

# Project Report: Journey Songs

BSharp, February 2025



Photo: Year 3 students from Seaton Primary School performing with the B Sharp Team at Seaton Tramway, October 2024.

## 1. Summary of Key Achievements

The *Journey Songs* project has successfully met its original aims and outputs, with tangible evidence across several key areas:

- **Exploration of Local Area and Amenities:** Local children were actively engaged in exploring the cultural and natural amenities of Seaton, including visits to Seaton Wetlands and Seaton Tramway.
- **Creation of Original Songs:** The children applied their newfound knowledge of the local environment to create original songs, combining their creativity with their learning about their local area.

- **Collaboration with Professional Musicians:** The children worked alongside local professional musicians and music leaders, expanding their understanding of music and their potential as future musicians. This fostered their self-confidence and identity as musicians.
- **Development of Musical Skills:** Through song-writing workshops and performances, the children developed essential creative skills and honed their musical abilities. This included both the technical aspects of music-making as well as the creative process of songwriting.
- **Community Engagement and Performance:** A key aspect of the project was to enhance community connections. Local residents participated in two workshops in both song-writing and reed lantern making, and local choir Seaton Accapella joined the final performance, creating a sense of unity and collective achievement across multiple generations across the community.
- **Training Opportunities for Young Adults:** Three young adults aged 16-25 worked as trainee music leaders, gaining valuable experience in leading workshops, songwriting, and cultural event production.
- **Cultural Celebration in the Local Area:** The *Journey Songs* project made innovative use of local attractions, transforming Seaton Tramway into a dynamic performance space and utilising the Seaton Wetlands Reed Base as a learning space that connected the community with nature.

This project also linked directly to two significant themes: **Protect & Enhance the Natural Environment**, by connecting culture and the community with nature, and **Creative and Enterprise Skills**, by providing opportunities for young people to learn and apply music and performance skills in East Devon, particularly within underutilized spaces such as Seaton Tram Station and the wetlands Reed Base.

## 2. Additional Outputs and Outcomes

### Achieved Outputs:

- **Engagement:** The project reached **320 participants**. Breakdown:
  1. Seaton Primary School: 57 children
  2. B Sharp Young Trainee Music Leaders: 3 individuals (ages 16-24)
  3. Local Professional Artists (B Sharp Music Leaders + Workshop Artists): 3
  4. Seaton Acapella Choir: 20 adults
  5. Mixed Age Workshops: 40 participants (20 for songwriting, 20 for lantern making)
  6. Audience (Performance): 200 individuals from the community

- **Facilities & Amenities:** Three local facilities were utilised:
  1. Seaton Wetlands & Reed Base
  2. Seaton Tramway
  3. Seaton Primary School
  
- **Community-led Arts and Cultural Programs:** The project resulted in **5 key community activities:**
  1. School trip and school music sessions
  2. Songwriting workshop
  3. Lantern-making workshop
  4. Seaton Acapella Choir Rehearsals
  5. Tramway Performance

**Visitor Numbers:** While specific data on increased visitor numbers is not available, the high attendance at community performances and workshops suggests significant interest and engagement and increased likelihood for participants' continued engagement with these facilities in the future.



*Photos: Participants creating willow lanterns at the community workshop at Seaton Wetlands*

### 3. Audience Feedback

Feedback collected through surveys, informal chats, and interviews indicated a positive response to the project's quality and relevance. Responses showed that participants found the workshops fun, accessible, and engaging. Parents and school staff reported an improvement in children's mood and enthusiasm for creative activities.


### 3a. Survey Results – Parents of the Year Three Children at Seaton Primary School


Number of respondents: 25 parents


#### Key Findings:


- **Confidence Boost:** 96% of parents reported they felt that their child's confidence improved as a result of participating in this project
  - **Sense of Achievement:** 93% said their child felt proud of what they had created during the project.
  - **Increased Interest in Music:** 85% said their child wanted to do more musical activities in the future as a result of participating in the project.
  - **Environmental Awareness:** 78% reported their child had learned more about local wildlife and history.
  - **Enjoyment & Engagement:** 96% said their child had fun and would love to do more projects like this in future.
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#### Parent Feedback – Quotes


 *"My child has always been shy, but they stood up in front of 200 people and sang their heart out! We were amazed at their confidence."*

 *"The whole experience was incredible – my child hasn't stopped talking about eels and migrating birds! They've been writing songs at home too."*

 *"I love that this combined music with nature and history – such a creative and engaging way to learn. It's something they'll never forget!"*

 *"After the concert, my son said, 'I didn't think I could do it, but I did!' Seeing him so proud of himself was wonderful."*

 *"Music was always something my daughter enjoyed, but now she wants to take lessons and join a choir. This project really inspired her."*

 *"It was fun, educational, and gave them such a sense of achievement. More school projects should be like this!"*


### 3b. Interviews with participant children

**Number of respondents:** 14 children

#### Key findings:


- **Enjoyment** - 100% of respondents enjoyed the project, mentioning the trip, the singing and songwriting sessions and the performance
- **Experience/engagement in music** - 90% talked about a greater enjoyment of music, and engagement in future musical activities including joining school choir, and local B Sharp group
- **Learning through the project** - 100% were able to talk about things they learnt about the natural environment or the historical environment through the project
- **Self esteem and confidence** - 80% talked about increased confidence, and feeling proud through performing

#### Children's Feedback - Quotes

 "I was proud because I done it, and it was really hard."

 "I was nervous at first and then I felt really pleased with myself"

 "I liked singing different songs about eels and the trams"

 "I liked that we got to sing all together and when the grown-ups stopped singing it was just us"

### 3c. School and Partner Feedback

The school really valued the project. They mentioned specifically:

- the value of the project in terms of bringing the community together, and enabling the school to link with local community organisations - Seaton Acapella, Seaton Wetlands, Seaton Tramway and B Sharp.
- the project brought exciting creative activity into school, which children really enjoyed and appreciated, and which enhanced their learning across the curriculum
- the opportunity to boost the school's engagement with music, with professional musicians bringing music to life by coming in to work with the children.

Project Partners - Seaton Tramway and Seaton Wetlands - felt the project met their educational objectives and were therefore happy to support and collaborate.

*“You must be very proud of the lovely community event that you organised. Thank you so much for choosing Seaton Tramway / Wetlands to provide inspiration for songwriting and host the school concert. We enjoyed having you and loved the tram song! ....We received lots of positive feedback from the audience. It was such a great atmosphere! It will be a lovely memory for all the children involved as they all did so well and all the hard work paid off! Please forward our sincere appreciation to your team and hope that we will collaborate again soon. It was lovely to meet you all and watch you all having so much fun!” Lisa, Seaton Tramway*



**Photo: An audience of 200 friends family and school staff attended the final performance**

## 4. Impact on Health, Happiness, and Well-being

Results from a survey of parents/carers regarding their child's well-being after participating in the project revealed:

- **88% of parents** observed a significant improvement in their child's mood and well-being.
- **12% of parents** noticed some positive changes.
- No parents reported any lack of improvement.

Parents also highlighted how participating in a professional performance helped boost their child's confidence, self-worth, and resilience.

Additionally, the outdoor learning aspect, such as visits to Seaton Wetlands, was seen to significantly enhance children's overall well-being.

## 5. Engagement with Children and Young People

A total of **75 children and young people** (including Seaton Primary School students, workshop participants, and trainee music leaders) engaged directly with the project, benefitting from hands-on creative experiences.

## 6. Employment and Training Opportunities

The project provided valuable professional development for **5 local musicians and artists**, offering opportunities to work in the local area and collaborate on community cultural activities.

Additionally, **3 local young adults (ages 16-25)** were employed as trainee music leaders, gaining practical skills in music leadership, event management, and cultural production.

## 7. Key Partnerships

Several local and regional partnerships were essential to the success of the project:

- **Ellie Walker Music**
- **Deano Skinner, Musician**
- **Ella Foxhall, Musician**
- **Wild East Devon**
- **Seaton Tramway**
- **Art Makers Devon**

These partnerships helped to build both creative ambition and resilience within the project.

## 8. Impact of East Devon District Council Funding

The funding received from East Devon District Council enabled the project to build momentum and leverage future funding opportunities. The success of *Journey Songs* has created the potential to run similar projects with different groups of children at Seaton Primary and other local schools, expanding the project's reach and adding to a growing portfolio for future funding applications.

## 9. Visitor Engagement Comparison

This year, the project reached **320 individuals** directly, including participants and audiences. While exact comparisons to last year are not available, this represents a significant level of community engagement.

## 10. Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion

The project did not include specific monitoring of diversity, equality, and inclusion. However, it was designed to be fully inclusive, ensuring that all children in the school year group participated, regardless of background, ethnicity, or additional educational needs. In Seaton Primary 13.9% of students receive SEND support, 13.2% of students have English as an Additional Language 13.2% and 13.9% are eligible for Free School Meals. The final performance, which took place outside of regular school hours, was open to the entire year group, with 96% of students in attendance which was testament to the engagement achieved from all students and their families.

High staffing levels provided by B Sharp played a key role in enhancing participation, as the artist-to-child ratios enabled sufficient support for all children to genuinely access the activities, including additional needs. Additionally, all the community workshops were widely advertised through diverse channels to reach a broad audience and were offered free of charge to remove financial barriers to participation.

## 11. Addressing the Climate Emergency

The *Journey Songs* project has connected children and participants with their local natural environment through utilisation of Seaton Wetlands and the Tramway for the initial school trip and for the community workshops. The creative process integrated themes of environmental awareness, with children reflecting on nature through songwriting. At Seaton Wetlands, they explored the habitats of migratory birds, learning about species such as swallows and swifts who travel vast distances to and from the area. They discovered how the local wetlands provide essential stopover points for birds journeying along migration routes and gained insight into conservation efforts protecting these species. Additionally, they learned about water life, including the fascinating life cycle of eels and their migration from the Sargasso Sea. The



project also incorporated sustainable practices, using locally sourced reed willow to create performance sets, reducing waste, and reinforcing the theme of environmental responsibility.



**Photos: The finished willow lanterns from the community workshop and some of the children rehearsing their spoken parts for the performance where they talked to the audience about what they had learnt on the trip to the wetlands and seaton tramway.**

## 12. Challenges and Learnings

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The project faced several challenges, primarily due to its ambitious scope in relation to the available budget. The school had limited capacity for engagement in activities such as field trips and out-of-school performances due to staffing constraints, which meant that B Sharp had to take on additional project management and put in place additional staffing to make the project happen.

Another significant challenge was obtaining and managing photo permissions, in the current climate where parents have increased (and very reasonable) concern around online safety. While permissions were requested at the start of the project, restrictions on photographing certain children made documentation complex, and permission changes during the period of the project required additional time to ensure compliance. In future projects, clearer communication with the school about image permission responsibility would be helpful.

Despite these challenges, the project was highly successful and has resulted in the development of a replicable model. Future iterations would require significantly fewer resources while maintaining strong impact. The overwhelmingly positive feedback from the school highlights the substantial benefits gained, reinforcing the value of this approach for future educational and creative initiatives.

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We have created a short video that captures the journey of this project, from the initial school trip through the community workshops to the final evening performance, where the children showcased their creations.

This video highlights the impact of the experience and the incredible work achieved throughout the project. You can watch it here: <https://youtu.be/rq17WfWja38?si=bto8VqDAj68S3L23>



Photos: Children on stage at the final performance singing the song they wrote about migrating eels and final rehearsals at the school with the Seaton Acapella choir.