

Buckinghamshire Culture Development to Date (2019–2022)

In 2018 Discover Bucks Museum (Bucks' only Arts Council regularly funded National Portfolio Organisation) and Buckinghamshire Council secured a grant from Rothschild Foundation towards implementation of the Buckinghamshire Cultural Strategy and development of a cultural partnership. This grant facilitated the emergence of a cultural partnership for Buckinghamshire and delivery of a host of networks, projects and initiatives designed to develop, inspire and connect the Bucks cultural sector. In this period, a member of staff has been recruited, two passionate Co-Chairs have been appointed; an Interim Board set up; charity registration for achieved; and a further 3-years funding secured.

Delivery

A great deal of relationship development, connection and partnership working has taken place since 2019. Several new networks have been developed, creating opportunities for organisations to meet, work together and develop ideas. Despite the impact of Covid-19 on the sector, Buckinghamshire Culture leadership feel a great deal has been achieved over this period, putting in place the foundations for a strong cultural partnership that can develop joint projects and funding applications, develop access and inclusion in creativity and culture across the county and contribute to healthier and happier lives of our residents.

An overview of activity from 2019-2021 is as follows:

- Visible delivery – Summer of Stories, Open Weekend, Bucks Cultural Leaders programme, Creative Arts Training for artists, Thinking Digital, various online sessions with inspirational speakers
- Buckinghamshire Culture development – charity registration, plan for structure/governance, Trustees recruitment beginning, logo/brand development and roll out
- Celebration/promotion of culture – Open Weekend 2021 (now planning for 2022), Storytelling Festival development, Bucks in 100 Objects. Developing project to mark 10 years since the London Paralympics
- Connection – greater connection within and beyond the creative and cultural sector and new projects emerging. Catalysing opportunities/growth through sharing, ideas, inspiration etc.
- Partnerships – strong partnerships developed with major cultural organisations and stakeholders.
- Placemaking – encouraging places and communities to build vibrancy in their locality through considered and relevant arts projects and activities. Working with Community Boards to help shape and develop the local culture offer and encourage participation in schemes such as Open Weekend.
- Fundraising – building relationships with National, regional and local funders, securing additional funds for delivery (c£100k), development of Culture Endowment concept for Buckinghamshire.
- Sector support – advice, meetings, funding surgeries, inspiration and Horizon sessions. Providing strategic insight/overview. Sharing and collaboration to make the most of opportunities. Delivered Bucks Cultural Leaders, Creative Arts Training, Thinking Digital with additional funding.
- Action Groups to develop projects – Culture, Health and Wellbeing / Culture, Access and Inclusion / Culture and Placemaking / Storytelling (meetings began July 21 – put off from April 20)
- Networks – Bucks Cultural Leaders network, artist networking, Learning Managers & broader Buckinghamshire Culture network meeting, talking and connected through Lallie.
- Cultural education – actively supporting development of Bucks Cultural Education Partnership and aim to support Cultural Education Strategy to dovetail Buckinghamshire Cultural Strategy
- Health and wellbeing – exploring opportunities for embedding culture into health/social prescribing.
- Advocacy – ongoing active advocacy for culture with wide range of organisations and projects, reaching out to VCSE. Development of evaluation framework for collective evidence/value.

The Co-Chairs would like to thank all of our partners and funders for their continued support and contribution towards delivery of the new partnership. We look forward to continuing to work together as the appropriate structures, policies and mechanisms are put in place for Buckinghamshire Culture to function as an independent charity.