

Creative Newington

so much fun and
right on your
doorstep!

Working Group
Model Making
Mosaics Workshops
Design Event
Hot Dog Club
Launch Event
Alley Animals
Best Fe
Garden
Roundabout
Storytelling
Youth Theatre
Holiday Programme
Singing
Species ID
Window Vinyls
Screaming Mary Club



Creative
Civic
Change

Final Project Report

September 2018 – October 2022

Written by the Working Group

This artwork has been created by a local resident, Dean Perry

Thank you...

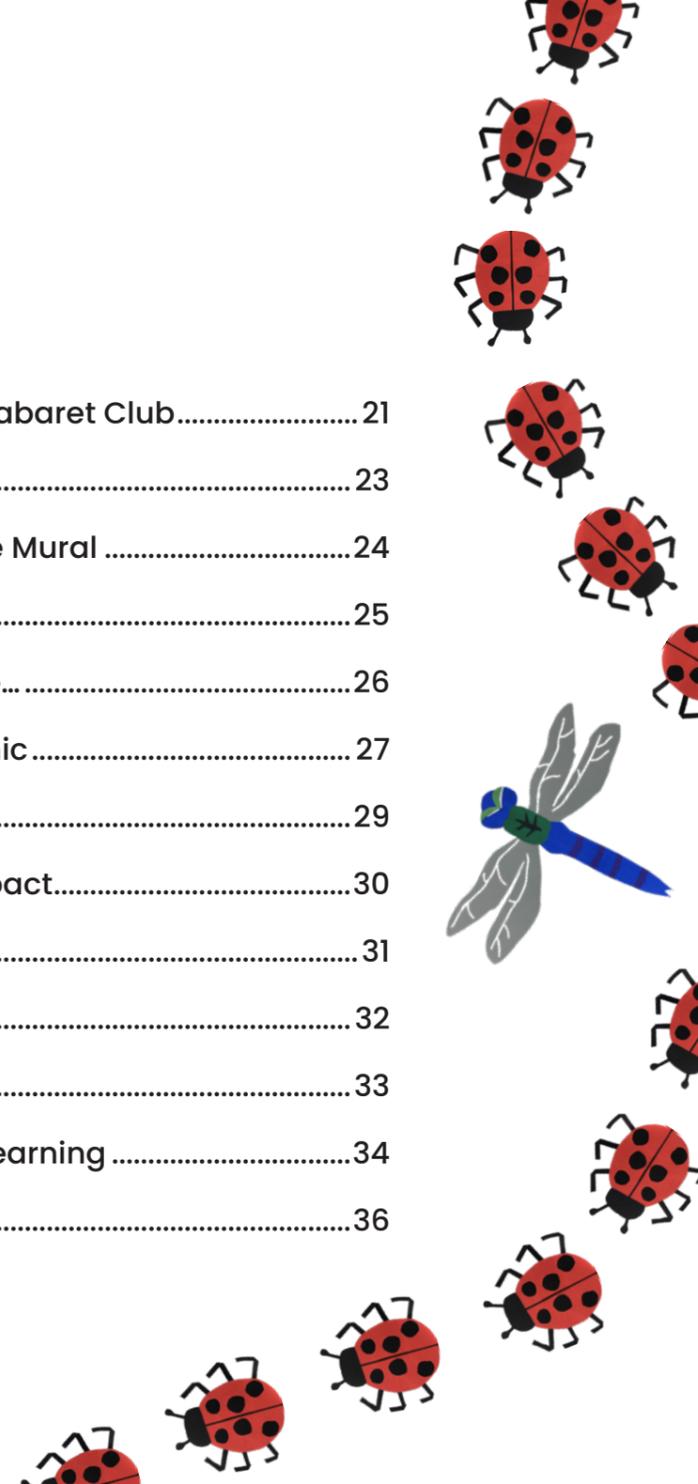
This journey would not have been possible without the support, patience and understanding from a wide range of people. We would particularly like to extend a very large 'thank you' to:

- | | |
|---|--|
| Grace Bremner | Screaming Alley, Lara |
| Esmée Fairbairn | Paines Plough |
| Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation | Beverly Balls, Lisa Payne |
| Local Trust | Looping the Loop, Ellie |
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| Buckle Up Films, Mats & Hannah | Iswoodgood, Dan |
| Inspiration Creative CIC, Zoe & Peter | Pam Hardiman |



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Introduction

Creative Newington was a 3½ year project exploring the impact of resident-led creativity.

Creative Newington was part of the Creative Civic Change programme, one of 15 projects across England designed to explore the impact of adopting a resident-led approach to arts and creativity. The project activities were designed by residents, and were deliberately broad and accessible to involve as many different people as possible. The Newington Big Local partnership was actively involved throughout all phases of the project, allowing us to embed Creative Newington as a 'community-owned' project from the outset. The project grew and evolved during its lifespan and has left a lasting legacy, not only on individuals but also on the fabric of the community.

The project plan was structured around specific areas to reflect what was locally important and could be designed and largely delivered by residents:

-  Green spaces
-  Community centre
-  Community theatre
-  Storytelling

We want visible changes that people can recognise as their own.



Timeline

Getting Started
Sept' - Nov' 18

Community
conversations

Consultation
external
stakeholders

Expression of
interest

Build It
Dec' 18 - Mar' 19

Steering Group
Mood boards
Model making
workshops

Design event
Hot Dog Club

Mosaic workshops

Delivery Phase
May 2019 - Oct' 2022

Species ID
Covid

Launch event

Roundabout 2019

Holiday Activities

Sensory Garden

Buckle Up

Alley Animals

Window Vinyls

Youth Theatre

Creative Packs

& Challenges

Roundabout 2021

Roundabout 2022

Completed film

Screaming Mary
Club

Working Group

The main success factor was that residents led all the decisions to inform the design and delivery of the project activities.

In January 2019 the resident-led project working group was set up, comprising residents of all ages, local artists, the Newington Big Local Chair, staff and volunteers and the Locally Trusted Organisation (LTO), and work began to plan consultation events and activities. From the outset, the working group was keen to ensure that as many local people as possible were given opportunities to inform the project design.

Although the working group met formally every month, with more meetings during busy periods and less during parts of the pandemic, we used every activity and interaction as a chance to gather ideas and to foster community leadership. This led to a diverse range of creative ideas and opportunities.

The wide-ranging conversations and consultation during the design phase of the project provided a solid foundation for project activities and enabled the working group to operate with confidence that wider community wishes were being met.

Membership of the working group changed during the project as people's lives and circumstances changed, but there was a committed, core group of residents who continue to be actively involved in steering Newington's creative legacy.

Not everything we delivered went as planned and we experienced some major challenges. However, the funding flexibility enabled the working group to learn from failure and to try things in new ways, which led to some great successes.

Background

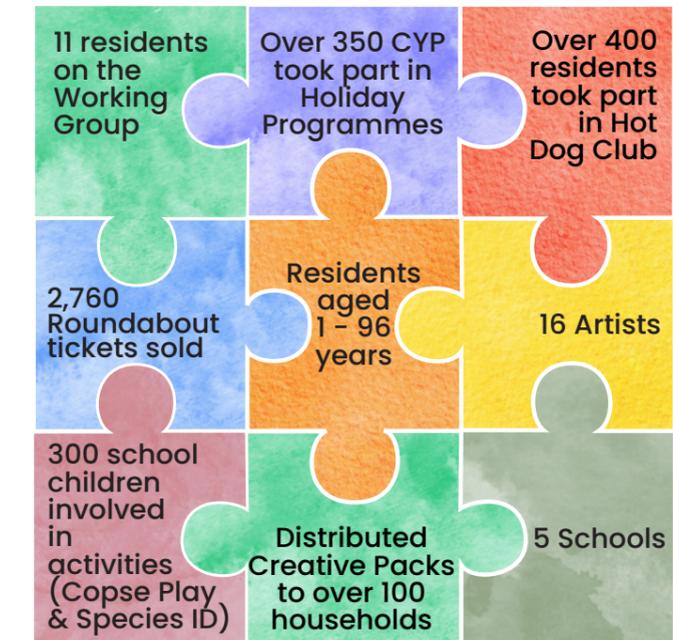
Creative Newington provided diverse creative activities to offer local people exposure to new creative skills and experiences.

Throughout the project we offered a range of events and activities to encourage people of all ages to participate and try something new. These activities allowed us to better understand challenges and barriers to creative participation, including access, lack of confidence, finance and preconceived misconceptions of the community and the community centre.

A key aim of the project was to provide new experiences and to involve as many local people as possible. We provided sessions for older people, young people, children and families, through after school and holiday clubs, working with schools, the housing association, artists and performing arts organisations and more.

The project was supported by Local Trust's Senior Programme Coordinator, Grace Bremner, a dedicated evaluation team and access to a

'Critical Friend'. The programme design afforded us with the freedom to try new things, to truly reflect the interests and ideas of local people.



The kids really look forward to the Hot Dog Club, they start asking on Monday if it's on! We love doing the alley animals – can we do more?

Hot Dog Club

Regular creative activities for families facilitated ongoing conversations, supporting stronger relationships and community ownership.

Initiated during the design phase, we delivered creative family sessions throughout the project, with a significant gap during the pandemic. The Hot Dog Club included food and ran after school and during school holidays. It was aimed at primary school children, their younger siblings and parents/carers. The sessions initially focussed on Alley Animals and mosaics, but increased in popularity to the extent that we introduced Lego builds, bunting and other activities as a way to include up to 65 residents each week. The club offered the opportunity to talk to residents and our activities and trips were informed by their ideas.

Our key objective was to encourage creativity, but alongside this we discovered that parents were finding it invaluable, as a way to connect, meet new friends and to build and strengthen relationships. Children made new friends and socialised with all ages, imitating an extended family group.



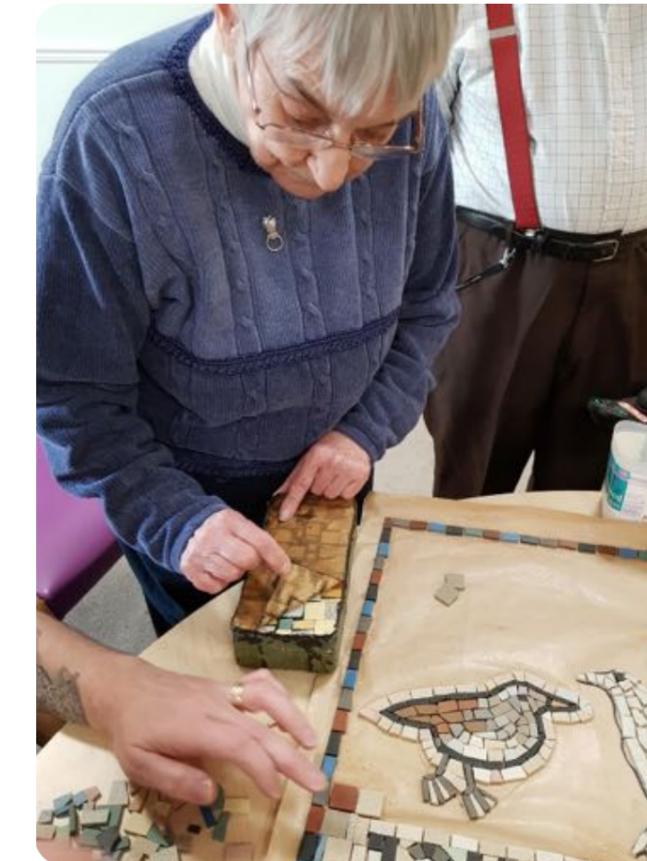
Right Place, Right Time

From the outset we understood that real community participation would only be achieved if we took activities to where people are.

During the initial community consultation we identified Copperfields, an extra care complex in Newington for over 55s as a route to involve our older population. We already had strong links with families, through existing relationships, activities and schools but less developed connections with older people.

Throughout the project we ensured that activities were delivered at Copperfields, made easier by having Copperfields residents on the working group! Despite a very difficult period during and after Covid we discovered that older people tend to be more vocal about what they do, and don't want and are much more accomplished at completing self-led work. Despite the barriers we were determined that the sensory garden, identified by them during the early consultation, would become a reality.

After the pandemic we moved working group meetings and cabaret sessions to the Copperfields activity room, fostering a more cohesive approach to community.



Copse Play

Engaging with nature encourages a natural curiosity.

We worked in partnership with aim4 CIC in 2020 to deliver a programme of natural play activities. The initial concept was to deliver outdoor community activities, bringing children, young people and their families together to explore nature. However, the project was subject to numerous alterations as government Covid guidance changed and was eventually delivered in partnership with local schools. 180 children took part in a carousel of creative activities, working with four artists.

By working with schools, the Copse Play project was able to ensure a Covid-secure environment, and to start to re-engage with local people after the challenges of lockdown.



The artists were really engaging and worked well with the children. The activities were really age appropriate and providing enough interest and challenge for the children. The Copse environment was really engaging and exciting for the children. Overall it was a very memorable experience for the children and we would be keen to come back again!

Holiday Programmes

School holidays can be tough, providing opportunities to come together promotes neighbourliness and community cohesion.

The project enabled us to provide creative activities during school holidays. From Easter 2021 these were complemented by the national Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programme and up to 60 children per day attended free sessions that focussed on connecting with nature, exploring different creative disciplines and creating installations for the community. We introduced wood carving, dance, theatre, storytelling, bird boxes, nature inspired activities, map making, cooking, healthy meals and much more.

Newington was unique within local provision insofar as we actively encouraged parents and carers to attend with their children. Parents told us that it is important that they are welcome, meeting other parents and the opportunity to socialise and eat together.



I find it welcoming, I don't feel uncomfortable and nobody judges Mike – they accept him. That means everything to me. Mike would be at home, alone, on an X-Box if he could.



Alley Animals

Design and create animals to provide colour and interest to the alley that runs between the Copse and Newington Primary School.

The concept for 'Alley Animals' came from early conversations with residents at our design event in March 2019 and is a good example of how the project was able to implement local ideas.

We provided the materials, alongside practical and artistic support and residents designed and decorated a massive collection of animals, birds, flowers and mythical creatures. Although the initial phase of this project was completed in 2019 we continued to revisit it in response to requests from local people. The Alley Animals brighten up a long, previously boring alley that is a route to and from school for numerous families. The community output has been so extensive that Alley Animals also form a central element on the community centre mural.

The installation continues to delight children on a daily basis. Participation was very widespread meaning that numerous families have made a direct contribution. This project strand demonstrated what is possible and was a key moment in changing attitudes towards community pride and ownership.



*I thought they would be little tiny birds and animals that people would have to search for!
I'm amazed, I love them.*



Sensory Garden

The sensory garden is a physical testament to the power of local voices and the immeasurable benefits of collaboration.

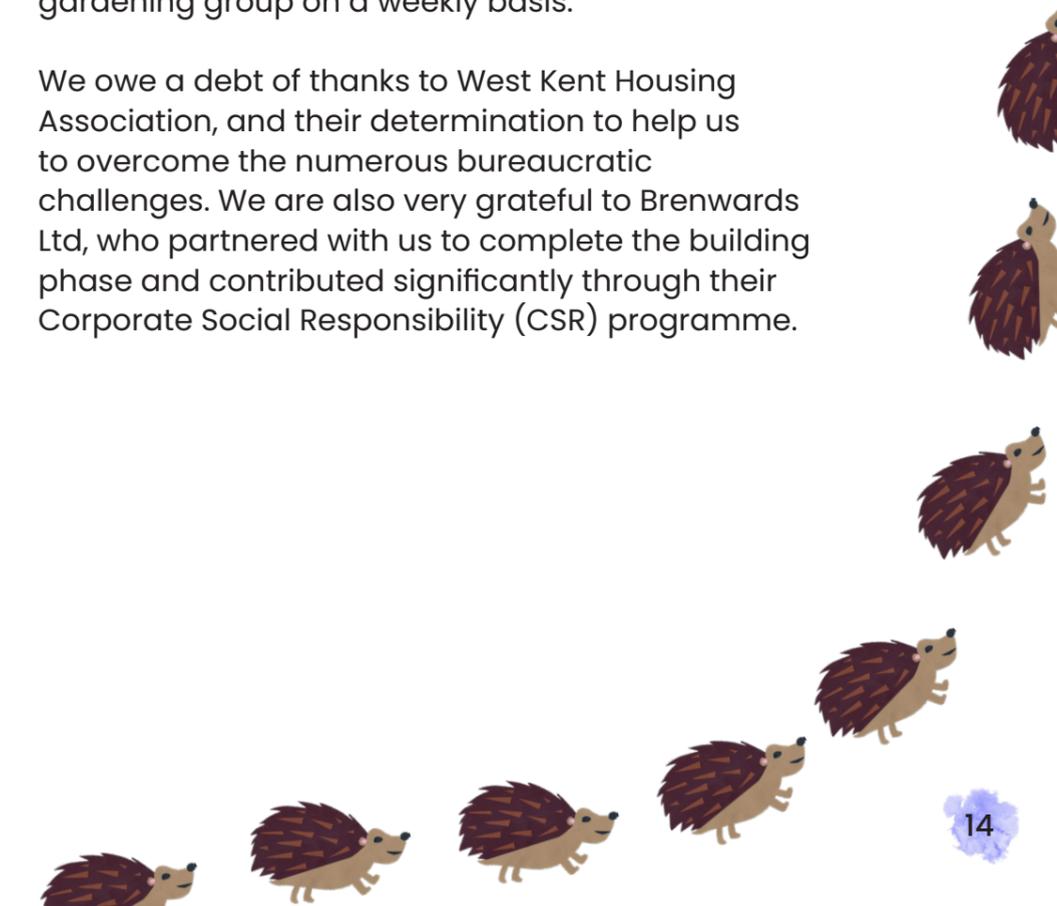
The sensory garden is situated in Copperfields and this strand of the project was identified early in the consultation. When the centre opened in 2016 residents were encouraged to take ownership of the garden and to make it their own.

Copperfields residents undertook numerous consultation activities and as early as March 2019, as part of Creative Newington had created a design and planting plan for a new 'sensory garden' that would benefit as many residents as possible.

We believed that this would be a 'quick win' for us, but we were very wrong! Copperfields is a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) and this presented significant hurdles, challenges and delays. A core group at Copperfield's used this time to create a number of armed forces themed mosaic slabs for the garden, reflecting their life experiences and memories. The garden was at last completed in November 2021 and these mosaics have been incorporated in the design.

It would have been easy to abandon this element of the project, but the patience and resolve of the working group paid off. Newington Big Local's community gardener supports the resident's gardening group on a weekly basis.

We owe a debt of thanks to West Kent Housing Association, and their determination to help us to overcome the numerous bureaucratic challenges. We are also very grateful to Brenwards Ltd, who partnered with us to complete the building phase and contributed significantly through their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programme.





Sitting Pretty

The mosaic benches and signage have provided a visible illustration of resident's creativity and have enabled community ownership and pride .

During the design phase of the project residents identified the drab, concrete benches and sign outside the community centre. 'Sitting Pretty' evolved as a way to create interest and local ownership by cladding these with community-made mosaics.

Mosaic activities were undertaken by children and families, at the Hot Dog Club and by older residents at Copperfields. The activity was not without its challenges; the finished artwork is time consuming and fiddly. We were fortunate to work with a master mosaic maker, Rob Turner and the fairies in his workshop.

We asked people to create mosaics that represented their lives and experiences. Emergency vehicles emerged as a theme before Covid but became emblematic of the pandemic.

The completed artwork was designed and created by diverse local people and represents what is important to them; it is displayed in the sensory garden and at the community centre and continues to delight on a daily basis.





Roundabout Theatre

Bring high quality theatre into the heart of the community, offering new experiences and opportunities.

Our partnership with Paines Plough offered the opportunity to bring World class theatre into the heart of Newington, presenting an opportunity to challenge negative perceptions of the estate, a recurrent theme during the Build It consultation phase. This initiative was not without significant challenges; our lack of performing arts experience put us on a steep learning curve. Throughout the three community tours, in 2019, 2021 and 2022 we grew in confidence and knowledge, and brought in people with specialist knowledge. We programmed a wide range of community shows to offer lots of new experiences.

The Roundabout tour brought something very different into Newington. Its bright yellow dome was hard to miss and young people in particular were enthralled, attending every possible performance, sometimes seeing shows more than once just to be inside the theatre!

Our key focus was to encourage local residents to experience theatre and performance, and to attract visitors from outside Newington. Our ticket sales grew year on year, and each Roundabout tour had standout highlights.

-  2019 Newington Youth Theatre Group
-  2020 Screaming Mary Club
-  2022 Afro-Bhangra Fusion Group
-  Over 80 local volunteers
-  Engaged four local schools

We are hoping to work with Paines Plough to arrange a longer visit. This would enable us to use Roundabout for a wider range of activities and to reach more schools and local organisations.

I've never seen anything like that before. I've seen the Roundabout but I've never thought about going inside.. I had no idea what it was. Amazing!

Newington Youth Theatre

Providing an opportunity for children to learn and grow through experiencing performing arts.



Children were enthralled by their first experience in Roundabout in 2019, including the theatre workshop delivered by Inspiration Creative CIC, a Thanet based inclusive creative arts company. This led to conversations about how inaccessible drama and theatre groups are for local children, due to cost as well as distance and a misunderstanding that drama 'isn't for people like us'. Starlings Support CIC, the LTO, liaised with residents, Newington Big Local and Inspiration Creative and the Newington Youth Theatre Club was created. Initially resourced through external funds, the Youth Theatre Club started in March 2020, just as the first Covid lockdown was announced! The club was delivered on Zoom, from March 2020 until May 2021, which presented the now familiar challenges of online provision.

The group subsequently performed two sell out shows in Roundabout, for an audience of 180 people in 2021 and performed again in October 2022, this time with a play that they wrote themselves.

This project has demonstrated the success of working with the right external partner. The Inspiration Creative leaders, Zoe and Peter have a great deal of experience in working with children who have a range of additional needs, and this has proved invaluable as around half of the Newington Youth Theatre children live with a disability or life-long medical condition. Inspiration Creative have embraced a collaborative ethos throughout, ensuring that the working group and Newington Big Local partnership were informed of successes and challenges and could be actively involved in changes. The flexibility of the external funder allowed us the 'weather the storm' during the Covid pandemic.

Although not in the original project plan, the working group determined that the impact of the group merited continuation and provided funding from November 2021 to February 2023. We are working with Inspiration Creative to secure ongoing funding.

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Screaming Mary Cabaret Club

Since Victorian times, cabaret and variety have provided stages and rare opportunities for women, and particularly working class women to express themselves.

The idea for the cabaret workshops evolved following a performance of Screaming Alley cabaret in Roundabout 2021. The pilot sessions were disappointing and take-up was poor. Nevertheless, the working group did not want to admit failure and explored what didn't work, and why.

The day and venue were changed and after a period of engagement and marketing the sessions were relaunched, in the gym at Copperfields. The activities included theatre-making and production alongside workshops in performance, make-up, costume making, burlesque, spoken word, comedy and dance, with a focus on having fun.

A group of 15 women, aged 18 to 87 arrived on their own at the start and found a safe, welcoming and fun space. The club provided an outlet where they could be themselves, meet new people and overcome social anxiety.

They quickly identified themselves as the Screaming Mary Club, forming strong relationships and defining desired outcomes.

This project has been a resounding success, resulting from a number of factors. Firstly, the working group was not defeated and actively sought alternative solutions. The change of venue necessitated that management at Copperfields took a leap of faith; cabaret is a long way from Bingo! The change of venue had the unforeseen advantage of making the club accessible for everyone, particularly older residents, some of whom hadn't left Copperfields since before Covid and/or are in wheelchairs and didn't have the means or confidence to attend elsewhere. Screaming Alley worked closely with community leaders to encourage participation and ensure that attendees felt welcome and safe. Finally, the flexibility of the Creative Civic Change programme allowed us to 'try again'.

We need a place to let loose, a women only space, a place to play and learn new things that doesn't feel like a class, like a task.

Species ID Signs

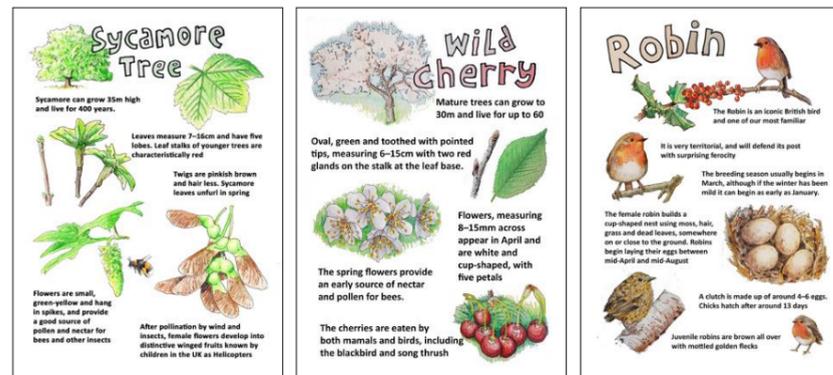
Work with local schools to identify plants, bugs and animals to create species ID signs for the Copse.

We worked with year 4 children at Newington Community Primary School to research and design the Species ID Signs. We asked the children to think about their experiences and to answer five questions. Their responses show that the children are clearly inspired by nature and embrace outdoor learning. It is interesting to see ideas from the children's perspective; the Copse clearly holds a special place in the children's imagination as well as being a place for education.

Due to Covid and school closures these children reflected many months later on their experiences of working with us. We are struck by how vivid their memories are and feel that their involvement has had a positive and enduring impact.

Some young people from Chill Club, Newington's youth group, enjoyed installing the signs.

A shift in the focus from a private space to a shared educational and recreational space has begun.

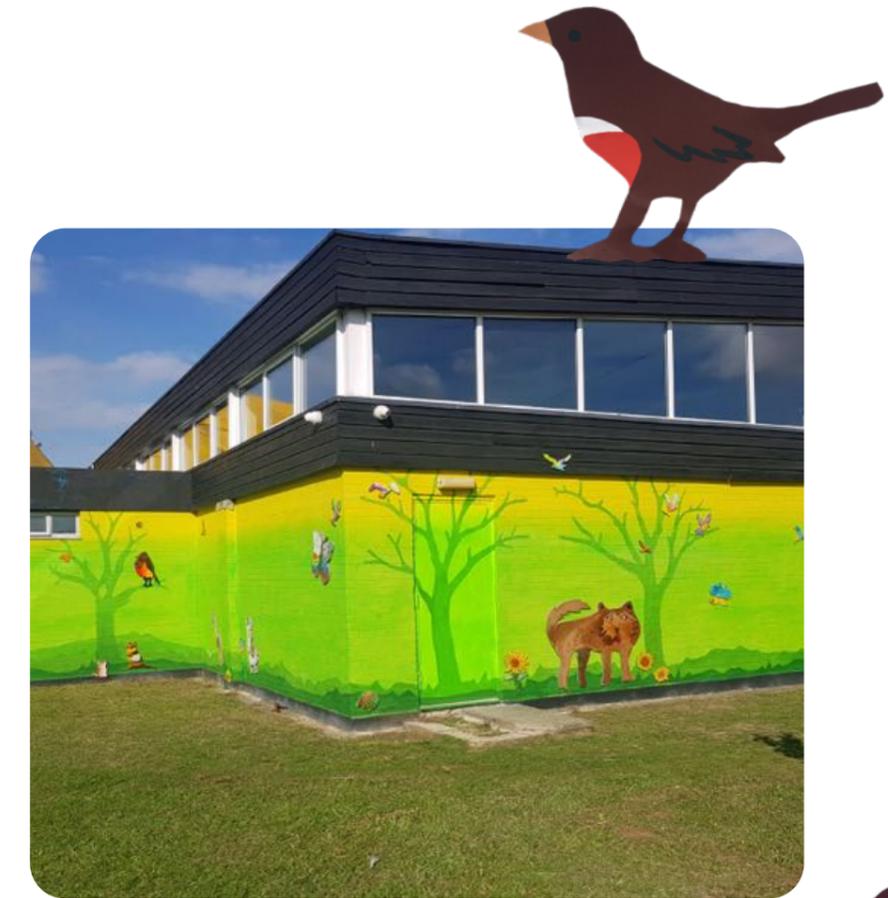


Community Centre Mural

The community centre is located in a prominent position and is the hub in Newington; its importance to local people was strengthened further during the pandemic. The working group started talking about the need to brighten up the centre as early as September 2019, partly in response to the success of the Alley Animals project. The community were so prolific that 'excess' designs were installed on the community centre.

We asked our artist in residence to propose a number of designs and the decision was reached through discussion at the working group and local engagement and conversations.

The result is striking and beautiful; the community centre is now a jewel in the centre of the community.



Window Art

Use community's drawings to design collage and create vinyl's for the community centre windows, with a stained glass effect to introduce colour and ownership.

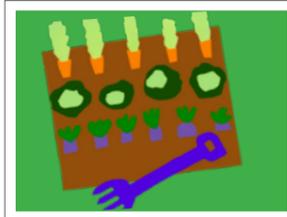
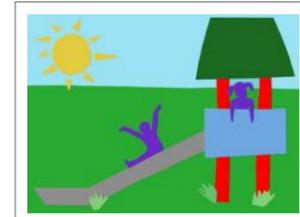
The idea for creating window vinyls came from conversations during the design phase. We were never quite sure how to implement this idea, and apart from starting to gather resident's designs and pictures we procrastinated! It wasn't until late November 2021 that we eventually took the bull by the horns to progress this project.

The working group agreed a rough plan and commissioned Nova Marshall, one of our trusted artists to turn this into reality. The design concept for the window designs were inspired by the famous artist Henri Matisse, who used colour and collage to create designs for the stained-glass windows of the Chapel of the Rosary in France.

Nova arranged a number of workshops and collected a vast array of artwork.

The window vinyls are the last piece in the jigsaw that represents the success of our Creative Civic Change journey, celebrating the creative capacity the project has uncovered. Well over 100 individual residents have taken part in design workshops and will see their work immortalised on the community centre for many years.

During the project the sense of community ownership has gained momentum and we are struck by how important it is to residents that they are able to design their own future.



And so much more...

Best Fest

In 2019 and 2021 the project worked alongside Newington Big Local to contribute to Newington's annual community arts festival. This free event attracts over 2,500 local people and is an opportunity to enjoy music and entertainment, to have a go at various arts and crafts activities and to socialise with friends and neighbours. Best Fest brings together numerous external partners, such as Kent Fire and Rescue, Age UK and Orbit Housing. They are all tasked with offering creative activities as a way to involve local people and to instigate conversations. The power of this annual creative arts festival to bring people together should not be underestimated.

Planters and Community Orchard

In response to repeated objections from residents we planted a community orchard and raised planters to stop parents parking on the grass as school drop-off and collection times. The children enjoyed decorating and planting these new community beds and we are looking forward to having home grown fruit and vegetables next year.

Local parents are delighted that the area is now safer for the school run!

Wood Carving

Local children worked alongside Dan Hilton, from Iswoodgood to design and create benches for the Copse. These will form a central element of the outdoor classroom that we are installing.

Trips and Visits

The Creative Newington project enabled a number of trips and visits. These ranged from a visit to The Bevi community pub in Brighton, the Creative Civic Change peer learning events, family visits to the Van Gogh Experience at the South Bank Centre and the Tower of London and theatre trips including the Bunker of Zion and The Three Musketeers, on Margate beach.

Us and the children thoroughly enjoyed it, the actors were really good in how they adapted into different characters also encouraging the audience to join in singing and clapping the children said they were funny.

The Covid Pandemic

In March 2020 the Newington team turned their attention to meeting residents' immediate needs; setting up Covid-secure ways to deliver our Community Food Club and free food and moving the youth group online. As we all became more accustomed to the new reality of life we considered the importance of connections and how creativity could support these without physical meetings.

We distributed creative packs, and linked these to online challenges, with people posting their creations on Facebook and prizes for the best. We distributed over 400 creative packs to households and young people in Newington. Families told us that these provided some focus and relief from home schooling and encouraged their children to play together, away from screens. The creative packs and online challenges reminded people that they are part of a caring and supportive community family. By posting pictures of creative challenges online families were able to share their

common experiences and to feel "less alone".

During Covid we collaborated with Looping the Loop, a Ramsgate based performing arts organisation supporting artists to make new work and encouraging people of all ages to join them on their adventures in performance. The mum, dad and son team brought their 'Nearly Normal Thanet Dog Agility Team' doorstep performance to families in Newington. The reactions were amazing; it was brilliant to bring some fun and laughter to families, many of whom were struggling with the lockdown constraints. The initial feedback was that the performances were "unexpected, fun and exciting".

Further exploration indicated that they made families feel proud to be part of the Newington community; most didn't identify the experience with 'live' performance, they just knew that they "loved it".

*The children had so much fun it really brightened up their day.
It was lovely to see them all happy.*



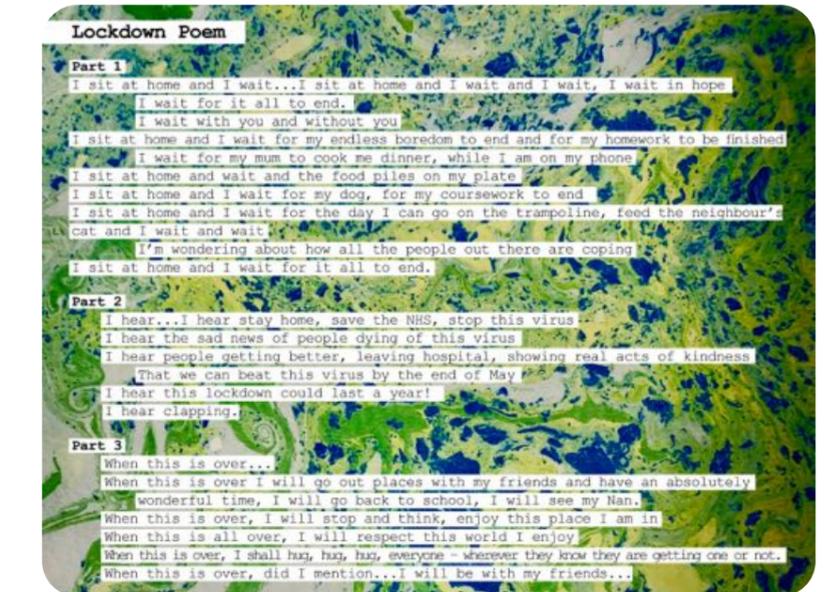
In March 2021 Looping the Loop were back in Newington, this time with their long awaited 'pop-up panto', Jack and The Beanstalk. Restrictions at the time necessitated that this was performed outside, to an audience remaining in their own 'bubbles'.

We have really loved taking part in the challenges it has helped my kids through this time.

We collaborated with Paines Plough to allow a number of local people to enjoy a play, read on the phone by an actor, followed by a chat.

I had a wonderful couple of hours talking to Cathy Tyson, the play she read me was called Quicksands, about a seaside town like Ramsgate! She is a very warm and pleasant lady and seemed very interested in Ramsgate and told me she had been to the Tunnels and had performed at the Theatre Royal.

Our youth group, Chill Club worked with RashDash, an arts company we met through Paines Plough, to contribute to a verbatim concept album, following 18 people from 12 countries around the world through the joys and fears of early lockdown and pandemic. Don't Go Back To Sleep: The Lockdown Album includes a poem, written by the young people over six weeks.



Sharing Our Story

We believe that telling stories helps us understand each other better and brings us closer together.

From the outset we worked with Buckle Up Films, a young film company, at that time based in Thanet. We were deliberately not prescriptive with Buckle Up and asked them to document our Creative Civic Change experience. We had all initially anticipated that the result would be a short film, but the result has been a full length documentary. Our film, like so many other things was rather hijacked by Covid but still captures the journey we have been on. At various stages in the project we have worked with Wizard Stories to bring their unique interactive storytelling performances to Newington's children.

During Covid we worked with a young graduate filmmaker, Marcia Rumsey to create a short film to capture a snapshot of our activity. This focusses on the Community Food Club and our creative packs and challenges.

We created case studies to illustrate how the Creative Newington project has impacted individual residents. We celebrated community successes, particularly in our local press.



Measuring Our Impact

We worked with the Creative Civic Change evaluation team to create and agree a monitoring framework for the project. This focused on our overall aim: Newington is a welcoming, creative and resourceful community, residents are proud to call it home and help each other to be socially connected.

We defined our outcomes, and have made good progress with these.

- More social connections
- Greater enjoyment from physical surroundings
- More people engaging with natural environment
- Pride in community and sense of ownership; a physical legacy that inspires creativity
- Aspiration and confidence to change
- Flourishing community participation

We wanted to challenge negative preconceptions of Newington. The framework for the project encouraged us to try new things and to take risks; our overarching success factors were that decisions were resident-led and that the community engaged in our activities. This approach, exacerbated by the Covid pandemic meant that our monitoring and data collection were not as robust as we would have liked. In recognition of this fact, the working group decided to work with People United, and commissioned an independent community consultation to reflect and review project achievements, including learning from Covid and to create a community-led roadmap for the future.

Governance

In line with Local Trust's practice with Big Local areas, the community designated Starlings Support CIC as their Locally Trusted Organisation, to hold and manage finances, ensure that decisions were resident-led and that the Creative Civic Change project met Local Trust's Terms and Conditions.

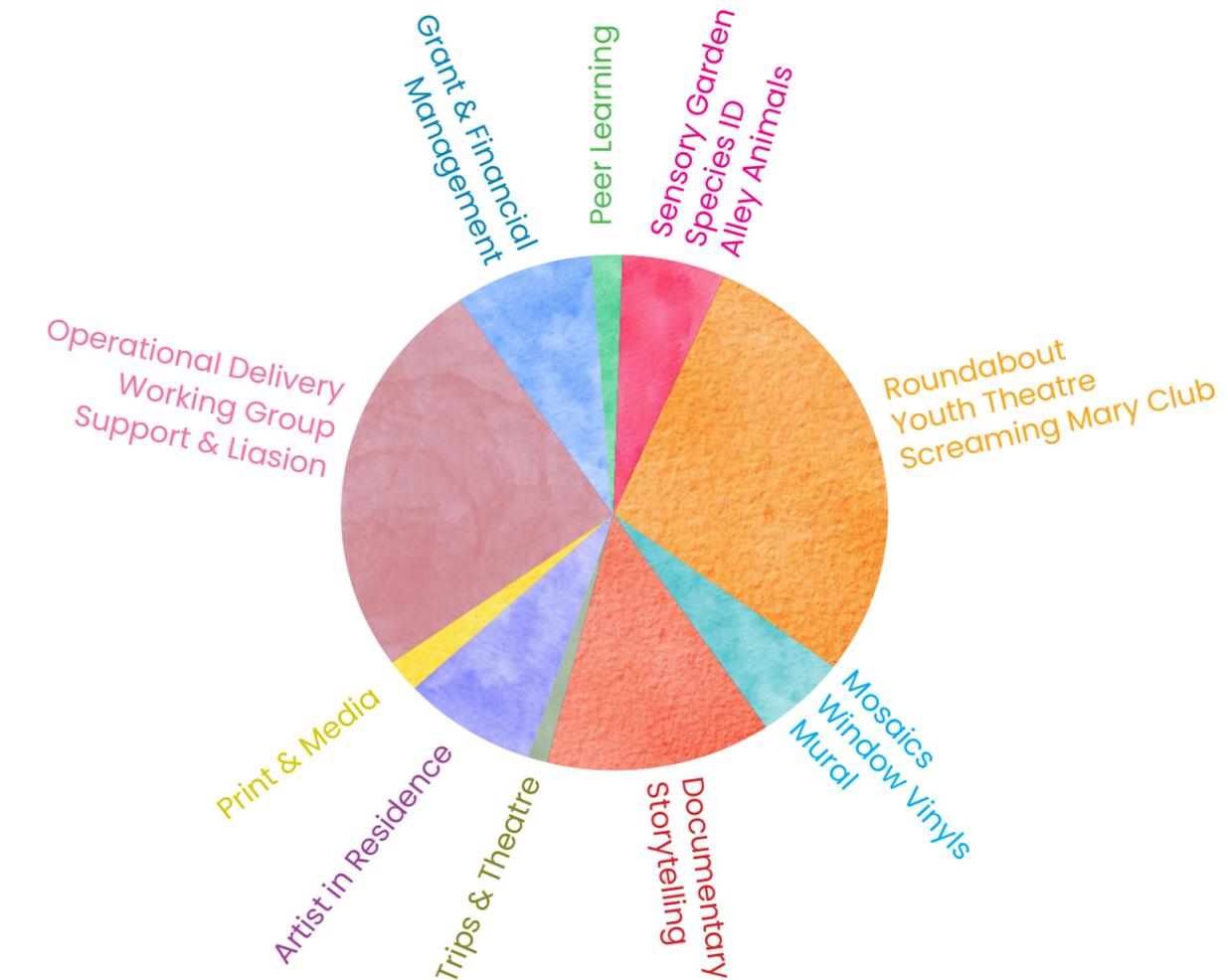
Starlings Support CIC is a Community Interest Company, set up to enable communities and not-for-profit organisations access the support that they need to drive dynamic, sustainable and resident-led change. We work with people to create resourceful communities, where individuals have the skills, confidence and knowledge to make different, healthier decisions for themselves, their families and their communities. We are inspired by people, supporting them to unlock their potential, harnessing individual skills and building local leadership to act as agents of change and to promote innovative solutions to local challenges. We aim to create strong, collaborative partnerships, building high-trust relationships based on common purpose, shared values and respect. We have extensive experience of community development, including with a number of Big Local areas, including Newington and specialist knowledge of accounting and budgeting. We are a small team and will always roll up our sleeves to help where needed.

We adopted a collaborative leadership role for the Creative Newington project, building trusted relationships and empowering residents with the knowledge and confidence to lead decisions. We encouraged the working group to design a project plan that addressed as many local ideas as possible, but also contained the flexibility for activities to evolve and change.

We produced supporting documentation, including spend reports for monthly working group meetings and supported all funder reporting requirements. External stakeholders, including artists were first introduced to the working group. It was important that they were carefully vetted by residents to ensure not only that they possessed the requisite creative skills but also to ensure a good cultural and social fit with the community. Whilst we worked with a number of artists during the project, the enduring relationship was with Rob Turner, who became our artist-in-residence throughout the project.

Spend

The Creative Newington project received £204,905 from the Creative Civic Change programme, based on a project plan and budget submitted in March 2019.



What Didn't Work

There were some activities included in our project plan that were not achieved.

We had intended to plant a wild flower meadow around the community centre and this was superseded by the community orchard and raised planters. Similarly, the project plan contained the ambition to do something with the 'sausage greens' that run from the community centre through the estate. Despite speaking to numerous local residents we were unable to shape a safe and practical design.

We had hoped to instigate an 'art group'. Although we integrated a group into the Hot Dog Club this never gained traction.

We trialed a coffee and craft club, but again, this did not attract ongoing community participation. Some activities, such as the Screaming Mary Cabaret club did not work at first. The flexibility of the Creative Civic Change funding allowed the working group to explore why this was and to make changes. The resulting project exceeded all our expectations.

Finally, the pandemic definitely impacted on the momentum we had created. When the Hot Dog Club restarted, after a gap of over 20 months attendance did not return to previous levels.



Conclusions and Learning

New relationships have been formed, both within the community as well as with schools and organisations.

When we reflect on the past 3½ years we have an overriding sense of pride. We look around Newington and see the physical evidence of community creativity. From the Sensory Garden, to the Alley Animals, mosaic benches and sign to the Species ID Signs, community centre mural and window vinyls. The flexible approach of the Creative Civic Change programme allowed us to ensure that local people were actively involved in the design and implementation of everything we have done. The sense of ownership that this has fostered is palpable. People are rightly proud of what they, their children and the community have achieved.

Unexpected outcomes have resulted from projects we had not anticipated at the design phase. Both the Youth Theatre Group and the Screaming Mary Club emerged from conversations following new experiences.

There are some basic tenets that have guided us throughout the project.

- Empower residents with the knowledge and confidence to make decisions.
- Failure is a lack of community participation, not a lack of outputs.
- People will vote with their feet; ask them what they want and listen to their reply.
- There is no such thing as too much transparency.

We are immensely grateful to the Creative Civic Change programme for the opportunity that this project has given us.



Next Steps

We are under no doubt that the Newington community will continue to grow and thrive if access to creative opportunities are available to us. We will seek funding, and collaborative funders to enable us to continue our creative journey.

- As part of any future activity we would like to repeat the Creative Civic Change 'Build It Phase' to involve ideas from across the community. We want to identify (and implement) future community projects that can continue to foster community ownership and pride, and grow aspirations. It is important to create public art that reminds residents daily of what they can achieve.
- Future public arts projects should offer a balance between slow burning projects, such as the mosaics and more quickly realised initiatives, for example the Alley Animals.
- The success of the performing arts projects reinforces our impetus to give things a try. We are actively supporting Inspiration Creative

and Screaming Alley to secure continuation funding. Screaming Alley have already secured £3,200 from the Mercers Company. We are working with aim4 Partnerships CIC to explore how best to deliver and resource activity that continues our young people's first taste of performance, BE BOLD, BE TRUE in Roundabout. We believe that it is vital that people understand that performing arts are for people like them.

- We are working with Cohesion Plus to design a bespoke project for Newington, firmly based on the reception to the Afro-Bhangra Fusion bands performance in Roundabout.
- Our aspiration is to continue to work with Paines Plough and to secure income for future community tours.

Photo Credits

Beth Roo Photography
Tim Leek Photography
Residents, staff and volunteers

