



# Lakeland Arts Impact Report

2024 - 2025

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# Chair's Foreword

## Annual Report 24-25

In 2024–25, Lakeland Arts made remarkable strides, delivering inspiring exhibitions, deepening engagement with local communities and wider audiences, and developing new commercial revenue streams that support our sustainability and growth.

This progress was achieved against a challenging national backdrop. The economic climate continues to present complex pressures for charitable organisations in the tourism and cultural sectors. Institutions like Lakeland Arts – reliant not only on philanthropic support and grant funding but also on strong visitor engagement – have navigated an environment shaped by inflation, fiscal constraints, and sector-specific challenges.

Over the past year, we have continued to experience compounded pressures, including sustained high inflation, a slowing UK economy, a 1.2% increase in employer National Insurance contributions, and significant rises in utility costs. Despite these challenges, our teams have risen to the occasion with resilience, creativity, and dedication.

2024–25 marked the second year of our three-year National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) grant agreement with Arts Council England, as part of the Cumbria Museum Consortium. We exceeded 77% of our targets this period, surpassing forecasts by 7,186 family engagements and 8,344 adult participants. This outstanding achievement reflects the dedication of our teams and the appetite of our communities to engage with arts and culture.

We are delighted that Arts Council England has recognised this success by extending our grant agreement to 2026–27, providing stability and confidence for the years ahead. We were equally pleased to continue our valued partnership with the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, whose support has enabled us to deliver inclusive engagement projects with local communities, particularly through Abbot Hall in Kendal.

Building on the Art Fund's Sir Nicholas Goodison Award in 2022, Programme Curator Naomi Gariff further enriched and diversified Blackwell's contemporary craft collection with nine outstanding new acquisitions from artists including Lorna Singleton, Chris Day, Clare Malet, and Paul Scott. Significant progress was also made on the John Ellerman-funded project to audit and rationalise the social history collections of the Lakeland Museum and Lakeland Arts' storage facilities, supported by the invaluable contributions of our volunteers.

We welcomed four new members to our Senior Leadership team, whose expertise and vision are already helping drive Lakeland Arts forward. Our teams continue to deliver meaningful arts and cultural experiences for visitors and communities across Cumbria, supported by the dedication of volunteers, who play a vital role in bringing exhibitions and experiences to life. During this period, we were proud to welcome 96 volunteers to Lakeland Arts.

Families remained central to audience development at Windermere Jetty Museum, with interactive exhibitions such as Microworld and Blue Space bringing biodiversity, ecology, and STEM themes to life. Event highlights included the fourth Windermere Science Festival and the first inaugural Festival of the Lake, which celebrated local stories and community spirit. Our Boat Conservation team had a successful year, recommissioning steam launches Osprey and Lady Elizabeth, both now back on the water for visitors to enjoy.

At Abbot Hall, an ambitious programme of exhibitions explored themes of ecology, identity, and landscape. Highlights included the first major retrospective of Gilbert Spencer in over fifty years, a thought-provoking exhibition of Claude Cahun's photography, and Charmaine Watkiss' largest institutional solo show to date. We also celebrated the reopening of the refurbished Ecology Gallery alongside Johannes Pretorius' Intervention and Renewal, developed in partnership with young activists from Queen Katherine School. Together, these exhibitions reflect Abbot Hall's commitment to presenting outstanding art while fostering creativity, dialogue, and community engagement.

At Blackwell - the Arts & Crafts house, the year began with the continuation of Sublime Symmetry: William De Morgan, which attracted audiences from across the UK. This was followed by a solo show of contemporary works by British-Nigerian sculptor Lawson Oyekan - his first in a UK public institution in almost two decades. 2024 also saw the return of Blackwell's Autumn Craft Fair, celebrating the work of local makers and artisans.

Our Participation and Learning team expanded workshops for schools and families, while engagement programmes strengthened connections with communities and partners. Lakeland Arts

played a leading role in major regional festivals and events, including Windermere Science Festival, Knotted Project's Forge Festival, Kendal Pride, Lake District Music Festival, Kendal Mountain Festival, and the Lakes International Comic Arts Festival. Strong partnerships remain central to our work. Collaborations with Kendal Town Council, Westmorland and Furness Council, Lancaster University, and numerous community organisations; including Strickland Gate House, Anti-Racist Cumbria, and Queer Cumbria, enabled us to deliver initiatives that enhanced cultural participation and community impact.

Windermere Jetty Museum also grew as a venue for filming and private hire, generating vital income and attracting new audiences through projects such as BBC Breakfast, Channel 4's Four in a Bed, and a national Currys campaign.

Looking ahead, Lakeland Arts moves forward with confidence, grounded in strong partnerships, creative ambition, and an unwavering commitment to making culture accessible, engaging, and meaningful for all.

**Diane Reid MCIOF**  
**Chair, Lakeland Arts**

# Financial Review

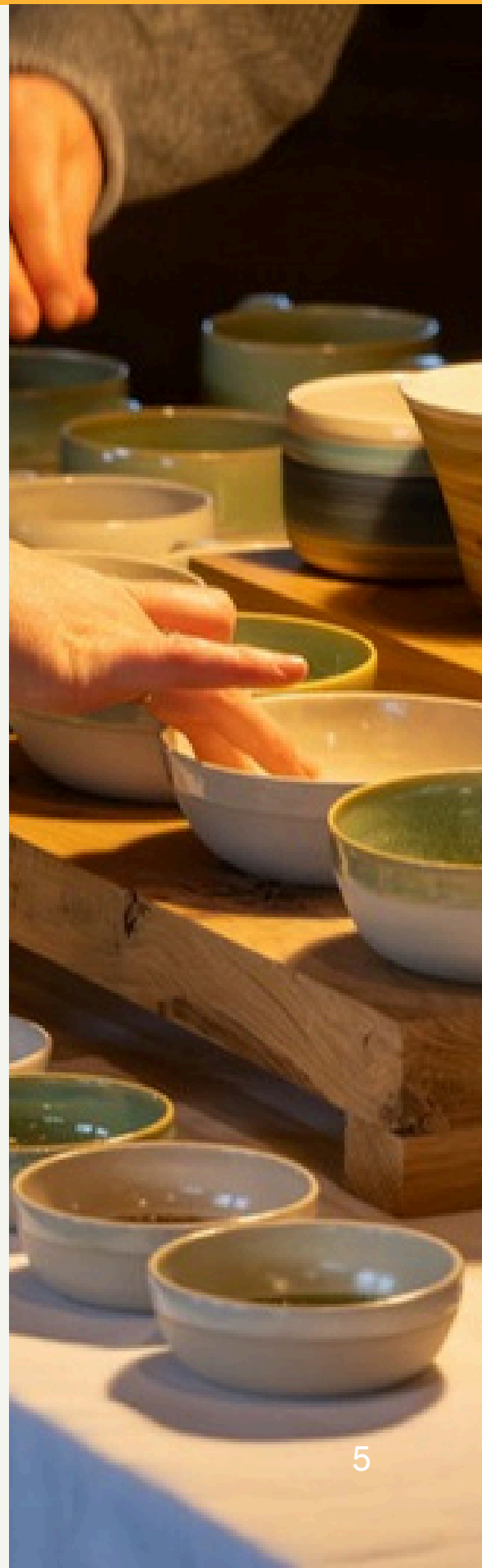
In 2024-25 total income for the Group was £2.92m, compared with £2.81m in the previous year. Of this, £2.72m was unrestricted income and £199k restricted income. The increase in overall income reflects improved trading performance, offset by continuing challenges in the visitor economy and difficult operating conditions across the wider cultural sector.

Fundraising performance was consistent with expectations for the first year of the new strategy, with a continued emphasis on project-based restricted income. Membership income remained stable at just over £71k (2024 - £70k), supporting the core charitable programme.

Total expenditure for the year was £3.27m, compared with £3.42m in 2023-24. The organisation continued to experience pressure from inflation, energy costs, and the resource demands of operating three museums, though these were mitigated by cost-control measures and efficiencies implemented during the year. Depreciation charges remained a significant component of overall expenditure, reflecting the scale and nature of Lakeland Arts' estate.

The resulting net expenditure for the year was £338k, an improvement of approximately £220k on the previous year's deficit. This improved position was assisted by stronger commercial performance and reduced reliance on agency and consultancy support, although further work remains to restore financial sustainability. The defined benefit pension scheme moved from a nil surplus/deficit position at the start of the year to a surplus of £83k, reflecting more favourable market conditions.

Lakeland Arts Enterprises Ltd, the charity's wholly owned trading subsidiary, delivered a surplus of £162k (2024 - £121k). A Gift Aid donation was made to the parent charity of £161k, with the surplus retained to restore the subsidiary's reserves following prior year losses. Earned income from catering, retail, admissions and commercial activities continues to play a central role in supporting the charity's operations, with particular strengths in events and hospitality at Windermere Jetty Museum.



## Reserves Policy

The board updated its reserves policy during the year and now aspires to hold free reserves equivalent to three months of unrestricted charitable expenditure. This target was not achieved in 2024-25. The organisation continues to operate with limited free reserves, reflecting the financial pressures of recent years and the structural challenges of running a multi-site cultural charity. Strengthening unrestricted reserves remains a strategic priority.

## Principal Funding Sources

Lakeland Arts' core operations are funded through a blend of earned income, Arts Council England NPO funding, trusts and foundations, investment income, membership, donations and Gift Aid. The Group continues to benefit from multi-year grants, including support from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, and strong relationships with local authorities and funding partners.

## Investment Policy and Performance

The charity's investment portfolio is managed by Sarasin & Partners in accordance with the trustees' investment policy, which aims to deliver balanced returns from a broad range of medium-risk investments. Investment performance for the year reflected broader market movements, with unrealised gains of £4k contributing positively to the fund balances.

## Principal Risks and Uncertainties

### Major risks

All significant activities undertaken by Lakeland Arts are subject to a comprehensive risk review as part of the project assessment and implementation process. Major risks are identified and ranked based on their potential impact and likelihood. For this purpose, major risks are defined as those that could significantly affect:

- operational performance, including risks to staff, volunteers, and visitors
- achievement of strategic aims and objectives
- fulfilment of expectations among beneficiaries, supporters, and stakeholders.

The trustees conduct ongoing reviews of these risks and ensure that robust systems and procedures are in place to manage them effectively.



If appropriate, risks are mitigated through insurance cover. The organisation employs the following framework to ensure a thorough approach to risk management:

- regular monitoring of major risks and the development of disaster recovery plans
- integrating risk identification and assessment into operational procedures
- maintaining a clear structure of delegated authority and control; and
- seeking to preserve financial reserves in accordance with established policies.

While acknowledging that some initiatives may require the acceptance and management of risk to achieve key objectives, the trustees have identified and implemented mitigation strategies for major risks under the following categories:

- governance
- operational
- financial
- environmental
- compliance

The strategic report was approved by the trustees of the charity on 19th December 2025 and signed on its behalf by:

**D Reid MCIOF**  
**Chair and Trustee, Lakeland Arts**



# Objectives

Our vision is to harness the power of culture alongside artistic creativity, breathtaking landscape and rich heritage, to transform lives and enrich communities.

We bring this vision to life through exceptional museums, diverse collections, innovative programming and a passionate and knowledgeable team, all deeply rooted in a strong sense of place. Our work is firmly embedded in the local community and has a transformative impact on the visitors and audiences we serve.

In 2024-25 we entered the third year of delivering our mission, which is guided by four key objectives. These objectives are essential to strengthening Lakeland Arts' position as one of the most distinguished cultural and heritage organisations in the North of England.

## 1 Curating and Caring

We are committed to developing and caring for our collections and fostering new ideas, ensuring that people from all backgrounds, both near and far, can explore and draw inspiration from our world-class art and heritage programmes.

## 2 Reaching Wider

We aim to broaden our reach by becoming better known and more accessible to a diverse range of visitors. This involves clearly communicating who we are and tailoring our approach to attract and engage varied audiences.

## 3 Engaging & Empowering

We will cultivate a culture of care, respect and inclusion, placing people at the heart of our organisation. Our museums are spaces for storytelling, dialogue and meaningful exchange, encouraging debate and discussion.

## 4 Sustainable & Resilient

We are building for the future by becoming a more dynamic, financially secure, environmentally responsible and socially sustainable organisation.

# Activities

The year 2024–25 marked the midway of a three-year National Portfolio funding agreement between Arts Council England (ACE) and the Cumbria Museum Consortium (CMC), which brings together Lakeland Arts, Tullie, and Wordsworth Grasmere.

In alignment with ACE's Let's Create strategy, our work and reporting have been guided by four key investment principles:

- **Ambition & Quality** – delivering programmes of the highest standard that inspire and engage.
- **Dynamism** – ensuring agility, resilience, and forward-looking practice.
- **Environmental Responsibility** – embedding sustainability in our activities and operations.
- **Inclusivity & Relevance** – reaching diverse audiences and reflecting contemporary society.

This year, the organisation focused on building strong relationships with funders,

stakeholders and community groups to maximise impact and ensure future sustainability. Developing these partnerships involved working directly with Kendal Town Council, Westmorland and Furness Council, Lancaster University and an active network of third-sector organisations such as Strickland Gate House, Space2Create, Lancaster Black History Group, Anti-Racist Cumbria and Queer Cumbria. Throughout these collaborations, the organisation emphasised transparent communication and joint initiatives that enhanced the collective capacity to serve the community.

Significant progress was also made in establishing a relationship with the National Lottery Heritage Fund, positioning the organisation to submit a mid-2025 funding application that aims to reimagine Abbot Hall and the Lakeland Museum site. This strategic engagement strengthens the charity's foundation, enhances future prospects and boosts organisational credibility with funders.





Our partnership with Lancaster University provided the opportunity to host two student interns, who worked closely with our curatorial team on the Abbot Hall collections research project. Their contributions included updating labels, improving the interpretation of displays and offering fresh perspectives that enriched the visitor experience.

We also collaborated with Kendal College, where art students produced responses to Kurt Schwitters' work across various media. These pieces are still displayed in the gallery, highlighting the creativity and talent of emerging local artists.

Additionally, local photographer Johannes Pretorius worked with students from Queen Katherine School in Kendal on Agri-Culture, a project documenting rewilding initiatives in the surrounding farming landscape. This partnership combined artistic practice with environmental awareness, highlighting the importance of sustainability in our rural region.

We also continued our ongoing partnership with Liverpool John Moores University, welcoming architecture students to take part in conservation-focused learning. This programme engages an entire year group—sometimes a combination of first- and second-year students—who visit annually. Their experience includes exploring Blackwell, The Arts & Crafts House, alongside our purpose-built, RIBA award-winning modern venue Windermere Jetty Museum. This juxtaposition provides a unique opportunity to compare one of the country's most accessible Arts & Crafts properties with contemporary architectural design, sparking rich discussion around heritage, design, and conservation.

This year, we made a series of strategic appointments to strengthen senior leadership and ensure greater organisational stability following a challenging period.

Recruitment decisions were guided by professional expertise and alignment with our values, enabling us to build a resilient and skilled team.

The appointment of a Head of Finance brought extensive charity sector experience, with expertise in streamlining complex accounting systems and delivering cost efficiencies. In November, a new Human Resources Manager joined us from the NHS, further supporting organisational growth and staff wellbeing.

Within the creative division, the conclusion of the Associate Head of Programming's contract prompted the process of recruiting a permanent successor, ensuring continuity in artistic leadership.

Key income-generation roles were also filled. A Development Manager, appointed in February, brought extensive experience in raising income for local and international charities and social enterprises. In March, a new Visitor Services & Operations Manager joined us from The Hepworth Wakefield, bringing a proven track record of monetising collections and maximising commercial revenue streams.

In 2024/25, consumer confidence continued to fluctuate amid subdued national growth forecasts and ongoing government caution regarding economic stability. This environment placed further strain on sectors such as arts and culture, where participation often depends on levels of disposable income.

Rising costs for utilities, goods, and services added to financial pressures. Combined with lower visitor numbers and reduced spending per person, these challenges created a difficult environment in which generating sufficient income to bridge funding gaps became increasingly complex. Despite these considerable challenges, Lakeland Arts successfully delivered an exceptional programme, emphasising its dedication to providing high-quality cultural experiences.



# Exhibitions

## Abbot Hall

### Art Herbarium

*February 2024 – ongoing*

Abbot Hall's Art Herbarium presents an immersive exploration of nature in art. Featuring works from the collection by artists including Winifred Nicholson and Percy Kelly, the exhibition offered visitors a contemplative space to consider biodiversity, wellbeing, and humanity's connection to the natural world.

### Portrait Galleries

*February 2024 – ongoing*

Abbot Hall's ground floor Portrait Galleries invite visitors to engage with stories of identity, community, and lived experience through works by artists including Kurt Schwitters, Celia Paul, Hilde Goldschmidt, Lucian Freud, Charmaine Watkiss, Stanley Spencer, Joan Eardley, George Romney, and Victor Pasmore.

Kendal-based artist Lela Harris contributed two works and led workshops for local students as part of the programme. During the 2024/25 financial year, the portrait galleries were refreshed to showcase newly acquired works by local artists Russell Mills and Catherine MacDiarmid, alongside pieces by Kendal College students created in response to works on display.

### Claude Cahun: Beneath This Mask

*April – August 2024*

Presented in partnership with Hayward Touring, this exhibition showcased 42 contemporary giclée prints of Claude Cahun's self-portraits, exploring gender, identity and surrealist aesthetics. With many original negatives lost, these prints offered a vital record of Cahun's practice and her subversion of traditional portraiture, particularly in the context of her resistance during Nazi occupation in France.

# 32

## Exhibitions

# 36

## Partners

# 50,978

## Exhibition Visitors

# 1,497

## Activity Days



Twelve Kendal College Performance students visited Abbot Hall several times to develop, rehearse and perform pieces in response to *Beneath This Mask*. Final pieces were performed on Friday 24 May to a small audience. The performances were captured by a group of 10 photography students, also from Kendal college. Two of the participating students led tours of the exhibition during Kendal Pride weekend.

### **Gilbert Spencer**

*April – June 2024*

In partnership with Liss Llewellyn Fine Art, Abbot Hall presented the first major exhibition of Gilbert Spencer's paintings in over 50 years. Featuring preparatory studies, illustrations, and large-scale works, the show examined Spencer's role in 20th-century British modernism, the revival of landscape traditions and the resurgence of mural painting.

A special section highlighted Spencer's wartime years in Ambleside, developed in collaboration with local historians Russell Mills and Deborah Walsh.

### **Charmaine Watkiss: Legacy**

*July – December 2024*

Abbot Hall hosted *Legacy*, the largest institutional solo exhibition to date by Charmaine Watkiss. Featuring new drawings and the installation *Witness* (2023), originally commissioned for Liverpool Biennial, the exhibition reflected on histories of botany, slavery, and cultural survival. Through intricately detailed drawings and sculptural forms, Watkiss invited audiences to engage with themes of memory, resilience, and healing.

### **Ecology Gallery**

*September 2024 – ongoing*

The newly opened Ecology Gallery explored local landscapes, ecology, and human impact on the environment. Developed with contributions from young activists at Queen Katherine Secondary School, the exhibition featured works by Elisabeth Frink, John Ruskin, Bryan Kneale, and George Shaw.

The gallery also showcased an innovative zero-waste display system designed by Playey design studio, introducing new possibilities for sustainable exhibition-making.

### **Johannes Pretorius:**

#### **Intervention and Renewal**

*September – December 2024*

This photographic exhibition documented regenerative farming practices in Cumbria, focusing on three generations of the Robinson family at Strickley Farm. Through Johannes Pretorius' work, the display highlighted sustainable land management, biodiversity and community resilience, situating local practice within the broader *We Feed the UK* project.

Following an inspiring visit to Strickley Farm, students from Queen Katherine School created artwork in response to regenerative farming, several pieces of which have been selected by Pretorius for inclusion in the exhibition.

Johannes Pretorius is an established photographer whose work has been supported by Arts Council England, The Gaia Foundation, and Open Eye Gallery.

## **A Delicate Tension**

*February – ongoing 2025*

Closing the financial year, *A Delicate Tension* brought together highlights from Abbot Hall's collection, juxtaposing modern and 18th-century works. Inspired by founding director Helen Kapp's vision, the exhibition explored the dialogue between beauty, challenge and innovation across time.

Works on display included pieces by David Hockney, Paul Cézanne, Paula Rego, Kurt Schwitters, George Romney, Austin Wright, Bryan Kneale and embroidered works by Elizabeth Allen and Marjorie Kostenz.

## **Blackwell - the Arts & Crafts house**

### **Sublime Symmetry: William De Morgan February – October 2024**

Continuing from the previous financial year, Blackwell presented *Sublime Symmetry: William De Morgan* until 6 October 2024. Delivered in partnership with the De Morgan Foundation, the exhibition featured 60 ceramic pieces from the De Morgan

Collection, including works inspired by animals and Islamic art. The display explored the mathematical principles underpinning De Morgan's ceramics, inviting visitors to look beyond their decorative surfaces. A self-led learning guide for Key Stage 2 students, along with family activities focused on symmetry in design, supported engagement with younger audiences.

Curator and Director of the De Morgan Museum, Sarah Hardy, also delivered public talks and tours of the exhibition.

### **Lawson Oyekan**

*November 2024 – March 2025*

In Autumn 2024, Blackwell hosted a major solo exhibition by British-Nigerian sculptor Lawson Oyekan, his first in a UK public institution for almost two decades. The show brought together ceramic sculptures from across Oyekan's career, reflecting on human fragility and resilience. A newly commissioned film by acclaimed French photographer and director Xavier Lambours offered further insight into the artist's practice.



This exhibition was delivered in collaboration with Cross Lane Projects, Kendal, and Maison Gallery 19 Paul Fort, Paris.

### **Annabel Hood: New Year New Maker**

*January 2025*

Blackwell's New Year New Maker initiative, an annual series highlighting contemporary makers whose practice reflects the ethos of the Arts & Crafts Movement, featured Edinburgh-based silversmith Annabel Hood in 2025. Hood creates simple, functional silverware, hand-engraved with designs that address social issues such as disability awareness and climate change. Hand engraving, now recognised as an endangered craft by the Heritage Crafts Red List, was at the heart of her practice.

### **Windermere Jetty Museum**

#### **Microworld**

*February 2024 – January 2025*

Microworld offered visitors of all ages a dynamic and immersive digital art experience, inviting them to explore biodiversity and ecology through play, experimentation, and collaboration. This interactive exhibition created a responsive digital ecosystem of projected artworks, encouraging reflection on the micro-creatures that inhabit Lake Windermere.

Microworld was created by Genetic Moo, a collaboration between Nicola Schauerma and Tim Pickup, and produced by Lumen Art Projects.

#### **Imagination Playground: Blue Space**

*March 2025 – ongoing*

In March 2025, Windermere Jetty Museum introduced Imagination Playground: Blue Space, an interactive environment inspired by boatbuilding and engineering. The large-scale STEM play system included bricks, cylinders, chutes, and channels, enabling children to construct inventions, environments, and activities while encouraging creativity, problem-solving, and collaborative play.





## Participation & Learning

During 2024–25, Lakeland Arts delivered a wide-ranging programme of engagement activities across our sites, deepening connections with schools, communities, and local partners through our participation and learning programme. Thanks to increased staff capacity and dedicated roles—a Creative Producer for schools and another for community and partnership development—we significantly expanded our reach:

- 1,997 students took part in 138 formal education sessions across our sites
- we engaged 10,318 family members through 548 different engagements
- we exceeded our target by 363% by engaging 11,514 participants through talks, workshops, courses, festivals and other activities
- together, our programmes reached an estimated 89,578 participants, engaging more diverse groups and breaking down traditional barriers to museum participation

**“This is quite a museum, huh? On a personal note – and as someone who is no stranger to museums – I can’t remember having a more impactful day in one!”**

Visitor, Multicultural Forum visit, January 2025

### Sustainability and Ecology Programme

An ecology-themed sustainability series was launched to connect environmental themes with creative engagement. The programme featured free entry for students and families to view their work exhibited at Abbot Hall, workshops exploring regenerative agriculture, and an event serving locally sourced produce from participating farmers. The pilot event welcomed 60 attendees and laid the foundation for expanding this strand of activity in future years.

# 89,578

## Participants

# 1,997

## Students

# 10,318

## Family members

# 548

## Activities

The Windermere Science Festival once again demonstrated the strength of collaboration by delivering 27 activities and workshops for audiences of all ages. Guidance from Lakeland Arts supported the Festival in exploring community funding opportunities, supporting its long-term financial sustainability. Consequently, funding was secured from the Lake District Foundation, enhancing the Festival's future and strengthening the resilience of the partnership.

Building on this momentum, Lakeland Arts launched the inaugural Festival of the Lake in June to celebrate Windermere's cultural heritage. The event offered a platform for affiliated organisations, including the Arthur Ransome Society and Waterbird (The Lakes Flying Company).

A new seasonal programme, 12 Days of Christmas, was launched at Blackwell to attract visitors during a traditionally quiet period. Covering music performances, family-friendly activities, and workshops led by makers, the initiative aimed to diversify the venue's offerings while piloting and testing approaches to engage different audiences.

**"I am not really artistic, but it was interesting to do something different."**

Visitor, Space2Create visit, January 2025



# Collections

There were 16 acquisitions into the Lakeland Arts collection.

1. an arts and crafts jug by Henry Loveridge and Co, donated by Martyn Griffiths, July 2024.
2. a collection of photographs, videos, and documents relating to the restoration of the powerboat White Lady, donated by the Estate of Sylvia Mason, July 2024.
3. two spelk baskets by Lorna Singleton, purchased with the support of the Art Fund's Nicholas Goodison Award, July 2024.
4. 'Strange Fruit', glass and metalwork sculptures by Chris Day, purchased with the support of the Art Fund's Nicholas Goodison Award, August 2024.
5. 'Autumn Dance' metalwork sculptures Claire Malet, purchased with the support of the Art Fund's Nicholas Goodison Award, August 2024.
6. 'Regenerative Appetites' sculpture by Martha Wiles, purchased with the support of the Art Fund's Nicholas Goodison Award, August 2024.
7. 'Cumbrian Blue(s), Marsellaise Sampler Jug No 1' ceramic by Paul Scott, purchased with the support of the Art Fund's Nicholas Goodison Award, August 2024.
8. Iseabal Hendry, 'Crunch' and 'Lan' woodwork sculptures, purchased with the support of the Art Fund's Nicholas Goodison Award, September 2024.
9. 12 Ceramic artworks by Steve Dixon, purchased with the support of the Art Fund's Nicholas Goodison Award, October 2024.
10. 'Reg and Jane Gifford at Michael's Nook' a painting by Claude Harrison, donated by Tony Wrathall, November 2024.
11. a 'Daffodil dresser' designed by Mackay Hugh Baillie Scott, purchased with the support of the V&A Purchase Grant Fund, the Decorative Arts Society, and a private donor, November 2024.
12. 'Glacial Drift' silverware teaset by Annabel Hood, purchased with the support of the Art Fund's Nicholas Goodison Award, January 2025.
13. Iklwa chair by Mac Collins, purchased with the support of the Art Fund's Nicholas Goodison Award, January 2025.
14. 'Clappersgate', a John Harden drawing, bequeathed by Anthony Chew, March 2025.
15. George Wilson silhouette, purchased March 2025.
16. two paintings by Alice Sielle, donated by the artist, April 2025.

## Collections loans

### Exhibition Loans Outgoing (England)

Borrowing Institution	Quantity
Tullie, Carlisle	3
Sunderland Museum and Winter Gardens	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>

### Exhibition Loans Outgoing (Rest of UK)

Borrowing Institution	Quantity
	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>

### Exhibition Loans Outgoing (International)

Borrowing Institution	Quantity
Centro de Arte Moderna Gulbenkian, Lisbon, Portugal	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>

## Collection care and documentation

Good progress has been made with the John Ellerman-funded project to audit and rationalise the social history collections of the Lakeland Museum and Lakeland Arts' storage units, with the assistance of volunteers.

The curatorial team continued to undertake regular conservation cleaning at Blackwell and Windermere Jetty Museum.





## Heritage Boat Conservation

Despite the challenges posed by reduced staffing and limited funding, our Conservation team demonstrated resilience and professionalism, and successfully delivered a wide range of accomplishments. Conservation work was able to continue as a result of continuous commercial tenders securing income and drawing on the diverse skill set the team worked to develop. While preserving our nationally significant collection is an organisation priority, expertise was offered to the wider maritime heritage sector.

All Lakeland Arts' vessels awaiting conservation were stabilised, and extensive off-water maintenance was conducted across the operating fleet. Key highlights included the overhaul of Osprey (steam launch) and Penelope II (motor launch), weather protection works carried out to safeguard the steam barge Raven, and the commissioning and introduction of a new safety management system for the steam launch Lady Elizabeth. A rare 1930s racing scull was also accessioned, conserved, and displayed, complementing our collection.

Alongside collection care, the team undertook a wide range of conservation and consultancy work for external partners, enhancing Lakeland Arts' reputation nationwide. This included surveying three historic lifeboats for the RNLI at Chatham, with recommendations for conservation to be carried out by trained volunteers, as well as conservation work on a rare coffin boat for the Glencoe Folk Museum.

Attendance at the HMS Victory Technical Committee led to strengthened national sector relationships, raising Lakeland Arts' profile within the National Historic Ships UK network. Regionally, we enhanced local connections through work with Lancaster Maritime Museum, undertaking digital recording and physical deconstruction in line with National Historic Ships guidelines. We also completed the repair of a 1930s gentleman's launch, replacing carvel planks on both sides. Although a private commission for a local owner, the vessel has strong links to our collection through its association with Jane, a Home Guard boat.

By integrating the repair into our daily Conservation Conversation programme, we were able to connect visitors directly with the history of the lake and the craft skills used to preserve it.

Investing in people and skills remained a key focus. The Conservation Boatbuilding Apprentice developed specialised skills, some of which are listed on the heritage-at-risk red list. Contributions included fabricating a cradle for a Manchester Ship Canal tug, now safely displayed at the National Waterways Museum in Ellesmere Port, and leading a skills workshop for 48 students from a Morecambe school, where a miniature steam engine the Apprentice had built was showcased. Alongside apprenticeships, weekly practical conservation opportunities were offered to volunteers, and visitors were engaged through daily conservation talks, which helped deepen public understanding of heritage boatbuilding and preservation.

The team also continued to innovate in public engagement. The in-house development of Raising Dolly,

an interactive experience, proved especially popular with families and served as a foundation for new digital interpretation projects. Funded by a passionate private donor, and having witnessed this success, our Digital Conservation Engineer is now developing a further initiative that will interpret the movement of goods across Windermere, linking to the historic vessel Raven and the industries that shaped the economy of the lake over centuries.

Through these achievements, Lakeland Arts' Heritage Boat Conservation team protected nationally significant vessels while inspiring and educating audiences, investing in the next generation of craftspeople, and reaffirming the organisation's role as a trusted centre for maritime heritage. As part of our shared ACE National Portfolio Organisation status, this work galvanised public engagement, fostered innovation, and enhanced financial resilience through commercial opportunities, ensuring that Windermere's rich maritime history remains vibrant for future generations.



# 4,922

Passengers

# 80

Exclusive bookings

## Boat Trips & Operations

In 2024/25, our Heritage Boat Conservation team combined public engagement with sector-leading conservation to deliver a programme whose impact was felt locally and nationally. Daily boat trips ran between April and October, with most services operating aboard Penelope II, while Osprey was reserved for exclusive bookings. September proved especially popular, as a wedding party booked multiple sailings alongside a series of private charters. To diversify the visitor experience further, we also introduced sailing trips in Swallow, which broadens the range of visitors we can attract, offering new audiences different ways to share in local heritage. By the end of the season, we welcomed 4,922 passengers and hosted 80 exclusive bookings, demonstrating the continued draw of our heritage fleet.

Behind the scenes, our skilled team carried out essential conservation work to ensure these vessels remained safe and seaworthy. The boats most frequently used required the greatest attention, and that year we undertook a major engine overhaul of Osprey. This complex work involved digital modeling to understand valve timing and the reverse engineering and manufacturing of worn moving parts. With the exception of foundry casting, all work was delivered in-house, keeping traditional skills alive and embedding them into our apprenticeship programme.





Our Conservation Boatbuilding Apprentice developed a broad span of skills, some of which appear on the heritage at risk red list. Throughout the year they contributed not only to the care of our own collection but also to external commissions. Notably, he fabricated a cradle for the Manchester Ship Canal tug, enabling its safe display at the National Waterways Museum in Ellesmere Port. His growing expertise was also shared with younger generations, as he led skills workshops for 48 students from a Morecambe School, showcasing a miniature steam engine he had constructed.

The team also advanced conservation and consultancy work for external partners, extending Lakeland Arts' reputation nationwide. This included surveying three historic lifeboats for the RNLI at Chatham, producing detailed conservation recommendations to be carried out by their trained volunteers. Through our Head of Conservation's membership of the HMS Victory Technical Committee, we further strengthened Lakeland Arts' national profile within the maritime heritage sector and deepened our partnership with National Historic Ships UK.

Our ongoing commitment as part of an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation galvanise our public engagement offers, drive innovation. While our Heritage Boat Conservation team continued to leverage commercial opportunities to safeguard skilled roles, and support organisaitonal financial resilience.

**“Elegant craftsmanship is everywhere. It gives a real sense of the Lake and its past. We also took the Lake boat ride - well worth it!”**

Visitor, TripAdvisor review, September 2024

£1,029,778

Earned income

£162,618

Operating Surplus

£2,923,451

Total Income

## Generated Income

### Earned Income

The commercial activities of Lakeland Arts are managed by Lakeland Arts Enterprises Ltd, the charity's wholly owned trading subsidiary. This entity undertakes all non-primary charitable operations, donating its net income to the charity annually.

Efforts to increase commercial revenue continued through retail, catering, venue hire, commercial boat work and events. The teams worked hard to maximise returns by strengthening gross profit margins and staff costs.

Net earned income from Lakeland Arts Enterprises was £1,029,778 with an operating surplus of £162,618.

### Catering

The catering department delivered a strong performance in 2024/25, finishing 10% above the revised forecast. This success was supported by carefully managed menu price increases and the strategic decision to keep the Windermere Jetty Museum café open during the winter closure period, which significantly contributed to the positive results.

The catering team at Abbot Hall expanded the food offering to include freshly prepared salads and sandwiches, which enhanced

visitor choice and supported a more engaging, high-quality dining experience.

Building on this momentum, opportunities were identified to further strengthen performance, including a comprehensive review of price points, the introduction of seasonal menus to refresh the offering throughout the year, and cross-promotion with events to increase dwell time and secondary spend.

Catering continued to play an important role in enhancing the visitor experience across our sites. A cross-promotional 10% members' discount in our cafés not only added value for supporters but also increased income by encouraging more membership sign-ups and higher catering expenditure.

### Retail

Retail performance in 2024/25 reflected broader sector pressures, with income ending 36% below revised forecasts. Visitor behaviour mirrored national trends, with spending focused on admissions and the café, while retail purchases were mostly limited to affordable pick-up items rather than from higher-value ranges.

In response, we refreshed the Blackwell Tearoom and Shop, working with the Estates team to improve the visitor experience and enhance the retail offer. Upgrades included a new colour scheme, improved lighting, expanded shelving in the tearoom, and the introduction of new accessories. These changes created a brighter, more welcoming environment, encouraging browsing and increasing visitor dwell time.

Although retail trading remained challenging, these enhancements formed part of a broader strategy to adapt to evolving visitor behaviours. By aligning our commercial spaces more closely with the distinct character of our sites, we offered unique experiences that complemented admissions and hospitality, while strengthening overall financial resilience.

### **Events and Private Hire**

Over the past year, Lakeland Arts hosted and collaborated on a variety of events and activities that united diverse communities and partners. Highlights included major festivals such as the Windermere Science Festival, Festival of the Lake, Lake District Music Festival, and Kendal Mountain

Festival, with both Abbot Hall and Windermere Jetty Museum hosting engaging programmes. Abbot Hall also welcomed the Lakes International Comic Arts Festival, while Blackwell provided the venue for the Autumn Craft Fair, the 12 Days of Christmas celebration, and creative workshops with Darcy Badger Designs.

Special anniversaries and gatherings were celebrated, including the Arthur Ransome Society's 50th anniversary and the Wooden Boat Gathering at Windermere Jetty Museum. Bespoke visits and private events further strengthened ties with partners and supporters, including a VIP cultural tour with La Fugue and a fundraising event with Rathbones in aid of the Cumbria Community Foundation.

Collaborations also demonstrated a strong commitment to community and skills development. These included sea survival training delivered by Heightec, partnership work with the Bowness and Windermere Community Care Trust, and participation in the Aha! leaflet swap event, which encouraged cultural engagement across the region.



## Location Hire

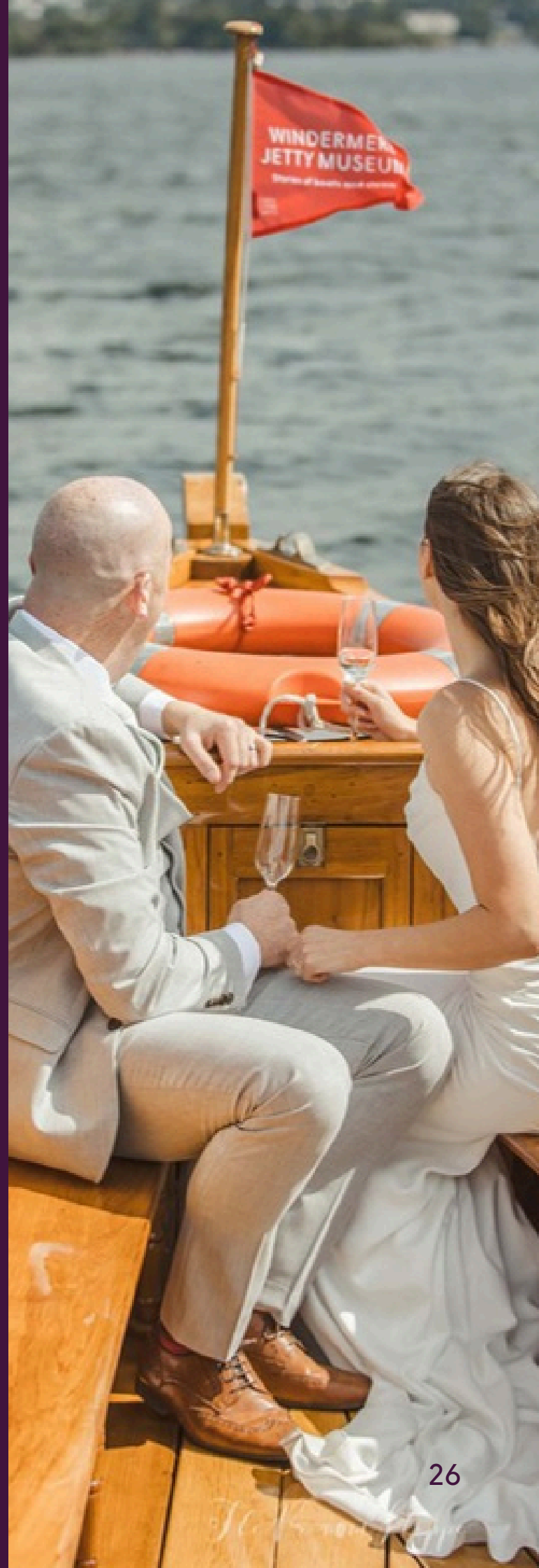
The site attracted strong interest as a venue for filming and private hire, including weddings, corporate functions, and other exclusive events. Location hire not only generated additional revenue but also introduced new audiences to the site, many of whom returned as visitors on future occasions.

Filming highlights included Channel 4's *Four in a Bed*, an advert for Currys produced by iSite TV and coverage by BBC Breakfast.

Opportunities to expand bespoke options were created through customised VIP packages and closer collaboration with local accommodation providers, including the Low Wood Hotel.

Windermere Jetty Museum continued to establish itself as a distinctive venue for weddings and celebrations. The renewal of the museum's wedding licence, alongside updated pricing structures, contributed to a noticeable increase in advance bookings, with six weddings already booked for 2025/26.

The site also hosted a variety of other high-profile events, including the RAC Rally of the Tests in 2024 and serving as a checkpoint for the A to Z EV Rally.

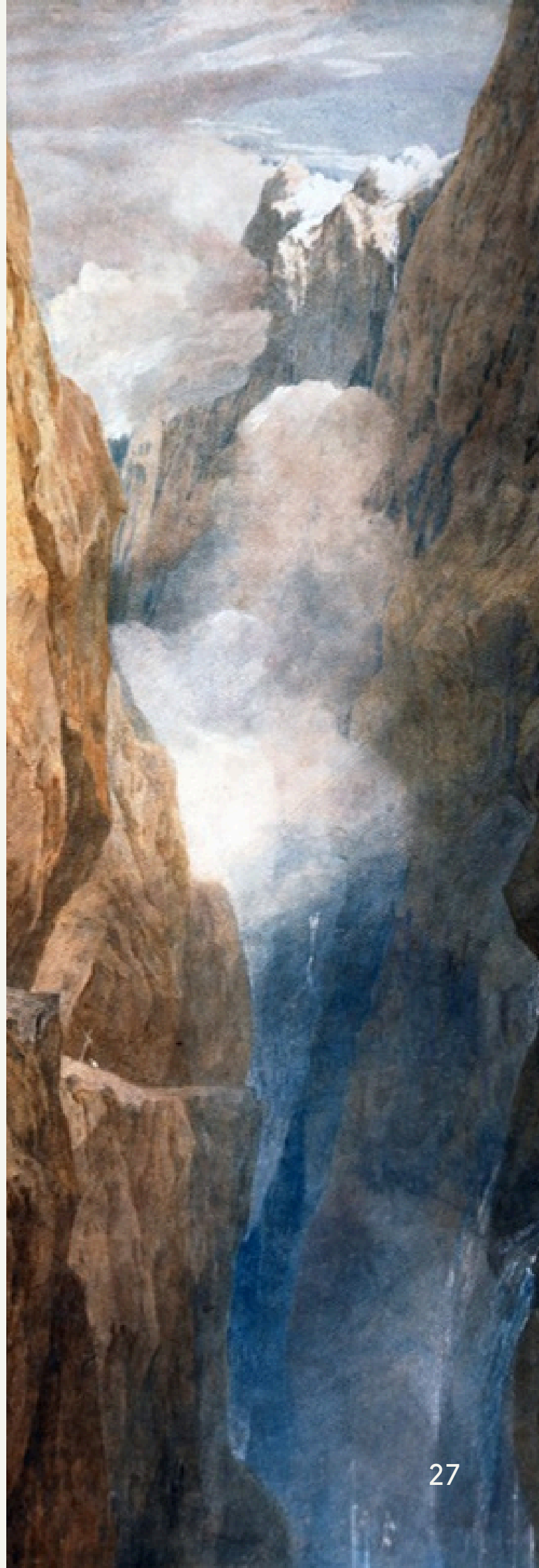


## Raised Income

In 24-25 Lakeland Arts' total raised income was £944,105. During this period, Lakeland Arts was awarded a two-year grant from the Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund, managed by the Museums Association, to support the development of new collaborative working practices at Abbot Hall. The project, *New Strategies and Ecosystems for Collections*, explored how a deeper understanding of local landscapes and ecologies shaped more symbiotic relationships between collections and communities. Its aim was to create a community-focused ecosystem in Kendal by bringing in a wider range of voices, engaging cross-sector partners, and building shared knowledge and expertise. This approach transformed how new and existing audiences engaged with our collections and offered new avenues to evoke meaningful interaction with both classic and contemporary pieces.

Collaboration through the Cumbria Museum Consortium (CMC) also created new opportunities to secure joint funding. Our first success was a grant from the John Ellerman Foundation, which supported an innovative project that addressed the complex subject of disposals within regional museums. This work responded to a longstanding commitment by Lakeland Arts to represent a broad spectrum of people, industries, and histories. Over time, this commitment led to duplicate items and material that had been collected beyond the organisation's original remit.

Funding enabled us to appoint two Collection Assistants for 12 months, who focused on cataloguing, rationalisation, disposals, and essential conservation. Through this work, we modernised our approach to disposals, aligning fully with Museums Association best practice and training staff across the organisation in the process. More than 500 objects were



ethically disposed of, either by return, transfer, sale, or destruction. At the same time, we improved documentation for over 1,200 objects, reconciled dozens of orphan items, and resolved more than 120 long-term and orphan loans, with objects either returned to lenders or formally transferred into our care.

Alongside this collections-focused work, we implemented a new fundraising strategy to align with our organisational priorities of consolidation and stabilisation. A key strand of this was renewing support for Lakeland Museum, addressing reputational damage from its prolonged closure. Re-engagement with lapsed funders and stakeholders was a notable success, strengthening our application for funding for the National Lottery Heritage Fund Development Phase.

An encouraging site visit in February marked a positive step toward our submission planned for Summer 2025. This application will focus on a capital feasibility study for the Abbot Hall and Lakeland Museum site, examining environmental considerations

and building organisational capacity. Investment to match our ambition of leading a major capital project that will secure a sustainable, state-of-the-art heritage destination for the region will be incorporated.

Lakeland Arts secured further support from Art Fund to participate in the nationwide project 'Four Lanterns', joining prestigious institutions such as the William Morris Gallery in London, Tŷ Pawb in Wrexham, and Dovecot Studios in Edinburgh. 'Going Places' is a country-wide, five-year programme running from 2025 to 2030, designed to share museum collections through collaborative touring exhibitions and community engagement. The project will encourage small to mid-sized museums to form networks, co-create exhibitions that tour regionally, and involve local communities in shaping the content. It also provides participating museums with training, mentorship, and opportunities for resource sharing, fostering more sustainable, accessible, and equitable approaches to cultural engagement.





# Partnerships

Over the past year, Lakeland Arts built a wide range of partnerships that enriched programming, strengthened community connections, and improved the visitor experience. Collaborations with Stride & Edge Yoga, the Steamboat Association, and the Windermere Model Boat Club created more opportunities for active visitor engagement linked to the lakeside environment. Working with creative partners such as the Knotted Project, Kendal Concert Band, Flutes & Co, Chetham's School of Music, and North West Harps brought lively cultural activities to our venues.

We partnered with national and international arts organisations to put together an ambitious and high-quality exhibitions programme. Exhibition partners included the De Morgan Foundation, Liverpool Biennial, Liss Llewellyn Fine Art, Hayward Touring, Plaey Design and more.

Links with Kendal Pride, Windermere Children, and Mountain Goat Freedom Days further strengthened ties to local communities, while partnerships with the Lake District Hotels Association and several local hotels offered guests discounted admission, and broadened reach to new audiences. Relationships with national bodies such as National Historic Ships UK reinforced the organisation's role within wider regional and national networks.

These partnerships not only expanded the range of activities offered but also demonstrated a dedication to collaboration, ensuring Lakeland Arts' venues stayed vibrant, inclusive, and connected to the communities they serve.

# Visitor Experience

In 2024/25, the Visitor Experience team concentrated on a series of initiatives aimed at enhancing engagement, increasing operational efficiency, and opening up new revenue opportunities across all sites. Their efforts combined detailed analysis of visitor behaviour with targeted commercial and experiential strategies to deliver a high-quality, sustainable heritage experience.

Total net admissions income was £1,284,507, a shortfall of £165,609 (11%) compared to the revised forecast of £1,450,116. Despite this, the organisation achieved significant operational savings to offset the impact. Staffing costs decreased by £61,550 (4%) through more efficient workforce management, while the direct cost of sales dropped by £54,527 (14%) due to tighter controls, gross profit margin reviews, and improved procurement practices.

To strengthen future revenue streams, the team started developing exclusive visitor packages across all three sites. This process involved benchmarking similar experiences

nationally, preparing detailed cost analyses to guide delivery, and exploring strategic partnerships with the wider hospitality sector to add value to the experiences.

Through these measures, Lakeland Arts demonstrated a proactive and strategic approach to balancing financial sustainability with visitor engagement. By refining operations, innovating the visitor offer, and exploring new commercial opportunities, the organisation maintained a high-quality heritage experience while ensuring the long-term resilience of its sites.

**“Beautiful house and decor made all the more enjoyable by knowledgeable volunteer guides. For lovers of the Arts and Crafts Movement, this house is a real must-visit.”**

Blackwell visitor, TripAdvisor review, January 2025





# Volunteering

In 24/25 we saw an increase in volunteering hours. Overall volunteers dedicated 5777 hours across Windermere Jetty Museum, Blackwell – the Arts and Crafts house and Abbot Hall.

The diverse opportunities across Lakeland Arts' three venues provide volunteers with a broad range of engagement. Abbot Hall, as the flagship and longest established, continues to attract the majority of volunteers, with around 70 of the 96 active volunteers dedicating their time there.

During the year, efforts focused on strengthening volunteer relationships and enhancing the volunteer experience. The volunteer management system, Better Impact, was utilised to streamline records and provide a clearer understanding of the active volunteer base.

Coffee mornings were reintroduced across all venues, building on the success of

previous sessions at Windermere Jetty. These informal gatherings foster community and connection, with future events scheduled to coincide with exhibition launches.

To deepen engagement, volunteers were invited to curator-led exhibition tours, with recordings supplied for those unable to attend. Gallery information is now shared in advance, especially at Abbot Hall, ensuring volunteers are well informed and confident in their roles.

A highlight of the year was the preview of 'A Delicate Tension' which attracted a strong turnout of Abbot Hall volunteers. Feedback reflected pride in Lakeland Arts' collection and enthusiasm for sharing it with the community. Notably, one volunteer marked an extraordinary milestone of 50 years of service at Abbot Hall.

**5,777**

**Hours**

**96**

**Volunteers**

**£106,874**

**Social value**



## Marketing & Communications

There has been a noticeable decline in visitor numbers across the Lake District, affecting cultural institutions, heritage sites, and visitor attractions. This trend reflects both regional and national shifts in tourism behaviour.

The rising cost of living remains a significant factor, with many UK households reducing discretionary spending, including short breaks and day trips. Staycation rates have also fallen compared with the immediate post-COVID years, as more families return to international travel with renewed confidence.

During the year, the team began working with Manchester-based digital agency One Day to deliver a refreshed programme of advertising campaigns. Targeting both national audiences and local visitors within a two-hour drive, the campaigns promoted all three open venues and supported the optimisation of future Google and Meta advertising. This partnership has strengthened brand awareness across all three museums and delivered a consistent return on investment through online ticket sales. The contract with One Day remains active, with scope to develop more varied and seasonal advertorial content.

The team also entered its third year on the steering group for Cumbria Tourism's 'Let's Go Culture' campaign, working alongside Brewery Arts, the National Trust and Wordsworth Grasmere. The initiative aims to increase visitor numbers to cultural attractions and raise awareness of Cumbria's high-quality cultural offer. As part of this campaign, nine social media influencers visited Windermere Jetty Museum and Blackwell, generating strong brand exposure. In addition, monthly journalist visits were arranged to support exhibition promotion and broader PR activity.

During 2024/25, new outdoor signage was installed at Abbot Hall to strengthen its presence within the local community. Out-of-home advertising at Oxenholme train station and print campaigns with the William Morris Society, Aesthetica, Art Monthly, Primary Times, and tourism publications further enhanced visibility. Filming was also commissioned across all sites to produce a suite of new promotional videos, alongside external advertising and ticketing through Love to Visit and Educational Visits UK.

Finally, standardised Arts Council England surveys were introduced at Windermere Jetty Museum, Blackwell, and Abbot Hall, providing valuable insight into visitor experience and engagement.

# Capital Projects

## Buildings & Estates

### *Abbot Hall*

Throughout the year, efforts continued to ensure Abbot Hall remains a welcoming, safe, and accessible space for visitors to engage with arts and culture.

Significant work was completed to stabilise Blind Beck, located alongside the building, including raising the nearside wall to enhance flood defence. This project represented the final phase of the South Lakeland District Council initiative, which began during Abbot Hall's closure for essential repairs and upgrades. Managed by the Council (now Westmorland & Furness Council) as the building's owner, the work included internal and external redecoration, installation of a new heating system and electrical system upgrades.

These improvements modernised the gallery while ensuring it is fully equipped and ready for future programming. Regular maintenance of gallery spaces has also been carried out to ensure they meet the highest standards for displaying works of art.

In addition, the Participation and Learning team began a rewilding project in the oval green space, collaborating with the local community to plant new species and enhance biodiversity.

### *Blackwell*

Lakeland Arts worked to improve energy efficiency while adhering to strict preservation stipulations to protect Blackwell, one of Britain's finest examples of Arts & Crafts architecture.



In April 2024, we commissioned a condition report to evaluate the property and pinpoint the most urgent conservation areas. To ensure the work was feasible, we broke down the recommendations into manageable phases.

The initial phase, funded by Lakeland Arts, concentrated on essential roof and masonry repairs. These updates enhanced the building's resistance to weather, protected historic features, and ensured the long-term preservation of the site.

With the generous support of a private donor, further heating upgrades were completed in 2025. A new control system created a more stable environment for our collections, safeguarding artworks and enabling us to host important future loans. At the same time, these improvements enhanced comfort for visitors and staff while also increasing energy efficiency.

Although humidity remains a challenge, our phased programme of works to address water ingress will help stabilise the environment further, ensuring lasting protection for this remarkable Arts & Crafts house and its collection.

To enhance the visitor experience, we also refreshed the tearoom, shop, and reception areas with new lighting, shelving, and decoration—creating a more welcoming and enjoyable space for everyone.

## Windermere Jetty

In December 2024, Storm Darragh caused extensive damage to our jetties, endangering both visitor access and our collection of heritage boats. Thanks to quick action, repair work was completed in time for the start of the spring season.

These repairs were vital in allowing our popular heritage boat trips to resume, ensuring that visitors could once again enjoy unique journeys on Lake Windermere aboard historic vessels in our collection. The works not only protected an important part of our collection in use but also preserved a much-loved visitor experience that connects people with the region's rich maritime history.

By restoring safe and reliable access to the water, we have been able to continue sharing the stories of Windermere's boatbuilding heritage, welcoming both local communities and visitors from further afield. This has helped sustain our educational programmes, volunteering opportunities, and the wider economic benefits these activities deliver to the organisation.



# Fundraising Disclosures

With accredited museums being part of the CMC portfolio Lakeland Arts adheres to the Museums Association Code of Ethics for Museums. The Code defines the ethical principles which guide museum practice and underpin policy and practice regarding the development of museum collections. An ethical approach to museums also underpins the Accreditation Standard. This code supports museums, those who work in and with them, and their governing bodies in recognising and resolving ethical issues and conflicts. It sets out key ethical principles and the supporting actions that museums should take to ensure an ethical approach to their work in relation to their audiences, local communities, donors, source communities, partner organisations, sponsors and funders. Lakeland Arts is an organisational member of the Museums Association.

Lakeland Arts has a set of policies that ensure we implement and adhere to the Museums Association Code of Ethics, including in relation to donors and funders. These include our Privacy Policy and our Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy, which applies to all staff, trustees, volunteers, and contractors, and sets out how we would recognise and deal with incidents of suspected financial abuse.

During the year Lakeland Arts contracted professional fundraising services from a third-party business, Laura Irvin Enterprises, to carry out fundraising on its behalf. During this period Lakeland Arts did not receive any complaints about activities by the charity or by a person on behalf of the charity for the purpose of fundraising. The organisation will register with the Fundraising Regulator in the next financial year.



# Major Funders & Partners



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**



**Funded by  
UK Government**



**Westmorland  
& Furness  
Council**



Esmée Fairbairn  
Collections Fund



**CUMBRIA**  
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

**John Ellerman  
Foundation**

**Art Fund\_**

museum  
development



north

**Liverpool  
Biennial**



L I S S  
L L E W E L L Y N



## Patrons & Benefactors

Lakeland Arts warmly thanks its Benefactors and Patrons for their generous and ongoing support.

### Benefactors (as at 31 March 2024)

- Mrs Jan Amber
- Mr Tim Harding
- Mr John Hudson, CBE, and Mrs Nadia Hudson
- Miss Laura Lindsay
- Dr Adam Naylor, MBE, DL, and Mrs Marianne Naylor
- Mrs Elizabeth "Pit" Rink and Mr John Rink
- Mr Mark Southern and Mrs Laura Southern
- Mrs Jean Wood

### Patrons (as at 31 March 2024)

- Mr Hal Bagot and Mrs Susan Bagot, MBE
- Mr John Barradell and Mrs Maggie Barradell
- Mrs Anthea Case, CBE, and Mr David Case
- Mr Charles Crewdson, OBE, and Mrs Victoria Crewdson
- Mr Christopher Crewdson and Mrs Diana Crewdson

- Sir James Cropper, KCVO
- Mr William "Bill" Duffton and Mrs Rachel Duffton
- Ms Wendy Ellis
- Mr Neil Fleming, BEM, and Mrs Susan Fleming
- Mr John Forsyth and Mrs Barbara Forsyth
- Mr Michael Gibbons and Mrs Lynne Gibbons
- Mr Robert Hasell-McCosh and Mrs Jane Hasell-McCosh
- 
- Mr Adrian Hohler
- Susan, Lady Kimber
- Mr John Lee and Mrs Heather Lee
- Mrs Christine Lomas Whittle
- Mrs Diana Matthews
- Mr John Nicoll and Ms Laurence Colchester
- Mrs Judy Rayner
- Ms Diane Reid and Mr John Velnoweth
- Mr Alexander Scott, Lord-Lieutenant of Cumbria, and Mrs Samantha Scott
- Sir Christopher Scott, Bt, and Lady Scott
- Mr John Townson
- Mr Peter White and Mrs Valerie White
- Mr Charles Woodhouse, CVO
- Mr Nigel Woodhouse

And with thanks to all those who wish to remain anonymous.

# Public Benefit

Lakeland Arts is dedicated to making a meaningful and lasting impact on the communities it serves by providing access to culture, creativity and heritage. The organisation ensures that its venues, collections and programmes enrich lives, inspire learning and foster wellbeing. Abbot Hall opened as an art gallery in September 1962, as home to an outstanding art collection and a dynamic exhibition programme.

In 1971, the Lakeland Museum (formerly the Museum of Lakeland Life & Industry) was established within the coach house and stable block at Abbot Hall. The museum holds an extensive collection that celebrates the social and industrial history of the Lake District and Kendal.

Blackwell - The Arts & Crafts House, a Grade I listed building with sweeping views over Lake Windemere, opened in July 2001. Designed by MH Baillie Scott and completed in 1900, Blackwell is one of the UK's most significant Arts and Crafts houses, renowned for its historic and contemporary craft exhibitions.

In March 2019, the Windemere Jetty Museum was inaugurated, offering a world class museum experience and attracting visitors from across the globe. Throughout its activities, Lakeland Arts prioritises accessibility, learning and inclusivity, ensuring its programmes and venues benefit a wide range of audiences, from local communities to national and international visitors.



# Structure, Governance & Management

## *Nature of governing document*

Lakeland Arts operates as a charitable company limited by guarantee and is registered as a charity. The organisation was established to modernise the governance of the Lakeland Arts Trust, an unincorporated trust founded in 1957 to save Abbot Hall and transform it into an art gallery.

The charitable company, governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association, assumed responsibility for the operations of the Trust on 1 August 2013. The Trust's funds, assets, and liabilities were transferred to the charitable company, which continues to operate the venues and manage redevelopment projects, such as Windermere Jetty Museum. The Trust itself retains the Blackwell Endowment (a permanent endowment) and the collections, which are loaned to the charitable company.

The Board regularly reviews its performance against the Charity Governance Code to ensure strong and effective governance.

## *Recruitment and appointment of trustees*

The Trustee Succession Planning Committee oversees the recruitment and succession of trustees to ensure the board maintains the skills, diversity, and expertise required to support Lakeland Arts. This committee identifies upcoming vacancies, defines the skills needed and recruits through methods such as advertising, recommendations or recruitment platforms.

Key steps in the trustee recruitment process include:

- reviewing trustee retirement schedules
- identifying skills necessary for the organisation's growth and success
- considering candidates who align with Lakeland Arts' commitment to diversity and inclusion.
- interviewing candidates with the Chief Executive Officer, Chair of Trustees, and a committee member.

Recommendations are approved by the Succession Planning Committee and formally endorsed by the Board of Trustees.

## *Organisational structure*

The trustees of the charitable company also serve as its directors under charity law. The Board of Trustees, comprising six to 15 members, meets regularly to oversee strategy, policy, and operations.

At these meetings, the trustees:

- define the charitable company's strategic direction and policy framework
- monitor financial policies, reserves, risk management and performance
- set remuneration for key management personnel using industry benchmarks.

Trustees appoint and oversee investment managers, currently Sarasin & Partners LLP, to implement Lakeland Arts' investment strategy. Details of key management personnel remuneration and expenses are disclosed in the notes to the accounts.

Trustees are elected during the Annual General Meeting, as stipulated in the Articles of Association. Those who served during the year and since year end are listed in the Charity information section.

# Relationships with Related Parties

## Lakeland Arts Trust

Lakeland Arts acts as the sole trustee of Lakeland Arts Trust, which holds the organisation's collections and manages the Blackwell Endowment. For accounting purposes, Lakeland Arts Trust is treated as a subsidiary of Lakeland Arts.

### *Lakeland Arts Enterprises Limited*

Lakeland Arts Enterprises Limited is the wholly owned trading subsidiary of Lakeland Arts. Together, Lakeland Arts, Lakeland Arts Trust, and Lakeland Arts Enterprises Limited comprise the Lakeland Arts Group, working collaboratively to support the charitable mission.

### *Lakeland Arts Support Trust*

Formed in 1998, Lakeland Arts Support Trust is an independent charity established to generate income in support of Lakeland Arts, with a particular focus on the Abbot Hall site in Kendal. As it operates under a separate board of trustees, it is not part of the Lakeland Arts Group.

### *Westmorland & Furness Council*

Since its formation on 1 April 2023, Westmorland & Furness Council has been a key partner of Lakeland Arts. The Council owns the Abbot Hall building and provides an annual grant to support the charity's operational costs and programme delivery.



# Financial Instruments

## *Objectives and policies*

The activities of the Lakeland Arts Group expose it to a range of financial risks, including those related to fluctuating visitor spending, cost pressures, investment performance, and broader economic challenges such as inflation and post pandemic recovery. Oversight and management of these risks are the responsibility of the Finance Committee, with trustees receiving regular updates on the organisation's financial position.

## *Credit risk*

The group's principal financial assets include bank balances, cash, trade receivables, and investments. Credit risk is minimal, as receivables are largely comprised of secured grants. Liquid funds are held with high credit rated banks, ensuring security and stability.



# Statement of Trustees Responsibilities

The trustees (who are also the directors of Lakeland Arts for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice), including FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland".

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under company law the trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the parent charitable company and the group and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, of the charitable group for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards, comprising FRS 102 have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the parent charitable company will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that can disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the parent charitable company and the group and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the parent charitable company and the group and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charitable company's website. Legislation governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

The annual report was approved by the trustees of the charity on 19<sup>th</sup> December and signed on its behalf by:

**Diane Reid**  
**Chair, Lakeland Arts**

# Reference & Administrative Details

## **Chair**

D Reid MCIOF

## **Trustees**

A Black

S A Crewe

K M Howarth

A J Karwa

E Kentley

K J S Knight

T A Leach

A M Lyles

D Reid MCIOF

G F Rycroft

E J Scott

## **Secretary**

A J Karwa (until October 2024)

C James (from October 2024)

## **Senior Management Team**

R Harris, Chief Executive Officer (until 17 July 2024)

L Martins, Acting Chief Executive

L Garrett Hampson, Head of Marketing and Communications

C James, Head of Finance and Company Secretary (appointed October 2024)

L Postans, HR and People Manager (until April 2024)

F Higgins, HR and People Manager (appointed November 2024)

A Fletcher, Development Manager (appointed January 2025)

A Saczek, Head of Visitor Experience (resigned September 2024)

R Ripley, Visitor Experience and Operations Manager (appointed March 2025)

## **Charity Registration Number**

1153001. The charity is incorporated in England.

## **Company Registration Number**

8162578

## **Registered Office**

Abbot Hall, Kirkland, Kendal, LA9 5AL

The trustees, who are directors for the purposes of company law, present their strategic report for the year ended 31 March 2025, in compliance with 414C of the Companies Act 2006.