



Annual Report 2025

Harvington Festival 25 was delivered over the period 20-29 June with the final programme comprising 12 separate events distributed across the Village. Once again the guiding principle was to provide a wide range of opportunities for the community to come together, see and hear from visiting speakers and entertainers and to celebrate all that Harvington has to offer.

There was increased emphasis on keeping access free where possible - with attendees invited to make contributions at some events - to maximise accessibility and engagement with the Community. Over the course of the Festival we welcomed over 450 visitors, expanded our repertoire of performers and contacts and benefitted from the continuing support of 34 Friends of the Festival.

Website traffic was once again our main access point for information with nearly 1400 site visits and over 4000 page views. During the Festival week itself there were 30 unique visitors (i.e. not repeat visitors) per day with the Events page being the most accessed. The challenge is to convert this traffic into attendance at events.

A copy of the Festival programme appears at Appx 1.

Community Involvement and Feedback

2025 Festival Survey Responses

Following the 2025 Festival, the Festival volunteers ran an online survey (September 2025) to try to assess the appetite for a future festival and feedback from this year's event. It is worth noting that the feedback this year was 28% lower than in previous years, and overwhelmingly (93%) from those who attended, and a majority (53%) of whom are Friends, so the following can only be indicative of what people want, rather than taken with any statistical relevance, and crucially **only represents the views of those already engaged with the Festival**.

To that end, this is shared as a narrative of what was seen in the responses and how we might develop a narrative for our offering in 2026.

Overall satisfaction

The festival achieved strong approval from those who attended. Three-quarters of attendees expressed satisfaction with the overall experience, split fairly evenly between those who were satisfied and those who were very satisfied. Roughly a quarter gave neutral ratings, feeling the festival was acceptable but neither particularly impressive nor disappointing. Critically, virtually no one expressed outright dissatisfaction with the event as a whole, suggesting **we have established a solid foundation** that our engaged festival goers appreciate even if there's clear room for enhancement.

Everyone supported there being a festival in 2026.

Everyone who was a Friend would be one again.

When asked to compare this year's festival with the previous edition, opinions scattered quite widely. Just under half felt this year proved better than last, whilst roughly a quarter thought it had declined. A significant proportion couldn't decide between the two, with several noting that their personal circumstances and availability made direct comparison difficult rather than the festival quality itself having changed dramatically

How people found the Festival

The publicity appears to have worked reasonably well overall, with two-thirds of **attendees feeling fully aware of what was happening**. However, roughly a quarter found it **difficult to locate the details** even though they knew events were taking place. Amongst the 30-65 age group specifically, the picture improves considerably – more than 80% felt fully informed, though about one in six still struggled to find the specifics.

The website garnered mixed responses across all attendees. Whilst a third found it easy to use, the majority only managed to extract the information they needed after some effort, and around one in seven found it actively difficult (though they persevered). The 30-65 demographic proved more generous, with half finding the site easy to use and the remainder rating it as acceptable. **More work needed.**

What needs improving

The clearest message concerns timing. **June is very busy**, which presents significant challenges for many villagers, with multiple respondents noting they're "very busy" or have "limited availability" during that month. Several explicitly **suggested exploring an autumn festival** instead, with September or October mentioned as alternatives. One person even proposed shifting to spring. This tension between wanting the festival and being available to attend it runs through the responses.

The publicity system needs attention. Whilst **awareness levels were high**, the difficulty in finding details suggests our communications successfully broadcast the festival's existence but **falls short on making the practical information easily accessible**. The website similarly functions but doesn't delight – it represents a barrier that people overcome rather than a tool that helps them.

Future Event

The message for the marketing efforts centres on three actions:

- a. make June work better by acknowledging people's competing commitments
- b. Simultaneously, streamline how people find out exactly what's on and when – awareness exists, but the path from interest to attendance needs smoothing.
- c. In particular, the working-age demographic represents an unexplored audience; respondents in that category want to participate but need the festival to fit more comfortably into their already busy lives.

Looking in detail at the question: From 1 to 5, with 1 being not important to 5 being very important which of the following types of event do you think it is important for the festival to host?

To explore the event importance rankings we use straightforward statistical averaging across responses on a 1-to-5 scale, where 1 represents "not important" and 5 represents "very important". Averaging smooths out extreme positions to reveal genuine consensus across the responses. This approach differs from simply counting percentages of people who rated something highly, as the average captures both the breadth and depth of support across all respondents rather than focusing solely on those with the strongest opinions. The results of this are here in order of importance:

Event Importance Rankings - All Responses

1. Live Music - 4.25/5.00
2. Gardens and Horticultural - 4.19/5.00
3. Talks - 4.13/5.00 (tied)
4. Children's Events - 4.13/5.00 (tied)
5. Gala with speaker - 4.00/5.00
6. Pub based party - 3.94/5.00
7. Free Events - 3.81/5.00
8. Author Talks - 3.75/5.00
9. Barn Dance - 3.69/5.00
10. Food - 3.69/5.00
11. Art and Photography - 3.56/5.00
12. Competitions - 2.88/5.00

The Core Narrative: "A Festival That Brings Music, Nature and Community to Life"

The 2026 festival should therefore present itself as a celebration built around live music, the natural beauty of village life, and opportunities for learning and connection across generations. The data reveals a community that values artistic performance, horticultural heritage, and intellectual engagement alongside traditional social gatherings.

Pillar One: Music at the Heart

Live music scored highest at 4.25 out of 5, establishing it as the festival's defining feature. Our respondents want the soundtrack of summer evenings, the energy of performance, the shared experience of listening together. This isn't background entertainment but the festival's beating heart. We could frame this as "music that moves us" - **positioning the festival as a place where professional performances, local talent, and communal singing create moments** that linger long after the final notes fade. Music should thread through the programme, giving each day its rhythm and the festival its crescendo.

Pillar Two: Gardens, Horticulture and the Village Landscape

The strength of gardens and horticulture at 4.19 reveals that Harvington takes pride in its natural environment and horticultural tradition - and the open gardens. We should emphasise how this can be used **to connect people to the landscape that defines our beautiful village character**. The narrative should emphasise "celebrating what grows here" – from open gardens to perhaps talks that focus on local ecology, and maybe exploring workshops on sustainable growing. This pillar distinguishes the festival from generic village events by rooting it literally in the soil and seasons that make the Harvington summer distinctive. It speaks to residents who've invested decades in their gardens and newcomers wanting to understand the place they've moved to.

Pillar Three: Ideas and Families Together

Children's events tied with talks at 4.13, reveals that intellectual curiosity and family engagement matter equally. But perhaps not together. Therefore whilst there is an appetite for talks, and these should be explored, there is also an appetite to cater for children. However, on this point, perhaps in 2026, rather than it be children or adult events we major on offering **for families**; which is most of the agenda! Having a focus at the events of how these can be family friendly in the height of summer will help broaden our appeal.

Pillar Four: Traditional Social Occasions

The gala dinner with speaker (4.00) and pub-based party (3.94) both score solidly, showing continued appetite for formal and informal gathering. These events create the festival's social architecture – the moments when the whole village assembles, when newcomers meet established families, when celebration becomes communal memory. Position these not as separate add-ons but as essential expressions of village identity, the occasions that remind everyone why community matters, and consider how they can dovetail as family events.

What Sits in the Supporting Role?

The need for free events (3.81) and then the author talks (3.75) score respectably and deserve inclusion, but they *enhance* rather than define the festival. Free events ensure accessibility remains central whilst author talks serve those with specific literary interests. Both have their place without dominating the identity.

Barn dances and food events (both 3.69) sit in the middle tier – this means they are popular enough to warrant including but not distinguishing features - and therefore there is caution as to the appetite they may create - again perhaps in line with the “family” offering. Treat these as potential enjoyable additions that complement the core programme rather than marquee attractions demanding significant resources or marketing emphasis - could the Barn Dance be free for example with money taken on drinks and BBQ?

Art and photography (3.56) scored surprisingly low, suggesting visual arts appeal to a minority rather than the broader community. For now, we might not include these, except perhaps alongside something else, better as modest exhibitions that support other events rather than standalone attractions, if at all. No one is asking for competitions.

The Timing Message

The narrative must still acknowledge the June challenge directly. Rather than pretending everyone's available, position the festival as "ten days to find your moment" – emphasising that the extended duration exists precisely because June is busy. The message becomes: "We know your calendar's full, so we've created multiple chances to join us. Find the evening, afternoon, or weekend slot that works for you." This transforms the problem into a solution, making the festival feel considerate rather than demanding.

Draft 2026 Positioning Statement:

"Harvington Festival 2026 celebrates the music, natural beauty and community spirit that define our village. Lose yourself in live performances that fill our summer evenings. Discover the gardens and landscape that make Harvington special. Join talks that challenge and inspire whilst welcoming families to create memories together. Gather at the Gala dinner and pub parties that remind us why village life matters. Whether you can spare an evening or a whole weekend, you'll find your moment to be part of something rooted in who we are."

Finances

A summary of Festival income and expenditure appears at Appx 2.

In addition to the event income and expenditure the Festival generated additional benefits throughout the community including increased (300%) footfall in the Coach & Horses for the Music night, block booking income for the Village Hall and reports from the Harvington Singers that there was a surge in tickets for the second night based on the buzz from the first night. In addition, a total of £1335 was raised at Festival events by volunteer supporters for a range of charitable causes in the area. A breakdown of the charitable funds raised also appears at Appx 2

The Future

The experience of the Festival Team, the survey responses and the many compliments received suggest that a future Harvington Festival can be viable and would be well received. However, there are some key areas which need further work to ensure success including the range of events on offer, the composition of any organising team and more productive engagement with local businesses and with the wider community.

Additionally, it was noted by the organisers that Festival 25 was well supported, but by a relatively small number of residents - as was the case for Festival 24 - and that this is not a sustainable position. There needs to be wider engagement by the community if a Harvington Festival is to thrive.

The Festival AGM was held on 10.09.25 as an open meeting for members of the community to drop in and have their say. At that meeting it was resolved that there is sufficient organisational knowledge, community traction and resources to deliver a Festival for summer 2026.

Harvington Festival Committee

harvingtonfestival@gmail.com

www.harvingtonfestival.org

Appx 1 – Festival Programme

Harvington FESTIVAL

JUNE 20TH - 29TH 2025

	RED CARPET FILM NIGHT VILLAGE HALL, FRIDAY 20 TH 7.30PM	OPEN GARDENS £5 ENTRY, FROM VILLAGE HALL SAT & SUN 21 ST - 22 ND 2-5 PM
LES FILLES SAUVAGES COFFEE CONCERT @ ST JAMES'S CHURCH SATURDAY 21 ST 11AM		LIVE MUSIC NIGHT COACH AND HORSES SATURDAY 21 ST 6.30PM
	GUIDES 50TH ANNIVERSARY ALL WELCOME - ELLENDEN FARM SHOP SUNDAY 22 ND 11AM - 3PM	
CLASSICAL CONCERT ST JAMES'S CHURCH TUESDAY 24 TH 7PM	KEEN HISTORY TALKS - PIRATES! VILLAGE HALL, WEDNESDAY 25 TH 7.30PM	
	HARVINGTON ANTIQUES ROADSHOW VILLAGE HALL THURSDAY 26 TH 5 - 8PM	
HARVINGTON SINGERS SUMMER SOUNDS @ ST JAMES'S CHURCH FRI. 27 TH & SAT 28 TH 7.30PM	FUNGI FRIDA AND THE MYCO HEROES THE PLAYING FIELD - BRING A PICNIC! SUNDAY 29 TH 12PM	
HARVINGTON YOUTH PROJECT SPORTS DAY ON THE PLAYING FIELD SUNDAY 29 TH 2PM - 4PM		ANNUAL DOG SHOW ELLENDEN FARM SUNDAY 29 TH 11AM
THE BIG FESTIVAL QUIZ THE COACH AND HORSES SUNDAY 29 TH 7.30PM		MEET THE AUTHOR NICKY STRATTON - ELLENDEN FARM SUNDAY 29 TH 11AM

Appx 2 – Summary Income & Expenditure

Harvington Festival 2025				
Income & Expenditure				
Reserves from 2024				2678
Income				
WDC Grant	1000			
Friends Subscriptions	629			
Tickets/Donations/Event sales	462			
Grand Draw	489			
Open Gardens Contribution	100			
Surplus stock sale	70			
		2750		
Expenditure				
Venue Hire	115			
Catering/Flowers	299			
Promotion/Advertising	953			
Artists/Speakers	235			
Bank charges	37			
Insurance	101			
Website/Ticketing	87			
		1827		
2025 Event balance			923	
Festival Account Balance			3601	
Proceeds raised for 3rd Party Causes (not included above)				
Open Gardens - Donation to Shelterbox	700			
Phoenix Coffee - Donation to Bidford Dementia Cafe	245			
Sophie's Teas - Donation to Shelterbox	130			
Dog Show - Donation to Forest Dog Rescue and Vale Wildlife Rescue & Rehabilitation Hospital	260			
		1335		

SAVE THE DATE

Harvington

FESTIVAL

June 20th - 28th
2026