

ANNUAL REPORT

2025-2026



**THUNK-IT
THEATRE**

SEE • MAKE • DO



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DIRECTORS STATEMENT

This year has been one of growth, connection, and a lot of joyful noise. At Think-It Theatre, we have always believed that theatre is for everyone, and in 2025–2026, that belief has felt more alive than ever. From our youngest participants taking their first steps into storytelling, to our touring productions reaching new audiences, we have continued to build spaces where people feel seen, heard, and able to create. Whether it was a sensory performance, a youth theatre session full of imagination, or a community project bringing people together across generations, the heart of our work has remained the same.

A defining moment of this year was our biggest project to date, 25/5. This ambitious project brought together voices from across our communities, celebrating stories, creativity, and shared experience in a way that truly reflects who we are. Seeing it culminate in a celebration day on International Women's Day was incredibly special. It was a moment of pride, reflection, and joy, and a powerful reminder of what can happen when people are given the space to come together and be heard.

We have also been proud to see our community deepen in so many other ways. Our youth theatres have continued to grow, not just in numbers but in confidence, creativity, and friendship. Watching young people develop their voices and take ownership of their ideas reminds us why we do what we do. In that vein, it seemed right to celebrate five years of Thinking by having our flagship youth theatre group create a brand new logo for Think-It. Their ideas and passion shaped a new logo that encapsulates all they see in Think-It – bright ideas, equality, and a whole lotta heart.

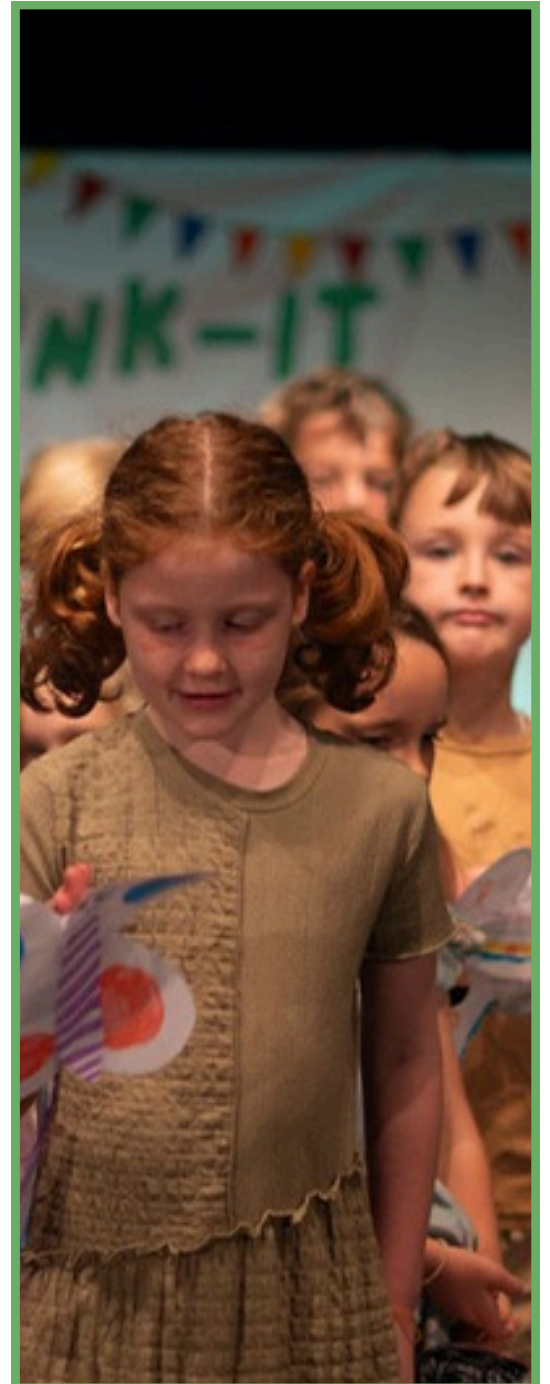
Of course, this year has not been without its challenges. As a small company, balancing ambition with capacity is something we are constantly learning to navigate. Funding landscapes continue to shift, and the demand for meaningful, accessible creative work continues to rise. But these challenges have also pushed us to be more inventive, more collaborative, and more determined in how we move forward. At the same time, our outreach work and partnerships have allowed us to reach those who might not otherwise access theatre, ensuring that creativity remains open and inclusive.

What has stood out most is the generosity of the people around us. Our participants, audiences, partners, and supporters have all played a vital role in shaping this year. Every workshop attended, every audience member supporting, every conversation shared has helped us continue to grow and evolve.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to creating more accessible opportunities for young people.

BECKY & JULES

THUNK-IT DIRECTORS



A FRESH LOOK FOR THUNK-IT!

As Thunk-It Theatre celebrated five years at the start of 2025, it felt like the right time to take a step back, look at what we have built together, and give our identity a bit of a refresh. When it came to rethinking our logo, it made sense to do it properly, by going back to the people who helped build Thunk-It in the first place.

We didn't want to sit in a room and design it on our own. Instead, we went back to our Pocklington Youth Theatre and asked a simple question: What does Thunk-It mean to you? The answers were brilliant, the group talked about big ideas popping into life, moments where something suddenly clicks, and the joy of trying things out without worrying about getting it "right". They also talked about feeling safe, supported, and part of something, with plenty of laughter along the way. And one comment really stuck with us: "Thunk-It makes me feel equal."

The new logo brings those ideas together in three simple symbols. The lightbulb is all about ideas, imagination, and those spark-of-inspiration moments we see every week. The heart represents the care, kindness, and friendships that sit right at the centre of what we do. And the equals sign, tucked into the base of the lightbulb, came directly from that powerful idea of feeling equal and included. Together, they sum up Thunk-It pretty well: creative, welcoming, and a bit playful too. Alongside the new look, we also introduced our phrase SEE-MAKE-DO, which helps explain what we actually do simply.



SEE is our performances, sharing work with audiences and communities.



MAKE is our youth theatre, where young people come back week after week to build skills, confidence, and friendships.



DO is our workshops, where people get stuck in and create together.



Put it all together, and it's basically what Thunk-It has always been about: showing up, getting stuck in, and making something brilliant together.

POCKLINGTON YOUTH THEATRE



Pocklington Youth Theatre remains a huge part of Think-It, a space where young people explore ideas, get creative, and turn weekly sessions into performances full of imagination and personality. This year has been another brilliant step forward for all three age groups, with each group developing its own voice and sharing work that was full of imagination, fun, and heart.

Spring 2025 marked a big moment with Think-It's first studio performances. For the first time, all three groups created and shared their own pieces in an intimate performance setting. The 4-8s devised a joyful space adventure featuring marshmallow aliens and a very hungry earth gobbling worm, which was ultimately defeated when it mistakenly ate the moon, thinking it was cheese.

The 8-11s performed 'Careful What You Wish' For by Hannah Lowe from Positive Stories for Negative Stories by Wonder Fools, bringing magical museum artefacts to life in a world full of curiosity and imagination. The 11+ group performed 'We Ain't Movin!' by Travis Alabanza, exploring teenagers fighting to keep their drama programme alive with honesty, energy, and confidence.

The year also saw Think-It's first Youth Theatre Festival at Pocklington Arts Centre at the end of our Summer 2025 term. Each group shared scratch performances on the main stage: the 4-8s became butterflies in 'Over the Fence', the 8-11s reimagined fairytales in 'Misfit Fairytales', and the 11+ group wrote, directed, and performed their own original work in a Scratch style performance. It was a brilliant celebration of young people leading the creative process from start to finish.

From Autumn to Spring, the groups took part in a huge project, '25/5' - which is so big, it needs its own page.

Across the year, Pocklington Youth Theatre has continued to grow as a place where confidence builds, friendships form, and ideas are taken seriously, with creativity at the centre of everything they do.

TADCASTER YOUTH THEATRE

This year, the group has continued to grow as a creative space where young people can explore ideas, build confidence, and take ownership of their work. One of the highlights was *Careful What You Wish For* by Hannah Lowe, performed twice: first for friends and family at The Barn, and then at the Summer Fields Festival for members of the public. The group brought energy and imagination to the piece, sharing it with both familiar and new audiences across the summer.

The 11+ group also created their own original work, *The Worst Showman*, a mini-play devised entirely by the young people. Alongside performing, they have continued to develop as young leaders, supporting and encouraging the younger sessions and helping to shape the culture of the youth theatre.

The 5-11 group spent the autumn and spring terms exploring extinct animals, a topic they were deeply curious about. Through research, discussion, and creativity, they designed and made animal masks before transforming into the "Guild of Explorers." This led to their original performance, *Explorers Around the World*, performed at Tadcaster Barn in Spring 2026. The piece celebrated curiosity, imagination, and discovery, bringing together everything they had explored throughout the year.

Across all groups, Tadcaster Youth Theatre continues to be a space where young people's interests shape the work, where confidence grows, and where creativity is shared with real audiences across the community.

Tadcaster Youth Theatre by Think-It Theatre is part of the Now Then! Programme. Funded by North Yorkshire Council, Arts Council England and UKSPF. Delivered by Think-It in partnership with The Barn and ARCADE.



STAMFORD BRIDGE YOUTH HUB

Stamford Bridge Youth Hub is a weekly space for children and young people to meet, connect, and take part in creative and social activities at the Station Club. The hub currently runs two weekly groups:

Creative Hub (Ages 6–16) Creative Hub is a dedicated space for young people to explore different art forms and ways of expressing themselves. The group is youth-led, with participants helping to decide the themes and creative practices explored throughout the programme.

Young people have created work for public display within the community, including The Beast – a partnership project with Stamford Bridge Art Club. This giant beast installation at the bus stop inspired further creative projects and community engagement.

During the summer, the group held its first exhibition showcasing work produced through Creative Hub, and participants successfully achieved their Discover Arts Award.

Youth Hub (Ages 10+) Youth Hub is a weekly safe and welcoming space where young people can socialise, build friendships, and connect with others in their community. Activities rotate weekly and include sports hall activities, baking, dance, games and social time, creative workshops, and much more

The project is commissioned by the Stamford Bridge Sports Hall Association, with delivery and administration managed by our team.

In January, we received confirmation that the hub will continue to be supported for another year. This funding will allow us to expand the project through a full holiday and summer programme, helping us further develop our reach and engagement within the community.



SEND PROGRAMME

Our successful SEND programme continues to grow and develop. Think-It Theatre's SEND Drama Provision is designed especially for SEND young people aged 6-16 and their families. We run monthly SEND Drama sessions at Rural Arts in Thirsk on the last Saturday of each month, offering a fun and relaxed environment where creativity, freedom, independence, and imagination are at the heart of everything we do.

This year, we prioritised outreach and engagement to reach as many families as possible, ensuring that new marketing materials and updated copy were widely distributed. We also worked closely with the Northallerton ACC Club to develop new access resources and materials, further strengthening our provision and improving accessibility for participants and families.

The group has continued to go from strength to strength, with many younger children now progressing into the teens group. It has also been wonderful to see families building connections and friendships with one another through the sessions, helping to create a strong and supportive community around the programme.

Two of our older members undertook the Power of 10 Award and successfully achieved their 10-hour milestone, while one member achieved their 20-hour award.

The Thirsk model has also been successfully trialled in York and Pocklington, with funding now in place to launch two additional monthly SEND provisions next year.



25/5 THE MAKING OF...

The 25/5 project brought together three important milestones for the Pocklington community: the fifth anniversary of Thunk-It Theatre, the tenth anniversary of the Burnby Hall Gardens Heritage Volunteers, and the twenty-fifth anniversary of Pocklington Arts Centre. Developed through collaboration with local artists, volunteers, young people, and community groups, the project explored the untold story of Katharine Stewart, whose generosity helped shape Burnby Hall Gardens and its lasting place within the town's heritage.

Supported by funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund alongside regional trusts and community partners, the project was designed to combine creativity, heritage, and accessibility. Workshops, rehearsals, heritage talks, and craft sessions created opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds to contribute directly to the final celebration.

The project engaged:

- 184 community crafters across local groups
- Young people from the Thunk-It Youth Theatre
- Adults with learning disabilities through Wolds Wonders
- Burnby Hall Gardens Heritage Volunteers
- Trainees, freelance artists, facilitators, and local partners

Creative development took place over several months and included script writing, music composition, recycled art-making, storytelling workshops, and heritage research. Participants explored original historical letters, created soundscapes inspired by Burnby Hall Gardens, and produced collaborative artwork inspired by Katharine Stewart's lost water lily paintings.

Accessibility and inclusion remained central throughout the process. Flexible rehearsal environments, accessible evaluation activities, and collaborative leadership ensured that participants felt welcomed, valued, and supported. The project also provided professional development opportunities for trainees and freelancers, helping to strengthen Thunk-It Theatre's long-term organisational capacity.

The resulting work demonstrated how local heritage can be explored through creativity, participation, and shared ownership, ensuring that stories from the past remain meaningful and relevant to contemporary audiences.



25/5 CELEBRATION!

The project culminated in a large-scale public celebration held across International Women's Day weekend, honouring Katharine Stewart's contribution to the town while bringing together performance, heritage, music, and visual art.

More than 400 audience members attended the final events, which featured:

- Live performances developed through the Youth Theatre and Wolds Wonders groups
- Heritage presentations from Burnby Hall Gardens volunteers
- A large-scale recycled water lily installation created by community participants
- Music and soundscapes inspired by Burnby Hall Gardens
- Creative displays celebrating local history and shared community identity

Audience feedback highlighted the welcoming and inclusive atmosphere created throughout the celebration. Visitors described the event as informative, uplifting, and engaging, while participants reflected on increased confidence, stronger community connections, and a deeper understanding of local heritage.

The project successfully elevated the legacy of Katharine Stewart, placing women's history at the centre of the celebration and encouraging new conversations about the people who shaped the local area. By connecting heritage with creativity and participation, the celebration transformed local history into a living and shared experience.

Alongside its cultural impact, the project strengthened relationships between organisations, volunteers, artists, and audiences across the region. It reinforced Think-It Theatre's reputation as a trusted and inclusive cultural organisation while leaving a lasting legacy through its digital archive, community partnerships, and ongoing creative engagement.

The 25/5 project demonstrated the power of collaborative arts practice to preserve heritage, champion inclusion, and create meaningful shared experiences for the wider community.



FAMILY THEATRE

DUNG BEETLE DAN

Based on the children's book *Dung Beetle Dan Hates His Job* by Andy Brennan, Dung Beetle Dan delighted audiences across festival and school settings this year. The production was performed at Summer Fields Festival, the Deer Shed Festival Schools Festival, and at Deer Shed's "And Now Then!" programme, reaching a total audience of 432 people. Full of humour, storytelling and playful characters, the show brought the much loved book to life while engaging children and families in themes of identity, purpose and self acceptance.



BEDTIME STORIES

Bedtime Stories was an imaginative winter touring production created with SEND young people, for SEND young people and their families. The show followed a little girl exploring a magical winter festival, discovering friendship, confidence and belonging along the way. Performed at Northallerton Library, Ripon Library, Knaresborough Library and The Barn, the production reached an audience of 155 people. Combining sensory storytelling, puppetry, and song – Bedtime Stories created an accessible and welcoming theatre experience for all audiences.



FLORAS FORGOTTEN FLOWER POT

Commissioned by the National Trust site, Beningbrough Hall, *Flora's Forgotten Flower Pot* was an outdoor sensory theatre experience performed during February half term 2026. Across eight performances, the production welcomed 105 audience members into a playful world of songs, music and woodland creatures. Designed especially for family audiences, the show encouraged children to connect with nature through interactive storytelling and imaginative exploration in the beautiful surroundings of Beningbrough Hall.



BETTY THE BUSY BUMBLE BEE

Betty the Bumble Bee is a sensory theatre show exploring the importance of slowing down, asking for help and caring for ourselves and others. Developed by, with and for the families at The Barnyard, the production was shaped through collaboration with local families to ensure an inclusive and engaging experience for young audiences. Through music, movement and sensory play, Betty the Bumble Bee offered a calm and joyful environment where children and families could explore the story together in their own way.



DIVERSIFYING OUR OFFER

Over the past year, we have continued to expand and diversify our work beyond performance, developing projects that support inclusion, participation and creative engagement across communities. Through partnerships, training and consultation work, we have been able to share our expertise in accessible arts practice while listening to and learning from young people and families across the region.

SEND Training:

In partnership with FEAST, we delivered SEND training for cultural and community providers across North Yorkshire. Drawing on our experience of creating sensory theatre and accessible creative experiences, the training supported organisations to develop more inclusive approaches to working with children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. Sessions explored practical tools, communication methods and ways to create welcoming environments where all young people can participate creatively and confidently. This work has helped strengthen inclusive practice across the region while building new relationships with providers committed to improving accessibility in the arts.

Creative Consultation:

Working collaboratively with Explore York Libraries and Archives, we developed and delivered a creative consultation project exploring young people's connection to culture, creativity and local opportunities. Through workshops delivered across York, we engaged young people in conversations about what culture means to them, the barriers they experience and the kinds of creative opportunities they would like to see in the future. Using creative activities and participatory approaches, the project created space for honest discussion and meaningful contributions from young people whose voices are not always heard in cultural planning. The findings were brought together in an impact report, helping to inform future programming and ensuring that young people's experiences and ideas remain central to the development of cultural activity in the city.

ENGAGEMENT FIGURES

This year has been another busy and rewarding period for Think-It Theatre, with activity spanning performances, workshops, and long-term creative programmes across Yorkshire. The figures on this page offer a snapshot of the scale of our work and the breadth of people we have engaged with over the past year. Behind every number is a real person, each bringing their own creativity, energy, and story, from young people building confidence in weekly sessions to communities experiencing live theatre and creative participation for the first time.

PARTICIPANTS:

1207+



AUDIENCE:

1642+



CREATIVES:

67



VENUES:

32



QUOTES

"I hate when it's over because I love it so much"
- Participant

"Thank you so much for all you are doing for (my child), I can already see her confidence growing and its only been a few weeks!" - Grown Up

"Such a lovely piece of sensory theatre. My child was so engaged, which they so rarely are. Would love to see more!"
- Audience Member

"The engagement of the children was incredible, and it really was a delight to watch. The enjoyment was written on *everyone's* faces! That was brilliant, I look forward to next year!"
- Organisation

(my child) has just loved it. I reckon she would love going to school so much more if their teachers were more like you" - Grown-Up

"My favourite highlight of the day is coming here and seeing all of you" - Participant

"If someone asked me if I could do this club every day I would say YES I LOVE IT"
- Participant

