CULTURE
IN COMMON



IMPACT REPORT
CULTURE IN COMMON 2024



Cartoon Capers at Waterside Arts Festival



Assembled Moments Youth Theatre



Lantern Making



Ringwood Summer Workshops



Play on Words Literature Festival

INTRODUCTION

Culture in Common is a New Forest programme creating more opportunities for you to see and take part in creative activities.

We're working with residents in different parts of the New Forest to plan inspiring and accessible creative activities for their area. That includes Totton, the Waterside, New Milton to Pennington and Avon Valley.

Our 10-year vision is to spark widespread engagement in a sustainable, inclusive and locally inspired offer that makes arts and culture as synonymous with the district as the iconic New Forest pony.

The cultural richness of the district will be celebrated in a way that's relevant and valued by the community. Our aim is to support everyone to connect with and through arts and creativity and share 'culture in common'.

The programme is driven by three key questions:

- Are more people in the New Forest experiencing and inspired by creativity and culture and what are the most effective ways to achieve this?
- What approaches enable us to deliver on our aspiration for excellence, both in the process of community engagement and the creative and cultural experiences on offer?
- What else are we learning that facilitates better public engagement in creativity and culture?

Culture in Common is part of Arts Council England's Creative People and Places programme (CPP). CPP is about more people taking the lead in choosing, creating and taking part in arts and culture experiences in the places where they live. There are 38 CPP projects, covering 55 local authority areas where involvement with creativity and culture is significantly below the national average. They give local people the chance to enjoy, commission and create their own artistic opportunities.

CREATIVE PEOPLE AND PLACES

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IN SUMMARY

In December 2021, Culture in Common was announced by Arts Council England as one of 11 new CPP projects, securing £1 million. The investment covers the first three years of funding, from April 2022 to March 2025.

49,432
people engaged in total

Since **April 2022,** Culture in Common has engaged with **49,432** people in total, through a variety of events, workshops, exhibitions and creative clubs. Our events are created with, and led by the community.

Our Key Aims and Outcomes:

1. Engage more people from the identified places in a wide range of creative and cultural experiences.
2. Empower communities to lead and shape local cultural provision.
3. Ensure both the engagement process and the creative and cultural experiences on offer are relevant and excellent.
4. Encourage partnerships and collaboration between publicly funded, amateur, voluntary, community and commercial sectors.
5. Take an Action Research approach to community engagement in arts, creativity and culture; learn what works best and share that learning.

Year Three 2024-2025

Since April 2024, Culture in Common has engaged with, and delivered:

26,372
Audiences attended events

3,136
Participants in projects and workshops

61
Projects, workshops, performances and exhibitions

Extension Year Update

In September 2023, Arts Council England confirmed that Culture in Common has been successful in another year of grant funding through to March 2026.

OUR TARGET AUDIENCES

We have already achieved our target of working with 25% of all New Forest residents between 2022 and 2025, and also that 70% of our audiences/participants come from areas with low or medium current levels of engagement in arts and culture.

Our specific target groups are:

- YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 13-34
- ISOLATED ADULTS AGED 70+
- PEOPLE WITH LIFE-LIMITING ILLNESSES
- INTERGENERATIONAL GROUPS
- ETHNICALLY DIVERSE GROUPS

From our research findings we know that:

74%

of people had never attended/taken part in the activity before

70%

of people were from the least engaged groups

82%

of people rated their experience of events as 'excellent' or 'very good'

77%

of people said they were more likely or much more likely to attend another event

MARKETING

In 2024, we have increased our online activity in order to reach those less engaged in the arts. Here's a summary of our overall stats:

445
Total Instagram followers

373
Total Facebook followers

674
Total Email subscribers

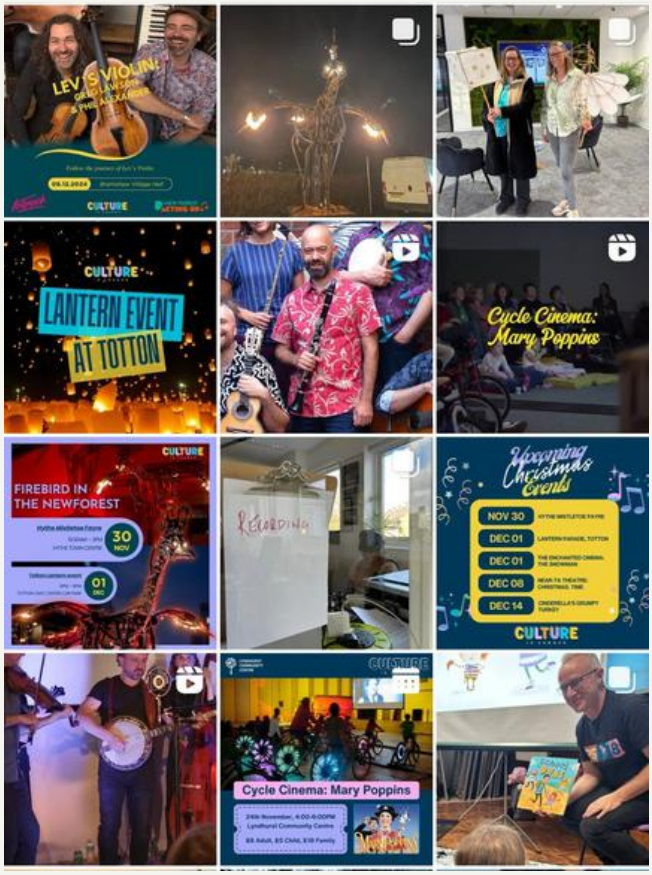
1.6k
Average website users each quarter

6.9k
Active website users this year

231
Webpage views on our busiest day (30th May)

Check our Instagram for the latest updates about projects we are working on:

Scan here!



PROJECT MAPPING

Based on the current demographic analysis, our priority areas are Totton and the Waterside, New Milton, and Avon Valley, chosen as the areas where engagement in arts and creative activities is lowest.



See the map below for where Culture in Common is currently working:



Projects Youth Clubs Creative Clubs

OUR WORK WITH COMMUNITIES

Culture in Common works across the New Forest, with Totton, the Waterside, New Milton to Pennington, and Avon Valley as priority areas. Here are some of the exciting projects we worked on in 2024:

Totton

- Storytelling Workshop at Headway
- Story/Filmmaking at St Win's Youth Project
- Lantern Making in 6 Schools, Cubs & Home Ed Group
- Firebird installation at Totton Lantern Event
- Community Engagement Session at Creative Hub

Waterside

- Dance Workshops with Families Matter
- Waterside Arts Festival & Enchanted Cinema
- Joli Vyann - Life's a Beach performance
- Beatbox Workshop & Mural with Military Youth
- St George's Hall Opening Display, Calshot
- Firebird installation at Mistletoe Fayre

New Milton to Pennington

- Dracula performance in Pennington
- Play on Words Literature Festival in New Milton: Write Your Family History workshop, Storytelling workshop & Future First youth theatre performance
- SPUD LGBTQ+ Put Yourself in the Middle Project

Avon Valley

- Storytelling Workshops in Fordingbridge
- 48 Hour Film Challenge with Regal Cinema
- Ringwood Summer Workshops & Xmas Lantern Project
- Community Engagement Session & Poetry Recording
- Thorney Hill Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Archaeological Dig & Workshops

New Forest Wide

- Forest of Calm Garden Design with Home Ed group
- D-Day 80 Discovery Bus & Souvenir Brochure
- Community Engagement Sessions
- Motionhouse Dance at New Forest Show
- Red Pepper & Black Pepper Indian Army Exhibition
- The Alice Project
- Cycle Cinema
- New Forest Song project in Primary Schools

“Engaging, stimulating and provoking. Excellent performance: extremely well written and well performed by a young energetic cast. More of the same please!”

Audience member, Assembled Moments ‘Future First’ performance

“Best of the best. I was a bit nervous at first and thought I’d be embarrassed but now I just feel free.”

Workshop participant, Ringwood Summer Workshops: Cartooning

“Absolutely magical and totally hypnotic. Loved everything about it.”

Audience member, The Alice Project Sneak Preview with Platform 4

“It’s honestly done wonders for my mental health, work-life balance and confidence. I have loved the social and community aspect too.”

Workshop participant, Waterside Creative Cafe

“Exquisitely imaginable and entertaining – the children were mesmerised and so was I .”

Audience member, Acting Up: Along Came a Magpie

CREATIVE CLUBS

We work across across the district to support a range of creative clubs, including youth theatre, creative walkshops, dance groups, writing workshops and more.

Dancing on Wheels, New Milton

Dancing on Wheels are monthly wheelchair dance classes, held at the New Milton Memorial Centre.

The classes are accessible and creative, and explore movement, music, rhythm and flow. Sessions are run by experienced dance tutors and are designed to meet the needs of everyone in the class, whether you're a self-propelled wheelchair user, an ambulatory wheelchair user or are accompanied by a companion. The sessions allow participants to improve their physical and mental wellbeing, learn new skills, and meet new people.

Overall, 24 wheelchair users and 23 companions have taken part in Dancing on Wheels this year. 63% of the participants identify as female, and there are a range of ages taking part (42% aged under 39, 17% aged 40-65, 41% aged 65+).





Cartooning Club, The Waterside

Earlier this year, Culture in Common supported a series of six-week cartooning courses held in Dibden Purlieu, Marchwood, and Fawley. They were open to anyone between the ages of 7 and 15, and were led by local cartoonist and children's book illustrator, Simon Chadwick.

Each week explored something slightly different, with the purpose of encouraging the children to discover and develop their own style.

There were 15 participants for Dibden Purlieu, 19 for Marchwood, and 17 for the Fawley sessions. Over 80% of the participants rated the session 'very good', and would want to attend something similar in the future.



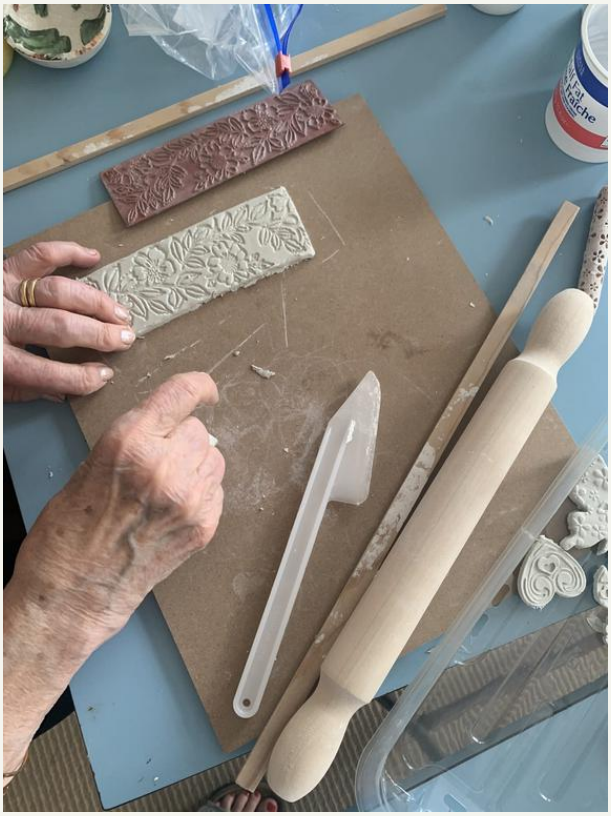


Waterside Creative Cafe

These regular sessions allow participants to explore their creativity and learn new skills in a relaxed and supportive environment. Martin introduces a range of artforms, techniques and themes, supporting development week by week.

The Creative Cafe also invites guest creatives for mini-masterclasses for more in-depth explorations.

Sessions take place on Monday evenings at St John's Hall, Hythe. There are over 10 members who attend regularly with a diverse range of ages.



Dementia Friendly Workshops at SPUD

Taking place in SPUD's new Living Room in Sway, these creative art workshops are for those living with dementia and their carers and relatives, and are warm, friendly and fun.

Sessions are on Wednesday afternoons, and are run by artist Suna Imre, with guest artists hosting sessions to share their particular ways of working. Approaches to creating art are varied and include collage, painting, drawing, working with clay and weaving. No prior experience to making art is needed. Tea and cake is always provided!

The Living Room has wheelchair access and was designed specifically to host small groups so people feel safe and comfortable. Payment is not needed to take part, however voluntary contributions are welcome.



Visit our website to view a full list of the creative clubs currently running across the New Forest:

Scan here!

COMMUNITY ANCHORS

We couldn't make decisions on our programme without the help of our panel of community champions. 'Community Anchors' are valued people who work to support their community in different localities across the Forest and volunteers who organise or support popular local events.

Below are some of our Community Anchors that we've worked with this year:


Nicky



Caroline and Julie


Rissa



Martin, Julie and Simon (Waterside Arts)


Simon and Military partners


Sarah


Lucie


Clare



Street Art Mural Workshops, Noadswood School

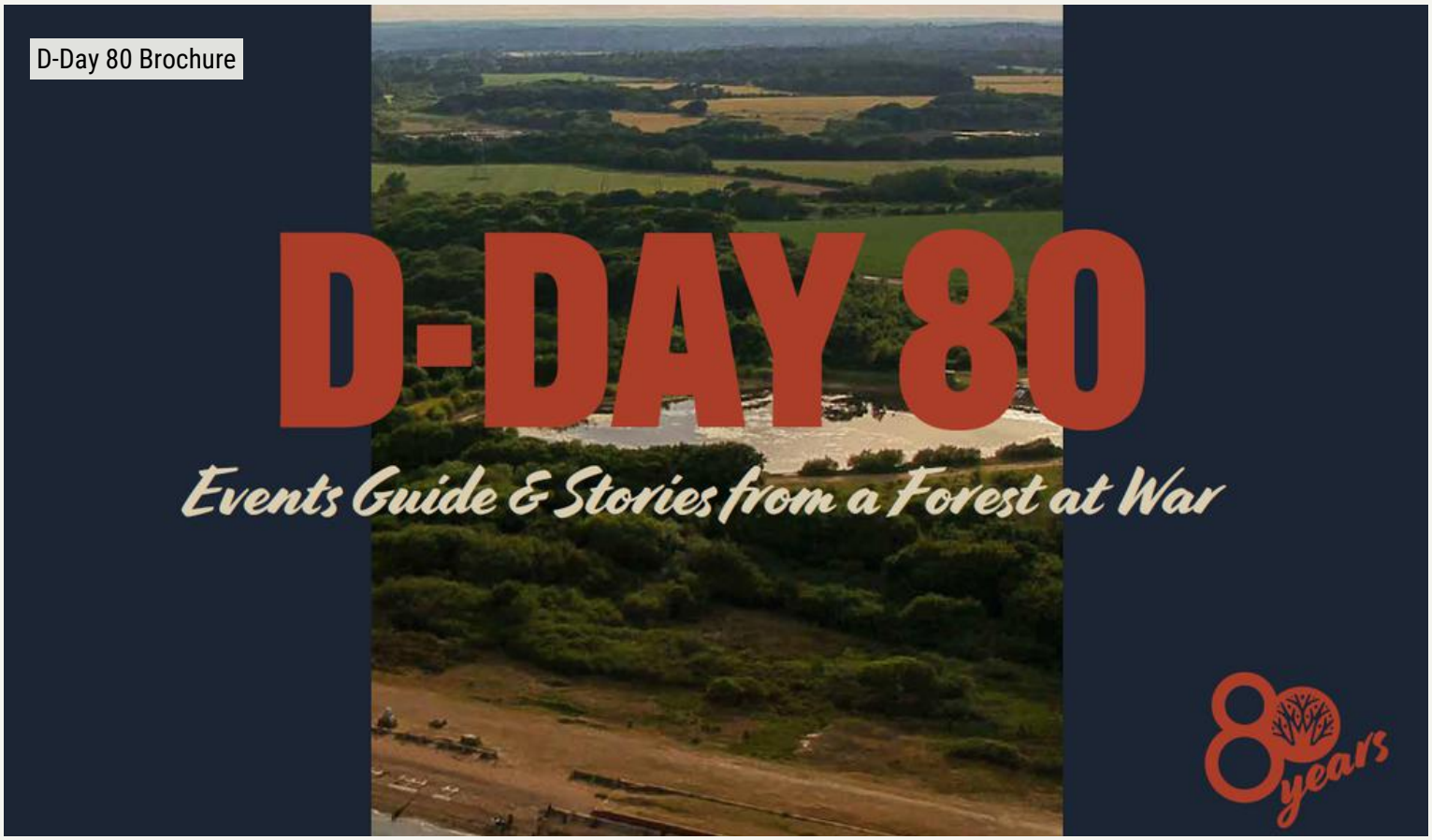


Lantern making, Ringwood School



Imari workshops, Thorney Hill

D-Day 80 Brochure



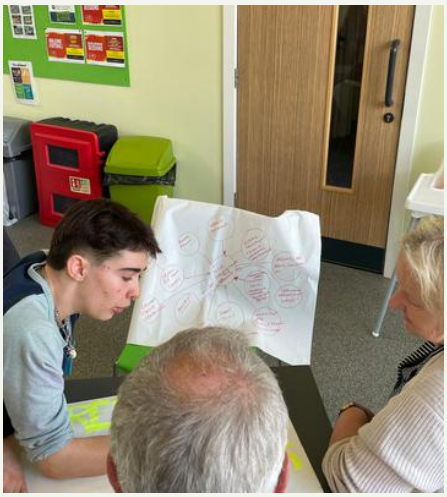
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS

In June and July 2024, Culture in Common partnered with New Forest District Council to engage Chris Rolls from Collective Sense to carry out action research public engagement activity with a variety of stakeholder and community groups across the New Forest.

The workshops included:

- Town and parish councillors, exploring perceptions of local arts and culture, the early stage development of a culture strategy and councillors' role in developing it
- After-school/home educated young people
- Folio artist network members x2
- Lyndhurst - Heritage Centre community engagement session
- New Milton - Guide HQ community engagement session
- Ringwood - Carvers Clubhouse community engagement session
- Totton & Eling - Shopping Precinct community engagement session
- Waterside - Fawley Jubilee Hall community engagement session





Process

Participants invited to the five Community Engagement sessions were selected through a 'Citizens Assembly' style approach. 40,000 residents from our priority areas received a leaflet and were invited to apply, with an offer of £50 voucher each for attending.

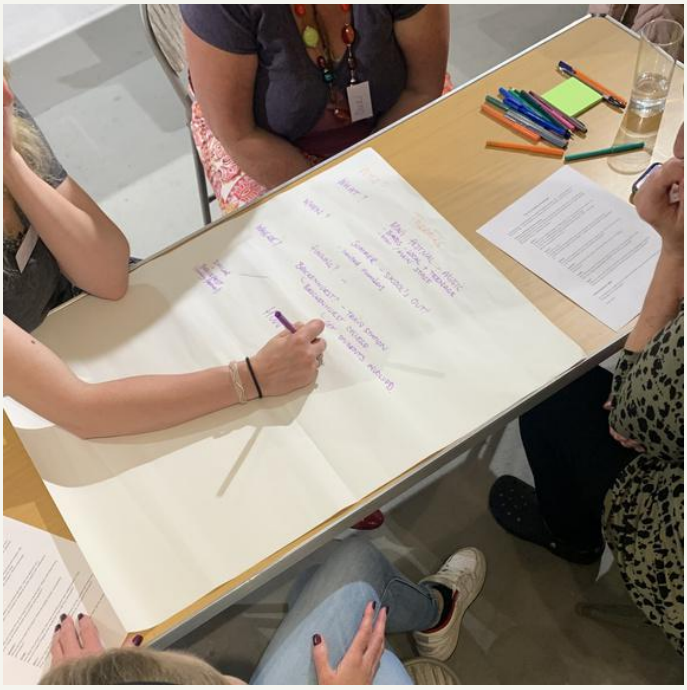
Receiving more applications than we needed for each session allowed us to select as diverse a group as possible, prioritising individuals that had the least engagement in the arts to date.

Reflections

The outcome of the community engagement sessions for New Forest District Council and Culture in Common was richly insightful. It revealed deep reserves of pride in place and the connectedness of locals to the unique landscapes of the New Forest.

The experience also revealed that demography with its ageing population, transport infrastructure and geography in the region conspire to create challenges in bringing people together to engage in the benefits of creativity, from health & wellbeing to economic impact.







Culture in Common is currently developing a **Community Engagement Strategy** and planning an in-depth hyper-local project in Blackfield for 2025, in our commitment to reach out to residents that are stepping back from engaging in community life.

The Community Engagement Sessions were produced in partnership with New Forest District Council, and facilitated by Chris Rolls, from Collective Sense.

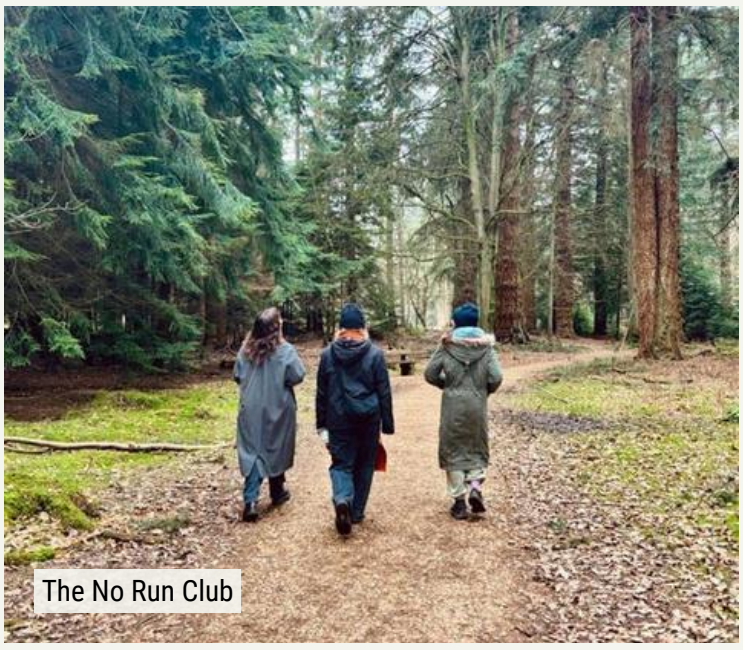
New Forest DISTRICT COUNCIL

COLLECTIVE SENSE


Cycle Cinema
CREATIVE


Pirate Day, Hythe


TO CREATE
HAPPY BRAINS
Fluid Motion Youth Theatre


The No Run Club


Motionhouse at New Forest Show
& ACTIVE


MS Dance


Lantern Parades


Story Quest Gang Warily

CULTURE IN COMMON WITH
THE ENVIRONMENT, CONSERVATION & SUSTAINABILITY

In 2024, Culture in Common has been working to combine nature and the environment with artistic projects, to inspire and engage local communities. There has been a particular focus on young people, bringing to life their vision of the Forest and natural environment that surrounds them, as well as their feelings on nature and climate.

Projects, Performances & Clubs 2024:

- A Forest of Calm with Broadleaf Home Education Group and The Beardy Gardener
- New Forest Song led by Countryside Education Trust, co-creating songs in 5 Primary Schools inspired by the Forest
- D-Day 80 Discovery Bus, Event Coordination & Souvenir Brochure featuring NFNPA local stories
- WILD acrobatic dance performance by Motionhouse at the New Forest Show
- Thorney Hill Gypsy Romany Traveller Archaeological Dig with Historic England
- Future First – Climate Hope play devised with Youth People for New Milton Literature Festival
- Creative Walkshops – in different parts of the National Park every month
- Life's a Beach – Joli Vyann Dance/Acrobatic new commission, co-created on the beaches at Lepe and Calshot



Future First Rehearsals © Oliver Jones



Joli Vyann's Life's a Beach

Moving forward to 2025 & 2026, plans are now afoot for a major new artistic commission working with CPRE (The Countryside Charity) and the community in Copythorne on the Hampshire Hedge initiative, to create a public art gateway for the start of the hedges that will connect the New Forest with South Downs National Park.

Other Eco-Arts projects in planning for 2025:

- Nature Calling partnership project with Activate – potentially with a group of Commoners
- Rivers of Hope project – with Ringwood School & The Burgate School, Fordingbridge
- Creative Walkshops – with isolated older people in National Park locations monthly
- Design of the new Blackfield Pantry including Recycle Arts Project with African Activities
- 'Better New Forest' Youth Consultation & Sustainability project at Priestlands School & Home Ed Groups
- Totton/Bartley Park Story Quest/Underpass Mural
- Community Radio – Spud Soundscape, Stories, Poetry, Music output with a Nature focus



Activate Performing Arts - River of Hope Project with Plymouth Institute of Education

CASE STUDY:
FOREST OF CALM

In the spring, Culture in Common partnered up with New Forest National Park Authority and New Forest District Council to deliver a project with home educated students from the New Forest, commissioning The Beardy Gardener (Leigh Johnstone) to co-create a garden inspired by the New Forest with young people.



The co-creation group at BBC Gardener's World

The garden 'A Forest of Calm' which replicated the iconic heathland landscape that humans and animals share together, including the famous New Forest pony, won gold when presented at BBC Gardener's world in Beaulieu in April.

The Garden was transported to Bramshaw Village Hall where the students meet every week so that the garden can still be visited and enjoyed by them and local residents.





Clare Canning, part of the Broadleaf Home Ed Co-op in Bramshaw said:

"Thank you so much for offering this opportunity to the children – very few of them were keen gardeners when the project started but Leigh was great, and they are all very excited to have won a Gold Medal for the garden design!"



Design of the Forest of Calm garden. Watercolour by Alexandra Froggatt

Click here or scan the QR code to view the final 'Forest of Calm' showcase garden at BBC Gardener's World

Scan here!

The Forest of Calm was created in partnership with:

New Forest DISTRICT COUNCIL

NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK

CASE STUDY:
THE ALICE PROJECT

On Saturday 4th May 2024, the New Forest Heritage Centre came alive with a wonderland of Alices, who joined us for an afternoon of creative activities, games, a sounds workshop and a mad hatters tea party.

There was excitement in the air as Alices, ranging in age from a new-born baby to a 79-year-old, made Alice bands together, played wonderland card games and engaged in a 'Menu of Conversation' over tea and cake to get to know each other and discover what they had in common. BBC South Today came to film the event – view an excerpt by scanning the QR code:

Scan here!



"Thank you very much for such a special event. Alice loved the whole day and is sad to go home. She had lots of fun."

"What a magical and memorable afternoon we have had. Thank you."



On 19th October, all the Alices were invited back to hear a sneak preview of their voices woven into a new sound piece by Platform 4. Platform 4 are a nationally acclaimed performance company who have been creating unique, bespoke projects for 27 years. This new project inspired by Alice in Wonderland, is a gig theatre piece which will tour the UK in Spring 2025, weaving together original music, interviews with the inhabitants of the New Forest, Lewis Carroll's text and voices from 40 contemporary Alices!







"Absolutely magical and totally hypnotic. Loved absolutely everything about it."

"A unique performance! Great gusto, artistry and connections to Alice."



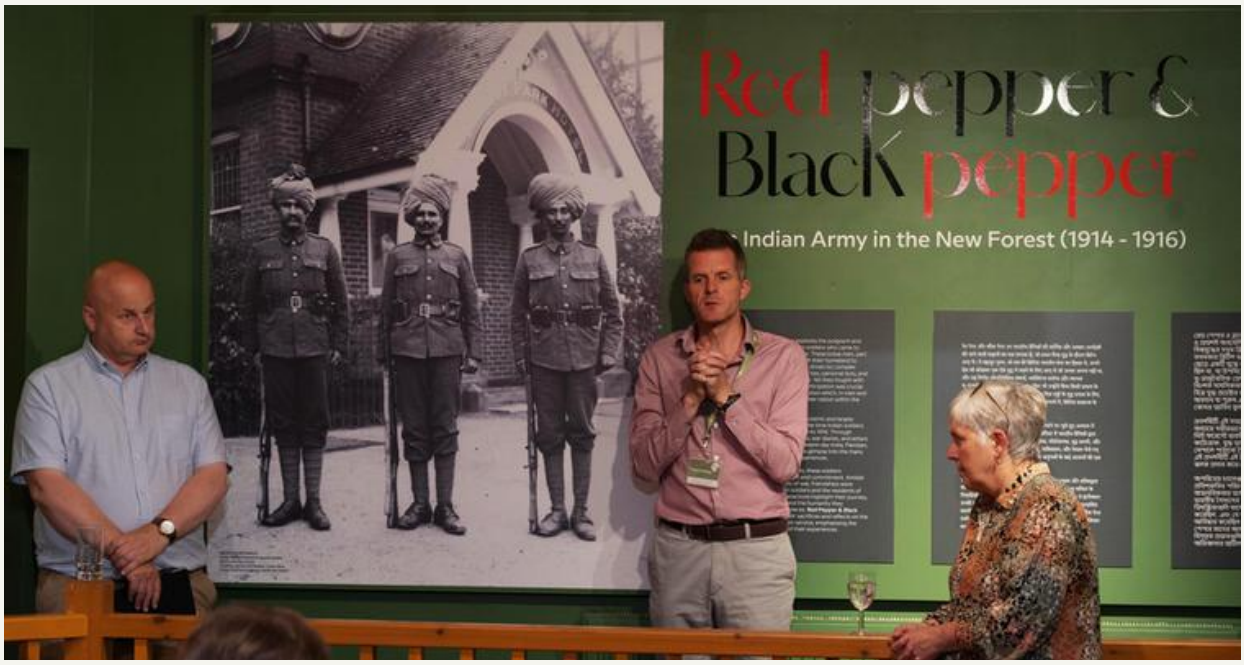
Why Alice?

Culture in Common supported this project because the 'real' Alice – Alice Liddell – lived near Lyndhurst and is buried in the local church. She is part of the cultural heritage of the area and we wanted to support other Alices to come together, create and share stories.

Thank you to Platform 4, New Forest Heritage Centre, and our Community Anchor Nerissa Wilkins for their creative vision and adventurous spirit making this project come to life.

PLATFORM 4 New Forest Heritage Centre THE ALICE PROJECT

CASE STUDY:
RED PEPPER, BLACK PEPPER
THE INDIAN ARMY IN THE NEW FOREST



Exhibition co-curator, Nick Saunders, and New Forest Heritage Centre Director, Angus, at the Exhibition Opening

Earlier this year, Culture in Common supported the production of 'Red Pepper & Black Pepper: The Indian Army in the New Forest (1914-1916)'. The exhibition, co-created by Nick Saunders and Devanshi Rungta, explored the fascinating story of two Indian Army hospitals in the New Forest during World War I.

Held at the New Forest Heritage Centre, Lyndhurst, the exhibition explored the spirit of friendship between the soldiers and the local community, as well as the hard-hitting narrative of 55 Indian soldiers who did not survive their injuries. The exhibition delved into a largely forgotten chapter of this period: the time Indian soldiers spent in the New Forest from 1914 to 1916. Through documents, journals, photographs, war diaries, and letters sent by soldiers back home to present day India, Pakistan, and Nepal, this exhibition offered a glimpse into these soldiers' experiences.



Angus and exhibition co-curator, Devanshi Rungta at Hampton Court Go & See





Local residents were invited to the exhibition's opening night - one resident had family who were part of the First World War and photographs of them in uniform were featured. To provide more context to the exhibition, acclaimed author and historian, **Shrabani Basu** was invited to deliver a talk entitled **'Turbans in the Trenches, India's contribution to the Western Front in WW1'** on 25th July at Lyndhurst Community Centre.

The exhibition coincided with the annual commemoration by the Friends of the Indian Memorial at Barton on Sea and we were pleased to welcome East Asian communities from the New Forest, Bournemouth and Southampton to share their memories of ancestors.







24

Exhibition Days

6,767

Exhibition Visitors

New Forest Heritage Centre

Friends of the Indian Soldiers

Arts Council England Lottery Funded

Supported using public funding by ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

OUR HOST AND PARTNERS

Culture in Common is managed by a consortium which blends arts, community engagement, heritage, physical activity and health expertise.

Members of the Consortium act like a Board, meeting quarterly and working together to develop, monitor and lead the direction, management and delivery of the project.

Energise Me

The host organisation – a charity that champions physical activity for all in Hampshire.

FOLIO
NEW FOREST
ARTS AND CULTURE

The collective of professional arts and cultural organisation based in the New Forest.

The Handy Trust
For You, For Youth, For All

A charity improving the lives of children and young people in our community.

New Forest
DISTRICT COUNCIL

The local government authority for the New Forest District

NEW FOREST
NATIONAL PARK

Responsible for promoting the purposes of the New Forest National Park and those who live and work it.

Find out more about Culture in Common's Consortium, Programming Team, and Community Anchors on our website:

Scan here!



Acting Up: Enchanted Cinema - The Snowman



Thorney Hill Archaeological Dig



Vic's Fish Bar © Niall McDiarmid



Street Art Mural at Noadswood School

CULTURE
IN COMMON

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Culture in Common Team, August 2024

"What heals is the taking part
In workshopped and engaging art
To make you feel less alone
And to take some brightness with you, home"

Excerpt from a poem, co-created at a Community Engagement Session with poet Stephen Mizen