

Winter Lights

Impact Report – March 2025

Event Summary



Photo on left:
Crafting at *Winter Lights*.
Photo by Edward Felton.



Photo on right:
Lanterns at *Winter Lights*.
Photo by Edward Felton.

On Sunday 26 January hundreds of Travelling Light's local children and families enjoyed ***Winter Lights*** – our community event celebrating joy, light, creativity and the warmth of community.

Over 700 children, young people and their families took part at Wellspring Settlement in Barton Hill, Bristol. Featuring theatre performances, storytelling, craft activities, a room of joy, a room of play, and a lantern parade, *Winter Lights* explored how to co-create events and stories with children and communities and was part of Travelling Light's 40th anniversary celebrations.

People that came to the event were mostly from the local area and overwhelmingly said how the event brought the community together for something joyful during a difficult time.

They valued the free and inclusive activities for local families and **88% of audiences spoken to by our evaluator said they didn't normally access arts or culture** or only did so through Travelling Light's activities.



Photo on left:
Crafting at *Winter Lights*.
Photo by Edward Felton.



Photo on right:
Children at *Winter Lights*.
Photo by Edward Felton.

Over 400 children, young people and members of the local Barton Hill community were involved in creating the event since last summer.

Schools and community groups made lanterns for the lantern parade and members of Travelling Light's intergenerational group made decorations for the event.

Our Youth Theatre groups worked together to create a new piece of theatre, *Where The Acorns Grow*, gaining experience of working with professional artists to turn their ideas into a performance.

Ideas from *Where the Acorns Grow* were developed further this half term with artists and young people coming together to explore ideas for a new piece of touring theatre for school audiences.

Watch a short video about the day on our website [here](#).

Lantern parade and workshops

5 workshops to create lanterns were held in Barton Hill during December and January including the Little Library at the Wellspring Settlement, Barton Hill Activity Club, St Luke's Lunch After School Club and Barton Hill Academy Primary School. These workshops were followed up with reminders and information sent to families to encourage participation in the lantern parade, and *Winter Lights* event. 127 children and adults took part in workshops in the lead up to the event. There was also a workshop at the Winter Lights event with approximately 80-100 participants.



Photograph of lantern workshop in the Barton Hill Little Library

Feedback from the lantern workshops

"Fantastic workshop. The children really enjoyed taking part in the different roles available when making the lanterns." Teacher at Barton Hill Academy

"It made me feel excited and at the end, it made me curious to see how they (the lanterns) look when they light up." Child at Barton Hill Academy

Families and children mentioned that they were aware of the *Winter Lights* event due to the lantern workshops in their/their children's school. One group of children who spoke to our evaluator said it was their first time attending a Travelling Light event. They had taken part in the lantern workshop and were pleased their school was part of *Winter Lights*.

Lantern Parade



Photo on left:
Bubble lady in Urban
Park at *Winter Lights*.
Photo by Edward Felton.

Photo on right:
Lantern Parade at
Winter Lights.
Photo by Edward
Felton.

Children and families were invited to participate in the lantern parade which was the finale of the *Winter Lights* event – departing from the Wellspring Settlement and travelling to the Urban Park, accompanied by the Jump Street Band, via local streets. **100** people took part in the parade, which lit up the local park and surrounding streets with many local people watching from their flats overlooking the park.

Where the Acorns Grow

From Easter 2024 onwards, all our Youth Theatre groups began work on *Where the Acorns Grow* a new theatre show for *Winter Lights*. The participants devised the show, sharing their ideas and working with a professional writer to create a story structure. Working together with our team of facilitators and a professional director, writer and designer, the participants not only created a performance, but also developed their creativity, confidence, friendships and connections.

Youth Theatre Impact Evaluation Findings

Our evaluation captured evidence and feedback from our Youth Theatre at the start of the term and in a session after *Winter Lights*, our team of facilitators kept reflective notes on the sessions and were part of the debrief process post event. Parent/carers completed an end of term survey and an evaluator was present at *Winter Lights*, talking to families about their experiences. Louder Than Words also had a specific evaluation framework, looking at confidence, reduced isolation and wellbeing. This evaluation demonstrated the following impacts:

Working towards the *Where the Acorns Grow* performance was particularly impactful for the groups, enabling them to stretch themselves and develop new skills. It was the first time they had worked collaboratively with a writer to develop a script from their ideas and the first time performing scripted work, as well as the first time that they had all performed together as a group.

Evaluation showed that the regular group and performance opportunities had a positive impact on children and young people's confidence, self-expression and friendships:

- 88% of parent/carers said their child had increased confidence and theatre and performance skills through attending Youth Theatre.
- 96% of Youth Theatre members said they feel safe when at Youth Theatre and that their ideas are listened to and valued.
- Youth Theatre members in all the groups identified making friends and working with the other groups as an important part of coming to Youth Theatre.
- In our Louder Than Words group for Disabled young people, 100% of regular members experienced progress in confidence and self-esteem, emotional wellbeing and reduced isolation/increased friendships.

In our end of term evaluation with our Youth Theatre groups they identified the following outcomes as important, and what they would like to continue to do in their Youth Theatre sessions:

- Theatre and Performance skills – working with artists and other Youth Theatre members to create and perform a story.
- Performing – enjoying performing with others to family and friends, being part of a bigger community event (*Winter Lights*).
- Making friends and meeting Youth Theatre members from other groups.

Feedback from Youth Theatre Participants

"I love that there is lots of acting and games." Youth Theatre member

"I like how all of our ideas are valued and listened to." Youth Theatre member

"I feel like my ideas are valid in the group and I feel safe in the group." Youth Theatre member

Feedback from February Half Term R&D Workshops

"I liked making the tree story, working together with others."

"My fave thing has been the creativity." Youth Theatre members



Photo on left:
Co-creating with young people and artists.
Photos by Edward Felton.

Photo on right:
Co-creating with young people and artists.

Winter Lights event evaluation findings



Photo on left:
Somali Cultural Buraan
Bar Taster Workshop at
Winter Lights.
Photo by Edward Felton.

Photo on right:
Creative activities at
Winter Lights.
Photo by
Edward Felton.

Our external evaluator spoke to 39 adults and 19 children on the day and 40 people completed an audience survey. The evaluation found:

- There was a very strong sense of community development – many people spoke about meeting new people and enjoying the diverse representation at the event.
- The majority of people spoken to were new to arts and cultural events. Although some said they used to attend community arts /performances but this had now become a barrier because of cost, having a family, lack of time or knowledge of the events.
- Respondents spoke very positively about the inclusivity of the event and its accessibility, being free. Inclusivity through provision for young people with additional needs was regularly mentioned either from people who had seen the performance, parents of participants or the positive reputation of Travelling Light provision within the community.
- All respondents wished there were more community events like Winter Lights and offered ideas for future links or projects.



Photo on left:
Youth Theatre
performance
at *Winter Lights*.
Photo by Edward Felton.

Photo on right:
Youth Theatre
performance at
Winter Lights.
Photo by Edward Felton.

Feedback from people who came to Winter Lights

“Fantastic. The feeling of joy and community on the day was really moving.”

“Lovely event, inclusive atmosphere. Wonderful to have events like this here in the community.”

*“It was marvellous to see so many different groups and ages interacting beautifully in the *Where the Acorns Grow* production, and it was incredible how well the evolving idea of joy and the relationship to the park (and to nature and to each other) was portrayed.”*

Comments from a local parent with child (8) and older child who was part of Louder Than Words:

“I love the creativity of Travelling Light; it’s so inclusive for SEND. It allows them to be expressive which they are so rarely able to do. It gives them an opportunity to join in.”

Conversation with a Trustee of the Wellspring Settlement (where Travelling Light is based)

“It is crucial to have Travelling Light here. How do we make rounded individuals in our children, if we don’t have organisations like Travelling Light.”



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Youth Theatre
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Conversation with a group of three adults

"Travelling Light works hard on inclusion. Theatre can be elitist but not Travelling Light. They make sure it is accessible to the whole community."

"I love Travelling Light because it is here in this community. It gives our daughter so much opportunity to be creative and gain in expressing herself. It is great in the local community."

Conversation with families who were Polish and Spanish speakers

"It's been really nice and inclusive. We went to the singing room and it was lovely to hear Spanish and Polish which are each of our languages." My daughter said it was "something good and made her feel included and special".

Conversation with of three local women

"It is good to go deep down in the community like today. Life is tough at the moment."



Photo on left:
Somali Cultural Buraan
Bar Taster Workshop
at *Winter Lights*.
Photo by Edward Felton.

Photo on right:
Silent Disco at
Winter Lights.
Photo by Edward Felton.

Conversation with a group of of five local woman

"It's the best. You see your kids enjoying themselves and there is nothing better than that, feeling part of the community is important and being with friends is good."

Comments from two members of staff from Barton Hill Academy (the local primary school)

"It's a real community event –you can see that by looking around. It's amazing. So many cultures working together. It appeals to everyone".

"We went to the performance. That was really inspiring. I thought it was moving"

"It's made me feel really happy. Seeing the kids smiling. No one is seeing race or judgement - all are one big community".



Photo on left:
Somali Cultural Buraan
Bar Taster Workshop
at *Winter Lights*.

Photo on right:
Storytelling at
Winter Lights.
Photo by Edward Felton.

Comments from a group of children who went to Barton Hill Academy (the local primary school)

"I loved the playroom – that was fun"
"I enjoyed playing with new people as well as my friends"
"Today has been fantastic!"
"Today has been incredible"
"Today has been amazing"
"Today has been wonderful"
"I am so looking forward to the parade"

Conversation with a group of three adults

"It makes you feel great. Today is such a good presentation of UK diversity – everyone joining in as one community".

Conversation with three adults – friends of different cultural backgrounds

"Today has been good at bringing the community together"
"Travelling Light they do so much. The reason Barton Hill is so well known is because of Travelling Light. They are always doing something for the kids. I would feel so sad if they weren't here."

Conversation with a local parent with baby and daughter of 7 years old

"I have loved it today, It has been lovely. It has been lovely to see everyone coming out. I feel very happy, very lovely today because of this. I got to meet new people - so did my older daughter".
"You don't get to interact with other people very much these days because everyone is indoors on their phones, so this was lovely. You get to feel part of the community. It helps me socialise with other adults and not feel isolated".
"Before we came today, my daughter was so excited. She loved the craft and making a butterfly."