

# Animated Landscapes Final Report



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ENGLAND**



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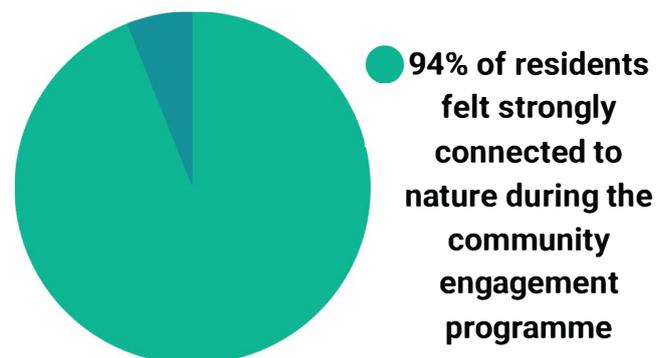
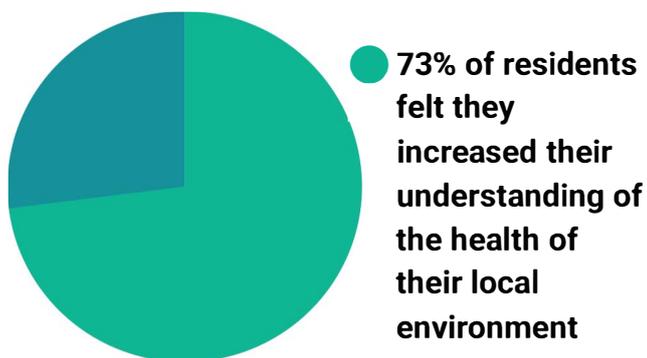
## Executive Summary

Animated Landscapes (Phase 2 of the Darent Landscape Partnership Scheme Inspired Landscapes Project) worked creatively with communities to explore, reveal and celebrate stories of individual places and local landscapes within the Darent Valley in Kent. The programme's focus was to deliver on this vision:

**'That communities that live within and around the valley feel emotionally and physically reconnected with their landscape, and there is a sense of pride and strong will to protect it for future generations.'**

Throughout May and June 2022, Puppets with Guts (PWG) and the Darent Valley Landscape Partnership Scheme (DVLPS) worked together to deliver creative activities designed to support the Kent Downs AONB's vision of engaging people in caring for, enjoying and exploring the special landscapes which form part of the Kent Downs AONB.

The Animated Landscapes programme engaged **4688 residents** with their local landscape through nature observation, healthy ecology knowledge exchange and creative activities.



These statistics help build the case for further creative practice led programmes to connect and inspire people to understand sustainable environment and cultural practices.

## Description of Activity

In 2021, PWG in partnership with DVLPS started delivery of a wide-ranging project called Animated Landscapes. This project focused on enhancing community pride and joint working between the individual settlements that are located within the valley. It is a celebration of the communities, land and how human interaction created the distinctive landscape of the Darent Valley. The project is inclusive and provides opportunities for all. Sections of the individual communities involved school children through to adults.

### Animated Landscapes main project outcomes are as follows:

- 1) Connectedness to landscape and nature
- 2) Upskilling/enhancing skills and creativity

### The areas of activity across the Darent Valley included:

- School Workshops: in-person
- Community Engagement: in-person and online
- Celebration Events: Gnomus Big Puppetry Performances and Big Picture Frames Art Installation
- Evaluation and Reporting



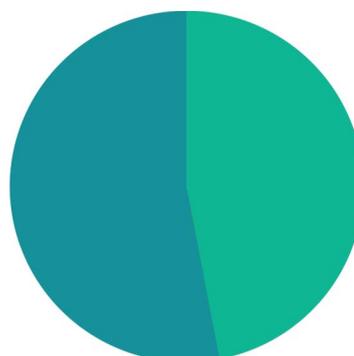
## Aims Summary

**1. That a deeper understanding of the value of the Darent Valley landscape has been rejuvenated in the communities in and around the Darent Valley as was conveyed by poets, writers and painters of the past. To instil in people an appreciation for the forces and influences that created the landscape, and their emotional connection is enhanced along with a greater personal investment in securing its future.**

- Over half of the participants questioned said that their knowledge of their local landscape has increased significantly due to taking part in the workshop.
- Participants appreciated learning about the biodiversity of the chalk landscapes and discovering wildlife and plant life that they had not previously noticed.
- One participant was unaware the river was so close by and took joy in taking her children to look for fish and frogs.

**2. Our community-led approach has revealed a complex interwoven story, and ensured that it is not lost to future generations. Our partners have ensured the long-term protection and resilience of the valley's iconic built heritage features and communicated how they relate to the wider landscape. Innovative techniques have engaged new and wider audiences.**

- We engaged new and wider audiences by recruiting many young people to take part in the schools and community workshops.
- The activity was centred on the Darent River and highlighted iconic built heritage features, including Eynsford Castle, the Oust houses and other built environments which formed part of the wider landscape when studying areas through the ReFrame workshops.



**47% of  
participants  
were under 18**

**3. Sustainable and integrated access exists throughout the valley and is enabling greater appreciation and interaction with the landscape and heritage by a wider audience. The pressure of high visitor numbers has been dissipated and is being managed in a sustainable manner.**

- 1100 people attended the Eynsford Parish Council Fete with around 100 participants taking part in the workshop and discovering a new area to explore nature and the river, which should relieve pressure on the Eynsford Ford area.
- The Animated Landscapes activities contributed to activating local green spaces across the DV away from the tourist hotspots, with high levels of attendance and participation.



**4. The key natural components of this landscape are in good condition and in positive long-term management with a clear strategy for the future. They are more resilient to the effects of climate change and better connected across the landscape. Local people understand and appreciate these important habitats, and are actively involved in identifying and recording habitats and species at risk.**

- The workshops included information about local wildlife, to enable people to identify and improve their understanding of different species which occupy the Darent Valley.
- Participants can access online resources which contain further information about the importance of chalk rivers and grasslands and what makes a healthy environment, and how to identify a healthy or unhealthy landscape.

**5. Local communities, professionals, and delivery partners are actively participating in the conservation of the Darent Valley's heritage, and their new skills and knowledge are enabling them to care for the landscape and communicate its importance in the future.**

- Working closely with DVLPS, NWCP, schools, community groups and local fetes, a total of **4688 people** were engaged across the DV area.
- During the schools workshops we worked with **seven local schools** to deliver **31 workshops** to **613 participants**, creating physical theatre pictures that interpreted the DVL.
- The community workshops engaged with **27 local organisations** from which seven took part, delivering workshop activities to **876 participants** and recruiting **24 volunteers**.
- The celebration events included two days of a bespoke Gnomus show in Otford and Dartford that responded to the Darent Valley and was attended by **3200 audience members**, alongside the Big Picture Frames installation presented to **800 audience members**.
- 73% of participants reported that knowledge of their local landscape and nature increased from doing the workshops.
- These key activities delivered across community engagement, schools workshop and celebration events broadly developed knowledge about what a healthy landscape is and used different creative practice techniques to inspire people to connect and care to their local landscape.



The activities delivered have been documented in various media and available here on our website. [puppetswithguts.com/shows/animated-landscapes/](https://puppetswithguts.com/shows/animated-landscapes/)

## School Report: Introduction and Student Data

In November 2021 over the span of two weeks Puppets with Guts delivered workshops to key stage two (KS2) students in seven primary schools across the Darent Valley area. Each workshop was forty five to sixty minutes long with the aim to engage the students in activities which get them thinking about their immediate landscape, green spaces and nature. Additionally, the workshops were intended to provide a physical creative activity using spatial awareness and performance skills within structured play.



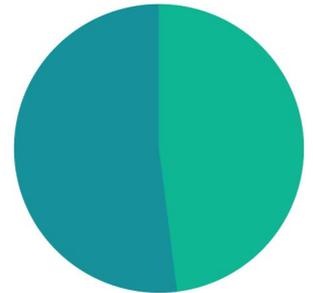
Number of workshops: 31

Number of schools who participated: 7

Number of students:

612 students across 7 schools

- Male 52%
- Female 48%



### Name of School:

Hextable Primary School

Shoreham Village School

St Paul's CEP School

Dartford Bridge Community Primary School

Fleetdown Primary School

Dartford Primary Academy

Oakfield Primary Academy

### Location:

Rowhill Road, Hextable BR8 7RL

Church St, Shoreham, Sevenoaks TN14 7SN

School Lane, Swanley BR8 7PJ

Birdwood Avenue, Dartford, DA1 5GB

Lunedale Road, Dartford, Kent, DA2 6JX

York Rd, Dartford DA1 1SQ

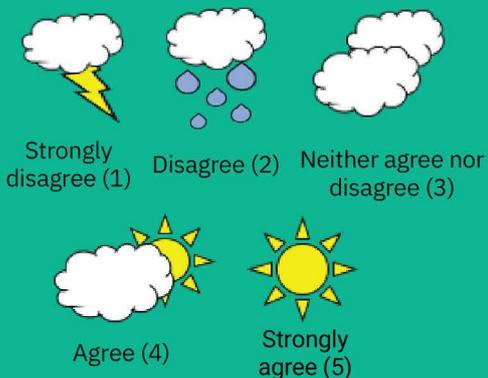
Oakfield Ln, Dartford, DA1 2SW

## School Report: Student Evaluation

Due to the students being in KS2 it was decided an active evaluation would be led by the workshop leader at the end of each workshop. The weather symbols above were made into cards and placed around the room. The workshop leader then read out the six evaluation statements and the students were asked to stand next to the card they felt answered that statement for them. The workshop leader then noted how many students were standing next to each card.

The student's evaluation is analysed by scoring each response. Individual statements can be evaluated using the combined percentage of all respondents.

The tables to the right indicate the participants' total percentage response to each question.



1. Today's workshop made me think about the landscape around Darent Valley.

3.43%    4.74%    16.83%    24.18%    50.82%

2. When I pretended to be an 'object' it made me think about nature.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
4.9%	8.66%	17.97%	25.98%	42.48%

3. I thought of more than one way to add movement to the 'object'.

6.37%    6.21%    19.44%    28.1%    39.87%

4. I can identify features of Darent Valley landscapes.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
3.59%	7.35%	17.16%	22.22%	49.67%

5. I feel confident performing with my classmates.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
5.56%	7.84%	17.16%	19.77%	49.67%

6. I enjoyed taking part in the workshop.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
0.82%	0.98%	2.45%	16.21%	89.54%

9.

## School Report: Teacher Evaluation

As well as the students, the teacher from the school who was present in the workshop was asked to complete an evaluation form. The school teacher's evaluation is analysed by scoring each response. Individual questions can be evaluated using the combined percentage of all respondents.

The tables to the left indicate the teacher's total percentage response to each question.

1. This workshop was valuable for the students.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
0%	0%	3.33%	40%	56.67%

2. The students demonstrated a connectedness to landscape and nature.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
0%	0%	3.33%	40%	56.67%

3. The students found the workshop a helpful way of developing their physical and social skills.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
0%	0%	0%	40%	60%

4. The students were encouraged to explore their creativity.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
0%	0%	0%	30%	70%

5. This workshop supports the national curriculum.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
0%	0%	0%	55.17%	37.93%



## School Report: Teacher Quotes

*'It was a pleasure to see the children play, laugh and enjoy themselves as children should'*

*'They were all able to relate the subject to their surroundings, and learnt the meaning of the word landscape'*

*'Everyone was able to contribute, have ideas and recall their own personal thoughts on nature/landscape'*

*'No one was left out, everyone joined in, even the people who don't like social/creative activities'*

*'The workshop encouraged group work and collaborations. It linked to national curriculum and was engaging'*

*'The activities really captured the children's imaginations. They were all keen to engage and were clearly enjoying the experience'*

*'The workshop encouraged children to notice their surroundings and appreciate nature, the group landscape was a lovely touch representing how everything in nature is connected'*

*'Today's workshops links in directly with our class topic of exploring villages towns and cities, how we live and our environment'*

*'The workshop offered a great alternative approach to learning about the local environment. The children were very enthusiastic throughout and the instructor was extremely motivating'*

*'Children have been exploring landscape and nature in lessons so this was a good cross curricular reference'*

*'It allowed them to explore art and drama in a different way than in the classroom'*

*'The blend of physical activities and art along with the discussions about our local area/other climate and ecosystems were very current. Team building and personal confidence skills'*

*'This workshop gave the children the opportunity to link many subjects together and got them thinking about their topic this term'*

*'Children were given freedom to explore their art creativity in the drawings'*

## School Report: Workshop Leader Evaluation

The workshop leader also completed an evaluation form for each school visited. This means seven evaluation forms were completed in total. The same workshop leader delivered all the workshops.

The workshop leader's evaluation is analysed by scoring each response. Individual questions can be evaluated using the combined percentage from each school.

The tables to the right indicate the workshop leader's total percentage response to each question.



1. The students demonstrated a connectedness to landscape and nature.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
0%	0%	0%	57.14%	42.86%

2. The students used physical and social skills throughout the workshop.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
0%	0%	0%	42.86%	57.14%

3. The students showed creativity in completing the tasks.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
0%	0%	0%	14.29%	85.71%

4. The students clearly understood what was being asked of them throughout the workshop.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
0%	0%	0%	71.43%	28.57%

5. The workshop achieved its outcomes.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
0%	0%	0%	28.57%	71.43%



## School Report: Summary of Results

Understanding whether a KS2 student felt connected to landscape and nature through participating in these workshops was a challenge due to their young age. However, when asked if the workshop made them think about the landscape and nature around Darent Valley over 50% of students strongly agreed. This shows that the workshop encouraged them to think about and connect to their local landscape and nature. Also, 40% of teachers agreed and nearly 57% strongly agreed that 'The students demonstrated a connectedness to landscape and nature'. One teacher felt 'The workshop offered a great alternative approach to learning about the local environment'. Another teacher noted 'The workshop encouraged children to notice their surroundings and appreciate nature, the group landscape was a lovely touch representing how everything in nature is connected'.

It is very clear that the workshop provided all the students with the opportunity to be creative - as one teacher mentioned "No one was left out, everyone joined in, even the people who don't like social/creative activities". 30% of teachers agreed whilst 70% strongly agreed that 'The students were encouraged to explore their creativity'. Nearly 86% strongly agreed with the statement that 'The students showed creativity in completing the tasks'. There were no neutral or disagreements to either statement.

Also, from looking at the teachers' quotes it is clear that this workshop supported the national curriculum and that students were given the chance to enhance their skills and knowledge. As one teacher said 'It allowed them to explore art and drama in a different way than in the classroom'.

It is worth noting that on the first day of workshops the workshop leader found that student data was harder to gain accurately. This was due to finding that some students found it amusing to answer negatively or would follow their friends. This was addressed in subsequent workshops by questioning and talking to the students about their decisions and why they chose to stand where they stood. This really helped in gaining more accurate student feedback.

In summary, these workshops achieved their outcomes and nearly 90% of students strongly agreed with the statement 'I enjoyed taking part in the workshop' which is a very positive end result.

## Community Engagement Report: Overview

In the spring of 2022 over three months, Puppets with Guts delivered online & in person workshops within community settings across the Darent Valley area in North Kent. The community workshops were made available online, delivered in-person and as drop-in workshops at community events, and delivered to specifically targeted smaller groups.

Each community workshop was 1 to 3 hours long, depending on the level of engagement the participants wished to commit to, with the aim of developing observation techniques of nature, increasing knowledge about healthy environments and connecting people through shared creative practice.

By the end of the workshops, the participants had created a physical craft object that documented their individual observations and findings through a flexible yet structured process.

### **In this community engagement report you will find:**

- Participant data - e.g. gender and total number of participants
- Participant evaluation results
- Community engagement evaluation results
- Workshop leader evaluation results
- Summary

### **Participant Evaluation Methods**

Participants were asked to complete an evaluation form after taking part in the community engagement workshops.

Some were filled out by adults on behalf of their children or dependants and when working with the National Autistic Society and with All Directions group of adults with learning difficulties and disabilities, we used a system of smiley faces.

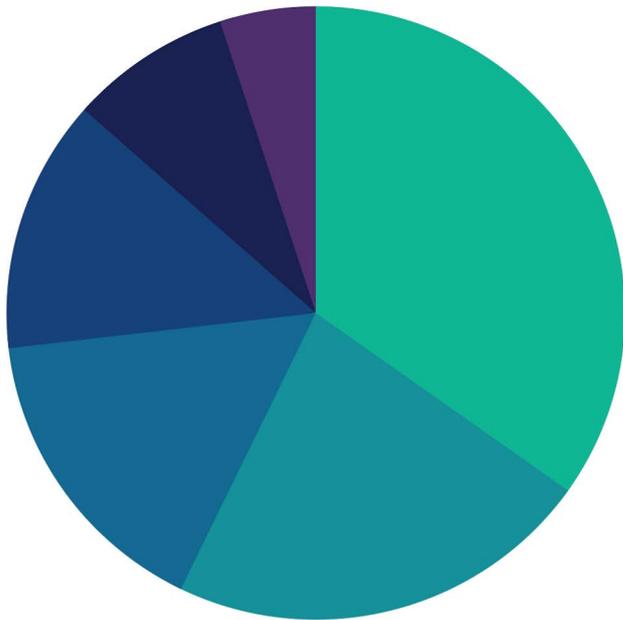
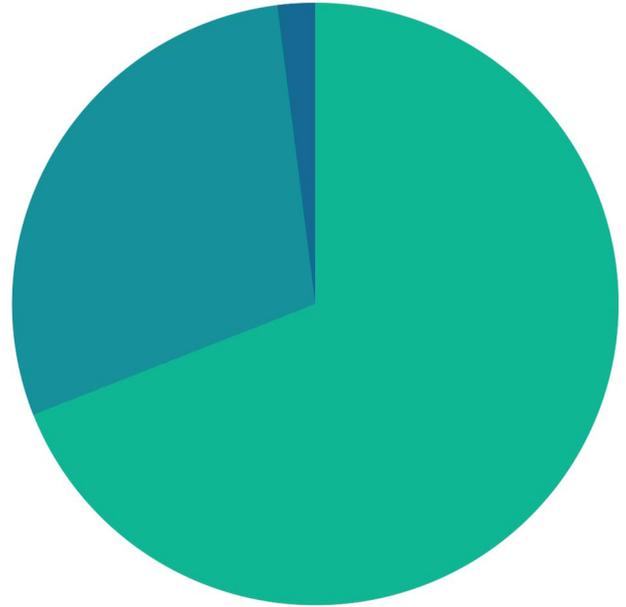
### **Community Groups**

In general, the community groups we engaged in Dartford were from deprived areas in Temple Hill and Dartford who are generally a younger demographic. The Sevenoaks areas of the Darent Valley are generally older with a higher aging population. However, the activities attracted a balance of both young people and adults.



**Number of Community Events: 7**  
**Number of Workshop Sessions: 45**  
**Number of Participants: 860**  
**Number of Volunteers recruited: 24**

**Gender:**  
 ● Female: 69%  
 ● Male: 29%  
 ● Other: 2%



**Age**  
 ● Under 18: 34.82%  
 ● 18-24: 22.37%  
 ● 25-34: 15.98%  
 ● 35-44: 13.36%  
 ● 45-54: 8.45%  
 ● 55-64: 5.02%  
 ● 65+ 0%

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# Community Engagement Report: Groups

## We are Temple Hill! Community Event, ReFRAME

Workshop participants	80
Sessions	5
Attendee Numbers	100
Community Champions	Sharon Philips plus 3

## All Directions, Centre and Garden Temple Hill, Dartford

Workshop participants	20
Sessions	2
Attendee Numbers	28
Community Champions	Vicki Carpenter plus 6 staff helpers

## Otford Village Fete

Workshop participants	50
Sessions	4
Attendee Numbers	1200
Community Champions	Patty Chaterjee

## Dartford Jubilee Celebration

Workshop participants	450
Sessions	20
Attendee Numbers	2000
Community Champions	Elaine Henson

### Eynsford Parish Council Fete

Workshop participants	150
Sessions	8
Attendee Numbers	1100
Community Champions	Holly Ivaldi
Volunteers	2

### Shoreham Society Big Picnic

Workshop participants	100
Sessions	5
Attendee Numbers	150
Community Champions	Chris Euman
Volunteers	6

### Artrack, National Autistic Society, Gravesend

Workshop participants	10
Sessions	1
Attendee Numbers	14
Community Champions	Kathryn Graff plus three staff

**Other community champions:** Mark Gallant, Sarah Moon

**Links with art and culture partners established: 17 local groups, schools and organisations engaged to contribute to the project.**



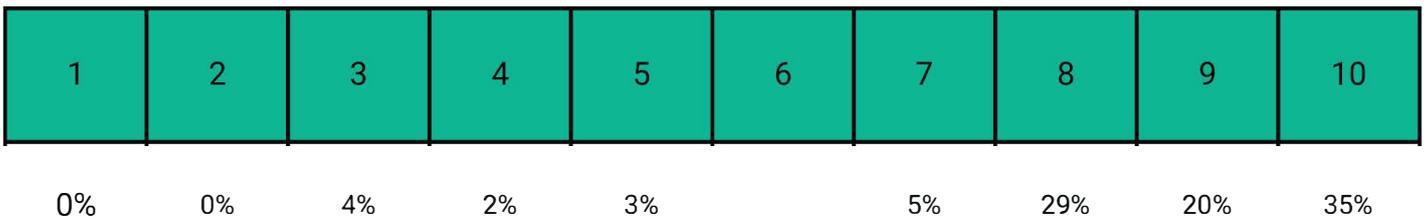
## Community Engagement Report: Evaluation Report

**Do you feel more connected to your local landscape?**



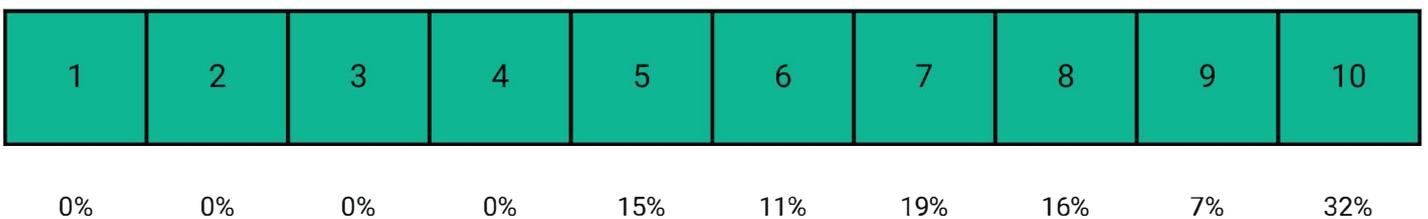
Total percentage who gave 7/10 or higher: 94%

**Do you feel this workshop has increased your artistic and creativity skills?**



Total percentage who gave 7/10 or higher: 87%

**Has your knowledge of your local landscape and nature increased from doing this workshop?**



Total percentage who gave 7/10 or higher: 73%

**Before the workshop, did you think about your local landscape and nature? What was your awareness?**

Felt connected to nature before the activity 46.00%

Felt disconnected to nature before the activity 54.00%

Felt more connected to nature through creative practice after the activity 100.00%



## Community Engagement Report: Community Manager Evaluation

As well as the participants, the community organisation representative who was present during the workshop was asked to complete an evaluation form. The community organisation evaluation is analysed by stating a scaling response to each question from strongly disagree to agree to strongly agree.

The host venue gave feedback and opinions on the majority of community participants' responses to the PWG community workshops by indicating your level of agreement with the following statements:

### **1. This workshop was valuable for the participants.**

Strongly agree

Evidence:

*"Participants showed enjoyment whilst engaging with nature, identifying colour in nature and using this to create their artwork from. Participants were proud of their creations and spoke very positively about their session."*

### **2. The participants demonstrated a connectedness to landscape and nature.**

Strongly agree

Evidence.

*"The students showed they connected to the landscape and nature through the discussions they engaged in. The artwork created reflected things they had identified in the landscape and nature. We could see where students had identified and tried to recreate colours, patterns and textures."*

### 3. The participants found the workshop a helpful way of developing their physical and social skills.

Strongly agree

Evidence:

*"The students were given the opportunity to develop their fine motor skills through the use of different tools to mix paint with and paint with. The workshop took place outside in groups along side the student's friends and this made it a very social activity and were actively encouraged to talk to their friends about their ideas and creations."*

### 4. The participants were encouraged to explore their creativity.

Strongly agree

Evidence:

*"The students were able to work on their own individual piece of art work and could create their own piece based on their own individual creativity. Students were able to mix the colours they wanted to. Elaine was very good at praising each student for the efforts they made and drew everyone's attention to individuality and creativity."*

### 5. The participants enjoyed the workshop.

Strongly agree

Evidence:

*"Our student's are very good at expressing their likes and dislikes and soon tell us when they have or haven't enjoyed something! Our students gave only positive feedback and seemed so proud as they shared their creations with the group. Students still talk about the workshop now!"*



## Community Engagement Report: Summary of Results

We are pleased to report that the two desired project outcomes of Animated Landscapes were met through the activity, which were:

### 1. Connectedness to landscape and nature

The activity successfully reached the aim of connecting people to nature and highlighting key facts about healthy ecologies. This includes a deeper understanding of what a visually healthy landscape looks like, as opposed to relying on traditional aesthetic portrayals of landscapes, which have low ecologic value. The success of this project is reflected in the high levels of participation and feedback, demonstrating a strong interest within the community.

Following the activity 94% of participants strongly agreed that they felt more connected to their local landscape. This clearly indicates a strong sense of connection to nature using the tools & ideas provided during their participation time. Cross referencing this level of nature connectedness from participant quotes, 54% started the session feeling disconnected from their local natural environment, which shifted to 100% of participants feeling more connected to nature after the engagement activity when surveyed. The key outcome is that 73% of participants feel their knowledge of their local landscape and nature increased from doing the community engagement, which aligns with the key aim of the activity to “increase knowledge of healthy ecologies”.



## 2. Upskilling/enhancing skills and creativity

Feedback from community group managers was incredibly positive and supported evidence that participants developed their artistic skills:

- 87% of participants strongly agreed they felt this workshop increased their artistic and creativity skills.

*“The workshop and workshop facilitator were fantastic! The activity was organised, prepared and most importantly calm, caring and patient with our participants. The activity has a lovely way of exploring art and creativity and gave participants the opportunity to express themselves as individuals... and really provided them with a real sense of achievement.”*

- Participants “showed enjoyment whilst engaging with nature, identifying colours, shapes or patterns in nature to create their individual artwork from”.
- Participants felt they could take ownership and that it was for them. “Participants were proud of their creations and spoke very positively about their session.”

When the levels of participation, feedback and observations are combined, there is a compelling case for further work which educates people about healthy landscapes through creative practice, disseminating clear and practical ecologic knowledge within community settings, so local people can act and ask questions about the management of their local environment. Creative practice and ecology sciences are inaccessible for a lot of local communities and doomsday messaging about the environment can be counterproductive and disheartening. This activity shared practical environmental knowledge in a positive way, developed creative observation techniques, and gave communities the tools to act locally to identify unhealthy landscapes. Through this increased knowledge, they can take steps to improve the ecological health of the Darent Valley landscape.



## The Celebration Events



The activity consisted of two celebration event activities across 4 days, with two presentation days of Gnomus- the caretaker of the earth , a giant puppet and two days of The Big Picture Frames installation, presented at community events in the Darent Valley.

Gnomus was presented at Otford Fete (1200 audiences) and Dartford Central Park Fete (2000 audiences) where he attracted a total audience of 3200

The rehearsal process with a professional team of puppeteers was conducted locally at The Quadrangle ecology farm in Shoreham, where a bespoke site-responsive show for the Darent Valley was created, highlighting the importance of biodiversity and our role in supporting healthy environments.

*"Thank you so much for your excellent contribution to the day."*  
**- Elaine Henson, Events Programmer  
Dartford Council**



*"I think he was wonderful, I really did. Really worthwhile messaging and fantastically done, go see it."*  
**- Audience Member**

The Big Picture Frames were also installed at community events across the valley, with a soundtrack created using hydrophone recordings from the Darent River and a contemporary sound piece made by culturally diverse sound artist Saffa. The frames were made in consultation with Nick Barnes Puppets Ltd with the design inspired by the participants of the ReFrame workshops held through the Darent Valley. The big frames were aesthetically engaging and highlighted the colours and patterns of the local landscape. They drew people in to look at them, take pictures, experience the nature soundscape, and focus in more detail on their environmental surroundings. The installation was seen by 800 people during the community engagement & celebration event days.



The activity also recruited 24 volunteers who championed the activity across different areas of the Darent Valley, ensuring its wide reach and successful levels of participation. The high quality of the celebration events delivered provides a cultural legacy for future activities to be delivered, making the case for stronger inclusion of combined artform projects with live performance elements that create closer community bonds across the Darent Valley.



The celebration event data consisted of tracking audience numbers on the day from event organisers and video interviews with audience members, performers and event staff.





The project successfully met the overall aims of reaching a wide range of people and age groups, developing connectedness to landscape and nature, as well as upskilling and enhancing creativity. With the challenges of covid during the project, we explored new ways of reaching people both digitally & in-person. Alongside the in-person workshops, we provided a substantial online resource of workshop videos, guides and information, including links to further reading. This expanded our resources and enabled our work to reach out further, making it available to those who have accessibility difficulties, or those who are still unable to socialise due to Covid19. The events & workshops delivered, were in most cases, the first time that many organisations and people had participated in community and creative activities post covid lockdowns, which delay delivery of the programme by two years.

The project will enable future research lead projects for PWG, with the aim of disseminating useful and important practical information about healthy ecologies, using creative practice as a mode of storytelling delivery. Our next nature-based project The Water Temple brings on knowledge and practices developed during Animated Landscapes, to improve rehabilitate degraded landscapes and environments. The project has developed our knowledge around sustainability that “cultivates environmental and social conditions that will support human well-being into the future.”

Animated Landscapes has strong interest from other regions across the UK, including Brighton Dome, Festival of Thrift in Yorkshire, National Autism Society, to deliver different parts of the programme. The activity has enabled PWG to invest and upgrade our education and outreach resources to reach a variety of people over a large geographic area across the Darent Valley.

The activity also invested in the creative collaborative team and helped to build ongoing relationships with new practitioners. The project engaged a gender balanced team from diverse backgrounds, providing an internship role, and supporting personal and professional development of combined arts practitioners.

Animated Landscapes is an ambitious programme and a key marker in the development of PWG, to create bold, inspiring work for positive cultural and environmental change.