



Littlehampton Town of Culture 2028 – Public Feedback Report

This report summarises public responses collected through open community engagement in early 2026.

1. Summary of Public Feedback

Public feedback shows strong pride in Littlehampton’s unique blend of coastline, river, natural beauty, and rich heritage. Residents consistently highlighted the town’s welcoming community spirit, independent businesses, maritime history, and cultural traditions. They expressed a clear desire for bold, high-quality cultural programming that reflects Littlehampton’s identity – calling for investment in arts venues, storytelling, and opportunities for young people. Protecting natural assets, celebrating local heritage, and fostering an inclusive, ambitious cultural programme were key themes. Overall, the community wants a Town of Culture year that strengthens civic pride, inspires creativity, and leaves a meaningful legacy.

1.1. Summary Report of Public Feedback

Residents emphasised Littlehampton’s defining assets: the river, beaches, dunes, harbour, South Downs, and the contrast between its lively seaside and quieter historic areas. Many highlighted the strong community spirit, independent shops, cultural traditions, and maritime heritage that together shape the town’s character.

Feedback showed pride in the town’s recent regeneration, including the seafront improvements, biodiversity initiatives, and new independent businesses. Many residents urged investment in cultural infrastructure – particularly the Windmill Theatre – with the ambition of transforming it into a modern arts hub that could host national-calibre events.

Natural spaces, local history, small businesses, and community traditions were repeatedly identified as priorities for protection and celebration. While some feedback pointed to concerns about litter or neglected buildings, there was overall optimism and strong belief in Littlehampton's potential.

Residents expressed hopes for bold artistic projects, diverse cultural events, stronger heritage storytelling, improved access to the river, and expanded opportunities for young people. Across the feedback, the community demonstrated pride, aspiration, and readiness for a transformative Town of Culture programme.

2. Feedback breakdown by question

2.1. What Makes Littlehampton Unique

Across almost all responses, residents highlighted the combination of river, sea, beach and Downs as the defining feature of the town. People described the River Arun and its changing scenery, sandy beaches including East Beach and West Beach dunes, the Green, miniature railway, promenade, harbour, and the contrast of 'two towns in one'. They noted unspoilt coastline, natural light, and rich history including shipbuilding, RNLI heritage, Napoleonic fort, railway history, links to 30 Assault Unit, and distinctive architecture such as the East Beach Café, Long Bench and Victorian structures. Many emphasised the contrast between traditional and unexpected elements, hidden gems, unique businesses, and cultural ambition.

2.2. What Residents Are Proud Of

People expressed pride in community spirit, cultural organisations (The Windmill Theatre, Bonfire Society, choirs, events, markets) businesses (Harbour Park), heritage (Littlehampton Fort) and institutions (RNLI), recent regeneration (seafront, splash pad, new independent shops, improved town centre),. In addition, the town's architectural courage, natural environment and biodiversity, and how visitors are surprised by the town's quality were mentioned. Some noted resilience and growing optimism.

2.3. What Should Be Celebrated or Protected

Residents consistently identified beaches, river, harbour, the Green, and natural environment as priorities for protection. Heritage and maritime history, historic architecture, community traditions (bonfire night, parades, sandcastle competitions, beacon lighting, RNLI), small independent businesses, creative makers, and the Windmill Theatre were highlighted. Some suggested turning underused heritage assets like the gasometer or tunnels under the museum into

cultural venues. Youth spaces and family areas were also seen as important to protect.

2.4 How Residents Describe Littlehampton to Others

Descriptions ranged from family-friendly seaside destination, compact town with strong character, traditional charm mixed with contemporary design, to a place full of hidden history and discovery. Many noted new businesses and regeneration making the town more vibrant. Some raised concerns about litter, parts of the High Street, and social issues, but these were balanced with affection for core assets. Even critical responses praised the coastline and natural setting.

2.5. Hopes for Culture and the Town's Future

Residents expressed ambition for bold arts programming, world-class cultural experiences, better use of natural light and scenery, stronger heritage storytelling (shipbuilding, maritime trade, 30AU), more opportunities for young people (pop-up shops, creative spaces, skills development), revitalisation of cultural infrastructure – especially the Windmill Theatre – and restoring river access including boat trips. Many believe Littlehampton is ready for major cultural transformation.

3. Closing Summary

Residents want a Town of Culture programme that builds on Littlehampton's strengths (river, sea, heritage, natural beauty, community spirit), is bold and creative, improves civic pride, invests in cultural infrastructure, protects natural and historic assets, supports young people and independent businesses, and tells the town's story authentically. The community believes Littlehampton has strong identity, character, and potential, and that a Town of Culture year could be a defining moment for regeneration and civic pride.