

BURNING NEST COMMUNITY AFTERBURN REPORT 2025

Burning Nest is now in its 13th year (though only 11 in person events). Running from 26/05/25-02/06/25 at our site in Devon this year was a little less well attended than in 2024 (881 in 2024; 854 in 2025) due, we think, to slight date changes.

Our full 2025 ticket & attendance figures are given with ticket prices in the table below.

Type Of Ticket	Tickets Sold	Number Checked In At Gate	Ticket Price
Adult	749	710	£170
Low Income	117	110	£80
Carers	8	8	£1
Reduced Sale	4	4	£80
Under 18	29	22	£60 (£1 if under 15)
TOTAL	907	854	

We also allowed people to make voluntary donations when buying their tickets, as we've done for many years, and as ever we're grateful for the generosity of our community. This year we also reduced our car parking charges back to £20 following some dissatisfaction with last year's parking charges.

This year we have a new category of ticket sales 'reduced sale' which was created to deal with an immediate issue. 3 DPW AF members, and subsequently, one art grant recipient relied upon receiving a Low Income/Inclusion ticket to be able to attend. The anonymous LI ticket allocation process by 3 independent assessors did not provide them with LI tickets. This caused a lot of consternation and agitation and so a separate category was created at the same price as LI tickets.

This was to deal with an immediate situation, and it would be informative to know the thoughts of the community on this & how we should deal with similar situations in future.

Although our numbers for first time burners should be taken with a pinch of salt this year, due to issues with our website, we believe 16.6% (or 142) of our attendees were first time burners.

We had a great organising team of circle links (eg co-ordinators of DPW, EOC, Community) and also leads handling different areas in the circles (eg placement, power, etc). Link meetings were carried out via Google Meet on a monthly basis, increasing to twice monthly in the months before the burn. Asana was used as an organisational tool, along with Signal chats for more informal collaboration.

Theme Camps

We had 24 registered theme camps this year, only one of which was a prank. As last year there were a significant number of new camps and good use was made of the site in providing placement both in the upper & lower parts of the site. This made a change to our usual layout and was generally well received.

Art

This year we had 42 art grant applications. 29 were funded & 13 cancelled or didn't go ahead. Last year we had 52 applications & 42 approved.

We provided £14,643.32 in art grants this year (£16,701.12 in 2024). Last year we had a budget for art grants of £16,000.

This year we had £20,000 available and didn't spend it all. We had some challenges in the art grant process, due to the lack of a full arts team and Art Link and issues with our website, but we also had less applications for art grants.

The above art numbers relate only to art grants provided. There was other art created & provided by participants, as there is every year, but they don't usually tell us about it and we don't try to count it.

We had one Art Car, or mutant vehicle, (Libalula was classed as a theme camp, not an Art Car) 'Marv' a tiny car brought by Troll Bar and adopted and decorated by different camps.

Burning Man asks us to include 'Total quantity of Performers/Performing Groups?' but we can't put a figure on this. Unless people are asking for art grants they don't usually tell us, other than (maybe) putting it in the WWW. That said, even the number of events in our WWW this year is not a good measure of actual events, activities & performances due to one (very funny) prank camp that had a high number of (joke) events.

Inclusion

As in previous years we provided 10% of our total ticket allocation for Inclusion tickets (Low Income & Carers tickets). In fact, as we did last year, we went beyond 10%, issuing 117 Low Income (LI) tickets & 8 Carers tickets. This equates to a subsidy - we prefer to think of it as a gift - of £10,500 for LI & £1,352 for Carers.

We experienced some issues with Inclusion Tickets this year which it may be helpful to explain. We run an anonymised application process, with multiple assessors independently reviewing each application, based on quantitative information provided by applicants (income, whether flying in to attend Nest, etc).

Each year we receive over twice as many applications for LI tickets as we have LI tickets to give (24-217; 25-209 applications). Many of these are approved (24-182; 25-158 approved) but not everyone offered a LI ticket goes on to purchase one. This creates a complicated timescale for LI whereby 1 wave of applications is approved, and people are given 2 months to buy tickets before those unbought go back in the pool for a further wave of applications and assessments.

This year we attempted to manage demand for LI tickets by restricting applicants to those who didn't attend Nest with a LI ticket in '24. The reasoning being that it was expected to reduce applications while broadening the opportunity to attend Nest for those who hadn't

received a gift of a LI subsidy last year. Unfortunately there were issues with communicating this initially, there was a lot of push-back and we eventually reversed that decision.

Dates

It is worth noting that this year Burning Nest - after long and torturous community consultation - moved our dates (as in 2018 & 2022) a week later than usual.

We provide information as to the background of this decision here

<https://burningnest.co.uk/2024/12/08/behind-the-scenes-the-date-change/>

This year we experienced the same issues as in 2018 & 2022.

Beginning a week later (on Bank Holiday Monday) has meant people have been unavailable to stay for the first day of strike on Mon (as no longer a holiday) - making this a much harder task; theme camps have packed up earlier - meaning a much quieter Sat & Sun; lower strike volunteer numbers; and issues with traffic management due to vehicles leaving in the dark after Temple burn.

It's due to these & other practical considerations - which we've found to make a big difference to the event & the tasks of building and striking the event - that we're not planning on making any further changes to our established pattern of ending on Bank Holiday Monday.

The dates for 2026 are 18 -25 May. We appreciate that these dates will not be suitable for everyone, however we feel these are the best dates for Burning Nest going forwards.

DPW

Our DPW circle has continued to grow and organise, with a year round DPWAF crew working throughout the year on planning for the event. This year DPW operated with 3 co-links sharing the role of co-ordinating DPW. This has led to a great improvement in the division of tasks and made things run a lot smoother this year, despite a lot of challenges with timescales.

We had a particularly well attended build this year, with 43 on site on the first day and rising to 83 DPW volunteers on Saturday.

Volunteer info

This year we had a great turn out from volunteers, helped in part by the 'Participation Hub' a location for all on-site volunteer sign-ups. This prominent highlighting of participation & communal effort helped boost our on-site recruitment of volunteers greatly. However for logistical reasons such sign-ups were carried out on paper, which has limited our ability to manipulate and interrogate the data for this area.

We always have difficulty getting accurate numbers for volunteers due to the fact that we make it easy to sign up & take a shift at the burn without having needed to previously commit to a shift. These on-the-spot volunteers are great & we love them, but we can't always keep good data on them & what they do.

We had 892 shifts filled, we don't know the exact number of individual volunteers, as I explain below, but a rough estimate is 350-400.

There were 7,729 hours of volunteering, both at event-time and during build and strike (3,866 hours are accounted for by build & strike volunteers).

This year we had around 54 individual Leads or Links. We structure ourselves into Links (eg DPW, Finance, Community) co-ordinating with other Links and leading their circle -a team made up of Leads (eg Kitchen, Inclusion, Build) to handle a specific area falling within that circle.

As - learning from previous years - we've found that many circles need more than one Link to handle everything we've had a number of Co-links sharing the role. So for the 8 circles we had 12 co-links.

It is however also the case that not all of these Links, Co-Links & Leads were in place for the whole year. Some were recruited relatively late, some dropped out of involvement, or had to necessarily scale-back their roles, due to life events & other reasons.

Multiple rotas documenting on-site shifts were recorded on paper, with volunteers chosen names. It is not possible to individually identify each volunteer or to split out cases where individuals took on multiple shifts in different areas. So there will be some double counting

Consent

Our Consent circle did an awesome job this year, despite facing a great deal of criticism and abuse online and on social media. It is recognised that there is a small group of people knowingly making misleading & false statements about Nest Consent while criticising our hard working volunteers & the integrity of our processes.

This is an attempt by some people with extremely dubious intentions to undermine confidence in Nest's consent culture & the handling of on-site decisions.

As one respondent to our post-Nest survey put it: "I'm deeply angry that some actors are engaging in bad faith conversations to try and undermine your work by implying there are systemic issues with your approach."

We have done a great deal to promote the concept of Consent at Nest, greatly raising awareness of consent and establishing processes for reporting, investigating and dealing with issues. This is welcomed by the majority of the community.

We're proud of the work of our consent, rangers, security, & event-ops teams and they do not deserve to be attacked.

Welfare

This year our Welfare team moved to a new location, in the free camping 'plaza'. The verbal feedback about this onsite was mixed - some really appreciating that it was easier to get to either from your tent or to be able to get back to their tent after visiting Welfare, and both visitors and Welfare volunteers found the space much quieter and calmer; others preferred the previous location and that Welfare was closer to 'the party'.

There were 159 individual visits to Welfare this year, which is an increase of 11% from 2024 and up 16% from 2023.

Of the 159 visitors, around 38% came to welfare for some 1-1/emotional support of some kind, with the rest only needing 'information or supplies' (eg medication, sanitary products, earplugs etc).

77 fabulous folk volunteered to be part of the Welfare Enough team - thank you Welfaries!! Including training the total volunteering time for Welfare was around 700 hours (equivalent to 175 'standard' shifts of 4 hours). Although this is a really very high level of gifting of time from so many, it was still the case that not all shifts that were needed were able to be filled.

Families & Children

Although event planning for child safety has always been in place, this was the first year that Nest had a Child Safeguarding Lead. A new policy was developed to further support this aspect, as well as FAQs for parents and theme camps. These changes worked well from the event operations perspective.

We actually had 22 children on site this year, compared to 21 in 2024 & 28 in 2023, however due to changes in the dates this year we had initially expected a higher turnout. As part of preparation for the event all theme camps (not just those offering 18+ only spaces) were encouraged to think further about whether their offering was seeking to be child/friendly and/or whether this was different at different times, both in terms of content but also whether they would be welcoming of children in their space/unsupervised children, and then to communicate these aspects more clearly. This led to overall much clearer information on the WWW (though there is room for this to improve further), and also clearer signage onsite to support all Nestings, to be more informed about different offerings and workshops.

Website & pre-event planning issues

One issue we experienced in '25 which affected planning and preparation for Nest was our website. We had great plans to revamp our website, using it to drive volunteering, low income applications, collection of info on burners, portal to ticket purchase, booking of shifts, art grant applications and community votes and participation, etc.

This didn't work, our Tech Link reappraised their involvement, after a contentious process of attempting to drive change, and our website dreams were unrealised. This led to some serious issues, delays and convoluted work-arounds on Inclusion tickets and burner info collection (eg no of first time burners, do you know about 10 principles, etc - what we call 'burner bio').

As a result, at different points, 'burner bio' info was collected on our website & via our ticket-seller Quicket. It hasn't been possible to entirely seamlessly integrate these 2 info sources, as a result it is possible our figure of 16.6% of burners being first timers may be an underestimate, though it is broadly in line with last year's figure of 16.2%.

The overall result of these IT issues was to cause a lot of delays and stress, but our teams stepped up and found ways to work around and correct the IT issues.

We are now undertaking a project to revamp and streamline our website in advance of selling tickets for the '26 event.

Accessibility

This year we built upon the work done last year to improve accessibility - playatech benches, handrails on the hill, improvements to accessible toilets, improved information & an accessibility vehicle providing transport for those with reduced mobility. Not everything went smoothly as unfortunately we were without a community link or accessibility lead for much of the year, people stepped up to fill that gap but unfortunately things were still missed & things originally planned didn't happen.

Temple & Effigy

We made a number of changes to our site layout this year, one of the most significant was changes to the siting for Temple and Effigy. Temple was moved to the large, previously unused, field behind Troll Bar, while Effigy moved from its now unsuitable site by the Lake up to the field where Temple was sited in previous years. This was not the initial planned site, but was adopted due to the Effigy team's need for level ground.

Both burns went well, with good weather and a large turn out.

The Effigy was however marred somewhat by a number of LNT issues and the absence of the Effigy team during strike, resulting in the whole clean-up of the Effigy being carried out by DPW volunteers who hadn't expected to be doing that.

Graters

This year Gate and Greeters were combined into one role - 'Graters'. This helped leads navigate needs for both aspects pre-event, and empowered volunteers to learn and perform different aspects of the role. It also made filling shifts easier.

Rangers

Our Ranger volunteers also made a huge contribution to the event, handling a number of incidents and providing a helpful and constructive presence throughout the event. Shifts lasted for 4 hours, with all Rangers sober throughout. Rangers were active for the whole duration of the event, some covering multiple shifts.

LBT

Building on work done last year to promote recycling, this year we had the PEEPs Recycling Zone (PEEPs - Planet, Ecosystem and Environment Preservation station) collecting Aluminium cans, LDPE, HDPE & paper for recycling. As a result we recycled a great deal more than last year. That said there was a good deal of mis-use of the PEEPs station & waste dumped there whilst unattended.

The Aluminium cans which we collected and took to a local recycling place netted us the sum of £15.60. Which was better than '24 when they didn't accept them due to contamination.

Glass and general waste were not collected but were packed out by attendees.

Another aspect handled expertly by the LNT team was lost property, of which there is always lots. This year a 'Museum of Lost and Found' was created to consolidate all the lost things in one place to assist retrieval. This was a resounding success with a great deal less unclaimed stuff to deal with after the Burn.

MOOP sweeps were effective and often attendees seemed to deMOOP from the previous night, before the sweepers even started their shifts! So clearly the LBT message is out there.

Survey & Documents

Post-event we carried out a survey to collect feedback on people's experience of Nest. This was overwhelmingly positive (although admittedly with a response rate of 7.8% of attendees) but did, as intended, highlight a number of areas for improvement next year. The results have been shared via email with '25 attendees and will be available on our website together with a password protected document showing in full all comments received.

Unfortunately the availability of this information on-line has been delayed due to the urgent need for us to revamp and restructure our website. The survey, prior years event wrap up reports, finance reports, consent reports & other documents are not currently on the website due to this re-organisation, but they will return to <https://burningnest.co.uk/public-documents-hub/> as soon as possible.

Finances

A full financial report for this year will also be available on the website, though a summary of our spending is provided below

Cost of Sales

Department of Public Works	47,130.03
Custodian for Arts	21,415.85
Edge of Chaos	49,772.73
Consent	145.69
Community Ambassador	1,160.47
Volunteer Director	1,232.05
Total Cost of Sales	120,856.82