

Exceptional

We ensure the highest presentation standards.
We capture and act on feedback from our community.
Our programmes celebrate discovery.
We innovate, evolve and embrace new platforms and activities.

Collaborative

Our cultural, academic, industry and archive partners invigorate our practice.
Our bold, high-profile partners complement our ambitions.
Our recruitment, artist commissions and volunteering opportunities are mutually rewarding.
Our tailored activity engages schools, FEs, universities and community groups.

Sustainable

We have a positive impact on community regeneration.
We champion Responsible Tourism.
We are committed to identifying and prioritising opportunities to cut carbon emissions.
We use our resources efficiently whilst ensuring the highest quality.

2024 key figures

423,572

People watched our cinema ad funded through a partnership with DCM (Digital Cinema Media)

19
Screenings

Programme reach:

5,052

1790+

Views of our HippFest at Home live streamed talks and features, and online pre-Festival talks



4
Workshops

3
Livestreamed features

2
Livestreamed talks

406

Livestream tickets sold; a record of 122 tickets sold for our Opening Night online premiere of *The Rugged Island*.

2,965

In-person & online tickets purchased

3
Online pre-Festival talks

87

Press stories over the course of the press campaign, with a potential reach of 45.3 million

6,045

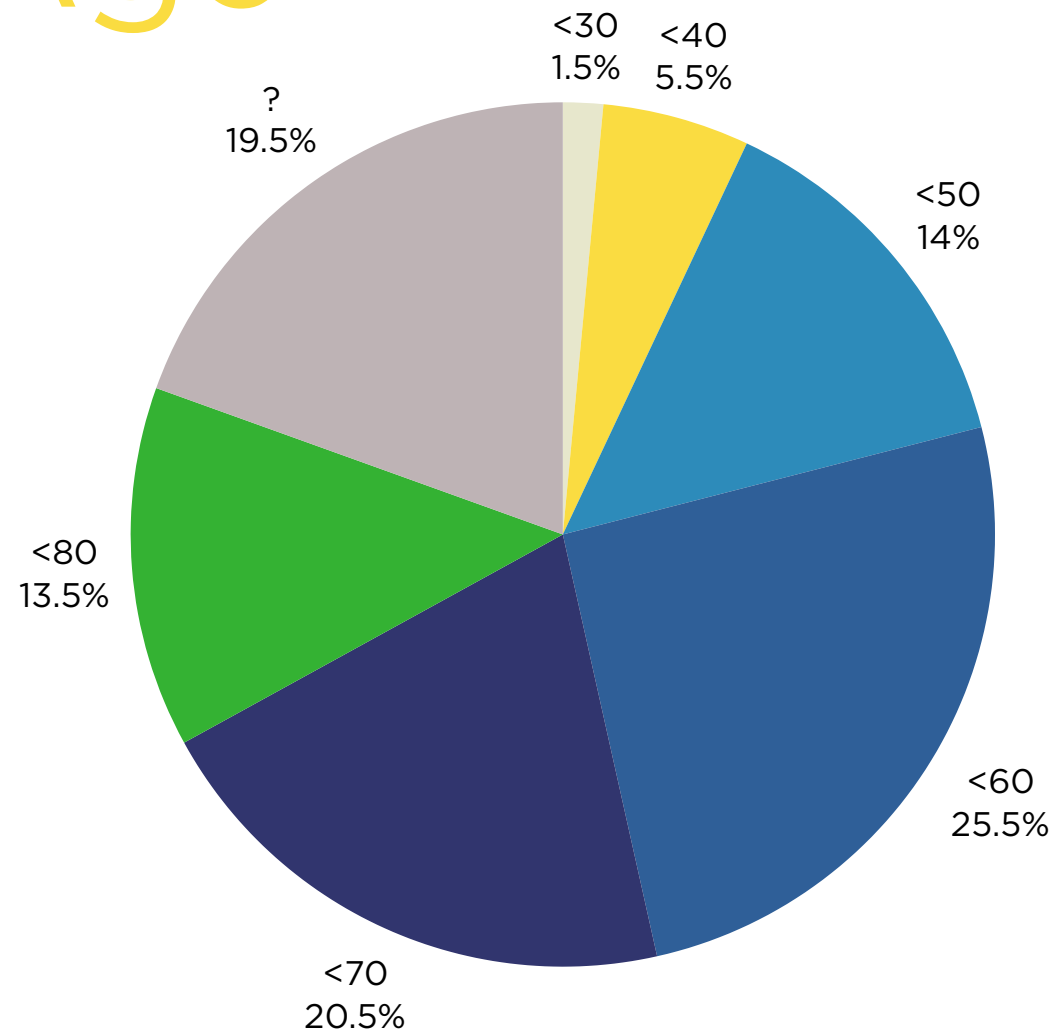
Social Media audience reach

100

Children and young people (under 25) reached with our Engagement Programme

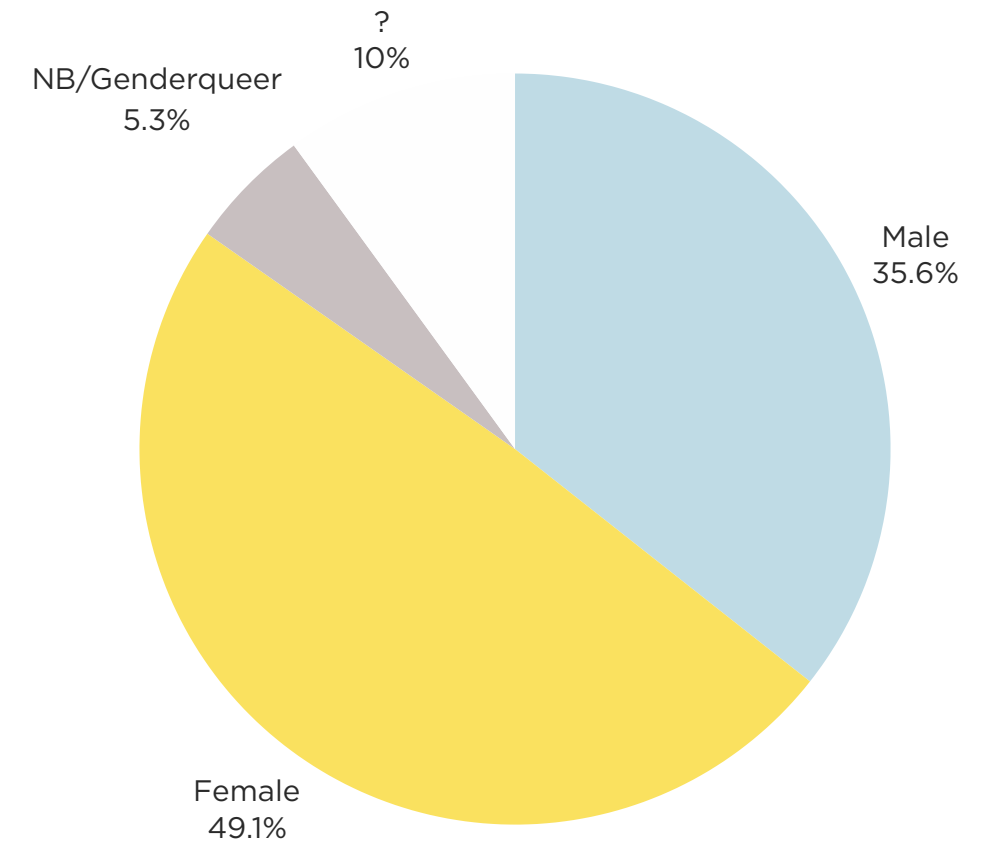
Audience Profile

Age



*average, online & in-person

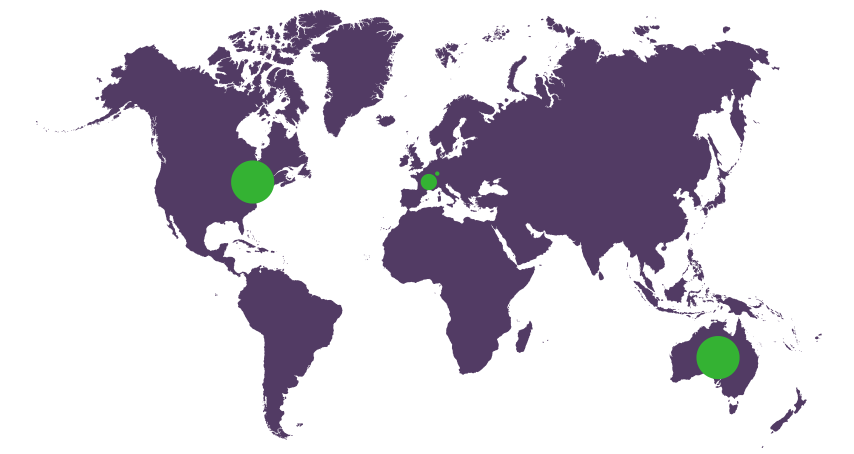
Gender



Location

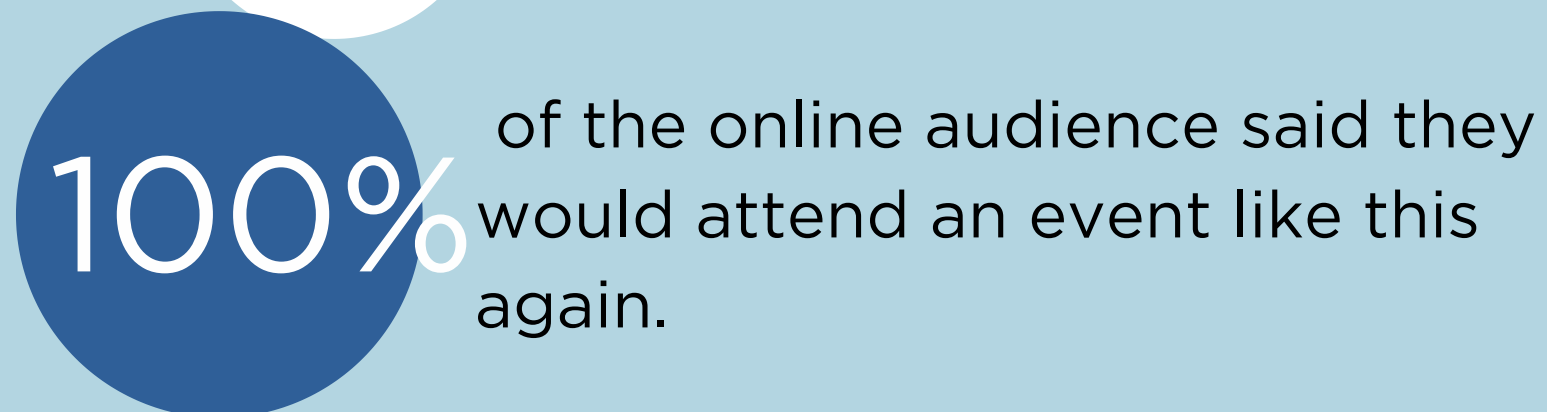
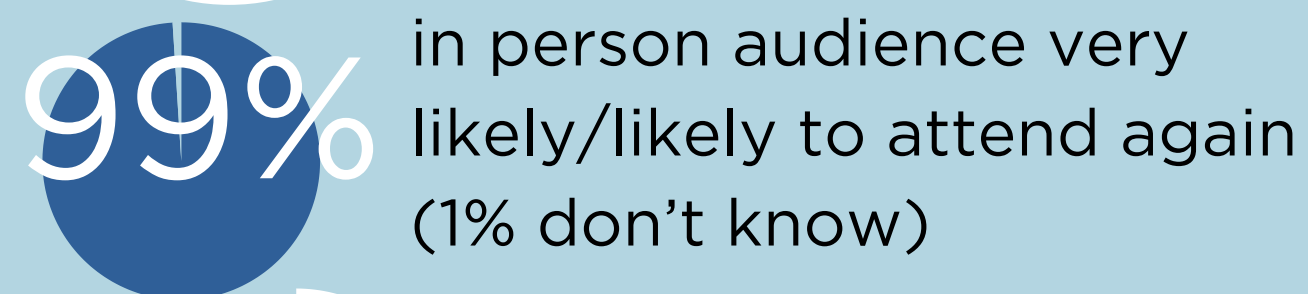
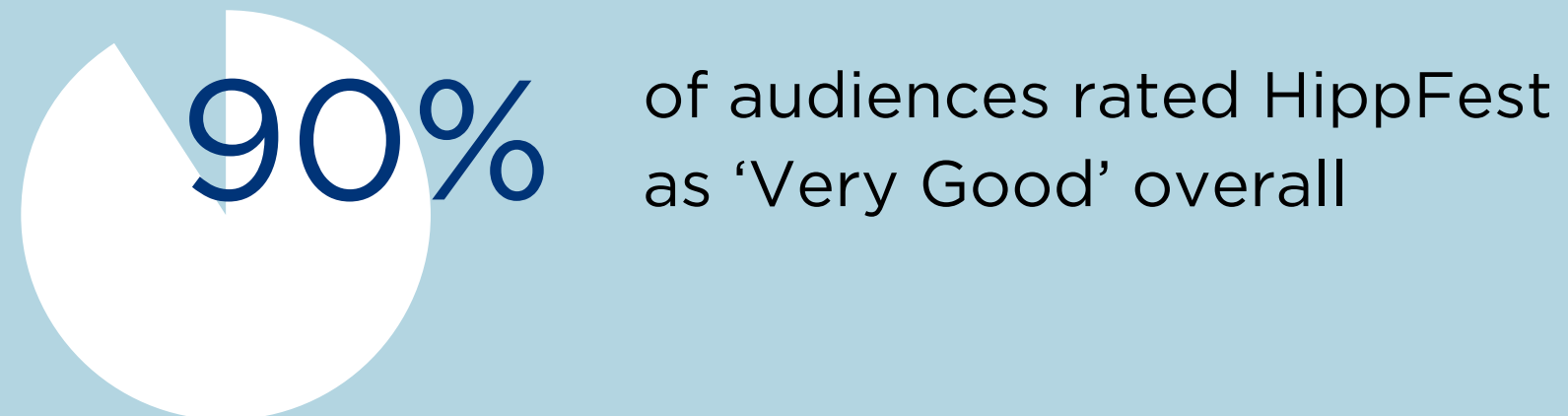
- 32% of our audience is local (Bo'ness/Falkirk)
- 35% hail from the Central Belt (11% from Glasgow; 24% from Edinburgh)
- 15% of our audience come from the rest of Scotland, from Dumfries & Galloway, Perthshire, Fife, Inverness, Orkney, Shetland, and more
- 5% of our audience came from London, and 7% from all over England & Wales

- 4% of our audience is International, from countries such as USA, Canada, Czechia and France*



*The remaining 2% did not share their postcode, data taken from Spektrix reports

Capturing Feedback



“This was the first time any of the 5 of us had seen a silent film. From the 5 year old to the 74 year old we all shook with laughter. We loved it! Who knew there was such a thing as a real family film (and it was made almost a hundred years ago)?!”

Access

"Door - fool!"



Lots of different endings going on.
Side note - final line is the ending of
censorship which existed in the silent era.

- 27% of audiences who purchased tickets were concession holders, and 1% of audiences utilised our standby ticket offer. 1% of audiences purchased 16-25-year-old tickets.
- 36% of the in-person and 32% of the online audience stated that they used our accessibility provisions in the 2024 edition.
- All of our spoken content had captions provided both online and in the Hippodrome

"Many thanks for the free tickets you provided for the Syrian family to attend the Silent Movie Festival last weekend. They had a lovely time... watching *Oliver Twist*. The family love silent films (which we talk about in our English classes) and the mother of the family even spoke about Silent Films in a recent English language exam for visa purposes."

CLD Worker
ESOL Resettlement

The Pay-it-Forward campaign allowed us to support free tickets for service users of our partner organisations **Friends of Scottish Settlers and Respite Falkirk** (for people with unpaid caring responsibilities), and to service users of the **Community Learning Department** at Falkirk Council, accounting for **0.5%** of our total audience.

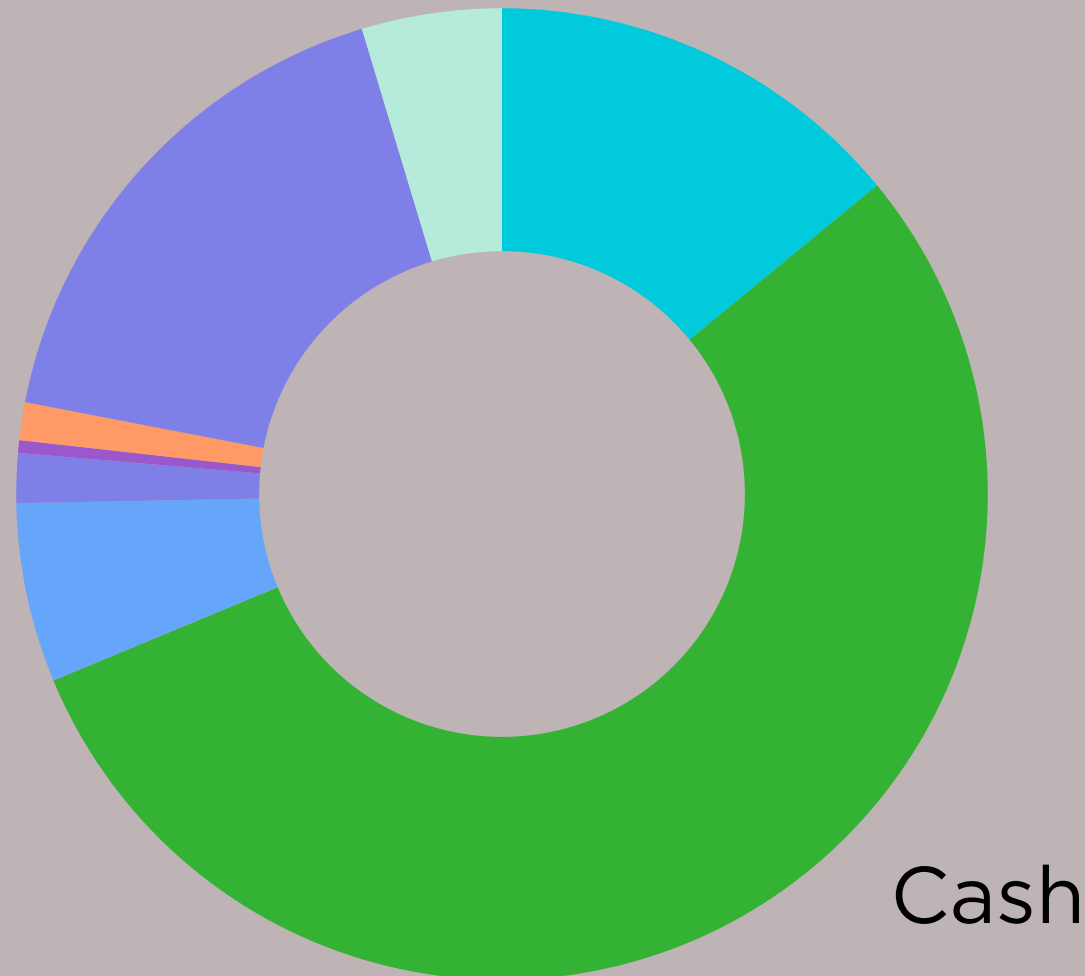


Funding & Income

24 funders and programme partners supported delivery of the Festival including Media Partner The Skinny and Accommodation Partner the Richmond Park hotel.

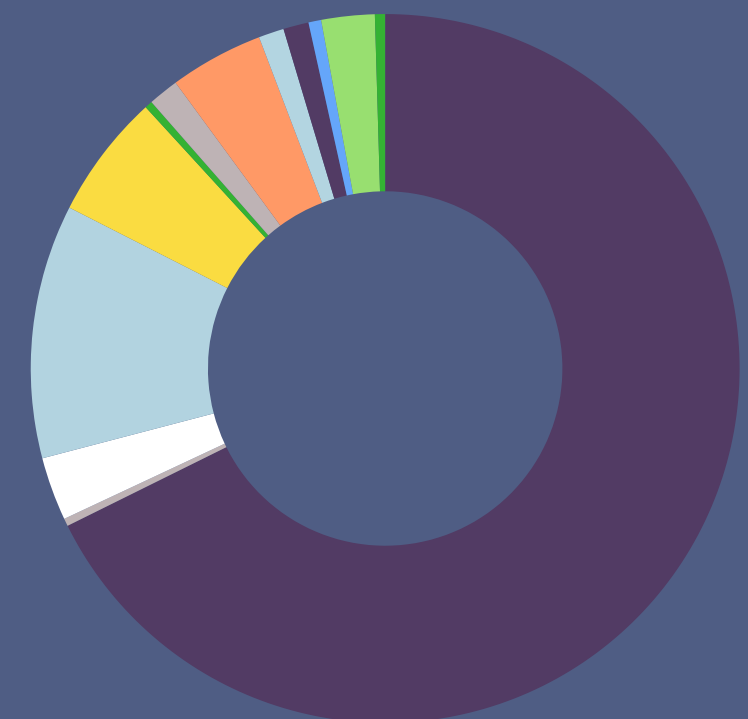
Core funding was secured from Film Hub Scotland and Screen Scotland to support programme activity for HippFest for the three and two years respectively. Creative Scotland also supported the commission of the score for our Opening Night performance. Programme and Archival partnerships such as the Academy of Motion Picture Sciences bolstered the programme notes, the presentations of silent film and our HippFest at Home programme. Modest in-kind and cash sponsorships were awarded from local groups and businesses such as the Barony Players, Artisan Roast, and the Richmond Park Hotel. Local trusts and Foundations such as the Agnes Watt Trust and the Schools Community 2008 Fund supported our Education and Engagement programme. We strengthened our earned income both through significant increases in box office sales and also through services, talks and tours with HE institutions and film societies, as well as merchandise sales and modest income from touring packages.

- Falkirk Council - £20,000
- Creative Scotland - £77,890
- Film Hub Scotland - £8,500
- Trusts, Foundations, Legacies - £2350
- Societies, HE Institutions - £600
- School & Other Gov. Funding - £1,786
- Earned Income (NET) - £24,655
- Cultural Institutes - £6,633



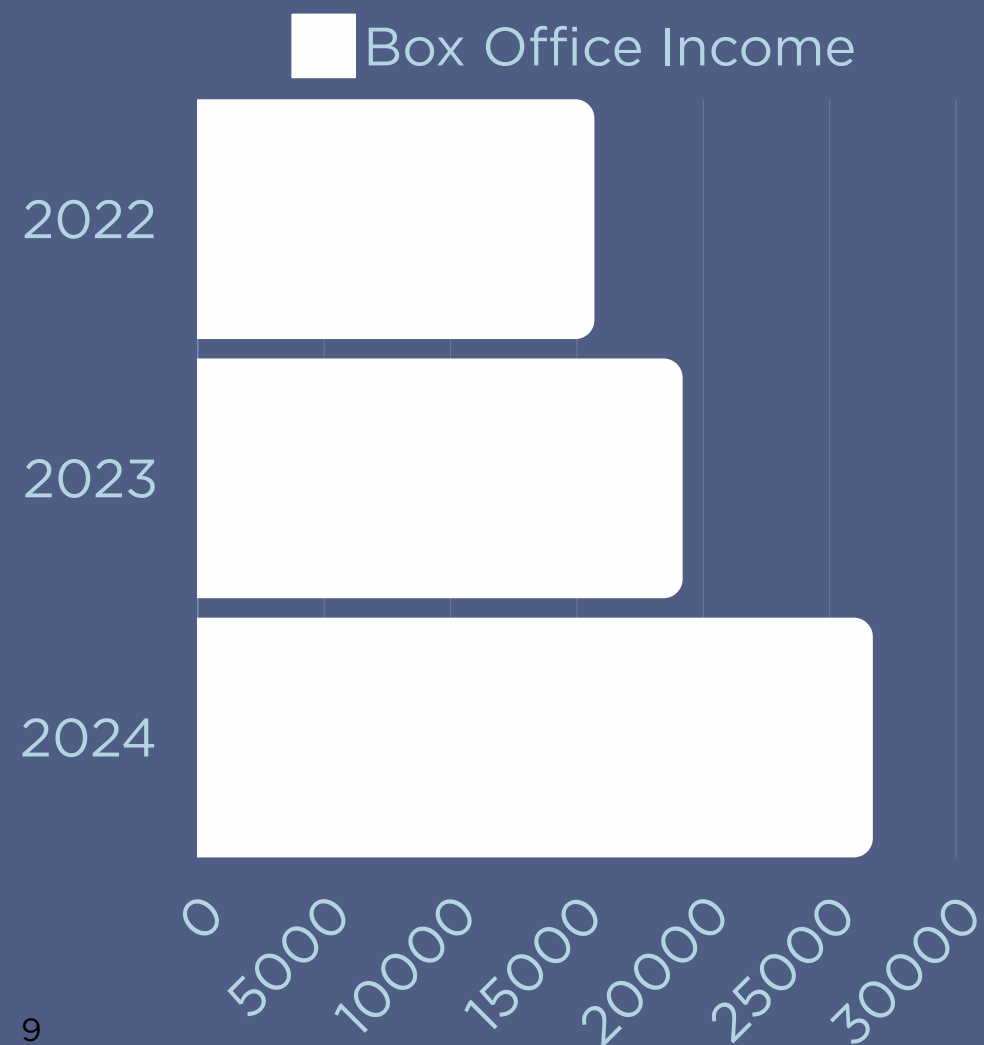
In-kind

- Falkirk Council - £29,232
- Falkirk Local History Society - £150
- YMI - £1250
- Digital Cinema Media - £5000
- Confucius Institute - £2459
- Ian MacLeod Distillery - £150
- Richmond Park Hotel - £600
- Glasgow University - £1850
- Braes Travel - £500
- Stretch Bros - £500
- Barony Theatre - £250
- Academy of Motion Picture Sciences - £1050
- SRPS - £200



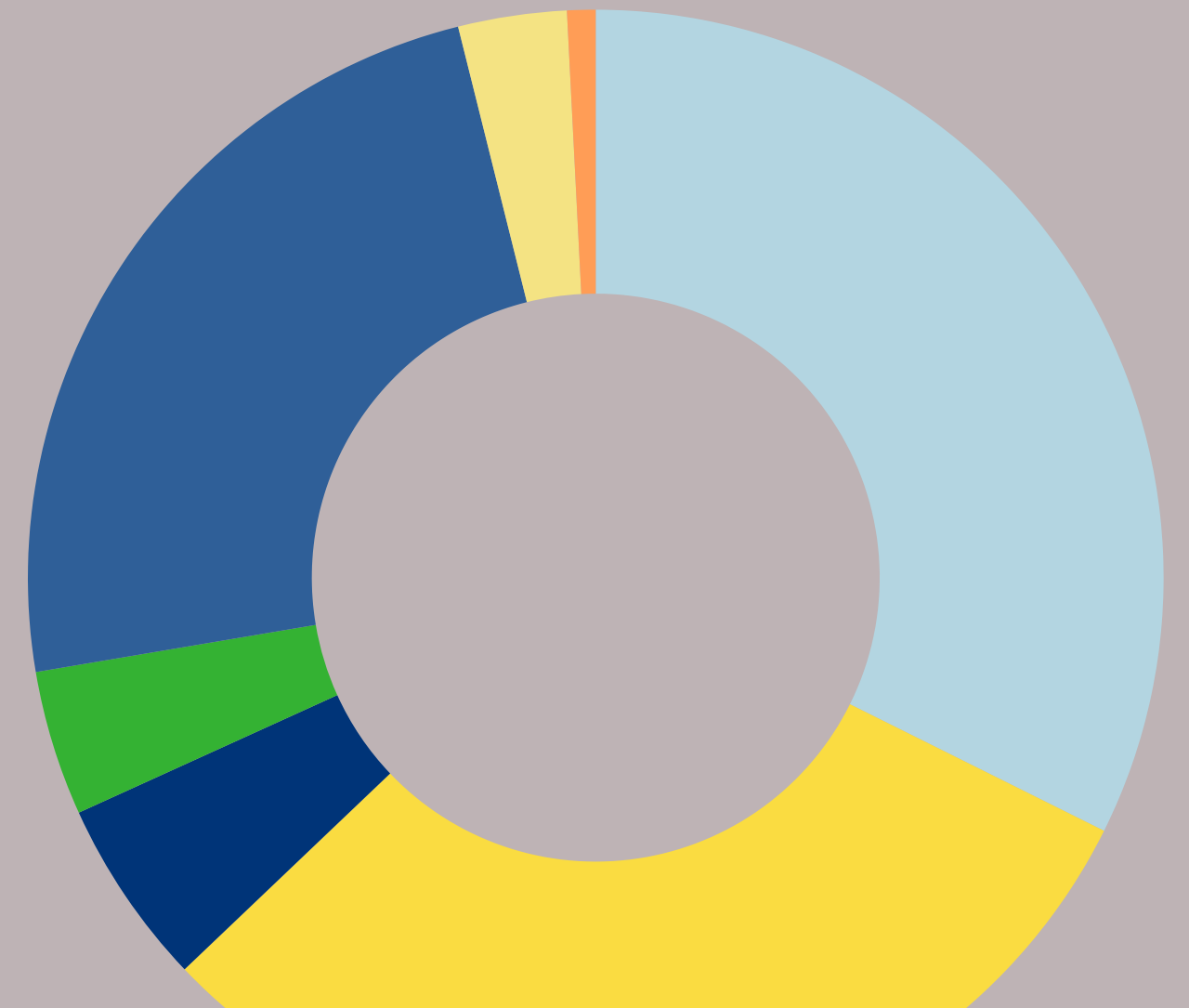


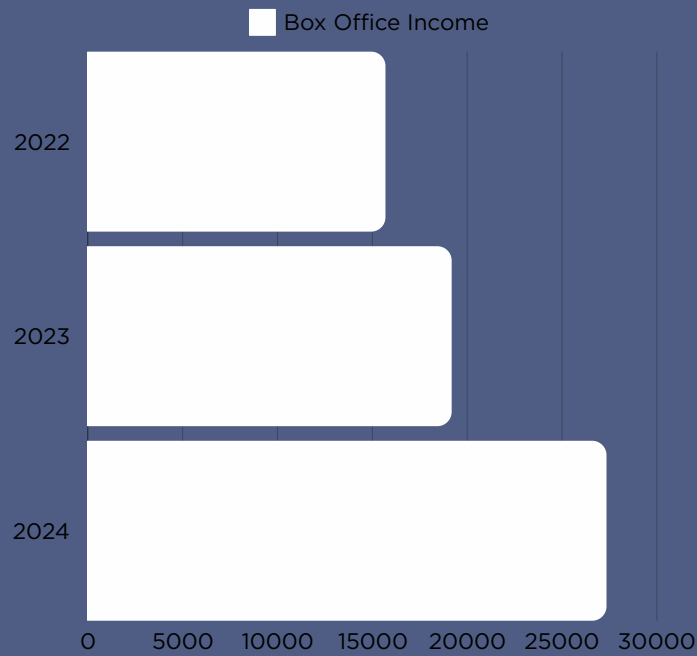
**Gross Box-Office
Income increased by
39% from £19,183 in
2023 to £26,710**



Expenditure

- Programme - £46,080
- Administration - £43,486
- Outreach & Education - £7,581
- Access Measures - £5,883
- Marketing & Promotion - £33,842
- Monitoring & Evaluation - £4,399
- Sustainability - £1,153





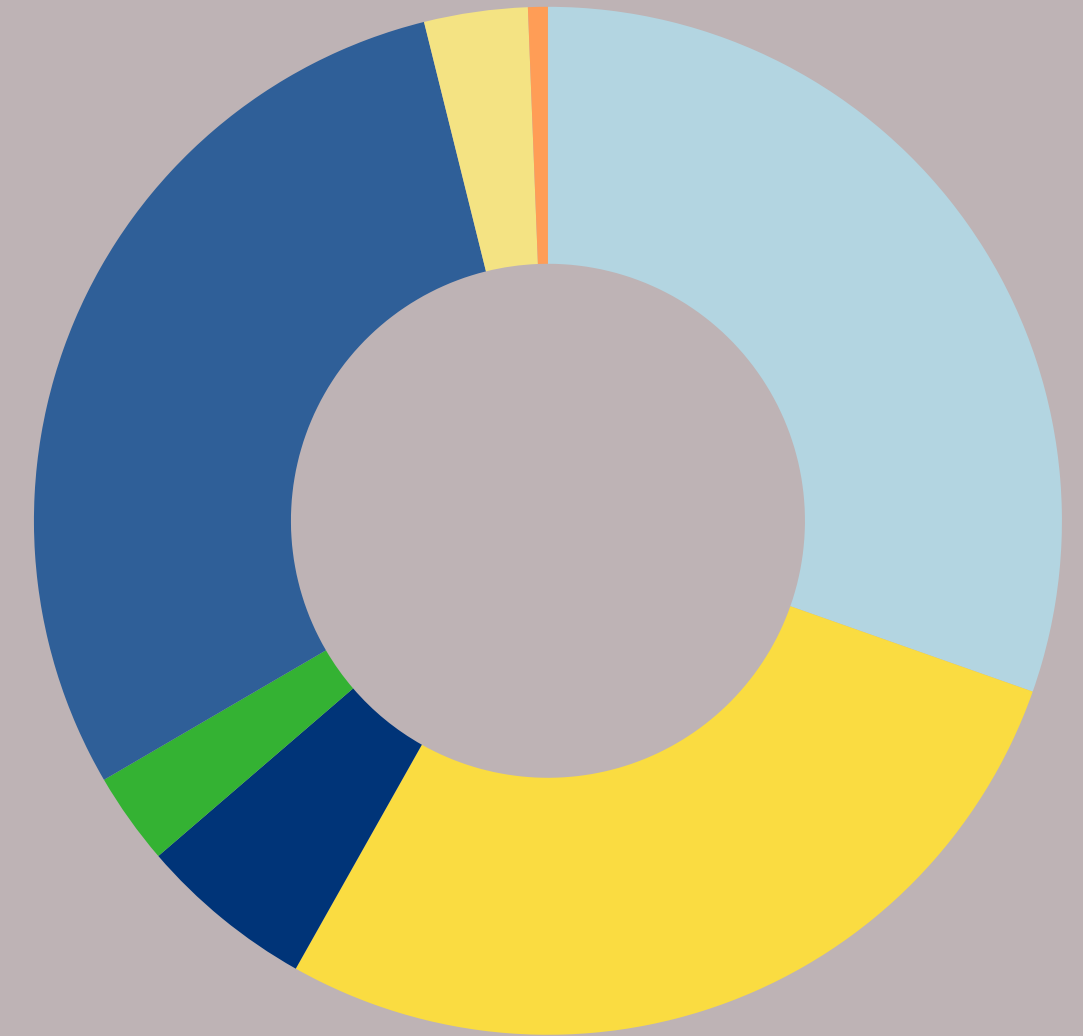
Gross Box-Office Income increased by 42% from £19,183 in 2023 to £27,346

Economic Impact:

- **95% of audiences surveyed cited HippFest as the main reason to visit Bo'ness**
- **78% (up from 75% in 2023) visited a café/ restaurant in Bo'ness 25% of those surveyed reported visiting other tourist attractions in the area**
- **Leveraged £4.88 through fundraising and £1.22 of earned income for every £1 of Falkirk Council cash investment**

Expenditure

- Programme - £41,080
- Administration - £37,536
- Outreach & Education - £7,475
- Access Measures - £3,923
- Marketing & Promotion - £39,915
- Monitoring & Evaluation - £4,399
- Sustainability - £840



Cash

Looking Forward

With funding already in place for the core activity the dates for the 15th edition of the Hippodrome Silent Film Festival will be 19th to 23rd March 2025, preceded by online activity from January to March 2025. In April of this year, the team submitted a Stage Two Application to Creative Scotland's Multi Year Funding programme, involving the development of an ambitious Business Plan covering the period 2025-8. If successful, the bid will see Falkirk Council receiving a three-year financial commitment from Creative Scotland to deliver HippFest, allowing crucial stability, continuity and development time. 2024 continues to present opportunities to tour HippFest commissions. The 2022 commission *Journey to the Isles* was reprised at the Glasgow University Advanced Research Centre in November 2023,

10.

and again at Edinburgh Tradfest this May. Plans are underway to tour the 2024 commission *The Rugged Island: A Shetland Lyric* across Scotland and internationally.

The Taste of Silents season will take place in Autumn 2024, with musicians including TV's Neil Brand, extending the HippFest presence throughout the year.

Planning is underway for the recruitment of a Young Programmers cohort from Autumn 2024-5, who will embed youth voices in next year's Taste of Silents season. Our online engagement programme continues with a monthly podcast and regular blog. HippFest is also working with international festival partners in Norway, The Netherlands and England on co-commission projects for the near future.

**The 15th edition of
HippFest will take place
19th-23rd March 2025**



Altogether, 'HippFest' is a high quality, internationally significant event in the cultural calendar. It deserves to be more widely known. It's also something Falkirk Council, as the host authority and a festival sponsor, can be enormously proud of. We may be done for another year, but the fifteenth edition will come around soon enough. Why not join the party?

Adrian Ross, The Reviews Hub