

# Crawley's Creative Playground

Today Arts Council England announce up to £1 million investment in arts and culture in Crawley as part of their Creative People and Places National Portfolio Programme between April 2022 and March 2025.

@CreativeCrawley | #CreativePlaygroundCrawley | [www.creativecrawley.com](http://www.creativecrawley.com)  
@thehawthcrawley @manor\_royal @DiverseCrawley @CrawleyTownCF @lgbt\_crawley

**A consortium of six Crawley organisations has been successful in securing up to £1 million investment in a three year programme of creativity in the town. Manor Royal Business Improvement District, Crawley LGBTU+, Crawley Town Community Foundation, Diverse Crawley and The Hawth will form the core consortium to govern the project and Creative Crawley is the lead delivery partner.**

This ambitious project will support local people to engage in high quality arts and culture in Crawley as audiences, participants, makers, producers and curators. Local people will work with a team of experts to develop their skills, engage in a wide range of different types of creativity and make decisions about what art and culture takes place in their town in homes, work places, community venues, outdoor areas and public spaces.

The project will employ artists, production managers, marketing, PR and audience development specialists, evaluation specialists, producers, community specialists and more and will involve a range of voluntary opportunities too.

Creative workshops, shows, gigs, exhibitions, digital projects, outdoor art and festivals covering a range of art forms from local, national and international artists and arts organisations will be at the heart of the project.

A series of monthly, creative meet ups will take place in a range of locations across Crawley where participants will make decisions on what creative activity happens in the town. Focussed work will take place in a variety of neighbourhoods in Crawley with a view to engaging people across the whole town.

It is intended that the £1 million investment from Arts Council England will lever another nearly £600,000 for the project over the three years with 40% of that income already confirmed from partners including Crawley Borough Council, Crawley Town Centre Business Improvement District and Brighton Dome and Brighton Festival.

**Speaking about the investment, Steve Sawyer, Chair of Creative Crawley and Executive Director of Manor Royal Business Improvement District says:** "This is very welcome and exciting news for Crawley. It's a testimony to the hard work put in by Creative Crawley and the consortium that brings together different sections of the community to build a reputation for our town as a place where creativity, imagination, experimentation and culture are celebrated and can thrive. This announcement is a huge stimulus to some very exciting plans that I am thrilled we will now – collectively – have an opportunity to bring to life."

**Louise Blackwell, Creative Director of Creative Crawley says:** 'This investment is a game-changer for the arts, culture and people of Crawley. I'm honoured to be one of the leaders driving the programme forwards and I can't wait to explore Crawley as a creative playground with our partners and others who live, work and study in the town.'

## About the consortium members:

**Vincent Martin is one of three founders and directors of Crawley LGBTQU+.** The aims the company are to raise awareness of the issues facing the LGBTQU+ community and promote Crawley as a safe place for members of the community. This is done through planning and managing annual events and supporting the development of services for the LGBTQU+ community in Crawley. <https://www.crawleylgbt.com/>

**Darren Ford, Head of Foundation, Crawley Town Community Foundation (CTCF)** Established in 2012, CTCF is the registered charity of Crawley Town Football Club. Their vision is to positively change lives primarily through using the power of sport and football to engage, inspire and empower people. Working with participants and the community, together with local, regional and national partners, the Foundation aims to positively support the local community in health & wellbeing, sports participation, equalities and inclusion, education, tackling loneliness, employment and skills, regeneration and community safety and work with its current age range of participants being 2 – 100 years old. <https://www.ctcommunityfoundation.com/>

**Dave Watmore, General Manager, The Hawth.** Set in a 38 acre wooded site, The Hawth's facilities include the Theatre (seating 855), Studio (seating 146), a permanent foyer exhibition space on two levels, six meeting rooms, Café Vita, two bars, and amphitheatre used for performances throughout the summer. The programme of events includes over 350 performances and events a year, attracting over 150,000 paying customers to the venue. The Hawth is managed by Parkwood Theatres working in partnership with Crawley Borough Council. <https://www.parkwoodtheatres.co.uk/The-Hawth>

**Diverse Crawley.** This voluntary organisation began in Summer 2017, launched as part of Crawley's 70th anniversary, to share and showcase the rich diversity of our town. DIVERSE Crawley aims are to: promote community cohesion, organise, host and promote events to celebrate the rich culture of our diverse community, encourage communities across Crawley to participate, offer opportunities to volunteers to participate in and develop skills, encourage partnership organisations to get involved, fundraise for the programme of activities. <https://diversecrawley.org.uk/>

**Steve Sawyer, Executive Director, Manor Royal Business Improvement District (BID).** The Manor Royal BID was created in June 2013 following a vote by businesses and is governed by Manor Royal businesses. MRBD Limited is an independent not-for-profit company formed by Manor Royal companies to manage and deliver the manor Royal BID Business Plan and its various projects. The Manor Royal BID is a mechanism to allow businesses to create a fund and attract additional investment to improve the Business District in ways they decide, working with and holding to account other agencies as necessary. <https://www.manorroyal.org/about-the-bid/>

## About Creative Crawley

Creative Crawley is a new charity set up by a group of people who have come together to expand creativity and participation in the arts in Crawley through collaboration and innovation. We want to establish a reputation for Crawley as a creative place beyond its boundaries and contribute to creating an environment that fosters happiness, confidence and pride in those who live, work and study in the town. It's Creative Director, Louise Blackwell was born and raised in Crawley.

The Trustees are Adam Joolia (Audio Active), Andrea Dumbrell (Crawley Museum), Dave Savage (CCYS), Laiba Baig (Crawley Youth Council), Parveen Kahn (Diverse Crawley), Steve Sawyer (Manor Royal BID) Tony Witton (Crawley Festival), Vanessa Dell (Manor Green College) and Vicki Illingworth (Crawley College).