

‘Thank you SO much for having me on Sunday, what an incredible festival you’ve put together! I enjoyed myself so much, it was such a privilege to take part’ *Nicola Tallis*

‘I love history, always have, and when I realised that there was a Cirencester History Festival I was just absolutely buzzed about it. To be part of it is a total joy’ *Charlie Cooper*

‘In an age where there is so much digital interaction the opportunity for real time contact between speaker and audience is a real privilege’ *Survey respondent*

‘Wow, what an amazing inaugural festival. With 99% of tickets sold across the whole programme, credit to everyone involved’
Andrew Tubb, Cirencester Town Council

‘The history festival filled a gap we didn’t know we had’
Dame Fiona Reynolds, Festival President

‘Collaborating with the History Festival has raised our society’s profile and helped us reach a much wider audience. Our recent Croome lecture was our best attended ever’
Anne Buffoni, Cirencester Archaeological and Historical Society

‘Volunteering was such a rewarding experience. I had multiple opportunities to speak with and learn from distinguished historians and archaeologists ... The entire experience was extraordinary, and has made me extremely passionate to connect everyone with history’

Elizabeth Pearce

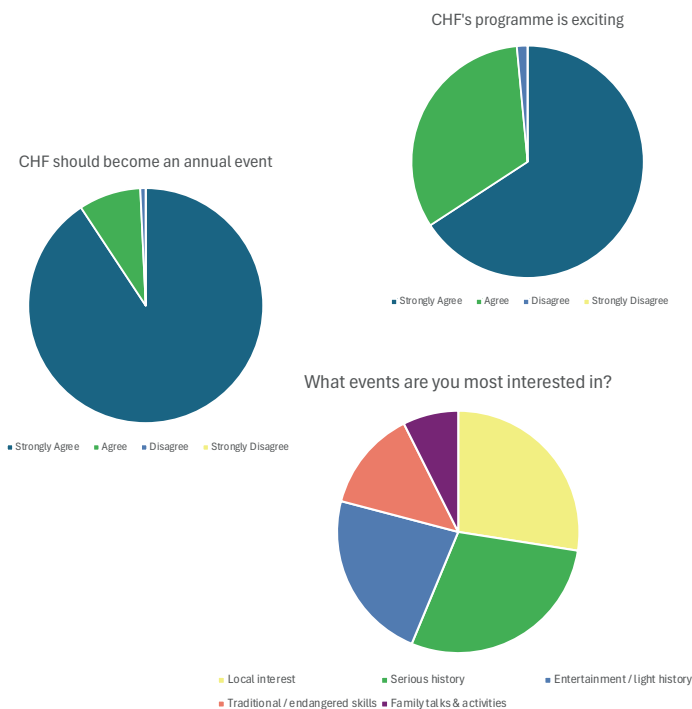
Year 13, Cirencester College



**Cirencester
History Festival**

IMPACT REPORT: YEAR 1

The first ever Cirencester History Festival ran over nine days during October half term in 2024. Our plan was to attract big names to Cirencester and put it on the festival map, but also to provide a platform for local people and to celebrate our community and the rich history beneath our feet. Here's what we learned...



1. STRONG DEMAND

Ticket sales and survey feedback indicated a clear appetite for a history festival in Cirencester and great enthusiasm for our first programme.

- 99% ticket sales across the whole programme
- More than 3,500 tickets sold
- Fast sell-outs were the biggest source of negative feedback

'We just arrived from LA ... I have been so blown away by the wonderful programming you have put together' Survey respondent

2. COLLABORATION

The devolved and collaborative nature of the festival took a huge amount of organisation but really worked.

- 30 organisations pulling together across 17 venues
- This gave us meaningful buy-in from the town as well as great programme diversity
- Win win: we provided a platform for Cirencester's many great cultural organisations while benefitting from their experience, resources, reach and expertise
- Our in-town venue model insulates the festival from rising hire costs affecting other tented festivals and keeps money in the town

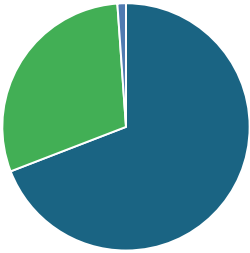
'It's particularly pleasing to see the involvement of local groups and organisations offering walks, talks, open events and activities away from the (very impressive) main programme of speakers' Survey respondent



'We supported the History Festival as a patron, and by subsidising youth tickets for their Charlie Cooper talk. Our membership has since increased by 25% - in part due to the collaboration, which raised our society's profile.'
Linda Chan-Jones, Chair of The Arts Society Corinium

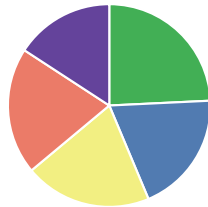


CHF brings the community together



Legend: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree

What is the most valuable potential outcome of CHF?



Legend: Education, Community cohesion, Entertainment, Prestige for the town, Commercial benefit - biz & local orgs

3. COMMUNITY & INCLUSION

We worked hard to create a programme with something for everyone. We also devised a whole series of off-programme outreach events by linking creative and charity partners during festival week.

- 5 fully funded outreach events, from cookery school to object handling & local history workshops
- Survey results show that community cohesion & pride are very important to our audience
- People overwhelmingly found ticket prices good value for money, but we would like to make family activities free to help remove barriers

'This was a fabulous event that felt community driven by people who cared about its impact and presentation ... congratulations' Survey respondent

'We felt incredibly proud to be part of the History Festival. It has been a catalyst to make new connections in our local community, which have extended well beyond the week of the festival' National Trust at Chedworth Roman Villa

4. EDUCATION & FAMILIES

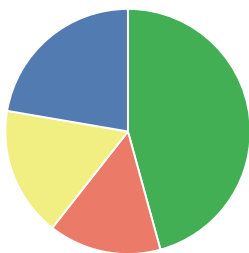
Schools were hard to crack but we made some great gains by partnering with Cirencester College.

- More than 40 talks & activities covering a huge range of local, national and global history, all with an educational angle
- Cirencester College arranged trips to curriculum-adjacent talks; students volunteered as stewards throughout the week and had backstage access to interview several speakers
- Good but slightly inconsistent take-up of family events

'Our students got so much out of it and developed some valuable skills - we're really excited to see what next year brings' Karen Le Maitre, Cirencester College



Where do you live?



Legend: Cirencester, Within 5 miles, Within 10 miles, Beyond 10 miles

'We travelled from Cheshire for the event, very worthwhile with excellent venues and topics'

TOURISM & COMMERCIAL BENEFIT

- Hard to gauge out-of-town visitor numbers, but 22% of survey respondents came from over 10 miles away
- Lots of anecdotal evidence for extra footfall in the town centre during festival week

'We loved the History Festival in Cirencester! We had the busiest October half term ever' Ian, The Market Garden

'Cirencester will benefit greatly in prestige, community spirit, tourism and business income. Thank you!' Survey respondent

KEY AIMS FOR 2025:

1. BUILD THE TEAM

The focus in 2025 will be on growing and strengthening our small organising team and streamlining operational processes, rather than expanding the programme significantly.

2. INCREASE VENUE CAPACITY

Finding some extra capacity for headline talks will be a priority, as will the associated issue of parking.

3. YOUTH ENGAGEMENT & EXPANDED ACCESSIBILITY

We aim to apply a £5 subsidised ticket for under-22s across the whole 2025 programme after having successfully trialled the initiative with Charlie Cooper's talk last year. We also want to make all of our family drop-in events free. Both of these initiatives will remove barriers to access for young people and families as well as taking pressure off festival administrative processes.

4. IMPROVED LOGISTICS & TECH

In response to feedback, we will focus on refining the logistical aspects of festival events, particularly regarding AV, crowd management, signage and volunteer support.

5. OUTREACH COMMUNICATIONS

We'll work on improving awareness of our outreach work with charities and schools so the public better understands the extent to which we're trying to bring the festival to the widest possible audience.

6. EXPAND THE PATRON SCHEME & EXPLORE SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

While the festival did make a surplus in 2024, we anticipate having higher venue and staffing costs for our 2025 festival. We hope to cover these costs, and the subsidy of our youth tickets and family workshops, with further patron contributions and some sponsorship, where appropriate.



**WITH HUGE THANKS TO OUR 2024 PATRONS:
WE COULDN'T HAVE DONE IT WITHOUT YOU!**