

# Cromer Artspace

## Annual Report 2025



2025 was Cromer Artspace's busiest and most successful year so far. Now five years old, the charity continues to grow in ambition, reputation and community impact. The trustees thank the 75 active volunteers and many other supporters whose work made the year possible.

**12**  
exhibitions

The newly refurbished Artspace on the Prom reopened in February, enabling a full programme of 12 exhibitions featuring emerging, local and national artists. Highlights included two Arts Council touring shows: *Framerate: Pulse of the Earth* and *Outsiders*; a new Bigger Picture trail with the National Galleries of Scotland, our first Sculpture Exhibition, and the launch of a new bursary scheme for emerging artists. The Secret Auction raised over £9,000 to support our work.

**75**  
volunteers

Cromer Artspace's profile continued to rise, with visitors travelling specifically to see exhibitions and artists submitting work from across the UK and beyond. Around 11,000 people visited the gallery in 2025, supported by guided walks, artist talks, family workshops and growing engagement from schools and community groups. We strengthened links with organisations supporting people experiencing homelessness and showcased children's work through the *See Like a Mirror* exhibition.

**45**  
art walkers

Artspace remains a volunteer-powered organisation. Alongside the 75 active volunteers, more than 30 people contributed through specialist teams covering programming, installation, communications, finance, premises and more. Volunteers covered 291 gallery shifts, with exhibiting artists covering a further 77.

**10**  
poetry  
workshops

The refurbished gallery, now warm, dry and weatherproof, allowed us to host more ambitious exhibitions and attract artists from across the UK. Visitors described the space as "as good as any you might see in a London gallery" and praised its friendly atmosphere and diverse programme.

**£27k**  
income

We continued to gain regional and national recognition, confirming Bigger Picture partnerships through to 2028 and beginning planning for a major 2026 symposium on art in rural and coastal areas. Engagement also grew online, with over 1,000 newsletter subscribers and strong social media growth. Schools and community groups borrowed artworks through the Bigger Picture Loan Scheme, and guided walks helped people notice artworks they had "often walked past without spotting."

**£19k**  
expenditure

2025 also marked the start of our first artist bursaries, offering year-long residencies and mentoring. We expanded links with schools, colleges and Norwich University of the Arts, and continued to deliver talks and guided walks to deepen public understanding of contemporary art.

We were awarded the Norfolk Carbon Charter Bronze Award, recognising the early stages of our environmental commitment. Financially, the charity generated £27,370 in income and spent £19,170, with refurbishment costs funded by earlier grants.

# Cromer Artspace Annual Report 2025



## 1. Welcome from the Trustees

We have just completed our fifth year of bringing art and arts activities to Cromer and North Norfolk and this has been our busiest year yet. There have been numerous highlights this year and many are featured in this Annual Report. We couldn't do what we do without the 75 active volunteers and many other supporters who are involved in all aspects of planning and delivering exhibitions, workshops, walks, talks and other activities throughout the year. We are becoming better known and more people are now regular attendees at exhibitions and activities throughout the year and we are grateful for their support. The trustees would also like to thank all the individuals and organisations who have funded Cromer Artspace and supported us throughout the year.

## 2. Highlights of the year



Steff Aquarone MP re-opens Artspace on the Prom

- Improvements to the Artspace on the Prom which was officially re-opened by Steff Aquarone MP on 7 February 2025
- A varied programme of 12 exhibitions at the Artspace on the Prom with emerging artists, local artists, and artists from further afield submitting work
- Hosting two Arts Council touring exhibitions, the international exhibition *Framerate - Pulse of the Earth* and the *Outsiders* photographic exhibition
- Bigger Picture exhibition of reproductions of paintings from the National Galleries of Scotland around the streets of Cromer
- Developing links with schools and community organisations linked to exhibitions
- Our first Sculpture Exhibition held at The Grove Hotel and Artspace on the Prom
- Becoming part of Bloomberg Connects offering online information about Cromer Artspace and the Bigger

- Pictures round the town
- Developing as an organisation, including recruiting 21 new volunteers and more volunteers joining Teams to help with planning and delivering Cromer Artspace Activities
- Launching our bursary scheme for new and emerging artists with our first bursary students recruited and starting their 12-month programme
- Successful fundraising for building works and to support Cromer Artspace's activities, including raising over £9000 at the Secret Auction

## 3. The Cromer Artspace Team

There were 75 signed up volunteers involved with Cromer Artspace at the end of 2025 and a number of other people who give their time on an ad-hoc basis to specific projects or pieces of work. The Trustee Team provides leadership and strategic direction to the charity and

a number of Teams have been set up to work on different aspects of planning and delivering the charity's work. More than 30 volunteers are members of teams which have been set up to oversee the Bigger Picture, Communications, Finance, Funding, Installation, Premises, Programming, Systems, and Volunteering.

Many volunteers help to keep the Artspace on the Prom open every day during the season. Exhibition Supporters covered 291 volunteer shifts at the Artspace on the Prom during 2025 and 77 shifts were covered by exhibiting artists. Other volunteers help with tasks such as maintenance, health and safety, getting the space ready for exhibitions, hanging and taking down work, and catering for events.

### **Volunteer Survey 2025**

We asked volunteers what they like about volunteering with Cromer Artspace. Responses included:

- *Meeting artists and like-minded people and learning about organising and hanging exhibitions. Meeting and talking to visitors to exhibitions. Attending talks on a range of subjects*
- *Seeing such a wide variety of art and meeting a wide variety of people from all over the country (and the world!)*
- *I enjoy making quality contemporary art available to a wide range of people in Cromer, in the gallery and through the Bigger Pictures: local residents; visitors from outside the area who come specifically to see the gallery or pictures in the town; holiday makers and people who wander in off the beach. It's lovely that Artspace on the Prom appeals to such a range of people and, although it is a 'white cube' gallery, visitors from all walks of life don't appear to be intimidated by it.*
- *Being part of such a unique art initiative. Meeting other artists and enthusiasts. Being in the Artspace space for a morning or afternoon.*
- *The opportunities to get involved with a very exciting and diverse programme and meeting fellow creative enthusiasts.*

## **4. A look back over 2025**

We have a five-year Strategic Plan and are entering the last year of the plan in 2026. The current plan has 7 key objectives and this year's Annual Report reflects on how well we are doing towards achieving these objectives.

### **a. Ensure sustainability and growth of Cromer Artspace as an organisation**

A key aim of the current plan is to ensure strong foundations for the charity for the future. During 2025 we have:

- Successfully raised funds for improvements to weatherproofing, heating and lighting at the Artspace on the Prom. This enabled the space to remain open for longer during 2025 and to attract a wider range of artists to exhibit their work.
- Secured £1800 to support exhibitions and workshops from local trusts and organisations
- Raised over £22000 self-generated income through commission, applications for open call exhibitions and the Silent Auction
- Developed a better understanding of the costs of running the charity and the funding needed year on year to sustain its work.
- Recruited 21 new volunteers, developed the Teams structure and planned to recruit two new trustees in 2026.



### Exhibitions 2025

- Framerate Pulse of the Earth
- Life Form - Graham High
- See Like a Mirror
  - 200 Years of the RNLI
- Into the Blue Black
  - Julie Oxenforth
- Melusina - Mary Blue
- Sculpture@Artspace and Sculpture@The Grove
- Print Cromer
- Secret Auction
- Outsiders
- Showcasing volunteers
- Art Depot Collective
- Cromer Open

### b. Exhibit world class, varied and innovative contemporary art in Cromer

Our Art Deco space on the West Promenade at Cromer, *Artspace on the Prom*, underwent a major refurbishment over the winter of 2024/25 and was re-opened refreshed, dry and warm by our local MP, Steff Aquarone in February 2025. We continued our partnerships with national galleries with a new Bigger Picture exhibition of pictures around the town, in partnership with the National Galleries of Scotland.

Highlights of 2025 were:

- Presenting a varied programme of 12 Exhibitions at the Artspace on the Prom
- Hosting a major Arts Council funded touring exhibition, *Framerate – Pulse of the Earth* at the Artspace on the Prom. Part of the content was filmed along the North Norfolk Coast and at Felbrigg Hall; this was an important opportunity for local people to see this exhibition before it was shown at other national and international venues.
- Delivering our first Sculpture Exhibition at The Grove Hotel, showing work made by artists for the location, alongside a linked exhibition at the Artspace on the Prom.
- Collaborating with the National Galleries of Scotland to deliver another successful Bigger Picture exhibition of 20 life-size reproductions of works from the gallery,

Visitors to the Artspace had this to say about exhibitions at the Artspace on the Prom:

- *Fabulous - we are always so excited to see each new exhibition here.*
- *Intriguing exhibition - great to find you at the end of the prom.*
- *A wonderful diverse exhibition with so many lovely pieces of art and friendly staff*
- *Great to see this gallery go from strength to strength.*
- *As a Cromer resident I love having an art gallery on my doorstep.*
- *So glad we came to see these - how to describe the impact of them? no words - just awe.*

Feedback from an artist who exhibited at the Artspace on the Prom

- *Many thanks for hosting me at the Cromer Artspace. It was a very good experience and I very much enjoyed it. I had very good feedback about the exhibition and about the gallery space. In fact it was positive without exception - both from verbal exchanges - and from the comments put in the visitors book.*



### c. Cromer Artspace to be recognised regionally and nationally by artists, arts organisations and visitors

Cromer Artspace is becoming better known as an important member of the arts community in North Norfolk, the Region and beyond. In 2025:

- We confirmed future partnerships with national galleries for Bigger Picture exhibition in 2026, 2027 and 2028.
- We received submissions from artists from across the UK and beyond.
- Visitors told us they travel to Cromer specifically to visit the Artspace on the Prom, During the Open Call exhibition in October 2025, we asked visitors to the Artspace on the Prom to share their post codes with us, which provided a valuable insight into how many people come to the gallery from outside the local area (see below)
- We started planning for a Symposium focussed on bringing art out to the regions, planned for late 2026

## Feedback from visitors

- *Really impressive show - as good as any you might see in a London gallery and the space looks so professional.*
- *Great to see this calibre of work on display in Cromer.*

### d. Engage with the Cromer community and visitors

Each year more people visit the Artspace on the Prom, come along to workshops, and engage with the Bigger Picture exhibition. In 2025:

- There were around 11,000 visits to the Artspace on the Prom
- 45 people attended guided walks of the Bigger Pictures
- 17 artworks from previous Bigger Picture Exhibitions were on loan to schools and community groups as part of the Bigger Picture Loan scheme
- Members of the public were invited to artist talks and viewings at the Artspace on the Prom, promoted on Social Media
- 7 print workshops took place as part of the Print Exhibition, including family workshops
- 10 monthly poetry workshops were held at the Artspace on the Prom
- At the end of 2025 over 1000 people were on the newsletter mailing list, there were 3801 followers on Instagram and 1684 on Facebook.



Snapshot of distance travelled to the Artspace on the Prom October 2025



■ Cromer    ■ <10 miles    ■ <25 miles    ■ <50 miles  
■ <150 miles    ■ <500 miles    ■ >500 miles

### Feedback from an attendee at a Bigger Picture art walk

- *What a fabulous walk. Having lived in the area for a number of years, I have often walked past the artwork without spotting it. The walk is a great way to take in the artwork and hear the history.*

### e. Engage with more diverse audiences, develop more diversity in programming, increase diversity in the team

A key aim is to reach out to and involve the many diverse communities that live in Cromer and North Norfolk and who visit the area on holiday each year. Year on year we are building more links with local community groups and organisations and working with them to find more and different ways to involve them in Cromer Artspace activities and exhibitions. This year we worked with local schools and organisations working with people who are or have been homeless and we will be developing our Community Outreach in 2026 and beyond:

- Groups from local schools booked to come along to special viewings of the Mary Blue exhibition, *Melusina*, and to the sculpture exhibition at The Grove Hotel.



and in raising awareness of the impact of climate change. During this year we were awarded the Norfolk Carbon Charter Bronze award, which reflects the start of our journey and our commitment to carbon reduction as reflected in our Environmental Policy, and our aim is to improve our performance year on year.

## 5. Looking ahead

Each year we plan to develop and improve our activities in line with our overarching aims. In 2026 we plan to:

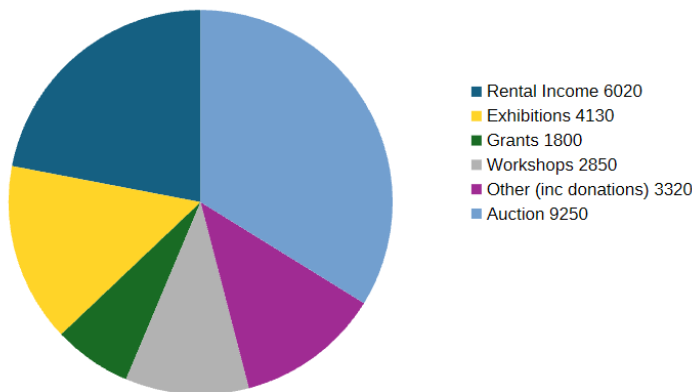
- Extend the season into the Spring and Autumn and offer residencies over the winter to ensure the year-round use of the Artspace on the Prom.
- Host exhibitions now made possible by a warm, dry building, including textile and photography exhibitions
- Hold our first Post Card sale to raise funds
- Organise a Symposium on the topic of bringing art out to rural and coastal areas
- Secure resources to recruit our next cohort of bursary students
- Develop more links with local Community organisations
- Develop our next Strategic Plan for 2027-31

## 6. Summary of Accounts

The income and expenditure for the year are summarised in the charts.

Cromer Artspace 2025

Income

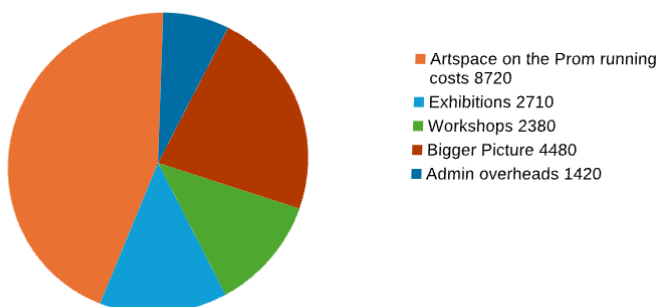


The income for the year totalled £27370, which was made up of a mixture of grants, fees and fundraising activities; the expenditure was £19170.

Additional expenditure in early 2025 was for the major refurbishment of the Artspace on the Prom building, for which funding was received in 2024 and the work was carried out at the end of 2024.

Cromer Artspace 2025

Expenditure



The work of Cromer Artspace would not be possible without the support of local and national funding via local councils, grant making bodies and many individuals who made donations or bid at the Secret auction. In particular we would like to thank:

- Crab and Lobster Festival
- John Jarrold Trust
- NCAS
- Norfolk Community Fund
- Norfolk County Council
- North Norfolk District Council/Levelling Up Funding
- Orstead