

# TEATRO VIVO RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT PHASE ISLE OF SHEPPEY (JUNE 2026)

PRODUCER: AMY SCOTT

IDEAS  
TEST



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**

# WHAT WAS THE PROJECT?

**The Big Vision:** Testing ideas to potentially create a brand-new, large-scale community play on the Isle of Sheppey in 2027.

**The Goal:** Ask local residents directly what content should go into a brand new play about their island.

## **Key Activities:**

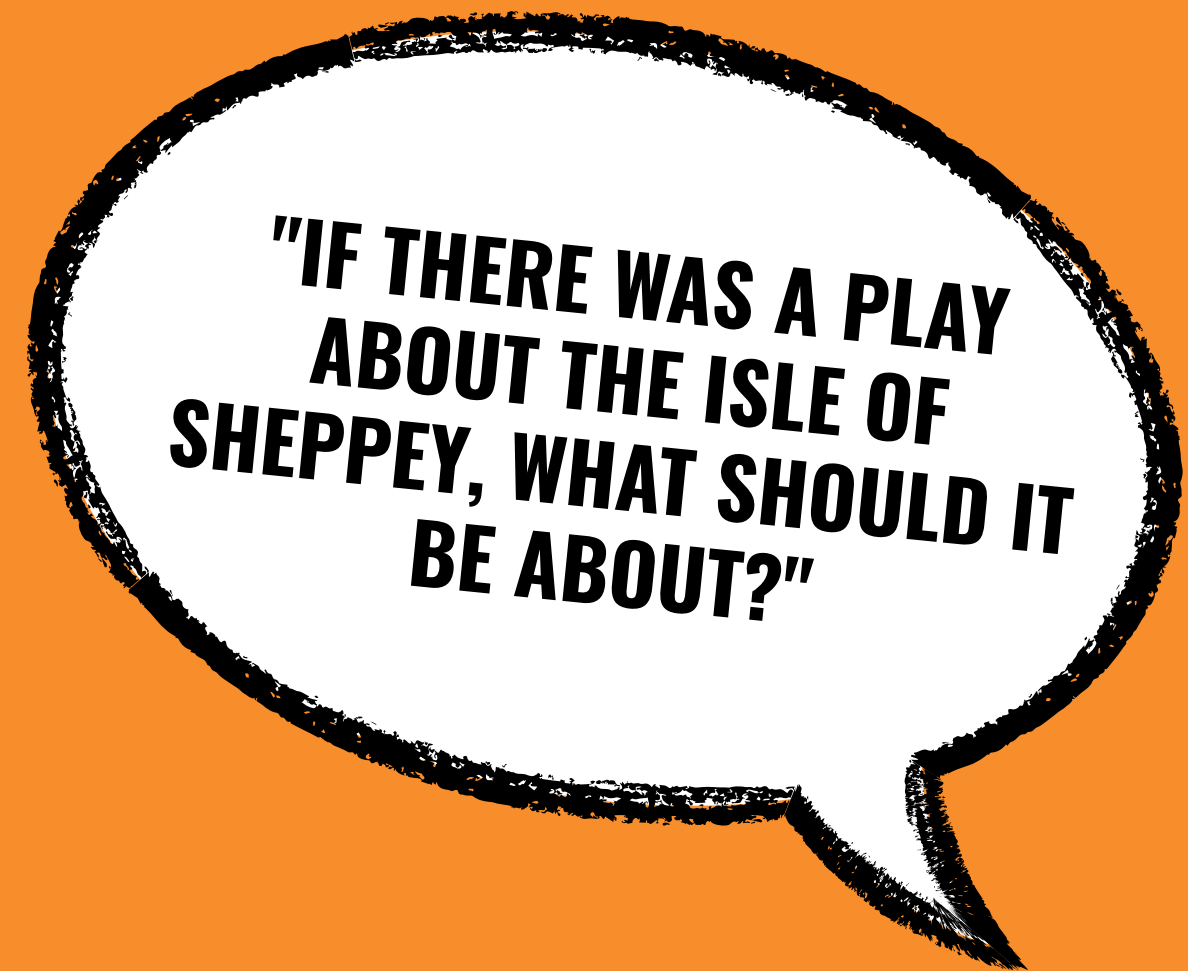
**The Usherettes By Teatro Vivo-** Theatrical street performers engaging locals in conversation across three weekends.

**School Workshops:** Six creative music and dance sessions at Queenborough Primary School.

**Youth Group Session:** One tailored workshop with the Red Door youth group (ages 13 to 17).

**Public Workshop:** One open creative session for ages 15+.

**Sharing Event:** A final showcase at the Little Sheppey Theatre where the community voted on three storyline options.



# PROJECT GOALS

**Partnering with Sheppey Festival over June 2026:**  
Timed to run alongside the month-long island festival.

**Community Connection:** Designed to chat with residents while they were already out enjoying local events.

## Our Core Goals:

- Build new local relationships and organisational partnerships.
- Have deep, meaningful conversations rather than quick chats.
- Give local people a genuine say in future artistic ideas.
- Ensure participants had fun, felt creative, and felt proud of where they live.



# PARTNER AND COMMUNITY GOALS

## Teatro Vivo (Theatre Company):

- Tested how their interactive style works on the Isle of Sheppey.
- Gathered local folklore, personal stories, and island history to inspire the script.

## Sheppey Festival:

- Added lively, interactive events to the very first Sheppey Festival calendar.
- Built a strong working relationship between local cultural partners.



# WHO WE REACHED

**Total Engagement: 393 local people**

**Usherette Street Interactions: 212 people**

**School Workshops: 157 pupils**

**Sharing Event Showcase: 12 attendees**

**Closed Youth Workshop: 7 young people**

**Open Public Workshop: 5 participants**



# WHAT WENT WELL

**Strong Partnership:** Fantastic collaboration with Teatro Vivo, laying a strong foundation for future work.

**High Quality Script Ideas:** Created three brilliant, island-inspired story concepts featuring local history and folklore.

**Great School Sessions:** The workshops at Queenborough Primary were a huge success with pupils and staff.

**Meaningful Street Conversations:** The Usherettes gathered rich, detailed insights from local residents.

**Deeply Engaged Individuals:** Reached passionate locals, including a young person now keen to help with future productions.



# WHAT WE LEARNT ABOUT SHEPPEY

**Island Pride:** Residents are intensely proud of their rich history, local nature, and friendly community.

**Changing Perceptions:** Locals are very keen to challenge and change how outsiders view their island.

**Local Storytelling:** Raw local folklore and oral histories provided excellent material for community theatre.



# KEY CHALLENGES/ COMMUNITY INSIGHTS

- **Reaching Audiences:** Small group turnouts highlighted the need for longer run-ups and more direct, face-to-face promotion to build local trust.
- **Supporting Street Teams:** Performing in open, public environments requires strong safeguarding, de-escalation training, and dedicated support for artists.
- **Event Coordination:** Working with local festivals showed how vital direct, joint approval processes are for all event listings and publicity.
- **Accessibility in Data:** Moving away from online surveys in favour of quick, spoken chats on the day makes sharing feedback much easier for participants.



# HOW WE ARE USING WHAT WE LEARNT, TO PREPARE FOR THE POTENTIAL COMMUNITY PLAY?

**Exploring Funding & Next Steps:** We are now looking into funding options and mapping out the next steps to bring this exciting community play to life on Sheppey in 2027.

**Early Connections on the Ground:** Our Audience Engagement Officer will start visiting local groups, clubs, and hubs early on to build strong, friendly relationships across the island.

**Better Local Marketing:** We will use extra face-to-face promotion to chat directly with residents and make sure everyone knows about upcoming events.

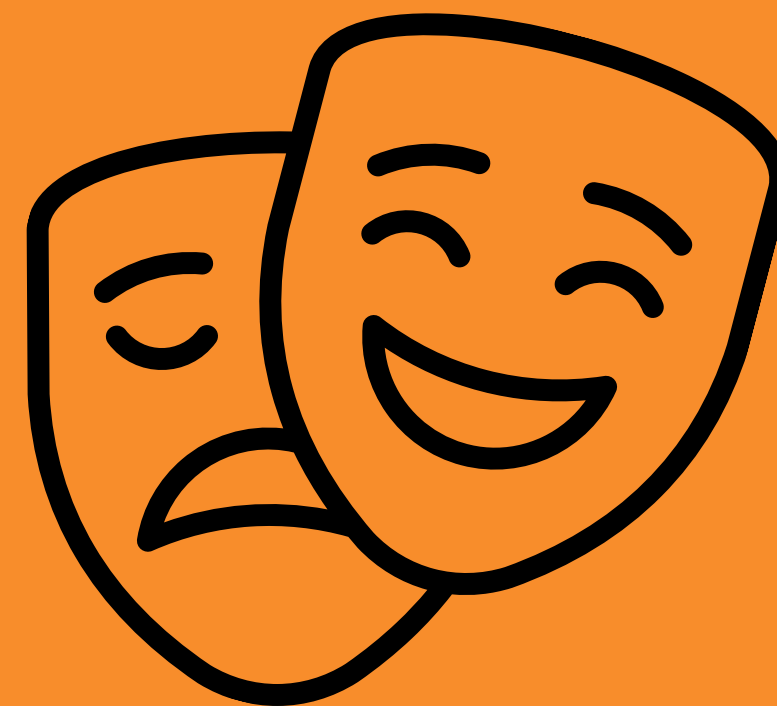
**Smarter Partnerships:** We will work closely with local partners to make sure event dates, times, and details are always correct and easy to find.

**Fun & Easy Feedback:** We will continue to use a range of approaches to gain feedback, including our survey where it's relevant- we felt it wasn't for this beginning phase.

**Supporting Our Performers:** Ensuring street performers undertake full training and support so they feel safe, confident, and welcome in every community space.

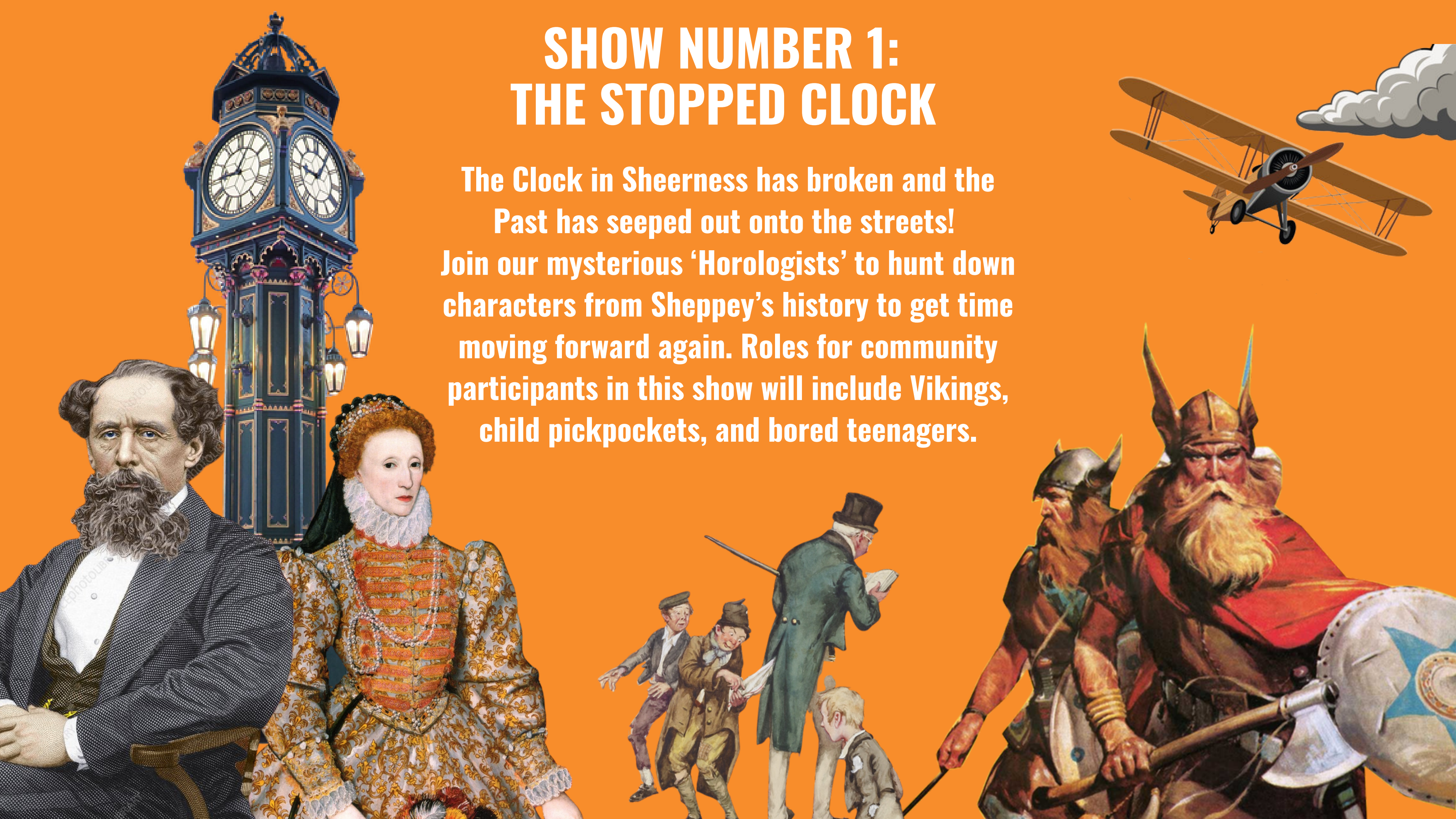


# THE THREE PLAY OPTIONS THAT WERE PRESENTED BY TEATRO VIVO



# SHOW NUMBER 1: THE STOPPED CLOCK

The Clock in Sheerness has broken and the Past has seeped out onto the streets! Join our mysterious 'Horologists' to hunt down characters from Sheppey's history to get time moving forward again. Roles for community participants in this show will include Vikings, child pickpockets, and bored teenagers.



# SHOW 2: WILD SHEPPEY OR GREAT EX-PIG-TATIONS

A pig visits Sheppey to search for his ancestor. Initially scared of Sheppey's "off-island" reputation, the other creatures he meets on his travels show him what a wonderful place full of community, history and nature the island is to live. Roles for local people include a flock of sheep, child-seagulls and a dancing ice-cream!



# SHOW 3: THE SKELETON CREW

At dusk in Queenborough a sea captain recruits the audience to help on a dangerous mission – to take Sheppey's ghosts out to sea and leave them on Dead Man's Island, as they're taking up too much space! But as the crew sail the ghosts sing the songs of their lives and persuade us to keep them on Sheppey, encouraging us to see that we have to live with our past and celebrate it! Roles for community participants in this show will be the dancing, singing ghosts and child mutineer sailors.





# **WHAT PLAY DID YOU LIKE BEST?**

**If you're interested in hearing more about this project,  
or you'd like to be involved please contact  
[amy@ideatest.co.uk](mailto:amy@ideatest.co.uk)**

