



THE CREATIVE VILLAGE

A partnership between Creative Crawley AudioActive and Theatre Centre Apr '24 to Sept '25



It doesn't have to be perfect to be applauded

Young people report a 34% increase in self-esteem and a 20% increase in wellbeing through taking part in this project

Skills Exchange cohort, West Green Studios, June 2025

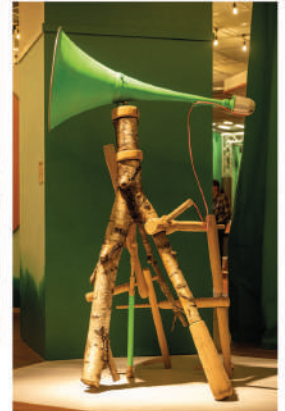
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You're making a revolution, recreating third spaces in Crawley and making art experiences accessible

- Audience member, Unit 79/80 County Mall
Super Normal Extra Natural by Requardt&Rosenberg in County Mall. Image by Ian Greenland.

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The Surgeon by Abdollah Nafisi, Unit 79/80 County Mall Image by Ian Greenland.

20 partners in Crawley create jobs for over 100 artists and cultural workers as nearly 3000 local residents get involved

The Creative Village was a Place Partnership Project funded by Arts Council England, UK Government via Crawley Borough Council, Sussex Community Foundation and Gatwick Airport Ltd.

It was led by Creative Crawley in partnership with AudioActive (a regional youth music company) and Theatre Centre (a national touring theatre company). Other partners included Crawley College, West Sussex Library Service, County Mall Shopping Centre, The Hawth, Pop Up Culture Crawley, DanceHub CIC, and three secondary and four primary schools in Crawley.

A local resident and member of the Skills Exchange cohort says, "It is inspiring and a breath of fresh air to Crawley. The vibes already feel different walking through town".

"Crawley is JUMPING. I feel so inspired to come back at a later date
says an audience member for Chris Thorpe's 'Talking About the Fire'



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Talking About The Fire by Chris Thorpe Unit 79/80 County Mall, image by Simon Edwards

"We felt so welcomed by the Creative Crawley team

- Unit 79/80 audience member

"I didn't realise that if you wanted to be an actor you still had to do maths to add up what you get paid
- Year 6 Bewbush Primary Student



"It's an experience for life

- Manuela, Skills Exchange Cohort

"Maple and Mosely are just like Gilbert and George but sexier

- Unit 79/80 audience member

Maple & Mosely, Breakfast Scene, image by Leyla Güler

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Amelia Rodrigues, Woodzy & Friends, The Hawth, Jan 2025. Image by Charlotte White



Detail of Unit 79/80 County Mall. Image by Ian Greenland.

Pop Up Spaces

The Creative Village was an ambitious 18-month project. It created **two pop up cultural spaces**; a former sofa shop unit in County Mall Shopping Centre was transformed into a 60-seat theatre, flexible exhibition space and recording studio and a former community centre just outside the town centre was converted into artist studios in West Green in response to the lack of cultural infrastructure and utilising empty spaces in the town.

Unit 79/80 County Mall hosted **local artist showcases, new visual art commissions** by local artists and nationally renowned events from a **large scale interdisciplinary dance show** that spilled into the main atrium of the Mall, **playable exhibitions for families** and **theatre shows that help us tackle big questions**. A **Fashion Show for Crawley** had audiences queuing around the block, young people **created beats in the recording studio**, and a local artist typed poems for shoppers on an old-fashioned typewriter in the window. **Nearly 3000 people visited the space in 3 months** and engaged in the work that was **all completely free to attend**.

Resident Artists at West Green Studios from **fashion designers to architects and theatre makers**, tested the space. The converted bin store became a **Window Gallery** visible from the street and three local artists created installations inside it. Open days invited school children, councillors, funders and Crawley's MP into the space to **see the potential of a cultural hub where creative entrepreneurs contribute to the local ecology**.

“ I came here to pick up a parcel from Boots and I've seen all this

– Unit 79/80 Audience Member

“ I was unsure about how to get into the industry before, but I understand that there are a lot more routes in than I previously thought

– Skills Exchange Cohort



Woodzy, Woodzy & Friends, Unit 79/80, County Mall. Image by Ian Greenland

What is the project?

The Skills Exchange Programme

A cohort of **10 local young people** took part in a **9 month paid opportunity to learn** in the Skills Exchange programme, **working with creative professionals across many disciplines in real work situations**. Local artists, other residents and the Creative Crawley team had access to a series of skills development and training workshops.

Local and national showcasing

We invited **artists of national significance** (Sarah Maple, Chris Thorpe, David Rosenberg & Frauke Requardt for example) **alongside local and regional artists** (Woodzy, Saaj Raja, Beth Williams for example) to present their work in spaces in Crawley **to inspire local and regional audiences**.

Developing Creative Crawley's business model

Local people were employed as the Welcome Team to work across both spaces and Creative Crawley built new connections and worked with consultants to help develop our business model, environmental and communications strategy placing Creative Crawley in a stronger position as **an anchor organisation for arts and culture in the town.**



Paul participating at Play Interact Explore by Leap Then Look. Image by Ian Greenland.

“ A true driving force in the ongoing revitalisation of Crawley Town Centre – General Manager, County Mall Shopping Centre



The theatre at Unit 79/80 County Mall. Image by Ian Greenland.



Super Normal Extra Natural by Requardt&Rosenberg in County Mall. Image by Ian Greenland.

Why Now?

As an ancient Sussex market town redesigned and expanded in 1947, Crawley had high hopes to become a culturally rich hub, and the plans included the construction of a central arts centre to host concerts, theatre, art exhibitions and meetings of local cultural societies. These initial town plans were never realised, creating a fragmented arts scene which is present today. Community activity, whilst vibrant and growing, is focused at neighbourhood level – while the town's larger venues are not always easily accessible.

Creative Crawley was formed in response to a report commissioned by Crawley Borough Council (CBC) in 2018 which highlighted a lack of a local organisation to champion arts & culture in all forms across the town, low engagement in arts and culture and a lack of cultural spaces. We became a charity in 2021.



West Green Studios Fashion Studio Image by Simon Edwards

Recognising the gaps, Arts Council England designated Crawley as a Priority Place in 2019, signalling increased investment in cultural development to support long-term creative and cultural engagement.

Alongside The Creative Village, Creative Crawley has been part of the development of a CBC led and Arts Council England funded **Cultural Framework for the town** and was one of the three partners with **Hemingway Design and always possible who undertook a feasibility study into a Cultural Quarter for Crawley** as part of the central government funded Towns Fund.

The lack of a central venue is a concern highlighted in the Cultural Quarter consultations and the Cultural Framework for Crawley, alongside significant gaps in infrastructure, economic pressures and a need for a clearer cultural vision. This disparate nature of the Crawley arts scene also means that the town's artists, both aspiring and those at later career stages, face barriers.

Many are not well networked and are often unaware of what opportunities are available in the town. An ongoing lack of visible cultural activity, limited knowledge of the business side of the arts, reduced access to more experienced artists and too few chances to practise and develop skills all hinder creative progression, making it harder for artists to take the next steps in their development.

Limited cross-sector partnerships, the relatively low profile of culture within local priorities and the tendency for artists either to leave



Creative Crawley team collaborating. Image by Ian Greenland.

for better opportunities or to remain working in isolation have all contributed to a feeling that Crawley's arts and culture sector is underdeveloped and fragmented. Crawley's Cultural Framework survey, carried out in 2024, identified that **62% of respondents wanted additional creative spaces** such as art hubs and community centres, and highlighted significant gaps in provision in areas like visual arts workspaces, exhibition spaces and youth facilities for digital arts and gaming.

The Creative Village became an opportunity to try collaborative working to create these spaces, as well as to create a deeper understanding of the needs of Crawley, West Sussex and Surrey creatives.

Skills Exchange Programme

From July 2024 to June 2025, 10 young people aged 16 - 29 years old were part of the Skills Exchange Programme which aimed to **open up access to the creative industries** for those they may not otherwise have routes in by working side by side with creative professionals.

They took part in **monthly training sessions and three, week long residencies** in the immersive spaces at Crawley

College, the studio at The Hawth and at the West Green Studios. The monthly sessions were open to all Crawley residents as well as the cohort. We also ran a series of **creative career workshops** and assemblies with students and teachers from local schools. Some of the cohort also received **1:1 mentoring** from professional creatives. The programme was intentionally interdisciplinary, working with

practitioners who take an experimental approach to their creative practice. It encouraged participants to step out of their comfort zone and try new things.



Producer Gathering speakers, West Green Studios. Image by Ian Greenland



Clod Ensemble's Archiving workshop, West Green Studios

The programme: creating an environment for risk-taking and resilience

The monthly sessions



Sophie Eustace budgeting workshop

Fundraising with Jamie Wyld (Dreamy Place) and Sam Eden-Green (Arts Council England)

The BIPC at Crawley Library with Tim Stanton

Telling Your Story with Matt Turner (Creative Pod)

Producer Gathering in partnership with Marlborough Productions

Using Archives in Creative Practice with Clod Ensemble

Creative Health in partnership with The Hera Project

Introduction to Evaluation with Flying Geese

Using the numbers to make a project happen with Sophie Eustace (Creative Crawley)

Inclusive Facilitation with Access All Areas



Creative Health workshop with The Hera Project, Charis Centre

The week long intensives

October '24: Immersive image and sound with BrightBlack, Helen Anahita Wilson, Maggie Slabon at Crawley College

January '25: Theatre making and asking big questions with Rob Watt, Theatre Centre, Chris Thorpe and Eleanor Field at The Hawth Theatre.

April '25: Creating your own work at West Green Studios with Sarah Maple, Meg Mosley and the Creative Crawley team



Projection Mapping workshop with Maggie Slabon, Crawley College.

Workshops with local school children

We ran five workshops and one assembly in partnership with Rob Watt and Eleanor Manners with year 6 - 9 students from Thomas Bennett Community College, Ifield Community College and Seymour, Waterfield, Bewbush and Broadfield Primary Schools. The workshops explored different creative careers with the students and offered CPD opportunities for the teachers. We engaged 468 young people and their teachers.

“WOW thank you so much for delivering the best Alumni talk ever!!! The feedback was 100% positive with some students asking for it to be a bit longer.”

- Careers Advisor, Ifield Community College

“Being mentored by Abdollah Nafisi was truly a transformative experience.”

Very inspiring. Thank you so much. - James, Skills Exchange cohort



The cohort making their final pieces, West Green Studios.

“It was an outrageously fun, bizarre, nurturing and creative experience” - James, Skills Exchange cohort

“One of the most interesting weeks of my life so far, very grateful & inspired”
- Grace, Skills Exchange cohort

“The school is buzzing with talks of different career options, and this wouldn't be possible without the engagement of employers like you”

- Teacher, Ifield Community College

The Cohort

The cohort comprised 10 young people aged between 16 and 27 years, drawn primarily from Crawley and its surrounding areas.

Crawley neighbourhoods represented were Bewbush (3 cohort members), Tilgate (3 cohort members) with 2 attending

The Gatwick School, 1 cohort member from Gossops Green, and another member from Forge Wood. 2 participants came from further afield: 1 cohort member attended Thomas Bennett Community College and lives in Reigate, and another was from East Grinstead.



In terms of ethnicity, the cohort included 5 White British participants (50%), two Latin participants (20%), 1 British/Slavic participant (10%), 1 Mixed Heritage participant (10%), and 1 Black/Other participant (10%). Gender identity was varied, with 5 female participants (50%), 4 male participants (40%), and 1 non-binary participant (10%). The group reflected a range of lived experiences: 2 individuals were neurodivergent (including ADHD) and one was a wheelchair user.

“**The accessibility provided throughout the program has been exceptional, fully accommodating my disability needs and fostering a sense of inclusion.**

I felt well-supported and able to engage comfortably in all activities.

- Isaias, Skills Exchange cohort

“**I'm surprised by my own capabilities**

- Luiba, Skills Exchange cohort

Pictured: Grace and Izzy, Skills Exchange cohort, The Hawth, Jan 2025. Image by Kaleido Shoots

What they learnt

Meeting professional artists brought the cohort practical guidance and valuable insight into what it really means to work in the creative sector. Our evaluators (RMR) observed the following positive impacts on the cohort:



Cohort at the Access All Areas workshop, Unit 79/80 County Mall. Image by Charlotte White

Developing a community

Building confidence

Developing skills (and trying something new)

Learning from professional artists

Thinking (and talking about themselves) as artists

They identified three types of learning here:

Reflecting on and developing their creative practice

Finding a balance between life and creative practice

Insights into life as a professional artist

And in all these areas, The Creative Village provided an opportunity for young artists to have vital conversations that are so rarely had, helping them gain a fast pass into understanding elements that are crucial to becoming a creative professional.

“**The confidence of the young people and how they described their own professional creativity — it was clear [the Creative Crawley team] had really bolstered their confidence.**

- Skills Exchange Programme Partner



The Cohort and Resident Artists, West Green Studios



Participants at Producer Gathering, West Green Studios, Image by Ian Greenland

“ It doesn't have to be perfect to be applauded. ”

– Most impactful statement, agreed by all the cohort during the Most Significant Change* reflection session

As part of the reflection session, the cohort developed a set of learnings that they felt was essential to take their career forward as artists:

DEVELOPING YOUR MINDSET, SKILLS AND CREATIVE PRACTICE

Being and growing with people in completely different stages of their lives

Inspiration and improvement in my craft

Evolving your creative career

Having the ability to articulate my ideas in front of others

Working with a mentor

Thinking ahead and thinking strategically

TAKING RISKS

Don't be afraid to dive into things

Trying new things and being flexible

Trusting my own ideas

Letting go of perfectionism and the fear of making mistakes in my work

Pushing out of your comfort zone

IMPACT ON OTHERS

Think of your target audience and the effect it will cause

Your practice impacts others

All of us together in the space was so impactful on our development

- All of us together in the space was so impactful on our development

- We were affected by each other and by the creative professionals that we worked with

- Learning to collaborate and learn from others

ENVIRONMENT

- Realising the importance of an inspiring environment and letting it lead you

- Being inspired by the world around you and being present in it

CONFIDENCE

Gaining confidence through trying

Having confidence in myself

A huge change in confidence from Sept to June

Without confidence you can't grow as an artist

*Most Significant Change is a storytelling approach to gathering and exploring change outcomes that was developed in the context of public health and international development (Davies and Dart, 2005).



Chris Thorpe and the Skills Exchange cohort, The Hawth, Jan 2025. Image by Kaleido Shoots

33% increase in confidence

20% increase in wellbeing

34% increase in self-esteem

40% of the cohort said “learning new things” was what they enjoyed the most

50% recognised the connection between sharing their ideas and increased confidence

These reflections demonstrate that the programme effectively captured the right balance.

It created an environment for risk-taking and resilience, with cohort reporting increased confidence and greater willingness to share imperfect work alongside measurable improvements in wellbeing and self-esteem, demonstrating a sense of safety.

“ We got the best out of each other and learnt from each other’s skills.

Collaboration has brought unusual and unexpected ideas to life.

– Skills Exchange cohort

“ It was so helpful having workshops from different creative professionals, such as Matt Turner, Brightblack and Dizzy, to showcase the variety of options there are for creative work. *– Skills Exchange cohort*



Cohort members at Producer Gathering, West Green Studios. Image by Ian Greenland.

National and local showcasing

We showcased both local and nationally significant artists across a range of art forms. Some of the work shown was curated by and involved Crawley residents as part of Crawley's Creative Playground, the Arts Council England Creative People and Places programme. One piece was also part of Crawley Borough Council's Pop Up Culture and Dance Hub CIC's programme.

The programme

Visual Art

The Surgeon

by Abdollah Nafisi (Unit 79/80)



Abdollah Nafisi and The Surgeon image by Abdollah Nafisi

Play, Interact, Explore

by Leap Then Look (Unit 79/80)



Participants enjoying the Play Interact Explore exhibition

Breakfast Scene

by Maple & Mosley (Unit 79/80)



A still from Breakfast Scene by Maple & Mosley
Image by Leyla Güler

Figures of Fragility

by Lonny Chahaun

& Gestures of Anatomy

by Carys Tupper

(West Green Window Gallery)



Figures of Fragility. Photo by Simon Edwards

Making The Invisible Visible

by Eric MacLennan (Unit 79/80)

Part of Crawley's Creative Playground



Making the Invisible Visible by Eric MacLennan, image by Ian Greenland

Performance

AudioActive Kustom Vibes Showcases

Mak 10, Donae'o and New Generation Jazz performed music gigs with local young people. Alongside these gigs, AudioActive also ran three workshops a week for young people and a session called 'What next for Live Music in Crawley?'



AudioActive workshops at Unit 79/80 County Mall

Woodzy & Friends

A monthly local showcase hosted by Surrey based poet and rapper Woodzy. Local artists showcased their work alongside national practitioners. Theatre, dance, music, literature, photography, fashion, visual arts and sculpture were represented. (Crawley College, West Green Studios, Unit 79/80)



Woodzy & Friends, March 2025, West Green Studios. Image by Simon Edwards

Super Normal Extra Natural

by Requardt&Rosenberg produced by The Place

An audience member said, "I loved seeing the vision become reality. The interactive show was amazing - I'm a big sensory seeker so getting to touch and play with the art was amazing. Super Normal Extra Natural was so surreal, I've never seen anything like it before, such an enjoyable show. Can't wait to see the space grow."



Talking about the Fire

by Chris Thorpe, Claire O'Reilly & Eleanor Field

Produced by China Plate

Audiences remarked how they hadn't seen something like this in Crawley before. It made them think that Crawley has something to offer creatively.



Dizzy

by Mohamed Zain Dada

A Theatre Centre and Sheffield Theatres co-production

An audience member said, "Having shows like this in Crawley is exactly what's needed. The relatability of the story for the audience in Crawley was perfect. We need more of it!"



Living Legends (And Dead Ones Too)

by Brigitte Aphrodite

Part of Crawley's Creative Playground, West Green Studios

A Citizens Assembly

by Andy Smith

Part of Crawley's Creative Playground, West Green Studios

Fashion Show for Crawley

curated by Beth Williams

Part of Crawley's Creative Playground, Unit 79/80



“Woodzy & Friends has benefited me massively as a local creative. It's helped me make some incredible connections with other creatives. It's also opened my eyes to other art forms and how important they can be within the community. – Local artist

Installations

Custom Poems by Woodzy

Sandy Times

by Ella Raimundo and Grace Lambert



Sandy Times image by Ella Raimundo

Concrete Jungle

by Charlie Baxter and Isaias Goncalves



Concrete Jungle image by Charlie Baxter

Spiral of Creation

by Zikora Onwuka, Liuba Manzarkhanova and James Fensom

Film

Pot Luck Cinema

On Saturdays people could watch a surprise feature length movie in Unit 79/80.

Rubato

by Karl Singaporewala



Rubato image by Karl Singaporewala

Digital Debris: Waste in the Digital Age

by Barney Moseley & James Emery

This is Crawley's first ever 1Min:16s Abstract E-Waste documentary.



Waste in the Digital age in situ at West Green Studios

Who Cares?

by Tort Robinson



Still from Who Cares? By Tort Robinson

Workshops

Japan: Manga, Anime and Sweets

part of Crawley's Creative Playground, Unit 79/80



Mawadda Egbadi and her Manga Exhibition

Poetry and open mic

with Woodzy (Unit 79/80)

Weekly workshops

by AudioActive



AudioActive, Mak 10 at Crawley Bandstand

The Creative Crawley team, local artists and other residents also undertook training as part of this project with Access All Areas in working with neurodivergent and learning disabled people, Climate Sustainability and the Planetary Emergency with Amber Massie-Blomfield.

Art has always been my language
When I'm sick of day to day life
art is the bandage
It makes everything better
We create in Crawley and
come together.

Home is where the heart is
The heart is where your art is
Home is where the heart
belongs
Bringing together art and
songs
Warmth and laughter
Looking forward to what's
coming after.

My environment is alive
Creativity can create what the
perfect picture looks like
A human being's vision
The space to be able to speak
and listen.

What drives me isn't just my
car or my legs it's being driven.
Setting goals
Targets
Creating a safe space for
artists
Art is what the perfect picture
looks like,
Even if it's shaky and blurry.

Creative Conversations can
squash misunderstandings
Standing out can be
outstanding.

I'm at my best when I'm being
me
Lost in the spaces of creativity
When I've had a good sleep
A good meal
And a big hug
Do what you can as long as
you're having fun.

Words can be the beginning
and the ending
The seed to a tree that can
blossom
Creativity is where I can be
myself
It's good for my mental health.

We are building adventure
ships
Curious to see what's beyond
the sea
To a place of art, creativity and
collaboration in one space
Hey universe - this is where
we're going mate.

It's not just me, it's all of you.
Humming to the sound of
gratitude.

Woodzy and friends has been
a blessing to be a part of
It's hopefully the start of more
to come
We can all be proud of what
we've achieved so far and
done
But it's not done
It's not finished
Call this season one
You can see the vision
Thank you to everyone who
listens
Like I said this isn't the end
I have been Woodzy
Thank you to all of my friends.

Collaborative poem by
Woodzy and audiences at
'Woodzy & Friends' Oct 24 -
June 25



Spiral of Creation by Zikora Onwuka, Liuba Manzarkhanova and James Fensom.



The outside of Unit 79/80. Photo by Ian Greenland.

Unit 79/80, County Mall

In partnership with AudioActive we created Unit 79/80 County Mall. Transforming a former Sofa Workshop unit (33m x 14m) into **a flexible 60 seat theatre, recording studio and exhibition space**. Located on the first floor of County Mall Shopping Centre next to the former Debenhams, right at the end of the Mall but opposite Primark, the unit opened on 27th March 2025 and by the end of June over 2500 people had come through the doors.

Alongside the programme (see pages 8 & 9) we were delighted to **commission local artist Abdollah Nafisi to make 'The Surgeon'** a brand new sculpture that works on many levels; as an announcement for arts and culture in the town, an intricate comment on the power of nature, ecologies and the relationship between humans and the natural world and most importantly, a reminder to listen carefully to what is around us. **It remains a permanent resource for Crawley**, a sculpture that can be displayed in many different places in the town.

One of the biggest successes of the County Mall space is **a group of 20 local people** who now function as the Welcome Team. **From different backgrounds and ages, this team are the guardians of the space**. They are paid at least Living Wage to host the space whenever it is open to the public and they are a wonderful bunch.

“ Such a magical space! I was blown away by the exhibition, the playful spaces and the 'can do' attitude. It inspired me and fired me up to make more of a difference in my community
 – Audience member

“ I can't believe this is happening in Crawley. Nothing ever happened here. It's brilliant – Crawley resident

“ Such a positive experience, to be so well looked after and have such fun. We are having the time of our lives and we are so grateful – Audience member

“ I'm so grateful for Creative Crawley, I felt at home this weekend and this never happens in malls for me, haha!
 – Audience member



The Long Gallery at Unit 79/80 County Mall. Image by Ian Greenland



Unit 79/80 County Mall, image by Ian Greenland



The West Green foyer. Image by Ian Greenland.

West Green Studios

In discussion with local artists and other interested parties and in partnership with Theatre Centre, we transformed a council owned, former community centre in the West Green neighbourhood (just outside the town centre and 15 mins walk from Crawley train station) into a **multi-purpose artist studios, and flexible rehearsal and performance space.**

We converted the former bin store into a Window Gallery and commissioned three new pieces of work for the window; *Spiral of Creation* by Zikora Onwuka, Liuba Manzarkhanova and James Fensom (Skills Exchange Cohort), *Figures of Fragility* by Lonny Chauhan, *Gestures of Anatomy* (Still Life) by Carys Tupper and Abdollah Nafisi's *The Surgeon* was hosted here too. Between December 2025 & March 2026 the gallery is hosting three new commissions.



This space was instrumental in me making the shift from national to local practice, artist led to community centred, and exploring how place, culture, creativity and wellbeing can fit within this.

- Karl, Resident artist.

“ An incredible space with an industrial sewing machine and industry standard mannequin. It's a great work space with lots of storage for equipment. - Beth, Resident Artist

We hosted three open days for the public, the final Skills Exchange week-long intensive, various workshops, local and national showcases and invited 5 resident artists to test the studio spaces.

The resident artists are architect and visual artist Karl Singaporewala, fashion designers Beth Williams and Sophie Merriner, music and creative health producer Maija Handover and the national touring theatre company Theatre Centre. The spaces have been visited by MP Peter Lamb, Leader of Crawley Borough Council Cllr Michael Jones, Director of Arts Council South East, Hazel Edwards and other people with influence in this area.

“ I like that there are different types of spaces in one building.

I like that people from different disciplines can pop their head in and see what you're doing

- Izzy, Skills Exchange cohort



I can't tell you how amazing the feedback from last week was, it highlights the massive chasm between how we perceive ourselves and what others see.

I can't thank you enough for helping me through the process and bearing with me when my nerves were well and truly getting the better of me. I learned a hell of a lot and it's given me new confidence to do it again in the future

- Simon, Local Artist, Woody & Friends

As part of the project we also presented work and hosted workshops at Crawley College, Crawley Library, a range of primary and secondary schools, The Create Building (Town Hall), The Hawth and The Charis Centre.



West Green Studios detail designed by Stuart Hayes. Image by Ian Greenland.

“ I was most proud of how confident I became meeting new people, being able to discuss things, just random topics from the top of my head and having to think quickly. I was really, really proud of the window display as well. - Zikora, Skills Exchange cohort

“ Coming back home since graduating, particularly with most of my friends being based in London or other cities, has felt like quite an isolated place to be trying to be creative... It feels really important that, while funding for arts subjects and arts opportunities is so challenged, places like this exist. - Local artist

Top Tips

Overall

- 1** Learn and make changes as you go. Be open to it working in a different way. There will be unexpected good and bad news along the way.
- 2** Listen to feedback and use your team's instincts to choose which bits to take on board.
- 3** Try and have as much money as possible confirmed before you begin. Have a worst case scenario budget. Understand what you can make happen if new money becomes available. Have a large contingency. There will be things you could never have planned for that you will need to pay for.
- 4** Find joy where you can. It'll be hard but remember to celebrate your successes along the way.
- 5** Be clear about the benefits your work can bring to others.



Audience, Woodzy & Friends, Unit 79/80 County Mall, image by Leyla Güler

Building a Skills Exchange Programme

- 6** Build partnerships with schools, youth organisations and arts organisations that work with young people to make sure the word is spread during the recruitment phase.
- 7** Pay the cohort as well as the professional artists to be part of the programme. Understand this might impact on family's benefits and work on a case by case basis to mitigate this.
- 8** Treat the cohort as professionals. Offer additional opportunities where possible.
- 9** Listen to the cohort's needs and adapt the programme to respond to what you hear.
- 10** Ensure it's practical and doesn't feel like school.
- 11** Run the programme over a period of months. It builds a sense of community.



Unit 79/80 County Mall before the build begins

Making Pop Up Creative Spaces happen

- 12** It takes time. We started looking at potential spaces in 2021.
- 13** Make friends with estate agents, centre managers, local councillors and council officers and build their trust over time.
- 14** Work with others. Don't try and do it on your own. Find allies.
- 15** Don't forget about rates and levies. As a charity we automatically get 80% rate relief but the remaining 20% relief needs to be applied for via the council website. It takes time. If we hadn't been granted it we would have been liable for another £7k+.
- 16** Electricity costs loads of money. Make sure you know which meter is yours. Try and get someone else to cover these costs.
- 17** Running costs (internet, cleaning, gardening, power etc) will cost more than you have budgeted. There's always something that you've forgotten about.
- 18** Hold your nerve. Things will change. People will move on. Be brave.
- 19** Communicate with your partners, let them know what's going on.
- 20** Understand your risks and mitigate them. There will always be risks.
- 21** Work with a combination of people you know and trust and some new people. In moments of great challenge you need to be able to rely on people who know you and whom you trust completely.
- 22** Encourage new and existing staff teams to get on board and offer it as a learning experience. Let them know it's a new project and no-one knows exactly how it will work. Encourage flexibility. Reward commitment.
- 23** Consider staff, artists and audience safety at all times. Set up lone working policies for artists and staff, working in public policies and make friends with the local PCSOs and security teams.
- 24** Remember what you are doing may never have been done in this place, in this way before. There will be resistance as well as welcome.
- 25** Embrace your leadership role and encourage others to think differently. Be gentle with people for whom this is a whole new experience.
- 26** Understand that not everyone will think what you are doing is a good idea. That's okay. You don't have to please everyone.

Working in partnership

27 If you are leading the project, even though you will put a letter of agreement in place with key partners, know that the partnerships will change and evolve over 18 months. Make sure everyone is keeping up.

28 Ask the question of partners: 'What do you want to get out of your involvement in the project? How does it connect with what you are planning anyway?'

29 Try to get partners to commit to the bigger picture as well as being involved for their own financial and/or business development.

30 Everyone will be very busy delivering their own programmes, but insist on regular touch points to ensure everything is on track and expectations are being managed. Use those meetings wisely. Remember the bigger picture as well as day to day operations.

31 Don't expect that all departments/people in organisations will pass crucial information internally to those that need to know. Assume nothing. Understand who needs to know what information and find a way to get it to them.

32 Things can change in a moment. We programmed lots of our events in County Mall on a Thursday night because there was late night shopping. As soon as we opened, Primark decided they didn't want to open late on a Thursday anymore so we had to adapt our plans.



Skills Exchange cohort member in the Fashion Show for Crawley, Unit 79/80 County Mall, image by Simran Kaur



Charlie, Skills Exchange cohort, Unit 79/80 County Mall. Image by Simon Edwards



Audience at the launch event, Unit 79/80 County Mall, image by Ian Greenland.



County Mall staff at Unit 79/80 County Mall launch, March 2025 image by Simon Edwards.



Speakers at Producer Gathering, West Green Studios. Image by Ian Greenland.

Creating the spaces: The Timeline

2023

- June** Theatre Centre takes on the lease (£26,500 per annum) from Crawley Borough Council for 1, Town Barn Road, what will become the West Green Studios in partnership with Creative Crawley
- July** Initial Expression of Interest to Arts Council England's National Lottery Project Grant Place Partnership Programme for The Creative Village is submitted by Creative Crawley. Fundraising for the project continues.
- Oct** Arts Council England full funding application for £350k is submitted (following a successful expression of interest)
- Nov** Launch event at 1, Town Barn Road launching with Crawley Stories a podcast produced by Theatre Centre and Creative Crawley

2024

- Feb** Arts Council England application is successful
- July** Skills Exchange cohort is confirmed following a three month recruitment process
- Sep** Skills Exchange Programme begins
- Oct** County Mall agrees a licence with Creative Crawley for Unit 79/80 County Mall for a fee of £1k per month plus rates and power costs
- Nov** All match funding is in place bringing the total project budget to £452k. Designer and Production Manager Stuart Heyes is contracted to create the spaces
- Dec** Initial designs are shared with the partners and local residents and approvals given in principle

2025

- Jan** The production team get the keys to the spaces and the build begins
- Mar** Unit 79/80 County Mall opens to the public (27th). The resident artists move into West Green Studios and the final Skills Exchange week-long intensive takes place there (w/c 31st).
- Apr** First public open day at the West Green Studios (24th)
- Jun** New licence agreed with County Mall to extend until Dec 2025 (with option to extend to March 2026)
- Jul** Proposal submitted to Crawley Borough Council for peppercorn rent agreement for the West Green Studios
- Oct** Budget reconciliation, evaluation and funding reports are finished



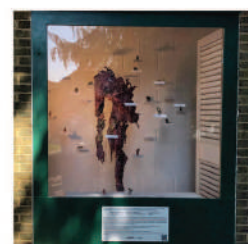
County Mall unit in development image by Simon Edwards



Request for permission to transform the bin store into a gallery. Image by Sam Evans



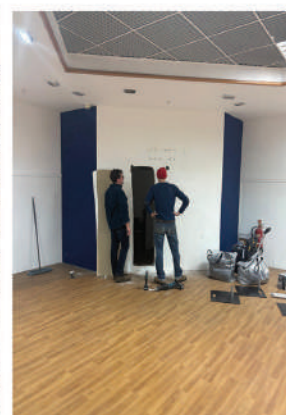
West Green Window Gallery in progress



West Green Window Gallery with Lonny Chauhan's Figures of Fragility image by Lonny Chauhan



West Green Studios new floor mid installation



The team contemplating how to turn this space into a recording studio image by Sam Evans



Finishing touches to the first Long Gallery exhibition in Unit 79/80.

The money and other numbers

98 artists and 22 other creative professionals employed

636 young people reached

43 events

(12 shows, 4 exhibitions, 22 workshops, 3 open days, 2 consultation events)

10 emerging creatives aged 16 - 29 years (Skills Exchange)

20 partners and wider stakeholders

2714 audiences and participants took part

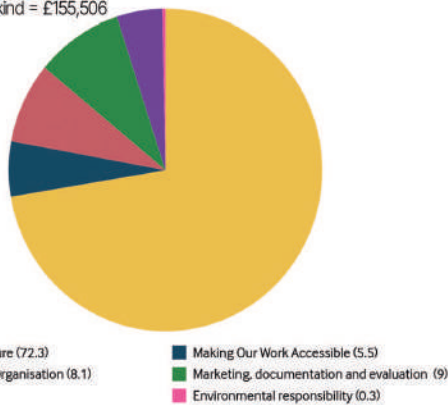
4 new visual art commissions

The money

40 local suppliers in West Sussex and Surrey were contracted to make the project happen.

Total Expenditure = £459,725
Total value of support in kind = £155,506

Values in brackets represented in %



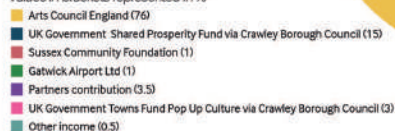
Breakdown of artistic costs



*not including cohort fees which are included in Making Your Work Accessible
**not including staff costs which are included in Creative Professional fees

Total income = £459,725

Values in brackets represented in %



Peter Lamb MP with West Green Studios Resident Artists, May 2025 image by Simon Edwards



Unit 79/80 County Mall in development, January 2025



Making the new artwork on the front of West Green Studios, March 2025

West Green Studios Resident and Associate Artists

Karl Singaporewala, architect and visual artist

Karl Singaporewala is an architect and royal academician. In 2024, he founded Karl Singaporewala + the design bureau (KSdb) which currently has architectural projects in Crawley, London, Manchester, Bristol, Brighton and Berlin. His sculpture studio at the West Green Studios was the former kitchen.



Karl Singaporewala. Image by Ian Greenland.

Beth Williams, Fashion Designer and Textiles Artist

Beth Williams is a queer, disabled designer and multi-disciplinary artist based in Crawley, West Sussex who specialises in Living Textiles, Bio-design and Knitwear.



Beth Williams. Photo by Ian Greenland.

Sophie Merriner, Fashion Designer

Sophie is a fashion and bridalwear designer raised in Crawley. She studied BA(Hons) Fashion Design at the University of Salford, graduating in 2023.



Sophie Merriner. Photo by Ian Greenland.

Beth and Sophie shared the Fashion Studio at West Green Studios.

Associate Artists

Kat Heath and Tara Boland, Theatre Makers

Kat Heath and Tara Boland are a theatre-making duo. They have previously created shows for Punchdrunk, Punchdrunk Enrichment, Secret Cinema, Swamp, the National Theatre and the National Portrait Gallery.



Kat Heath and Tara Boland

Simon Edwards, Photographer

Simon is a photographer, filmmaker and artist. He moved to Crawley in 1999 when he got his first production job with Formula 1. He is part of the WORDfest Crawley committee which he has been part of since the very beginning in 2011.



Simon Edwards

Maija Handover, Music and Creative Health Producer

Maija is passionate about the positive impact of creativity. Her background is in conceiving, producing and promoting innovative projects and initiatives across new music and sound.



Maija Handover in the garden at West Green Studios. Photo by Ian Greenland.

She is currently developing work inspired and informed by local place and wellbeing.

Research and Development

Marco Woolf & Sound UK

In November the Manchester based musician Marco Woolf (Richard Kankondo) was supported by Sound UK to spend a week in Crawley connecting with different members of the community (particularly elders) and developing his new show. He also spent some time working with the Skills Exchange cohort. In total he worked with 57 people from age 16 - 80 yrs.

He worked in the West Green Studios, Carey House and Broadfield Community Centre, supported by Creative Crawley. The week culminated in Marco presenting ideas developed as part of the December Woodzy & Friends local showcase which resulted in an unforgettable moment of spontaneous improvisation between Woodzy & Marco live on stage.

Theatre Centre (also Resident Artists)

In June 2025, Theatre Centre ran nine workshops and R&D sessions with a total of 75 young people as part of developing their new co-production with Sheffield Theatres; My Brother's a Genius.



Theatre Centre R&D, West Green Studios, Image by Ian Greenland

The workshops took place in Manor Green College, National Youth Theatre, St Wilfred's Catholic School and The Hawth Youth Theatre. They worked with three artists; Yami Lofvenberg (Director and Movement Director), Eleanor Manners (Theatre Centre Artistic Director) and Debris Stevenson (Grime Poet, Mover, Writer & Creator of Genius).

“ To be met with such acceptance and have the accessibility not just meet my needs but go WAY above and beyond was so heartwarming

– Workshop participant

“ A brilliant opportunity for our students to support and shape a story focused on SEND.

– Manor Green College



Marco Woolf and the Skills Exchange cohort, West Green Studios

The Partners

Developing new partnerships was a core part of The Creative Village, with **collaboration crucial to the delivery of the programme**. Creative Crawley's key partners were **AudioActive and Theatre Centre**, complemented by partnerships and stakeholders including County Mall Shopping Centre, Crawley College, West Sussex Library Service, The Hawth, DanceHub CIC, Pop Up Culture Crawley, The Gatwick School, Thomas Bennett Community College, Ifield Community College and Seymour, Waterfield, Bewbush and Broadfield Primary Schools.

On the whole, these partnerships worked well with a collaborative nature aiding the delivery components of The Creative Village. **Partners were overwhelmingly positive about promoting the spaces:** of the five respondents, four had actively promoted the pop-up spaces.

Key impacts of the pop-ups on partners' work and organisations include:

- Improved community engagement
- New opportunities for collaboration
- The chance to enhance their programming and services
- A deeper understanding of the needs of Crawley's creative community

Theatre Centre

Theatre Centre commissions new writing from trailblazing writers, touring their shows directly into schools and theatres UK-wide, as well as running their year-round Future Makers activities. Future Makers brings young people, artists, and teachers together as creative collaborators, making space for young people to have agency. They moved to Crawley as part of the Arts Council England Transfer Programme and are now based in Crawley with hubs in South East London and Sheffield.

Before The Creative Village, Theatre Centre took on the lease (and financial risk for the lease and the running costs) for West Green Studios and were based in the building until March 2026. The project contributed a % of the rent and running costs for the building during this period. Creative Crawley transformed the former community centre into a fit for purpose artist studios, rehearsal and pop up performance space.

The project contributed to the cost of Theatre Centre working with us to run 9 workshops in local schools, with the Hawth Youth Theatre and the National Youth Theatre at the West Green Studios, present their show Dizzy by Olivier award-winning writer Mohamed Zain Dada at The Hawth and undertake some R&D with local young people for their new show My Brother's A Genius by Debris Stevenson.



Sera Mustafa (Qamar) In Dizzy image by Chris Saunders

AudioActive

AudioActive provides widely accessible projects that use music to support young people and emerging artists to reach their potential. Their work aims to use music for social innovation, to promote grassroots talent, and create a fairer, more inclusive industry and world of work. They are based in Worthing and work across Crawley and Brighton. They have been running projects in Crawley since 2018.

As part of The Creative Village AudioActive invested time and money in making Unit 79/80 fit for purpose for their three weekly music workshops and ad hoc gigs for young people aged 12 - 25 years old. They also hosted a session called 'What next for Live Music in Crawley?' led by AudioActive and attended by 28 artists, young people and other interested parties.

We created a recording studio and workshop area in the space for their exclusive use. The events ran from April to July 2025 and there were 457 engagements with young people in the project across 39 workshops. AudioActive continues to be based at Unit 79/80 County Mall for their Crawley work.



Adam Joola, CEO AudioActive at the launch of Unit 79/80 County Mall, March 2025, Image by Ian Greenland

“
The creative space has brought different people into the Centre that may not have visited before.

With it, they see and experience more than just a shopping centre – Unit 79/80 gives people a creative outlet now which wasn't available before.

– Simon, General Manager, County Mall Shopping Centre

“ I come from a working class background, a low economic background, and never in a million years would I have dreamt that I could have a studio space in my hometown

– Sophie, Resident Artist, West Green Studios

Challenges

Staff capacity

Creative Crawley has a small team. For this project we recruited some new freelance staff to work alongside the core team.

We created a new role of Operations Manager to manage the day to day operations of the two pop up spaces. Both people recruited to this post left after a few weeks due to changes in personal circumstances. **It was also a brand new role.**

We needed an experienced person in this role who was able to create the role and respond to need. This meant **the core team took on much more responsibility in this area than planned.**

Our Communications Officer left as the programme launched. This created a gap in marketing capacity which placed increased workload on the core team.

Some freelance staff were based a long way from Crawley. This put a greater strain on them due to travel time and placed more pressure on the local members of the team.

Arts funding cuts

Despite the momentum for arts and culture in the town, two big setbacks took place towards the end of the project. Crawley Town Centre BID (one of Creative Crawley's long term partners and investors in arts and culture in Crawley) didn't win a second 5 year term at ballot.

Crawley Borough Council made their Arts Development Officer redundant and cut the arts budget drastically.



Negative feedback and threats

We received in person threats and online negativity towards the work we were doing in County Mall in March 2025.

This was mostly directed at a show we opened our programme with, involving men dressed as women. There is an ongoing police investigation relating to the threats. This resulted in **increased security at all public events** and a clear support system in place for staff. The County Mall team was incredibly supportive.

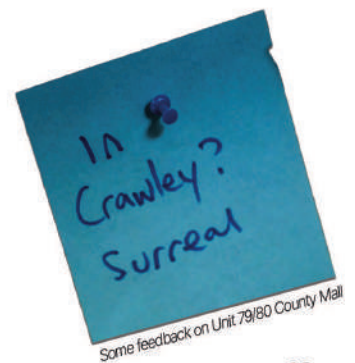
“
We loved it. For every outspoken negative opinion, there will surely be at least a hundred silent admirers.

Thank you for continuing to bring life and creativity to Crawley, we need it.

—Audience Member, Unit 79/80 County Mall



These characters are by local illustrator Nick Sherman and are part of three animations he made in partnership with the Skills Exchange cohort and Focus Film School showing directions to the new creative spaces



Some feedback on Unit 79/80 County Mall

Successes

We created **two new communities of people** in Crawley. The Welcome Team are a group of local people who have now developed skills in Ushering, Duty Management and Communication. The Skills Exchange cohort continue to work with Creative Crawley and our partners in a variety of ways.

Nearly 3000 audiences came through the doors of the pop up spaces in just 3 months. Over 600 young people were engaged through the Skills Exchange Programme working in partnership with **nine schools and one college in Crawley**.

The management team at County Mall has asked us to stay in Unit 79/80 and have agreed a new deal which means we can. **We are focussing on making it available for local people to hire** as well as continuing to curate a programme of free and low costs creative events when we can.

AudioActive continue to run their music workshops from Unit 79/80, County Mall.

West Green Studios continued to support Resident Artists until the end of March 2026.

The local artists involved in the project have achieved new national recognition since being supported by The Creative Village. For example Sarah Maple made the final shortlist for the **2025 Aesthetica Prize**, Karl Singaporewala had a **solo exhibition at the SOAS Gallery, London**, his newest sculpture, *Keke's Fusion*, has been permanently installed on Manor Royal Business District and the film we commissioned for the County Mall window has been chosen to be featured at the **Royal West Academy, Bristol**. Fashion designer and living textiles specialist Beth Williams had two sculptures at **Kew, London** as part of their *Material World* exhibition in 25/26, Woodzy has a part time job teaching on the Hip Hop education **Academy Breakin' Convention at Sadler's Wells East** and Abdollah Nafisi's newest sculpture, *Neighbours*, featured in the **Frieze Sculpture Trail 2025** in Regent's Park. The Resident Artists are now collaborating on new projects together.

Skills Exchange cohort members have gone on to create their own comedy gig mentored by Victoria Melody, work as a film assistant on a new film with Focus Film School and start new courses at Crawley College and at University.



Karl Singaporewala and Gatwick School students at the West Green Studios Open Day, April 2025

Meg Mosley and Sarah Maple at the launch of their Breakfast Scene exhibition, commissioned by Creative Crawley, June 2025.

“ It was heart warming to hear that this valuable resource in the centre of town is being able to keep its doors open for longer than planned. This work should be encouraged and nurtured.

As someone now in their seventh decade I have found it quite hard to re-join live events again since the pandemic.

These warm, friendly, inclusive spaces make it much easier. They improve our lives. Long may it continue. Thank you Creative Crawley, you are making the world a better place.

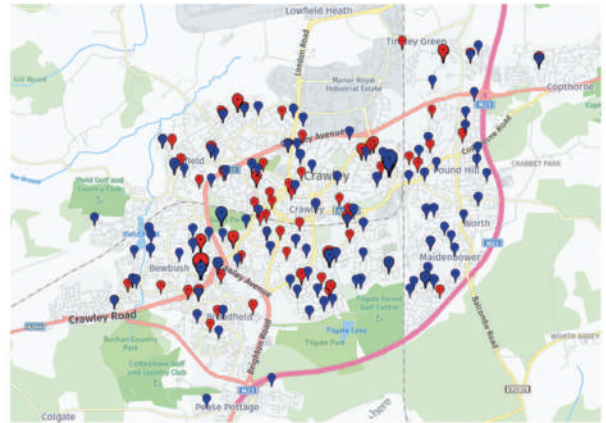
– Eric MacLennan, National artist

From the audience & participants:

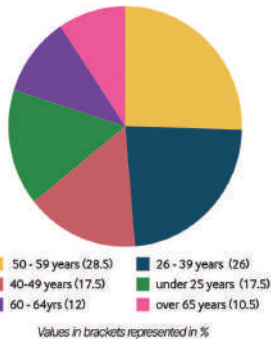
"It is an experience for life!"

Just under 3000 people came to or participated in events from across Crawley and from the map we can see that **13 out of 14 Crawley wards are represented** (with high engagement in Tilgate 13% and Bewbush and North Broadfield 12%).

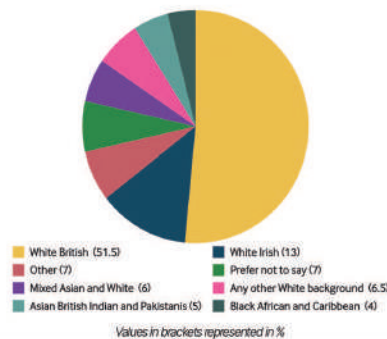
Shown in the image: Audience residence by postcode across Crawley. Red = local showcases / Blue = national showcases



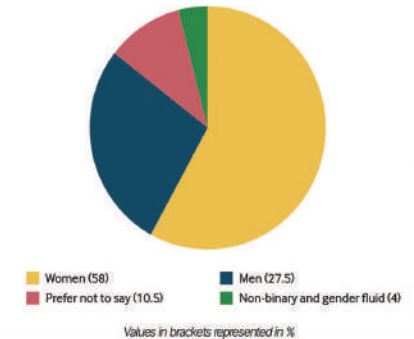
Age range, audiences for The Creative Village events



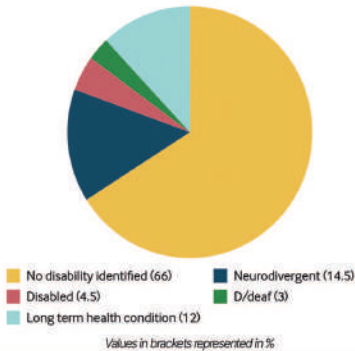
Ethnicity, audiences for The Creative Village events



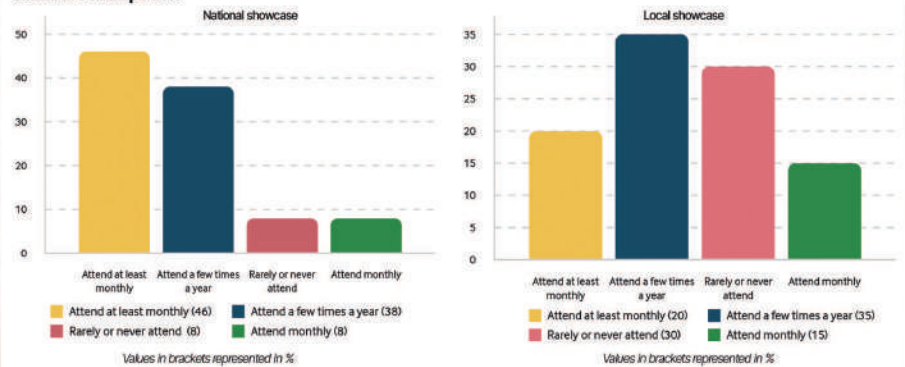
Gender, audiences for The Creative Village events



Disability, audiences for The Creative Village events



Cultural Participation



Very impressive, the Creative Crawley staff were very welcoming and all so enthusiastic.

The space looks amazing offering something for everyone young and old. I felt very welcome and proud of what you are doing for Crawley residents. I particularly liked Eric's work. – Audience

I have learnt a lot about what goes on behind the scenes- about setting up events, planning, health and safety and evaluation. It's really useful. – Lisandra, Unit 79/80 Welcome Team

When it came to cultural participation, national showcase audiences showed strong engagement: nearly half attended at least monthly (46%), and a further 38% engaged a few times a year, while only 8% reported rarely or never taking part in cultural activity.

When asked about their engagement with arts and culture, the local showcase audience was not as active as the national showcase audience, with just over a third saying they took part a few times a year (35%), while around a fifth engaged more than monthly (20%) and another 15% monthly.

Working in this group was a dream come true. I didn't think I'd see again for a long time. Everyone was absolutely incredible and brought some real individuality to the show, and oh my goodness was it worth it. I really hope this leads to more opportunities, love to you all! And keep sparking!

– Fatima, Unit 79/80 Welcome Team

You are doing a truly wonderful job. I was so moved and impressed by the experience that I could easily write an entire essay just to express how much I appreciated it.

Thank you for creating something so meaningful and memorable.

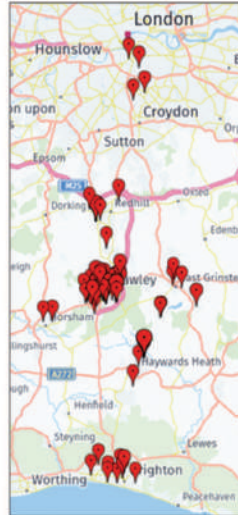
– Audience

From the artists: "I'd come back in a heartbeat"

Over 100 creative professionals were employed and were based mostly in the South East (see map) but we also worked with artists based in Manchester and Coventry.

Whilst half the local artists surveyed have been practising as creatives for more than 15 years, only 14% have been connected to Crawley's creative scene for five years or more. The age range of artists represented was equally spread across all ages over 18 years.

Shown on the map: Creative professionals' residence by postcode across the South East



“ Very inspired by what’s been achieved so far and up for supporting what you want to achieve in the future.

It hasn’t really changed my perspective so much as given me a perspective as I didn’t really have one before.

– Chris Thorpe, National Artist

“ I think there’s probably a longer conversation to have about how artistic development works for emerging artists in Crawley and the structures of the programme to do that, but it feels like everything’s moving in a really positive direction

– China Plate, National Artist

“ While I was born and grew up and live in Crawley, I’ve always commuted out of town, and Creative Crawley – I mean, hats off to them.

They gave me the confidence to have my studio here. And being able to work where I live and interact at a much more hyper local level as well as nationally is a dream come true.

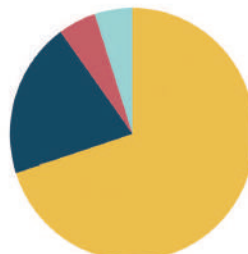
– Karl, Local Artist

Ethnicity, artists for The Creative Village events



Values in brackets represented in %

Disability, artists for The Creative Village events



Values in brackets represented in %

Most national artists involved in the project had little or no experience of working in Crawley. Their reflections show that **the programme not only introduced them to the town but also left them with strongly positive impressions.**

For some, the experience “completely changed their perspective”. A local artist noted via survey that they had previously only thought about showing their work in London but now felt encouraged to share it in the town, **having found both a supportive team and a new network of creatives in Crawley.**

Through attending The Creative Village, local artists: experimented with new approaches, made connections and collaborations and felt able to take more creative risks.

71% of artists surveyed agreed that the workshop or showcase they attended was **different to things they had experienced before.**

83% said it helped them **gain new insight or knowledge** and **86%** said it helped them **feel inspired.**

More than 80% agreed that they came across ideas and work that **made them feel more confident.**

Tangible outcomes for local artists include:

- Gaining new followers on social media
- Trialling new work in front of an audience
- Creating a new sculpture with Manor Royal BID
- Collaborating with another artist
- Being included in an exhibition
- Giving a talk at the Royal Academy and BHASVIC, Brighton
- Having a space and a platform to test new writing



Iffat Rahman, local poet at Woodzy & Friends, The Hawth, Jan 2025. Image by Ian Greenland.



Super Normal Extra Natural by Rehardt & Rosenberg and The Place, County Mall, March 2025. Image by Simon Edwards.

The Creative Crawley staff

The core Creative Crawley team working on this project part-time (shared with the Creative Playground work, another major project managed by Creative Crawley) were Becky Jones, Ben Lintott, Deena Shobaki, Hannah Foley, Lara Hockman, Louise Blackwell, Mawadda Edbagi (Creative Assistant, Artwork Breakthrough Placement), Sam Evans and Sophie Eustace.

We boosted the team to help deliver the programme and provide specialist expertise by bringing in the following part-time, fixed term (unless stated) positions:

Ben Pearce - Fundraising consultant
 Charlotte White - Project Producer
 Jenny De Jersey - Project Assistant
 John Nicholls, Arts Quarter - Business Development Consultant
 Juliette Holton and Jade Logue - Operations Manager
 Sophie Kronenberg - Production Assistant
 Stuart Heyes - Designer and Production Manager

Production team:

Alex Anzenberger, Emile de Watteville, George Thompson, Ina Miller, Jack Crotty, Gregory Howe, Joaquin Alves, Joe Iredale, Fred Nobre, Luke Francis

Welcome team:

Barney Moseley, Billie Jasper, Fatima Moseley, Ihsan Idkhill, Izzy Sutherland, Esme Foster, Jade Logue, James Leggott, Lauren Lawrence, Lila Wordsworth, Lisandre Nobrega, Mark Hales, Stella Funnell, Taranum Khan and Tracy Glover

Duty Managers:

Charlotte Coe, Emily Lyle, Kimberley Jackson, Sam Murray

Storytelling PR:

Emma Ainley Walker and Fergus Craig

Photographers

Ian Greenland Simon Edwards, Leyla Guler, Simran Kaur and Kaledio Shoots

Evaluation Consultants:

Georgina Aboud, Ruth Melville and team, RMR

Communications Consultants:

Hannah Clayton and Holly McConnell, Culture Change Now

Accountants:

Simpson Wreford

We would like to pay tribute to Ian Ross who worked with us on this project from the start and due to a life-changing health incident in December 2023 was unable to contribute in the planned way. Ian continues to be an inspiration to us and was one of the driving forces behind the Pop Up spaces in particular.



Sophie Eustace speaking at Unit 79/80. Image by Simran Kaur

“ The entire team at Creative Crawley is just wonderful. They are the beating heart of Creative Crawley and are what makes the initiatives so special.

They are passionate about community and art. This transmits into each event I have attended

- Audience and participant



Becky Jones and Hannah Foley, West Green Studios, image by Ian Greenland



Louise Blackwell and Sam Evans with The Surgeon image by Abdollah Nafisi



Welcome Team in Unit 79/80 County Mall. Image by Simon Edwards



Ian Ross and friends at Unit 79/80, Sept 2025



Jenny De Jersey, West Green Window Gallery



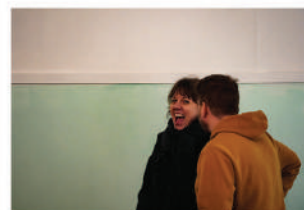
Stuart Heyes installing Unit 79/80. Image by Alex Anzenberger



Alex Anzenberger at the first exhibition at Unit 79/80. Image by Ian Greenland



Fred Nobre setting up The Producer Gathering. Image by Ian Greenland



Sam Evans and Ina Miller installing Unit 79/80 County Mall

People who helped make this happen

Board of Trustees:

Adam Joolia, Lorraine Le Courtois, Sophie Cornell, Steve Sawyer, Tony Witton, Toby Shaw, Vanessa Dell and Vicki Illingworth

The Skills Exchange Cohort:

Barney Moseley, Charlie Baxter, Ella Raimundo, Grace Lambert, Isaias Gonclaves, Izzy Burghard, James Emery, James Fensom, Liuba Mazarkhanova and Zikora Onwuka

The Creative Professionals:

Amber Massie-Blomfield, Access All Areas, Amelia Rodriguez, Amy Nicholls, Andy Smith, AudioActive (Adam, Bobbie, Giz, Grace, Ivan, Jenny, Jon, Kieyan, Michelle, Nicholson, Nikhil, Roxy, Samosa, Vitz), Beth Williams, BrightBlack (Myrah Appannah and Simon Wilkinson), Brigitte Aphrodite, Cee Boulaqui, Clive Martin, China Plate (Ed, Paul & Abbie) Chris Thorpe, Clod Ensemble (Suzy & Lottie), Creative Pod (Matt), Dan Blomfield, Debris Stevenson, Donae'o, Dreamy Place, Eleanor Field, Eleanor Manners, Eloise O Dwyer-Amary, Enkay Rockson, Eric MacLennan, Exploring Senses, Flying Geese (Beckie Smith), Focus Film School, Go For It Tribe, Heidi Compton, Helen Anahita Wilson, Iffat Rahman, Jamie Wyld, Karl Singaporewala, Kevin Wratten, Luke Boucher, Melina Barnett, Leap Then Look (Bill Leslie & Lucy Cran), Maija Handover, Mah-e-nau Rafiq, Maggie Slabon, Mak 10, Marco Woolf, Marlborough Productions (David, Tarik & the team), Matt Turner, New Generation Jazz, Nick Sherman, Producer Gathering (Nassy Konan), Quiet Boy, Requardt&Rosenberg (David, Frauke, Nina, Hannah, Rachel, Herbe, Maikiko, Valentina, Alex, Ruben) Rob Watt, Saaj Raja, Sam Eden-Green, Sir Sam Everington, Saziso Phiri, Simon Edwards, Simon J Keenan, Sophie Merriner, Sound UK, The Hera Project (Ratna & Emma), Theatre Centre (David, Eleanor, Emma, Emily, Rachel, Rob), The Place (Christina & Eddie) Tim Glynne Jones, Tim Stanton, Yami Lofvenberg, Woodzy

The Funders:

Arts Council England, Crawley Borough Council, UK Government (Shared Prosperity and Towns Fund), Sussex Community Foundation, Gatwick Airport Ltd

The Partners:

County Mall Shopping Centre, Crawley College, West Sussex Library Service, The Hawth, DanceHub CIC, Pop Up Culture Crawley, The Gatwick School, Thomas Bennett Community College, Ifield Community College and Seymour, Waterfield, Bewbush and Broadfield Primary Schools

Specialist advice and suppliers:

Prestige Security, Flying Geese and RMR evaluators, Fuel, Ian Greenland photography, Kate at Simpson Wreford, Laura Keogh at Brighton Dome, Lollipop Print, Storytelling PR and The Production Family



Prestige Security team and Production Manager Ina before an event at Unit 79/80 County Mall. Image by Simon Edwards



Film-maker Clive Martin and Production Assistant Sophie Kronberg at West Green Studios



Photographer Ian Greenland. Image by Lara Hockman



Welcome Team member Sam Murray at the Unit 79/80 launch. Image by Ian Greenland

In partnership with



Supported by



I'd like to finish with a rallying call. It's a significant moment for arts and culture in Crawley. It feels like we are at a fork in the road. There's a year or so left on the Towns Fund project. A Cultural Quarter feasibility study practically complete, a Cultural Strategy for the town almost done.

The partners involved here have decisions to make. Trust, invest in and support the collaborative creative community here to move forwards and positively impact the reputation of the town and the residents lives within it or make choices to invest elsewhere, block innovation and allow arts and culture to remain 'a nice to have' tucked away in the back end of a shopping mall. Evidence shows it takes time to capitalise on initial investments like this. There's momentum here. We must harness it or the moment will pass.

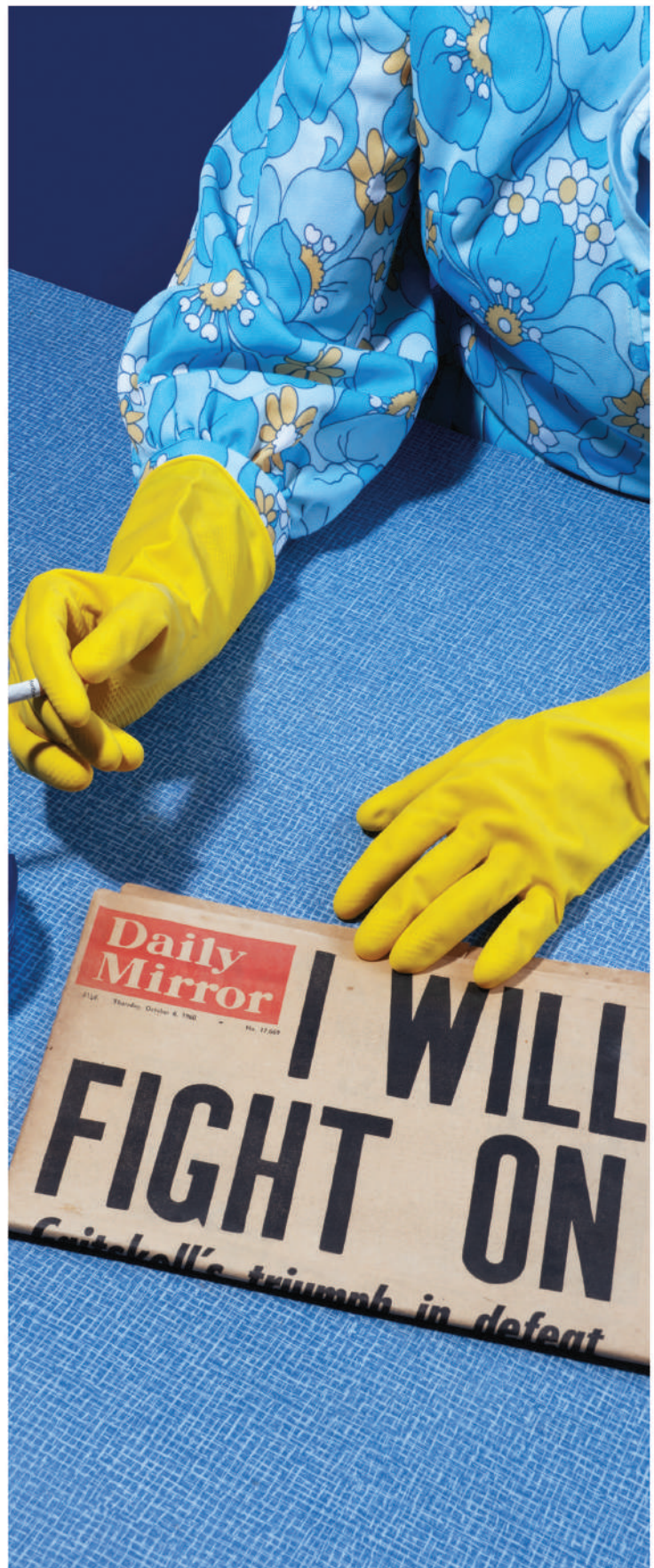
We live in challenging times where the president of the United States can take over the chairmanship of a major arts centre in the US in the blink of an eye. Artists feeling unsafe to take risks in a context of trans and homophobia, racism and sexism. Where a small number of people are able to decide what art should be allowed in a place based on personal preference rather than celebrating diversity and difference. Arts events in Crawley have had to be cancelled due to threats of violent protest. A Unity Pledge has been created by CBC in which community groups have pledged their commitment to diversity, which is a positive move.

We are in a place where difficult budget cut decisions are having to be made. We are all working in challenging circumstances. The arts community in Crawley are experiencing these challenges globally and locally. The loss of Crawley Town Centre BID is a massive blow to arts and culture in the town. In the last 5 years I would argue they have been one of the biggest investors in the arts in the town apart from UK Government and Arts Council England.

My question to leave you with is this. Do you want Crawley to be a progressive, healthy and economically flourishing town? If the answer to this is yes, then please invest in, support, engage in and champion culture. It's the only way.

And now I'd like to handover to Mawadda Egbadi, our Creative Assistant, to tell you more about what's next...

Extract from Louise Blackwell's speech at the opening of Unit 79/80 County Mall, March 2025.



Domestic Abyss by Sarah Maple and Meg Mosley, commissioned by Creative Crawley as part of Breakfast Scene, Unit 79/80 County Mall, June 2025