

Thriving Together Grant Fund case study: Making Worthing Festival more accessible and inclusive

Worthing Festival will return this June with a free, two-day music and arts event at Homefield Park from 19th to 21st June 2026, and a range of public arts events, performances, talks, and exhibitions across the borough as part of the month-long fringe festival.

The festival was first launched by Worthing Borough Council, but has been run by the non-profit organisation Worthing Festival CIC since 2025.

A celebration of local creativity and community life, the festival's main aims are to bring people together through art, music and performance, make culture accessible to everyone, and boost community pride.

This year's main two-day festival is set to be even more inclusive and accessible, thanks to £12,500 from our Thriving Together grant fund that will be used to create a community wayfinding trail and improved sound garden installation and art trail.

Building on the success of last year's sound garden, local artists will be commissioned to create works that encourage playful interaction with sound, nature and place.

Some structures in the garden will also be made by Brighton charity Making it Out, which works with people who are at risk of committing crime to begin to change their situation through regular engagement in creative making activities.

A special preview evening will be held before the festival on Friday 19th June for underrepresented audiences and local charities, including young people with sensory sensitivities, allowing them to experience the installation in a calmer environment. The West Sussex Youth Orchestra will play a variety of classical pieces to accompany this special preview event.

After the festival audio content from the sound garden will be hosted on the Worthing Festival website for year-round access, and the organisers will work with local groups, including Friends of Homefield Park, to explore ways of installing a permanent sound sculpture in the park.

To help build excitement ahead of the festival and enhance community involvement, Worthing Festival CIC has been working with local groups and creatives to host a series of free banner making workshops in Worthing.

The community created banners and flags will guide residents and visitors from key arrival points, including Worthing Railway Station and town centre, to Homefield Park and through the festival site.

Other wayfinding elements will be added to local businesses and permitted locations along the routes to Homefield Park. These will be removed after the event and reused for future community events.

A physical wayfinding event will also take place to open the Festival on Saturday 20th June, led by local drumming group Drumheads. This celebratory community parade will take local residents and festival participants from the seafront to Homefield Park via the town centre and Beach House Park.

Jen Left, Worthing Festival's creative director, said: *"We're delighted to have secured funding from Worthing Borough Council's Thriving Together grant fund, which will help us to expand our community arts programme and create more opportunities for local artists, creatives and residents of all ages to get involved in this vibrant community celebration."*

To find out more about the festival, including the full line-up and many ways to get involved, please visit <https://worthingfestival.org.uk/>



