

# Think Human Festival 2022

## At a glance

OXFORD  
**BROOKES**  
UNIVERSITY

### What is Think Human Festival?

Think Human Festival showcases research and teaching in the Humanities and Social Sciences at Oxford Brookes. Think Human events are designed to demonstrate the relevance of these disciplines to our everyday lives as human beings.

Think Human events are free, open to all, and designed to entertain, engage and interact with our diverse communities. To achieve this we incorporate debate, live music, film, theatre, comedy, interactive exhibits and much more besides.

For 2022, HSS colleagues built on the success of our 2018 and 2020 festivals by collaborating across the University, and with external partners, to deliver interdisciplinary events on important topics around the festival theme, "Creating the future we want to see".

Think Human 2022 delivered both face to face events, on campus and across the city, and online events to our publics, schools, students and staff across an eight day programme. Over 300 school students registered and over 900 people attended, despite the sharp spike in Covid cases around festival week.

**25 free events**  
across 8 days delivered  
through interdisciplinary  
collaborations and  
community partnerships

**1,200 event  
registrations**  
over 900 attendees  
with 98.9% attendee  
satisfaction

**Over 700 visitors**  
so far to our  
**Digital Festival Hall**

**Over 23,000**  
Think Human Facebook  
Page and Instagram  
account reach

**Over 49,000**  
Think Human Twitter  
impressions and over  
20,000 profile visits

**689,385**  
Facebook Campaign  
reach



## What our colleagues said

"I have learned a lot from my engagement with the local community and I think that people who have encountered Oxford Brookes research have been pleased to share it"

"I was able to connect with people who I had not previously met but shared common interests regarding their field of study and area of interest"

"Brilliant discussions with guests and audience, links forged with different people in the field I hadn't met before"

"It was a great experience for me. I loved meeting new people and expanding my network!."

"This was a great opportunity to meet other members of staff as I have recently started myself."

"It's been fantastic! The festival has allowed us to develop a seed of an idea into something which feels promising and real"

"It was nice to find a way of making my topic accessible to school students."

"The timing of the festival was pretty challenging in the wake of the pandemic. But so important and rewarding to do something purposeful, proactive and inspiring at this particular moment."

## What our students said

"My experience of being Student Ambassador for Think Human was more than positive. Not only was I contributing to the Brookes community which brought a sense of belonging but I learnt so much myself, valuable and thought provoking."

"It was very positive. I was very intrigued with the panel discussions and the information I acquired"

"I enjoyed the festival as it was a unique experience for me."

"It was great seeing the public engage with the university and being a positive representative of Oxford Brookes"

"Enjoyed working the events, especially with schools, as well as interacting with guest speakers"

"I loved meeting new people that participated in the events and hearing what they had to say."

"I enjoyed being more part of the community, as I feel like universities should have a closer link."

"It was a good experience as I got to meet great people, I got to develop my team working and communication skills, and my confidence improved"

"I really enjoyed it and felt proud to participate in the Think Human events."





## What our audience said

"Wonderful, moving and unique event. All speakers were fantastic."

"The live music was excellent and the talks thought provoking"

"It was inspiring, serious and light-hearted at the same time"

"It gave people a voice."

"I enjoyed connecting with mothers in my community, it was fascinating finding how our experiences crossed over"

"A real expression of love for the subject"

"Wonderful to see how literature and philosophy can support the work of an important charity"

"I enjoyed learning about my local area and meeting new people like the Japanese student who travelled from Nottingham to attend!"

"Great to have time to contemplate and reflect on the pandemic"

"I enjoyed the mix of panellists and the opportunity to contribute. Engaging and emotive."

"Fantastic event – great selection of poets, enjoyable and inspiring."

"Wonderful evening – perfect venue, world-class comedy."





## Public engagement with Think Human events

### Feedback from our schools audience

231 School students attended our 6 Think Human events, (of the 326 registered – we experienced a 29% drop out largely due to the spike in Covid cases around festival week). 19 of the 46 School students who took part in our evaluation commented that their experience at Think Human had made them think differently about university.

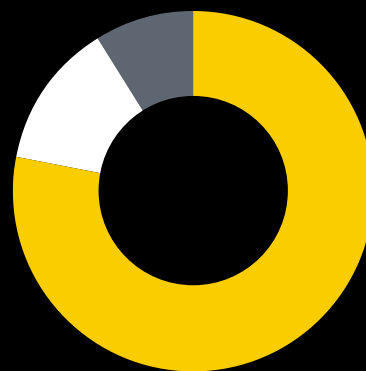
*"It is more involvement than you think, made university seem more desirable/enjoyable."*

*"I realised the possibilities there are and how interesting it can be."*

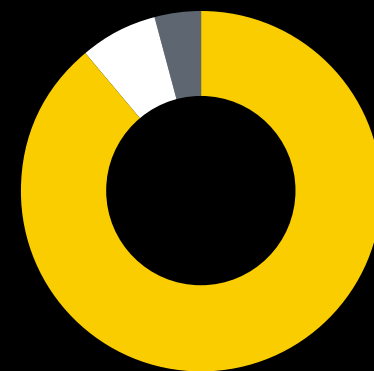
87% of school students rated their enjoyment of Think Human Festival as either 4 or 5 out of 5, (the lowest rating was 3 out of 5). When articulating what it was that they had enjoyed most, the majority of our school age visitors mentioned the opportunity to connect with their classmates and *collaborative discussions* on issues of importance to them in a setting *different to normal class*.

### Attitude change feedback from our public audience

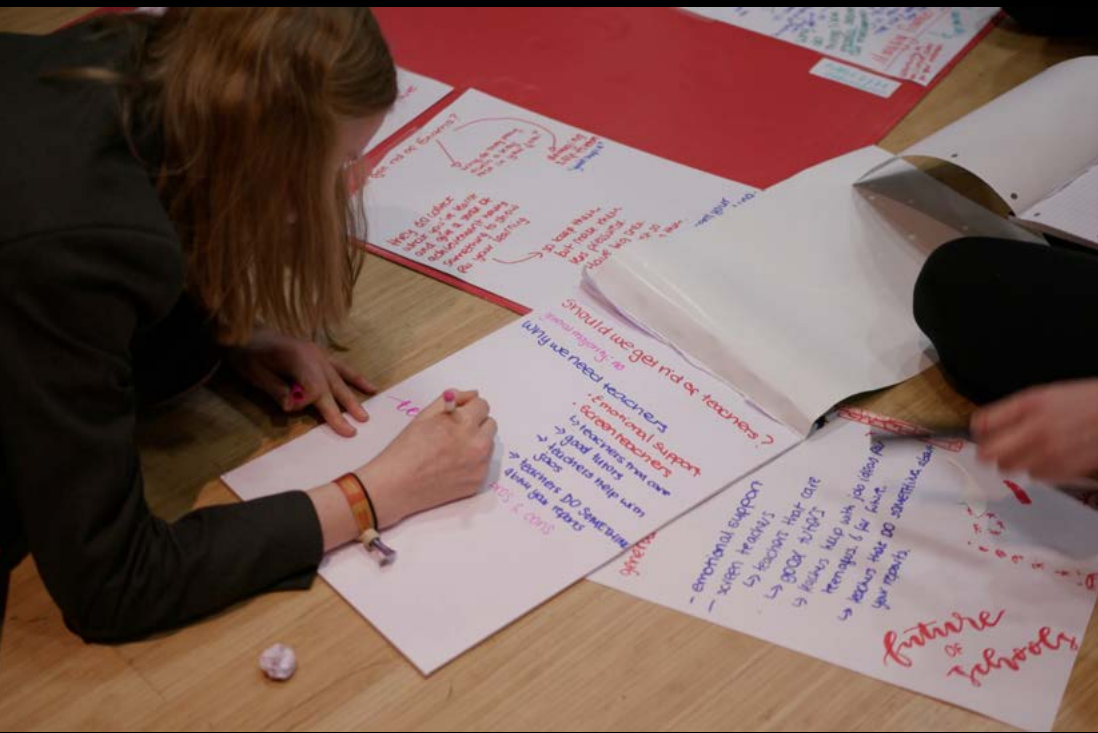
Has this event changed or challenged your thinking?



Did this event inspire you to find out more?



Yes No Not sure





## Don't Lose Your Way: Walking and Protecting our Rights of Way

This event took a diverse audience on a guided walk across Oxford before returning to Headington campus to discuss ways of defending and promoting the Rights of Way network in England and Wales for everyone.

**“Lovely walk and great to hear the history as we stopped by landmarks. I learned a lot about the ancient ways and boundaries around Headington and Marston”**



## Listening and Attending to Others: Iris Murdoch and Samaritans

This sell out event highlighted the importance of listening while abandoning the “big fat relentless ego”. Celebrated actor Annette Badland read passages on attending to others from the novels of Iris Murdoch, as the audience and guests from Oxford Samaritans discussed how listening more can help us all in a “post pandemic” society.

**“Wonderful, moving and unique event. All speakers were fantastic. Loved the readings from Murdoch’s novels. Terrific audience participation”**



Annette Badland  
@AnnetteBadland1

Replying to @r122 @IrisMurdoch and 4 others

Thank you! It was a really good event and an important event, I think.



## Our Food: Our History. Exploring the inherited recipes of a diverse community

Professor Joanne Begiato developed this event exploring inherited recipes and the rituals and emotions they evoke with colleagues from History, Nutrition and Special Collections. In collaboration with community hub Flo’s The Place in the Park a local audience shared their inherited family recipes, showcasing East Oxford’s diverse community, over tea, cake in Florence Park Pavillion.







## The Future of School Workshop

This interactive event for schools saw Dr Patrick Alexander – working with our Student Ambassadors – ask an audience from local secondary schools what schools of the future should look like? Enthusiastic contributions included thoughts on whether we need exams, teachers or even school buildings!

**“I really enjoyed how interactive the session was and discussing with my friends about the future of our education system”**

**“University is different from school, it seems much more independent, it interacts with young people, it’s a bit more open, there’s more teamwork, they’re really friendly and help you to understand what you don’t understand”**



## Dylan at 80 – Live Music and Discussion

This evening of live music and conversation in the Forum of John Henry Brookes Building celebrated Bob Dylan’s life, music and legacy. A packed audience enjoyed contributions from a plethora of Dylan experts and fantastic performances from the wonderful jazz singer Barb Jungr, guitarist Matthew Jack Biley and our own Think Human House Band of staff and students.

**“Fabulous music, thank you for hosting such a tremendous event”**

**“The live music was excellent and the discussion thought provoking”**



## How will you decide who to vote for?

For this schools event Dr Jon Wheatley introduced students in years 12/13 to his Voting Advice Application and provided them with the opportunity to discuss the political issues that mattered most to them with local MP Annelise Dodds. Our enthusiastic group of students and their accompanying teachers debated how voter advice apps could better engage and benefit young voters.

**“What I enjoyed most – the discussions with Jon and the MP, asking questions on my own interests, creating key topics for statements (for the app)”**

**“Made university seem more desirable/enjoyable, I might actually enjoy engaging”**



## What if? Creating the Future we want

Hosted by Professor Nicole Pohl through her research interest in Utopias; Rob Hopkins, author of *From What is to What if, unleashing the power of imagination to create the future we want*, led this inspiring workshop for an enthusiastic community audience at Barracks Lane Community Garden. The session covered a wide range of local issues for which attendees were able to workshop their own imaginative solutions and initiatives.

**“Excellent, Rob Hopkins was inspirational”**

**“The first indoor event I’ve attended since the pandemic, it was lovely to connect and discuss the future”**

## Think Human Collaborations

### Community Collaborations:



# OVADA



## In All Our Footsteps

### Key Contributors:

Comedian **Alex Farrow**  
 Writer and artist **Jay Bernard**  
 Playwright **Sue Bevan**  
 Artist **Tom de Freston**  
 Actor **Annette Badland**  
 Singer **Barb Jungr**  
 Activist **Rob Hopkins**  
 And many more!

### Brookes collaborators:

The Poetry Centre  
 The Institute for Ethical AI  
 Science Bazaar Saturdays  
 The Centre for Nutrition and Health  
 Technology, Design and Environment, School of Arts  
 Avant-Gardes and Speculative Technology (AGAST)  
 Special Collections, Brookes Library

## What's next?

Oxford Brookes Humanities & Social Sciences colleagues are heavily invested in public engagement and ownership of this activity has gained focus through the planning, development and delivery of Think Human festivals in 2018, 2020 and 2022. Discussions with Faculty senior management, following an honest review of each of these festivals, have developed the purpose and remit of Think Human beyond the idea of a biennial programme of events. Think Human is now a brand for HSS public engagement carried out in the spirit of building and evolving mutually beneficial relationships with community partners and schools. This new outlook for Think Human focuses on an ongoing programme of HSS research and teaching based content, created with input from a range of partners and collaborators to better meet the needs of the communities we serve.

We are looking forward to delivering many more events and activities under the Think Human banner, with the aim of showcasing the wider relevance of Humanities and Social Sciences research and teaching, through impactful public engagement relationships and initiatives in our communities.

**For further information about Think Human contact Laura Baldock – Public Engagement Officer, Humanities & Social Sciences**  
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