

Macclesfield Marvellous Makeover – Elmers Art Parade



Project Overview

Macclesfield Town Councils UKSPF application was all about using creative placemaking, uses arts and creativity to animate public spaces, strengthen local identity and encourage people to spend more time in our town centre. The project was designed to promote the town, to increase footfall and dwell time, to work with local business and to increase engagement and pride in Macclesfield Town Centre. Delivery was all about the Christmas Elmer Trail, a town-wide festive art trail designed to attract residents and visitors, encourage exploration of the town centre, and support local businesses who were provided with maps and limited edition badges to give to visitors during the winter period.

Key Activities Delivered and Time Scales (add time scales)

- Delivery of the Christmas Elmer Trail across Macclesfield Town Centre.
- Installation of artist-designed Elmer sculptures in prominent locations.
- Town-wide promotion through social media, maps, banners and posters.
- Engagement with local businesses to participate in and promote the trail.
- Collection of visitor feedback and monitoring data.

All activities and timescales were met and delivered on time.

Target Outputs and Actual Results

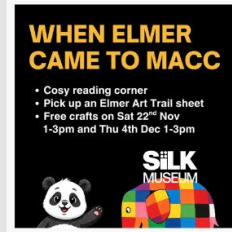
E6		
Output Indicator	2025/26	Actual
Number of local events or activities supported	5	24





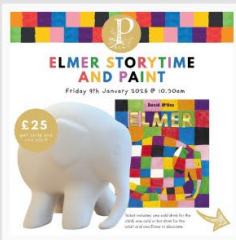
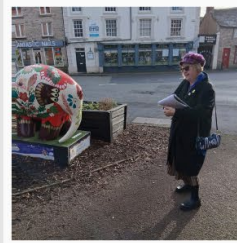
Z in the Attic

Silk Museum



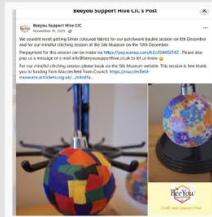
Art Space

Guided Art Walks



Periwinkle and Clay

Bee You Support Hive



E8

Output Indicator	2025/26	Actual
Number of people reached (Using social media)	5,000	126,044

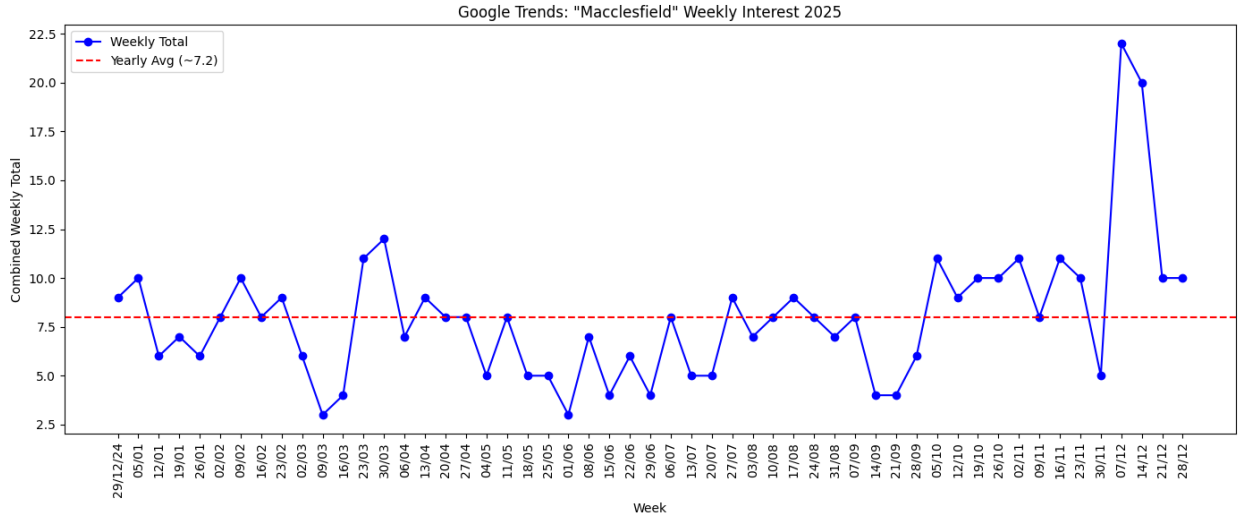
Target Outcomes and Actual Results

E6

Outcome Indicator	2025/26	Actual
Increased Footfall	5000	37,688
Improved engagement numbers	2500	3315
Improved perception of events	100 people	128 people were asked and all replied they had an improved perception of events

E8

Outcome Indicator	2025/26	Actual
Increased number of web searches for a place	5%	116%



Local Businesses

9 local businesses actively put on 17 Elmer related events during the time period of the Elmer Art Parade Trail, with another 14 distributing 2000 maps and limited edition pin badges on production of a completed trail.

Comments:

The Flower House Cheshire – *Elmer has been a big hit. They make me smile every time I see them.*

Z in the Attic - *I've really enjoyed being part of this trail, it was good for shop traffic and getting my new shop out there on the map so thank you.*

Spiveys Web - *The trail has definitely brought in tourists, we had a lady visiting the tree festival who had come to Macc specifically for Elmer trail, was staying at Boho, and doing a full tourist weekend, and lots of people were from out of town. All in all, a great event, lots of fun, and looking forward to the next one*

Artmagedon Tattoo & Piercing - *We have had some amazing feedback from the Elmer Trail, one lady was so impressed by it, she walks her children past most of them on the way home from school every night! We have had lots of comments about how great it is to see such effort from the Town Council in making something accessible for everyone in the town.*

Pause Creative Studios – *We put on a few more free Elmer photo dates to get people into our new shop.*

ELOV - *I've chatted to lots of people doing the trail and see people pointing at them round town! There were two mums with their kids dodging the rain whilst completing the trail they chose a very cosy FWS... (doing these things are really cool AND bring people to town). I love the Christmas window themed around Elmer too..*

Modern Woolfare - *The majority of people have loved it both kids and adults*

Macclesfield Library - *Macclesfield Library reported strong additional benefits from hosting an Elmer installation. Many new families visited the library to collect trail maps and see the Elmer located in the building. Staff were able to capitalise on this increased footfall by engaging visitors and signing up a number of new library members as a direct result of the trail.*

Summary of Impact

The Christmas Elmer Trail has showcased the power of creative placemaking in Macclesfield Town Centre. The project delivered a 13.5% overall uplift in footfall, with an impressive 18.5% increase in the first week, demonstrating strong performance against targets. Town Council events such as Step into Christmas, the Twilight Market, Treacle Markets and the Lantern Parade continue to be reliable and well-established drivers of footfall.

The scale of improvement in footfall 2025/26 compared with 2024/25, despite these events being delivered in both years, suggests that additional activity is influencing performance. The Elmer Trail, running continuously from late November to mid-January, is a plausible contributing factor, particularly in terms of repeat visits, family engagement, and extended dwell time.

The combined effect of anchor events (single-day or short-period peaks) and a longer-running attraction appears to have supported stronger and more resilient footfall across both December and January.

Beyond the numbers, residents, visitors, and families have actively enjoyed participating in the trail and associated community events, enhancing wellbeing, engagement, and community spirit across the town.

Proposal

Following the strong performance of this year's event, and the likely positive impact of the Elmer Trail on footfall and town centre engagement, the Services Committee has approved a proposal to deliver a similar multi-week trail next winter. The event may adopt a different theme to maintain public interest, sustain engagement, and continue strengthening Macclesfield's profile as a vibrant, family-friendly destination. The estimated cost is £32,500 and is subject to availability from Wild in Art.