



## **FINDHORN BAY FESTIVAL END YEAR ON A HIGH AS SPECTACULAR FESTIVAL OUTCOMES ARE PUBLISHED**

**Organisers of the 2016 Findhorn Bay Festival reveal spectacular evaluation results showing the Festival drew bumper crowds, a substantial economic impact and tremendous community involvement.**

The second biennial Findhorn Bay Festival took place in unexpected spaces and scenic locations in and around the Forres area from 21-26 September 2016 with many sell out performances, free shows and exhibitions packing out with locals and visitors alike. Over 100 visiting artists, 185 local artists and 171 young performers contributed to the six-day showcase programme attracting an estimated 13,659 attendances across free events, ticketed shows and Culture Day Forres.

Findhorn Bay Arts, the not-for-profit Forres based organisation that produced the Festival, undertook an in-depth post event evaluation through online feedback surveys and face-to-face conversations with visitors, festival artists, community groups, volunteers, local businesses and Culture Day participants to better understand the impacts of the Festival and learn how the event can develop for years to come.

Evaluation results show that the second instalment of the Festival received very strong support locally with 75% of the audience drawn regionally from Forres, Moray and Nairnshire. A further 18% visited from other areas in Scotland including Glasgow, Edinburgh, Skye, Perth, Aberdeen, Arbroath, Orkney and the Borders. 7% of visitors travelled from further afield across the UK and the rest of the world visiting from London, Bristol, Belfast, Wiltshire, Gloucestershire, USA, Australia, Germany, Italy and many more.

Survey analysis showed 23% of visitors reported to have stayed at least one night over the Festival period, spending an average £78.20 per night's stay. 95% of visitors reported to have also spent money in shops, cafes, restaurants and pubs in Forres, Kinloss, Brodie and Findhorn with the average spend amounting to £41.82. The local business survey conducted showed that 86% of businesses experienced an increase in footfall and 78% reported increased sales over the Festival period. Business sales increased by between 10-30% in places across the area with several town centre businesses citing that sales were up by 50% on Saturday 24 September when Culture Day Forres was held.

Vicky Brown, owner of Little Flower based on Forres High Street, said "It was absolutely fantastic for the town and local area. It's good that there's something for everyone and every age group."

This year saw over 15 new local businesses engaging with the Festival to promote and support events. Recognising the potential for audience engagement, new Festival partner Ewen Mackintosh, Chief Operating Officer at Benromach, said "We are delighted to have been part of the Findhorn Bay Festival in 2016. Benromach is targeted at consumers who have a curious mind, who wish to seek out

something that little bit different. We feel our match with the arts and opportunities to work with the Festival provides access to this type of consumer.”

Using the reported visitor spend in shops, on accommodation, and including the event funding which was spent locally, it is estimated that the Findhorn Bay Festival contributed £874,902 to the local economy (£571,219 from visitor spend, £128,683 spent on accommodation and £175,000 spent locally from funding) contributing a significant economic boost to the local area.

Festival Director Kresanna Aigner noted, “The impacts of the Festival go well beyond the event itself. Artists, businesses and local groups not only benefit over the six days but they are able to sustain and grow as a result from increased work, sales and promotion. We do this in depth evaluation as it’s important for people to understand how events and creative activity contribute locally and to highlight what the benefits are for investment.”

Partnership working lies at the heart of the Festival success as Findhorn Bay Arts worked in collaboration with a variety of local and national partners to deliver the extensive programme of events. The Festival was part of Scotland’s Year of Innovation, Architecture and Design and this national collaboration brought about many key programme events such as the Guerrilla Lighting Tours, Glass Microbiology and the 2020Vision photograph display at Brodie Castle, talks and tours about sustainable design, and the artistic lighting of The Tolbooth throughout the Festival.

Speaking of the partnership and exhibits that featured at Brodie Castle, National Trust for Scotland Property Manager Shona Ferguson commented, “We were delighted to be part of the Findhorn Bay Festival. The events held at the castle brought in many new visitors. Many had travelled from out with the area and visited Brodie for the first time, we hope to see many of them return in the future.”

Partnership working included the involvement and participation of hundreds of local people. Volunteer participants played a crucial role in delivering Festival events and activities with 185 people ranging from the ages of 16 to 93 contributing their time for front of house duties, stewarding, and support to participating community organisations. A further 312 volunteers supported local artists and local groups on Culture Day.

The Festival enabled a variety of outreach and educational opportunities to be made available through local schools. Five young people gained work experience in event management and film making over several weeks leading up to and during the Festival. 160 school pupils attended workshops enabling them to participate in unique learning experiences including playing in a street band with Oi Musica, planting and installing a floating eco-system on Brodie Pond, participating in shadow puppetry with Indigo Moon Theatre, and learning about Macbeth and his life in Moray on tours with Cameron Taylor. The programme collaboration with community partner Falconer Museum drew a further 960 attendances to the educational ‘Danger! High Voltage’ shows with London Science Museum.

The outreach work of the Festival also included the programme collaboration between Eden Court Creative’s Integrated Performance Group which showcased ‘all I have to do is dream...’ at Universal Hall. This ground breaking piece of visual theatre was performed by a cast of 50 adults with additional support needs alongside their support workers and received rapturous standing applause leaving hardly a dry eye in the house.

Kresanna noted, “Findhorn Bay Festival is like no other event in the area, it is unique in providing people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds the opportunity to participate in and access arts and culture activities, gain a range of new skills and meet new people too. It gives local artists and young people a prominent stage to perform on alongside well-known visiting artists and local groups a platform to publicise the work they do all year round. This involvement adds a strong community feel to a Festival which truly has something for everyone.”

Festival artist Julie Fowlis, who opened the event with a sell-out concert in St Leonards Church, said “the Findhorn Bay Festival is a bold, far-reaching and adventurous festival, grounded in its rich artistic community. There is something special about a festival which takes inspiration from the landscape and history of its locality. [It was] a pleasure to be part of.”

The Findhorn Bay Festival was recognised and rewarded for the contribution the event makes to the local economy, to tourism in Moray, and to the wider community in being awarded the Moray Chamber of Commerce Community Tourism Award last month. The impact of the event was further demonstrated and cited as a reason for Forres being placed number two in the top ten trending seaside spots on the rise according to the worldwide travel website TripAdvisor.

The biennial Findhorn Bay Festival, which includes Culture Day Forres, will return the last long weekend of September 2018, Wednesday 26 to Sunday 30. For further information on the work that Findhorn Bay Arts do throughout the year and to see if you feature in the Findhorn Bay Festival highlights film visit [www.findhornbayarts.com](http://www.findhornbayarts.com)

**ENDS**

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### **Notes to Editors**

[Findhorn Bay Arts - www.findhornbayarts.com](http://www.findhornbayarts.com)

Findhorn Bay Arts is a non-profit arts organisation, connecting creativity, people and place by:

- Delivering high quality arts events and projects.
- Nurturing and showcasing the creativity of the people of Moray.
- Celebrating and promoting Moray as a place for outstanding arts.

Findhorn Bay Festival – [www.findhornbayfestival.com](http://www.findhornbayfestival.com)

The Findhorn Bay Festival is produced by Forres based company Findhorn Bay Arts – a not for profit social enterprise that works to nurture and showcase the creativity of local people and promote Moray as a place of outstanding art. With the second instalment of the biennial Festival breaking even and with strong support from funders, partners and the general public, Findhorn Bay Arts have started to plan the third Findhorn Bay Festival which will return in 2018, Wednesday 26 – Sunday 30 September.

Using the Great Britain Tourism Survey 2011 figures of economic impact assessment of average recognised spend for local, regional, national and international visitors, the economic impact of the Findhorn Bay Festival to the Scottish economic is estimated to be £1.1 million.

Findhorn Bay Festival Funding and Sponsorship Partners

The Findhorn Bay Festival 2016 was made possible with generous support from the following:

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2016 Year of Innovation, Architecture & Design

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Kelvin Lighting	Kinloss Abbey Trust
LEDC4	Lumenpluse
Speyside Craft Brewery	Tesco Forres
The Mosset Tavern	The Red Lion

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