

CORN EXCHANGE NEWBURY



**'I THINK THE CORN
EXCHANGE IS BRILLIANT...
I'M SO GLAD WE HAVE IT
IN NEWBURY.'**

Audience member



**IMPACT REPORT
APRIL 2024 – MARCH 2025**

WELCOME FROM JESSICA

The last year has been an extremely full one – and seen us engage with the greatest number of people ever, with over 148,000 visits to our venues and activities. I am extremely proud of what we have achieved – from 10,000 people attending *Ablaze*, our 10th anniversary celebration of 101 Outdoor Arts, to starting the building work on our new arts and wellbeing hub at Newbury’s Old Library – it’s been an amazing year.

This report outlines just some of the ways that the Corn Exchange (Newbury) Trust has had a positive impact on local people’s lives. We strongly believe that the arts play a vital role in the life of our local community, and I hope you enjoy reading about just some of the highlights from 2024/25.

We know that what we have been able to achieve during this time has only been possible with your support. I continue to be overwhelmed and thankful for your huge generosity which helps us make brilliant things happen. You – our Members and Companions, donors, funders, audiences, participants, collaborators, staff and volunteers – have enabled us to do all of this crucial work and make a huge difference to our community.

As I write we are coming to the end of our redevelopment works on the Old Library and we are really excited to welcome all of you into the completed building in Spring 2026.

Thanks, as ever, for your support.

Jessica Jhundoo-Evans
Director



We appreciate ongoing support from



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ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND



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UK Government

Greenham Trust The logo for Greenham Trust, featuring a stylized "g" inside a circle.



OVER THE LAST YEAR YOU HAVE MADE EVERYTHING WE DO POSSIBLE...



13,000

attended
outdoor events



35,105

engagements with
our learning and
participation programme



278

live indoor shows



61

performances of
Dick Whittington



82

artist
residencies at 101



33,457

volunteer hours



4,649

donations to
the Old Library
campaign



£1,108,679

raised from grants



7,688

engagements with
our activity for young
people



6

access performances



5,626

engagements with our
activity for over 55's



148,229

overall engagements
across all our activity

WE SEEK OUT BETTER WAYS TO DO THINGS

Making arts accessible for everyone

We are committed to recognising, embracing and responding to the diversity of our community and strive to ensure equity and inclusion is incorporated across all the programmes and activities of the organisation – last year 34% of our live programme represented diversity in the broadest sense. Shows included the BSL integrated performance of *Beautiful Evil Things* by Ad Infinitum, a fierce, funny, bloody take on some of the oldest stories known to woman, which took place in the Corn Exchange auditorium in June 2024.

We have delivered a number of significant changes in this year including introducing more relaxed, audio described, captioned, dementia friendly and BSL performances for live shows and film; created resource bags to aid those with sensory needs; amended our booking process for wheelchair users; and provided mental health first aid training for the whole staff team as part of our efforts to make our venues and events accessible for everyone.

Towards a greener future

We are committed to minimising the Corn Exchange's impact on the environment and a key focus is working with our staff, volunteers, partners and stakeholders to find and promote greener ways of doing things. We have already replaced our incandescent theatre lights with LED units, installed motion detectors in toilets, removed single use plastic and packaging from our Café Bar and Front of House area and prioritised using local, closed circle or B-corp businesses along with reusing, repairing and repurposing. In this year we ran our sustainability fair, which aims to bring together eco-friendly individuals, makers, businesses and charities that are leading the way in our communities, encouraging people to connect with others and share ideas to minimise the impact we have on our environment.

In this year we were also successful with funding to create two small gardens from overgrown patches at the rear of the Corn Exchange. Works are now underway to transform this area, making the space more attractive and enhancing biodiversity.





The Jungle Book



Last Rites



The Luminous



Zero for the Young Dudes

WE ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT THE ARTS

Supporting young talent

Our Youth Theatre has seen over 150 young people take part in weekly drama sessions in this year. We achieved funding to award 29 bursaries to provide young people with a Youth Theatre place - equating to 18% of our youth theatre membership supported through either half or full bursaries for families from low socio-economic backgrounds. These bursaries have a significant impact on young people, with one youth theatre member opting to do their Duke of Edinburgh volunteering at infant youth theatre and continuing as a volunteer once that had ended.

Bursary places also enabled these young people to take part in our annual large scale infant and junior youth theatre performance in August 2024, *The Jungle Book*. This show was performed on the Corn Exchange stage across six performances with two full casts of 47 and 51 young people in each – performing to over 1,000 audience members. Bursary places also went to members of our intermediate youth theatre who presented *Zero for the Young Dudes* at the Corn Exchange in April 2024 and *NT Connections: Normalised* in March 2025.

Supporting artists and new work

In this year we are delighted to have supported two theatre companies by co-commissioning new work: Redcape Theatre with *The Luminous*, which explored female protest through the company's unique blend of physical theatre, dark comedy and gripping storytelling, which opened at the Corn Exchange before going on a short tour; and Ad Infinitum who presented *Last Rites*, a non-verbal piece of theatre with no spoken words, accessible to deaf, Deaf, hard-of-hearing, and hearing audiences. The performance included some BSL with creative captions and a soundtrack with heavy use of bass that can be felt or heard by audience members. It was later selected to be part of the *Here & Now Showcase* at the Edinburgh Fringe.

'It was an astonishing play. Mesmerising. I've seen many West end musicals and shows, but Last Rites is right there at the top. It moved me tremendously.'

Audience member

WE PUT OUR AUDIENCES AND PARTICIPANTS FIRST

Providing opportunities for connection and creativity

Our weekly Coffee+Click camera club focuses on coffee, camaraderie and the joy of photography. The sessions were originally led by a documentary photographer at Podium Place in Newbury and had over 368 engagements. When the mentor had to take some time out the participants actively took the lead driving the club to new heights, creating a group which strikes just the right balance between social interaction and artistic inspiration.

'Nothing but positivity, friendship, community. Calm and gentle. No judgement. It certainly played a positive part in my recovery.'

Coffee+Click participant

Using arts to improve wellbeing and mental health

In this year we delivered our Create a Space project which supports confidence, mental health and wellbeing for young adults not in employment, education or training (NEET). The project aims to contribute to positive change for participants and support their pathways to education, training, and employment opportunities. Across the programme we engaged with 56 young people, working with partners from West Berkshire Training Consortium, Berkshire Youth, A Bridge for Young People and West Berkshire Council.

'The workshops run by the Corn Exchange add an invaluable opportunity for our learners to explore themselves and form trusting and respectful relationships with their peers, adding hugely to their confidence, communication skills, engagement with the course as a result.'

Course Lead, West Berkshire Training Consortium





WE RESPECT AND INCLUDE EVERYONE

Ablaze

Ablaze took place in September 2024 as part of 101 Outdoor Arts' 10th anniversary celebrating ten years of free outdoor arts which Newbury residents have come to love and cherish as a unique part of their town. The outdoor event saw the Kennet and Avon Canal glowing with spectacular floating braziers leading to Victoria Park, which was transformed by legendary French company, Carabosse, into a huge fire garden illuminated with majestic fire installations, kinetic sculptures and mechanical structures bringing fire, metal and water together in improbable combinations.

Working with partners Greenham Trust, Newbury Canoe Club, Waterside Centre, Canal & River Trust and Newbury Town Council, *Ablaze* brought 10,000 people of all ages together to experience this magical event in Newbury.

'It was truly wonderful and these events make us feel part of a wonderful community'

Ablaze attendee

Arts for Health

In this year we continued to deliver targeted work supporting mental health locally through creative activity. Our Creative Art Journalling programme saw 113 young people from 6 local secondary schools participating in 2025. These sessions provide a safe place to acquire skills for young people to express themselves and help them through challenging times. Led by a professional artist, sessions provide a creative wellbeing toolkit to help them explore, articulate and manage their emotions to support improved mental health. 80% of students said that they felt more able to attend school after attending the sessions and 90% said that they helped with managing emotions or behaviour.

'These sessions were very useful as they took some stress out of my day and they let me get everything I was feeling out on a page.'

Art Journalling participant

WE AIM FOR EXCELLENCE

Curating a varied live programme

In this year we presented 278 live indoor shows at the Corn Exchange. Some of the highlights include:

Srishti Nina Rajarani Dance Creations, one of the leading choreographers of Indian Dance in the UK, presented two shows – *Pathways* and *Sevens* – showcasing classical dance from southern India.

We also presented two circus shows: *Heka* from the internationally-renowned Gandini Juggling and *Tess* from Ockham's Razor which was an adaptation of the Thomas Hardy classic, told using contemporary circus and dance.

And we were really pleased to be part of a limited UK tour for *Trash* – a comedy music show by a Spanish company who were performing in the UK for the first time. Our theatre offerings included *I Wish My Life Were Like a Musical* and *Buffy Revamped*, both of which have been hits at the Edinburgh Fringe, and we had a strong selection of comedy from some big names including Ben Elton, Milton Jones, Rob Beckett and Jack Dee.

At the heart of our community

A highlight of this year was receiving three awards. The Corn Exchange was voted the Overall Winner of the Newbury Christmas Heroes Award, having received the most nominations and feedback from people in the local community. We also won Best (Town Centre) Business, sponsored by Newbury BID, as part of the Newbury Weekly News Best in Business Awards and the regional Muddy Stilettos 2025 award for Best Arts, Culture and Theatre in Berkshire!

We listen to feedback from our visitors and local residents as we work hard to be an arts centre which caters to everyone and are delighted to be acknowledged by our community for this effort.





Junior Youth Theatre



Best in Business Awards



Words Together



Muddy Stilettos

WE WORK COLLABORATIVELY

Wellbeing Warriors with Education Business Partnership

In this year we continued our collaboration with the Education and Business Partnership delivering Wellbeing Warriors in 4 different primary schools (7 classes) reaching 206 children. This project introduces children to the idea of 'Wellbeing', exploring physical, mental and emotional, social, educational and holistic wellbeing through drama, music, arts and crafts, games and quizzes.

'The students are loving the sessions. One of our students can struggle sometimes, but when she got upset (earlier today) she said 'it's ok because I have my wellbeing session this afternoon and that will make me feel better'

Primary School Teacher

Working with the care sector

Working with the care sector is a key focus of our work with older people. Our year long residency at Willow's Edge Care Home delivering Tai Chi sessions successfully engaged with people living with dementia, offering a familiar exercise session to enhance physical health, flexibility and balance to positively impact mobility for all participants.

'The sessions suited our residents perfectly, allowing them to take their time without feeling rushed. There was improvement in flexibility. Residents were calmer and had a notable improvement in behaviour with less agitation.'

Care Home staff member

Our intergenerational literacy project Words Together, was another successful project this year which connected Streatley Primary School and their neighbouring care home, Coombe House; linking two generations in a local village as they explored folk tales.

'When we first started working with the residents, they weren't keen to engage but the moment we told them that the children from the next-door school were coming it was like something lit up inside them.'

Ageing Creatively Project Assistant

OLD LIBRARY

In this year we launched our public fundraising campaign to refurbish Newbury's old library to become a new arts and wellbeing hub for West Berkshire. Having already secured some significant grants for the project the public campaign asked our audiences and community to support our fundraising effort.

We were fortunate to have many generous people donate their time to fundraise on our behalf – everything from sponsored runs, bake sales, cheese and wine evenings, Bridge events and bucket collections.

We presented a number of fundraising events at the Corn Exchange including a benefit event with Al Murray, an evening with Thomas Forrester and *Newbury Sounds*, a live music event for local bands. We organised fundraising quizzes; open mic nights;

raffles; match funding appeals; and did numerous radio and TV interviews along with information events and tours of the building to raise awareness of our project.

This year also saw the start of the development works: Greenham Trust, the owners of the building, completed external weatherproofing including repairs to the roof, new windows and repointing of the brickwork. We appointed a project manager, architects and relevant professional services, cleared the space in preparation for interior works and re-designed the entrance to ensure the building is accessible to everyone.

By the end of this financial year we had raised an amazing £800,000 towards our overall fundraising target. We are humbled by the immense support that our audiences and community have given the campaign this year. Thank you.

We can't wait to welcome you all to our Old Library; a hub for arts, wellbeing and community.

OLD LIBRARY

CREATING A NEW ARTS HUB FOR NEWBURY







1 & 10 *Dick Whittington*

2 *NT Connections: Normalised*

3 *101 Open Day*

4 *Cinema Club*

5, 7 & 14 *Memory Café*

6 *Home Artists*

8 *101 Outdoor Arts 10th anniversary*

9 *Urban Sketching*

11 & 13 *Sing 55*

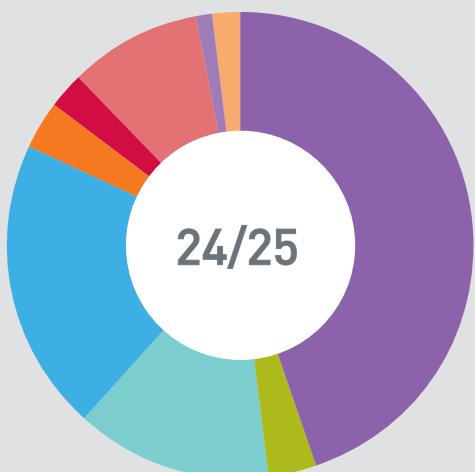
12 *Festival of Light*

15 *The Jungle Book*



OVERALL INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

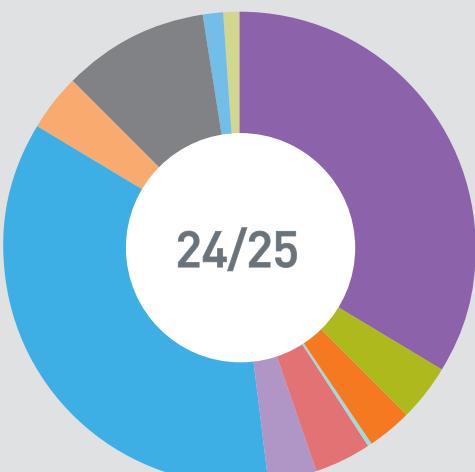
INCOME



● Artistic Activity	£1,601,009
● Learning and Participation	£128,208
● Grant Funding (inc ACE and Lottery)	£487,639
● Trusts and Foundations (inc Greenham Trust)	£719,375
● Fundraising (Individuals and Sponsorship*)	£120,285
● Fundraising – Old Library	£86,051
● Café Bar	£337,865
● Investment income	£39,446
● Theatre Tax Relief	£60,003
Total	£3,579,881

*includes £20,400.33 from Gift Aid

EXPENDITURE



● Artistic Activity	£1,210,565
● Learning and Participation	£134,629
● Marketing and Technical	£112,583
● Fundraising	£4,949
● Capital expenditure on Old Library (up to March 25)	£144,981
● Café Bar	£112,209
● Staff Costs	£1,273,274
● Administration overheads	£146,095
● Premises Overheads	£359,247
● Depreciation	£46,059
● Other Expenditure	£34,332
Total	£3,578,923

THANK YOU

We are grateful for the support and generosity of all our members and donors, please see a list of our individual donors here cornexchannew.com/oursupporters, and our Old Library Patrons here cornexchannew.com/old-library-supporters

We would like to thank all the trusts and foundations, businesses and organisations who have supported us this year, including with our Old Library campaign.

All of your donations have made a real difference, helping us to carry out our extensive programme of work, fulfilling our mission to offer high quality arts and creative activity to more and more local people. We hope you will continue to support us as we look forward to opening the Old Library and expanding our creative work.



Corn Exchange gratefully acknowledges funding from:



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Headley Trust • Hungerford Town Council • JA Floyd Charitable Trust
Lily and Marcus Sieff Charitable Trust • Mobbs Memorial Trust • Payne-Gallwey Charitable Trust
Sabina Sutherland Charitable Trust • Trelix Charitable Trust • VCSE Energy Efficiency Scheme
Veolia Sustainability Fund

BackstageTrust



Events wouldn't happen without our team of dedicated volunteers. We would like to thank all of our volunteers for kindly giving us their time, support and enthusiasm.





Photographers:

Camilla Adams
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Normalised



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