

Lunar Poetry Podcasts - Evaluation of Arts Council England

Funded Period - 01/09/2016 to 01/09/2017

As a quick disclaimer, and because this PDF is going out online, I feel it's necessary to say that this evaluation is not intended as an instruction in how to make a podcast. It is merely intended as an explanation as to how I used money given to me by Arts Council England in the form of a *Grant For The Arts*. I believe strongly in transparency when it comes to using public money, as well as the benefit of sharing information with other arts practitioners. Hopefully someone will find something of interest in this document. So...

Lunar Poetry Podcasts began, in October 2014, as a series of discussions, interviews and live recordings of poets in the UK and further afield. Initially all episodes were uploaded to YouTube, as it was the only free platform I could find with unlimited upload capacity; I also wasn't sure how long the project would last, so I had no idea if it was worth investing time and effort to build a hosting website. Building a website, no matter how simple, STILL feels outside of my skillset. *LPP* followed this model for 76 episodes and nearly two years.

It became obvious in this time that in order to build a bigger audience, episodes needed to be recorded and edited to a much higher standard and available to download through established channels. Even more importantly, there were certain discussions and subjects, such as representation in publishing, that would have been inappropriate for me to lead and host, and I didn't want to start asking poets from marginalised sections of society to work for free.

These two factors were the main reasons for me approaching Arts Council England with a proposal for a 12-month series of programming, with funding for broadcast-quality recording equipment, new editing software and hardware, and money to pay guest-hosts and guests for 'feature' episodes. This money was to be used to allow guest-hosts complete autonomy to lead conversations in the direction that they saw fit. In this way we avoided the all-too-common issue of, for example, a hearing, able-bodied person leading a discussion about the barriers that D/deaf and disabled writers face when trying to get published.

A breakdown regarding the diversity of hosts and guests can be found over in the *Series Evaluation* section of our website: <https://lunarpoetrypodcasts.com/series-evaluation/>

Throughout this document I use the term 'Feature Episodes' to refer to episodes in which hosts and guests were paid. There was still a number of episodes produced voluntarily (because I love making podcasts!!) - these 'Intermediate Episodes' are listed on the next page. The editing and promotion of these intermediate episodes were partly covered by the project management section of the budget.

A fee for hosting was settled upon using guidelines set by the National Union of Journalists in the UK. These guidelines stated that writing and recording for broadcast commanded a fee of around £12/hr. I allowed 8-12 hours for planning the discussion, working up a rough script, liaising with guests, travelling to and from the recording, and the recording of an episode (minimum 52min duration). The fee was set at £152. When determining a fee for guests appearing on feature episodes I consulted with a sizeable number of writers and gathered an average figure of £75 for half a day's labour. These fees were still considered a little on the low side for most, but not so low as to be insulting.

I would suggest that figures of £225 for hosting and £100 for guests would be fairer.

It was a stated aim in the funding application that 55-60% of the budget would be spent on artist fees. I achieved a figure of 58%.

The funding also included money for travel to avoid the series becoming 'London-centric'. I believe it's vital for this kind of series to work nationally rather than being restricted to a large city, no matter how vibrant.

A big thanks goes to Spread The Word, Arts Council England, Podcasters' Support Group on Facebook, and everyone who took part in the series.

Intermediate Episodes

The hosts and guests took part in the following episodes voluntarily:

Note: As part of my *Grant For The Arts* application I committed to, voluntarily, producing one 30-minute episode per month alongside the 12 'feature' episodes. This is known in the *ACE* application process as providing *Support in Kind*. This commitment rapidly spilled over into producing the following episodes, more than doubling my suggested output.

Ep.79 - Lunar Poetry at the Betsey Trotwood Summer All-Dayer 2016 - 11/09/2016

Ep.81 - Poetry Island, Torquay - 25/09/2016

Ep.83 - National Poetry Day, 2016 - 05/10/2016

Ep.84 - Thomas Owoo; Andra Simons; Poetry Unplugged - 10/10/2016

Ep.85 - Maria Schratzenholz; Melissa Lee-Houghton; Rest & its Discontents

Ep.86 - Emlyn Maurizio; Nadia Drews; Agnes Török - 24/10/2016

Ep.88 - Hannah Silva; Nick Makoha; John Hegley - 21/11/2016

Ep.90 - Savon Bartley; Belinda Zhawi; Travis Alabanza - 18/12/2016

Ep.91 - Matt Abbott; Catherine Madden - 15/01/2017

Ep.93 - Ross Monaghan; Stuart McKenzie; Poetry on the Picket Line - 20/02/2017

Ep.95 - Khairani Barokka; Wayne Holloway-Smith - 19/03/2017

Ep.97 - Rachel Long; Raymond Antrobus - 17/04/2017

Ep.99 - Come Rhyme With Me; Anthony Anaxagorou - 15/05/2017

Ep.101 - Kim Moore; Zeina Hashem Beck - 17/06/2017

Ep.103 - Rishi Dastidar - 16/07/2017

Basic Breakdown of Spending

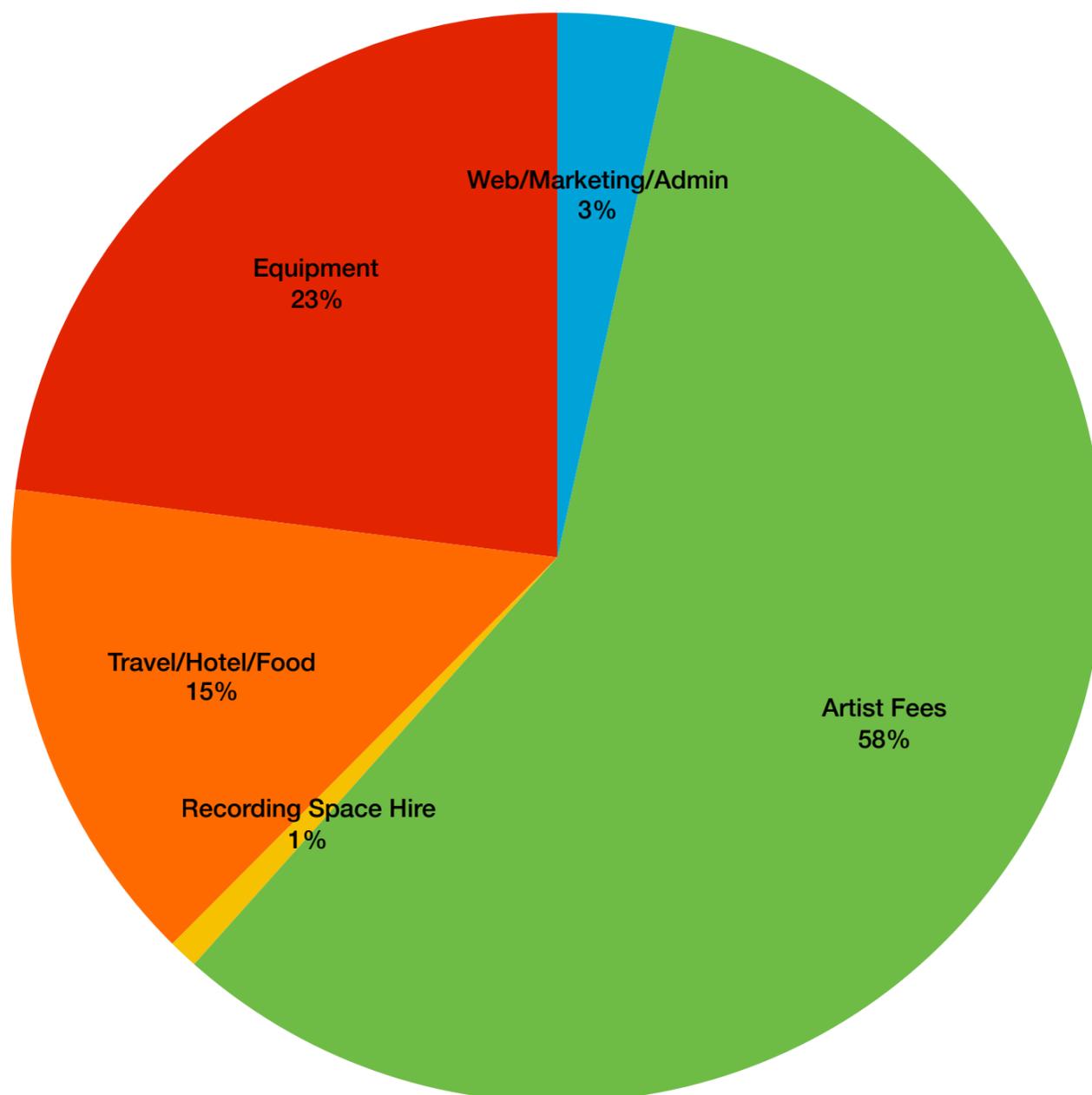
The planned budget was £14,497. The final spending was £14,866.75

I provided 10% of the budget myself, as well as the £369.75 overspend. Arts Council England provided the remaining 90%, though they hold back a further 10% of the grant until the proposed project is completed.

Intended 12-month budget - £14,497

AREAS OF EXPENDITURE	AMOUNT IN £ - STERLING
Web/Marketing/Admin	515.84
Artist/Guest/Host Fees	8645.00
Recording Space Hire	130
Travel/Hotel/Food	2164.35
Equipment	3422.56
Actual expenditure	£14,866.75

● Web/Marketing/Admin ● Artist Fees ● Recording Space Hire ● Travel/Hotel/Food ● Equipment

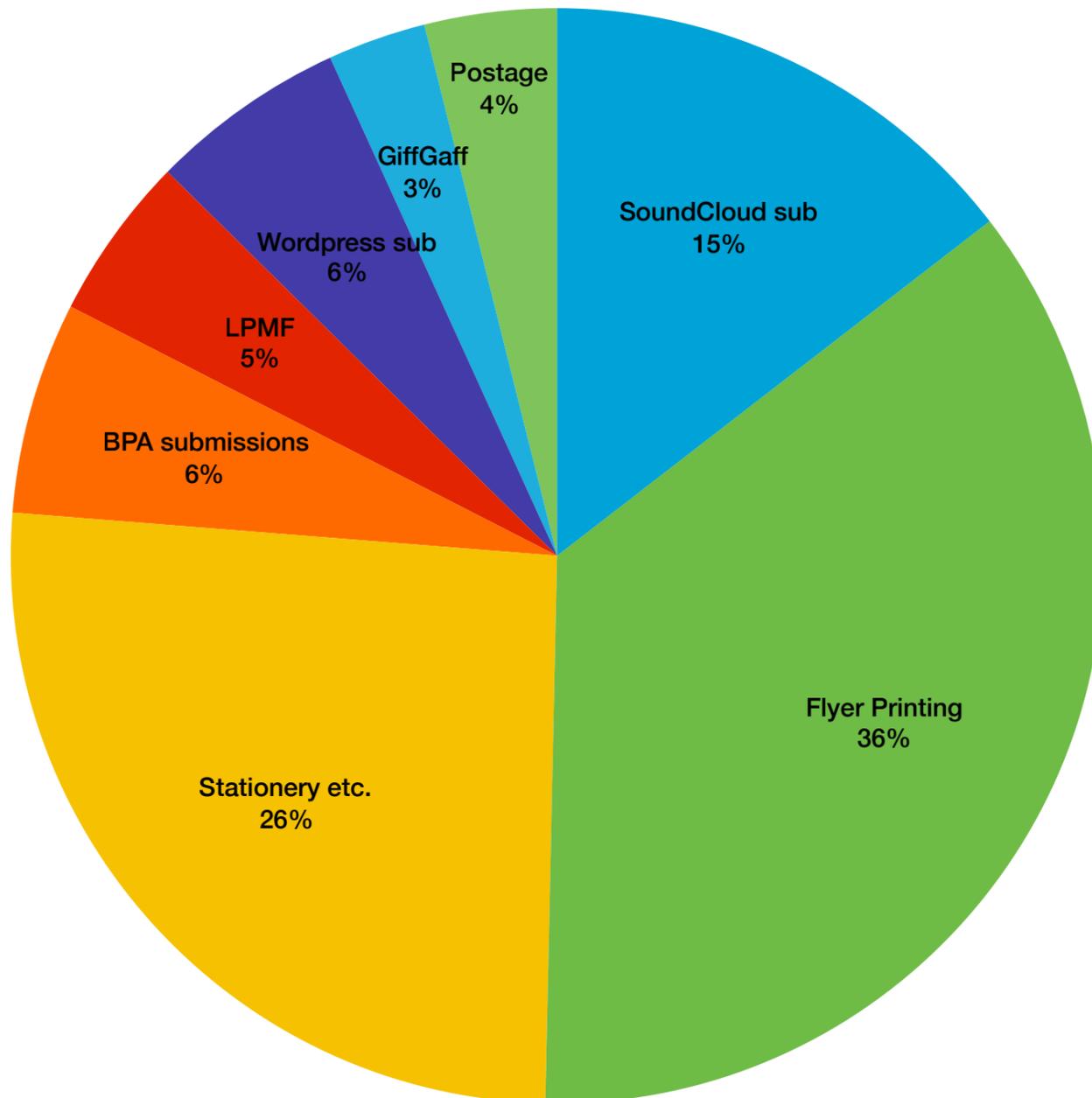


Web/Marketing/Admin Budget Breakdown

This is a breakdown of costs relating to podcast hosting, promotion and general admin. I chose to host with SoundCloud and self-build a basic website with Wordpress as a 'home' for the series, and somewhere to host episode transcripts. The flyer printing costs equate to around 1000 flyers and 200 business cards which I gave out at live literature events and posted to arts venues around Europe after contacting them. I entered two categories in the British Podcast Awards and the series was awarded 'bronze' in the 'Represent' category as a result.

	COSTS - £
SoundCloud Subscription - 12 months	75.00
Flyer Printing	184.69
Stationery etc.	133.67
Submission fees for two categories - British Podcast Awards	32.30
Exhibitor's Fee - London Poetry Magazine Fair	25.00
Wordpress Subscription - 12 months	30.00
GiffGaff 'Starter Pack'	15.00
Postage - Sending flyers to various arts venues	20.18
TOTAL	£515.84

● SoundCloud sub ● Flyer Printing ● Stationery etc. ● BPA submissions ● LPMF ● Wordpress sub ● GiffGaff ● Postage



Artist/Guest/Host Fees - Budget Breakdown

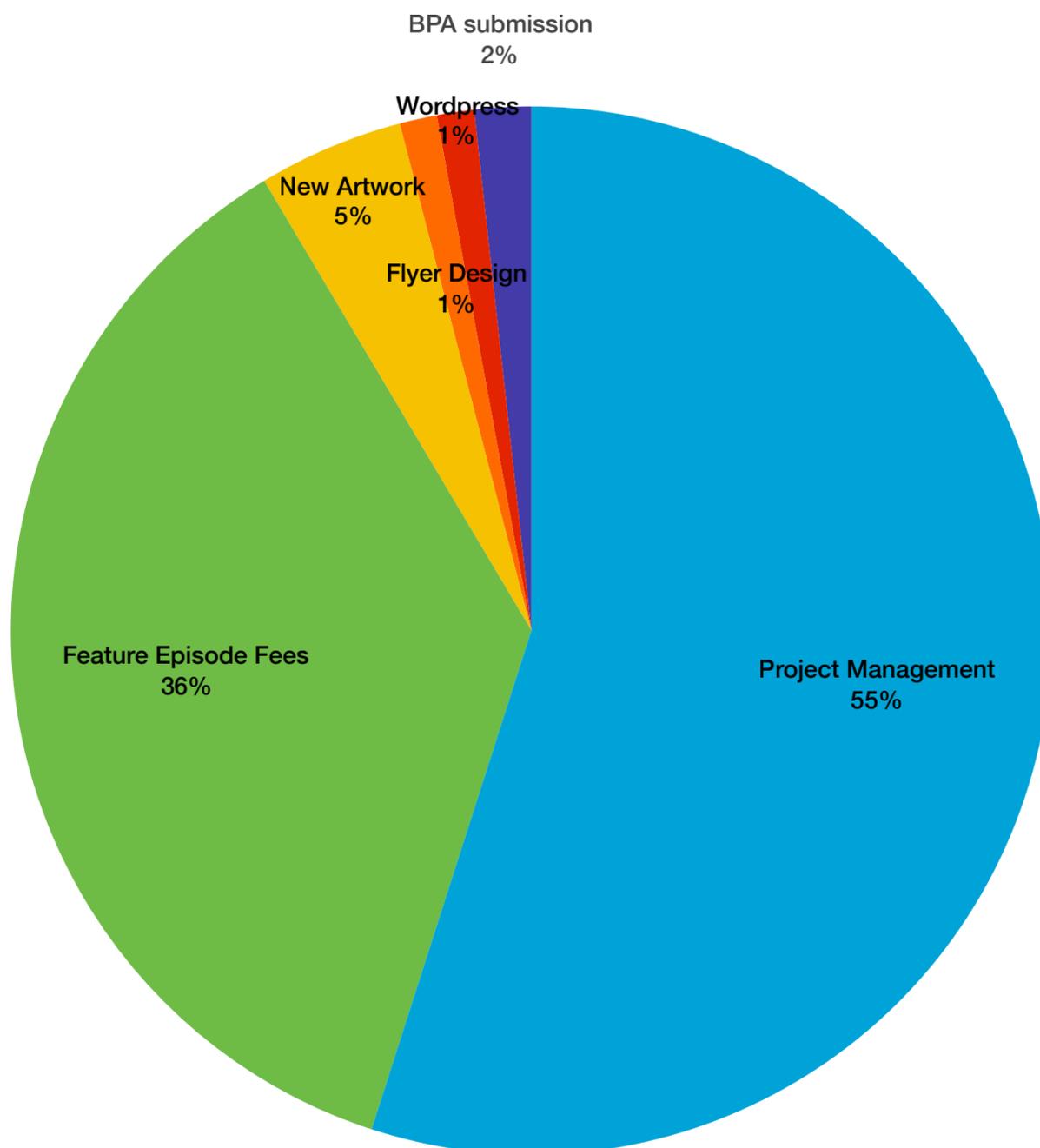
The project management fee was intended to cover some of the costs involved in planning episodes, editing audio and promoting the series. This equates to £396 per month or 33hrs @ £12/hr. Interestingly, funding advisors felt this amount should have been two to three times higher!

The 'feature episode' artist fees are explained in more detail later in this document, in the individual breakdowns of each episode. I commissioned an illustrator to design new artwork/logos for use online and in print. £100 was paid for advice about how to build a Wordpress website - this is not an area of expertise for me!

The editing cost of £152 relates to the editing of two 15-minute audio clips as an entry for the inaugural British Podcast Awards, for which the series was awarded 'bronze' in the 'Represent' category. This cost also covered the writing of supporting statements for each category entry.

	COSTS - £
Project Management Fee to cover the period 01/09/16 - 01/09/17	4752.00
Feature Episode Artist Fees	3151.00
New Logo/Artwork for website and social media	390.00
Flyer/Business Card Design	100.00
Consultation for Wordpress - Design & Construction	100.00
Editing of audio submissions for two categories - British Podcast Awards	152.00
TOTAL	£8,645.00

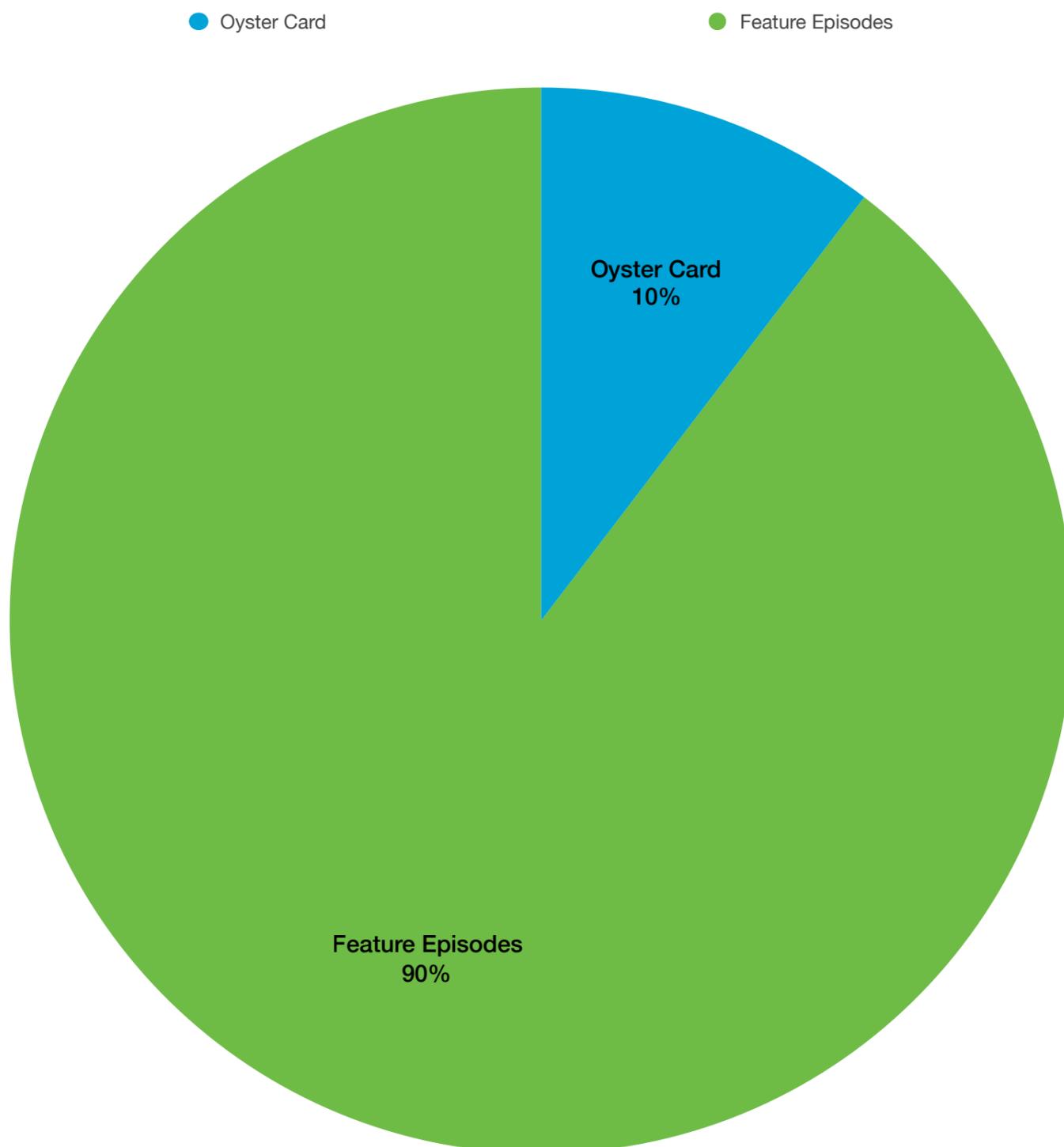
● Project Management
 ● Feature Episode Fees
 ● New Artwork
 ● Flyer Design
 ● Wordpress
 ● BPA submission



Travel/Food/Hotel - Budget Breakdown

The 'Oyster' card is a method of pre-pay travel for use on the London transport system. This cost covers travel to meetings and literature events, the recording of intermediate episodes, and promotion of the series. Travel costs relating to 'feature' episodes are explained in more detail later in this document.

COSTS - £	
Oyster Card - General travel around London for meetings/promotion etc.	225.00
Feature Episode Travel	1939.35
TOTAL	£2,164.35



Breakdown of expenditure on equipment for recording and editing:

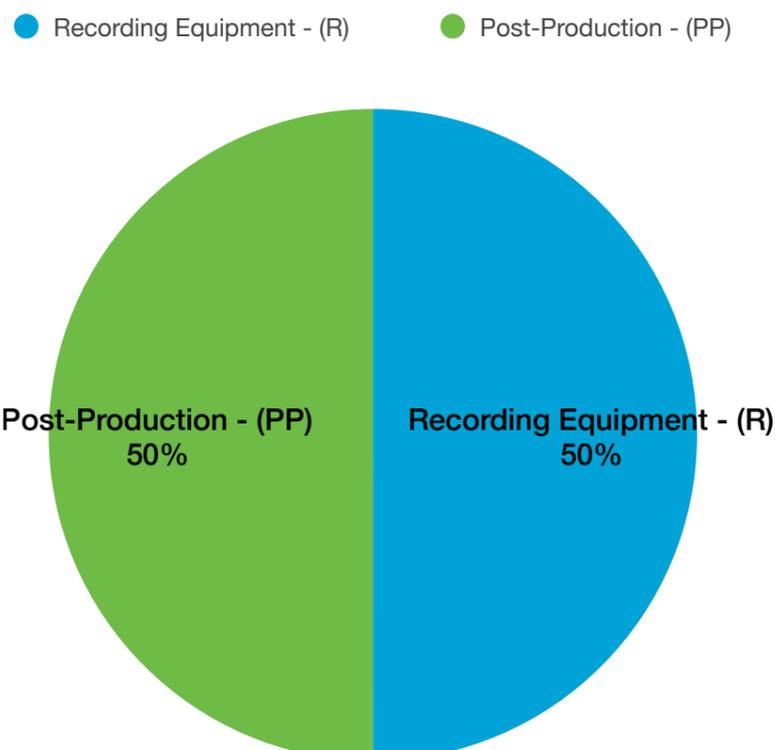
Note: It is a condition of the Arts Council England funding process that no second-hand equipment be purchased. Most of this equipment can be purchased cheaper elsewhere. These prices are at the top end of the scale and the equipment was purchased from a specialist supplier of broadcast equipment in central London, due to the conditions placed upon me by the funding agreement. You will almost certainly find these items significantly cheaper online or second-hand.

After consulting with specialists at PEC Video Ltd about the kind of recording I wanted to do whilst travelling around the country, we decided on a 'lightweight kit' of four Røde lavalier microphones, complimented by a shotgun microphone for recording live events in conjunction with a live feed directly into the Zoom H6N recording unit. I've also used the shotgun microphone for roadside interviews, using the wind baffle.

This set-up would not suit everybody but it enables me to board a plane or train with four microphones, arrive at a festival/ event without plans, and move between one-on-one interviews and round-table discussions, without dragging excessive amounts of equipment around with me.

I have divided equipment into two categories: items relating to recording (R), and those relating to editing and post-production (PP).

ITEM - (R): RECORDING EQUIPMENT – (PP): POST-PRODUCTION	COST - £	SUB-TOTALS
Zoom H6N recorder - (R)	330.00	
SanDisk 64GB SD Card - (R)	38.40	
4 x Røde Lavalier Microphones + MiCon 5 connectors - (R)	618.79	
1 x Røde NTG4 Shotgun Microphone - (R)	282.00	
Rycote 'Mic Handle' & wind baffle - (R)	136.80	
Various cables - XLR, 1/4" Jack, Phono etc. - (R)	91.65	
Sennheiser HD25 Headphones + 5yr Warranty - (R)	158.04	
Wenger 'Potomac' Roller Luggage Flight Case - (R)	49.99	1705.67
2 x MP3 Player & 'Cheap' Headphones for Poetry Fair 'Listening Station' - (PP)	52.96	
13" MacBook Pro & Word 365 - (PP)	1319.00	
Protective Laptop Carry Case - (PP)	34.95	
External Hard Drive - 1TB - (PP)	54.99	
iPhone and case for working/emailing remotely and series related social media - (PP)	243.99	1705.89
TOTAL	£3,411.56	



Feature episode #1 - Poetry In Schools (Ep.77) - 04/09/2017

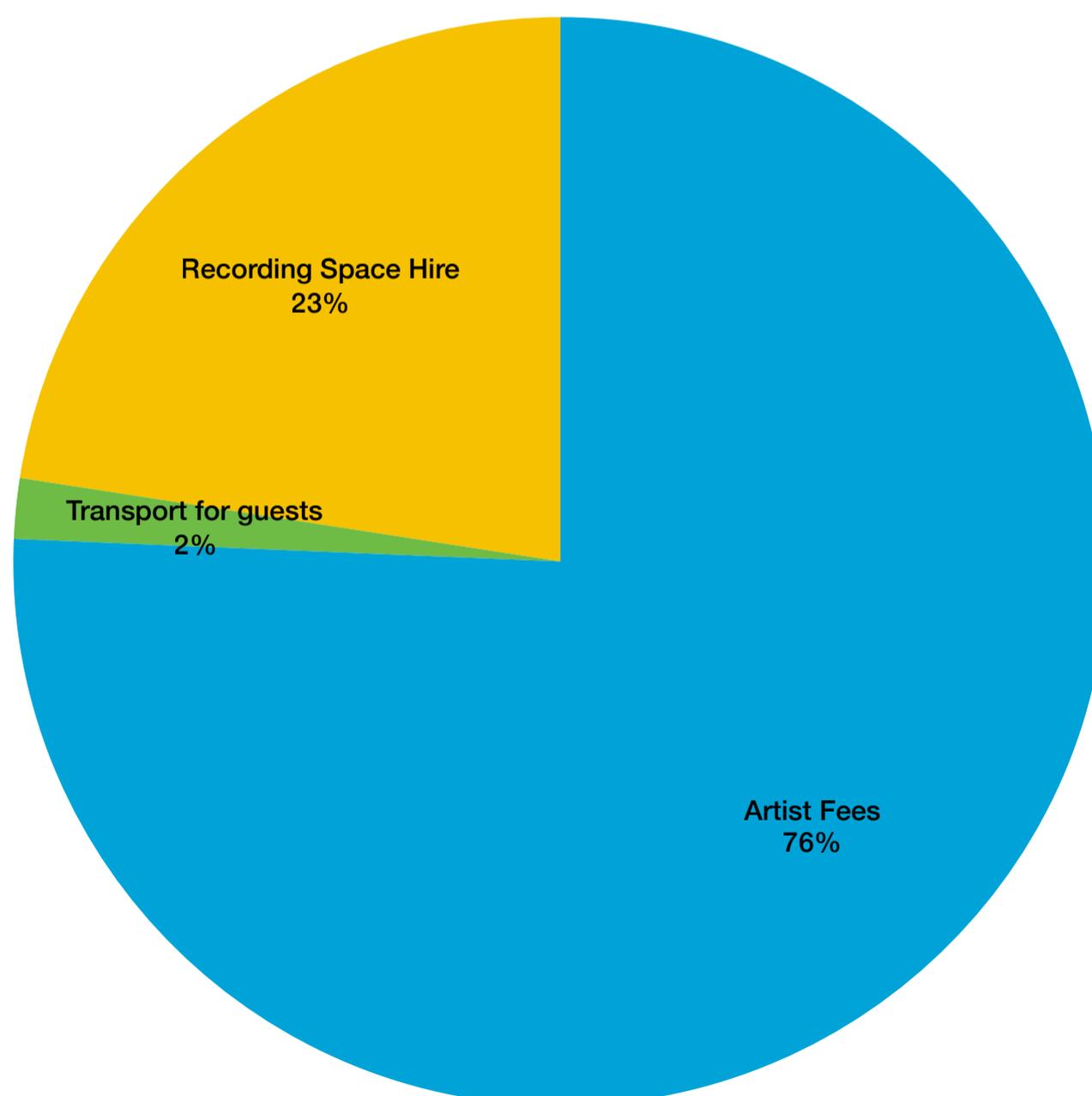
A discussion about poetry in education. This was the first funded episode to be published. As the episode was being released around the beginning of the school term, it seemed natural to record a discussion about poetry in schools. The episode was hosted by Jacob Sam-La Rose, who was joined by Keith Jarrett and Miriam Nash. An office space in central London was hired as a recording location.

	COST - £
Artist Fees - Host: £152; 2 x Guests: £75	302.00
Transport for guests	7.15
Recording space hire	90.00
TOTAL	£399.15

● Artist Fees

● Transport for guests

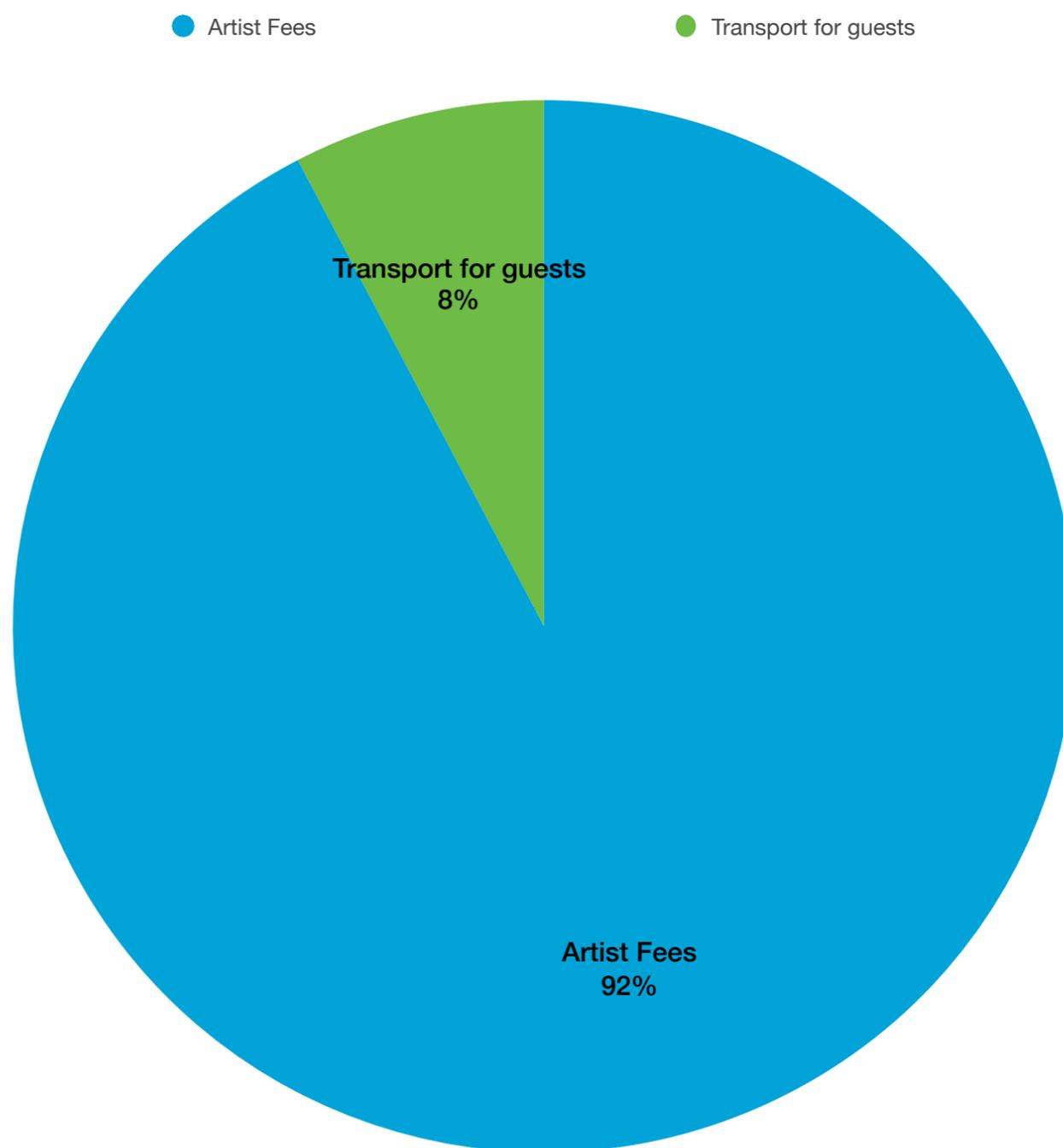
● Recording Space Hire



Feature Episode #2 - Show Me The Money (Ep.82) - 02/10/2016

This was a discussion focusing on the finances of artists, asking if there is a need for greater transparency when it comes to artists' fees. This episode was recorded in London with local poets. The episode was hosted by Paula Varjack, who was joined by Liv Wynter and Dan Simpson. The venue was donated free by literature organisation Spread The Word.

	COST - £
Artist Fees - Host: £152; 2 x Guests: £75	302.00
Transport for guests	25.10
TOTAL	£327.10

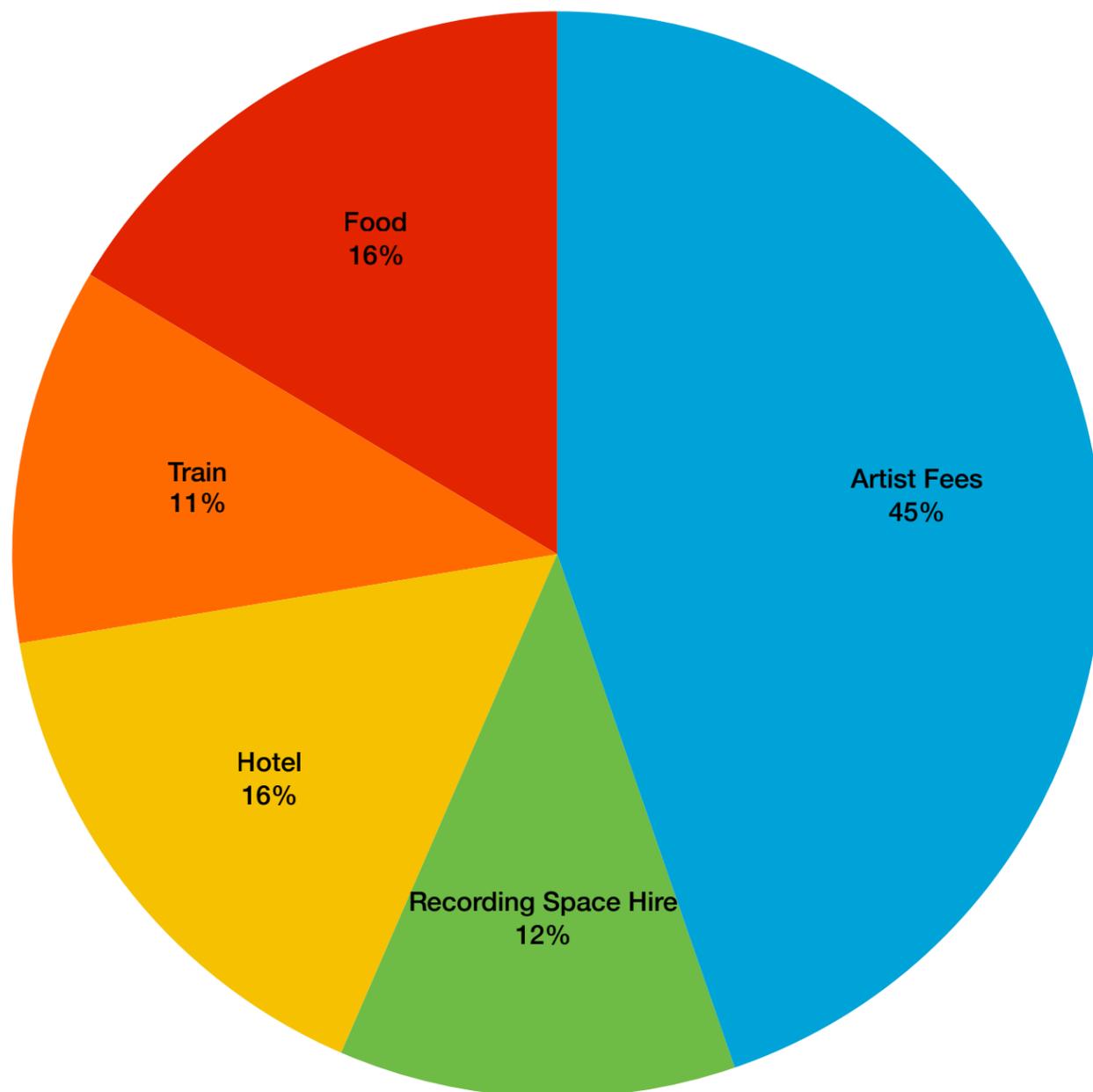


Feature Episode #3 - Bristol & Bath (Ep.87) - 07/11/2016

This episode was the first to focus on a specific area of the country. These episodes took a slightly different form in that the guests weren't paid, due to the fact that they were allowed to freely promote their own work and didn't have to stick to a fixed topic set by me. A quiet space was rented inside the PaperARTs arts venue in Bristol city centre. The topic of discussion was the poetry scene in and around Bristol and Bath. The episode was hosted by David Turner, and the three guests were Clive Birnie, Lucy English and Rebecca T Antony.

COST - £	
Artist Fees - Host: £152	152.00
Recording Space Hire	40.00
Hotel	54.00
Train - London to Bristol, return	38.20
Food	55.70
TOTAL	£339.90

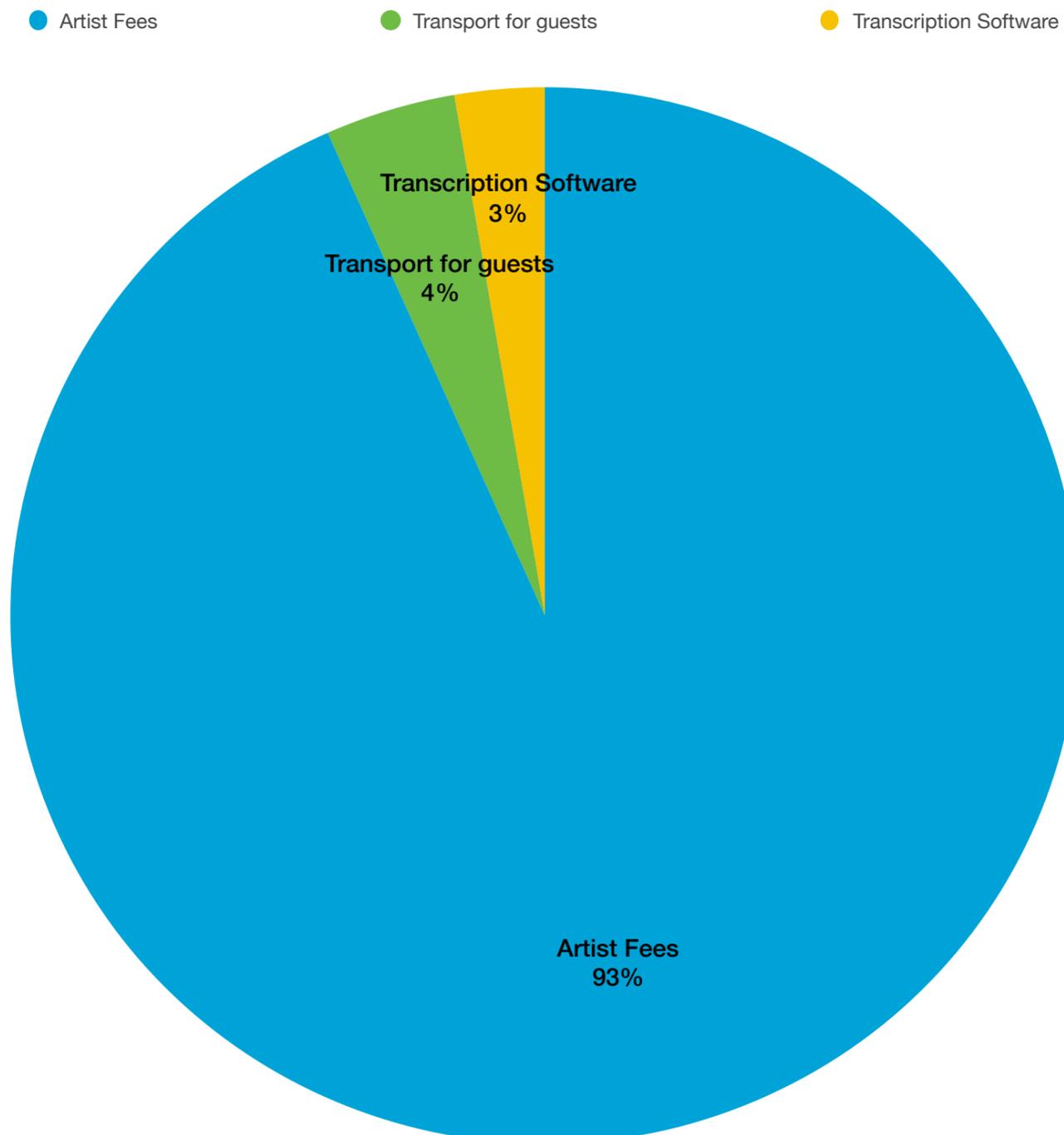
● Artist Fees ● Recording Space Hire ● Hotel ● Train ● Food



Feature Episode #4 - Accessibility in the Arts (Ep.89) - 04/12/2016

This episode focused on the lack of accessibility around live arts events. In order to make it as accessible as possible, the episode was accompanied by a transcript. A free, accessible venue was used for recording. This episode was hosted by Harry Giles, who was joined by Abi Palmer and Andra Simons.

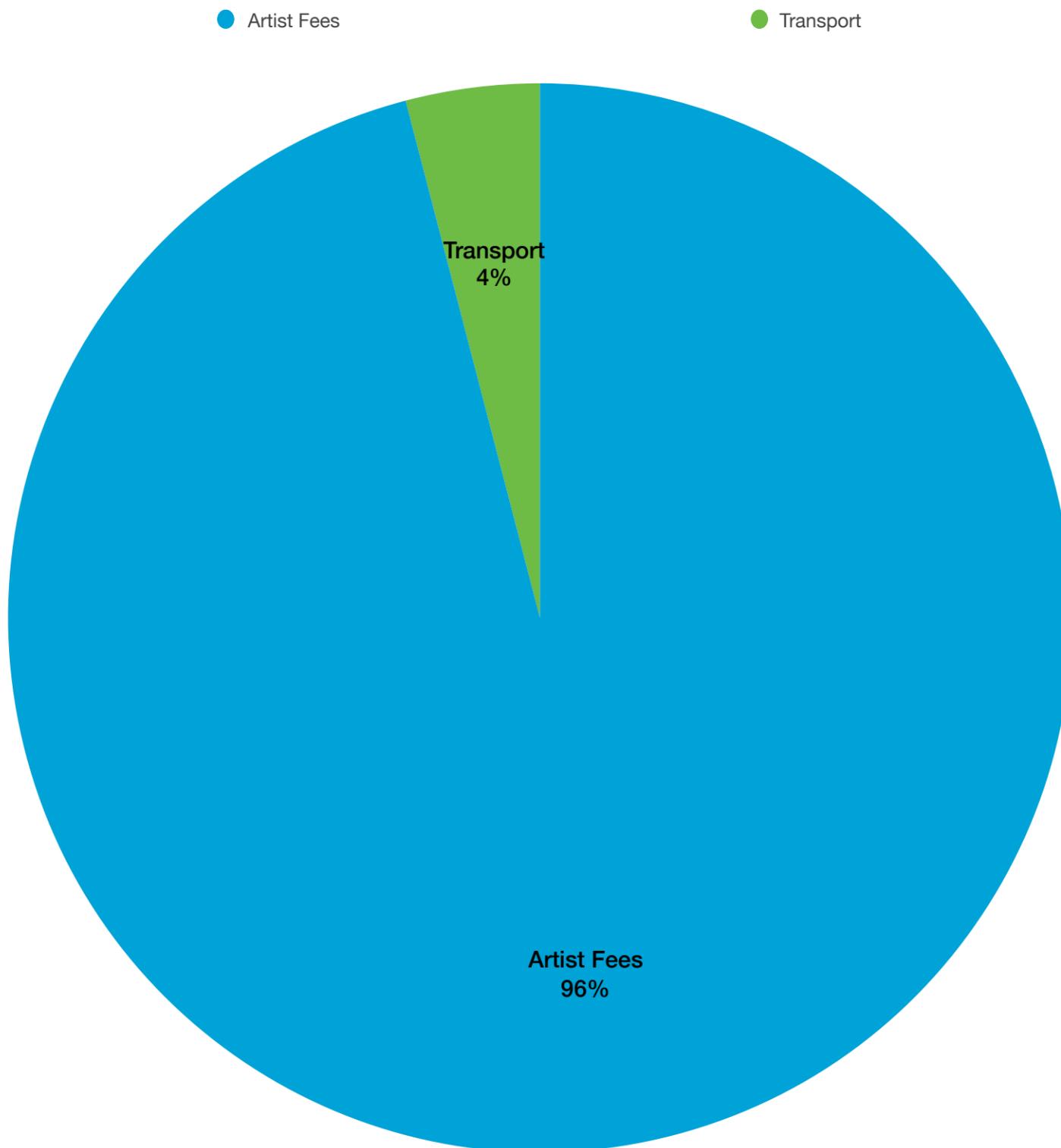
	COSTS - £
Artist Fees - Host: £152; 2 x Guests: £75; Transcription: £152	454.00
Transport for Guests	19.20
Transcription software cost - www.trint.com	13.20
TOTAL	£486.40



Feature Episode #5 - Creative Writing as Therapy (Ep.92) - 05/02/2017

This episode focused on how creative writing can be used to aid mental wellbeing. A free space was used as the venue for recording this discussion. The episode was hosted by Emily Harrison, who was joined by Wendy French and Marie Larkin.

COSTS - £	
Artist Fees - Host: £152; 2 x Guests: £75	302.00
Transport for guests	12.80
TOTAL	£314.80

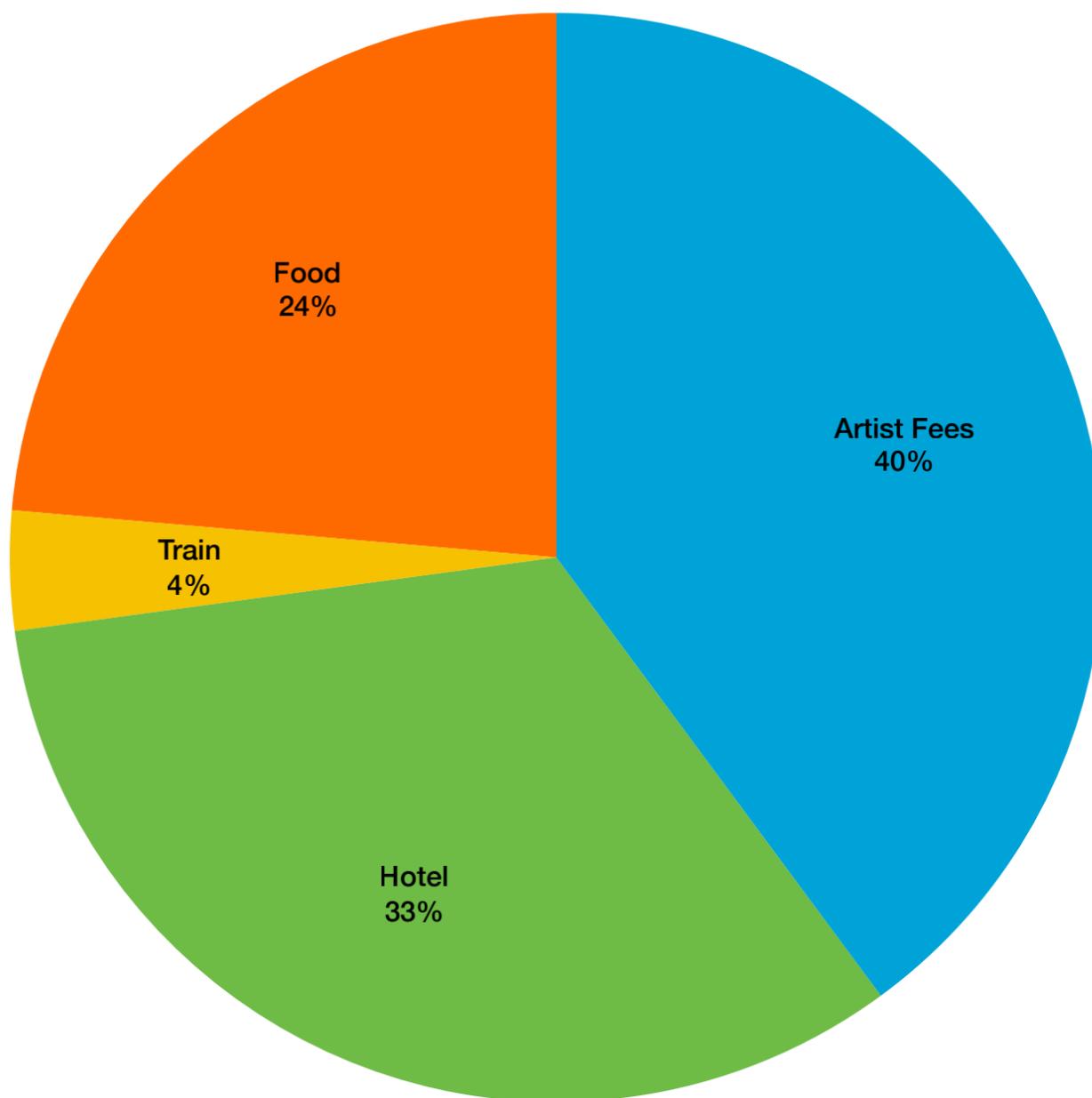


Feature Episode #6 - Birmingham (Ep.94) - 05/03/2017

This episode was based around the Verve Poetry Festival in Birmingham, and looked at the poetry scene around Birmingham. Hosted by David Turner, it was broken into three shorter sections. Part one was with Amerah Saleh, part two with publishers The Emma Press, and part three with Luke Kennard. The guests were not paid for this episode as they were appearing mainly to promote themselves and their work. The episode was recorded on-site at the festival.

COSTS - £	
Artist Fees - Host: £152	152.00
Hotel	125.59
Train: London - Birmingham, return	13.50
Food	90.00
TOTAL	£381.09

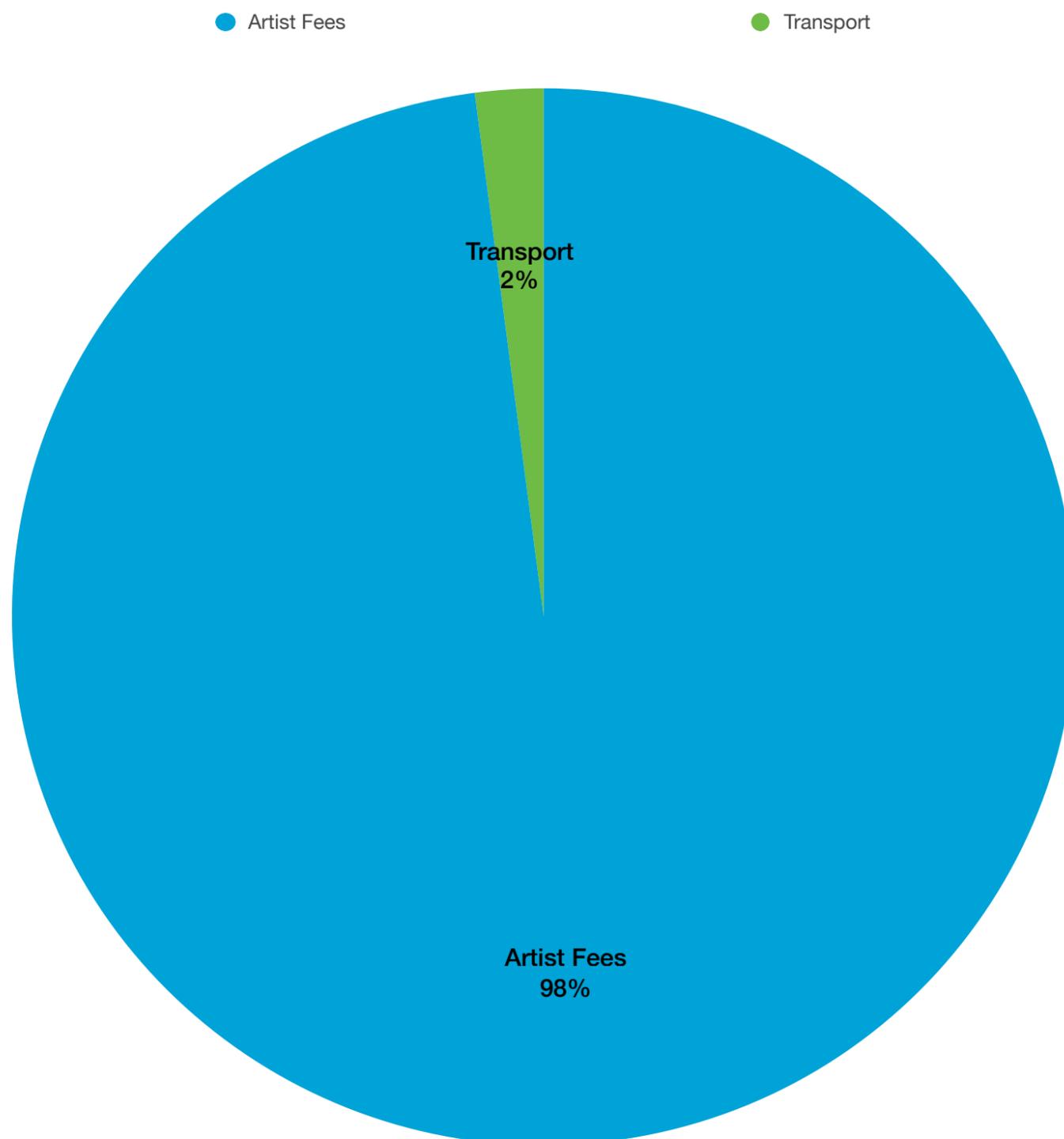
● Artist Fees ● Hotel ● Train ● Food



Feature Episode #7 - Poets & Prose Writing (Ep.96) - 03/04/2017

This episode focused on poets transitioning their practice and moving toward writing longer prose. The episode was hosted by Melissa Lee-Houghton, who was joined by Max Porter and Joe Dunthorne. It was recorded in a space given over for free by literature organisation Spread The Word.

COSTS - £	
Artist Fess - Host: £152; 2 x Guests: £75	302.00
Transport for Guests	6.40
TOTAL	308.40

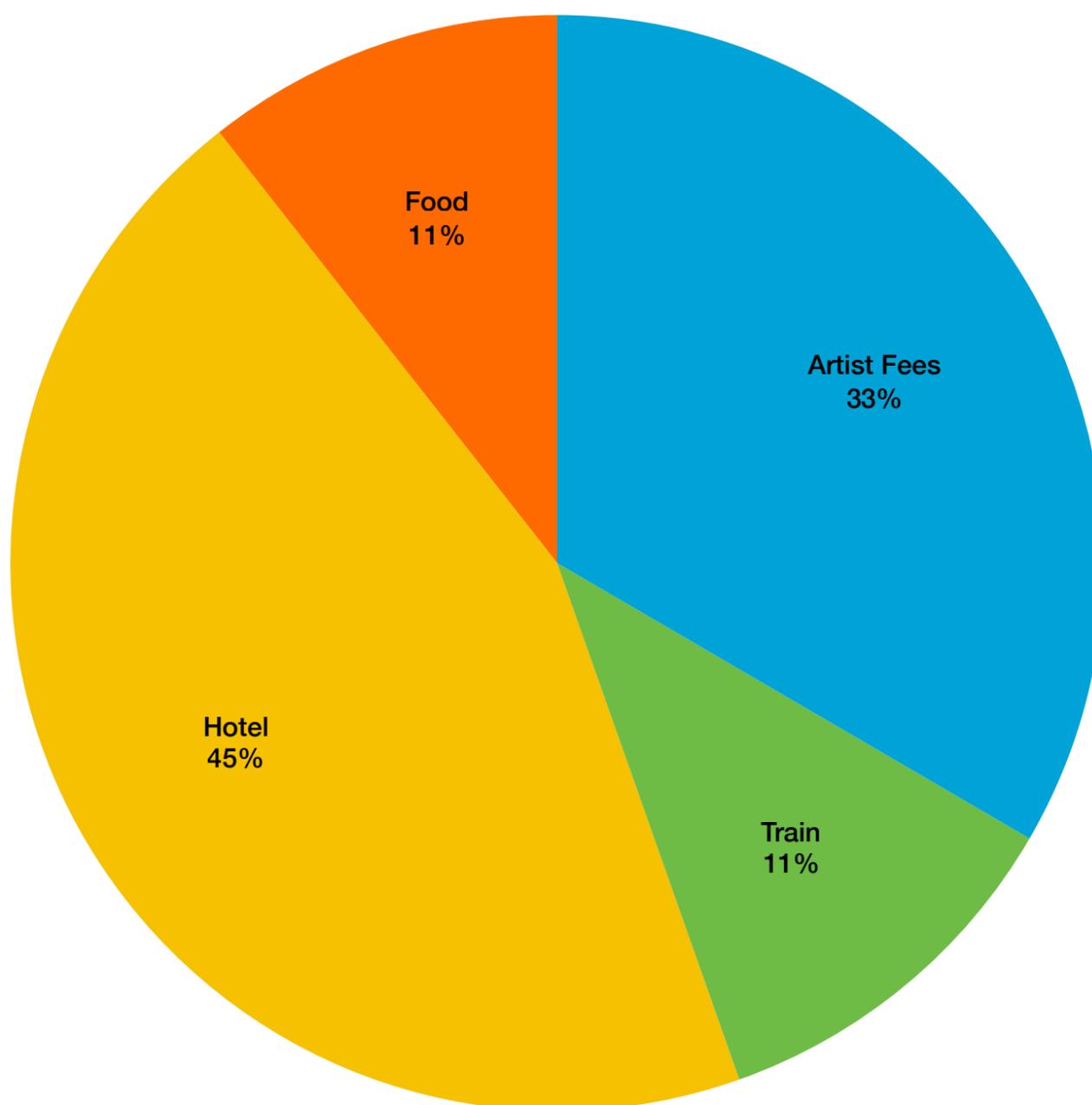


Feature Episode #8 - Poetry & Theatre-making in West Yorkshire (Ep.98) - 01/05/2017

This episode focused on the crossover between poetry and theatre-making in West Yorkshire. The episode was hosted by David Turner, who was joined by Zodwa Nyoni and Javaad Alipoor in two 25-minute sections. Instead of a hotel, an apartment was booked through Air BnB so that there was a guaranteed venue to record in.

COSTS - £	
Artist Fees - Host: £152	152.00
Train	51.00
Hotel	204.00
Food	48.28
TOTAL	£455.28

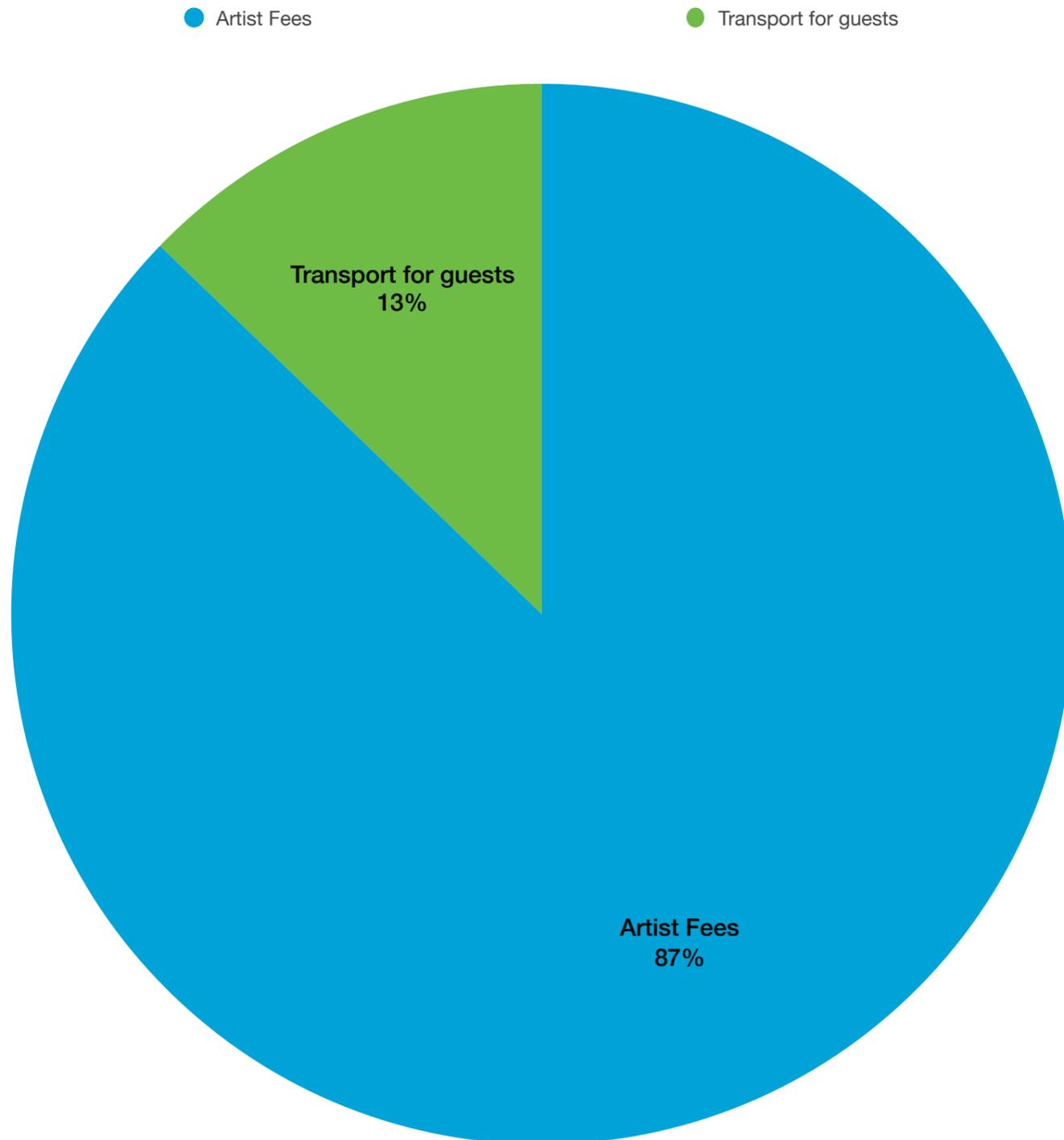
● Artist Fees ● Train ● Hotel ● Food



Feature Episode #9 - Octavia: a takeover (Ep.100) - 04/06/2017

For this episode the two guests who joined host Rachel Long were asked to write a poem in response to the subjects of the episode. Due to this being a commission it was decided that the usual guest fee be raised from £75 to £100. This episode was recorded in a space given over for free by Barbican, London. The two guests were Sunayana Bhargava and Tania Nwachukwu.

COSTS - £	
Artist Fees - Host: £152; 2 x Guests: £100	352.00
Transport for guests	51.60
TOTAL	£403.60

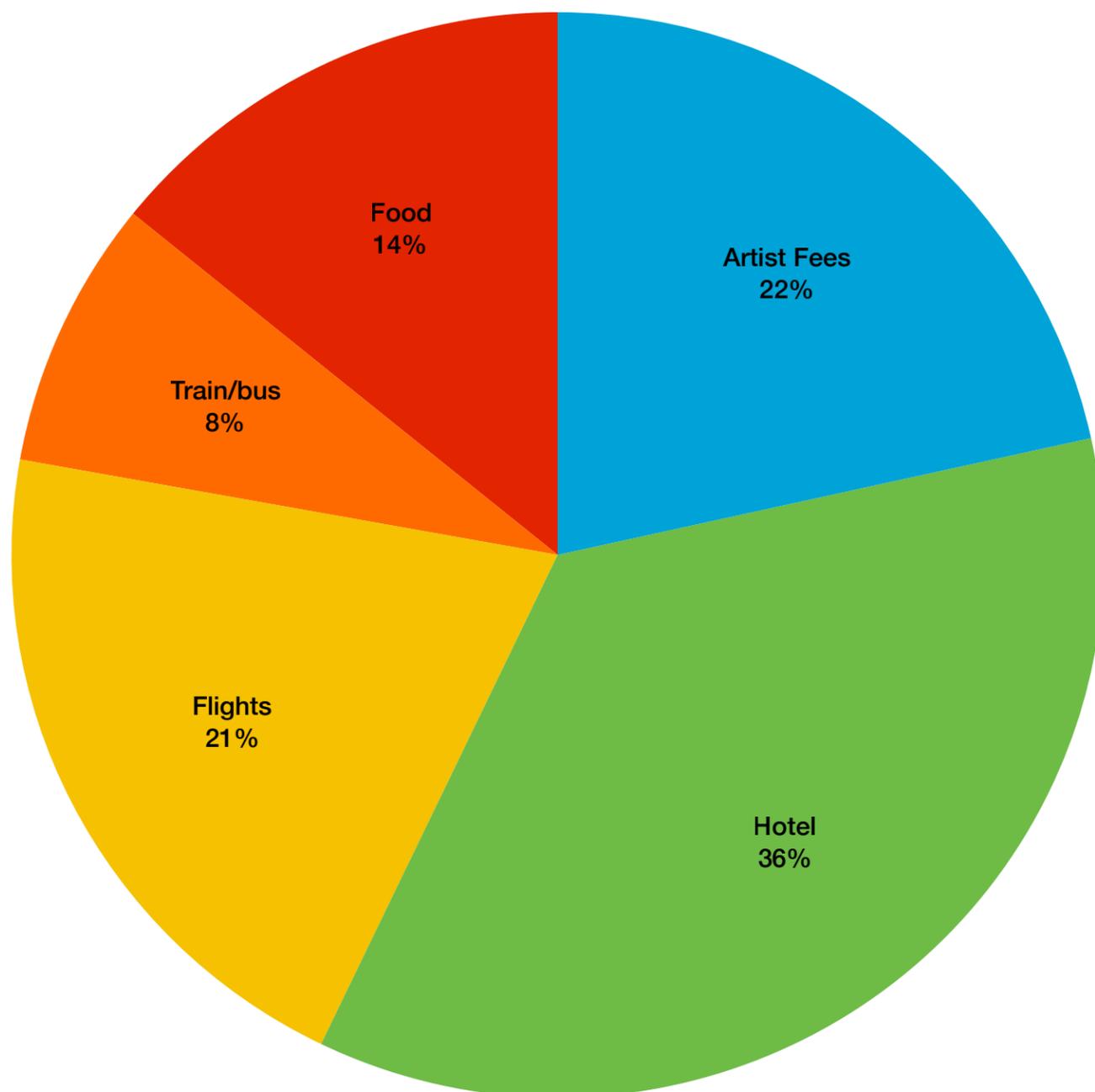


Feature Episode #10 - Belfast (Ep.102) - 01/07/2017

This episode focused on the Belfast Book Festival, which a co-host and I attended for six days in order to meet potential guests, report back on what was happening in the area, and promote the podcast. The episode was hosted by David Turner, and the guests were the editors of literature magazine The Tangerine, poet Matthew Rice, and Women Aloud Northern Ireland. These guests were not paid for appearing as they appeared in order to promote themselves and their work. The discussion was recorded in an apartment rented through Air BnB.

COSTS - £	
Artist Fees - Host: £152	152.00
Hotel	251.00
Flights - London to Belfast	145.92
Train/Bus to and from airports	56.50
Food	100.00
TOTAL	£705.42

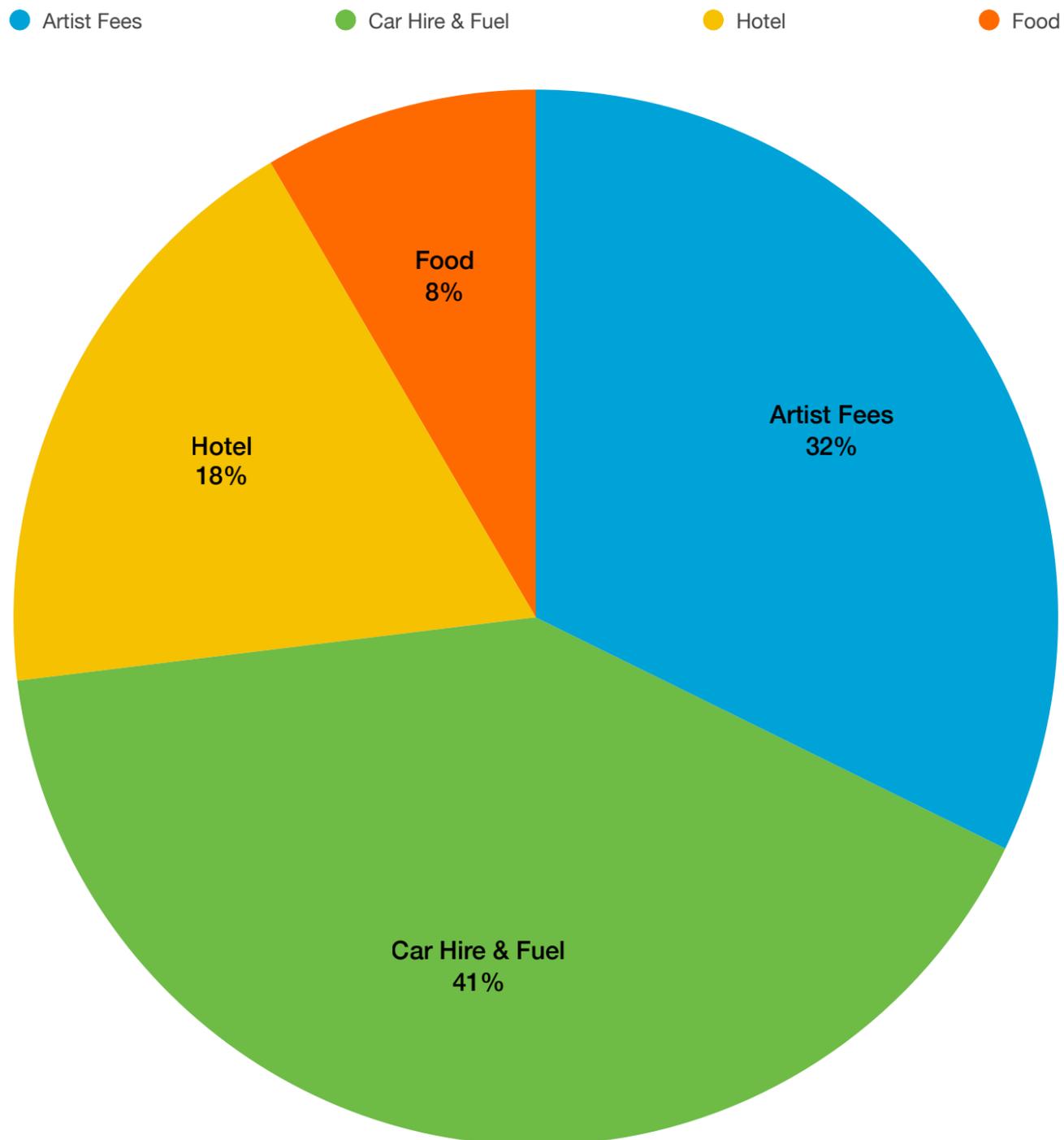
● Artist Fees ● Hotel ● Flights ● Train/bus ● Food



Feature Episode #11 - Wrexham (Ep.104) - 07/08/2017

This episode focused on the poetry scene in and around Wrexham, north Wales. The episode was hosted by David Turner, who was joined by Sophie McKeand and the organisers of Voice Box Spoken Word. The discussions were recorded in an apartment rented through Air BnB, and on-site at arts venue Undegun. Guests were not paid as they were appearing in order to promote themselves and their work.

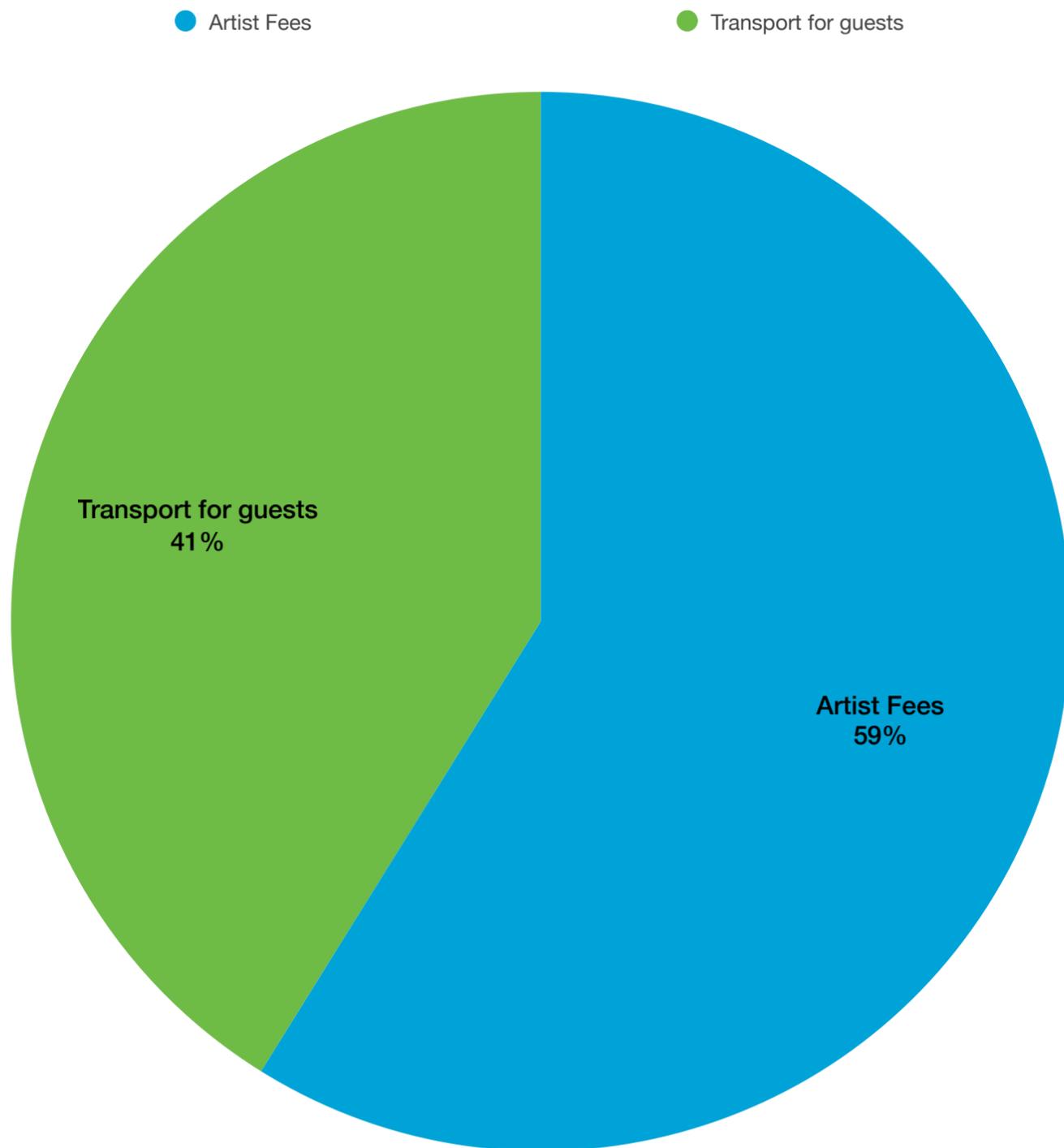
COSTS - £	
Artist Fees - Host: £152	152.00
Hotel	87.00
Car Hire: £150.90; Fuel: £41.91	192.81
Food	40.00
TOTAL	£471.81



Feature Episode #12 - Access to Publishing (Ep.105) - 21/08/2017

In order to give as wide a range of views as possible on this subject we widened our pool of guests to three. We also tried to gather writers from around the UK resulting in far higher transport costs.

COSTS - £	
Artist Fees - Host: £152; 3 x Guests: £75	377.00
Transport for guests	263.60
TOTAL	£640.60



Summary

I'm going to try and not be very negative in this summary as I still can't quite believe how lucky I was to be given the chance to develop this series with the aid of funding from Arts Council England. To be given the chance to invest in the recording and editing set-up of my choice, and to be paid in any way, still feels surreal. Here goes...

I'm very happy with the way that the project went overall. The series achieved exactly what I wanted it to regarding diversity and representation of hosts and guests, and this was reflected in the recognition it received in the British Podcast Awards 2017. A fuller breakdown of this aspect can be found here: <https://lunarpoetrypodcasts.com/series-evaluation/>

I couldn't be more satisfied with my decision to purchase the Zoom H6N recorder. It has provided exceptional flexibility in a wide variety of situations and it was very easy to get to grips with, providing four separate recording channels as standard. The four lavalier microphones have proved very useful, providing a very lightweight method of carrying a number of microphones around the country, and allowing me to be prepared to record 'round-table' discussions on the fly. I do, however, wish I had included a second NTG4 microphone in the budget for one-to-one interviews, as I think this gives far superior quality audio.

I chose to host episodes through SoundCloud but I now feel as though that may have been a mistake, not only because of the uncertainty over the future of the company, but also because the service provides very poor stats and analytics. I will probably look at moving over to Acast or Libsyn.

From September 2016 I began to upload one episode each week, though this proved too frequent for the audience that I had established at that point, and it was definitely too much work for me to maintain. From November 2016 I reduced the output to two episodes a month. The audience seemed to respond well to this change, perhaps because it reduced the pressure to listen, and in turn any feeling that they might fall behind with the schedule.

Although I still maintain that the reason I continued to upload more audio than I had committed to in the *ACE* application was because I enjoyed doing it so much, I think a large part of my motivation was based in guilt, knowing that so many other podcasters were continuing to plug away for no financial gain. I mention this mainly because I think that the guilt resulting from the pressure, in all creative industries, to produce is dangerously under-addressed.

My main complaint through this whole project is how little support I got from major literature organisations with the promotion of the series. This seemed to stem from a lack of awareness of how effective this kind of medium can be in the promotion of the arts. Understanding the possible reasons for why they have not helped more makes it no less frustrating!

I have already begun planning another *ACE* funding application (to fund the series from January 2018 to October 2018), a process that took me around four months of work the first time around. However, regardless of the answer from the funding body, I will continue with the series. I've never gained so much pleasure from a professional project as I have from this one, and I feel extremely fortunate to have found a place on the internet where people are genuinely interested in the conversations I'm having with my peers. Here's to 2018.