

itv **WHAT UNITES A KINGDOM**



# Cultural Strategy at ITV

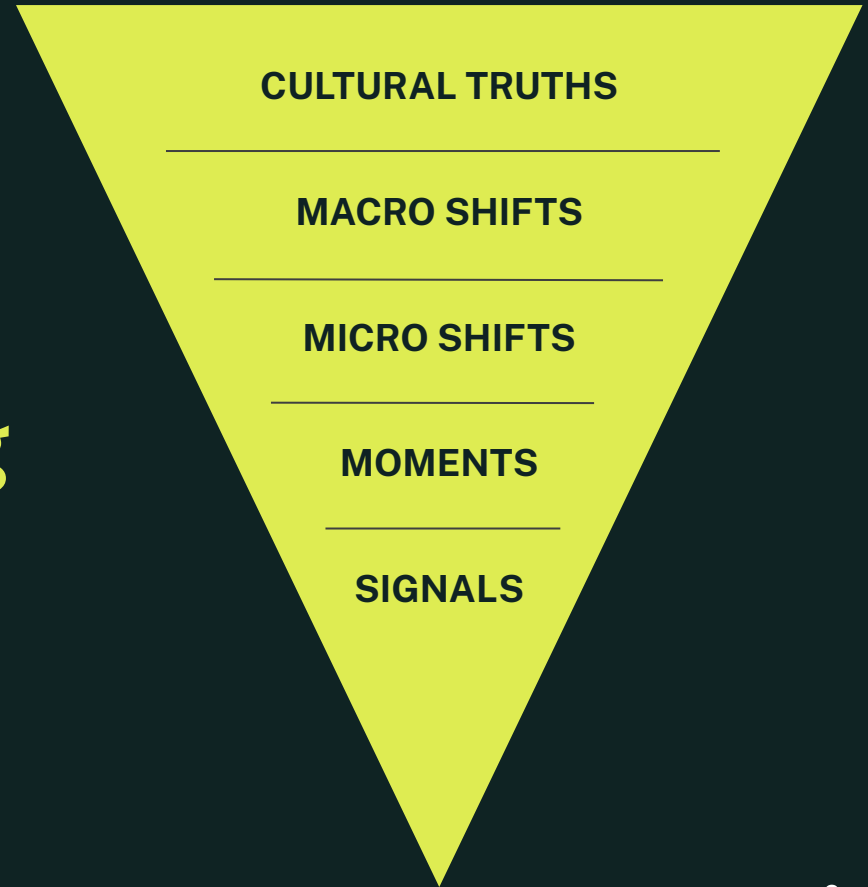
itv **WHAT  
UNITES  
GENERATIONS**

**70** itv

*Hey  
Hunni! x*

itv  
**POP**  
THEORY

# ITV's approach to understanding culture



# Fresh research + enduring cultural truths

Mood of the nation survey



itv **WHAT UNITES A KINGDOM**

*Background text on the graphic includes: FUN, PROUD RESILIENCE, DREAM BIG, GIGGLES, BULLNT, PLAYFUL, QUIRKY, EVERYDAY MAGIC, PLAYFUL, OUR ROOTS, LEARN, RESILIENT, SHINE, WILD.*

WHAT UNITES US

# 5 enduring codes of our cultural DNA

PROTECT

PROGRESS

PROUD  
RESILIENCE



66%

SOCIAL  
GRACES



65%

EVERYDAY  
MAGIC



74%

KNOWING  
YOUR ROOTS



53%

DREAMING  
BIG



55%

% THAT FEEL THAT THIS REPRESENTS WHAT UNITES THE NATION

Source: C1 To what extent do you think the following theme represents what you feel unites us as a nation? % Top 2 Box agree Base: Total sample (N=2,053)

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WHAT UNITES US

# 2026 Manifestations

PROTECT

PROGRESS

PROUD  
RESILIENCE



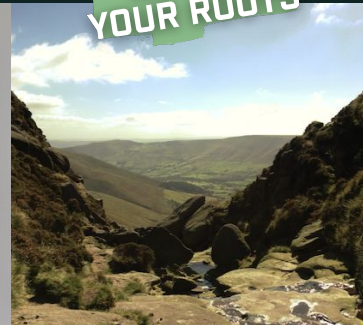
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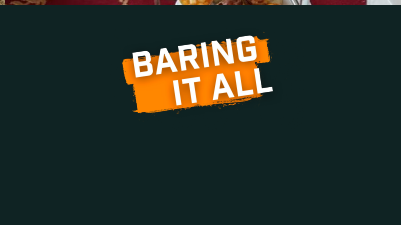
DREAMING  
BIG



PROTECTING  
OUR PEACE



BARING  
IT ALL



MANAGED  
MISCHIEF



DEFIANTLY  
DULL



In 2026 we're lacking  
a shared aspiration for  
the nation

Source: C1 To what extent do you think the following theme represents what you feel unites us as a nation? % Top 2 Box agree Base: Total sample (N=2,053)

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**PROUD  
RESILIENCE**

**“This is the British way!  
We grin and bear it!  
We face adversity with  
a smile and it’ll be alright!”**

**DANIEL, 38, BRADFORD**



## OVERVIEW

# Proud resilience reflects our inner strength and determination

- A no nonsense gritty realism and getting the job done
- Demonstrating inner strength and perseverance
- Contributing to the local community (via small acts of solidarity and support)
- Staying in control of our emotions and keeping our cool
- Prioritising the pack - family keeps us focused, supported and grounded

**“As Brits, we try to keep in high spirits and not let setbacks stop us in our tracks - I think it’s quite empowering.”**

ASHLEY, 28, HARROGATE

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**PROTECTING  
OUR PEACE**

2026 ARTICULATION

# The outside world feels full of drama...

79%

Stressed

of Brits believe we're becoming more angry as a society

Is the no.1 emotion we think others are feeling

ALMOST

1/2

Of brits believe that **'We should prioritise protecting our own' (48%) VS just 33% who agree 'we have a responsibility to look after everyone'**

Source: YouGov Dec 2025 "ITV Mood of the Nation" BASE n=2,249

B3\_1. I think we are becoming a more angry society | I think we are becoming a more tolerant society

A2. Which ONE of the following best describes how people you know (e.g. friends, family, colleagues, neighbours etc.) are feeling at the moment?(Please select one option)

B3\_4. We should prioritise protecting our own | We have a responsibility to look after everyone



## 2026 ARTICULATION

# PROTECTING OUR PEACE

While the world outside feels like a bin fire with rising distrust in brands and each other. Brits are pulling up the drawbridge and cutting out the drama.

It might seem that we've all become a little bit insular, but empathy is still there. 87% still believe that we should be kind and tolerant to one another.

We're not shutting out the world and each other from selfishness, **we're doing so in the name of self preservation.**

# 17%

decline in number  
of Brits volunteering

THE MAJORITY OF BRITS AGREE  
**'My family & friends are the  
only community I care about'**  
(44% agree vs 33% disagree)

Sources: YouGov Dec 2025 "ITV Mood of the Nation" BASE n=2,249  
A4\_2. My family and friends are the only community I care about  
UK Gov Community Life Tracker (2013-2024)

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2026 ARTICULATION

# So what?

1

**What role can your brand play in this space?** Leaning into our introversion or opening us up to the possibilities of connection?

2

**Encourage us to open to one another** by leveraging big cultural moments and talking points

3

**Tailor messaging to focus on the individual rather than the collective** - think personalised rewards, services and creative uses of data

4

**Utilise personalised and targeted comms** i.e. linear addressable and ITVX targeting

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**SOCIAL  
GRACES**

**“We’re self-conscious and modest. There’s a lot of emotional and social awkwardness, so we put high priority on manners.”**

**SIMON MULVANEY, FILMMAKER**



# Social graces is about the appearance of modesty

- An ordered way of life and a way of establishing control
- Politeness and respect - being genteel, quaint and conforming
- House proudness, afternoon tea, having just one biscuit, picky bits, hosting
- Awkwardness of keeping up appearances (or not) and the 'Social schadenfreude' that comes with it

**“I love a queue. To stand in a queue, stay in the queue...  
It's about having respect for other people.”**

KIM, 59, LEEDS

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**BARING  
IT ALL**

2026 ARTICULATION

# We're seeing a significant decline in trust in the collective

6/10

**Brits believe** 'Most brands don't charge fair prices for their products/ services'

NEARLY

1/5

would be worried if their friends/family trusted their neighbours

NEARLY

1/3

would be worried if their friends/family trusted online reviews from the public

Source: YouGov Dec 2025 "ITV Mood of the Nation" BASE n=2,249

B3\_7: Most brands don't charge fair prices for their products/ services | Most brands try to charge a fair price for their products / services

C4: Thinking about the news and information we get, to what extent would you be worried or not worried about a loved one trusting / believing the following platforms or people?

## 2026 ARTICULATION

# BARING IT ALL

Instead of curtain twitching, we're tearing back the net curtain and exposing the raw unfiltered truth.

Declining trust and increasing use of AI means we're favouring raw, human emotion and transparency in favour of 'politeness' and social graces.

We're enjoying content that exposes the truth and offers a unfiltered peek behind the scenes. Looking up to truth crusaders like Martin Lewis, Lily Allen and David Attenborough. Even if we're not rushing to expose our innermost thoughts ourselves...

**Honesty** is the **number 1 value Brits** want the government to promote in 2026

Source: YouGov Dec 2025 "ITV Mood of the Nation" BASE n=2,249  
B2. In your opinion, which, if any, of the following values do you think our future government should promote? (please select up to 3 options)

**+12% YoY increase**  
in viewing of  
**ITV2 reality shows**



2026 ARTICULATION

# So what?

1

**Radical honest, transparency and integrity is of utmost important to brits** – what's a truth your brand can expose?

2

**Be undeniably human, centring emotion in campaigns** – think gritty texture, wrinkles, uncomfortable human emotions

3

**Democratize insider knowledge** – what spaces can you give consumers the inside scoop on?

4

**Messiness and friction feels human**, how can you create the feeling of friction without compromising customer experience

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**KNOWING  
YOUR ROOTS**

**“I’m an amateur cheese maker so I have to be in touch with the environment. I’m proud to turn humble milk into products that people admire.”**

**CRAIG, 34, BRISTOL**



## OVERVIEW

# Reconnecting with grounded places and people

- In a world that feels performative it's about connecting with what feels 'real'
- Appreciating the here and now
- Embracing our local identities and provenance
- Appreciating humble, honest graft and craftsmanship

**“The UK has so many beautiful and interesting places. To visit, touch, see and sample life from years gone by helps us to understand where we come from.”**

**BARBARA, 69, LEEDS**

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DEFIANTLY  
DULL

2026 ARTICULATION

# Consciously cutting back

1/5

Say **appreciating life's simple pleasures** has become more important over the past year

46%

Are trying to cut down the amount they share online vs just 15% who aren't

Source: YouGov Dec 2025 "ITV Mood of the Nation" BASE n=2,249

B3\_7. Most brands don't charge fair prices for their products/ services | Most brands try to charge a fair price for their products / services

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## 2026 ARTICULATION

# DEFIANTLY DULL

In 2025 it was all about enveloping ourselves in classic comforts, in 2026 it's more a conscious embracing of the dull and mundane.

Brits are using monk-like routines, 'dull' hobbies and 'dumb phones' to ground themselves in a world that feels overstimulating.

**Understimulating, dull hobbies are becoming the ultimate social flex** - from smashing crossword puzzles to pub quizzes to joining 'dull' clubs online where Brits share their mundane observations. As the ultimate way to signal our freedom from the hyper performative expectations of social media.

# 200%

Increase in google searches for dumb phones with WhatsApp in the UK (2021-2026)

# 7/10

Brits say having a routine is important to them

Source: YouGov Dec 2025 "ITV Mood of the Nation" BASE n=2,249

B2. In your opinion, which, if any, of the following values do you think our future government should promote? (please select up to 3 options)



2026 ARTICULATION

# So what?

1

What 'dull' parts of your business can you hero?

2

Celebrate **mundane** and 'basic' products

3

Own 'boring' routine **moments** e.g. taking out the bins, the morning commute or settling down to watch a soap.

4

In an overstimulating world, deliberately **dulling your brand down** can help it stand out.

44%

YoY increase  
in viewers of  
Grantchester

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**DREAMING  
BIG**

**“The best thing about the underdog is the thing about sticking it to the man. It is quite British.”**

**PATRICK YOUNGE, ITV STUDIOS NON-EXEC DIRECTOR**

## 2026 ARTICULATION

# A nation inspired by grassroots changemakers

- Celebrating those with imagination and creativity
- Plucky underdog spirit
- Finding out the 'who' but mainly the 'how' behind people's success
- Championing everyday heroes
- Humble, marvelling expertise

**"I love to read about and see success stories of people who come from humble beginnings and make a success of their lives."**

**BARBARA, 69, LEEDS**

Source: YouGov Dec 2025 "ITV Mood of the Nation" BASE n=2,249 B2. In your opinion, which, if any, of the following values do you think our future government should promote? (please select up to 3 options)

NADIYA BAKES



Nadiya Hussain\*



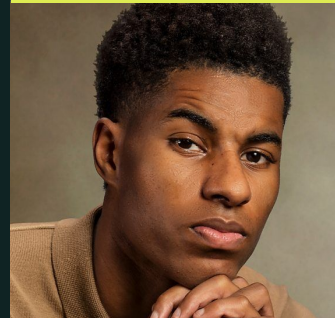
Dr Sarah Gilbert



Olympic Opening Ceremony



Local Operatic Society



Marcus Rashford



David Bowie\*

2026 ARTICULATION

# When it comes to collective inspiration, we're in a bit of a funk...

ONLY

48%

**believe** we have more  
in common than that  
which divides us

ONLY

53%

are actively striving  
to **improve** their/  
their families lives

ONLY

13%

describe most people  
in their communities  
as **thriving**

Source: YouGov Dec 2025 "ITV Mood of the Nation" BASE n=2,249

B3\_7. Most brands don't charge fair prices for their products/ services | Most brands try to charge a fair price for their products / services

C4: Thinking about the news and information we get, to what extent would you be worried or not worried about a loved one trusting / believing the following platforms or people?

# ...But this could all change come June

## TOP UNITING FORCES

1

Humour

2

Big sporting events

3

Respect

**Brits are looking forward to the 2026 World Cup more than their own birthday's**

Sources:  
YouGov Dec 2025 "ITV Mood of the Nation" BASE n=2,249  
C1. Of the following items, which do you feel brings people together?  
C2. Of the following events next year, which events are you looking forward to the most?



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EVERYDAY  
MAGIC

**“Life can be tough. We need to share smiles and laughs at home & work. Being together, sharing the good and bad times gets us through life.”**

**ALISON, 55, BIRMINGHAM**

## 2026 ARTICULATION

# Everyday magic is authentic sparkle in daily life

- A **British coping mechanism** (not seen in other countries where humour has a place)
- **Happy hijinks** to help us cope with whatever life throws at us, or to just get through the day
- Coming together in moments of **collective effervescence**
- **Wearing our hearts on our sleeves** and facing our feelings head on

Source: YouGov Dec 2025 "ITV Mood of the Nation" BASE n=2,249 B2. In your opinion, which, if any, of the following values do you think our future government should promote? (please select up to 3 options)

Releasing the feels



Birthday Party



Time with family



This Morning



Whimsy and Kitsch



Dressing up



Royal support for mental health



Brilliantly Banal



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**MANAGED  
MISCHIEF**

## 2026 ARTICULATION

**We're frustrated with the status quo,  
but too burnt out to properly act on it...**

**75%**

Believe that **society needs to change**  
(5% increase YoY) vs only 5% who would  
like to keep things the way they are

**2nd**

Highest current feeling  
is **exhaustion**

Source: YouGov Dec 2025 "ITV Mood of the Nation" BASE n=2,249

B3\_7: Most brands don't charge fair prices for their products/ services | Most brands try to charge a fair price for their products / services

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## 2026 ARTICULATION

# MANAGED MISCHIEF

**British culture is characterised by restraint and self control, this sentiment has been enhanced by the cost-of-living crisis. But when you shove something down, it's bound to boil over.**

Brits are leaning into mischievous micro rebellions to get through the everyday grind. Whether it's treating yourself (even when you've achieved nothing) or sneaking in a cheeky innuendo into a work meeting. We're embracing whimsy and frivolity when we feel we can.

But importantly this isn't spontaneous, it's planned and managed in advance, meaning it never gets 'too wild'.

# 3rd

**'Small treats' are ranked as the 3rd highest source of joy for Gen Z and Millennial audiences combined**

Sources:  
YouGov Dec 2025 "ITV Mood of the Nation" BASE n=2,249  
C1. Of the following items, which do you feel brings people together?  
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2026 ARTICULATION

# So what?



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**+10%**

YoY increase  
in viewers of  
G'Wed on ITVX

1

How can you add a  
sprinkle of mischief  
and cheekiness to  
brand comms?

2

Be a partner in  
permissiveness,  
giving permission  
for consumers  
to unleash their  
'naughty side'

3

Create events  
or moments for  
managed mischief  
i.e. elevensies,  
Pimm's o'clock,  
bottomless brunch

# Coming up

**70 Years of Relationships**



**Mid-March**

**Influential Content (Name TBC)**



**Early May**

**ITV Subcultures**



**Late Q2/ early Q3**

# Let's chat!

**LUCY IRVING**

Cultural Strategy Lead

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**There's No Place Like *itv***