

CULTIVATING CULTURE

CELEBRATING LOCAL ARTS IN BIRMINGHAM



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Welcome to Cultivating Culture

Cultivating Culture showcased Local Arts across Birmingham's ten districts over six weeks during February and March 2014. The Cultivating Culture Symposium, held at the Library of Birmingham on March 18th, provided Arts Champions with the opportunity to celebrate their work within specific Districts over the last three years. As part of the 'Culture on your Doorstep' strand of Birmingham's Cultural Strategy, Birmingham City Council's Culture Commissioning Service have set up Local Arts Fora to develop local arts activities in each District and to work in partnership with the Arts Champion programme. The Symposium was able to bring together research from the community arts programme of the UK City of Culture 2013 Derry~Londonderry and recent work of Birmingham's Cultural Pilots. Presentations of case studies from the Local Arts Forum and Arts Champions leads allowed attendees to discuss the innovative ways that new participants and audiences have been engaged in arts and culture in Birmingham's neighbourhoods. This document presents some of that information as a record of what has been achieved between 2011- 14 in Local Arts.

With new investment during 2014 -15 from Birmingham City Council, Arts Council England and Department of Communities and Local Government our aspiration and ambition is for more citizens to become involved and engaged to co-design activities that are tailored to the needs and interests of local residents and the local context. We look forward to working in partnership with you all and to ensuring that residents are engaged in shaping 'Culture on your doorstep' and in your neighbourhood.

The Culture Commissioning Service, Birmingham City Council



Cultivating Culture – Celebrating Local Arts Development 2011-14

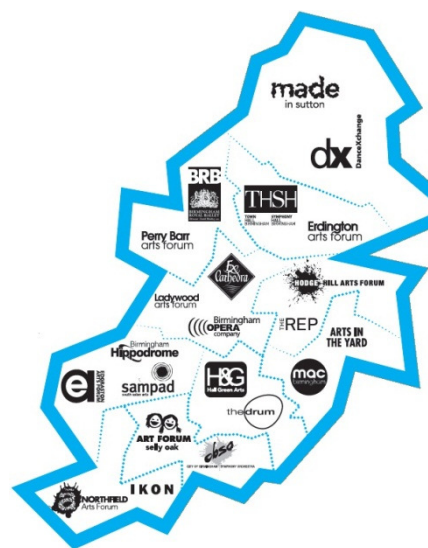
What is Cultivating Culture?

Throughout February and March 2014, Birmingham has celebrated the work of the Arts Champions and Local Arts Fora. The Cultivating Culture programme offered a range of high quality arts experiences in neighbourhoods, such as Birmingham Royal Ballet performances with youth dancers and Handsworth elders in Perry Barr; CBSO's SO Vocal choir in Selly Oak's *Art SOAK* festival; *HeritEDGE* stories an *Arts Buzz* travelling across Edgbaston and families enjoying *Splosh* or *Griffin Day* activities in Hodge Hill. There were opportunities for residents to get involved in photography, storytelling, poetry, film, singing and dance sessions in libraries and local shopping malls.

Local Arts Development led by Birmingham City Council's Culture Commissioning Service

Birmingham falls into ten districts, each with a population of 100,000 residents. The approach has been to create an infrastructure for culture by developing activities at a local level, responding to local priorities developed in partnership with residents. This is organised through a Local Arts Forum in each district, supported by one (or in some cases two) of Birmingham's arts major organisations (Arts Champions). This is the first month-long celebration of work after three years of residency.

Contributing to this, three cultural pilots (funded by Arts Council England and Birmingham City Council) have been testing ways of developing engagement in culture and capacity to co-design arts and cultural activities with local residents. Events have ranged from a new arts festival in Castle Vale to a carnival event and illuminations in Balsall Heath and an outdoor theatre production and pop-up arts hub in Shard End.



Cultivating Culture Symposium March 18th 2014 - Library of Birmingham

This half day seminar was the finale of Cultivating Culture; a chance to hear case studies from Arts Champions, Local Arts Fora and residents who have participated during the month and over the three years. Discussion reflected on what has happened in Birmingham as well as in the communities of Derry~Londonderry during their year as UK City of Culture 2013.



Local Arts in Districts (alphabetical order)

Edgbaston

Covering: Bartley Green, Edgbaston, Harborne and Quinton wards

Lead contacts: Arts Champions Urmala Jassal & Rabiya Latif (Sampad), Liz Leck (Birmingham Hippodrome) and Dr Tom Jones (Edgbaston Arts Forum)



In 2011-12, joint Arts Champions Sampad and Birmingham Hippodrome developed the *EAT* initiative – Edgbaston Arts Table - offering the inclusive and universal subject matter of food to bring the district together. The art forms were interdisciplinary and in the first year included visual arts, craft and storytelling sessions to reach a diverse range of participants across Edgbaston. In 2012-13 this theme was further developed into *Feed Your Soul*, and the Art Champions worked together with Newman University and Queen Alexandra

College, producing animation and drama alongside a plethora of other groups through the Barber Institute and Cerebral Palsy West Midlands.

Both Art Champions work in collaboration with Edgbaston Arts Forum, coordinated by Dr Tom Jones. The Forum enabled 180 residents and 90 students to work in empty shops and at Birmingham University as part of The Big Draw in 2011-12. In 2012-13 they organised the successful *ArtSmile*, where a range of art works and workshops was programmed along Harborne High Street.

As part of the Cultivating Culture programme, Sampad and Birmingham Hippodrome have been working together to unearth the local history of the area through their *HeritEdge* project, working with local artists from Edgbaston Arts Forum, Newman University, Edgbaston district libraries and Age Concern. The Forum also coordinated the Edgbaston Arts Buzz Tour, offering a range of creative activities from jazz music and painting to storytelling and photography.





Erdington

Covering: Erdington, Tyburn Ward, Kingstanding and Stockland Green wards

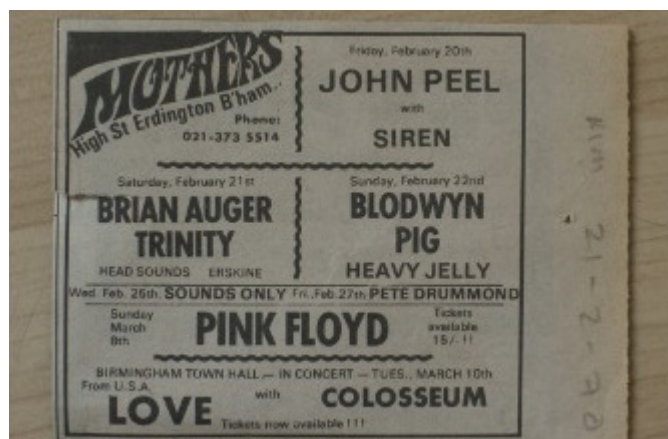
Arts Champion Mohini Howard and Fay Todd (Town Hall & Symphony Hall) & Café Arts (Erdington Local Arts Forum) led by Dan Brown (Big Brum)



The last three years has seen Arts Champions Town Hall & Symphony Hall (THSH) and Café Arts (Erdington Arts Forum, led by Big Brum Theatre in Education Company) develop partnerships and networks across the district for artists and creativity, as well as generating targeted activities working with community groups. In 2012-13 THSH's *Feral Choir*, developed with Osborne Family Centre, performed in *Curious Sounds Curious Spaces*, part of Fierce! Festival. THSH has offered the successful *Entertaining Erdington* discounted ticket scheme, and family *Musical Bite* events in local venues.

THSH's intergenerational project offered nearly 100 residents across Erdington the opportunity to engage in arts activities with professional artists, and attend performances of *Bluebeard's Castle* at Symphony Hall.

As part of the Cultivating Culture programme, THSH and Café Arts produced a Musical Heritage Project exploring the history through residents' memories and memorabilia of the significant music venue 'Mothers', once situated on Erdington High Street. The exhibition/ installation took place at Mothers Café and ended at St Barnabus Church (Erdington) with live performances. The exhibition built on Café Arts' previous showcase of local artists' work at the Erdington Village Fete in 2013.





Hall Green

Covering: Hall Green, Kings Heath & Moseley, Sparkbrook and Springfield wards

Arts Champion Ian Sargent (The Drum) and Ian Edwards (Hall Green Arts Forum)



Hall Green has a mixed infrastructure of arts and creative hubs. Kings Heath and Moseley ward is home to many cultural venues hosting poetry, storytelling and music nights, as well as folk festivals and art fairs. The cultural scene in neighbouring ward Sparkbrook has become increasingly visible with new organisations such as Sparkbrook Neighbourhood Forum, The Old Print Works and Ort Café & Gallery providing a hub for cultural activity and growth bed for artists and makers, building on the long-term arts-development work of organisations such as

Soul City Arts, St Paul's Community Development Trust, Calthorpe Park Play Centre, Concord Youth Centre, local schools, community centres and libraries.

The last three years has seen Arts Champions The Drum and Hall Green Arts Forum link with these venues and organisations to support and develop a range of projects. In 2011, The Drum offered digital photography, circus and visual arts workshops to residents in libraries, parks and community centres. In 2012, in partnership with local groups and Craftspace, The Drum held a Sparkbrook Diamond Jubilee Day of Culture and Guerrilla Craft in Farm Park, and the Olympic Torch Relay event *From Birmingham to Brazil* in Calthorpe Park. The last couple of years have also seen the development of Hall Green Arts Festival in Hall Green ward, coordinated by WeareB28 Neighbourhood Forum with support from both The Drum and the Forum.



Hall Green Arts Forum has been developed by three key individuals between 2011-14, Kim Charnock (Rogue Play), Marcus Belben, and Ian Edwards (St Paul's Community Development Trust), gaining additional funding and contributing to over 20 local activities including the first Hall Green community and arts market, Kings Heath *Car Culture* events and activities at the many festivals across the district. As part of the Cultivating Culture programme, the Forum and The Drum have programmed *Art Works*, a series of arts activities culminating in a conference in Balsall Heath.



Hodge Hill

Covering Shard End; Hodge Hill, Washwood Heath and Bordesley Green

Arts Champion Steve Ball and Cathy Rollins (Birmingham REP) and Laura Breakwell (Reel Access leading Hodge Hill Arts Forum)



During 2012-13 Arts Champion Birmingham REP worked with hard to reach families from five Primary schools across Hodge Hill district, taking adults and children on backstage tours of the Birmingham Rep offices, seeing three different productions and meeting with the Director of *I was a Rat*. The parents and the children learnt performance skills together and then performed on the Old Rep stage. During 2013-14 Birmingham Rep programmed *Yuma Yakaboo* by Vaiya Nadu (storyteller) and *Splosh* in Ward End Library to bring new family audiences with children under 5 years to see live theatre.

The majority of the parents said that the biggest benefit was to spend quality time with their children and that whilst they were nervous of performing, they were inspired by the confidence of the children.' - Cathy Rollins, Participation Manager, Birmingham REP



During 2013-14 Hodge Hill Arts Forum, coordinated by Reel Access, worked together with Birmingham Rep to host an outdoor *Big Arts Picnic* event in Ward End Park featuring arts activities and an outdoor picnic. Reel Access also created *Re-awakening Lea Village* in Shard End, bringing residents together in their High Street featuring maypole dancing, arts and craft activities. Hodge Hill Arts Forum supported by Ward End Library and the Shard, have organised six arts events throughout 2013-14 including *Lea Village Christmas Lights Switch-on* and *The Passion Play* in Firs and Bromford estate.

Reel Access led the Cultural Pilot in Shard End during 2013 -14 and developed a wide range of activities including bringing a new Heartbreak production to the Norman Chamberlain Park (Kingfisher Park) and commissioning Women & Theatre to work with local group DiVAs.



Ladywood

Covering: Ladywood, Aston, Nechells and Soho wards

Arts Champions Richard Willacy (Birmingham Opera Company); Lizzie Grew and Myriam Toumi (Ex Cathedra) and Tina Hamilton (Fluid Space Arts leading LEAF Ladywood Arts Forum)

Joint Arts Champions Ex Cathedra and Birmingham Opera Company (BOC) have worked together over the last three years to offer Ladywood residents opportunities to learn different musical genres. BOC has enabled residents to experience and immerse themselves their productions, while Ex Cathedra have applied some of their core programmes *Singing Pathways* and *Singing Playgrounds* to local settings: in 2011-2012, 40 residents were mentored and performed in the chorus of *Life is a Dream*, and Ex Cathedra offered singing sessions in health centres with new parents, families and health professionals. In 2012-2013, BOC worked with Kerria Court care home residents and groups from SIFA Fireside to create films themed around Musorgsky's *Songs & Dances of Death*, and Ex Cathedra developed their work in schools, forming the *Never Too Late* choir in partnership with Town Hall & Symphony Hall, engaging parents, teachers and pupils. In 2012-13, BOC encouraged residents to get involved in the chorus for their 2014 production, *Khovanskygate*, while Ex Cathedra have continued their successful community choir.



Over the past three years, LEAF (Ladywood Arts Forum), coordinated by Fluid Space Arts, have networked some of the city's larger city-centre-based arts companies (covered by Ladywood district) e.g. Punch and Town Hall & Symphony Hall, with neighbourhood based groups, individuals, schools and community centres. In 2012 they co-ordinated the Summerfield Park Torch Relay event with a range of partners including Aston Performing Arts Academy and the Arts Champions, where over 3,000 residents took part in art workshops, community games and watched local music and dance acts.

As part of the Cultivating Culture festival, Ex Cathedra built on BOC's relationship with Kierra Court, bringing residents a participatory performance from the *Never Too Late* choir; and together they delivered a family singing workshop at Spring Hill Library. BOC also gave shoppers a whole new experience by bringing opera to the local Tesco's Supermarket in the Jewellery Quarter.



Northfield

Covering: Northfield, Kings Norton, Weoley and Longbridge wards

Arts Champion Simon Taylor and Emma Bowen (Ikon) and Laura Yates (Northfield Arts Forum)



In 2011-12, Arts Champions Ikon worked with Birmingham Contemporary Music Group in Northfield to create *Drawing Rooms*, exploring the relationship between drawing, sound, resident and place. Residents had the opportunity to reflect on contemporary art practices and visit exhibitions at the Ikon and in Spain as part of a European funded cultural exchange. In 2012-13 Ikon targeted adult learners through a partnership with Childrens' Centres. Visual artists and poet Spoz led creative art-walks around the area, exploring the theme of walking art in connection to the then current Ikon exhibition. Following from this, Ikon's work in the district became more targeted focusing on Frankley and the peripheral areas on the border of Birmingham. Ikon secured additional funding to run *A Portrait of Frankley* to compliment this Art Champions activity.

"I really enjoyed the project... I had never done anything like that before. I love the thought that the place where I spent a lot of my childhood is being transferred into music and sound."

- Participant, Drawing Rooms

Northfield Arts Forum (NAF), originally hosted by Bliss4all, has been developed by Forum coordinator Laura Yates. In 2012 NAF became a constituted group and successfully gained Arts Council England funding for the area's first Northfield Arts Trail - also involving Ikon. Activity took place all over the district in community centres, shops, libraries and public spaces. This weekend of cultural activity was developed into Arts March in 2013, a series of events taking place in community settings including Bournville College, attracting over 1,000 audiences and working with 30 students.



As part of the Cultivating Culture programme, Ikon and NAF hosted *The Art of NAF*, a day of free drop-in creative workshops, performances and displays looking back at three years of activity in the area at Northfield Library. NAF also presented their *Words of Art* exhibition of poetry and visual arts in the Library of Birmingham, while Ikon's exhibition looking back at three years of Arts Champion projects ends on March 18th.



Perry Barr

Covering: Oscott, Perry Barr, Handsworth Wood and Lozells & East Handsworth wards

Arts Champion Pearl Chesterman and Kasia Kraus (Birmingham Royal Ballet) and Don Kinch and Rachel Chiu Perry Barr Local Arts Forum



2011-14 Arts Champion Birmingham Royal Ballet worked across all areas of Perry Barr. During 2011-12 artists visited care homes, day centres and independent elderly groups, introducing them to ballet and using ballet based movements to get the groups active. The activities focused on celebrations and gave all participants the opportunity to share their stories. This culminated in a celebration tea party and dance film. In 2012-13 Birmingham Royal Ballet dancer and choreographer Kit Holder created a new work for *Simmer Down Festival* in Handsworth Park and *The Flyover Show*. This was performed to over 10,000 people. Five local dance groups took inspiration from this and developed their own work to perform.

Most recently Birmingham Royal Ballet delivered three events entitled *Ballet What's That?* These introduced communities to ballet and enabled the *Handsworth Golden Age* group who had participated in the previous events to perform alongside Birmingham Royal Ballet dancers and children from the *Dance Track* programme. Local residents attending these events were invited to attend a performance of David Bintley's new ballet, *Prince of the Pagodas* at the Birmingham Hippodrome.

Perry Barr Arts Forum has been developed by two leads/ organisations between 2011-14: Don Kinch (Nu Century Arts) and Rachel Chiu (Grosvenor Road Studios). The Forum has developed partnerships between local community groups and artists through regular informal networking sessions to encourage creative collaborations. Local artists have been active in participatory activity at *Simmer Down Festival*. During 2013-14 the Forum developed visual arts work using recycled furniture as printing presses in One Stop Shopping Centre alongside cartoon creation. Grosvenor Road Studios is becoming a new hub for local arts and music where new talent can hone their skills.





Selly Oak

Covering: Bournville, Selly Oak, Brandwood and Billesley wards

Arts Champion Katie Lucas and Gavin Allsop (City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra) and Sabra Khan (Arts Forum Selly Oak)



In 2012, as Arts Champion for Selly Oak, CBSO established the SO Vocal community choir, attracting over 130 adult participants, most of whom had not sung since school. 2013 saw it go from strength to strength, with membership numbers doubling to over 260 and the choir continuing to perform locally at the *Art SOAK* festival and *CoCoMad* festival in Cotteridge Park, and at Symphony Hall.

“Through the musical diversity and accessibility of the community choir, the CBSO have started to break down social barriers and change perceptions that ‘classical music’ isn’t always what you might think!” - CBSO Vocal Co-ordinator

Arts Forum Selly Oak has been developed by two organisations/ individuals, Stirchley Happenings (2011-2012) and from then on by Sabra Khan (Argy Bhaji). The Forum’s first year saw the creation of ‘*Arts SOAK*’, a local festival showcasing and celebrating local artists in March 2012, programming arts in non-traditional spaces such as parks, launderettes, swimming pools and social clubs in partnership with Friends of Parks groups, local businesses, Council leisure and parks services, local artists and musicians, and the CBSO.

In 2013 the Forum were successful in gaining Arts Council England funding for the *Art SOAK* festival. It expanded to include circus skills and theatre in supermarket car parks and hairdressers, to science, magic, films and jewellery making, engaging families and people of all ages across the district. The recent third *Art SOAK* festival (2014), also supported by Arts Council, saw the SO Vocal choir perform in Walkers Heath Park in collaboration with Friends of Walkers Heath Park and the Arts Forum as part of the Cultivating Culture programme.





Sutton Coldfield

Covering: Sutton Four Oaks, Sutton New Hall, Sutton Trinity and Sutton Vesey wards

Arts Champion Lucy Kenny (DanceXchange) and Ian Myatt (New Streetly Youth Orchestra leading Made in Sutton)



In 2012-13 Arts Champion DanceXchange started a Dance Leadership training programme (DLP) and created a new cohort of dance leaders through 2013-14 enhancing skills and knowledge in how to teach and choreograph on community groups and special educational needs groups.

DanceXchange targeted their activities towards special needs groups in Sutton Coldfield, developing participatory and performance and adapted the 2012 International Dance Festival Birmingham project *Home* for local residents.

"The Dance Leadership Programme has provided me a great opportunity to mix and work with other dance teachers. The training course has provided me with an arts award training session and great material that I now use in my everyday teaching. The DLP has been most enjoyable and I am glad to have been part of it."

- Kate Atherton, Dance Teacher, Dance Depot

Made in Sutton (Sutton Coldfield Arts Forum) is coordinated by New Streetly Youth Orchestra. Over the three years they have created a unique brand, a quarterly newsletter, a website and a local offer of showcasing opportunities for groups. New local groups Body Beat and Squirm performed at the Mailbox Torch Relay Celebration events in 2012, and in the Sutton Variety Show. The Forum has also supported the new group The Smilers, who performed at the fundraising Arts Gala at Sutton Coldfield Town Hall in July 2013. As part of Cultivating Culture, Made in Sutton programmed a range of dance and music activities from Hip Hop to Salsa into Gracechurch Shopping Centre in March 2014. Performances took place in empty shop units and Sutton Coldfield Library and participatory workshops were offered to young children in cafes.





Yardley

Covering Acocks Green, Stetchford & Yardley North, South Yardley and Sheldon wards

**Arts Champion Pat Dawson (Midland Arts Centre) and Alex McCorkindale
Arts in the Yard (Yardley Local Arts Forum)**



The last three years has seen Arts Champion mac Birmingham (Midlands Arts Centre) and AITY (Arts in the Yard, Yardley's Arts Forum) successfully working together developing partnerships with community centres, libraries and residents groups. Yardley's arts infrastructure is perhaps less visible than in other parts of the city, and for this reason both the Forum and mac Birmingham took a targeted and community-led approach to linking-up and developing local arts activities.

In their first year of residency, mac Birmingham offered residents a unique opportunity to sample theatre in their own living room through a production by The Other Way Works. Residents were also invited to be part of mac Birmingham's *Anticurate* exhibition. They worked with the *Young at Heart* craft group to create new work for a touring exhibition for community settings, involving nearly 100 participants and over 3,500 new audiences in Yardley (including new visitors to mac Birmingham). In 2012-13 they delivered an intergenerational photography project with Pakistani families in Stetchford, and hosted *Yardley in Our Own Words*, a project working with writers, reading groups and St Peter's Church.

As well as mac Birmingham, key drivers for Yardley's collaborative arts development include Marcia Springer (Soul City Arts) and Alex McCorkindale (forum coordinators), and Blakesley Hall (run by Birmingham Museums Trust), libraries, Sheldon Community Centre, and PN7 residents' group (amongst others). In 2013 AITY linked Blakesley Hall, mac and South Yardley library with a free arts bus during Artsfest, and programmed a weekend of family arts activities. In 2014 as part of the Cultivating Culture programme, held a family creative play day at St Cyprian's Church.



mac Birmingham have recently held a wide range of events complimenting their programme such as an art walk inspired by the current *Walk On* exhibition, some building on their literature and library links such as workshops and readings with Birmingham Poet Laureate Jo Skelt, and some through new partnership working such as their photography project with young adults through St Basils, exhibited as part of this Symposium.



Cultural Pilot Case Studies

Cultural Pilots 2012 – 14

"Participation in culture is inherently a good thing - it challenges perceptions, prompts feelings of happiness, sadness, anger and excitement, creates moments of personal reflection and enables people to understand the world they live in, its possibilities and the cultures of others more profoundly [...] Cultural activities can also deliver a range of other outcomes including health and wellbeing, social and community cohesion, civic engagement, economic impact, development of transferable skills and improved environment."

- Big City Culture - Birmingham's Cultural Strategy

Background

Vector Research (2011) demonstrated that levels of cultural engagement in Birmingham are much lower in some areas and amongst some communities of interest than in others. Recommendations to pioneer more localised interventions in specific neighbourhoods were identified with the action points within the policy Culture On Your Doorstep. More focused work in local neighbourhoods needed to find new and different ways to create in-depth models of engagement with local residents to co-design cultural provision.

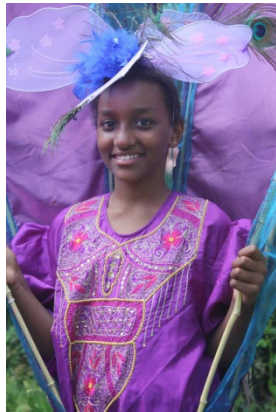
Three Cultural Pilots were matched to the areas selected for the Department for Culture, Media and Sport national pilot for Community Based Budgeting. Funding was secured from Arts Council England and Birmingham City Council to test ways of developing participation in culture and capacity to co-design arts and cultural activities with local residents. The C2 methodology – Positively Local was selected to inform the project as it is a process of neighbourhood development that supports people in disadvantaged areas to champion their own agendas in partnership with agencies. Three local co-ordinators were appointed to undertake the initial research with over 100 local stakeholders and residents to recommend a range of local delivery of arts and cultural activities. The outcomes for the Cultural Pilots were:

- To identify a sustainable way forward for cultural and arts provision that meets the needs of local residents and can be continued after the Cultural Pilot year
- To pilot projects in each area during 2013 -14 which empower local organisations to design, set up and deliver activities that engage local residents through a variety of targeted approaches
- To embed the learning from robust evaluation in each pilot area

The opportunity to share some of the case studies from the Cultural Pilots was presented at the Symposium prior to a final report being published in May 2014. The methodology and learning from these Cultural Pilots will inform the development of work across all 10 Districts with new investment from Arts Council and Birmingham City Council during 2014 – 15.



Balsall Heath



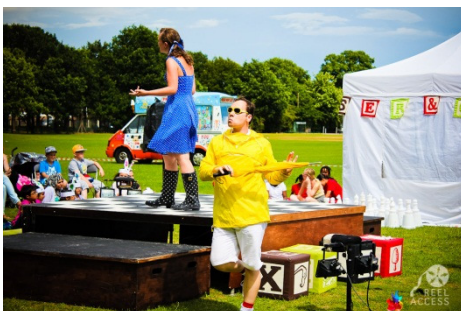
Balsall Heath is a part of Sparkbrook Ward in Hall Green District, bordering on the Stratford Road, hosting the famous Balti Triangle of restaurants around Ladypool Road. This area has a population of 14,000 and has one of the most ethnically diverse neighbourhoods with a high turnover of migration into and a way from this area. Multiple deprivation is a reality but does not describe the internal spirit of the residents that have turned the area around creating a vibrant Balsall Heath Forum, St Pauls Development Trust and a 30 year tradition of a Carnival. This year the Carnival reached over 5,000 audiences and had a procession of 200 people the length of Runcorn Road. Environmental issues to clean and green the area along with neighbourhood planning were the themes for the Community Based Budget.

Castle Vale

Castle Vale is an estate set up on the old aerodrome where Spitfires were created, built and flown from in World War Two and now forms part of Tyburn Ward with approximately 10,000 residents. 2013 marked 21 years since the regeneration on the Vale, when it was transformed from high rise tower block housing into new housing. This happened alongside a far reaching programme of capacity development training so that residents could co-manage and inform the future of local services including culture. Active Arts has been at the heart of arts and culture on the estate, and the pilot project sought to embrace the next generation of arts managers and leaders to carry these initiatives forward. Health and well-being agenda was the focus for the Community Based Budget pilot.



Shard End



Shard End is a whole ward of 26,000 residents, and is part of Hodge Hill District. However, it is better known to local residents as a collection of five villages including Tile Cross and Lea Village. The area has poor local infrastructure with deprivation statistics that have not changed over the past ten years. There was no central focal point for the arts other than Kingfisher Park and The Pump, where the only arts organisation (Reel Access) resides. The challenge for this Cultural Pilot was to create a local arts infrastructure, where residents could come to a central place and experience and participate in culture. The Community based budget focused on families with complex needs and worklessness agenda.



Speakers at Cultivating Culture Symposium

Councillor Karen McCarthy Councillor, Selly Oak Ward



Cllr Karen McCarthy was elected to Birmingham City Council in 2012 and serves as District Chair for the Selly Oak District, which has a population of around 100,000 people. She has a particular interest in services for people with dementia and in the co-operative councils movement. She has taken up Committee Membership for Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Joint Health (Birmingham and Sandwell) Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Councillor Karen McCarthy is a keen advocate for arts in the Selly Oak district and has supported many events involving SO Vocal Choir and the *Art SOAK* Festivals in 2012 and 2013.

Emil C Toescu Neuronal Network Group, University of Birmingham



Dr. Toescu graduated with a Medical degree in Bucharest, Romania, where he practised general medicine for 1 year and a half, while maintaining an active interest in basic research. After leaving Romania, he worked at the Dept. of Human Anatomy at the University of Oxford, while completing a D.Phil. Dr. Toescu continues to take part in a variety of international scientific meetings and symposia such as the Physiological Society and the British Neuroscience Association. Another important part of Dr. Toescu professional activity is dedicated to the process of public engagement with science, starting from the view that it is important for all scientists to present and engage the public in discussion on science and its methodologies. To this purpose he was the organiser, for three years, of Birmingham's Cafe Scientifique, while contributing also to the activities of the national network of Cafes. More recently he organised a city-wide series of events relating to the Brain Awareness Week initiative, including a Festival of Neurosciences.

Claire McDermott Cultural Programmer for City of Culture 2013 in Derry~Londonderry



"I am passionate about developing arts activity with communities as I have witnessed first-hand the enabling, empowering, inspiring, life-enhancing effect that participation in the arts has on people of all ages."

Claire McDermott was one of five Cultural Programmers responsible for curating and delivering the £20 million programme of cultural events for UK City of Culture 2013 in Derry~Londonderry. Over 500 events and projects took place throughout the year, spanning all art forms, cultural activities and sports. Claire is now Production Manager with Dog Ears Ltd., overseeing the production of kids' TV animation series '*Puffin Rock*'.



Ginnie Wollaston Culture Officer, Culture Commissioning Service, Birmingham City Council



"The arts, when placed in community settings, can have a positive impact in terms of changing beliefs and perceptions of space and place; increasing well-being and developing new skills for artists and residents."

Ginnie Wollaston has taken lead responsibility for the development of local arts at Birmingham City Council through the Arts Champions scheme and Local Arts Fora. Prior to that she worked as a Dance Officer for Arts Council West Midlands and had a freelance career working on projects with Leaps & Bounds, Birmingham Royal Ballet, Anurekha Ghosh and professional artists working in community settings. Her professional dance career included leading educational and outreach programmes for Extemporary Dance Theatre, Second Stride and Shobana Jeyasingh Dance Company.

Sheila Arthurs Active Arts Castle Vale



Sheila Arthurs is a mixed media artist and retired graphic designer. She was educated at Moseley Rd School of Art and later attended day release classes at Margaret St. College of Art. Sheila went on to be a commercial artist and toy designer for Chad Valley, Blue Bird Toffee and freelanced wherever the work was! Sheila has lived in Castle Vale since 1967 and has been involved in both the development and administration of the estate as a volunteer. As a trustee of Active Arts she is closely involved in all the arts projects and have run day classes as well as her present primary interest in encouraging the very talented local craftswomen to join Knits and Pieces and share their skills with a bit of Guerrilla Graffiti!

Matt Daniels Managing Director, Midan Limited and Balsall Heath Cultural Pilot Co-lead



Matt is the Managing Director of Midan Limited, a consultancy that works across the voluntary and cultural sectors offering support with organisational development, cultural development, fundraising and programme development and co-ordination.

After over a decade in leadership positions of regional charities Matt established his own consultancy firm, Midan Limited, in April 2012 and has undertaken a number of wide ranging contracts from the establishment of a commercial trading arm for a charity through to large scale consortia fundraising, community driven cultural development facilitation, and multi-agency programme co-ordination. He is also an active Board Member for two regional charities, Groundwork West Midlands and Birmingham LGBT.



Ian Edwards St. Paul's Community Development Trust, Hall Green Arts Forum & Balsall Heath Cultural Pilot Co-lead



Ian Edwards has volunteered and then worked for St. Paul's Community Development Trust in Balsall Heath for more than 30 years, making the journey from service user to senior manager, leading a broad staff team in everything from premises management through to community development. St. Paul's takes every opportunity to ensure that creative approaches are seized upon when delivering its core mission of working for, and with, the community in Balsall Heath and nearby areas to help secure better opportunities and quality of life for all. During his time with St. Paul's, Ian has worked with Balsall Heath Carnival, theatre groups, artists and other creative organisations, supporting them with both practical advice and strategic development.

Laura Breakwell Reel Access, Hodge Hill Arts Forum & Shard End Cultural Pilot Lead



Laura is the Creative Producer of Reel Access. She is responsible for the strategic direction of the company as well as its operations, and nurturing and establishing relationships and partnerships. She takes an active approach to project planning and development alongside the filmmakers and artists that she works with.

Reel Access is a Birmingham based film education and training organisation with a drive to raise aspirations through sound and vision. Established in 2006, the company is made up of a team who are passionate about working alongside young people and community groups to develop their skills in filmmaking and visual media in a collaborative way to increase confidence, pride and self-esteem.

Claire Marshall Castle Vale Cultural Pilot Lead



Claire Marshall is the producer that people call on when there is an ambitious, challenging or complex project to manage, with experience in a diverse range of settings and a proven record of enabling people to achieve their visions. She works as an unobtrusive instigator, building relationships, and making connections. She is Project Coordinator for Active Arts Castle Vale and the Cultural Pilot in Castle Vale, is a producer for the CBSO and a director of Changing Cultures.



Phil Jones University of Birmingham



"Creativity is the key to economic growth in cities like Birmingham and I am interested in the ways that getting communities engaged with arts activity can help them unlock this potential."

Phil Jones is Senior Lecturer in Cultural Geography at the University of Birmingham where he has worked since 2003. He writes about cities and city cultures, particularly urban regeneration, creativity and cycling. His work also involves developing new ways of researching place and identity, particularly through mapping. Since 2012 he has been running a major project funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council looking at how different communities engage with the creative economy across Birmingham and Greater Manchester.

Dr Saskia Warren University of Birmingham



"My interest in developing activity with communities in Birmingham is that it brings important exclusions and divisions to the forefront of investigation in the cultural and creative industries, in particular issues of socio-economic background, gender, religion and faith."

Dr Saskia Warren is a Cultural Geographer currently working on a large three year Arts and Humanities Research Council funded project entitled Cultural Intermediation and the Creative Urban Economy. The research investigates governance, community engagement and practice-based interventions in the creative economy, with a focus on Birmingham and Manchester. It is a multi-disciplinary and cross-sectoral project that draws together the expertise of academics, policy-makers, cultural organisations, artists and community participants.

Karen Garry Merida Associates



Merida Associates are currently evaluating the impact of the three Cultural Pilot projects in Birmingham. Karen Garry and Polly Goodwin are working with the Cultural Pilot co-ordinators to assess how they have been able to increase participation in arts and cultural activity, involve local people in designing and producing local cultural events and building people's capacity to influence local arts planning. They are looking to show how, through the Cultural Pilots, Birmingham is taking a community assets-based approach to building on existing strengths in local areas and helping people to aspire and achieve high quality arts productions in their own neighbourhoods.

Cultivating Culture was produced by Clare Edwards, www.clareedwards.com



Performances

The Mother Birmingham REP performed by Lorna Laidlaw and Kyle Bell



The Mother by Bertolt Brecht is The REP's first community production after the building reopened after refurbishment. It was performed in the main house on Saturday 15 March with a large community cast. Lorna Laidlaw plays Pelagea Vlasova (The Mother) and in this scene she is visiting her son Pavel (played by Kyle Bell) in prison. The play is set in early twentieth century Russia when the revolution is building, as living conditions worsen for the population. In this scene The Mother has already become embroiled in the revolution and is attempting to get names of fellow revolutionaries from her son without being overheard by the guards.

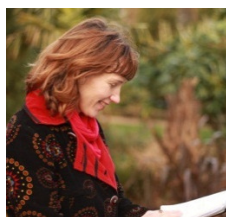
About Kyle Bell: I have been acting since I was 13 years old at Four Dwellings High School. That is where it all began for me, that's when I started to take acting seriously - building craft. I then went on to further study at Solihull Sixth Form College and Birmingham Theatre School. I now work with 4-Inspire devising theatre, and Theatre in Education for the socially concerned. I also won a *Mind Media Award* with ITV Fixers for a short film I directed based on a true story about children who have parents that suffer with mental health issues.

Beatfreeks Artists Amerah Saleh & Joe Cook performed their own spoken word poetry



Beatfreeks is a movement sweeping Birmingham and beyond. If you're into music, dance, poetry and media then Beatfreeks is the place for you to learn, share, grow and develop as an emerging artist. But it's about more than the arts - we want to develop young leaders and the next generation of social entrepreneurs. We want you to be free to be you and create change for yourselves and for your communities.

Joanna Skelt Birmingham Poet Laureate performed her own work and that of Yardley residents



Currently Birmingham Poet Laureate, Joanna has read and performed her work extensively and used writing in a range of community settings from Freetown, Sierra Leone to Yardley, Birmingham. Joanna completed a PhD in African Literature in December last year and is a researcher at Birmingham University. As Laureate, Joanna is working on a praise poem to the City of Birmingham along with various commissions including pieces for World War 1 commemorations and the Commonwealth Games. A passionate, thoughtful and yet very accessible writer, Joanna is fascinated by place and our global connections and interconnections. Joanna writes a regular blog as Poet Laureate for the Library of Birmingham and is writing in residence in the Shakespeare Room every Wednesday until the end of April.



Birmingham Local Arts Infrastructure 2014-17

Arts Champions and Local Arts Fora working across the 10 districts

