



STAFFORDSHIRE  
UNIVERSITY

# Get Talking with Appetite

Year Two

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**August 2015**

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Photos by Andrew Billington, Creative Communities Unit, Nic Gratton, Nic Winstanley and Sarah Nadin



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**“Truly amazing. I cannot believe something  
this fantastic is in Stoke-on-Trent”  
Fire Garden audience member.**

# Introduction

Appetite is a three year, Arts Council England funded project which aims to get more people in Stoke-on-Trent experiencing and inspired by the arts. Appetite has been developed by a consortium of organisations, and is led by the New Vic Theatre. The other consortium partners are Partners in Creative Learning (PICL), B-Arts, Brighter Futures and Staffordshire University.

The Creative Communities Unit (CCU) at Staffordshire University is responsible for the evaluation of Appetite. We are adopting a Participatory Action Research model, called Get Talking, to evaluate the programme. The findings from the first year of the programme can be found in the [Get Talking with Appetite: An evaluation of year one report](#). The role of CCU in year two has also included supporting the Appetite team to understand and learn from monitoring data.

Year one of Appetite presented audiences with a [Taster Menu](#) of art, to inspire and motivate people living and working in Stoke-on-Trent. In year two, Appetite moved its focus to the development and support of Community Hubs and a Supper Club. Community Hubs are new and existing groups who have worked with Appetite over the last 12 months to commission art for their own community. Representatives of each of the Community Hubs make up the Supper Club, a group of committed individuals who have shaped Appetite's Strategic Programme in year two.

This report outlines the findings from the evaluation of Appetite in year two. It is designed to be read online and so you find links to appendices, data, external links and case studies throughout.

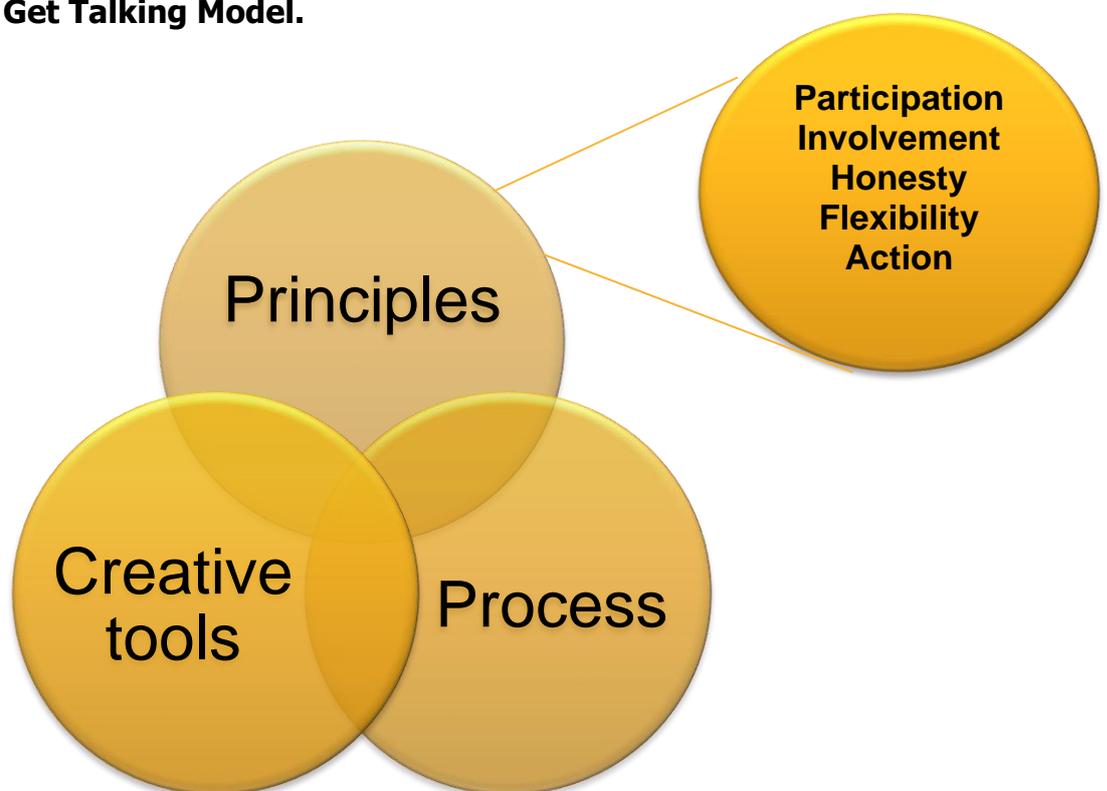
[An executive summary of this report is available here.](#)



# How have we evaluated Appetite in year two?

The Creative Communities Unit at Staffordshire University is responsible for the evaluation of Appetite. We use a model of participatory action research called Get Talking to encourage audiences and participants to take an active role in the research process. The model uses creative tools to gather feedback from audiences and participants in the Appetite programme, set within a clear set of principles which guide the research.

**Figure 1. The Get Talking Model.**



The Get Talking model follows a clear process of involvement, listening and learning, cross checking and action planning. In year two we have included audiences, participants, Community Hubs, the Supper Club and the team in these stages of the process. The groups and individuals involved in each stage of the process are outlined in figure 2.

# During our evaluation of Appetite in year two we have:

## Involved:

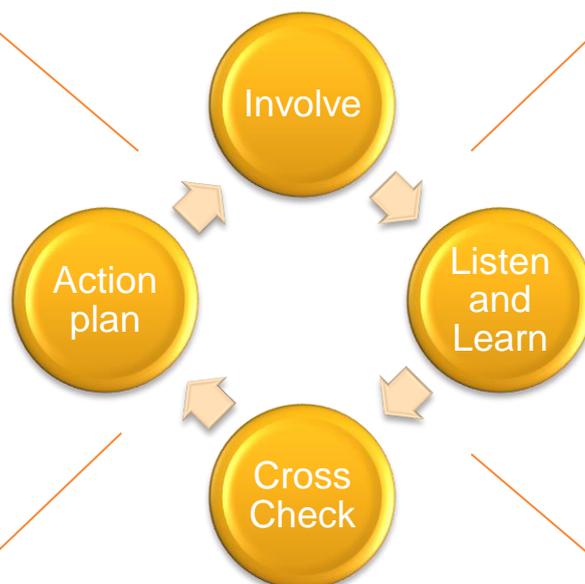
- A team of artists to engage with audiences and case studies with creative methods, including Artists in Residence [Nic Winstanley and Sarah Nadin](#)
- Community Hubs to evaluate their own events
- The Supper Club, through the development of an evaluation and monitoring subgroup
- The Get Talking Network through the delivery of Get Talking training and support sessions

## Planned to take action with:

- The programme team by identifying learning and how the programme can respond
- The Supper Club
- Community Hubs after their events

## Listened and learned through:

- Creative consultation tools
- Questionnaires
- Case studies
- Meetings with Community Hubs after their events



## Cross checked the findings by:

- Creative cross checking session with the Supper Club
- Discussions with the Appetite team
- Discussions with our Critical Friend, Kate Gant.

**Figure 2: The Get Talking process and the evaluation of Appetite in year two.**

## The Research tools

The tools used to evaluate Appetite in year two have included both creative consultation tools and more traditional surveys and semi structured interviews to ensure monitoring data can be more closely aligned to the evaluation. In year two we have worked closely with two Artists in Residence, [Nic Winstanley and Sarah Nadin](#).

The evaluation tools used to evaluate events in year two have been:

Event	Evaluation tools
Spill	Post event questionnaire
Circus Sundae	Post event questionnaire
The Bell	Post event survey, focus group
Old Bill	Wish Tree, monitoring boards, semi structured interviews
Hunt and Darton Café	Tea pot voting, semi structured interviews, paper questionnaires, general comments board
Open House	Paper questionnaire
Big Feast	Money in a buskers hat, vinyl spots, #Chumbrella, ribbon wheel, pottery mobile
Grand Cross Fayre	A-boards
Fire Garden	Light umbrellas, post event survey
Meir Light installation	Carrier bag balloons, social media responses
Winterfest	Geodesic playing cards

In addition, timelines have been used with the Community Hub groups to identify their learning from events and to plan for future action. The evaluation team have also attended and facilitated some elements of the Supper Club.

Partners in Creative Learning has led on the collection of monitoring data for Appetite in years one and two. The information collected about audiences for this report was collected through post event surveys.





**Ribbon Wheel  
created by Get  
Talking Artists in  
Residence Nic  
Winstanley and  
Sarah Nadin,  
which was  
used to gain  
feedback from  
Audiences at the  
Big Feast**

**“It’s excellent. Is it on every  
weekend?”**

**Feedback from the ribbon wheel consultation  
tool at the Big Feast**

# Part one

## Are more people from Stoke-on-Trent experiencing and inspired by the arts?

Arts Council England's Creative People and Places programme has set three questions for the evaluation of Appetite. These are:

1. Are more people from Stoke-on-Trent experiencing and inspired by the arts?
2. To what extent has the Appetite's aspiration for excellence of art and excellence of engaging communities been successful?
3. Which approaches to engagement, inspiration and excellence have been successful?

Part one of this report will explore what we know about our audiences and participants, who they are and what inspires them about Appetite.

***"This is endearing. People who would normally be whizzing round have stopped. It's important to stop and think."***

***Big Feast audience member***

# Our Audiences and Participants

## In 2014-2015 Appetite involved:

**307,732**

audience

members against a target

audience of

**22,400**

**45**

Supper Club  
members  
representing

**193**

recipients of  
training or  
development

**19**

Community  
Hubs

**230**

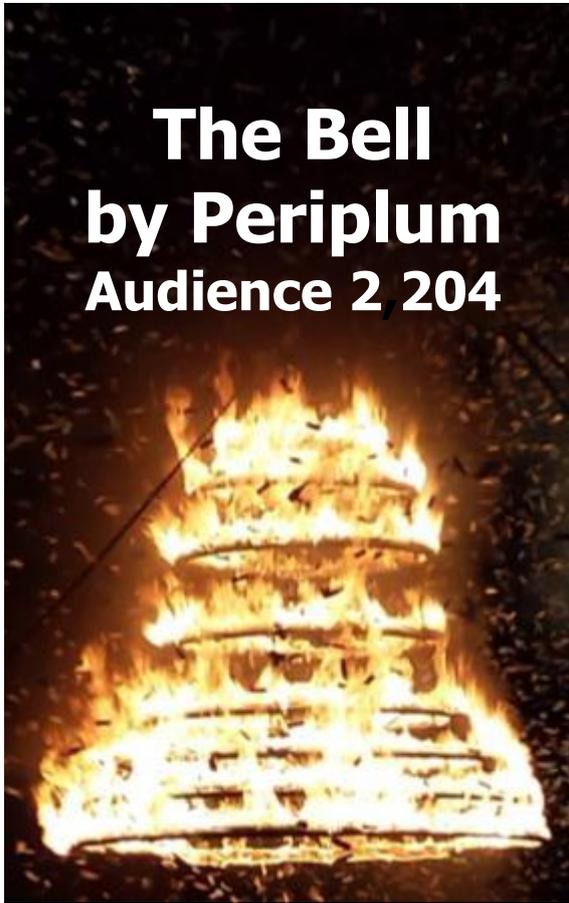
Volunteers



**24**

Cultural  
Reporters

**The Bell  
by Periplum  
Audience 2 204**



**Winterfest  
Audience 9 357**



**Open House  
by No Fit  
State Circus**

**Audience  
2,492**



**Fire Garden  
Audience  
2,490**



**Play Me  
I'm Yours  
35,488  
played  
144,640  
Audience  
members**



**The Big  
Feast**

**Audience  
14,394**



# Community Hub Programmes took place with:

**Bentilee  
Community  
Partnership**

**UHNM**

**Second Look  
Stoke**

**Brighter  
Futures  
Academy**

**Friends of Hanley  
Park**

**Stoke South  
Carnival Committee**

**Jubilee  
Club**

**Brighter Futures  
Observatory**

**Chell Family Action  
Group**

**Strathcross**

**Meir  
Residents'  
Association**

**Hanford  
Residents'  
Association**

**Open  
Cinema Hub**

**City Centre  
Partnership**

**Brighter  
Futures Staff**

**Middleport  
and Burslem**



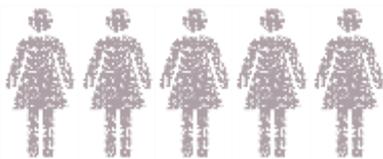
# What did we find out about our audiences?

The data presented in this section is from a sample of 358 people who responded to the post event questionnaires<sup>1</sup>. They represent a larger sample of approximately 940 people in total. See [Appendix 1](#) for details.

## Gender



**63%** were women



**37%** were men



**Appetite Audiences**

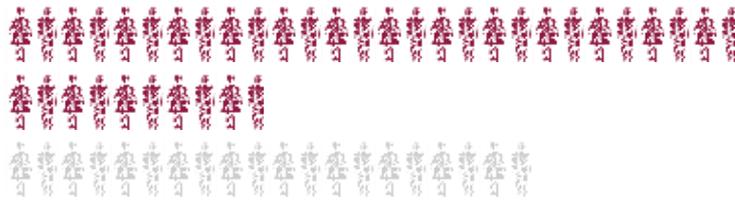


**Stoke-on-Trent Population**

<sup>1</sup> Gender, age, ethnicity and disability data were collected from returned questionnaires from audiences at The Bell, the Big Feast, the Fire Garden and Winterfest.

# Age<sup>2</sup>

Under **16**



**37.4%**

**16-24**



**5.9%**

**25-34**



**17.6%**

**35-44**



**17.4%**

**45-54**



**11.4%**

**55-64**



**7.9%**

Over **65**



**2.4%**



**Appetite  
Audiences**

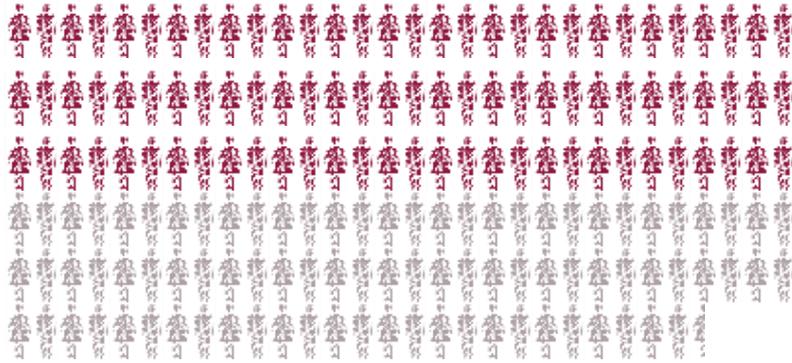


**Stoke-on-Trent  
Population**

<sup>2</sup> There was a slight discrepancy in age ranges requested for the Bell and Fire Garden (Under 16, 17-25, 26-35, 36-45, 46-55, 56-64, 65+). These have been merged into the above age ranges for ease of comparison.

# Ethnicity

**White  
British**



**90%**

**White  
other**



**2%**

**Black**



**1.8%**

**Asian**



**1%**

**Mixed  
ethnicity**



**3.4%**

**Other**



**0.8%**

# Disability and life limiting illness



**94.6**  
%

did not have a disability or life limiting illness



**8**  
%

were living with a disability or life limiting illness



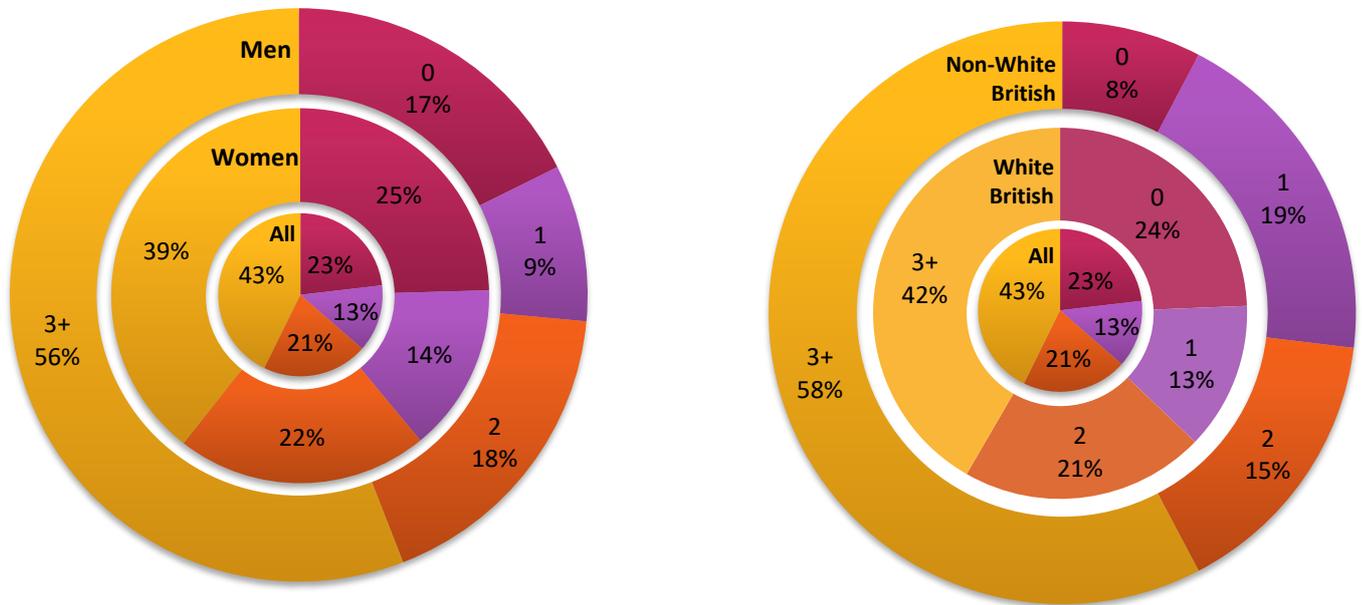
**Appetite Audiences**



**Stoke-on-Trent Population<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>3</sup> Figure taken from Kaur, B. (2013) *Equality and inclusion data analysis report*. Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Partnership NHS Trust

# How frequently do our audience members attend art events? <sup>4</sup>

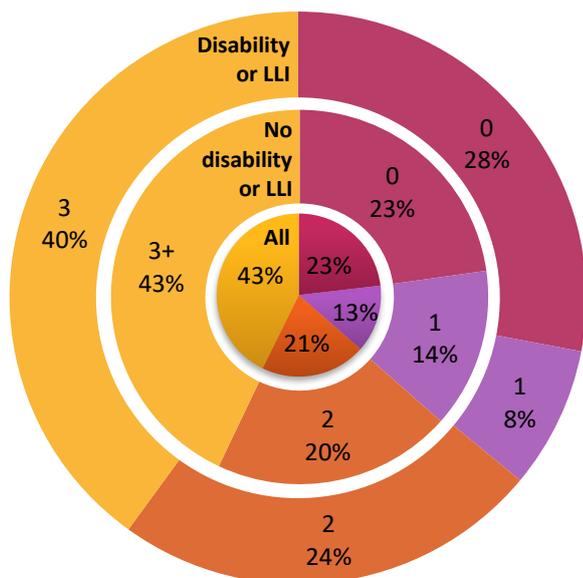


**Figure 3. Regular arts attendance**

Regular arts attenders are classified as people who attend three or more art events in a year. 57% of Appetite audiences are non-regular arts attenders. With a total Appetite audience figure of 220,560, approximately 125,700 of these are non-regular arts attenders.

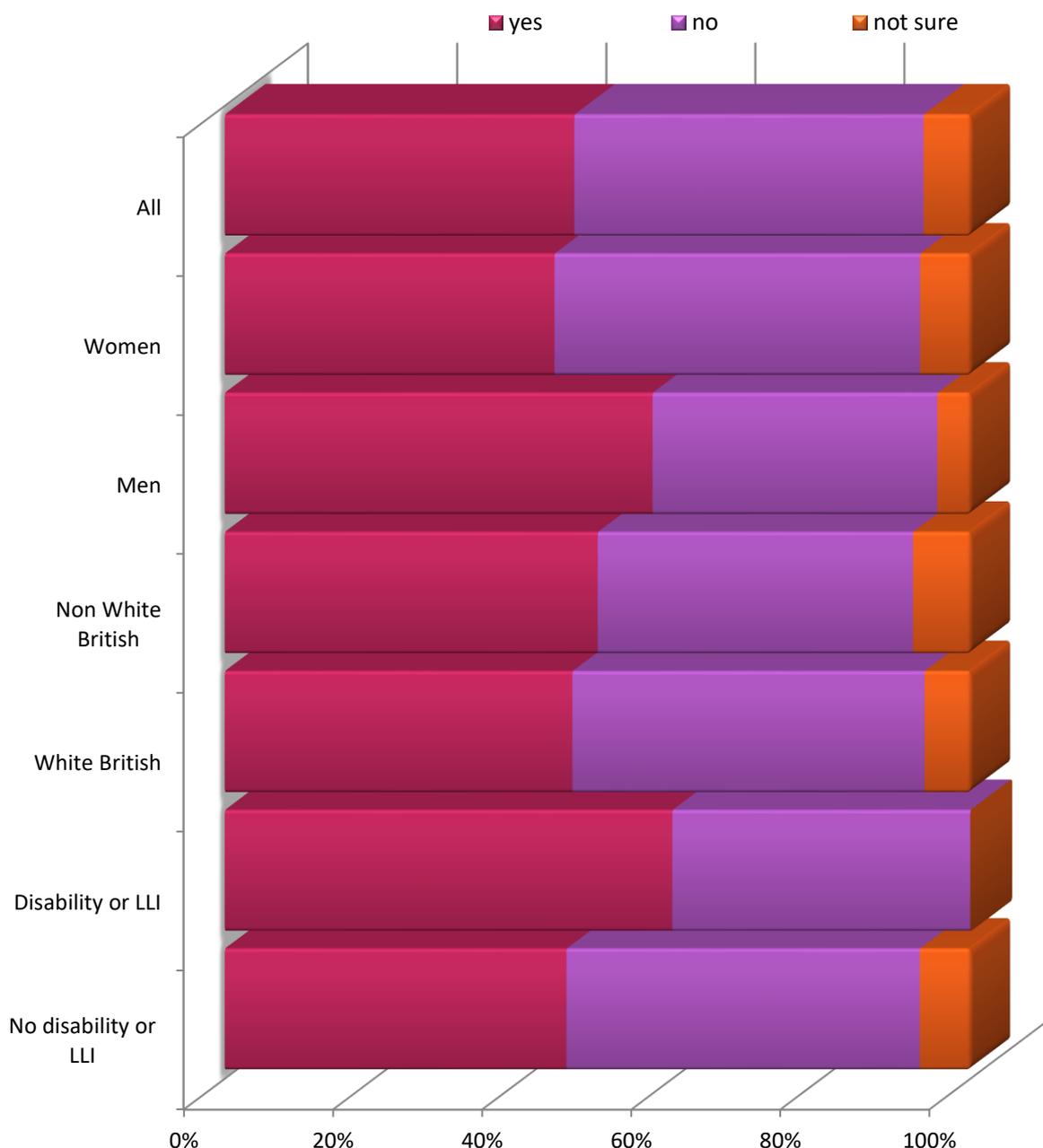
Men were more likely to be regular arts attenders than women. People who identified as White British were less likely to be arts attenders than those who did not.

People who identified as having a disability or life limiting illness were less likely to be regular arts attenders, and were more likely not to have been to an arts event in the last 12 months.



<sup>4</sup> Data for arts attendance was gathered from questionnaire responses from audiences at the Big Feast, Fire Garden and Winterfest.

# Have our audiences been to an Appetite event before?<sup>5</sup>



**Figure 4. Attendance at Appetite events**

There is a reasonable split between those people who have been to an Appetite event before and those who are new to Appetite. Men and people who identified as having a disability or life limiting illness were more likely to have been to an Appetite before.

<sup>5</sup> Data for this question was gathered from questionnaire responses from audiences at the Big Feast, Fire Garden and Winterfest.

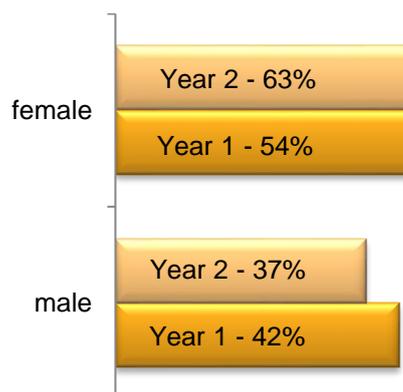


## Comparing our audiences to those in year one

There has been a significant increase in audience numbers for Appetite events between years one and two from 16,193 in year one to 307,732 in year two. This is an increase of 765% against target audience number of 22,400. Even accounting for audience figures for Play Me I'm Yours and the City of Six Towns exhibition, which attracted very large audience numbers, the programme still attracted in excess of 106,000 people in year two.

We have detailed monitoring data for audiences at Bianco by No Fit State and As the World Tipped by Wired Aerial Theatre to use as context for this year's findings. We are able to compare the gender and the ethnicity of the audience in years one and two.

### Gender



### Ethnicity

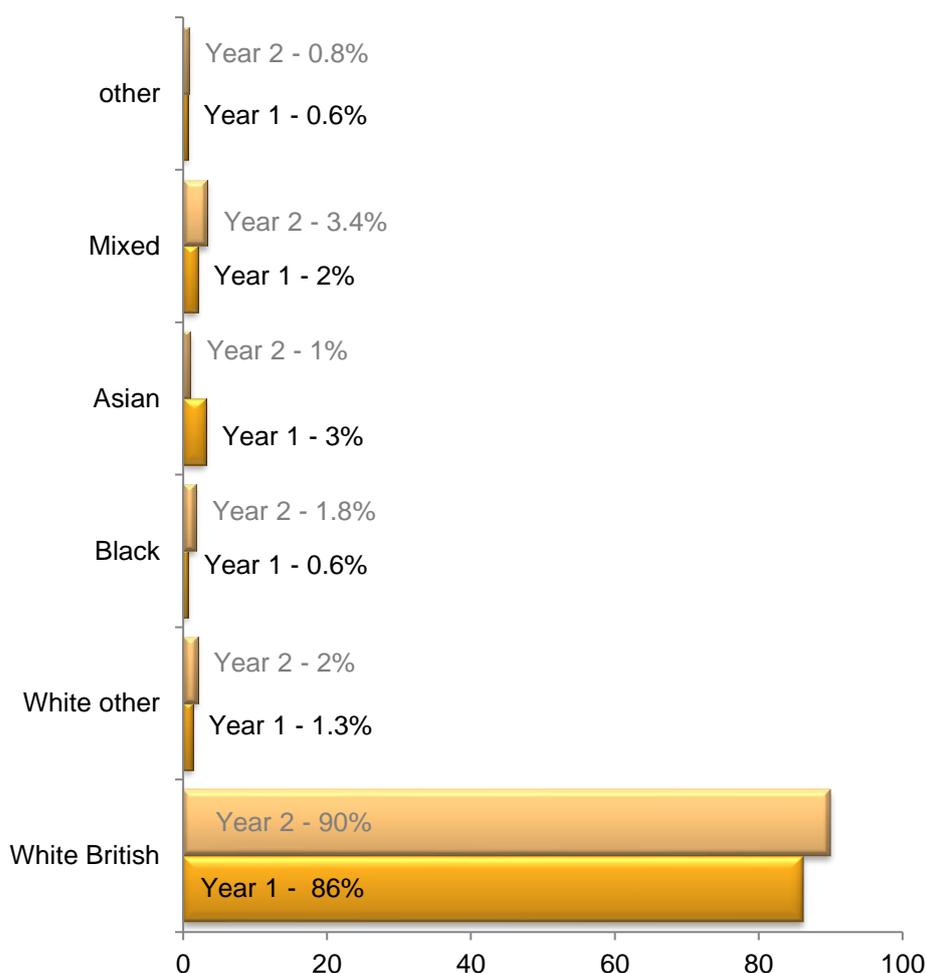


Figure 5. Gender and ethnicity of audiences in years one and two.

# Analysing what we know about our audiences in year two

Post event questionnaire feedback was used to gather information about the age, gender, ethnicity, disability and life-limiting illness and arts attendance during year two of Appetite<sup>6</sup>.

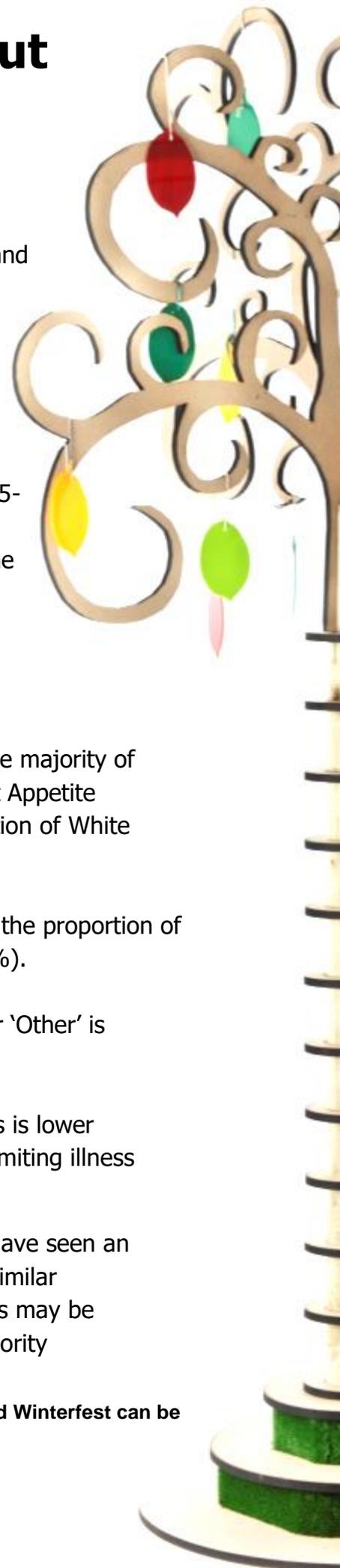
From the data we collected we can see that:

- More women attended or took part in the events than men (63% women compared to 37% men).
- Our audiences tend to attract people between the ages of 25-44. There are also a high proportion of children who have attended the events, who may be the children of those in the 25-44 age bracket.
- We attract fewer people over the age of 55 than are representative of the Stoke-on-Trent population.
- People who identify themselves as White British made up the majority of audiences (90%). The proportion of White British people at Appetite events has been slightly higher in year two than the proportion of White British people living in Stoke on Trent (86.4%).
- The number of people who identified as Asian is lower than the proportion of Asian people living in Stoke on Trent (1% compared to 7.4%).
- The numbers of people identifying as Black, 'White Other' or 'Other' is reflective of the population of Stoke-on-Trent.
- The numbers of people with a disability or life limiting illness is lower than the proportion of people living with a disability or life limiting illness in Stoke-on-Trent (8% compared to 22%).

Compared to year one of Appetite, and based on our sample, we have seen an increase in the proportion of our audience that are female, and a similar increase in the proportion of White British audience members. This may be that year two has attracted fewer men and people from ethnic minority

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<sup>6</sup> Details of the audiences attending the Bell, the Big Feast, Fire Garden and Winterfest can be found in [Appendix 1](#)



backgrounds, potentially as a result of Appetite Builders having a less 'hands on' role in relation to attracting the more difficult to reach groups across the city in year two. Equally however, a change in monitoring data collection between years one and two may be responsible for the apparent changes in the demographics of our audiences.

## **Our learning from how we collected monitoring data**

There appears to be an increase in the percentage of women attending Appetite events in year two, as well as an increase in the number of White British people. There may be a number of reasons for these shifts.

How we collect monitoring information from audiences has a significant impact on what we can learn about our audiences. The way in which we have collected information about our audiences changed between years one and two. While the monitoring data for Bianco and As the World Tipped (both in year one) was collected for all audience members who reserved a ticket, the data in year two was only collected from a sample of the audience, namely those responding to the post event survey for The Bell, Big Feast, Fire Garden and Winterfest. Therefore, the data for year two tells us more about who is likely to respond to the survey than the actual demographics of the whole audience. The data from The Bell is perhaps the most accurate as we asked the attendees to provide demographic information for everyone in their booking group.

In general terms, it would appear that women are more likely to complete and return a questionnaire than men. This is apparent when we compare the gender data from The Bell with that from the Big Feast, Fire Garden and Winterfest. The Bell asked the respondent to provide monitoring information about everyone in their party, whereas the other event questionnaires asked for information only about the respondent. The Bell returned a more balanced picture of the number of men and women attending the event (46% male and 54% female) than for the other events (combined percentages of 21% male and 79% female).



We can also assume that the lower numbers of children under 16 at the Big Feast is as a result of their parents or carers completing the surveys on behalf of the family. Where the respondents were asked how many children under the age of 16 were with them for the Fire Garden and Winterfest Surveys this increases the number of under 16s in the overall sample.

However no under 16s completed the Winterfest and Fire Garden Surveys.

There may also be a difference in the questionnaire response rates for people from different ethnic backgrounds, people with a disability or life limiting illness and people over the age 55. These are all an area that Appetite needs to explore in year three.

## Our response to these challenges

In year three Appetite needs to address the disproportionately low numbers of men, people from Black or Minority Ethnic backgrounds, people over 55 years of age and those living with a disability or life limiting illness. Learning from how certain groups of people find out about Appetite and targeting those groups through the marketing campaign in year three is essential to help address the balance.

However, in addition we need to adopt a more consistent approach to monitoring data collection, both in the terms of the data collected and the methodology used. In year three we will:

- **Review the methodology for data collection:** Gaining monitoring data post event has also resulted in skewed audience statistics, and as such the approach to monitoring needs to be reviewed.
- **Ensure consistent data is collected:** Changes in age ranges and ethnicity categorisation have made comparison across events and years difficult. Categories, where possible (and not imposed from outside of the project) will remain consistent. One person within the project will oversee the questionnaires to ensure consistency.
- **Increase communication levels:** Challenges arise from responsibility for the evaluation and monitoring sitting with two different consortium partners. Regular meetings will continue between the evaluation manager and monitoring manager. These meetings will review learning from monitoring data, plan action to be taken and plan monitoring arrangement for future events.



# What are our audiences' experiences of Appetite?

Throughout the Appetite programme we have engaged audiences, Community Hubs and participants in conversations about their experiences. In year two we can see that people responded generally positively to the programme. The Strategic programme was particularly well received. Feedback from the Strategic programme indicates that people valued:

- How art helped to bring people together: This was seen as an important element of the Big Feast and Winterfest in particular.
- Feeling a part of the art. Many people enjoyed being immersed in the art form. This was particularly relevant to The Bell by Periplum.
- Escapism: Related to being immersed in art, audiences enjoyed being able to escape through art. The Fire Garden and Folk in Box at the Big Feast were art forms where people commented on enjoying being able to escape through art.
- Transformation of space: The Strategic programme (and some Community Hub programmes) were valued for the impact they had on the local environment. In particular, Open House, the Big Feast and Fire Garden attracted comments about the positive impact the events have had on the City Centre and Hanley Park respectively.
- Family events: Providing opportunities for children to engage with art was welcomed throughout the programme, in particular for the City Centre events such as the Big Feast and Winterfest.

For Community Hub events, people valued:

- Having the opportunity to do something different: Many people saw the small, local art forms as enriching lives through offering an alternative to the usual activity.

In year two, however, we have also seen people providing more negative feedback for some events. For example, the Meir Consumerist Tree, the City of Six Towns Exhibition and some elements of the Big Feast and Grand Cross Fayre received some criticism. However, this increased level of criticism needs to be recognised in the context of an increasing confidence to talk openly about art and differing tastes. This point is discussed [later in this report](#).

## What audiences said about the Strategic Programme

### Community Cohesion

**"Stunning way to bring the community together. Loved it."** Frantic at the Big Feast

### Escapism

**"Like an invite into the musician's head."** Folk in a Box at the Big Feast

### Inspiration

**"It has inspired me to think about making my own sound sculpture."** Audible Forces at the Big Feast

### Transformation of a public space

**"These events were brilliant and for that time made the centre feel vibrant and happening...I felt a bit more hopeful for Hanley."** The Big Feast

### Emotion

**"A wonderful moment when Poetry Takeaway made a family cry with tears of joy."** Tweet about Poetry Takeaway at the Big Feast

### Importance for Children

**"The children here will remember this for a lifetime."**

Dragonheartbeats

### Immersed in Art

**"It involved the crowd and made you feel almost scared but wanting to see more. Electric atmosphere, very thought provoking."** The Bell





## What our audiences said about the Community Hub Programme

### **Atmosphere**

**"[I liked] the atmosphere of wonder and being in a totally different world of fire and wonder."** Fire Garden

### **Thought provoking**

**"It is poignant. It will make people think. I wish it wasn't being burned."** About Old Bill at Stoke South Carnival

### **Transformation of a public space**

**"I didn't expect to be transported to another world in Hanford."** Grand Cross Fayre

### **It's Different**

**"The tree is different. It's put Meir on the map and looks better with light on than in daylight."** Meir Consumerist Christmas Tree

### **Experience**

**"A marvellous experience."** Hunt and Darton Cafe

### **Appreciation of the art form**

**"The dancers were very talented."** Spill in Bentilee

### **Accessible**

**"We don't usually get access to art such as this."** Bentilee Circus Sundae

### **Community Cohesion**

**"I haven't seen so many people in one place for ages."** Bentilee Circus Sundae

# What practical changes did our audiences suggest?



## Advertising

Advertising remained an area of concern for many people for both the Strategic and the Community Hub programmes.

**“The times on the internet are different to what is advertised here. It is a shame as my friends will miss the performance. Also, the polar bear is not included in the map.”** Sweet Treat Sunday

**“Better signposts to the event [needed]. A few arrows would not have gone amiss.”** Circus Sunday.

## Suitability for children

Family events were important for audiences in years one and two of Appetite. Through programmes such as the Big Feast, Spill by DanceXchange and Winterfest, Appetite is developing a reputation of family friendly events. Therefore, when a performance is not as suitable for children, some criticism was received.

**“The advertising stated [that it contained] mild language, however in my opinion it wasn’t mild considering the event stated it was suitable for children.”** The Bell

## **Catering or refreshments**

Catering was available at The Bell. However, the audience felt that a broader range of food needed to be on offer. For some events, people felt that refreshments may have enhanced their experience.

**“Nothing for vegetarians.” The Bell**

**“[I would like] perhaps a food stall.” Circus Sundae**

## **Location**

The City Centre was used for a number of events in year two. While many commented that it was good use of the City Centre, some were more concerned about location.

**“We watched Dragonheartbeats which I and my 4 year old really enjoyed but it was staged outside [a pub] which unfortunately came with its own entertainment not suitable for a 4 year old.” Dragonheartbeats**

## **Information on what to expect**

A recurring theme throughout year two is that people welcome information prior to the event to help them understand the content of the performance or art form. Where this was not available, such as at The Bell, some people felt unable to fully engage with the performance.

**“Perhaps let the people know more about what to expect... we were left wondering if we were stood in the wrong place.” Winterfest**

**“I would have very much liked some information about the content of the production [as I was] not familiar with the story (not sure if I should be?) A short synopsis of the story would have added to the performance...because we couldn't necessarily follow all the dialogue.” The Bell**

## Accessibility and the use of space

While the use of public spaces is generally welcomed by audiences, sometimes this can make accessibility for some people difficult. From feedback from the events themselves and afterwards with the Community Hubs, it has been suggested that Appetite consider the needs people with disabilities in planning events. While seating areas have been provided (such as at The Bell) the experience of people with disabilities has, at times, been impaired through the use of this extra space.

**“The location made it difficult for children and wheelchair users to see as it was downhill.” Winterfest**

## How Appetite have responded to the feedback

Learning from feedback from events has been catalogued and used to influence the programme. Reflections on learning and action taken can be found in the Evaluation learning and action document (to follow).

Some of these areas of learning will be returned to [later in this report](#).

## Part Two

# To what extent has the ambition of Appetite for excellence of art and the excellence of engaging communities been successful?

## Towards a local definition of Quality Art

A Stoke-on-Trent [based definition of quality art was researched in depth in year one of the Appetite programme.](#) Audiences voted, using tea pots and sugar cubes, for their definitions of quality art.

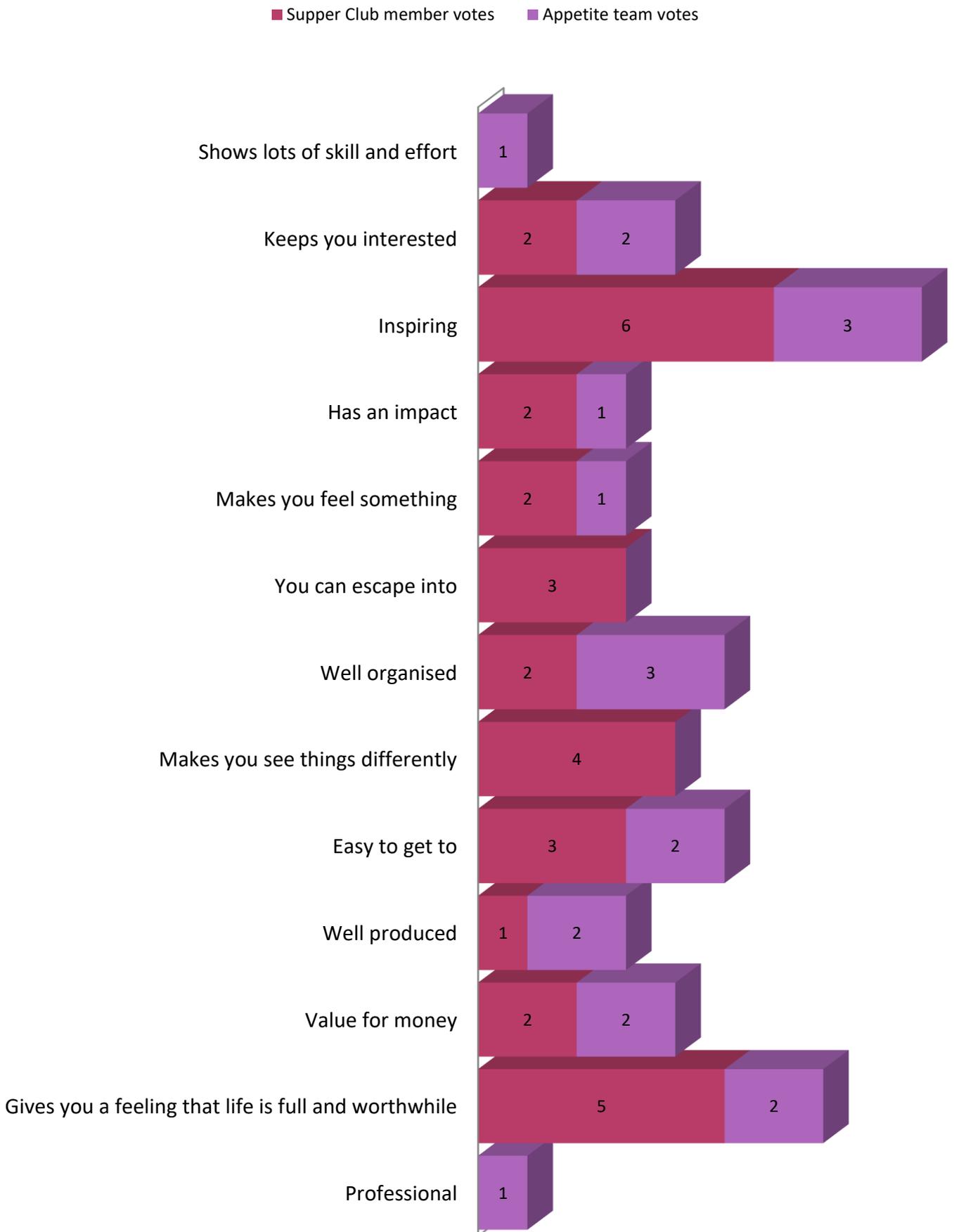
Quality art was identified as art that:

1. Is inspiring
2. Makes you see things differently
3. Keeps you interested

In year two, we continued to discuss quality with audiences. Further definitions started to emerge through these conversations, which were added to the original definitions and voted for by members of the Supper Club. The Appetite team also had an opportunity to vote for the definitions. The results are displayed on page 31.

Inspiring art was still considered by both the Supper Club and Appetite team as the highest scoring definition of quality. However, the Supper Club members and the Appetite team had differences in opinion in relation to the question of how they define quality art.

The Supper Club members' definitions were related to the intrinsic elements of art; art that made people see things differently, or made them feel as if life was "full and worthwhile". The Appetite team definitions of quality art included more definitions relating to the production elements of the art, including it being well organised or well produced.



**Figure 6. Quality art definitions as voted for by the Supper Club and Appetite team**

Having a connection with the artist or performer was also considered to be a defining element of quality.

**“Professionalism is not as important as having a connection with the performer or artwork.”  
Super Club member.**

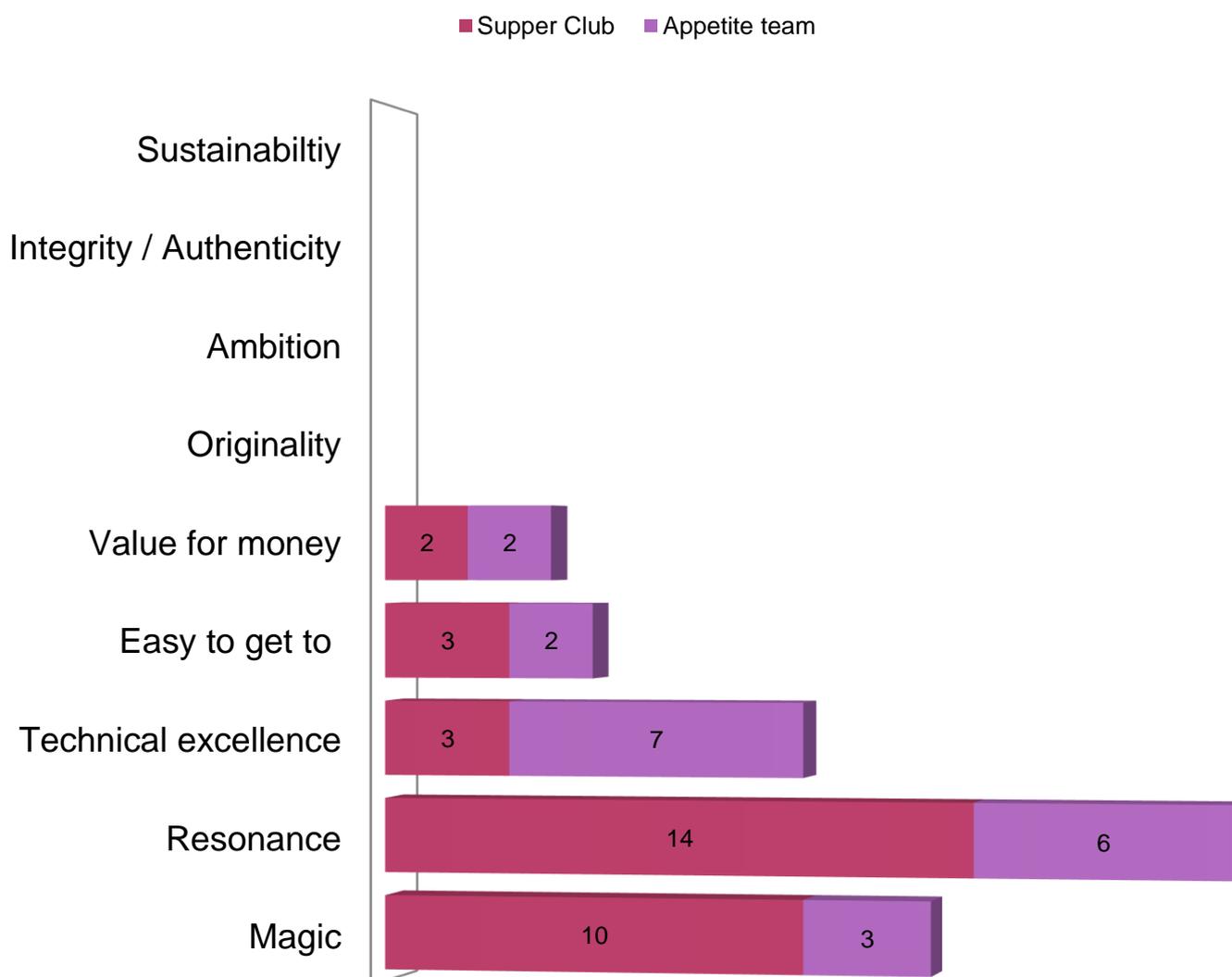
At the Creative People and Places Peer Learning Day in St Helens in February 2015 a definition of quality was offered which adapted and added to definitions from the work of Matarasso (2015). These definitions are:

- Magic
- Resonance
- Ambition
- Originality
- Technical excellence
- Integrity/Authenticity
- Sustainability

We have been able to map our local, Stoke-on-Trent definition of quality art onto this which helps us to understand how our definition compares with other Creative People and Places areas. Using the definitions above, we can map our definitions of quality art easily against three of the categories as follows:

- **Magic** – art that makes you feel something, art you can escape into, art that gives you a feeling that life is full and worthwhile.
- **Resonance** – art that keeps you interested, art that is inspiring, art that has an impact, art that makes you see things differently.
- **Technical excellence** – art that shows lots of skill and effort, well organised art, well produced art, professional art.

**Figure 7. Local definitions of quality art mapped against the Creative People and Places definitions**



The notion of quality art being magic fits well with the feedback from year two of Appetite, and was particularly reflected in the feedback from Fire Garden and Audible Forces.

**“I found it uplifting and it provided me with escapism from the hectic world that we live in.” Fire Garden.**

**“Haunting, beautiful, very interesting and atmospheric.” Audible Forces.**

The concept of resonance was also reflected in feedback from audiences in year two. Art in which people felt a personal connection with the art or artist was considered high quality.

**“Beautiful! Being sang a song just for me was like I had found a little sanctuary in Hanley.” Folk in a Box**

For some, the transformation of the City Centre through art resonated with them.

**“[This is] the best thing that’s happened in Hanley. I’ve never seen people enjoy themselves in the town” (began to cry). The Big Feast.**

Both resonance and magic were the most popular definitions when voted by the Supper Club.

Technical excellence was a definition which emerged from the audience feedback in year two and was the definition favoured by the Appetite team.

**“Wonderful achievement of building.” Old Bill at Stoke South Carnival**

**“All was extremely well executed.” The Bell**

Easy to get to and value for money were additional definitions produced at a local level. There were some discussions with the Supper Club and the Appetite team about how periphery elements of an art event, such as how to get there, or whether it will be good value, can impact on its perceived quality.

**“If you have to worry about where to park, how much it will be and how much time you will need it stops you becoming immersed in the event and can impact your idea of its quality.” Supper Club member.**

Originality did not emerge in year one and was not a definition which was included in the voting by the Supper Club and Appetite team. However, when asked what audiences thought of an event, a common response was “it’s different”. With the fact that Stoke-on-Trent has some of the lowest rates of arts engagement in the country it

could be argued that the mere presence of any art in the City is offering something different. However, by offering art that challenges people's perceptions of what art is through the introduction of performance based art, light and fire installations and immersive art experiences, people in Stoke-on-Trent have identified that the art on offer is different to 'traditional' art forms. Originality was also an attraction that motivated people attend events.

**"[I enjoyed] the originality." Big Feast**

**"It was very different." Spill**

Integrity and authenticity were not specifically mentioned by audiences as variables of quality art. However, the issues surrounding integrity in relation to art was discussed through conversations with audiences and Community Hubs. The discussions surrounding the [City of Six Towns exhibition](#) demonstrate a high level of pride in the area. When art questions Stoke, or holds a mirror up to highlight its flaws, audiences react negatively to this.

The photographs included in the City of Six Towns exhibition in the City Centre were recognised by a number of people we spoke to as technically high quality. However, the overall exhibition was not well received due to the content of the photographs.

**"Stoke keeps getting told it is the worst at everything and these don't help. They don't show the pride people have in the area. The photos might represent what some areas look like but not all of it, or how people feel about it." Someone who had stopped to look at the City of Six Towns exhibition**

Some people said they would be embarrassed if other people, outside the City, saw Stoke being portrayed in this way.

Many of the comments for both the Consumerist Christmas Tree and the City of Six Towns exhibition were focused on how people felt that the artist was trying to 'say something' about the area through the art (regardless of whether this was the case). The art made people reflect on the area, whether they wanted to or not, and some people seemed to find this an uncomfortable experience. This is interesting given that the Stoke-on-Trent based definitions of quality in years one and two include:

- Makes you feel something

- Makes you see things differently

It appears that 'feeling something' or 'seeing things differently' only apply if it is a positive experience or one which is not too close to home. Art can make you feel something without it feeling 'magical'. It would appear that while initiating reflection can be positive (as shown from some of the feedback from the Big Feast) there is a level at which reflection becomes uncomfortable. Both the Consumerist Tree and City of Six Towns were perceived to be reflecting Stoke-on-Trent in a negative way. The difference in perception of Mark Powers, the artist who created the City of Six Town exhibition, and local residents illustrate how distance can give a different perspective. However, this challenge to local people's perception was not welcomed on the whole.

Some audience members saw the artist as an 'outsider', making judgements about the area and its people, without fully engaging with or becoming immersed in communities. This notion of artists as 'experts' who come into an area and create art based on their perception of it has been challenged by Sarah Duffy, creator of Fun Palaces (Duffy, 2015). People in Stoke-on-Trent, on the whole, appear to agree that this approach only serves to reinforce the artist as 'other'.

Ambition and sustainability were commented on less so by audiences as factors of quality art.



# A growing confidence to debate art

In year one, we saw that the vast majority of responses people gave to art were overwhelmingly positive. While feedback in year two was also overwhelmingly positive, change in year two, compared to year one, has been people's willingness to discuss and judge the quality of art they experience. This was reflected in responses to some of the art programmed for year two. For example some members the audience felt able to say one of the performances at the Big Feast, Cannonballistia, fell short of the quality expected from Appetite. This scored the lowest for quality on the post event questionnaire, which was reflected in the creative consultation at the performance.

**"It's badly timed, slow and not very entertaining."  
Cannonballista audience member.**

This was balanced by more positive comments on quality, demonstrating an increased willingness to define and debate the quality of art on offer.

## Meir Consumerist Tree – a case study

Meir's Consumerist Christmas Tree received mixed feedback from the creative consultation at the launch event and through social media. Our creative consultation at the launch event received feedback from 25 people. The majority of this feedback was positive, with 15 of the 25 responses, four being negative comments and 6 comments including both positive and negative comments.

In addition, Meir Consumerist Tree became a point of discussion, both in local and regional press and across social media streams. For example, a local radio station, Signal, initiated their own debates on Facebook about the tree with one post asking people to respond to the tree. This reached 86,496 people and received 2,242 Likes, comments and shares.

In relation to social media posts referring to the Consumerist Tree, there were a total of 64 positive comments and 97 of the comments were negative<sup>7</sup>. The Consumerist Tree therefore generated a discussion about art in Stoke-on-Trent like no other Appetite event to date.

It is clear that there were a significant number of people who actively supported and defended the tree. From our creative consultation at the launch event, research participants argued that they felt that the tree would have a positive effect on the area, and welcomed the fact that local community groups had been involved in creating the tree. This was supported by some of the comments gathered by the local Newspaper, the Sentinel, at the event.

**“There won’t be many other towns in the country with something like this. It is nice to see that Meir is standing out for the right reasons for a change.”  
Meir Consumerist Christmas Tree Launch audience member, via The Sentinel<sup>8</sup>.**

Some social media comments also defended the Consumerist Tree, arguing that the tree was ‘different’ and ‘put Meir on the map’.

**“I think it’s brilliant, it’s really quirky and is a talking point.”  
Twitter user.**

For some, the tree was enough to attract them to the area.

**“I’m actually going to make the effort to visit Meir to see it... This is brilliant for Meir. A brave decision and a very positive ‘First’”.  
Twitter user.**

**“Great idea, I shall make a point of visiting it when I am in the Potteries.” Twitter User.**

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<sup>7</sup> Taken from The Sentinel Facebook page, Comments and Twitter, Radio Stoke Facebook page and Twitter and Signal 1 Twitter feed. Were comments included both positive and negative elements, the comments were counted twice.

<sup>8</sup> Barnes (2014) Crowds gather to see lights on Meir Christmas tree made of plastic bags switched on. The Sentinel. Available at: <http://www.stokesentinel.co.uk/Kids-team-bag-new-look-festive-tree/story-25259247-detail/story.html#ixzz410dPjTcl>

However, a proportionately large number of people (compared to other events and installations) offered less positive comments about the tree. At the launch event creative consultation, some people told us that they were concerned about the cost of the tree. There appeared to be numerous rumours about who had paid for the tree and how much it had cost local tax payers. Again, this was echoed on social media.

**“There are loads of worthwhile important things to spend the money on” Twitter user.**

Equally, some people were critical of the use of plastic bags to create, what they considered to be, a Christmas tree.

**“It looks like a rubbish tip all lit up.”  
Meir Consumerist Christmas Tree Launch audience member.**

For some, the appearance of a ‘Christmas Tree’ made out of ‘rubbish’ was taken personally, and used by others to insult people living in Meir.

**“I don’t like being valued only as trash...” Twitter user.**

**“I think it fits nicely in Meir, it’s a dump.” Twitter user.**

While the Meir Consumerist Tree generated a debate in Stoke-on-Trent about art, we can learn a great deal from the comments about how artistic quality and community intersect. Some of the comments illustrate how some people were unaware of how and why the Consumerist Tree was chosen for Meir and how the installation had been funded. For some, the appearance of a Consumerist tree was a shock as they were expecting the traditional Christmas tree that had been placed in Meir Centre in previous years.

## **What we have learnt about the importance of local context**

The Consumerist Christmas Tree had been seen by members of the Supper Club the previous year at Durham’s Lumiere Festival. The tree had been part of a larger light installation in Durham and had been deemed by the Supper Club and other visitors to the attraction as high quality art. However, for some, this did not translate to Meir in Stoke-on-Trent. For Appetite, as we move into year three, it is helpful for us to understand how the local, historical and social contexts can influence how people accept and perceive art in their local area.

- **The Christmas Tree tradition** There is a long tradition in Meir of a traditional Christmas tree being placed in the town centre. The Consumerist Tree was an alternative to this, commissioned by Meir Events Board and Appetite. The result was people commenting on the quality of the tree, perceiving it to be a Christmas tree, not as a challenge to consumerism which it was designed to be. Further information about the tree, prior to the installation, may have helped local people understand the significance of this. Equally, a broader community consultation on the tree may have addressed some of the community's concerns prior to the art work being installed, and therefore, over time, supported audience development for the event.
- **The economic and political context** Many people thought that the tree was a cost cutting measure by the City Council, and were angry about this. Conversely, others felt that the City Council had funded the tree at the expense of other local services. Stoke-on-Trent scores high on the indices of deprivation and therefore transparency about how local events are funded and the value of these is essential in can helping to reduce the level of myth and rumour associated with an event.
- **The environmental context** In Durham, the tree was part of a larger light installation. The Chair of the Community Hub group who organised the tree installation reflected on the fact that the perception of quality in Durham was perhaps higher because it was surrounded by other light sculptures.
- **The social and historical context** Meir is an area of high poverty, inequality and low investment. Many of the comments on social media were using the tree to insult people of Meir. **"Only Meir would have a Christmas tree made of carrier bags" (Twitter user)**. By better understanding the social and historical context of the area, more could have been done to make stronger connections with local people outside of the community group Appetite worked with. A wider consultation may have also highlighted how local people thought the artwork would be perceived in that specific community.

In year two we have seen more open discussion about the quality of art on offer through the Appetite programme. Of course, a more diverse opinion of the quality of art may not necessarily reflect the actual quality of the art itself, more so people's ability and willingness to judge the art. Appetite, therefore, can be seen to be meeting its aim in relation to starting a conversation about the art.

# Is it art?

Interestingly, not everyone recognised the work programmed through Appetite as art. When asked if they thought the space should be used to exhibit other types of art such as paintings, one person who had enjoyed looking at the City of Six Towns exhibition commented,

**“Oh no Duck, I wouldn’t have stopped if it was art. I don’t like art.” Person who had stopped to look at City of Six Towns**

Through our creative consultations at Appetite events in year two, we asked people to identify whether they would be willing to pay for the art they were experiencing and if so, how much. Whilst recognising that quality is different to and separate from cost, the exercise helped us to understand how initial expectations of quality (or what people thought they would pay) were challenged once people had experienced the event. For example, at Folk in the Box:

**“I said I would pay £1.50 before I went in, but now I would pay £10.”**

Further, at the Fire Garden, although the tickets were free of charge, donations were collected on the night. Donations exceeded £700 demonstrating how, once an event is deemed as quality, people are more likely to pay.

This shows that expectations of artistic quality, based either on location, advertising or the initial perception of the experience (such as those of the box in Folk in a Box) can be a barrier for both attendance or charging for tickets.



**Money in a Buskers Hat, a creative consultation tool used to gain feedback from Folk in a Box at the Big Feast**

# Supporting a growing confidence

In year two, Appetite has supported Community Hub members to commission art in their local areas. At the same time the programme has started to develop an increased awareness of a range of forms accompanied by an increased confidence to discuss and debate art, and to be critical of it. In the case of the Meir Consumerist Tree these two achievements of the programme were in conflict as the ambitions of the Community Hub members to present quality art had a mixed reception by the local community.

A future consideration for Appetite is how to manage expectations of, and reactions to, quality art. At times the wider audience may have a different perception of the quality of the art that has been commissioned by Community Hubs with the support of Appetite. While experienced artists and commissioners may be more equipped to deal with negative reactions to the work, community members involved in the Appetite programme may require more support in handling critical feedback, particularly when the criticism comes directly from the community in which they live or work.

In year three of the programme **Appetite** need to consider:

- **How we can support Community Hubs to manage varying perceptions of quality art.** Community Hubs' increased confidence and awareness of what 'quality art' means to them may not be shared by the wider audience for Appetite who have not had the same level of support and input. Supporting Community Hub members to further discuss and debate art, in the face of disagreement, could support them to further increase their confidence levels.
- **How we can ensure Hubs consult widely when commissioning art.** We can support Community Hubs to understand the benefits of consulting with the wider community prior to commissioning and offer tools and techniques to be able to do this. Art commissions based on consultation findings are more likely to be well received by the wider community than those where local people feel art has been imposed on them.
- **How we can support Community Hubs to keep the local community informed of progress.** Once commissioning has taken place, providing local people with information about progress and an opportunity to meet artists will ensure a wider group of people, beyond the Community Hub members, feel engaged and invested in the process.

## **Part Three**

### **To what extent has the ambition of Appetite for excellence of art and the excellence of engaging communities been successful?**

## **Excellence of the process of Engaging Communities**

We have seen an increase in audience numbers and Appetite participants in year two. Communities have engaged with Appetite through meaningful conversations about art. Between years one and two of Appetite we have seen the depth of conversation increase. Responses have moved from initial reactions to the art they see (“wow”, “amazing”) to more complex discussions about quality art, inspiration, aspirations, and impact. We have discussed transformation of space through art with audiences, pricing dilemmas with the Supper Club and community cohesion with Community Hubs. We have listened to audience members about their emotional responses when immersed in art and the challenges of engaging communities in art when they do not know what to expect. We have talked to the Supper Club about sustainability of art in Stoke-on-Trent and we have heard how art has become a lifeline for some or a vital part of their communities. We have talked to local artists who have been a part of art developed through The Kitchen to find how their confidence has grown from their involvement in a production. We have listened to audience members who told us how difficult some of our events were because their needs as someone with a disability had not been met. We have given audiences an opportunity to let us know what has worked for them, and what has not. And we have heard how nervous our Community Hub members feel on the morning of a production.

Conversation has been central to Appetite’s engagement in year two. Through this engagement we have grown Community Hubs and established a Supper Club. Both have commissioned art for Stoke-on-Trent. In addition we have grown the number of volunteers engaged with Appetite as Artistic Programme volunteers, Cultural Reporters, Appetite Ambassadors and the Get Talking Network. We have also funded eight artists through The Kitchen programme, increased the number of partners we work with and engaged with local and regional press. This section of the report will explore how Appetite has engaged communities and some of the learning that has taken place about engaging communities to increase an appetite for the arts.

# Changes in how Appetite is engaging communities

In year one the process of engagement started with the **Taster Menu** which was designed to get people to art events be inspired by their experience. It offered an alternative to 'traditional art forms'.

In year two there has been a shift towards **people being engaged in conversations** about art and an increased confidence in being critical of art. Communities also started to commission art. Participation levels in Appetite increased in year two.

In year three there will be a further shift towards **increased co-commissioning**. Evidence from the research suggests that this is not fully achievable in year three, but more a part of the ten-year vision. For example, Community Hubs who have some previous history of commissioning before Appetite are closer to this vision, such as University Hospitals of North Midlands Charitable Trust (UHM). However others have further to travel due to the fact that they started their relationship with Appetite with far less experience of art generally.

## Year 1

Inspiration through the Taster Menu

## Year 2

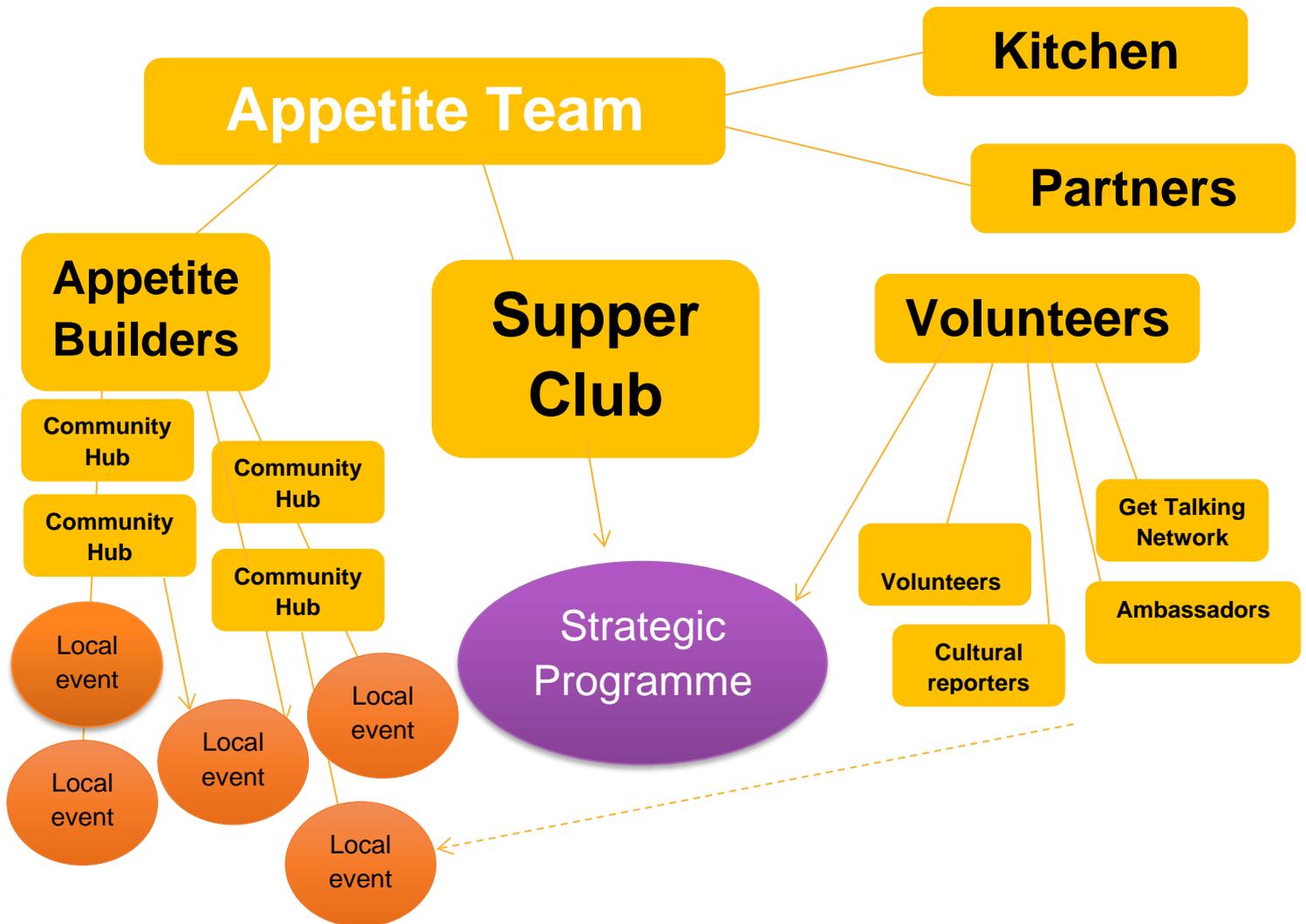
Engaging in conversations about art and developing Community Hubs and Supper Club

## Year 3

Increasing confidence to critique art and co-commissioning for sustainability.

# Year 2

Engaging in conversations about art and developing Community Hubs and Supper Club



In year two, Appetite has engaged communities through four main strands:

1. **Inspiration through the strategic programme** - The Supper Club has been the main community engaged with this. However, the strategic programme has also been supported by other volunteers such as Event Volunteers, Ambassadors, Cultural Reporters, and the Get Talking Network.
2. **Engaging communities in a localisation of art** - Community Hubs have co-commissioned art across Stoke-on-Trent with support from the Appetite Builders.
3. **The Kitchen** - The artist development programme has supported 8 artists develop quality art programmes across the City.
4. **Working with partners** - We have worked with partners across Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire to help us engage with local communities. For example, Winterfest was a joint initiative between Appetite and Stoke-on-Trent City Council, attracting over 6,000 people to the three-day event.

Through evaluation of these activities we have been able to learn more about how we attract audience members, what types of art our audiences aspire to and the barriers to engagement with art.



# How Appetite has attracted more audience members to its events

## Strategic events

For our strategic programme we have been able to assess how audiences found out about The Bell, the Big Feast and Winterfest.

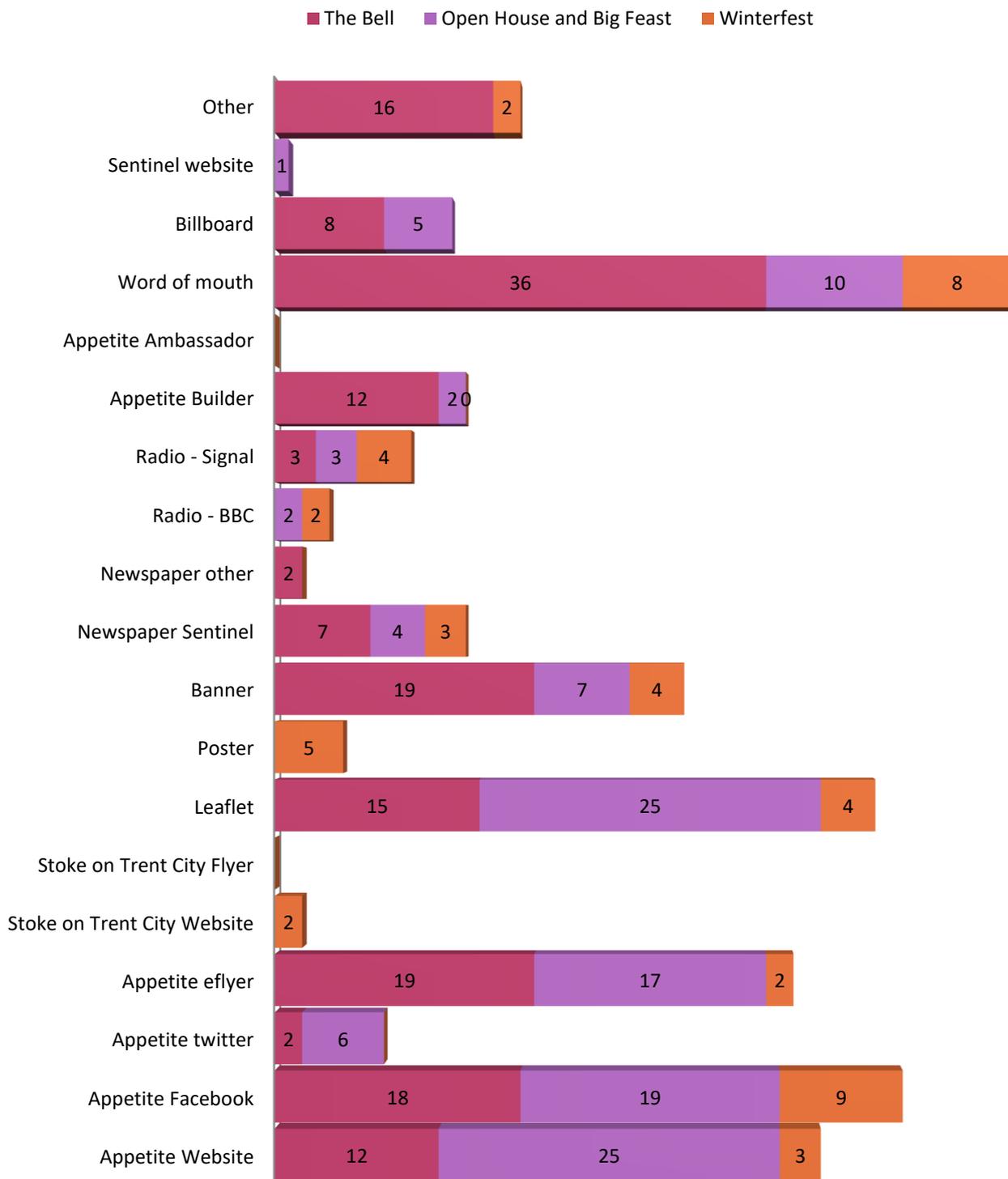


Figure 8. How our audiences found out about Appetite.



Appetite's strategic programme attracted a significant number of people through word of mouth, particularly for The Bell. Appetite's Facebook page was also successful in helping people find out about the events, as were the Appetite website, leaflets and e-flyers.

### **Community Hub Programme**

People were more likely to find out about the Community Hub programme through a poster or flyer, by word of mouth, or by stumbling across it. The role of the Appetite Builders was important in promoting the Community Hub events, and there was less reliance on the Appetite website. The most effective approaches to marketing for the Community Hub events appears to be far more organic than that for the Strategic events, relying more on community members and community based organisations to spread the word.

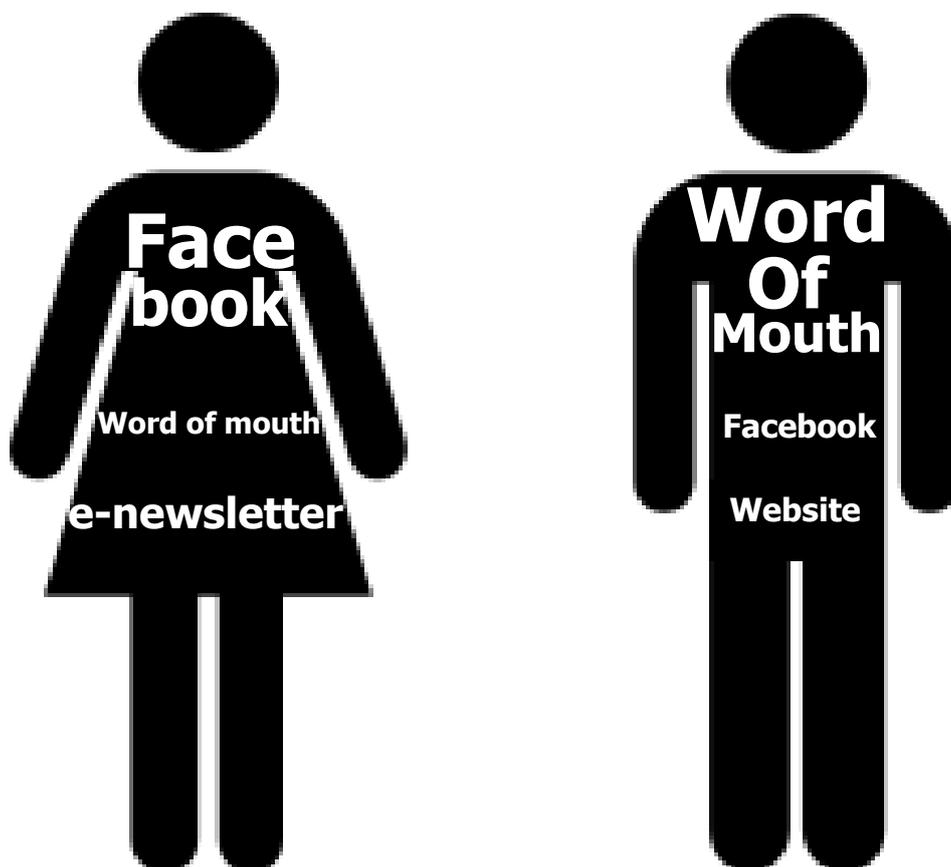
The Fire Garden was an anomaly for the Community Hub events. Tickets for the Fire Garden sold out faster than any other Appetite event to date. Most people found out about the event either through Facebook or word of mouth (which may have included social media). This high level of interest in an Appetite event was welcomed, however, it also posed a few challenges. Compared to events such as Stoke South Carnival where people found out about the event largely through leaflets and banners, or Bentilee Spill where word of mouth was important, the level of sharing of the Fire Garden event through social media was unexpected. News of the Fire Garden spread virally over Facebook within a few days of it being released, resulting in the tickets being sold out before local residents around the area of the park where it was being hosted had an opportunity to book places. In future, it is important that local residents are informed of the events before the event is released on social media (through leaflets, banners and flyer drops) as it is these residents that are those most affected by an arts performance in their locality.

# How different groups of people found out about Appetite events

The samples of people from ethnic minority backgrounds and those with a disability or life limiting illness are very small in the current sample. However, early indications show that Facebook and word of mouth were as important for people from ethnic backgrounds or living with a disability or life limiting illness as for the wider audience. However there appeared to be a greater proportion of people with a disability or life limiting illness and people from ethnic minority backgrounds who found out about the events through Appetite Builders. This demonstrates the important role Appetite Builders have in targeting specific groups who are less likely to access the arts in Stoke on Trent.

Both groups appeared to be more reliant on radio, newspapers and banners to find out about events than the wider Appetite audience.

Although the number of men in the sample is smaller than the number of women, we can start to understand how different members of our audiences find out about events. Women were most likely to hear about the event through Facebook (28%), whereas men were most likely to find out about the events through word of mouth (23%).



# Growing the Appetite Brand

The Appetite brand has strengthened in year two. Increasingly audience members have attended events because they have recognised the brand and associated quality with it.

**“If it is Appetite then I will come.”**

The brand is strongest in relation to the Strategic Programme, and Appetite is generally associated with the large spectacle art events such as The Bell and the Big Feast. While Appetite is important for the Community Hub level, Appetite is not always recognised as being associated with the localised events. For example, the City Council was seen by many people as commissioning the Consumerist Christmas Tree in Meir. In year three we will explore further with communities how the Appetite brand is perceived for both strategic and community events and identify whether the brand can be further strengthened to help support the vision of increased arts engagement in Stoke-on-Trent beyond the current Appetite funding.



# appetite

# What types of art do our audiences aspire to?

In year two we asked people about the art they would like to see in Stoke-on-Trent in the future at the Big Feast and Open House, Winterfest, Stoke South Carnival, and Fire Garden. We can compare these to aspirations for art identified during the Taster Menu in year one.

There were some similarities between years one and two. Music is still popular, with performance and theatre also being mentioned in both years. Interactive art, where people feel immersed in the art, also remains a common aspiration. However, there have been some differences that have started to emerge which can be further cross checked in year three. More specific art forms have been mentioned in year two than in year one, with sculpture and ballet, poetry and puppetry all being suggested. Outdoor events remained popular, but the emergence of festival type events was apparent. This may have been as a result of the Appetite programme including the Pavement Café in year one and the Big Feast in year two. It may be that audiences are getting used to festival-like events in the City Centre, and are aspiring for more. Equally art that is inclusive of children as audience members became increasingly popular in year two.

## **Immersive vs static art**

From our research we can see that audiences in Stoke-on-Trent are motivated and respond most positively to immersive art. This is also reflective of year one's findings. There are some exceptions to this. Feedback from the Community Hubs and audiences has indicated that some people are concerned about feeling foolish or being put on the spot. Having the support of an Appetite Builder to reassure them was highlighted as important in making immersive art a positive experience in this case.

From our audience feedback, audiences are also starting to aspire to more traditional art forms such as sculpture, ballet, and exhibitions. However, the least favourable feedback this year has been from City of Six Town and Meir Consumerist Christmas Tree. Both of these were criticised for making a negative statement about the area. Meir Consumerist Tree received 53 positive comments and 103 negative comments across The Sentinel Newspaper and Radio Stoke Facebook feeds. Meir is an area of Stoke-on-Trent that scores high on indices of deprivation, and there are widespread negative perceptions of Meir across the rest of the City. The feedback from social media indicated that people from Meir and from elsewhere across the City were saying that it is giving Meir what it deserves – rubbish. Equally some people said that they were ashamed to say they were from Meir as a result of the tree.



## *Year 1*

*Outdoor art*  
*Art I can take part in*  
*Supports local area and artists*  
*Live art*

## *Year 2*

*Interactive art that involves people*  
*Children's or family events*  
*Street performances or festivals*  
*Specific art forms*

The City of Six Towns elicited a similar response, although on a smaller scale. While some people liked the photographs and the fact that there was an exhibition in the City Centre, others thought the photographs were depressing and making a statement about the area. Some asked where the artist was from, and other said that they would be embarrassed if other people, from outside of the city, saw Stoke-on-Trent being portrayed in this way.

It would appear therefore that art that makes a statement about Stoke-on-Trent is very divisive.

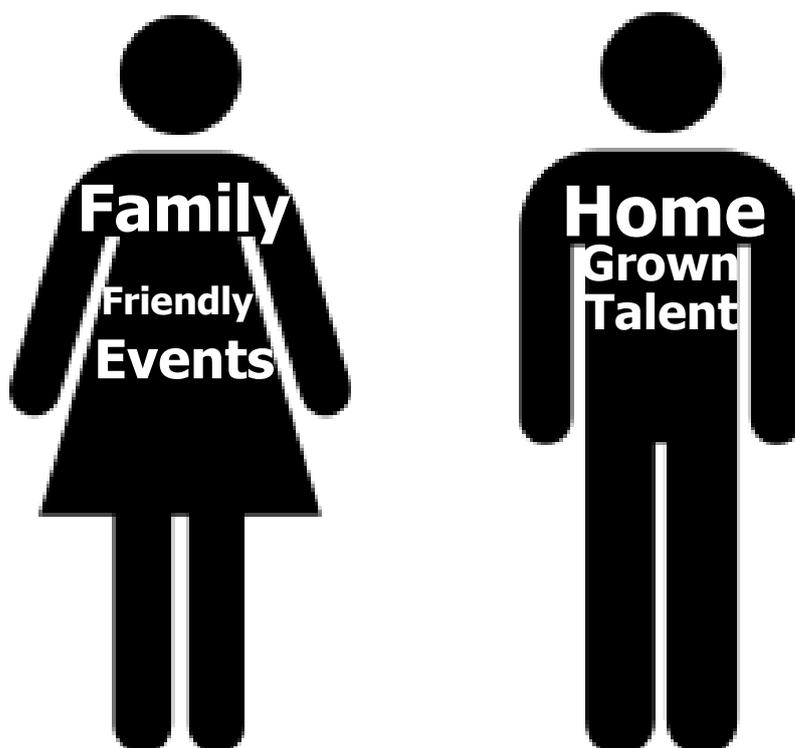
It is also interesting that, in comparison, immersive art, in which you can escape the realities of the area, is more positively received. People in Stoke-on-Trent appear to prefer art that is an escape rather than that which holds a mirror to its face.

### **How men and women aspire for art in Stoke-on-Trent**

The sample size for men and people who identified their ethnicity as non-white is relatively small, or who identified themselves as having a disability or life limiting illness. However we are able to see some interesting themes developing which distinguish how men and women who participated in our research in year two aspire to different types of art for Stoke-on-Trent. A larger sample size is needed to distinguish between people from various ethnic backgrounds and between people with and without a disability or life limiting illness.

From the questionnaire data we can see that men are more concerned with developing and supporting home grown talent as 4% of male respondents mention this compared to 1.7 % of female respondents.

Female respondents were more likely to aspire to family friendly events, or those that were engaging for children or young people (6.7% of women compared to 1.3% of men mentioned this).



BARRIERS



# The barriers to art engagement

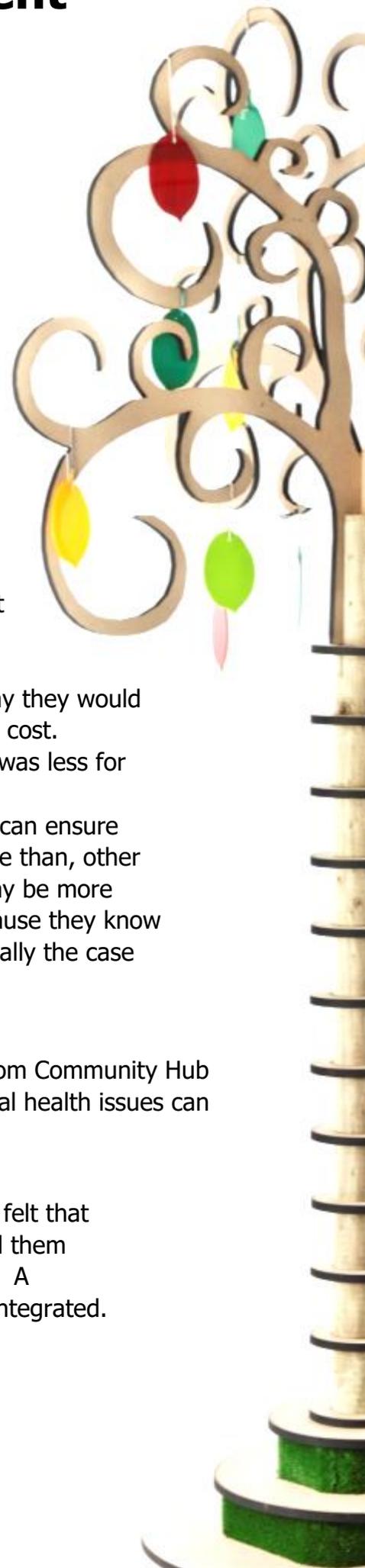
From our conversations with audiences, our post event surveys and discussions with Community Hubs the following factors have been identified as making it more difficult for people to attend art events in Stoke-on-Trent:

**Money / cost** – Some communities still feel that the cost of attending art is the greatest barrier to engagement. It can prevent people from considering attending an art event, exclude some family members from attending if costs are too high or limit their experience at the event, for example being able to access refreshments or brochures.

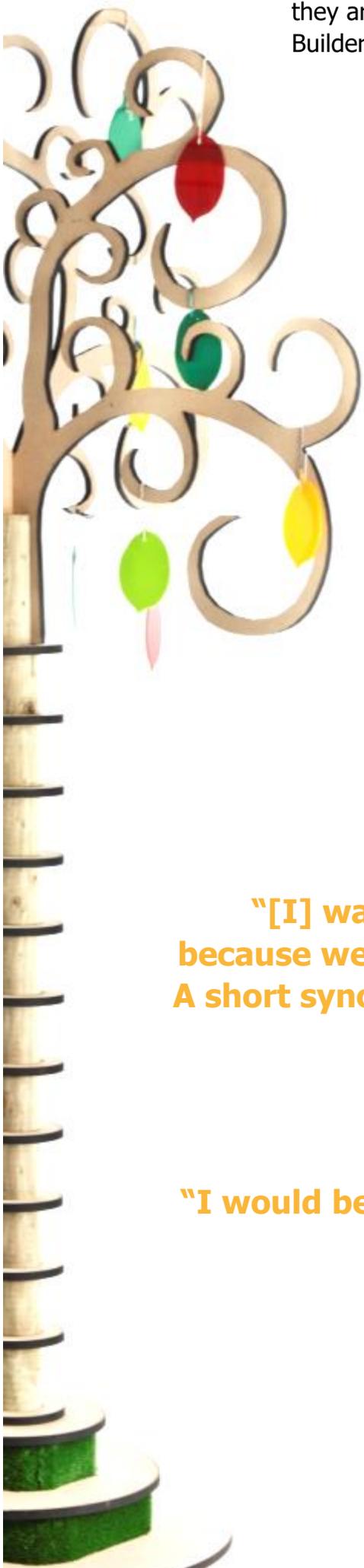
- At the strategic events, people said they would pay for the event on offer, but the amount varied depending on the event/performance.
- Most people said they would pay (or said they would pay more) after they had experienced the art than before, and therefore knew that it would be high quality.
- At a community level, people were more likely to say they would not be able to access the art on offer if there was a cost.
- The amount they said they would be willing to pay was less for the Community Hub programme events.
- A challenge for Appetite is to understand how they can ensure that the 'arts pound' is as valuable, or more valuable than, other 'leisure or cultural pounds'. For example, people may be more willing to spend their money on cinema tickets because they know what to expect than on an art event. This is especially the case for families.

**Mental health and disability** – Feedback from The Bell and from Community Hub evaluation sessions have shown how physical disability and mental health issues can be a barrier to engagement.

- For events such as The Bell, people with disabilities felt that although they had access to seating this segregated them from the rest of the audience and the performance. A challenge for Appetite is to make access to events integrated.



- People with mental health issues require support at the stage at which they are deciding whether to attend an event. The role of the Appetite Builders has been essential here.



**Fear of the unknown** - A barrier for some people is that they do not know what to expect at art events (see point above in relation to the value of the 'arts pound'). This can lead to discomfort for some people. Feedback has indicated that some people feel anxious when they do not know what to expect and foolish if they are unable to follow the 'storyline'.

**Low expectations** - Our creative consultations with audiences have also shown that people's low aspiration and expectation of the area mean that some people do not expect the quality of art to be of a high standard, or do not expect it to last. There is still the perception from some people that Stoke does not deserve art, although this is slowly being challenged through the programme and increased engagement with Appetite. This echoes the feedback in year one of Appetite which showed that there was a general feeling that 'art is not for me' or 'art does not fit in with this area'. While people are getting more confident to discuss and debate art, and the aspirations of art locally appear to be increasing, there are still some people in Stoke-on-Trent who do not expect the quality of art in Stoke-on-Trent to be high.

**"[I] wasn't sure if we got out of it all that we could because we couldn't necessarily follow all the dialogue. A short synopsis of the story... would have added to the performance."  
The Bell**

**"I would be more excited if this was on the South Bank in London."  
Folk in a Box**

# How Appetite has started to address these barriers

Consultations have taken place throughout year two and the feedback gathered has helped to inform the programme planning. In response to the barriers identified above Appetite has already taken action based on our learning. For example:

- Supper Club members are supported with the cost of transport to enable them to attend the meetings. The Appetite team arrange taxis for people without their own means of transport.
- Venues have been used that are easily accessible by public transport, ensuring the cost of this is kept to a minimum and events are accessible.
- Many events have remained free to access in year two, in particular Community Hub events.
- Appetite Builders have been essential in supporting people to access art, developing relationships with communities to ease the process of deciding whether to attend an art event, planning the visit, accessing tickets and getting to the venue.
- Flyers were produced for the Fire Garden informing people of what to expect, following feedback from The Bell.
- A broader range of refreshments will be on offer in year three in response to feedback in year two, ensuring that more people who attend Appetite events feel welcomed and catered for.
- There are some areas of the City where Appetite has not attracted audiences. In year three the programme will specifically target areas of lowest engagement.

There is further work to do in relation to supporting people to overcome the barriers in accessing art.

- While seating has been made available at performances where the audience are required to stand and move around, some people felt segregated and removed from the experience as a result. We need to consider how to fully engage with all sections of the community to ensure they have an equal quality of arts experience.
- Further work is required to challenge the relatively low expectations of art in Stoke-on-Trent. While this appears to be changing gradually, further programming and targeting people who have not yet accessed Appetite could support a further change in perception.

# A reflection on our learning about Community Engagement

During year two of Appetite, the shift towards the Community Hub and Supper Club model of community engagement has been implemented. From our engagement with communities, we have learnt that community engagement has worked well when:

- People feel part of something. The Supper Club has brought together a team of people with a common goal. There are opportunities for networking and team building as well as the 'business' of the group. The group has now formed four subgroups which have clear roles in the development of the Appetite programme.
- People feel supported and valued for their contributions. For example eating together at the Supper Club has become an important part of the Supper Club sessions and helps to make the group feel valued.
- Key 'community champions' are supported to extend their networks and develop programmes. Appetite Builders have been essential in the development of the Community Hubs in year two. Other examples of where this has happened are the Cultural Reporters Scheme and the Ambassadors Scheme.
- Appetite makes it easy for people get involved. Appetite is able to arrange transport for participants and to reimburse travel expenses. This, for some, is the difference between them being able to engage or not.
- There is a team approach to community engagement and everyone takes responsibility for it, including the Consortium, Appetite team, Appetite Builders, Supper Club, Community Hubs and volunteers. In year two of Appetite, the different elements of community engagement across the programme have become more aligned than they were in year one.
- Different networks are brought together. For example, the role of the Supper Club needed to evolve to include evaluation activity. Bringing together the roles of the Supper Club with that of the Get Talking Network has ensured that evaluation has become more embedded into the Community Hub and Strategic programmes.
- There is recognition that people have different motivations for getting involved and therefore have the opportunity to choose how and when they engage with the programme. For example, for some the motivation might be to feel useful, while for others it may be to experience more art, or to become more active in their communities. Understanding and valuing these motivations ensures people who are engaged remain so.
- The Appetite brand is strongly connected to a performance and people have a good understanding of what to expect from their engagement. For example, the strategic programme attracts high levels of volunteering.

**“I wanted to join because I’ve enjoyed meeting people going to events, taking part [and] being useful for once.”  
Community Hub Member**

However, community engagement has been challenging at times in year two. We have learnt that this happens when:

- The needs of the funders and Appetite’s business plan become paramount beyond the needs and wishes of the Community Hubs and Supper Club. Appetite were required to complete a business plan for Arts Council England before the start of the programme and prior to any depth of community consultation taking place. Therefore, while communities are engaged in the process of commissioning art, their power to influence the overall business plan is limited.
- Time and resources are limited. Good community engagement is time consuming and resource heavy. The pressures of the programme can mean that there is not enough time to fully engage and consult with communities in a meaningful way.
- Communities have little say in the work they are involved in and where the workload is predetermined. For example, in the case of the Get Talking model of research, a full Participatory Action Research project would encourage and support community researchers to influence the direction of the research and the research questions being addressed. For Appetite, the questions are predetermined and therefore full participation in this is difficult. Where communities feel that their impact is limited, community engagement becomes more challenging.



## Part Four

# Which approaches to engagement, inspirations and excellence have been successful?

## Our learning from Appetite... The story so far.

This part focuses on our learning from Appetite in year two and presents a number of case studies and reports to show our journey. Some of these are one person's story, others are based on a group's experience or an event. Some case studies are written pieces, others are creative case studies in the form of films or artistic pieces. Click on the links to see the case studies.

### **The Appetite Team: Putting Learning into Action**

Throughout year two, we have continued to evaluate Appetite activity through participatory and creative methods as well through more traditional methods such as post event surveys. Monthly meetings between the Evaluation Manager and the Appetite project team have provided a forum to discuss the findings and identify how the project can respond to the feedback.

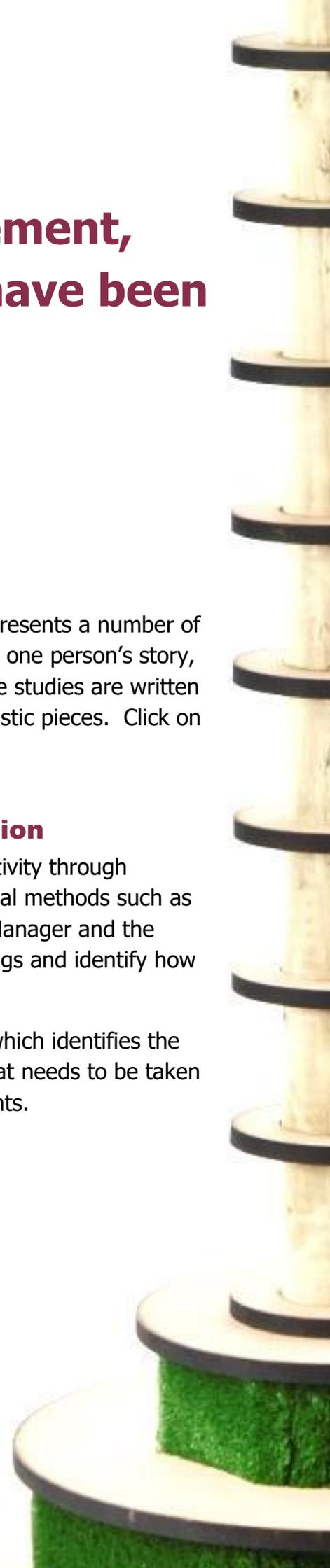
The Appetite project team have developed a working document which identifies the key areas of learning from the evaluation of events, the action that needs to be taken to respond to these finding and who is the lead on the action points.

The learning and action from year one can be found [here](#).

### **Appetite Stories**

This section will present the stories and learning from:

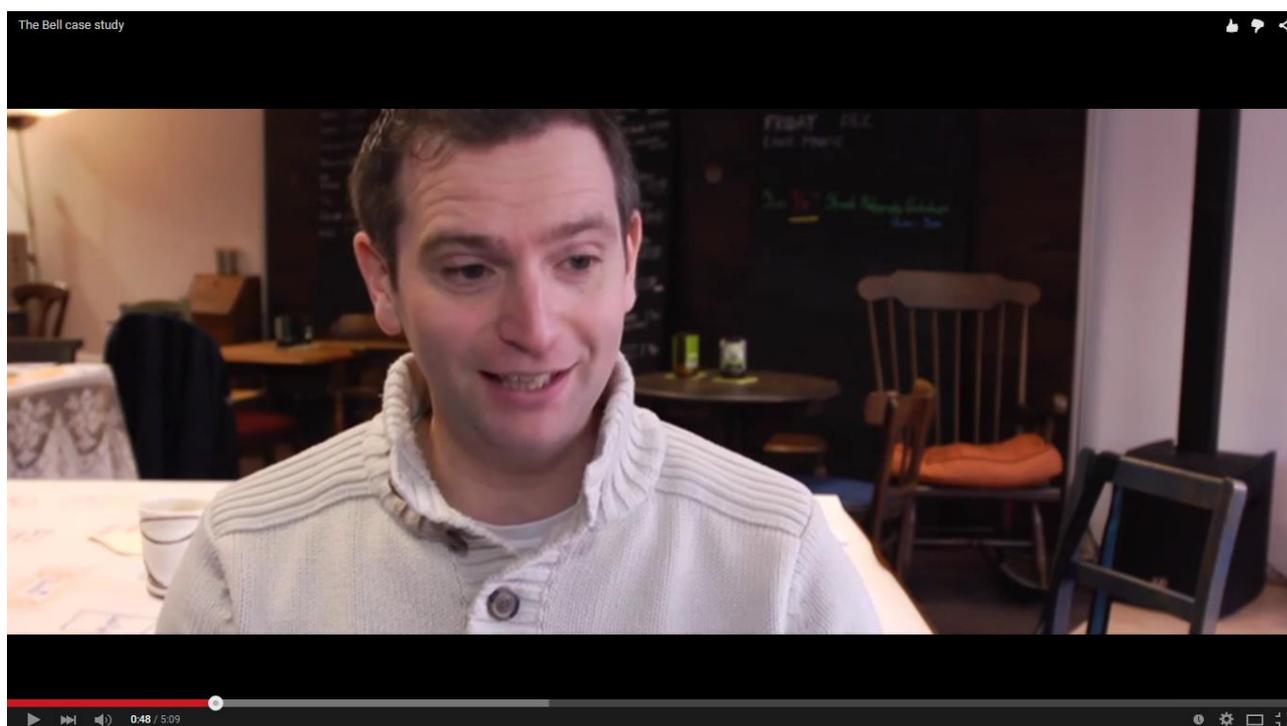
- The Strategic Programme
- The Community Hubs
- The Kitchen



## The Strategic Programme: The Bell

The Bell was part of a large spectacle event in the summer of 2014. The performance was held in Central Forest Park and attracted an audience of 2204, with 24 local active participants as performers.

Two audience members tell their story of how the format of the event excited their passions for art.



**“I have been to the theatre before but never actually felt part of the performance. I have just been an observer, not a participant”**

## Bentilee Community Hub's Appetite Story

Bentilee Community Partnership formed a Community Hub in 2014. In year one of Appetite they formed their group and established themselves as part of the Supper Club. In year one Stephen, a member of the Community Hub, created a [series of illustrations](#) with a Staffordshire University student to help tell his part of their story. In year two, Bentilee Community Hub went on to commission three separate events with the support of Appetite. These were:

- [Spill by DanceXchange](#), a contemporary dance performance using a local park and playground equipment as the centrepiece
- [Circus Sundae by Upswing](#), held in the Bentilee Amphitheatre
- The Three Greens event, a community event with a number of art performances.

The Community Hub members and audiences share their story [here in a short film](#) made by [Junction 15](#). They tell us that:

- Their work with Appetite has helped to bring different communities within Bentilee together.
- Bringing together communities has helped community cohesion in the area.
- The introduction of art in Bentilee has been welcomed by audiences from across the area.
- As one of the areas of highest deprivation in Stoke-on-Trent, residents in Bentilee welcomed the fact that the events were free to access.

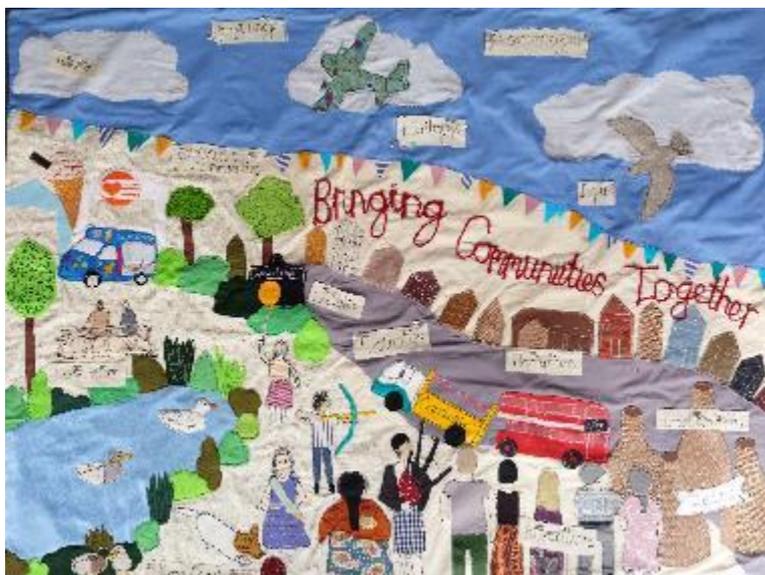
Click on the picture to see their story.



**“When it comes to changing people’s lives in the community; that is an art in itself.”**

## Stoke South Carnival Committee's Appetite Story

Stoke South Carnival Committee worked with Appetite in 2014 to commission artists to contribute to their carnival which aimed to commemorate World War 1. Just before their carnival, the Community Hub worked with Bryony Pimble, a Textiles student from Staffordshire University, to develop a creative case study. Here is a photograph of the textile and an audio file from Mike, one of the members of the community hub, reflecting on 'inspiration'. Click on the picture to hear the recording.



Stoke South Carnival Committee's story continues and they reflected on the experience of working with Appetite after their carnival. They made a short film with Junction 15 to record their story.



**“Appetite gives you that extra bit of bite.”**

## Jubilee Project Community Hub: Ayad's Story

Ayad is an Asylum Seeker from Iraq who is currently awaiting a decision to be made by the Home Office about his asylum case. He became involved with Appetite through the Jubilee Project, a project for Asylum Seekers and Refugees in Stoke-on-Trent. The Jubilee Project commissioned British Ceramics Biennial (BCB) with the support of Appetite to work with the group to explore themes of food and culture through working in clay.

Ayad's story tells us about how, on a personal level, his connections with Appetite have helped to reduce the levels of boredom and isolation he felt, and how he was able, through art, to express how he and others wanted to identify as 'unique' without feeling 'alien or abnormal'.

He identifies how the group's vulnerability made it difficult to engage, but how the project workers and artists helped to overcome some of the challenges associated with this, such as arranging transport, and calling people by their names. He is also clear that for any project to engage effectively with a group of people seeking asylum, the project team must get to know the cultural language of the individuals within the group. He also feels that involving the group in decision making from the start of a project is important to ensure the range of backgrounds within the group can be reflected in the art.

The impact of the project for Ayad and other members of the group has been significant. In some ways the project has helped Ayad "find a new version of himself" in this new city. Ayad was also able to use his skills, which he had felt less able to do since arriving in the UK.

You can read Ayad's full story by clicking on the picture below.



**"We did not feel like asylum seekers, we demonstrated our stories in our work."**

## Meir Christmas Events Board: Janet's Story

### Introduction

Janet is the Chair of the Meir Christmas Events Board and worked with Appetite for the Consumerist Christmas Tree to be constructed for Christmas 2014. The Tree's construction brought together a range of local people, with community involvement one of the project's key aims. The Tree received a mixed response from local people, the press and on social media, with Janet facing some personal criticism because of her involvement.

### Project information

The Consumerist Christmas Tree was organised by the Meir Christmas Events Board and Appetite, and was displayed in a prominent place in the Stoke-on-Trent suburb in December 2014. Local people helped with the creation of the tree, transforming 5,000 used carrier bags into giant light-up baubles.

You can read Janet's full story by clicking on the picture below.



Meir Consumerist Christmas Tree photo, 2014, Available from:  
<https://twitter.com/appetitestoke/status/540984411962232832>

## Brighter Futures Service Users' Community Hub: Theresa's Story

Theresa worked with two local artists, [Nic Winstanley and Sarah Nadin](#), to create a creative case study which illustrated her experience of Appetite. Together they designed a series of interconnected and interlocking boxes which open sequentially to reveal Theresa's Story. Nic and Sarah made a short film to show how the boxes case study works. Click on the picture to see the film.



Through her case study Theresa tell us how her involvement with Appetite has helped her to feel more confident and to be increasingly involved with the programme.

[Theresa's full story can be read here](#)

**"I stood in a field with 1000 people. I have approached 50 people. I have had to give a presentation about my Take Away to XX to the Supper Club. I never thought I could ever do those things 12 months ago."**

## Cathie's Story: The Voyager's Choir (Supported by The Kitchen)

In the **second** round of Appetite's 'The Kitchen' seed fund for professional development and research, Restoke was awarded funding to develop their latest participatory performance, 'The Voyagers'. Cathie, a recently self-employed creative practitioner, volunteered to sing in the choir for this performance, along with her husband Erik and stepdaughter Taylor.

She worked with the Get Talking Artists in Residence, Nic Winstanley and Sarah Nadin, to develop a creative case study.

Cathie's story tells us how through joining The Voyager's Choir she gained personal and professional confidence, pushing her comfort zones and strengthening relationships with peers and family.

[You can read Cathie's full story here](#)

You can also view a video of Cathie developing a woollen structure to help illustrate her story. Click on the video link below to watch the video.



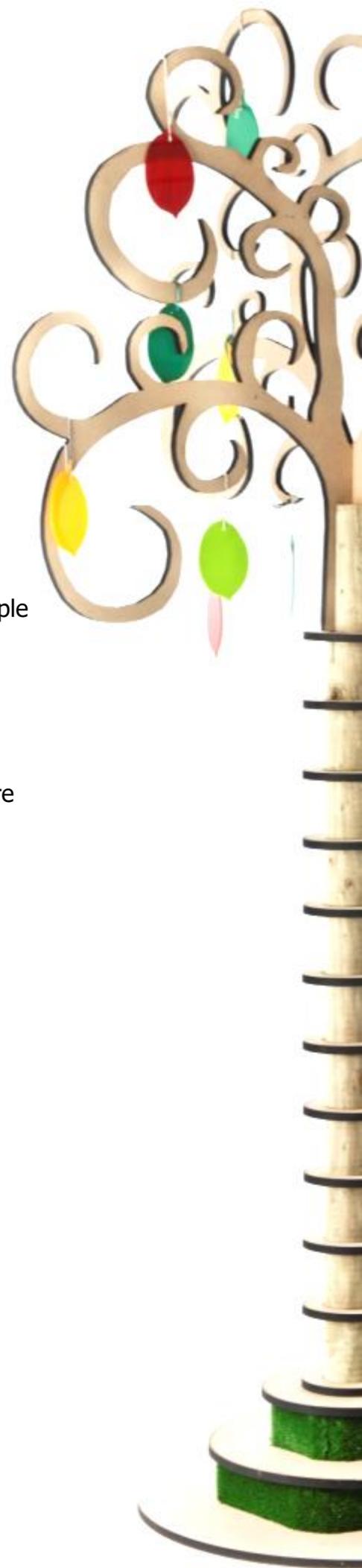
**“It sounds funny but before The Voyagers I felt a bit old; I thought music was closed off to me, now I don't. This has made me think, now I have done this, what else am I capable of?”**

## Conclusion

This report demonstrates how Appetite, in its second year, has both exceeded its audience numbers and developed a sustained approach to engaging with communities. The Supper Club has grown into an essential group for Appetite, feeding into a growing number of Community Hubs. The Supper Club has started to take on increasing levels of responsibility for commissioning art, marketing programmes, monitoring the audience numbers, evaluating the programme and planning for sustainability.

This report illustrates the successes of Appetite in attracting people who are not regular arts attenders to experience art, and demonstrates how we are starting to see changes in people's attitudes towards art and their confidence to discuss and debate art. The aspirations for art are changing subtly.

In year three we will continue exploring these themes. We aspire to engage more people in conversations about art through supporting the Supper Club to evaluate their programmes.



# Glossary

## **Appetite Ambassadors**

Ambassadors are a team of volunteers whose role it is to develop audiences for the Appetite programmes through the delivery of workshops and community engagement sessions.

## **Appetite Builders**

Appetite Builders are Appetite Community Engagement workers. They work with community groups and support them to become Community Hubs and to commission art for their local areas. There are four Appetite Builders, one attached to each of the Consortium Organisations (excluding Staffordshire University).

## **Arts Council England (ACE)**

Arts Council England fund Appetite through the Creative People and Places Fund.

## **Community Hub**

The Community Hubs are groups of people from Stoke-on-Trent who are supported by Appetite to develop ideas for, and to commission art for their local areas or organisations. There are currently 19 community Hubs, each supported by one of the Appetite Builders.

## **Community Hub Programme**

The programme of art commissioned by the Community Hubs. The programmes are usually localised to a specific geographical area or organisation.

## **CPP (Creative People and Places)**

Creative people and Places is the fund which supports, administered through Arts Council England. There are a total of 21 Creative People Places funded programmes across England.

## **Cultural Reporters**

Cultural reporters are a team of volunteers who attend and report on art events locally, regionally and nationally.

## **Get Talking**

Get Talking is a model of Participatory Action Research developed by Staffordshire University and used to evaluate Appetite. It is based on an ethical set of principles, a clear process and a set of creative tools.

## **The Kitchen**

The Kitchen is Appetite's artist development programme. It provides development and research opportunities for artists.

### **Strategic Programme**

The strategic programme is the large scale, spectacle artistic events hosted by Appetite. The events are often held in the City Centre.

### **Supper Club**

The Supper Club is made up of representatives from the Community Hubs and influences the development of the Strategic programme. The Supper Club sub groups also have influences no the artistic programme, monitoring and evaluation, marketing and sustainability.

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