

River/Flow/Connect

A community-led programme delivered by
Bedford Creative Arts

River/Flow/Connect

Evaluation Report

Written by independent evaluator
Amanda Cusimano



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**“This has been one of the first times
I can remember that an art project
on this scale has ever happened in
Kempston. We are extremely delighted
that Bedford Creative Arts chose our
Riverside in Kempston to collaborate
with residents near & far, local
businesses and artists on this ongoing
creative journey. As a local councillor
I am very proud of what has been
achieved so far.”**

Cllr Caroline White, Bedford Borough



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Project Overview

Following a 2023 consultation with local residents, River/Flow/Connect, a community-led programme delivered by Bedford Creative Arts (BCA), was launched in July 2024 to engage Kempston communities with the River Great Ouse and explore how areas to dwell, relax and meet on the riverbank could enhance community cohesion and well-being.

From July 2024 to July 2025, a series of activities—including picnics, river walks, workshops, and collaborative events—took place across local settings such as schools, libraries, and the riverbank. These culminated in a celebration event in July 2025, where the community was presented with three sculptural prototypes, shaped with input from local residents, to vote on, helping to inform the next phase of the project, which will commission a permanent piece of riverside infrastructure.

The project was funded by the National Lottery Community Fund, the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, the Ashley Family Foundation (for our work in schools), Bedford Borough Council, and supported by Arts Council England, The Harpur Trust, BMK Waterways, John Bunyan Community Boat, and Canoe Trail.

Methodology

The evaluation considered both outputs—quantitative measures of activity and reach—and outcomes—the broader changes in awareness, attitudes, and community connection—structured around six key ambitions. Together they formed the foundation of the evaluation approach.

Evidence was drawn from surveys at 15 events, artist and facilitator interviews, feedback from the Steering Group, and internal reflections from the BCA team, combining both qualitative and quantitative insights.

Outputs

River/Flow/Connect delivered 28 activities, engaging over 3,100 participants, exceeding their original target of 2,500:

- **7 school workshops with 693 participants**
- **3 community picnics with 925 attendees**
- **6 open workshops with 283 participants**
- **2 sharing events with 860 participants**
- **4 mini-build workshops with 60 participants**
- **1 celebration event with 228 attendees**

Attendees represented a broad cross-section of the community, including culturally under-represented groups, people with disabilities, and individuals from areas of higher socio-economic deprivation.



Outcomes

The following outcomes guided the assessment of the project's impact on different stakeholder groups, drawing on evidence collected for each:

Outcome 1: Kempston residents' connection with the River Great Ouse has been enhanced

Residents reported greater pride, enjoyment, and appreciation of the river—many experiencing it for the first time. Activities encouraged continued use of the river and built excitement for the next phase of the project.

Outcome 2: Local residents and decision-makers are committed to engage with BCA endeavour to develop the river as an accessible asset for greater community use

River/Flow/Connect has cultivated strong commitment and enthusiasm from residents, leaders, and partner organisations, indicating their dedication will continue into the next phase of the project.

Outcome 3: Local residents and communities have an enhanced awareness and understanding about the river history, heritage, and its environmental and social challenges

From schoolchildren to older residents, participants in River/Flow/Connect reported gaining a deeper understanding of their local river, as the project sparked learning, curiosity, and reflection.

Outcome 4: BCA is seen by its peers to be leading a truly community co-created project that demonstrates best practice for socially engaged art projects

BCA demonstrated good practice in community co-creation through a flexible, iterative approach that placed residents at the centre—from planning and decision-making to the design of the upcoming sculpture.

Outcome 5: Residents, schools and community organisations feel empowered through their involvement with the project, and motivated to engage in similar projects in the future

The project engaged residents, pupils, and community organisations alike, sparking their motivation to take part in future initiatives. Creative workshops, in particular, successfully provided opportunities for children and adults to see their contributions reflected.

Outcome 6: Through their engagement with the project, local residents feel encouraged to spend more time along the river, through walking, cycling etc

The project successfully motivated residents to (re)discover underused areas of the riverbank and generated momentum for lasting engagement with this local asset.

Right: Local children walking by the river in Kempston.





Learnings

The project has demonstrated the value of flexibility, sustained engagement, and genuine co-creation, fostering meaningful community connections.

While challenges arose in engaging a wider number of schools, environmental organisations, and steering group members, strong and long-lasting partnerships were built with Kempston Library, Project 229, amongst others local organisations.

Next Steps

With this phase complete, River/Flow/Connect has strengthened BCA's position to build on the relationships, momentum, and insights gained. The next phase will focus on embedding sustainable practices, consolidating partnerships, expanding programming into educational, youth-led, and environmental areas, and delivering a community-chosen public art sculpture.

Conclusions

River/Flow/Connect has successfully highlighted Kempston's riverbank as a valued cultural and recreational asset. The project has strengthened BCA's role as a trusted cultural broker, capable of delivering long-term, arts-led placemaking initiatives. Residents are more connected to the river, and the community has actively contributed to shaping the foundations for the next phase.

Beyond the planned sculpture, River/Flow/Connect's legacy lies in having fostered creativity, pride, and community connection along the riverbank, demonstrating the potential of collaborative arts-led initiatives to create a shared sense of place.

Following the conclusion of the evaluation period, the project reached a major final milestone. The Knowledge Garden was chosen as the preferred sculptural proposal, and its model has since been permanently installed at Kempston Library. Further discussions with Bedford Borough Council confirmed that the permanent installation can be taken forward under Permitted Development, and the project is now entering its next phase: fundraising to deliver the final structure. The two other sculptural contender models, Treehouse for You and Me and Star, have also now been placed in their new homes at the Transfiguration Church and Elstow Abbey respectively, extending the project's physical legacy across multiple community locations.

“Beyond the sculpture itself, River/Flow/Connect has created a lasting legacy of creativity, pride, and community connection along the riverbank.”

Elaine Midgley, BCA Director

Left: Making a model of the river at Kempston at a River/Flow/Connect workshop session.

INTRODUCTION

The Project

River/Flow/Connect is a community-led arts initiative delivered by Bedford Creative Arts (BCA), aimed at fostering a deeper connection between local residents and the River Great Ouse. It was developed following a 2023 consultation with Kempston residents which explored what might encourage greater use of the river. Feedback highlighted a desire for a more welcoming riverbank and greater awareness of important conservation issues.

Between July 2024 and July 2025, River/Flow/Connect actively involved schools, local organisations, families and communities in Kempston through a series of creative workshops and public events providing them with the opportunity to re-engage with the river on their doorstep and imagine how cultural activities and public arts can help to embrace the positive benefits of living by the river.

These activities, a total of 28, took place in different settings, through a variety of formats; from schools' workshops, to clay-working to lanterns making, picnics and river walks, they engaged communities to explore their personal connections to the river and imagine what a sculpture could look like and what benefits public art could bring to Kempston.

Below: Sculpture Olympics family fun day, with exhibition hub.



Through an iterative approach centred on co-creation, they collectively paved the way to BCA's future plan to commission and install a sculpture along the riverbank that will celebrate the community's relationship with the river and promote recreational use of the area.

BCA collaborated with various local community organisations and artists, including Paul Pibworth, Janet Reddy and Sam Williams who contributed to the development and execution of these activities, ensuring that the project captured the diverse voices and creativity of the community.

River/Flow/Connect is funded by the National Lottery Community Fund, the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, the Ashley Family Foundation, Bedford Borough Council and ongoing supporters Arts Council England and The Harpur Trust.

Support also came from BMK Waterways, John Bunyan Community Boat, Canoe Trail, Kempston Climate Change Group and the Transfiguration Church.

Future Developments

Looking ahead, River/Flow/Connect aims to continue its community engagement efforts and the project will culminate in the installation of a public artwork that provides recreational infrastructure along the River Great Ouse. It seeks to make the area feel loved, safe, and respected, encouraging residents to enjoy and feel proud of their river.

“Lots of residents were not aware of the areas we highlighted at these events and said they would make more time to use it [...] I think the impact is already happening. The river is busy with walkers who didn't use it before.”

Bex Foskett, BCA Company & Projects Manager

Below: Children enjoying the family picnic event by the river.



Methodology

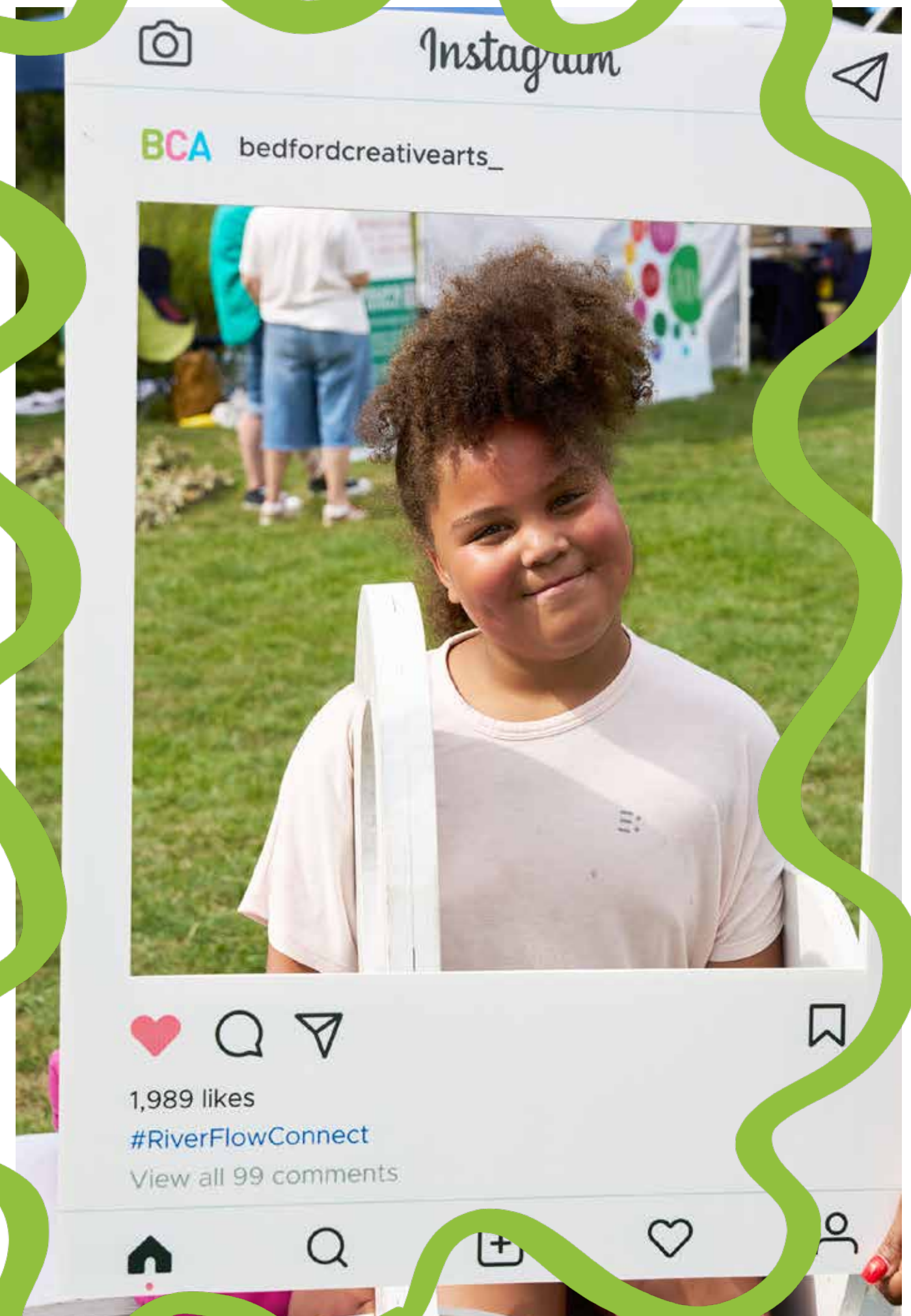
In the evaluation planning stages, the team articulated a series of outcomes, that together capture the changes the River/Flow/Connect aimed to bring to different audience groups:

1. Kempston residents' connection with the River Great Ouse has been enhanced
2. Local residents and decision-makers are committed to engage with BCA to endeavour to develop the river as an accessible asset for greater community use
3. Local residents and communities have an enhanced awareness and understanding about the river history, heritage, and its environmental and social challenges
4. Residents, schools and community organisations feel empowered through their involvement with the project, and motivated to engage in similar projects in the future
5. BCA is seen by its peers to be leading a truly community co-created project that demonstrates best practise for socially-engaged art projects
6. Through their engagement with the project, local residents feel encouraged to spend more time along the river.

Together, they formed the basis of an evaluation framework developed by the project's evaluation consultant. A simplified version is included on page 22. The framework drew on both qualitative and quantitative evidence to assess the defined outcomes, including:

- A documentation review (including the project application, workshops briefing documents, observation notes, River/Flow/Connect short video produced in July 2025 etc.)
- Audience surveys from 15 different events and activities (workshops, community picnics, walks, festival etc.) delivered between July 2024 and July 2025
- Two interviews with workshops facilitators: Sam Williams (artist) and Sadie Hunt (schools workshops facilitator)
- Feedback from the Steering Committee
- Questionnaire capturing reflections from Bedford Creative Arts team

Right: Sculpture Olympics family fun day.



FINDINGS

A: SURVEY RESPONDENTS' PROFILE

This section presents an overview of the demographic characteristics of individuals who took part in surveys conducted throughout the project year. Across the various events, respondents provided information on age, sex, sexual orientation, social background, and cultural participation patterns. Taken together, these data offer a composite picture of who attended and engaged with the project.

Some contextual comparison emerges from drawing on available data for local residents¹, providing insights into the representativeness of the project's audiences, highlighting both areas of alignment with the local population and areas where particular groups may have been under- or over-represented.

By examining these demographic patterns, the report seeks to better understand the reach of the project, identify potential gaps in audience engagement, and inform recommendations for future programming and outreach strategies.

Ethnicity and socioeconomic background

River/Flow/Connect activities attendees' ethnic background aligns pretty well with Kempston population data as illustrated by **Figure 1**.

Survey analysis using the Government's deprivation data tool revealed that a significant portion of event attendees—42%—come from areas with higher levels of socio-economic deprivation, indicated by an Index of Multiple Deprivation Decile below 5.

The largest discrepancy between attendees of River/Flow/Connect activities and the local population profile is in employment categories—specifically among those in routine and semi-routine occupations – See **Figure 2**. While these groups make up a substantial portion of the local workforce with 27%, they are under-represented among attendees at 3%.

Fig 2	Categories of employment
M/P	Lower to higher managerial, administrative and professional occupations (e.g: Teacher, nurse, finance manager, chief executive, large business owner, office manager, retail manager, bank manager, restaurant manager, warehouse manager).
R/SR	Routine and semi-routine occupations (e.g: postal worker, machine operative)
I	Intermediate occupations (e.g: secretary, personal assistant).
SME	Small employers and own account workers who employ less than 25 people (e.g: corner shop owners, small plumbing companies, retail shop owner, single restaurant or cafe owner, taxi owner, garage owner).
U/NW	Never worked and long-term unemployed.
T	Lower supervisory and technical occupations (e.g: motor mechanic, plumber, gardener).
S (FT)	Full-time students.

FIGURE 1: Top 3 ethnicity groupings for Kempston² and River/Flow/Connect attendees³

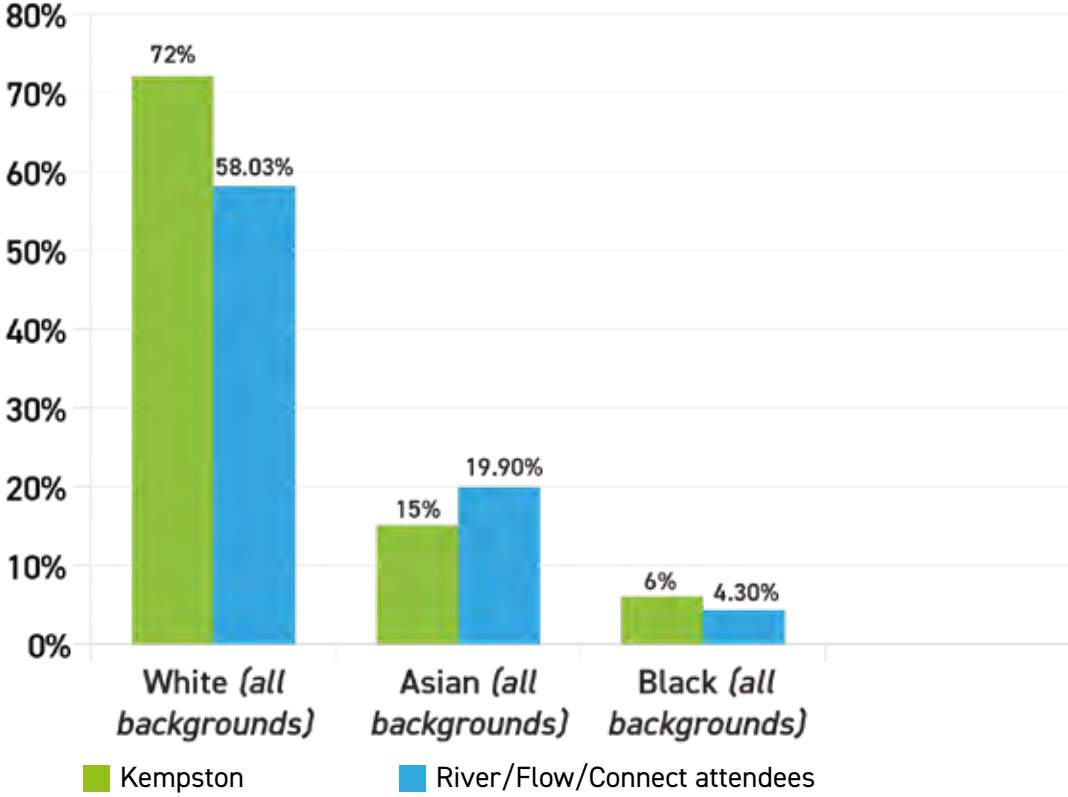
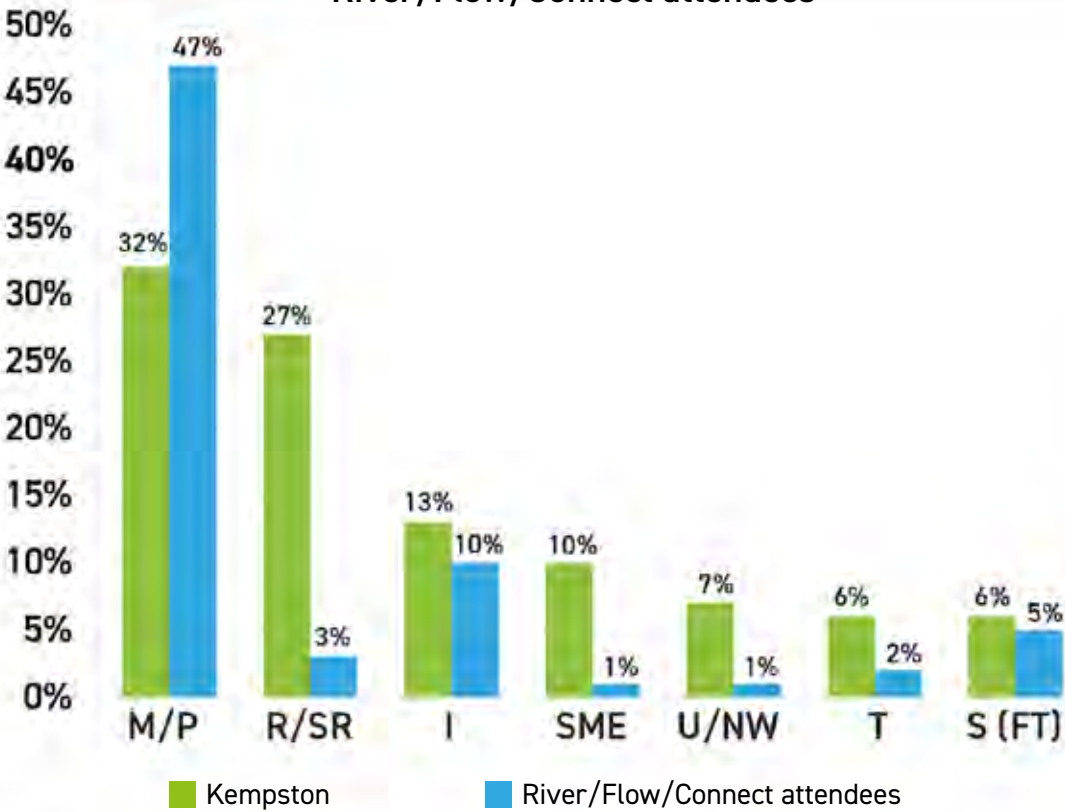


FIGURE 2: Most popular employment classification for Kempston⁴ and River/Flow/Connect attendees⁵



The workshops delivered in schools and nurseries engaged children from a wide range of ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds:

- Camestone School has a significant proportion of pupils from minority backgrounds, particularly Indian (15%), and nearly a quarter of children speak English as an additional language⁶ while 12% qualify for free school meals.
- Balliol Primary is highly diverse, with over half of its pupils (about 57%) coming from minority ethnic backgrounds. More than a third have a first language other than English, and nearly a third are eligible for free school meals.⁷
- At Peter Pan Nursery, the balance tips even further towards linguistic and cultural diversity, with almost half of the children using a language other than English at home. Notably, around 19% of pupils are from Indian backgrounds.⁸
- Cauldwell School stands out for its diversity, with only about 10% of pupils being White British. The largest groups include Indian (23%), Other White (21%), African (15%), and Bangladeshi (11%), and more than 70% of pupils speak English as an additional language and almost 27% are eligible for free school meals.⁹
- Grange Academy, a special school, has a somewhat different profile. Around a third of pupils are from ethnic minority groups, but only about 9% speak English as an additional language. Levels of socioeconomic diversity are significant, with almost 40% of pupils eligible for free school meals.¹⁰

Below: Sculpture Olympics family fun day creative workshop.



Age

River/Flow/Connect activities were designed to appeal to a broad range of age groups, with particular emphasis on family-friendly programming. The figure below highlights three age groups where the profile of attendees differs from the demographic make-up of the Kempston population:

- 0–15 years: surveys did not include participants in schools' workshops¹¹ (these engaged with a total of 363 children aged 2-11), and children are generally under-represented in respondent samples, which explains the apparent gap in this age group.
- 16–19 years: this age group was not a specific target for River/Flow/Connect, so their lower representation is neither unexpected nor a cause for concern.
- 25–34 years: while this age group was not a priority for BCA's project, their relatively lower attendance may point to an interesting opportunity for future engagement.

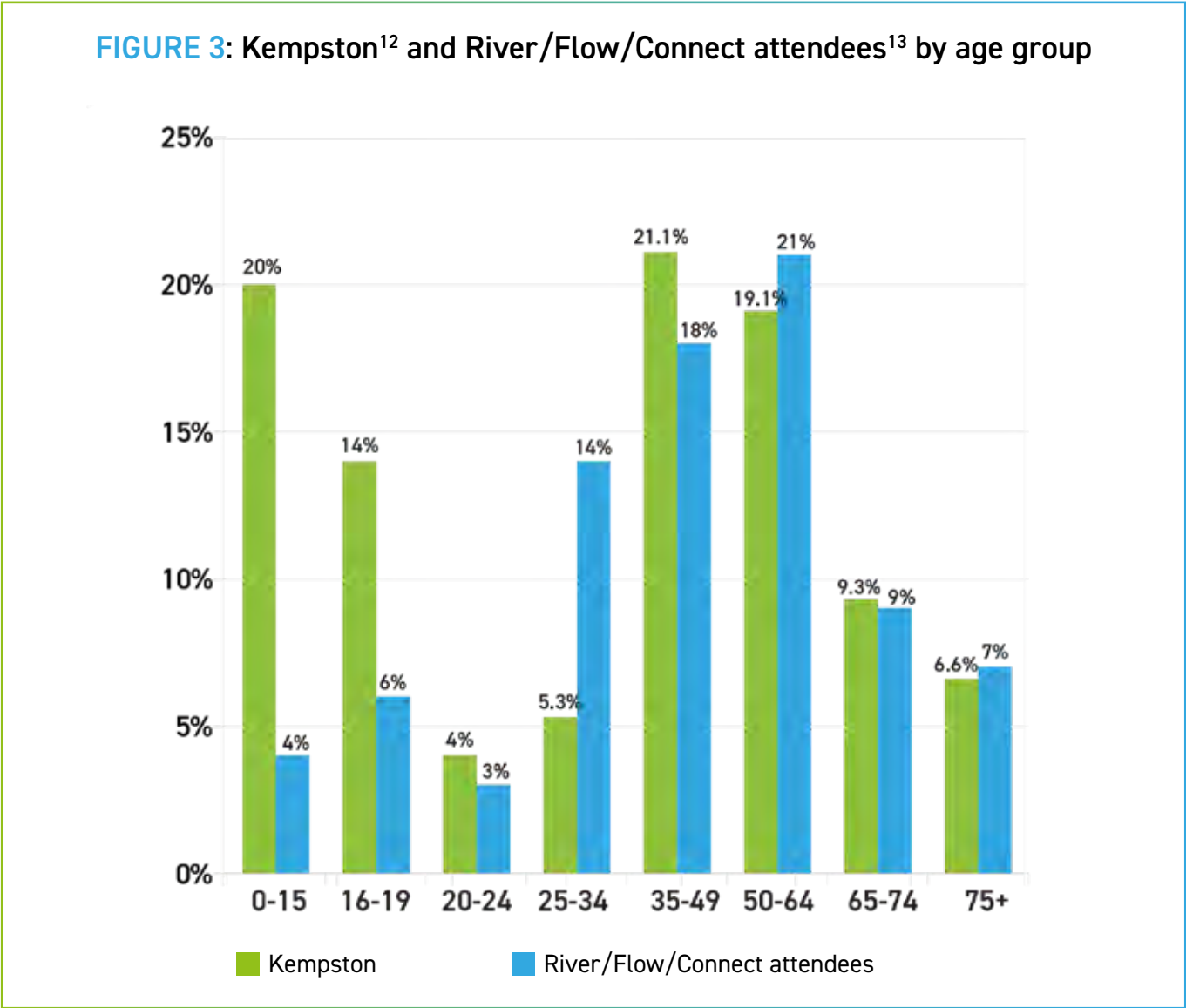
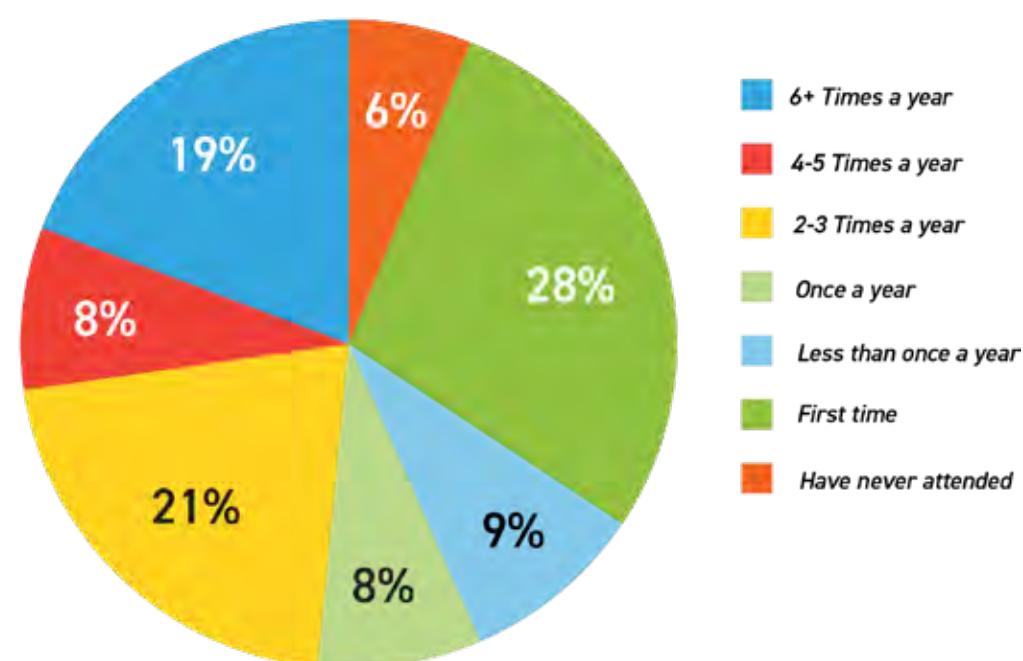


FIGURE 4: Cultural attendance patterns of River/Flow/Connect survey respondent¹⁵



Gender

In terms of gender split, almost 60% of River/Flow/Connect activities' attendees identified as female, compared with 22% male. For Kempston residents, the corresponding figures are more balanced at 51% female and 49% male. This difference is not unexpected: national data consistently shows that women are more likely than men to attend and participate in cultural activities. For example, the recently published Culture Counts Arts & Culture Benchmark Report 2024–25¹⁴ or Arts Council England's Active Lives Survey (2015–2022) both highlight that women are among the demographic groups most engaged in arts and cultural events. Similarly, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport's Taking Part Survey reports that across England, women have higher attendance rates at theatre, museums, and libraries than men.

Disability

Across the 14 River/Flow/Connect events surveyed, 26% of respondents reported having a disability. This is notably higher than the Bedford population average of 16.3%, indicating that the project was particularly successful in engaging people with disabilities through its commitment to accessible programming.

Cultural attendance

When considering River/Flow/Connect cultural attendance patterns, data from the Arts Council England's National Portfolio Organisations survey¹⁶ provides a useful context showing that 88.7% of Bedford residents engaged with the arts in person at least once over the past 12 months. By comparison, the River/Flow/Connect events successfully attracted audiences who are typically less engaged, with 56% of survey respondents reporting that they usually attend arts, heritage and cultural events only once a year or less.



Right: Exploring sounds and history of the river, at Bedford River Festival 2024.

B: OUTPUTS

The project delivered a diverse range of activities across multiple community engagement formats, reaching a wide audience and generating strong community participation, while providing insights to inform future planning against the targets set in the NLCF application.

Steering group meetings: a total of eight meetings were delivered engaging a core group of six people.

School workshops: seven workshops were delivered across seven educational settings (six schools and one home education service provider), slightly below the original target of ten workshops. While engaging additional schools proved challenging, audience reach was nearly on target, with 693 participants attending compared to the target of 700 (-7), demonstrating strong engagement despite the limited number of schools involved.

Community picnics: all three planned picnics were delivered, significantly exceeding audience expectations. Actual attendance of 925 (+625) far exceeded the target of 300, reflecting strong community interest.

Open community workshops: the six planned workshops were held, attracting 283 participants (+163) compared to the target of 120, highlighting high community interest in hands-on activities.

Community sharing events: two of the three planned events were delivered: Swan Library Day 15th Feb 25 and The Light Walk 15th Mar 25. Attendance exceeded targets, with 860 participants attending compared to the target of 120 (+740), suggesting these events had broad community appeal.

Below: Sculpture Olympics family fun day, building a sculpture together.



Mini-build workshops: adopting an iterative and responsive approach, the project's original plan of 30 workshops for 360 participants proved unrealistic and misaligned with insights gathered on community engagement.

The approach shifted to a more focused, in-depth, hands-on strategy, prioritising quality over quantity. Four workshops were delivered, engaging 60 participants, enabling meaningful and immersive experiences with each group.

Celebration event: The planned celebration event was delivered as planned reaching fewer participants than expected, with 228 attendees against a target of 750 (-522).

Across all activity types, the project reached over 3,100 participants, exceeding the overall target of around 2,500 (+600).

As part of a shift to higher-quality engagement, some activities fell short of the originally planned numbers—particularly the Mini-Build Workshops—but the focus on more in-depth, immersive experiences allowed meaningful participation.

Activities, including community picnics, open workshops, and sharing events, exceeded audience expectations, demonstrating strong community interest and engagement where activities were delivered.

Below: June workshop, where children built their own river informed creations.



C: OUTCOMES

The data collected through the methodology referred to in the methodology approach above, was analysed to draw conclusions against the defined outcomes:

OUTCOME 1

KEMPSTON RESIDENTS' CONNECTION WITH THE RIVER GREAT OUSE HAS BEEN ENHANCED

Surveys' results across the year provide positive evidence towards this outcome. People attending the different workshops delivered, expressed high level of satisfaction with 96% rating them as either good or excellent.

"Excellent workshop, would be happy to attend more."

"Great experience, loved the workshop."

Open public events attendees - including community picnics, participation in the Bedford River Festival and river walks - were similarly enthusiastic about their experience.

"Any positive activity that gets people enjoying the environment is good."

Likewise, feedback on BCA's future plans to commission a sculpture has been very positive with 74% agreeing or strongly agreeing they were "excited by the prospect of BCA commissioning sculptural structures in Kempston".

"Good idea. Kempston doesn't have any art sculptures, it's all in town."

"Brilliant idea! Brings life to the area!"

"Bedford is screaming out for more art installations."

"Would love to see more local art!"

Almost two-thirds of participants across events in the year (64%) reported that attending the River/Flow/Connect events deepened their "appreciation of the river". A high proportion also indicated a strong sense of "pride" (74%), "enjoyment" (86%), and "connection with the River Great Ouse" (73%) as a result of their involvement and participation in River/Flow/Connect events and activities.

Feedback on the quality and delivery of activities was similarly positive: 80% rated the overall quality of the event as excellent or good, and 74% described the programme as "innovative and ambitious".



This feedback reflects the voices of both new and returning participants - with 85% of attendees engaging with River/Flow/Connect for the first time across a range of activities - and represents a wide cross-section of the community (see Survey Profile section).

Surveys also indicate that 60% of respondents spend considerable time along the river, highlighting it as a valued location that would benefit from the addition of a sculpture.

Collectively, these responses highlight residents' enthusiasm for both the activities and the wider aims of River/Flow/Connect. Across workshops, walks, picnics, and festivals, participants reported high satisfaction and agreed that the project had enhanced their appreciation, pride, enjoyment, and connection with the River Great Ouse.

Excitement around BCA's planned sculpture commissions suggest continuous and long-lasting community interest and support in future creative interventions along the river. BCA successfully fostered a sense of connection to the river with a diverse cross-section of residents, including many first-time participants.

Below: Lanterns made for the Kempston Light Walk.



OUTCOME 2

LOCAL RESIDENTS AND DECISION-MAKERS ARE COMMITTED TO ENGAGE WITH BCA ENDEAVOUR TO DEVELOP THE RIVER AS AN ACCESSIBLE ASSET FOR GREATER COMMUNITY USE.

Decision makers

BCA actively engaged with different local leaders, community representatives and key stakeholders in Kempston. From political representatives, to schools and police officers, they all expressed interests and support for the project, highlighting its positive impact on Kempston and the opportunities it could lead to creating for the future.

In 2024, then Mayor of Kempston, Terri Conway, stated her enthusiasm for the project

“It’s great that BCA has chosen Kempston to be the focus of this exciting new project. The river is a jewel in our crown and this project will invite everyone to consider how they might use the riverbank more whilst learning about wildlife protection and environmental sustainability at the same time. I encourage local residents and teachers to get in touch with BCA to find out how to get involved over the coming months.”

During the Sculpture Olympics Family Fun Day in July 2025, Ali Akbor, current Mayor of Kempston, expressed the continuous municipal government’s support of River/Flow/Connect.

Councillor White highlighted plans to restore lakes off Ford End Road as a nature reserve and has connected BCA to developers involved to explore potential collaborations or funding opportunities.

Lorna from Kempston Climate Change Group, a local non-profit, volunteer-led organisation dedicated to supporting residents and local businesses on how to live and work more sustainably, noted how she has seen local community slowly engaging more and more with the river post- COVID and would welcome a sculpture on the riverbank.

“The sculpture there would just enhance it so much, it would be lovely.”

BCA’S director Elaine reported on an interesting conversation with police officers during the Sculpture Olympics Family Fun Day in July 2025 focusing on the River/Flow/Connect project’s role in encouraging positive community use of the riverbank, with the officers expressing interest in learning more about the project and planning to share available data on antisocial behaviour in the area.

“It is very, very important that more events should happen like that all the time in Kempston.”

Ali Akbor, current Mayor of Kempston

In parallel, in early 2024, BCA established a Steering Group to guide and oversee the River/Flow/Connect project. Meeting quarterly, the group, made up of 9 regular members, acted as a forum to review progress, test ideas for development, and ensure that the project remained responsive to community needs. The group comprised diverse members, including ward councillors, local residents, representatives from religious and environmental groups, representing a wide range of local perspectives and interests.

Analysis from the Steering Group’s reflections and feedback demonstrate a deepening engagement with the project and a growing recognition of the river as a valuable community asset.

“The value [of the river] is priceless.”

Its members highlighted the positive impact of the different activities and events delivered by BCA, noting how River/Flow/Connect has been successful in fostering connections between residents and their river.

“The events have been superb and the river is becoming a priority to residents.”

In practical terms, they also commended the project’s strong momentum and effective pace of delivery.

“Things have been moving at an impressive pace.”

Below: Support from local volunteer led organisations, dignitaries, and Kempston Library.



There is strong shared vision for transforming the riverside into a safe, accessible, and welcoming space for the community.

“We are hoping it gives a sense of pride to our local communities.”

The group sees River/Flow/Connect as a key enabler of this vision.

“A major focus point on the river walk leading to more visits to the river side and a more active community.”

Members of the Steering Group share a commitment to the future phase of the project: the commissioning and installation of a sculpture on the riverbank, which members view as both a cultural milestone and a symbol of local identity.

“I feel a strong responsibility to bring art to the residents of Kempston – it is a high priority.”

Three members of the Steering Group will represent River/Flow/Connect at the Kempston Green Fair on 20 September, where they will showcase the three sculpture prototypes. This highlights both their pride in the project and their commitment to supporting its visibility and future development.

Overall, the Steering Group's active involvement and enthusiast feedback provides clear evidence that decision-makers are committed to supporting BCA's ambition to develop the river as an accessible community asset.

While BCA shares this impression - Ami, BCA's Programme Producer noted:

“The steering group mainly ward councillors local group community leaders were supportive throughout.”

The organisation is also committed to building on this foundation by strengthening consistent engagement, diversifying the group's membership and remit, and ensuring a greater representation of residents' voices. (More on this in the Learning and legacy section).

This commitment has continued beyond the main delivery period. The Council's planning team has confirmed that The Knowledge Garden can progress through Permitted Development – a major step forward that shows continued local support for the project's long-term ambition.

Right: Knowledge Garden prototype sculpture.



Local residents

All surveyed schools and nurseries¹⁷ expressed strong interest in River/Flow/Connect, with teachers unanimously agreeing that their institutions would like to continue engaging with BCA on this project.

Similarly, local residents who participated in hands-on River/Flow/Connect activities, including workshops, expressed strong support for the project's aim to develop the river as an accessible community asset.

“Any positive activity that gets people enjoying the environment is good.”

“Great idea to attract people to visit and walk along the river. To encourage children to get outside, learn about nature and how to look after the natural world and wildlife.”

“Great way to inspire connection with nature.”

Beyond this positive feedback, 81% of workshop attendees taking place in October and November 2024, stated they were interested in continuing / further engage with River/Flow/Connect.

Furthermore, 36% of survey respondents across all events chose to provide their contact details to join BCA's mailing list—whether to stay informed about project progress, volunteer (from stewarding events to gardening), or take part in creative workshops.

This represents an excellent marker of engagement. By industry benchmarks, a 2% newsletter sign-up rate is considered healthy in digital contexts, while rates of 10–20% are seen as strong performance in highly engaged settings such as community events.

Achieving 36% therefore demonstrates a clear commitment from local residents to be involved or remain informed as the project developed.

River/Flow/Connect has successfully fostered strong commitment from both local residents and decision-makers to engage with BCA in developing the river as an accessible community asset. Decision-makers, including political representatives, community leaders, and partner organisations, have expressed support for the project, recognising its positive impact on Kempston and the opportunities it creates for future development.

Looking ahead, BCA has the potential to further broaden community input, ensuring individual voices continue to shape the project, alongside ongoing support from local stakeholders and decision-makers.

“The project has thrown a spotlight on the riverbank as well as Kempston. For example, steps are being taken by the Council to extend the footpath along the river.”

Elaine Midgley, BCA Director

OUTCOME 3

LOCAL RESIDENTS AND COMMUNITIES HAVE AN ENHANCED AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING ABOUT THE RIVER HISTORY, HERITAGE, AND ITS ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL CHALLENGES.

A central ambition of BCA's River/Flow/Connect project was to strengthen the connection between local communities and the River Great Ouse through deepening their knowledge of the river's context and significance. In the early stages of the project, BCA investigated the level of awareness of its communities on river-related organisations or issues, to inform its future programming demonstrating a clear commitment to community-responsive practice.

Teachers gave very positive feedback, praising the workshops for inspiring children and helping them learn. All teachers surveyed after the workshops agreed or strongly agreed the sessions effectively deepened the children's understanding and appreciation of the river's history, heritage, and environmental and social challenges, while also being engaging and inspiring.

“This was an exceptionally well-prepared workshop that was engaging and inspiring. Thank you for coming into our school!”

“Children enjoyed the day and the activities provided.”

Across all other workshops held throughout the year, 77% of survey respondents reported “learning something new” by attending.

In Sam Williams' workshops, where she led the community in co-designing and building prototype sculptural spaces for riverside hubs, 72% of participants indicated that the sessions had enhanced their knowledge of creative design for public spaces.

“It is very inspiring and educational. Got my creative juices flowing. I hope to keep the flow alive and flourish it with further projects.”

Collectively, these experiences demonstrate how River/Flow/Connect has fostered meaningful and inspiring connections between the community and the river through encouraging curiosity, learning, and reflection on its wider cultural and environmental context.



OUTCOME 4

RESIDENTS, SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS FEEL EMPOWERED THROUGH THEIR INVOLVEMENT WITH THE PROJECT, AND MOTIVATED TO ENGAGE IN SIMILAR PROJECTS IN THE FUTURE.

Residents

Feedback from residents engaging with River/Flow/Connect activities revealed a strong level of engagement with the project. 100% felt “engaged” with and “inspired” by the project while 93% of survey respondents, agreed or strongly agreed their experience on the day had increased “their willingness to take part in similar projects in the fields of culture and heritage”.

This is particularly positive considering that 52% of all survey respondents do not regularly attend or participate in arts and culture experiences.

“School children can see their artwork as part of a sculpture in their local library that reflects their connection to the river.”

Ami Aubrey, BCA Programme Producer



Schools

In winter 2024, a series of schools' workshops were offered to a total of six nurseries (for children aged 2 - 5yrs), and primary schools¹⁸ - Year 4, Year 6 and SEND, reaching a total of 363 children.

An interview with the facilitator revealed how the approach allowed children to connect creatively to the river while expressing their ideas freely. Activities were designed to give children a voice and a sense of agency:

1. **Word outlines:** children first filled out an outline with “lots of different words of their choosing” and shared them with their class, encouraging creativity and self-expression.
2. **Sculpture sketches:** Each child sketched their “ideal sculpture” for the river, generating imaginative, playful ideas such as:
 - **Water slides into the river**
 - **Floating football pitches**
 - **Zip lines across the river**

The sketches were then placed on maps of the river, giving a visual overview of all children's contributions.

The resulting artwork, a swan sculpture, was installed in Kempston Library. giving children the opportunity to see their ideas valued and celebrated within the wider community.

While getting schools to register for the workshops was challenging, the facilitator was happy with the ones that were delivered, noting children were highly enthusiastic “They all want to play” and teachers and staff showed positive interest and engagement with the process: “They were very keen” and expressed the desire to be informed about the next stage of the process and to visit the sculpture with the children once they will be installed.

Feedback was gathered from schools' teachers and they were unanimous about theirs and the children enjoyment; they all agreed or strongly agreed the children were inspired by the project and excited to contribute to it, enjoyed reflecting on their connection with the river, and enthusiastic about imagining new activities along it.

Ami Aubrey, BCA Programme Producer, also felt schools' children felt empowered through their involvement with the project.

Community organisations

The aim of developing partnerships with grassroots community organisations for BCA was to open new gateways into the wider community. While it proved challenging when some early promising conversations did not materialise (i.e., the Wildlife Trust), BCA still managed to form useful and encouraging collaborations with some local organisations.

A strong partnership was with Kempston Library, which hosted a variety of workshops and displayed the swan sculpture prototype developed by community members, including school children.

The library emerged as a key venue for community engagement within the project. The three sculpture prototypes presented during the Sculptural Olympics Fun Day on 26 July 2025 have been on display since 27 July 2025, and between then and 11 September the library recorded over 1,403 visits to the exhibition. During this period, a further 60 votes were gathered for the prototypes. The library has requested that the Knowledge Garden prototype sculpture, that emerged from that process as the preferred structure, becomes a permanent fixture, underscoring both the lasting legacy of the project and the library's status as a central partner for BCA in delivering community-focused creative initiatives.

Since the close of the main evaluation period, the other two models have also found new homes, with Treehouse for You and Me installed at the Transfiguration Church and the Star installed at Elstow Abbey.

“The relationship with the library is really strong and gives us an opportunity to do more work with them.”

Bex Foscett, BCA Company & Projects Manager

Below: Activities in Kempston Library.



Building on these positive outcomes, BCA will continue to collaborate with the library to guide the next phase of the project and strengthen the enduring engagement and connection established with the local community.

Project 229, a multi-agency community centre, was another supportive organisation as well as a good location for River/Flow/Connect activities and the involvement of the Art Well's Eco Art group in the final event was very valuable.

Other beneficial connections included the Green Man Eco Garden, the Kempston Climate Change group and the vicar from the Transfiguration church.

Overall, River/Flow/Connect successfully empowered residents, schools, and community organisations, fostering enthusiasm for cultural and heritage engagement. Residents reported feeling inspired and motivated, with the majority expressing increased willingness to participate in similar projects in the future, even among those who do not regularly engage with arts and culture. School workshops enabled children to connect creatively with the river, contribute imaginative ideas, and see their artwork reflected in tangible outcomes, reinforcing a sense of agency and pride. While engagement from some environmental partners was more limited than anticipated, other collaborations demonstrated the potential for meaningful community involvement and lasting impact.

Collectively, these experiences illustrate how the project engaged participants and nurtured relationships with local cultural and environmental initiatives that have the potential to grow into the next phase of the project.

Below: Creating and building.



OUTCOME 5

BCA IS SEEN BY ITS PEERS TO BE LEADING A TRULY COMMUNITY CO-CREATED PROJECT THAT DEMONSTRATES BEST PRACTISE FOR SOCIALLY-ENGAGED ART PROJECTS.

BCA has delivered a wide-ranging programme of events for local communities — from guided walks and creative workshops to hosting a pavilion at the Bedford River Festival, one of the largest free outdoor festivals of its kind in the UK, attracting over 250,000 visitors across a single weekend.

The content and design of the activities was iterative and continuously informed by communities' feedback (collected via surveys and steering group).

In the early stages of the project, BCA included questions in its events survey about what could improve their engagement with the river (i.e., Is there anything that prevents you from spending more time at the river currently? Would any of the below changes to the riverbank space encourage you to use it more: Places to sit; Better and more accessible pathways; Public art such as poetry or sculptures, water-level art or beacons; Play equipment for children; Beach huts etc.) BCA also asked communities what type of sculpture would most appeal to them (i.e., What kind of Community Sculpture would you like to see along the river bank that relates to Kempston? What could it look like?).

Their responses informed the next phase of the project, where the latest hands-on workshops were programmed to enable residents to ultimately collaboratively shape three prototype sculptures that were presented at the closing event in July 2025:

1. **Knowledge Garden – shelter and community food growing space.**
2. **Seven-sided Reflective Structure – playful panels and mirrors to view nature.**
3. **Tree House for You and Me – accessible, nature-integrated design.**

These were then submitted to a community vote.

The public exhibition of all three sculptural models at Kempston Library extended the project's co-creative process beyond the final celebration event, allowing residents to continue engaging with and voting on the proposals.

The selection of The Knowledge Garden as the preferred structure demonstrates that community input remained central to decision-making through to the end of this phase.

Consultation, engagement, and collaboration were therefore embedded at every stage, reinforcing the principle that “community art can't be done to people – it must be done with people.



This programming approach demonstrates a strong commitment to meeting communities where they are, offering a diverse range of activities to maximise appeal, and actively involving them in shaping the project.

This assessment is supported by survey statistics: 78% of respondents stated that the activity or event they took part in was “relevant to local people and local issues”, 88% agreed or strongly agreed that the activities were “welcoming for people like them”, and 100% reported feeling “engaged with and inspired by the project”.

Artist and public art producer Sam Williams, who led a series of workshops in July 2025 aimed at engaging the community to imagine and design prototypes for potential public art along the river, reflected on the project's distinctive approach.

Unlike many public art initiatives she has worked on, — often tightly constrained by budgets and timeframes — River/Flow/Connect was delivered with unusual flexibility. She described it as “flipping the mindset”.

Below: River/Flow/Connect exhibition, with background on the project and ideas for community involvement.



While this open approach was occasionally challenging, in particular for planning, it fostered flexibility and a continual renewed focus on a community co-creation ethos:

- Workshops initially planned to be online were switched to in-person sessions with flexible structures to respond to audience needs after low online engagement.
- Most participants attended only one session, which made cumulative engagement difficult. In response, Sam adopted an iterative approach, using ideas generated in early workshops to inform the briefs for subsequent sessions.
- The workshops successfully engaged a diverse mix of community members, from young families in libraries to local councillors, who “not only just... took the photograph, but also participated in the workshop.” This diversity required significant flexibility and responsiveness from the facilitators.

Sam Williams subsequently developed additional design detail for The Knowledge Garden through pre-application work, helping translate the community-supported concept into a more deliverable proposal.

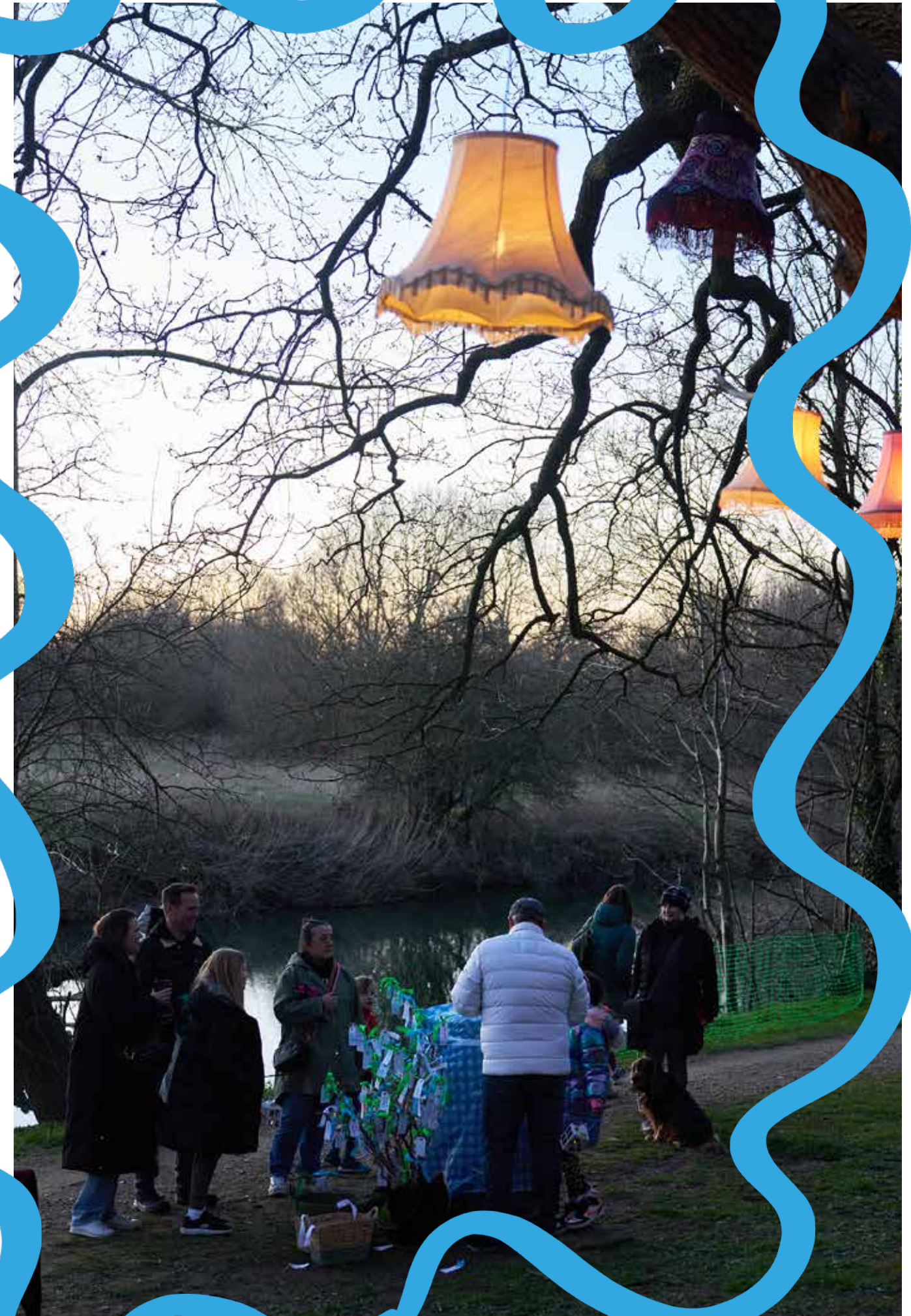
This iterative, reflective approach highlights BCA's commitment to an innovative, co-created model of socially engaged art that places communities at the heart of the creative process.

It is further referenced in the River/Flow/Connect short video produced in July 2025 where a Councillor specifically mentions the unusual commissioning process as a methodology he had not come across before but helped to ensure community ownership.

River/Flow/Connect was shaped by a co-creation approach that placed residents at the heart of every stage. Flexible and responsive programming enabled diverse voices to actively influence the project, from early consultation to workshops and ultimately to the three prototype sculptures unveiled at the closing event.

Survey feedback confirmed notions of relevance and feelings of inclusivity with participants reporting strong engagement and inspiration. Together, these outcomes demonstrate BCA's innovative model for fostering genuine community ownership and participation.

Right: The Love Kempston
Light Walk



OUTCOME 6

THROUGH THEIR ENGAGEMENT WITH THE PROJECT, LOCAL RESIDENTS FEEL ENCOURAGED TO SPEND MORE TIME ALONG THE RIVER, THROUGH WALKING, CYCLING ETC.

Elaine, BCA's Director, reflected on her favourite community engagement response to programming, which took place during the Light Walk in March 2025. This event embraced the colder, wetter winter months to activate the riverbank. While it did not spark direct conversations about artistic or sculptural commissioning, it succeeded in drawing 800 people to the river, a real attendance achievement. Many attendees, largely local residents, remarked they did not usually engage with this part of the city.

“I wasn't aware of this area until now.”

For BCA's Director, this was a powerful achievement realising the ambition of encouraging residents to rediscover and reconnect with the riverbank. This assessment is also reflected by Bex, BCA's Senior Projects Manager.

“Lots of residents were not aware of the areas we highlighted at these events and said they would make more time to use it [...] I think the impact is already happening. The river is busy with walkers who didn't use it before.”

This is further echoed in survey results: 73% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that, based on their experience at a River/Flow/Connect event, they felt encouraged to “spend more time along the river”. By the final event in July 2025, this figure had risen to 100%, demonstrating growing excitement as the project continues to take shape.

The evidence from events observations and survey data demonstrates that River/Flow/Connect has encouraged local residents to spend more time along the river. Residents are rediscovering underused areas and expressing enthusiasm for continued connection with the river. It is also showing a growing momentum in fostering lasting community engagement with this valuable local asset.



LEARNINGS AND LEGACY

With this phase complete, River/Flow/Connect has positioned BCA strongly to build on the relationships, learnings, and momentum it has generated. While adapting to a few challenges, the project has demonstrated the value of patience, trust-building, and sustained engagement in creating meaningful connections between communities, partners, and cultural organisations.

Key challenges included securing engagement from more schools, specific environmental organisations, and residents in certain settings, such as participation in the steering group or online workshops.

Despite BCA's strong commitment, engaging the target of 10 schools proved challenging, with a total of 6 ultimately reached. This shortfall was largely due to ongoing pressures from COVID-19 and the rising cost of living.

At an early stage, BCA secured partnerships with the Wildlife Trust, the Environment Agency, and the Waterways Trust, hoping these collaborations would help shape content linked to their campaigns and provide learning opportunities. However, engagement from these partners declined over time, partly due to their limited capacity and partly because their need to have more focused objectives from the outset did not always align with the evolving nature of the project. As a result, BCA had limited opportunity to incorporate environmental learning as initially anticipated.

Below: Balliol Primary School pupils exploring what the river means to them.



Reflecting on the Steering Group's make-up Elaine felt it was more local authority (Councillor) and community leader led than she had hoped.

As residents provided thoughtful feedback during events, BCA believes there still is greater potential for them to play a more direct role in shaping the direction of the project; When asked what kind of sculpture they would like to see along the river, participants expressed a preference for nature-inspired structures and an interactive focus: pieces that could be activated through events, features that children could play with, or elements that people could sit on. These preferences emphasised the importance of the sculpture serving as a community connector—a focal point that brings people together and encourages them to gather, interact, and enjoy the riverside collectively.

Looking ahead she suggests a review of how steering groups are formed and envisions considering stipends, or quotas for representation to ensure that individual voices from the community are heard.

One of the most significant learnings has been the importance of flexibility and responsiveness—whether shifting workshops in response to community needs or adapting engagement strategies to better suit local contexts.

This iterative approach has ensured that the project remained rooted in community voices, fostering genuine co-creation and ownership. BCA has also learned that these relationships require slow, sustained and long-term engagement that carefully considers timing and requirements from potential partners as they can often be constrained by the limited resources available to them.

Despite these challenges, important new relationships have been established, and promising conversations have begun with key stakeholders.



“We have managed to successfully engage a broad membership of both town and borough councils for the area who seem to have really valued having a single, shared project to get behind. It has enabled conversations about other ambitions for the locality such as connections to local housing developers, desires to refurbish the shopping district, a desire to do an event such as bring the Knife Angel sculpture to Kempston, and other such programmes.”

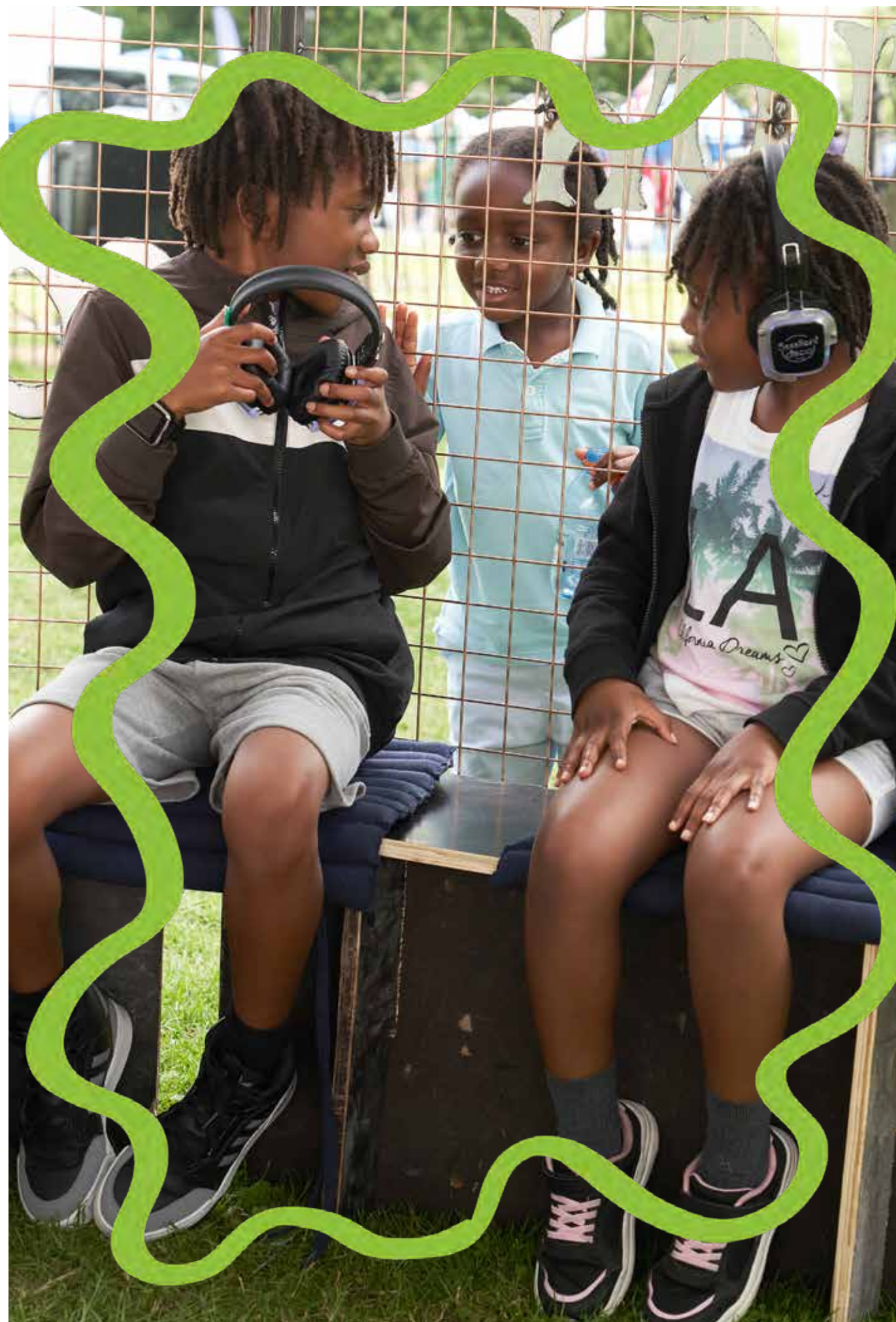
Looking ahead, the next phase for BCA will focus on consolidating the community engagement achieved so far and embedding sustainable practices in areas including partnerships development, resource building, fundraising, as well as programming (youth-led, educational, and environmental programming) – building on the learnings of this initial phase.

Key next steps now centre on progressing the community-chosen sculptural proposal, The Knowledge Garden, towards fabrication and installation in Kempston. Following discussions with the Council's planning team, BCA has received advice that the proposal may be taken forward through a Permitted Development route, subject to a flood risk assessment and clarification of installation measures, including anchoring and site conditions. BCA has also built on Sam Williams' consultative approach to public art planning and commissioning, with further design development helping to strengthen the proposal for delivery.

The project's legacy is already visible in the placement of the other two models, with Treehouse for You and Me now at the Transfiguration Church and the Star at Elstow Abbey.

Below: Child exploring the Knowledge Garden structure.





The project now has a clearer route towards implementation, and the principal challenge is fundraising for the next stage.

River/Flow/Connect has provided a foundation for BCA to act as a cultural broker, nurturing a long-term, community-driven vision for the riverbank. The legacy lies not only in the planned permanent sculpture, but also in a growing culture of creativity, pride, and connection. By reimagining underused public spaces as sites for arts, environment, and community connection, the project has set in motion a shift that could transform the riverbank into a living hub of participation, wellbeing, and shared identity for years to come.

“For BCA, the project has reinforced the importance of embedding co-creation, long-term engagement, and flexibility into its practice. It has generated resources and learning – from evaluation frameworks to partnership approaches – that can be applied to future commissions. It has also strengthened BCA’s role as a trusted cultural broker, able to bring communities, artists, and partners together in meaningful and sustainable ways.”

Ami Aubrey – BCA Programme Producer

Left: Children enjoying River/Flow/Connect activities at Bedford River Festival 2024.



CONCLUSIONS

Residents profile

The surveys' sample shows that River/Flow/Connect events reached a broad and diverse audience, with several notable strengths. The project attracted many individuals who do not typically engage with the art, culture and heritage activities, demonstrating its success in reaching new and less culturally active audiences. Participation also spanned a wide range of age groups, reflecting the broad appeal of the programming, and engagement from people with disabilities was above the local average percentage, highlighting the value of its accessible approach.

While there is still potential to increase participation amongst certain groups (i.e., 25–34-year-olds) the demographic data shows that the project's audience broadly reflected Kempston's population while also engaging culturally underrepresented groups.

River/Flow/Connect Outputs

River/Flow/Connect delivered 28 activities across a range of community settings, engaging over 3,100 participants—exceeding the overall target of 2,500 by around 24%. This included 7 school workshops (693 participants), 3 community picnics (925), 6 open workshops (283), 2 community sharing events (860), 4 mini-build workshops (60), and 1 celebration event (228). While some activities, such as the mini-build workshops and school sessions, fell short of planned numbers, the focus on immersive, hands-on engagement ensured meaningful participation. Community picnics, walks and workshops significantly exceeded expectations, demonstrating strong community interest and engagement.



River/Flow/Connect Outcomes

The project set out to deliver six outcomes, which formed the basis of the evaluation. Their achievement is summarised as follows:

Outcome 1: KEMPSTON RESIDENTS' CONNECTION WITH THE RIVER GREAT OUSE HAS BEEN ENHANCED.

River/Flow/Connect has been successful in having a meaningful impact on Kempston's communities. Across workshops, walks, picnics, and festivals, residents have reported increased appreciation, pride, and enjoyment of the River Great Ouse, with many first-time participants. The project has strengthened community ties to the river, encouraged continued use, and fostered enthusiasm for future activities, including the planned sculpture commission.

Outcome 2: LOCAL RESIDENTS AND DECISION-MAKERS ARE COMMITTED TO ENGAGE WITH BCA ENDEAVOUR TO DEVELOP THE RIVER AS AN ACCESSIBLE ASSET FOR GREATER COMMUNITY USE.

River/Flow/Connect has cultivated strong commitment from both local residents and decision-makers. Political representatives, community leaders, and partner organisations have expressed ongoing support for the project, recognising its positive impact and the opportunities it can continue to create for developing the river as an accessible, valued community asset.



Outcome 3: LOCAL RESIDENTS AND COMMUNITIES HAVE AN ENHANCED AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING ABOUT THE RIVER HISTORY, HERITAGE, AND ITS ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL CHALLENGES.

BCA set out to deepen Kempston residents' connection with the river through creative, river-themed activities. From school pupils to retired residents, participants in River/Flow/Connect reported greater interest in the river, along with increased awareness and understanding of the river's history, heritage, and environmental and social challenges, encouraging curiosity, learning, and reflection.

Outcome 4: BCA IS SEEN BY ITS PEERS TO BE LEADING A TRULY COMMUNITY CO-CREATED PROJECT THAT DEMONSTRATES BEST PRACTISE FOR SOCIALLY-ENGAGED ART PROJECTS

BCA's approach to River/Flow/Connect exemplifies best practice in socially engaged, community co-created art. By placing residents at the heart of the project design and creative process, iteratively shaping programme content and prototype sculptures, and remaining flexible and responsive throughout, BCA has fostered community ownership and participation.

Outcome 5: RESIDENTS, SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS FEEL EMPOWERED THROUGH THEIR INVOLVEMENT WITH THE PROJECT, AND MOTIVATED TO ENGAGE IN SIMILAR PROJECTS IN THE FUTURE.

The project has inspired residents, pupils, and community organisations, fostering confidence, creativity, and motivation to engage in similar cultural and environmental initiatives in the future. Workshops in particular have successfully provided opportunities for children and adults to have their voices heard and see their contributions reflected in meaningful ways.

“It seems logical that we should continue to work in this community and understand their place-shaping challenges beyond the river.”

Elaine Midgley, BCA Director

Outcome 6: THROUGH THEIR ENGAGEMENT WITH THE PROJECT, LOCAL RESIDENTS FEEL ENCOURAGED TO SPEND MORE TIME ALONG THE RIVER, THROUGH WALKING, CYCLING ETC

The project has encouraged residents to spend more time along the river, rediscovering underused areas and generating momentum for lasting engagement with this important local asset.

With this phase complete, River/Flow/Connect has strengthened BCA's position to build on the relationships, momentum, and insights gained. The project has demonstrated the value of flexibility, sustained engagement, and genuine co-creation, fostering meaningful community connections. Residents are more engaged with the river, the community has shaped creative outputs, and BCA's is growing into a trusted local cultural broker.

The next phase will focus on embedding sustainable practices, consolidating partnerships, expanding programming into educational, youth-led, and environmental areas and delivering a community-chosen public art sculpture.

With this funded phase now complete, River/Flow/Connect leaves a tangible legacy in Kempston through the permanent display of The Knowledge Garden model at Kempston Library, and through the siting of the Treehouse for You and Me and Star models at the Transfiguration Church and Elstow Abbey respectively. Alongside secured for the Knowledge Garden, these developments provide a credible pathway towards the next phase of fundraising and installation.

Beyond the sculpture itself, River/Flow/Connect has created a lasting legacy of creativity, pride, and community connection along the riverbank.



Right: Local resident walking the path alongside the river.

METHODOLOGY

1. Evaluation Framework¹⁹

Outcome	Audience	Data collection tools
Kempston residents' connection with the River Great Ouse has been enhanced.	Participants & General Audience	Survey + BCA reflections
Local residents and decision-makers are committed to engage with BCA endeavour to develop the river as an accessible asset for greater community use.	Steering group + other stakeholders	Interview + questionnaire + BCA reflections
	Participants & General Audience	Survey + BCA reflections
Local residents and communities have an enhanced awareness and understanding about the river history, heritage, and its environmental and social challenges.	Teachers	Questionnaire + BCA reflections
	Participants & General Audience	Survey + BCA reflections
Residents, schools and community organisations feel empowered through their involvement with the project, and motivated to engage in similar projects in the future.	Participants & General Audience	Survey + BCA reflections
	Schools' teachers	Questionnaire + BCA reflections
BCA is seen by its peers to be leading a truly community co-created project that demonstrates best practise for socially-engaged art projects.	Partners	Interview + questionnaire + BCA reflections
Through their engagement with the project, local residents feel encouraged to spend more time along the river.	Participants & General Audience	Survey + BCA reflections

2. List of consultees

- Sam Williams - Artist and public art producer
- Sadie Hunt - School workshop facilitator
- BCA's team: Elaine Midgley - Director, Ami Aubrey - Programme Producer, Bex Foscett - Senior Projects Manager and Anne Forgan - Freelance Producer

3. Survey questions sample

The following represents a sample of the survey questions used across the 15 River Flow Connect events surveyed for this evaluation; not all questions were included in every event's survey.

Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements using the following scale: Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree or disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree.

- I am excited by the prospect of BCA commissioning ambitious sculptural structures in Kempston
- I felt the activity/event was welcoming for people like me
- The activity/event was well organised
- The activity/event was relevant to local people and local issues
- It was unlike anything I have experienced before
- It was innovative and ambitious
- I have learned something from this experience
- Attending this workshop has increased my knowledge understanding of creative design for public spaces.
- I felt empowered by contributing my ideas to this project
- Attending this event has deepened my appreciation of the river in Kempston
- It has made me prouder of the local area
- Based on my experience of taking part in this event, I feel encouraged to spend more time along the river
- This experience has increased my willingness to take part in similar projects in the fields of culture and heritage
- I feel engaged with and inspired by the project

Using a scale of 1-10 (1 being very little and 10 a lot) how would you rate the following:

- Feeling of pride in the river/riverbank
- Level of enjoyment of the river/riverbank
- Sense of connection with the river/riverbank
- Time spent using the river/riverbank



SOURCES

¹ Sources include www.ons.gov.uk/ and <https://areainsights.co.uk/borough/bedford>

² <https://areainsights.co.uk/borough/bedford>

³ 270 respondents across 13 surveys

⁴ <https://areainsights.co.uk/borough/bedford>

⁵ 288 respondents across 14 surveyed events

⁶ <https://crystalroof.co.uk/school/109462-camestone-school?>

⁷ <https://www.schooldash.com/school/109464/>

⁸ <https://www.schoolratings.co.uk/school/109417-peter-pan-nursery-school?bounds=-0.5927467346191407,52.09754242880996,-0.35482406616210943,52.15497830567235>

⁹ <https://crystalroof.co.uk/school/144528-cauldwell-school>

¹⁰ <https://www.schooldash.com/school/139374/>

¹¹ No demographic data obtained from children under 15 in surveys

¹² <https://areainsights.co.uk/borough/bedford>

¹³ 288 respondents across 14 surveyed events. Surveys excludes younger age groups and school workshops.

¹⁴ <https://culturecounts.cc/r/arts-and-culture-benchmark-report-2024-25/3UWK3H/#0>

¹⁵ 236 respondents across 11 events / surveys

¹⁶ <https://culture.localinsight.org/#/map>

¹⁷ 3 out of 6 responded to a questionnaire

¹⁸ Camestone School, Balliol School, The Grange, Cherry Tree, Peter Pan and Cauldwell School

¹⁹ Simplified version





BEDFORDARTS
CREATIVE