

# 2025 SUNRISE FILM FESTIVAL



**FESTIVAL REPORT**  
Sunrise Film Festival CIC

**MARINA  
THEATRE**  
LOWESTOFT

## AT A GLANCE: WHO WE ARE & WHAT WE DO?

Sunrise Film Festival, based in Lowestoft, Suffolk, was founded in 2021 and in 2026 we are celebrating 5 incredible years screening independent film across overlooked communities.

Across the past 5 years we've had over 5,000 admissions across our annual festivals and year-round activity.

58% of our audience in 2025 were from our local community in Lowestoft's district of East Suffolk.

Our social media has over 8,000 combined followers.

54% of our programme in 2025 was directed by women.

A growing and trusted platform for underrepresented filmmakers in the industry.

In February 2026, we became an independently registered Community Interest Company.



*F-rated is our continued commitment to programme at least 50% of films created by female or non-binary filmmakers.*



Film Hub  
**South East**



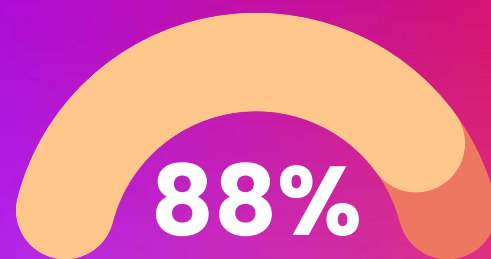


# CREATING IMPACT

## Sunrise Film Festival directly supports:

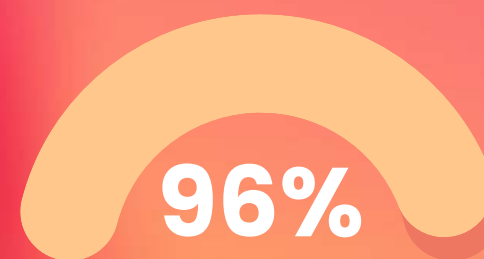
- Increasing access to cultural exhibition in coastal communities.
- Improving wellbeing through creative participation.
- Reaching both regular and infrequent arts audience members in our local community.
- Strengthening reputation of town's largest theatre with the support of the Marina Theatre Trust and Lowestoft Town Council's continued funding.

### Place-Based Engagement



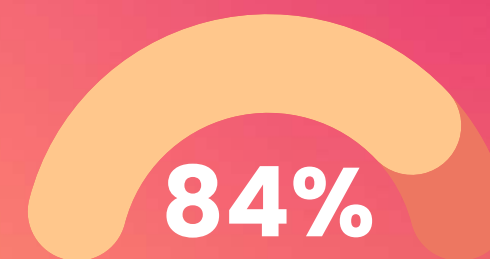
More  
Connected To  
Arts & Culture

### Audience Experience



Good /  
Excellent

### Wellbeing Impact



Positive Impact

# SUPPORTING OPPORTUNITIES IN FILM

**21 Awards presented to filmmakers**

**46 Filmmakers supported with speaker slots/Q&As**

**187 Short films showcased across the festival**

**191 Screening committee volunteers reviewing films**

**12 Senior festival programming & curation roles**

**9 Festival steward volunteers**  
(supporting local students under 21)

**Strongest  
Age Group  
25-40 year olds**

**With Healthy  
Engagement  
With 18-24**

**79%**  
**Attended  
Because The  
Event Felt  
Accessible &  
Welcoming**

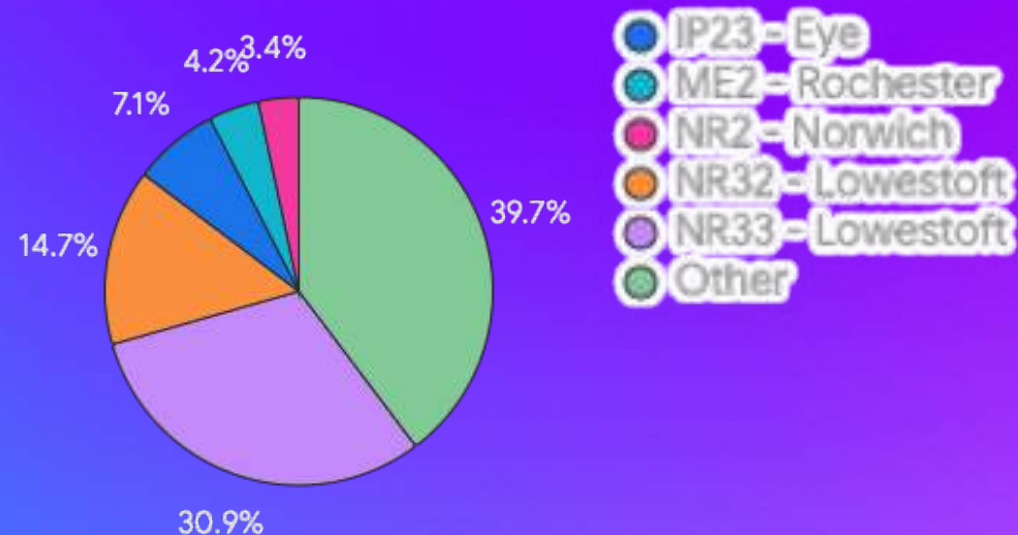


# AUDIENCE REACH & ACCESS

- 62% of attendees travelled by car
- 21% walked to the venue
- 10% used public transport
- 7% used taxis or other means

Over 20% walked to the venue indicating strong hyper-local engagement within the town centre.

72% of audiences booked tickets online, demonstrating effective digital access, while 28% used in-person or phone booking, supporting inclusion for audiences with different access needs.



Audience members and filmmakers also once again travelled to us from across the country including as far as Glasgow and internationally including Germany.



**91% of our audiences would recommend the event to others**



# WELLBEING & SOCIAL IMPACT

The project delivered strong wellbeing outcomes:

- 84% of respondents reported a positive impact on their wellbeing when attending our activities.
- 88% felt more connected to arts and culture in their local area because of Sunrise.

This shows strong feelings of enjoyment, connection, and reduced isolation, supporting evidence that cultural participation in our activities contributes towards improved mental wellbeing and social connection in our community from those who attend.

**Your review:**

This is so great for Lowestoft! Well Done to everyone involved & all nominees. See you next year, I'm spreading the word.


Share with us on Instagram @sunrisefilmfest

Susanna (local artist)



**Your review:**

REALLY GOOD TO HAVE SOMETHING LIKE THIS IN OUR TOWN. GREAT TO SEE SO MANY YOUNG PEOPLE INVOLVED TO.



# ENGAGEMENT & AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT

The strongest drivers of attendance were community-led and informal networks:

- 41% heard about the festival through word of mouth
- 27% via our social media channels
- 18% via venue or organiser websites
- 14% via posters, flyers, or print advertising

Such a strong level of people discovering the festival via word of mouth is positive, but we know that, with a stronger marketing strategy supported by new funding opportunities and a partnership with Greater Anglia to promote sustainable travel to the festival, we could considerably boost engagement and attendance.

Your review:

Wonderful event  
Thankyou to The Marina  
and all the team  
Such talented film-makers!



Your review:

Really Great!  
How do we push this  
great event? how do we encourage  
More people to attend it?





### How tickets were booked:

- **72% Booked online**
- **28% Booked in person or via phone**

## MARKETING – OUR OUTPUT

### Social Media

#### Facebook:

156.6k Post views | 1.8k Interactions (comments & shares)

#### Instagram:

61.4k Total reach

### Website

Total clicks through to booking 3,340

58.6k website impressions

### Print

5,000 programmes printed & distributed across the region.

Touch points this year beyond Lowestoft included Great Yarmouth, Ipswich, Norwich, Halesworth, Beccles, Southwold & Cambridge.

### Signage, Posters & Adverts

2 road signs, 2 large posters in Lowestoft Town Centre, 3 banners, 300 A3 posters & 500 A4 posters, 30 Paste Up Posters, 5 adverts in local magazines

### Press

9 different pieces across the BBC, Eastern Daily Press & local radio.



## **ATTENDANCE**

**Across the 4 days we saw 3,084 admissions across our film screenings, talks, workshops and dedicated free to access non-ticketed events.**

- Our open access micro short showcase saw over 900 admissions.
- Time Travelling With Myself was a local screening attracting 133 admissions.
- Our brand new VR experience had over 300 admissions across the festival.
- Our first ever industry summit to inspire local young people under 25 had over 100 admissions.
- Our awards ceremony attracted over 250 people ranging from filmmakers from across the UK and interationally, supporters and industry professionals.

**It's important to note that our audience numbers remain strong for a regional UK festival, supported in part by the BFI Film Audience Network. Sunrise Film Festival presents an important opportunity for Lowestoft's cultural landscape. It is organised by an entirely volunteer-led team and contributes to the town's wider ambitions.**

# IMPACT IN COMMUNITY

We know the impact of Sunrise can contribute to our local community and help put Lowestoft on the map as a destination for attendees, encouraging them to support the town beyond our activities.

- Based on the available data we can see at least, 177 people not from the East of England stayed at least one night in Lowestoft and the surrounding area.
- Average spend of attendees whilst in Lowestoft £40.

For future editions of our festival, we will be looking at ways to improve capturing this type of data to better inform how the festival impacts and supports our local community.

“You can really feel the effort that they put in. From their marketing, Q&As, low cost of submission/tickets, friendly faces, range of films selected, events across the festival etc. This was my second year visiting, and first time submitting” - **Amelia Deering**

## BEST LOW BUDGET FILM

Buffing the Walking Men



# FILMMAKER REVIEWS

"We were so happy to have been selected to be part of the superb festival programme at Sunrise this year. The team were very responsive, kind and professional, they were also very active on social media which was great! Brilliant festival to have been part of and we will absolutely submit future films for consideration."

- **Benjamin Verrall**

"Absolutely loved attending Sunrise FF, my team and I felt so grateful for the amount of effort put into the event, it has such a lovely team behind it who were always helpful and considerate to our questions. Brought together extremely talented creators with great networking opportunities. Still talking about this one now, cannot recommend enough! Thank you Sunrise - Time Between Us Team x"

- **Isabella Campbell**

"Thank you for nominating our film "Lavender Whispers" for the "All Kinds of Hearts Award (LGBTQ+ Representation)". All the films screened were incredibly meaningful and the Sunrise team were so passionate. It's amazing to see a festival so driven to platform under-represented groups and filmmakers. Our team are very grateful to have been a part of it!"

- **Blythe Paynter**

"We had a great time. We met amazing people. The festival organisation was 5-star. Very cordial, incredible communication, and above all, they took great care of every detail of the films and directors. We will return every year."

- **Sergio Moraga**

"A fantastic festival with a diverse range of great shorts covering many genres. So pleased to have been selected as a winner. Thank you to the hard working team who delivered an inclusive and friendly film festival."

- **Sarah McCluskey**



"Sunrise is an excellent festival, organised with care and heart."

- **Jake Alden-Falconer**



## CLOSING SUMMARY

As Sunrise Film Festival continues to grow, it remains rooted in the collective effort, generosity, and belief of the people and organisations that make it possible.

At the heart of Sunrise is our volunteer-led committee, made up of six dedicated volunteer programmers, alongside myself as founder, and our Festival Producer and Lead Programmer. This core team is supported each year by over 180 volunteer pre-selectors and industry judges, whose time, care, and critical insight play a vital role in reviewing films and shaping the final programme. Their contribution is fundamental to maintaining the quality, integrity, and ambition of the festival.

We're incredibly grateful for the continued support of the Marina Theatre Trust, and for the commitment of their staff and volunteers. Access to a professional exhibition venue has been instrumental in strengthening the audience experience and supporting the long-term sustainability and future growth of Sunrise.

Our sincere thanks also go to Lowestoft Town Council for their significant and ongoing funding support. This investment not only enables the delivery of the festival year on year, but also plays a crucial role in strengthening our wider funding applications as match-funding and partnerships. In particular, it has supported our ability to secure funding through Film Hub South East, as part of the BFI Film Audience Network, helping us expand audience reach and deepen engagement across our community.

Sunrise is a testament to what can be achieved through collaboration, volunteer commitment, and belief in the cultural potential of place with genuine grassroots connections.

We look forward to building on this foundation in the years ahead.

**Festival Founder**

*Joshua Freemantle*

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## FESTIVAL REPORT

[sunrisefilmfestival.co.uk](http://sunrisefilmfestival.co.uk)

Sunrise Film Festival is delivered by Sunrise Film Festival CIC, a registered non-profit Community Interest Company in England & Wales registered no 17021463