

# Appendix 2: Exploring some of Wandsworth's existing Cultural building blocks

The Arts and Culture Strategy builds upon the strong foundations that have been laid by the Council, cultural organisations, residents and community groups and have created a myriad of vibrant creative offers. This section reflects on what is already in existence (or in the pipeline) to help identify gaps and where additional support is required to help ensure sustainability.

While the Borough’s cultural ecology has already been heavily affected by Covid-19, at the time of writing this strategy the long-term effects of the pandemic are still unknown. This part of the strategy therefore focuses on the cultural offer as it existed in mid-2020 in terms of the policy already in place and case studies of local organisations and programmes. It is important to note, however, that the new strategy is designed to be responsive and flexible as to ensure that it endures, is relevant, and can be adapted within the context of change and challenge.

As part of Wild City’s Big Art Picnic (in 2018) visitors to Heathbrook Park were invited to join in and create a giant interactive tunnel installation. The creation of this strategy has tried to follow similar principles, building on the wide variety of creativity found within the borough to create a unified structure that supports and nurtures each element to operate separately. Image Credit: Eoin Carey.



# 1. Place-shaping

While Wandsworth Council sets the vision for an area and puts in place the framework for delivering that vision, it is through partnerships between numerous organisations and individuals that this vision will be realised. Through working with planning officers and developers at the pre-application stage, the Council's Arts Service can ensure that developer's individual S106 cultural contributions are spent in such a way as to maximise the positive impact on the Borough. Working with cultural and community organisations and linking them with developers enables bespoke Cultural Action Plans to be produced or, when individual Cultural Action Plans are not applicable, for funding to be commuted and pooled to invest in new cultural infrastructure.

**During a time of significant upheaval, place-shaping is one of the areas where local authorities play a vital role in determining the future character of an area.**

**N**ational, regional and local government all recognise that arts, culture and heritage increase the desirability of a location as a place to live, work and invest. A high-quality public realm increases an area's attractiveness, whilst a positive reputation for cultural and creative activity helps ensure an area develops a distinctive character and attracts a creative community, further building its positive reputation.

Alongside the new Arts and Culture Strategy, the Council is also developing a new Local Plan for the Borough, as well as Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) for areas identified as benefitting from regeneration and development. It also recognises the vital role played by arts and culture as part of the place shaping strategy, ensuring places support living, working, supplying, caring, learning and enjoying by focusing on three core principles: People First, Placemaking and Smart Growth.

Wandsworth's place-based approach builds on an understanding of the distinctive character and

evolution of different areas of the Borough. Although Wandsworth is generally quite prosperous, there are parts with high deprivation, where people feel that access to art and culture is not reachable (which has been heightened in recent months with cultural provision moving online, highlighting existing issues of digital poverty). This is why a number of areas (Nine Elms, the Winstanley Estate, and the Alton Estate) already have their own Cultural Strategies or Action Plans. We are committed to ensuring that cultural opportunities are embedded in the short-, medium-, and long-term plans for each area, and that the needs of local people are put first when looking to support cohesive, well-connected, and healthy communities. We are also committed to ensuring that growth and regeneration responds to the local characteristics of the area.

The following sections of this place-shaping chapter focus on the Council's existing and proposed policy for cultural development and investment in infrastructure.

# Battersea & Nine Elms

Culture and community are at the heart of the Council’s vision for Nine Elms – one of the largest regeneration projects in Europe. Working with a wide range of partners, there has been a strong focus on creating a sense of place and an integrated neighbourhood. A key element is establishing a sustainable cultural ecosystem that fosters community cohesion and supports residents’ aspirations for access to high-quality facilities, culture and design, and affordable space for cultural and community uses.

**I**n line with the area-based approach to development, the Cultural Strategy for Battersea & Nine Elms provides a framework for the evolving identities of the Battersea and Nine Elms neighbourhoods by supporting the growth of three creative clusters:

- a Visual Arts Quarter towards the east and sweeping up towards Vauxhall
- a Food & Horticultural Quarter around New Covent Garden Market and Food Exchange, and
- Battersea Design & Tech Quarter, to the South & West

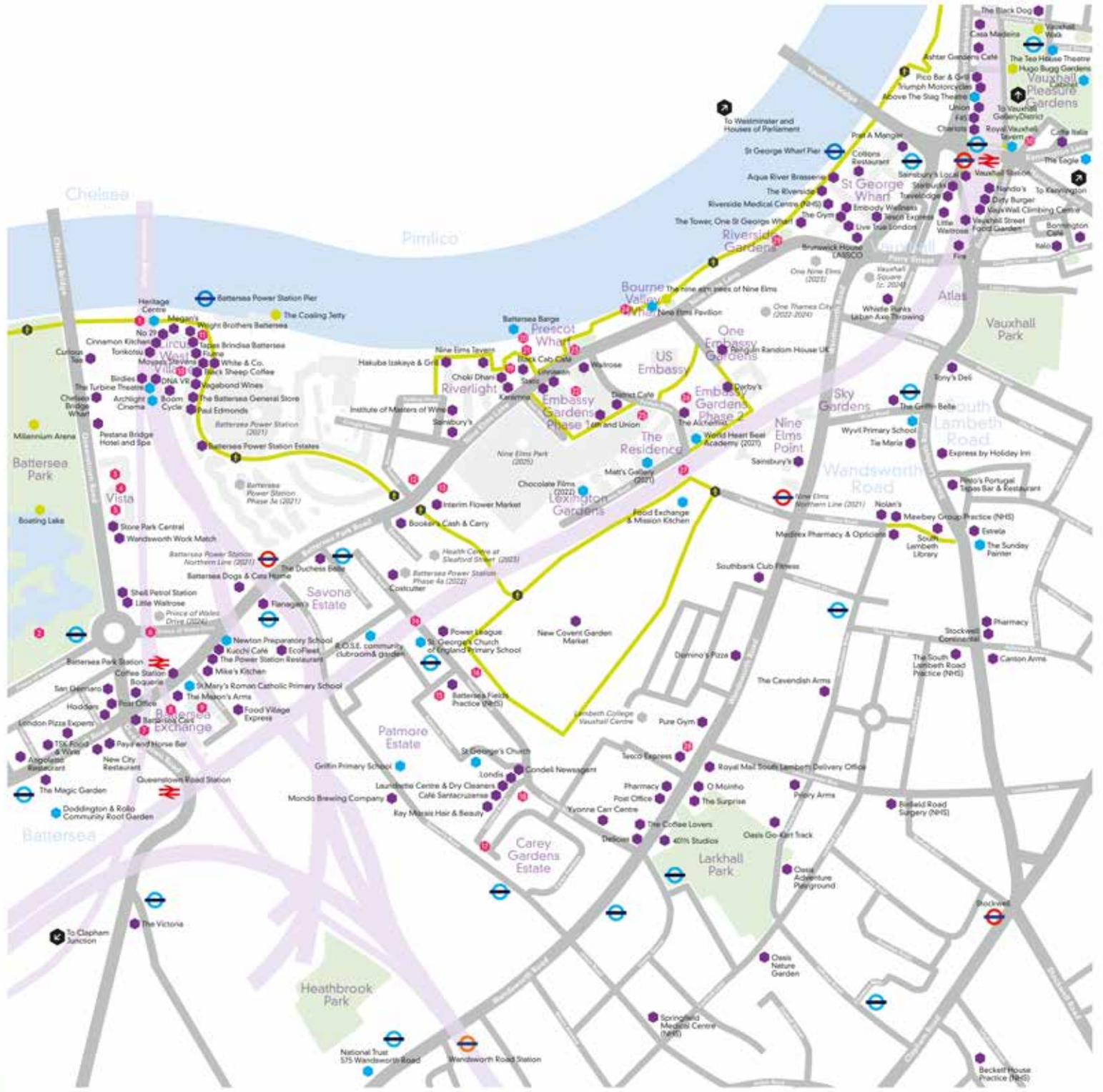
The key to delivering this vision has been working in partnership with developers to secure affordable space and attract high calibre cultural anchor tenants to the area for the long-term. To date, spaces have been secured for five cultural anchor tenants, including Matt’s Gallery, World Heart Beat Music Academy, and Chocolate Films, with the next cultural tenant due to be recruited in partnership with Galliard Homes and the Royal Mail Group and will be announced in 2021.

The Cultural Strategy for Battersea & Nine Elms

also delivers an ambitious year-round programme of events inspired by the area’s market garden, pioneering design heritage and its riverside connectivity. Events such as ArtNight 2018, Light Up Nine Elms, and the Happy Streets Festival engage residents and raise the area’s profile across London and beyond. The events programme nurtures community cohesion and supports the local cultural ecosystem.

A Nine Elms Vauxhall Cultural Steering Group oversees the Nine Elms Vauxhall Partnership’s Cultural Strategy and provides advocacy and governance for the area’s cultural vision, while a Nine Elms Arts and Events Programming Group – which includes public and private stakeholders, community and arts organisations delivering cultural programmes in the area – ensures a joined-up approach to the area’s growing cultural offer.

The arts and culture programme in Nine Elms has deployed upfront investment to support the unique scale and pace of change in the area, and to help establish the local cultural ecosystem. Looking forward, the Cultural Strategy for Battersea & Nine Elms aligns with the wider Borough cultural strategy set out in this document.



- Local business
- Development soon to be completed
- Community and cultural venues
- Open space
- Public art and sites of interest
- Pedestrian route
- Underground
- Overground
- Cycle Hire
- River Bus Services
- National Rail
- Railway line

- 10 Machines for Modern Living by Haffendi Anuar
- 11 Battersea Power Station Heritage Trail App
- 12 Figures on the Foreshore by Tim Davies
- 13 BLOOM! by BLKBRD Collective (to October 2021)
- 14 Happy Street by Yinka Ilori
- 15 Rampart Studios
- 16 Edible Avenue — part of Nine Elms Tea Trail by Urban Canopy
- 17 A Brief History of Time by Brian Barnes, Morganico and LeSpleen
- 18 The Barrier by Ian Walters
- 19 Terra Ludi by Simon & Tom Bloor
- 20 Light & Water by Kate Davis with David Moore
- 21 Skystation by Peter Newman
- 22 Florian by Sarah Lucas
- 23 Edward Snowden mosaic by artist unknown
- 24 Father Thames by Stephen Duncan
- 25 Modern Marriage by Simon Fujiwara
- 26 Rice Bowl by Guggi
- 27 Arch 42 (2021)
- 28 Massive Orange Object by Nick Turvey
- 29 Dawn to Dusk by Tord Boontje
- 30 Untitled by Paola Piglia

- Public art sites and sites of interest
- 1 Power by Morag Myerscough
- 2 Single Form by Barbara Hepworth
- 3 Wassail by Mark Gubb
- 4 Sculpture Garden by Matthew Darbyshire
- 5 Plantanus by Nicky Hirst
- 6 Microscopic Park Life by Amalia Pica
- 7 Chromatic Cycle by Dallas-Pierce-Quintero & Umut Yamac
- 8 Chroma Trail by Miray Mehmet Fontanelli & Anna Barlow
- 9 Push and Pull by Dallas-Pierce-Quintero

# Lombard Road & York Road Focal Area

In November 2018, the Council adopted a cultural guidance note for the Lombard Road and York Road Focal Point Area. This recognised that a collection of nationally and internationally significant cultural institutions were locating within easy reach of this focal point area: Tavaziva Dance, BBO Dance, and the Royal Academy of Dance (which will relocate to York Road in 2021). This cultural provision and its employment, educational and economic dimensions, gives the area a strategic significance that opens an opportunity to build a cluster of cultural and creative activity in and around the focal point area.

**T**he cultural guidance note identified the following three objectives for developers to address as part of the Cultural Action Plans when building in the focal area:

- Public Arts and Creative Engagement that promote participation in the arts, engage local communities and potentially lead to the establishment of a community driven cultural offer, reach new audiences and/or created temporary or permanent public arts
- Pathways to Creative and Cultural Employment. Utilising arts, culture and creativity to engage hard to reach learners and open pathways to employment
- Affordable Creative Workspace and Support. Developing affordable workspace which will help retain and attract new talent to the area and support the incubation and growth of new creative

businesses. It will also provide office accommodation for cultural leaders and creative practitioners who build community networks and promote cohesion. This could potentially become a creative enterprise zone.

Similar to Nine Elms, a key part of the focus has been to work in partnership with developers to secure, through S106, long-term cultural anchor tenants to help enliven the area. To date, spaces have been secured for two cultural anchor tenants, who will be moving into the spaces in 2021–23. These cultural anchor tenants will benefit from free space in exchange for delivering a range of accessible cultural programmes. Due to the area's close proximity to the Winstanley and York Road Estates, the aim is that residents from these estates will become beneficiaries of the new cultural engagement opportunities.

As part of Linden Homes' Section 106 cultural obligations, the Arts Service commissioned local arts organisation Tavaziva Dance, to deliver a two year programme for young people aged 9 – 18 years to explore the process of creating, marketing and performing their own music and choreography. Tavaziva Dance worked in partnership with Royal Academy of Dance and Caius House Youth Centre, both of which are also based in the focal point area, to develop this project to help establish strong, longterm, relationships between the youth centre and nearby cultural organisations. Image credit: Jevan Chowdhury.





# Wandle Delta & Wandsworth Town

In early 2020, the Council started work on a new Supplementary Planning Document for the Wandle Delta. The vision sets out how “cultural and creative uses should form an instrumental component in the placemaking and economic strategy for the Wandle Delta. The Council will work with key partners and respective developers to secure a vibrant cluster of cultural activities and creative workspace in the SPD area, focused around the Economic Use Indication Area sites south of the railway line and along the River Wandle.”

The overall vision for the Wandle Delta is to develop a place for people – a mixed urban neighbourhood, with a focus for living and working, and a local destination for visitors. The area will be transformed by creating an accessible network of streets and spaces, making it easy and enjoyable to get around on foot and by bike. The Thames and the Wandle will be a key focus for the area, with continuous riverside paths and spaces along the way for nature, play and leisure, joining up with the wider Wandle corridor to King George’s Park and beyond. A diverse mix of workspace, homes and local amenities will serve this growing community.

Building on our learning from Nine Elms and the Lombard Road and York Road, the Council will again be working with developers to secure cultural anchor spaces at a peppercorn rate. The aim is to secure spaces that could be used for a range of artforms and creative engagement. The Council will encourage the re-use of existing buildings (on a temporary or more permanent basis) for incubator space, arts-based learning and engagement, or businesses that are part of the supply chain for the

creative sector.

The place shaping strategy looks to develop opportunities to combine cultural and leisure activities with new forms of workspace, set against the backdrop of distinctive waterside spaces. Enhanced links to Old York Road, the Ram Quarter and the town centre, will announce the Wandle Delta’s identity as a local cultural hub.

The emerging London Plan classifies Wandsworth Town’s night-time economy as NT3 – or, of ‘more than local’ significance. The Local Plan will therefore support proposals for leisure and night-time economy uses in the town centre, assuming they would not result in any material adverse impacts on residential amenities.

The following diagram provides some visual sense of the long-term aspirations for the Wandle Delta and



Cultural place-shaping is already underway in Wandsworth Town. The largest scheme in the area is with developer Greenland on the RAM Quarter. A wide range of creative, heritage and brewing related projects have happened since 2015 both on site and nearby. In 2021 local brewer Sambrooks will be opening on the site and their new space will including a heritage centre celebrating 500 years on onsite brewing. They will be joining four meanwhile cultural tenants on the site - Backyard Cinema, Collective Studios at Wandsworth Plain, local music industry charity NEKO Trust and John Hatch's micro-brewery.



# Alton Estate & Roehampton

The Council's regeneration strategy for the Alton Estate includes high-quality new homes, open spaces, play, and community facilities. As well as providing an open, playful environment suitable for coworking, the two multipurpose community hubs, and wider landscape improvements, will provide a stage for a variety of cultural activities.

**R**oehampton's Alton Estate has its own cultural strategy, which will be funded through the S106 cultural obligations. The cultural strategy outlines the vision for the area – “to celebrate what is special about the Alton Estate by providing a programme of inspiring and engaging creative activities that will give everyone the opportunity to participate. The strategy focusses on:

- To develop local skills and talents
- Widen horizons and increase wellbeing
- Promote community engagement and cohesion through an appreciation of the area's diversity
- Foster a sense of place and belonging within the neighbourhoods and communities of the Alton.”

The redevelopment's cultural strategy aims to develop cultural programmes and projects shaped by local people, enhance the creative lives of residents and stitch the new into the existing cultural landscape, further establishing a sense of place and belonging. The strategy's core vision is to support residents of all ages discover and nurture new talents and skills (through both formal and informal education), to work with the Borough's cultural sector to proactively create routes into creative employment, and to support residents to start well, live well and age well.

The Local Plan's area strategy builds upon the Roehampton SPD adopted in October 2015 with a

focus on reconnecting the currently fragmented areas of Roehampton Village and the Alton East and West Estates, whilst providing multifunctional spaces for local residents and facilitating the development of new retail and employment uses to address recognised deficiencies.

The vision for the new Area Strategy for the Alton Estate and Roehampton, as outlined in the Local Plan, include:

- Create new commercial, community, leisure and cultural facilities within Roehampton local centre, anchored by a cultural facility, that forms a civic square that provides a locus for community life and connects Alton West, East and Roehampton Village
- Create local economic opportunities through the provision of incubator space and revitalised commercial premises to address relative deprivation within the area
- Facilitate new cultural and community facilities to draw in both local and wider audiences
- Facilitate temporary use of vacant shopping units, especially where this provides cultural facilities or space that promotes the area's Cultural Strategy
- In the interim, pop-up uses should therefore be encouraged in vacant shops – particularly where these support creatives – with the view to establishing a permanent cultural anchor space in the longer-term, potentially in partnership with the University of Roehampton or other institutional actors.

Ubuntu Museum is a community enterprise run by Jackie Mwanza, a resident on the Alton Estate. In the autumn of 2019 she took over a short-term residency of the empty shop at 6 Portswood Place and created "The Nude Gallery". Asked about the project Jackie said that "Ubuntu Museum was born out of a need to share my experiences of being a black African female in Britain. There are too few stories and points of views of people of colour in Britain and the West generally, so I have created Ubuntu Museum to put out these stories". Both the borough-wide Arts and Culture Strategy and the cultural strategy for the Alton Estate aim to support more residents to turn their creative ideas into deliverable projects.

**UBUNTU MUSEUM**  
The African Museum of Humanity

**BLACK HISTORY MONTH**  
**OCT 2019**  
15th-31st Oct: 10am-5pm  
Tue-Sun; CLOSED Mon

**THE NUDE**

**GALLERY**

**FREE ENTRY + WORKSHOPS**

- presents -

**THE NUDE GALLERY**  
at  
**6 PORTSWOOD PLACE**  
(The former Juice Bar)  
Roehampton  
London SW15 4ED  
[www.ubuntumuseum.com](http://www.ubuntumuseum.com)  
[info@ubuntumuseum.com](mailto:info@ubuntumuseum.com)

**TRANSPORT:**  
Buses: 430, 170, 493, 265  
Nearest  
Trains: Barnes, Putney  
Tube: East Putney, Hammersmith

- Guided Tours + Exhibition Trails
- School Workshops • Drama Workshops
- Halloween Storytime + Workshops
- Inclusive products Challenge + Workshops

**BOOK NOW!**

@ubuntumuseum /ubuntumuseum

# Winstanley Estate

The Winstanley Estate already has a vibrant grassroots cultural landscape. The Council and Taylor Wimpy's Joint Venture Partnership have agreed that the vision for the Estate "is for culture and creativity to be integral to the regeneration project, before, during and after construction."

The Winstanley Estate cultural strategy focusses on embedding creativity into all aspects of the scheme and has set the following aspirations to deliver:

- A place for culture and creativity. To create significant new cultural facilities at the heart of the estates.
- Expressing identity through cultural projects. To enable our communities to communicate their identity and partner residents with creative practitioners to articulate a distinctive identity for the evolving estates.
- Nurturing the future talent of our young people. Maximising opportunities arising from the development for young people from the estates,

engaging with local schools and other young people to participate in cultural projects.

- Weaving culture and creativity into the public realm: to add a layer to the landscape that references the estates' heritage and evolution, enhancing the experience of being in that space and enabling residents and artists to make their mark on the new landscape
- Cultural wellbeing at the heart of a healthy community. Encouraging participation in creative and cultural, as well as recreational activities, as part of the community's everyday life and making culture part of the wider health strategy for the estates.

Creative project in Falconbrook Primary School commissioned to support young people's engagement in the creative activities. Image Credit: Eoin Carey.



# Clapham Junction

Clapham Junction is identified in the London Plan as a nascent Opportunity Area, reflecting the significant growth opportunities offered by the potential for replacing the existing station at Clapham Junction. Whilst a master planning exercise for the area is considered premature at this time, the new Local Plan Area Strategy has been developed to inform any future masterplan or development proposals that come forward in the near-term.

The centre has a reputation for having a lively evening and entertainment offer, including pubs, clubs and restaurants that make up a diverse food scene, much of which is clustered on Northcote Road and Battersea Rise and along Lavender Hill and St John's Hill. The New London Plan classifies night-time activity in Clapham Junction as 'NT2', indicating that it has regional/sub-regional significance. The area also hosts a number of cultural organisations and large venues, including the Battersea Arts Centre and the Clapham Grand, and is also renowned for its artists' studios on Lavender Hill, many of which are located in the Battersea Business Centre. Due to its excellent transport links and growing cultural offer, Clapham Junction presents a desirable location for national cultural organisations.

The vision for the new Area Strategy for Clapham Junction, as outlined in the Local Plan, is to:

- Develop a twenty-first century urban heart, focused on an improved transport interchange at and around Clapham Junction that delivers homes, commercial space and an enhanced cultural, leisure and entertainment offer
- Provide social and community uses as part of new development that meet the needs of the local community
- Enhance the area's creative character and its popularity for leisure and night-time cultural economy and entertainment by ensuring development makes provision for cultural, creative, visual and performing arts and other forms of community innovation
- In conjunction with development opportunities that take advantage of the Clapham Junction Station proposals, the Council will promote the development of a new public square and entrance to Clapham Junction Station, and a series of pocket parks/ parklets within the town centre
- Enhance the experience and quality of the public realm by creating interesting, dynamic, accessible, and inclusive public spaces. These should provide elements that encourage dwell time, such as seating, which facilitate community and cultural use, and which incorporate public art.
- Existing cultural, creative and arts uses will be safeguarded, and proposals for the expansion, renewal and modernisation of the existing cultural offer will be encouraged. The change of use in the town centre, particularly outside core shopping areas, to accommodate additional cultural offerings will be supported.

As part of Peabody's mission to rebuild Burridge Gardens, adjacent to Clapham Junction Station, Peabody's team have been collaborating with sculptor Rodney Harris and Valda Jackson to create four brick reliefs forming part of the building fabric. These reliefs recall the history of the site and its community through objects, such as clothing, tools and objects of domestic life. The sculptures at St John's Hill were designed in collaboration with architects Hawkins\Brown, residents and the local community and have been incorporated into the new buildings.



# Putney

The Area Strategy for Putney provides a framework for how new development in the area should be designed and planned to support the sustainable development of the town centre. Putney benefits from a high-quality townscape on the River Thames, is served by excellent transportation links, and the surrounding residential areas provide homes for a culturally active population. The unique combination of these assets constitutes an opportunity to enhance the local environment by building on the community’s cultural capital and the area’s strong heritage.

**W**ithin Putney, the main focus is on how arts and culture can be utilised to reverse the declining social and community role of the town centre and draw more people back to the area. Even before Covid-19 struck, Putney’s town centre had a shop vacancy rate of 13% (RNA, 2020) – the highest in the Borough – which has increased significantly in the last few years (from 4–7% in 2004).

The Council’s strategic aims for the area are therefore to help reanimate the town centre:

- To create significant new public spaces to spend time in a welcoming urban environment and to develop stronger links with and along the riverside. Some of these public realm projects will include commissioning artists and architects to produce artworks for space, i.e., the new Putney Embankment Foreshore by Tideway.
- To work in partnership with Positively Putney, landowners and other stakeholders to utilise empty units, either as meanwhile or permanent spaces for the cultural and creative industry sector, thereby

helping to provide incubator spaces for local creative businesses and attract people to the area.

- To further enhance Putney’s existing and vibrant night-time economy, which is classified in the London Plan as NT3 – having a ‘more than local’ significance. Proposals for leisure and night-time economy uses will be supported and should be on Putney Wharf and the riverside. All development in this location should make improvements to the public realm to help facilitate connections to this location.
- Support a public cultural programme that engages, excites and inspires all sections of the community to visit the area, building on the popularity of existing programmes such as annual Wandsworth Arts Fringe and the Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race.

A more attractive and healthier town centre will support a viable mix of uses, promoting employment and creative floorspace, while addressing structural changes to the retail sector, ultimately maintaining Putney’s position as a vibrant town centre that adeptly serves local people.



As part of the London wide Tideway programme Putney Embankment will be getting to new public space. Artist Claire Barclay has been commissioned by Tideway to create a series of artworks for this new public realm site celebrating the history of the River Thames. These visualisation images are courtesy of Tideway, produced by Atkins Arup Joint Venture for BMB.



# Tooting

The emerging London Plan identifies Tooting as a Strategic Area for Regeneration. Although the area has witnessed a substantial reduction in the level of deprivation over the last decade, a reflection to some extent of a shifting demographic towards young professionals, limited pockets of deprivation remain. The draft Local Plan sets out a holistic approach that will steer regeneration activity to improve the quality of local people's lives, ensuring that new developments are sensitive to, and enhance, the existing positive elements of the neighbourhood, in terms of both the built environment and sense of community.

**T**he area identified as Tooting in the Local Plan covers lies within the Tooting Bec and Broadway Neighbourhood Area. The Tooting Bec and Broadway Neighbourhood Forum are currently in the process of drafting their Neighbourhood Plan and the initial outputs of this process have been considered and incorporated into the Area Strategy. This strategy and the proposed Neighbourhood Plan will inform and complement each other.

Tooting Town Centre, focused around Tooting Broadway station, has a good range of shops, local services, and community facilities. At its heart, two indoor markets originating from the 1930s, Tooting Market and the larger Broadway Market, provide an array of food stalls and independent shops, which collectively account for around a third of all the shops, bars/restaurants, and services facilities within the centre. They epitomise the vibrancy and cultural diversity that the area has become renowned for and form a popular draw throughout the week and at weekends. The markets provide a high degree of flexibility, including opportunities for pop-up and temporary uses alongside established traders, and daytime and evening uses. Tooting is particularly notable for its nightlife and vibrant food scene, which extends beyond the market to include the area's much-loved and long-standing curry houses and South Asian restaurants, as well as clusters of pubs and entertainment venues. The London Plan classifies the centre as NT3, meaning that its evening economy has a 'more than local' significance.

The vision for the Area Strategy for Tooting as outlined in the Local Plan is to:

- Manage new development in a sensitive manner that respects the local distinctiveness and 'human scale' of the neighbourhood, and which enhances the vibrancy of the centre's day and evening offer
- Provide social and community uses as part of new development that meet the needs of the local community
- Enhance the area's cultural and creative character and its popularity for leisure and night-time cultural economy and entertainment by ensuring development makes provision for cultural, creative, visual and performing arts and other forms of community innovation
- Protect and enhance Tooting Market so that it maintains its thriving day and night-time operations and diverse retail and leisure offer
- With its strong community and heritage offer, and diverse food scene, Tooting is a recognised destination in its own right. In the medium term there is an aspiration to develop a tourism strategy for the area that supports local businesses and the local cultural sector.

Tooting Broadway tube station is being considered as a potential station on the future Crossrail 2 link. In addition to relieving congestion on the Northern Line, this would provide Tooting with a rapid and direct connection to major London stations such as Clapham Junction, Victoria, Tottenham Court Road, and Euston. However, it would also place the town centre under threat as the new station would require the demolition of a significant central space on the High Street.



Tooting currently has limited public realm available for cultural events, so in 2015 as part of The Streets project we put a band on the roof of Tooting Broadway tube station. As part of place-shaping the we are keen to develop spaces for live performances in the public realm.



# Balham

**Balham is a cohesive community that already successfully provides most community amenities within a 15-minute neighbourhood.**

**B**alham's Town Centre offers a year-round and varied cultural programme. However, almost all of the cultural activities are linked to the local pubs: Balham Bowls Club, The Bedford, and The Exhibit. The residents are already highly culturally engaged, but due to the good transport links they are comfortable travelling to other areas of London for cultural activities. The good transport links also attract significant numbers of people to Balham for cultural festivals, especially the comedy nights, Banana Cabaret, and the Balham Literary Festival.

The Local Plan references Bedford Hill Place and the areas adjacent to Balham Library as desirable locations for the expansion of the existing cultural offer and that any such proposals should aim to make provision for cultural, creative, visual and performing arts and other forms of community engagement.

In addition, the Borough's Town Centre Health Check, reflecting pre-COVID rates, identified that Balham has a shop vacancy rate of 12.4%, which could potentially supply meanwhile spaces for cultural and creative organisations.

# Wandsworth's Riverside

**T**he Borough has 8 kilometres of Thames riverside stretching from Putney to Nine Elms. Part of the riverside has already been covered by the more detailed plans for Nine Elms, Lombard Road and York Road Focal Point Area, Wandle Delta, and Putney, however the following vision is outlined in the Local Plan for the remaining area:

- Develop opportunities to enhance the experience and quality of the public realm by creating interesting, dynamic, accessible, and inclusive public spaces. These should provide elements that encourage dwell time, such as seating, which facilitate community and cultural use and incorporate public art.
- Encourage a mixture of uses to increase activity and vibrancy along the riverside and support the development of community and cultural event space – both temporary and permanent
- The cultural heritage of the river will be celebrated as an intrinsic part of Wandsworth's story. Future Development proposals should accord with the recommendations set out in the Cultural Planning Guidance for Lombard Road/York Road Riverside Focal Point Area, as well with the recommendations

outlined in the forthcoming River Thames Cultural Vision. Arts and Culture should be used to create a sense of coherence between the many different elements along the riverside that will be supported.

- Opportunities to enrich the experience of the river through public art and interpretation will be sought along the length of the riverside.

Celebrating the local history of the river, artist Simon Periton has teamed up with students at Brandlehow Primary School to create 'Anguilla anguilla' on Osiers Road was commissioned by cultural practice Dallas-Pierce-Quintero for Hollybrook in association with Peabody.



# Funding & Grants to Build the Cultural Ecology

Key to sustaining and growing the Borough's cultural sector is investment. Wandsworth's cultural landscape benefits from being able to access several area specific funding pots to support creative initiatives. Of these, the main ones are:

- **Wandsworth Grant Fund** provides Council funding of between £500 to £10,000 for cultural, community, and voluntary sector organisations in the Borough to undertake activities for up to 12 months. Applicants can apply specifically for the Arts and Culture theme, but cultural organisations are also invited to create projects that deliver against the Council's other themes: Environment and attractive neighbourhoods; Children and young people; Citizenship and civic engagement; Achieving aspirations and potential; and Health and wellbeing.
- **Wandsworth Council's Cultural Capacity Grant.** Each year a single grant of £10,000 is available to support small cultural organisations or artist collectives who are based and work in the Borough to develop their capacity, test out new ideas or develop new business models to help support their sustainability going forward.
- **Wandsworth Community Fund** provides Council funding of between £250 to £5,000 support small Wandsworth-based registered charities, voluntary or community-based groups. The aim is to support new local initiatives that can show they will achieve a positive outcome for the Borough's residents.
- **Battersea Power Station Foundation** funds projects that support local communities, create new opportunities and make Wandsworth's neighbourhoods even better places to live. The Foundation funds work in a range of areas – from arts, culture and the environment, to wellbeing, welfare and training for work – looking for projects that energise local neighbourhoods by empowering and renewing communities, improving wellbeing and increasing economic opportunities. There are two funding pots: The Spring Fund for up to £5,000, which aims to support smaller scale projects that can quickly make a big difference to local communities; and The Evolve Fund, which seeks to partner with organisations to invest in programmes that will help local communities prosper over the longer-term.
- **Wimbledon Foundation** looks to support charities that seek to tackle social problems in Wandsworth. Organisations can apply for grants of up to £5,000 as part of the Community Fund. In addition, the Wimbledon Foundation offer an annual award of up to £50,000 to support a local arts and cultural project entitled the Arts and Community Engagement (ACE) Fund. The ACE Fund was launched in 2018 and looks to support an inspiring and creative project that will engage the local community of Merton and Wandsworth, particularly groups who might not ordinarily access the arts.

# Case study: Introducing Cultural Anchor Tenants

**M**att's Gallery is one of the UK's leading contemporary art galleries. It will also be one of the first cultural anchor tenants to move into Nine Elms.

The organisation was founded by Robin Klassnik in his studio in 1979 and has supported the making of new and innovative work since then. For 25 years the gallery was based in Mile End, Tower Hamlets, and is currently temporarily based in the studio of Ron Henocq in Bermondsey, Southwark.

Matt's Gallery exists to give artists the time, space and support they need to take risks, test their limits and surprise even their own intentions. They provide the best conditions for experiencing art and challenging audiences. They work with artists at key moments in their development and at all stages of their careers. Matt's Gallery is a registered charity and an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation.

In 2015 Matt's Gallery won a competitive tender for a permanent new space in Nine Elms, which will open in 2021. The building is provided core and shell by the developer Bellway through Wandsworth Council as part of their Section 106 commitments. As well as bringing their free programme of high-quality, international contemporary art to the residents of Nine Elms and the wider Borough, the gallery will draw audiences from further afield into Wandsworth. Matt's Gallery provides the best conditions for enjoying contemporary art in an inclusive, welcoming and accessible environment.

The fit out has been designed by architects Manalo & White to create a complex that will incorporate

two double-height gallery spaces, affordable artists' studios, offices, a book and editions shop, and a publicly accessible home for the Matt's Gallery library and archive. Alongside documentary evidence of the exhibitions being made, the library and archive will hold films, books, invitations, letters and ephemera relating to artist-led practice from the 1960s to today. The archive gives significant insights into the working methodology of the gallery and the artists it has worked with over the last 40 years.

The space, secured on low rent over a 25-year lease, provides Matt's Gallery with much-needed stability into the future. The fit out of the shell spaces will be completed in two phases and will cost £1.2m.



Image: Marianna Simnett, *Worst Gift*, 2017. Installation shot. Photo by Jonathan Bassett. Courtesy the artist and Matt's Gallery.

# Case study: Happy Streets

**H**appy Streets was an outdoor arts festival, focused on community cohesion and wellbeing, that took place for the first time in July 2019. The first festival celebrated the completion of Yinka Ilori's colourful redesign of a railway underpass on Thessaly Road, a key north-south route in Nine Elms that links the Savona, Patmore and Carey Gardens estates.

The transformation of what had been an unwelcoming pedestrian underpass was the starting point: following a design competition held in partnership with the London Festival of Architecture, Wandsworth Council commissioned Yinka Ilori's 'Happy Street' design in November 2018 to brighten up the dark underpass, used daily by residents, schoolchildren and commuters.

From the outset, community engagement was at the heart of this project. Residents were invited to view a shortlist of six designs at the ROSE Community Clubroom and offer their comments and preference on whose design they wanted to see brought to life in person or online. Pupils from St. George's School were then invited to meet with Yinka Ilori as he finalised his winning design.

In early 2019, the Council commissioned a new solo exhibition from Ilori, 'Types of Happiness', to be presented in a pop-up gallery space run in partnership with the Royal College of Art, thereby introducing more of the local community to his work and giving people a chance to get familiar with his proposed underpass design. A series of community engagement workshops were held, offering everything from hands-on architectural activities to colouring-in mural activities.

Work on the underpass was completed in July 2019,

when a festival was held in the outdoor and public spaces either side of the bridge, spilling out into the surrounding streets, to celebrate its transformation. The Happy Streets festival took over four venues (the playground spaces of St George's School, a ball court, and two community centres), encouraging people to move through the newly-improved underpass throughout the day. The festival programme included 46 performances, participatory events and workshop opportunities, themed around happiness and wellbeing, including taster sessions of activities that were available locally for residents and could help improve neighbourliness and longer-term wellbeing, such as musical instrument learning, dancing or gardening. The content of the festival was developed hand-in-hand with local artists and community groups, bringing together local choreographers, beat-boxers, church groups, puppeteers, gardening groups, café owners and musicians, alongside professional artists and arts organisations from further afield.

Happy Streets was entirely free to attend, with all events wheelchair accessible and BSL-interpreted. Brochures were hand-delivered in advance to every residential address in the local neighbourhoods, including existing estates and new developments; attendance totalled 1872 during the afternoon.

Happy Streets provided a crucible for residents, community groups and organisations of different kinds to meet each other through their participation in the day; as two participants commented: "It was fantastic. What a great way for the whole community to get together. We met some really interesting people on the day and found out about other things happening in the area, i.e., with St George's school and church," and "It makes it feel as if it's an area that is not forgotten but celebrated."

Top image: Yinka Ilori's 'Happy Street' designed to brighten up the dark underpass, used daily by residents, schoolchildren and commuters.  
Below image: World Heart Beat leading a procession through the underpass as part of the Happy Street Festival in 2019





# 2. Economic Growth

# Case study: Tooting High Street

**T**ooting High Street is one of the Borough's most culturally vibrant Town Centres, although unlike some of the others it does not have any cultural venues on the high street. What Tooting does have are two indoor markets (Tooting Market and Broadway Market) and an array of pubs that act as a focus for culture and creativity in the area, provide an array of food stalls and independent shops and form a popular draw for visitors. Tooting has become famous for its vibrant food scene, which includes a selection of culinary festivals such as Tootopia Festival and Tooting Foodival.

Over the years, Tooting has also developed a strong reputation for its music offer, from Tooting Folk and Blues Festival to live music in a range of pubs. Over two years, 2015–2017, the Council worked with

Serious (one of the UK's leading producers of live music) and six other local authorities to develop a dynamic music and performance project serving as a catalyst for urban regeneration through creative cultural events. The project brought high-quality music and performance to Tooting High Streets and encouraged the community to rediscover and reclaim their public space. A series of live music events and window displays along the High Street, gave impetus to the hyper-local creative community to get involved with this project, allowing us to build a wide range of local contacts that are now part of Wandsworth Arts Fringe. The legacy of the project has been the range of small businesses that engage with us each spring to host performances, such as poets in local barbers and hairdressers, exhibitions in the market, and plays in charity shops and pubs.

One of the live music events that took place in Tooting as part of The Streets.



# Case study: Battersea Design & Technology Quarter

In 2019 work started on developing a new Battersea Design and Technology Quarter at the western end of the Nine Elms opportunity area, which will build on a strong existing creative economy and is expected to develop further with the arrival of the London headquarters of Apple and Penguin Random House.

**T**he opening of the Northern Line extension, expansion of the Royal College of Art's Battersea campus and the 'Apple effect' are already generating investor interest in the area. The plans being developed for the Battersea Design and Technology Quarter are designed to ensure that the Council maximises the opportunity to deliver a high-performing economic and creative cluster that supports the Council's vision for the area and the Borough as a whole.

It aims to draw on the strong existing design community in this part of Battersea, with creative enterprises already accounting for around 10% of all jobs in the wider Vauxhall Nine Elms Battersea Opportunity Area, such as Philip Treacy, Vivienne Westwood, and Foster and Partners, as well as the expanding Battersea Campus of the Royal College of Art,

including InnovationRCA, its incubator programme for design and tech start-ups.

The existing concentration of creative employment and business is higher than that found across London, although the growth rate has been slightly lower than the city as a whole over the last five years. The Design Sector has a much tighter and specific definition than creative industries; as such, it only accounts for around 250 jobs and 30 businesses in the Opportunity Area. The concentration of business is 50% higher than London as a whole, and while employment in the sector has grown by 42% over the last five years within Wandsworth it has only increased by 9%. There are also almost 1,300 jobs in the Tech sector in the VNEB Opportunity Area. The quarter will therefore meet the expanding demand for space and support the Borough's existing creative cluster.

# Case study: Maintaining Artists' Studios

**T**he last decade has seen a significant lose of artists studios across London. In 2009 a group of young artists decided to try and do something about this loss of space and set up their own space. It was originally a joint venture developed by the National Federation of Artist Studio Providers (NFASP), ACAVA, Workspace and a group of Central St Martins graduates.

In 2010 Collective Studios through ACAVA moved into 7–9 Church Row, a previously empty listed Georgian building in Wandsworth Town, which the artists have completely transformed. The space is a temporary meanwhile occupancy while development takes place on the adjoining land as part of the Ram Quarter. Twelve artists currently work in the studios, practising disciplines ranging from painting to film to kinetic sculpture.

Over the years the artists at Collective Studios have formed many local links, working in partnership with other local organisations and other local artists.

Activities have included:

- Hosted over 60 solo and group shows
- Ran annual Big Draw events for local children
- Worked in partnership with Southside Centre in providing over 3 years of Christmas Card making workshops
- Participating in both Wandsworth Arts Fringe and Wandsworth Artists' Open House
- Worked in partnership with Cato Trust (now Neko Trust) in setting up an additional gallery space in their

site where they could host larger shows with regular opening receptions that drew in a large audience from all over London, such as can be seen below.

With all the support, knowledge and skills gained over the years, 2021 will see Collective Studios transform into WIP Space. WIP Space will be focused on finding its own space to continue to support creative SMEs through a mixed-use site that can house studios, gallery, community and project spaces but also include subsidised work/live units. Supporting artists who value collaboration and cross pollination, especially important in a post pandemic world.



# Case study: Supporting The Next Generation in The Music Industry

**N**eko Trust is a music industry charity that supports the next generation of talent to reach their potential, both on and off stage. Established in 2005, NEKO runs an historic, creative site in Wandsworth where a community of 50 artists work out of subsidised studios, writing rooms and production suites. The charity focuses on those who are early career but it is also home to established and high profile artists who utilise its spaces for rehearsal.

Recognising that the COVID-19 pandemic represents the biggest threat to the UK's cultural infrastructure, institutions, and workforce in a generation, the charity wants to ensure the live events industry emerges better and more resilient than ever before. For NEKO this means improving diversity and



inclusion across the industry.

In 2021, NEKO is set to launch a new pilot which looks to accelerate the employment opportunities of a diverse group of emerging onstage and offstage talent. It also wants to empower young creatives to progress their own ideas, including the development of digital initiatives for online audiences.

NEKO has a track record of running educational courses in touring production aimed at providing young people with the skills needed to have a successful career in the industry, while also providing access to the spaces they need for on the job training, rehearsals, and performances.

# Case study: At The Forefront of Innovation

**I**nnovationRCA is the Royal College of Art's centre for enterprise and entrepreneurship, helping students and graduates transform compelling ideas into successful businesses. InnovationRCA, based in Battersea, is set up to:

- Provide start-up incubation services, including pre-seed funds of up to £100,000, to help exceptional graduate start-ups with compelling ideas rapidly generate technological, market or commercial proof of concept and transform them into profitable and investable businesses
- Accelerate the growth of creative brand businesses founded by graduates of the RCA
- Protect and manage the commercialisation of intellectual property created by students, graduates and staff helping them bring their innovations to market

A wealth of amazing products have already been developed through the InnovationRCA start-up incubation programme, with highlights including:

- The Moment by Lucy Soo Min Jung, MA / MSc Innovation Design Engineering, 2019. The Moment is developing a wearable device that emits a low-voltage impulse on-demand, in order to relieve the symptoms of Parkinson's and other neural

transmission disorders. The vibrotactile stimulation device sits on a user's sternum and helps decrease stiffness, slowness and improve the fluidity of their movements. Pilot testing has showed 100% of the users showed increased speed in their movements and has been shown to overcome hesitancy and immobilisation in Parkinson's sufferers – enabling them to live richer lives. Trials are showing that The Moment's technology might have similar benefits to sufferers of other neural transmission disorders.

- FreshTag by Rui Xu, MA Textiles, 2019. FreshTag is developing sustainable food packaging that is biofilm-based and pH-sensitive. FreshTag's packaging technology dynamically changes colour as food freshness decreases – signposting when the packaged food is safe and unsafe to eat, thus eliminating food waste and reducing consumer dependence on plastic-based packaging and unreliable "Use-by" dates.

The Higher Education Funding Council for England's 2015 report Research to Assess the Nature and Annual Value of Student Start-ups, ranked the RCA as having 'the highest number of student spin-outs with university ownership in recent years in the UK'. Wandsworth Council is working with the RCA in exploring how we can support these new creative businesses with staying and growing within the Borough.

# Case study: Supporting New Writers

**T**heatre503 is the home of new writers and a launchpad for the artists who bring their words to life. They focus on finding exceptional, diverse new playwrights who will define the canon for the next generation, as well as supporting learning and career development at the core of their work. The key to Theatre503's success is how they bridge their work identifying, nurturing and supporting playwrights by doing everything they can to get their work on stage performed in front of a public audience. With two Olivier Awards, countless playwrighting awards and nominations Theatre503 has become the most significant venue for first time writers in the English speaking world. "Doctor Who", "The Crown", "Normal People", "Succession" and "Killing Eve", are just a few of the programmes writers who made their debut at the venue are now writing for, as well as for theatres across the country.

In 2020 they launched The 503Studio, the culmination of a four-year dream to bring together all the existing strands of their work developing early career playwrights to get from script to stage. While the Studio was always a long-held ambition, the Covid-19 crisis gave them the moment to reflect on who they are and what they could do to keep supporting Wandsworth, London and the UK's incredible freelance community. The Studio was launched with a paid for Writers Programme, with both the Autumn and Spring iterations selling out in a matter of days. At least 25% of all places in this and future programmes are offered for free via their Share the Drama scheme, with a priority given to Wandsworth residents who would otherwise be unable to afford places. The year round programme of the 503Studio will feed directly into productions at their Latchmere space.

# Case study: Incubating New Businesses

**T**he Scratch Hub is a co-working space situated in the heart of Battersea Arts Centre. It opened in 2018 in the area of the building known as the Lower Hall. The Scratch Hub offers different types of work and desk spaces, meeting and events rooms, capacity building and professional development opportunities.

It is a thriving community, with the membership curated to ensure there's a dynamic buzz of people from different backgrounds and sectors with a range of experiences: local entrepreneurs, grassroots voluntary organisations, artists, makers and young people testing new ideas. The community includes the Springboarders, who receive free membership to build their ideas and networks. These members are selected for their brilliant achievements, their great potential and the significant social impact they are making rather than on the basis of their field of expertise. Members share skills through a time-banking system, sparking new collaborations and supporting one another.

The Scratch Hub is strengthening Battersea Arts

Centre's networks locally with those who have similar socially-minded goals, most significantly in new areas outside of the arts and cultural sector: with local business, charities, social sector and start-ups. These new partnerships make the organisation stronger in achieving the broader, civic-minded purpose, which is about supporting creativity and creative environments that enable all types of people and businesses to flourish, "to inspire people, to take creative risks, to shape the future."

BAC Scratch Hub. Image Credit: Morley Von Sternberg



# 3. Communities & Partnerships

This new ten year strategy is about more than just working with cultural organisations – it’s about supporting individuals who have made their home in the Borough. Empowering and enabling creative individuals to create a strong cultural network that is welcoming to all and encourages innovation.

In addition, in January 2020, Wandsworth Council adopted its new Resident Participation and Engagement Strategy following extensive consultation with residents in Council owned properties. This outlined that “the Council is committed to ensuring that residents living in its properties benefit from a wide range of activities and cultural programmes taking place across Wandsworth,” and to working with voluntary, community and cultural organisations to support events taking place within estates and adjoining green spaces.



# Case study: Brightening Up The Hazelhurst Estate

**I**n December 2017 Work and Play Scrapstore was awarded £4,000 (out of a total cost of £8,270) through the Wandsworth Grant Fund to work with three community artists, Jayson Singh, Stevie King and Airborne Mark, to develop large-scale, highly visually impactful, semi-permanent/permanent pieces of artwork on Hazelhurst Estate to augment the environment and surroundings.

Working closely with the Council's Estate Management, the artists' brief was to deliver artwork in the area adjacent to the tower blocks, Hayesend House and Chillingford House, which were brightly-coloured, joyful and celebratory in their nature – all with the themes of reuse, sustainability and the environment interwoven. Throughout the project, there was a strong focus on providing numerous opportunities for the local community to input their own artwork to the projects through collaborative making and design sessions run out of the Scrapstore. These sessions involved local community groups and the local schools as well as 35 Scrapstore volunteers and 400+ members.

Over the project, 525 Wandsworth residents engaged in the initiative through the various workshops and the installation period. The project resulted in four linked, but individually separate, pieces of bespoke artwork: two community pieces of artwork and two commissions that involved the community with observation and inclusion opportunities.

The two community pieces were: 'Lilies Speak Volumes,' over 100 separate murals painted on the pillars of the tower block by individuals living all over

Hazelhurst Estate, many of them young people. Some Work and Play Scrapstore volunteers and members also took part; and 'Upcycled Mosaic,' which saw 50 people make upcycled wooden paintings at Hazelfest #2 to add to the giant Hs, 20 Scrapstore volunteers work on the giant Z and T plastic collages, and 25 children from Smallwood Primary School make upcycled mosaics for the giant U and E.

The two commissioned pieces were 'Waterlily Eye,' the artwork on the bridge above the pillars, and 'Chameleon Mural,' which many local, young residents enjoyed watching take shape. Ten people participated in the 'burning the origami' ceremony at the end of the project and Airborne Mark undertook a free extra project for the Work and Play Scrapstore to decorate their front doors.

A key part of the project's ethos was creating something environmentally friendly. 100% of the upcycled mosaic was made with reused materials, thus reducing carbon emissions through preventing these materials going to landfill/incineration. However, it was not practical to reuse paints for the painted murals as they needed to be anti-graffiti and fire-retardant masonry paint.

The project has had a very positive impact on the estate, with residents reporting how they feel more pride in their local area; littering levels have been significantly reduced. In May 2019, Work and Play Scrapstore secured funding from the Wimbledon Foundation Community Fund to complete an additional mural on the other side of the walkway above their entrance.



The 'Lilies Speak Volumes' murals on Hazelhurst estate.  
Image courtesy of the Work and Play Scrapstore.



Wandsworth Arts Fringe 2019. Image: Deborah Jaffe

# Case study: Developing The Cultural Ecology

Wandsworth Arts Fringe (WAF) is the Borough's largest annual, two-week arts and culture festival. During May, multiple venues across the Borough open up to 150 events, performances and workshops with many hosted in local 'hub' venues throughout the Borough. In 2019 almost 25,000 people engaged with local events and 4,199 local residents of all ages either helped to create content or performed as part of the festival.

**W**AF is an opportunity for cultural organisations, community groups, youth clubs and educational institutions to throw open their doors and showcase their amazing work. It is also a means to fund a local programme and support creative employment in a variety of roles: we offer opportunities to get involved with anything to do with festival production – from production managers to lighting designers, print designers, writers and directors to people who run workshops. In addition to WAF grants, we run training and networking sessions for potential participants, helping to develop new skills, broker new partnerships and share methods of best practice. Our ultimate aim is to help people develop their craft and create a cultural ecology for

everyone.

Whilst the sixteen days of the live festival programme are crammed with events and shows open to the public, there are many activities and events going on before and afterward the fringe. In 2019, we ran 191 outreach and engagement sessions as part of WAF over eight months to draw in participation from local schools, youth groups, community centres, refugee groups and many more.

WAF creates a happening that ultimately changes the cultural landscape of Wandsworth. The festival is a wonderful celebration of what makes Wandsworth unique, but its vibrancy throughout the year is what confirms its lasting impact and legacy.

**“This is a wonderful initiative from Wandsworth Council in partnership with Enable Leisure & Culture with support from Arts Council England. As it’s now been running for 10 years, they must be doing something right and it’s an example of how the arts can bring communities together – something other Borough Councils would do well to take note of.”**

# Case study: Nurturing creative freelancers

**M**y name, The Storyteller of Southfields, reflects what I like to do: bring stories and storytelling to the local community. Storytelling evenings and events are an opportunity for people to meet up, escape into stories, have a chat, and sometimes share their own experiences. My show 'Life Death and Dreams Along the Way' was inspired by both my mum and dad's battles with terminal cancer. The show brought laughter, tears and afterwards the audience stayed on to chat about their own families and experiences. I like to support local venues and storytelling events have taken me to pubs, gardens, artists' studios, my back room, people's homes, a bowls club and more. My storytelling events are truly for the community, in the community.

I was lucky to join other storytellers, including Alison

Royce, at a Wandsworth Arts Fringe event she organised on Tooting Common a few years ago. Since then, we have continued to work together and create a wonderful local peer network. I've also joined local artists as part of Wandsworth Artists' Open House. Visitors often stay for a cuppa, a slice of cake and a chat during the day, whilst during the evening we escape into stories surrounded by the artists' work.

WAF in your Living Room 2019 helped me conquer my fear of Zoom and produce Two Tales, where some of my favourite characters were faced with Covid-19 and lockdown: Rapunzel rebelled and Little Red Riding Hood grew up, but not before we found the usual wolf and Prince. My storytelling has really evolved during Lockdown, in future I'll be working with live and virtual audiences.

Hannah Need, The Storyteller of Southside performing in a Furzedown Garden Gig



# Case study: Bringing Carnival to the Neighbours

**I**n May 2017, local resident Natasha Sackey was able to realise a long-held ambition of introducing carnival arts to the residents of the Latchmere ward. As a creative producer and registered dance movement psychotherapist, Natasha had long been an evangelist for the creative and therapeutic benefits of dance, and she was keen to share this passion with her neighbours. Through coming along to WAF networking meetings and enthusing others with her ambitions to develop a local carnival, she was able to build a range of connections that came together to pilot the first Flagz Mas band carnival day event in the Winstanley and York Road community. Natasha worked closely with the York Garden library whose support enabled the event to take place. It had a turnout of around 450 attendees.

Natasha had judged her neighbours' enthusiasm for a carnival correctly: during and after the event enquiries came in from families and other youth organisations about how they could be part of future programmes. In response Natasha and Flagz Mas band developed a three-part programme for 2018, including:

**Phase 1:** Outreach 'Discover Flagz Carnival' Easter

**Project:** An introduction project to Carnival Arts, consisting of an outreach programme working with 40 young people from Providence House and Caius House, which then continued once a week over April and May to develop performances and costumes for Flagz Carnival

**Phase 2:** Flagz Carnival day as part of WAF. This aimed at bringing the whole community together to celebrate carnival arts, including performances, stalls and community engagement activities.

**Phase 3:** Flagz Junior Mas Carnival Arts Programme Carnival costume and design programme for Notting Hill Carnival. The young people with Providence House and Caius House continued to work with Natasha over the summer months, with ten Wandsworth residents joining Flagz at Children's Day, Notting Hill Carnival.

The second year was even more successful, with over 650 people engaging with the carnival over the day, the majority of whom had been able to walk to the event. Enthusiasm from young people was evident, with both youth clubs and families coming up during the event to ask how their children could be involved with the Flagz Mas band in the future.



As part of the five month Carnival Arts Programme ten young Wandsworth residents joining Flagz at Children's Day at the Notting Hill Carnival. Image courtesy of Flagz Mas Band.

# 4. Learning & Education

As one of twelve Challenge London investments from A New Direction, our Local Cultural Education Partnership, Creative Wandsworth, looks to empower young people in Wandsworth to inform and shape creative activity in their area by working in partnership with cultural organisations, schools, youth services and other local partners to deliver projects and activities that inform strategic outcomes for young people of all ages. This has included setting up a creative youth panel of young people aged 14–21 to help inform and shape this new Arts and Culture Strategy, and providing support and training for arts and culture organisations to develop their own Youth Voice.



# Case study: Embedding Arts & Culture in Schools

**A**pples & Snakes is one of the UK's leading spoken word and poetry organisations and specialises in participation and outreach. In 2018, they were commissioned as part of the Linden Homes' Section 106 Cultural Action Plan to work with Falconbrook and Westbridge Primary Schools for two years to develop new more dynamic approaches to teaching English and poetry in particular.

The selected schools both have a high concentration of young people on free school meals (58% at Falconbrook and 39.4% at Westbridge, against a Wandsworth average of 17.6%) and a significant number of children who either have English as an additional language, are involved in social care, and/or have a SEN or a SEN concern. As one teacher put it, "the school's link inspector has previously reported that the greatest barrier to reading and writing in our school is the poverty of language that pupils bring with them from home. With these issues in mind, our pupils would benefit greatly from being exposed to new experiences; the discussions, writing and art lessons that would arise from an arts project would allow exposure to new vocabulary and rich conversations." This led to the cultural commission focussing on working with the young people to develop their confidence with language and train teachers in this technique.

## The project's aim was twofold:

1. To give children living in a deprived area of Wandsworth the chance to explore and develop their writing skills and literacy through creating poems and raps around the themes of Identity / Belonging / Home (Year 1) and Thinking Big / Resilience (Year 2)
2. To support both schools in carving out time for creative training and staff development.

Two highly experienced artists were recruited to lead the project: BREIS, a rap artist, was based at Falconbrook Primary, and Kat Francois, a spoken

word poet, was based at Westbridge Primary. Both worked with years 3 and 4 in year one, and years 4 and 5 in year two.

The project worked with 118 students from four classes aged 8–10 and explored the project themes through spoken word arts. Over the two years it had a profound effect on the young people, growing their confidence in using language and developing their performance skills. An important element was that every single child participated in one of the final performances.

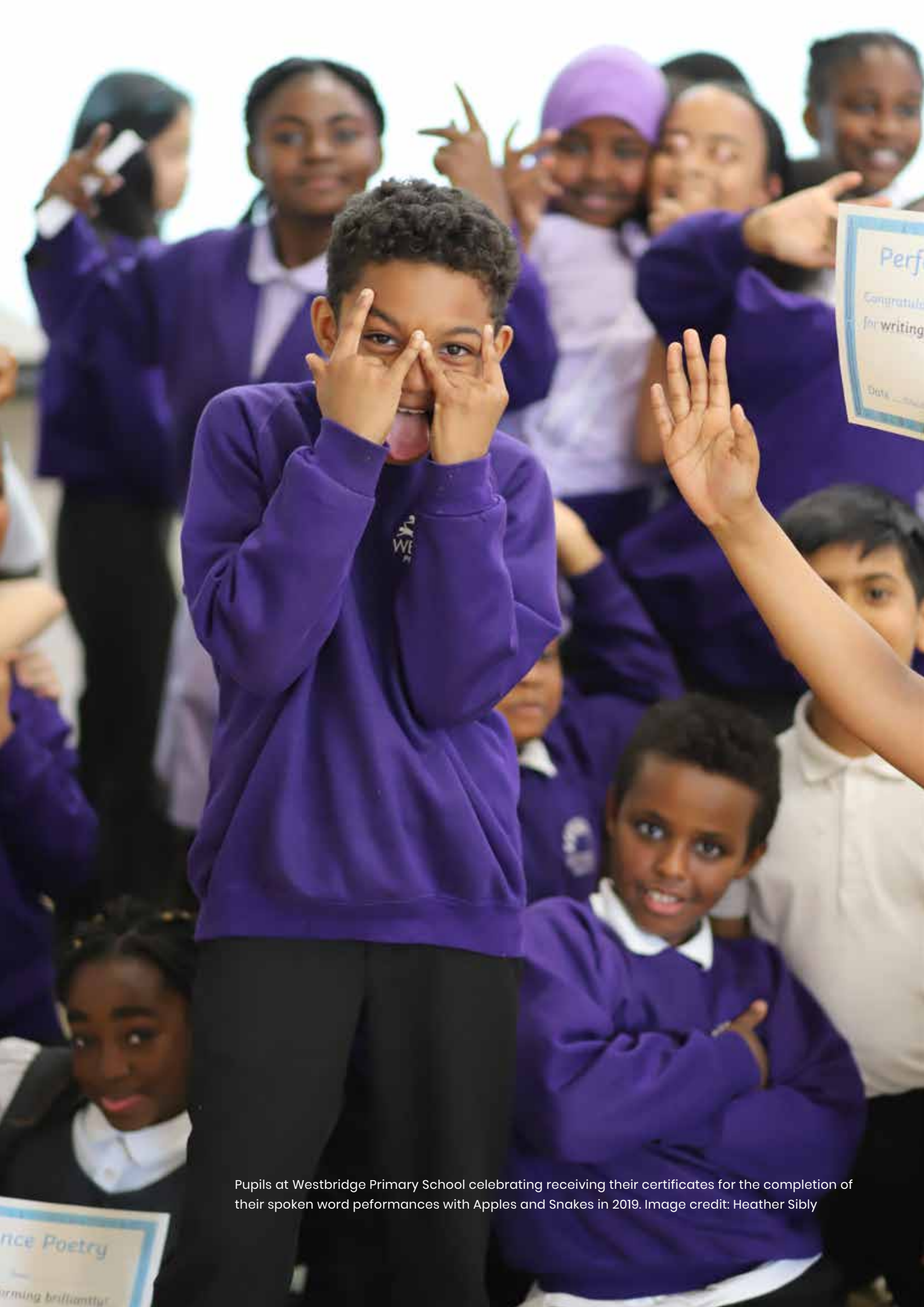
The project culminated with various public performances. Two performances took place in school to an audience of other year groups and parents/carers. The other two performances were to the general public – one in Falcon Park at the end of year one, and later as part of WAF Schools Showcase in the Civic Suite at Wandsworth Town Hall on 9 May 2019 to an audience of over 450 people.

Six teachers were heavily involved with the project. These teachers began by observing Kat and BREIS delivering the sessions and then gradually took a greater role in planning and delivery, with the aim of building their confidence in teaching poetry in the classroom. To further embed creative learning in the schools an INSET session for teachers, including those from other Wandsworth schools, was held after the project ended to support the teachers in learning new approaches to working with poetry and spoken word and gain confidence in their ability to deliver a more creative curriculum.

## Feedback from the teachers included:

"I will plan my next poetry unit as a performance poetry unit and plan it into assemblies knowing it will be really well-received by the children"

"seeing the growth from last year has been brilliant – they are much more confident, and their work is much stronger"



Pupils at Westbridge Primary School celebrating receiving their certificates for the completion of their spoken word performances with Apples and Snakes in 2019. Image credit: Heather Sibly

# Case study: WAF Schools Showcase

In May 2019 Wandsworth Arts Service held the first ever Wandsworth Arts Fringe Schools Showcase. Held at the Civic Suite at Wandsworth Town Hall, the event was the culmination of creative projects between Wandsworth Primary Schools and cultural organisations, covering a range of creative activity including dance, drama, music, visual art, animation, and spoken word. Over 700 young people took part in the projects from 33 different schools.

**W**AF School Showcase brought together the following projects as part of a borough wide celebration of young people's creativity.

**Chocolate Films Workshops with Nightingale Community Academy, Paddock Primary School, Ronald Ross Primary School, Roehampton CE Primary School, Trinity St. Mary's RC Primary School:** 106 pupils took part in hands-on 2D stop motion animation workshops, learning how to use camera and lighting equipment and professional Dragonframe animation software to create their own animations based on their local area. All animations were screened at the showcase.

**Group 64 at Putney Arts Theatre with West Hill Primary School:**

50 Year 4 pupils took part in interactive theatre workshops to explore Wandsworth's past, present and future. During the project they developed confidence and creativity through performance skills, including physical theatre and puppetry. Their finished piece was performed live at the showcase.

**Pump House Gallery with Griffin Primary School:**

30 Pupils from years 3 and 4 worked with artist Orly Orbach to explore food and the stories and memories behind it. They then experimented with textures to create patterns and prints with a variety

of food items and create a tablecloth design, which was exhibited at the showcase.

**Royal College of Art with Chesterton Primary School:**

60 Pupils from Year 5 worked with artist Tom Pope in creative hands-on workshops to learn about one of the oldest photographic print-making processes, cyanotypes, a fantastic cross-curricular process mixing science and art. The final artworks were exhibited at the showcase.



**Wandsworth School's Music Service:**

We were delighted to showcase the Year 5 and 6 Singing Project, following their outstanding Brighter Sounds concert at the Royal Festival Hall. 40 pupils performed live at the event. In addition, the Wandsworth Performance Troupe, made up of 45 pupils from a wide range of Wandsworth schools, opened the performance

**Work and Play Scrapstore with Broadwater and Fircroft Primary Schools:**

Artist Stevie King worked with 224 pupils of all ages to create decorative bricks from reclaimed materials. Pupils were asked to reflect on their individuality and use their creativity to express this in order to develop structures representing community. The finished bricks were used to construct an installation that was exhibited at the showcase.

**Apples & Snakes with Falconbrook and Westbridge Primary Schools:**

Pupils worked with professional spoken word artists to write and perform their own work. Performances from Falconbrook pupils were filmed and screened at the showcase; a group of Westbridge pupils performed live at the event.

To assist with the showcase performance, a team of students from South Thames College was recruited in order to explore ways that the older students can produce and manage the final performance events as part of Wandsworth Arts Fringe and develop practical skills useful for future employment. They took on Front of House roles and worked under the supervision of the Wandsworth Arts Fringe Producer and Front of House Manager.

Young musicians from Tooting Primary School performing as part of the WAF Schools Showcase held at the Civic Suite at Wandsworth Town Hall in 2019. Image credit Eoin Carey.



# Case study: Nurturing Wandsworth Talent

**Battersea Arts Centre (BAC) delivers a range of bold and ambitious projects for young people. Their programmes empower young people to take creative risks, support them to make their ideas happen, and increase their confidence and self-esteem.**

**B**eat Box Academy. Nathaniel is 25 and has been a core member of the Beat Box Academy (BBA) for over 8 years. Nathaniel began his journey with BBA by attending as a weekly participant. Over the years Nathaniel has developed his skills as a performer and a workshop leader. Conrad Murray, BBA director, and staff at BAC have supported Nathaniel on this journey, working alongside him to develop him as a young leader and peer mentor for other young people. Today, Nathaniel is the co-workshop facilitator for the BBA, this is a paid role. This is the sort of progression that BBA want to and do invest in, nurturing young people to develop their skills and share them with other young people. Upskill them and train new professional leaders from our local area.

Through his journey with BBA Nathaniel has not only become a workshop leader and facilitator he has become a professional performer as part of Battersea Arts Centre smash hit show Frankenstein. Frankenstein was developed through BBA by Conrad Murray and the members of the Beat Box Academy, Frankenstein is a modern day take on a classic tale. Frankenstein grew from a small studio show to an international touring phenomenon, winning best show at the Edinburgh Fringe in 2019 and playing at the Adelaide Fringe in January 2020, Frankenstein will tour internationally as soon as COVID allows. From attending weekly beat box sessions as a young teenager, to running workshops to making and touring an international smash hit show, Nathaniel has actively and brilliantly demonstrated what is possible when consistent investment is made in young people.



# Case study: Teaching New Skills

**T**avaziva Dance is a sector leader for dance production and training in the UK. Their core purpose is to excite, transform and enrich people's experience of dance.

Artistic Director Bawren Tavaziva's Zimbabwean heritage and his unique hybridisation of African and contemporary choreography and music lie at the heart of all Tavaziva's work, which is renowned for its bold, risk-taking and beautiful choreography and is popular with audiences and ever more relevant in today's cultural landscape.

Since moving to Wandsworth in 2016, Tavaziva has become a key cultural player, offering a range of classes, workshops, residencies, work placements, apprenticeships in dance and arts management, talks, screenings, and online programmes. The vision that unites this activity is to support a thriving, diverse dance sector where young people, students,



Image credit: Jevan Chowdhury courtesy of Tavaziva Dance.

professionals and the wider community learn and participate in an inclusive, inspirational and often life-changing environment.

In 2018 and 2019 Tavaziva, in collaboration with RAD and Caius House, were commissioned to lead a two-year programme for young people in Wandsworth. They delivered activities including CPD training, taster sessions and masterclasses, plus intensives in music and dance, where participants experienced using professional music suites and dance studios. The project also included performances for friends and family, a film of the participants, shot by award-winning photographer and filmmaker Jevan Chowdhury, and a permanent photography exhibition at Caius House – all inspired by the title 'Journeying Between.'

The workshop leaders mentored the participants, giving valuable insight into what is expected of artists in professional companies and guidance on timekeeping, confidence, teamwork and marketing skills. Beyond the physical and digital legacy, a lasting bond was developed. They discussed what they would like to happen in the future, and all were passionate about continuing to meet, dance and create together. A group was formed – 'The Caius House Crew' – and Tavaziva are working towards making a case for further workshops of this kind either with the same group or new groups around the country.

Aside from this fantastic two-year project, Tavaziva produces touring shows that can be seen across the UK, and when in the studio creating opens its doors to offers open classes for professionals led by Bawren Tavaziva and guest dance teachers. Tavaziva has delivered classes to over 390 professionals, graduates and dancers studying at Higher Education level. These classes are highly energetic and physically challenging, and aim to give an insight into working with a professional dance company. Tavaziva is developing a Company in Residence programme with RAD and also starting conversations about an apprenticeship programme with Roehampton University dance department to bridge the gap between dance training and employment in the cultural industry.

# Case study: Breaking down barriers into music for young people from diverse backgrounds

**W**orld Heart Beat (WHB) was founded in 2009 in an old converted warehouse in Southfields to address the lack of free and affordable music tuition available to South London’s most disadvantaged young people. They have become one of the UK’s leading music hubs, continuing to support young people in Wandsworth. They are renowned for their inclusive global music programme, youth-led approach and the pathways they open up to conservatoires and music careers for diverse young talent.

From an intake of 70 students in 2010, they have grown to 370 students in 2019–2020. Each year they:

- Inspire 2,000 young people to take up an instrument, often for the first time, through taster sessions delivered with more advanced students in schools and community settings in some of Wandsworth’s most deprived areas.
- Support 370 young people aged 5–25 to develop their musical and performance skills through 1:1 and group teaching and band ensembles. By offering a repertoire that includes Asian, Jazz, Gospel, Eastern European, Gypsy, Latin, Reggae and Tabla genres, they reflect the diversity of the Borough and its large Asian, African, and Caribbean population. They have established a diverse student body, with 70% identifying as ethnically diverse and over half receiving full bursaries and free instruments.
- Provide professional development to 30 exceptional young musicians aged 15–25 as part of the Music Leaders students programme. Music Leaders students receive mentoring from professionals,

training in vocational music and production, and are given opportunities to perform, record and curate and produce concerts and events for the local community. The Music Leaders students also serve as role models for younger students, providing mentoring and training and co-delivering our taster workshops. 70% of WHB’s Music Leader students now study at top music conservatoires/universities, have secured professional roles in the music/creative industries, or have been recruited to training programmes in other sectors, and twelve of WHB’s teachers are past alumni.

In Autumn 2021, WHB will be opening a second performance hub and education centre in Embassy Gardens as one of the Nine Elms cultural anchor tenants, in a space provided by Eco-World Ballymore on a 50-year peppercorn lease. The new Academy will serve as an important cultural anchor in a rapidly changing neighbourhood, addressing the lack of accessible grassroots music venues in South London, and delivering a programme of over 100 concerts and events each year. The new space will enable WHB to double the number of students they can work with and extend their focus to marginalised young people.

“Having something you can do, to be passionate about, a skill you can develop and really hone, makes such a difference. It helps you navigate through all the negative distractions and influences growing up and gives you belief and confidence that you can succeed. Without music, the saxophone, the friends that I had in music and the role models I found at World Heart Beat I would not be where I am today.”  
– Kwabena, 23

# Case study: The Agency

**B**attersea Arts Centre offers a series of bold and ambitious projects for young people. Their programmes empower young people to take their creative risks, support them to make their ideas happen and increase their confidence and self-esteem. Nowhere is this better demonstrated than in The Agency which develops local young people's social entrepreneurship ideas.

Agents take part in creative workshops, develop their research skills and make professional networks to produce an idea that they are passionate about. At the end of the 12 week process the Agents have a chance to pitch their idea to a panel and receive up to £2000 to turn it into a reality. Each year 5 projects which benefit the community are funded.

## Henrietta Imoreh – RE:DEFINE

Henrietta started with the Agency in 2016, aged 22. She has experience of the care system and a passion for theatre. Through the Agency she developed a theatre company called Re:Define, campaigning for the rights of care leavers through creative workshops and performance. Henrietta is now a public speaker for care leavers' rights, and works at EY Foundation supporting care experienced young people into work.

Henrietta is from the local Wandsworth area, and her theatre company for care leavers called 'Redefine' is based on personal experience, "as when I was 14, my little brother and I were taken into care. Shortly after, I was expelled from school for carrying a knife. Over the next few years I went to 8 different foster homes and attended a Pupil Referral Unit as I couldn't maintain mainstream education."

When she started the Agency, she had just started living in her own flat after having been in a hostel for four years, and was already on route to being evicted. It was a very daunting time for her.

"The Agency made me think creatively about my whole life. The process started with me and my desire and was shaped around what I wanted to do. It's made me who I am today." The biggest shift happened when she was awarded the money from the Panel. It was a huge boost for her self-esteem; sense of identity; and belonging. The Panel believed in her idea – and that is huge for a young person who has just come out of care.

"For the first time in my life I felt proud of myself. The experience of setting up 'Redefine' was the most amazing feeling anyone can feel. For the first time in my life, I felt autonomy, responsibility and a sense of agency. I've always had external agencies – be it a teacher, a social worker, a sexual advisor, a councillor, a mental health therapist – talking for me, but this time I could talk for myself."

When she went to social services and asked them to refer ten young people for the programme that she was running and had sourced funding for – she could feel their awe and surprise about what she was able to accomplish. She could feel the power shift in the room.

She cried when they staged their first show, realising that what started as a small idea has had such a massive impact. "When I saw the young people on stage – I could tell they had changed: they had confidence, were strong and proud. None of them had work or are in education. Before 'Redefine', some of them wouldn't even leave the house, but through the process they came to rehearsals every time. When we performed our show at City Hall for politicians, policy makers and people of influence – after the performance I thought they would be nervous and sit straight back down in the audience. But they didn't – they started talking about their experiences and what 'Redefine' had unlocked for them. My aim was never to expose their stories and narratives for sympathy, but they felt so strong within their identity that they decided they wanted to talk about it and educate the policy makers."

Since The Agency, she has worked as an assistant facilitator on the programme and Outreach Coordinator at BAC. She now works for Ernst & Young, one of the largest companies in the world, as Careers Consultant for Young People in Care. She has also set up her own children's party business, 'Happy Henry', that brings joy through drama to children. The business has been running for four years and now makes about £10,000 per year. She is also on the board of trustees for Agenda, a charity that supports women and girls at risk of abuse, poverty and homelessness and is leading meetings with a range of influential people including the Chief Executive of Barnardo's and the Head of Children's Services and Leaving Care Services in councils across London.



# 5. Access For All

Access for all is key principle throughout the work being done both by the Council and the cultural organisations working in the borough. Much of this work focusses on how to make sure that existing and new opportunities to enjoy culture and to join the borough's creative workforce are available and accessible to everyone. There are also areas where additional opportunities are commissioned to those who would benefit from specialist support.

# Case study: Supporting people to fulfil their potential

**N**nena Kalu, a Wandsworth resident, joined ActionSpace in 1999. She has complex autism, a severe learning disability, and is functionally non-verbal. She requires 24-hour support and a high level of supervision at all times. Nnena was originally introduced to ActionSpace through Atheldene Day Centre, who were looking for activities outside the centre that some of their more complex service users would be able to access. Nnena quickly showed an aptitude and a strong desire to create art. This gave her a sense of purpose and Nnena currently comes to ActionSpace two times a week.

Over 18 years of working together, artist facilitator, Charlotte Hollinshead, and Nnena have developed a warm and intuitive relationship. Charlotte is able to support Nnena's needs to such an extent that Nnena is completely in charge of the direction her work

takes. This relationship between the artist facilitator and the artist is a central feature of ActionSpace's model for nurturing and developing artists with learning disabilities. Also important is the ability for the artists to attend weekly supported studio sessions over a number of years. This gives them a safe, comfortable, familiar environment in which they feel able to explore, experiment and take risks in creating their artwork.

Nnena is now one of ActionSpace's most accomplished and respected artists. Her work has been widely exhibited in mainstream contemporary arts venues and festivals with national recognition. She has had solo exhibitions at Glasgow International (2018), Humber Street Gallery in Hull (2019), and Studio Voltaire at Old Burlington Street London (2020), as well as having her work regularly displayed within Wandsworth.

Nnena Kalu's "elsewhere" exhibition in 2020 at Studio Voltaire at Old Burlington Street London. Image credit Francis Ware.



# Case study: Reimagining theatre for young audiences to make it more accessible

**O**ily Cart challenges the accepted definitions of theatre and audience by creating innovative and highly interactive Sensory Theatre productions for disabled children and young people who experience multiple barriers to access.

Each year, Oily Cart, based in Wandsworth, tours two original productions to over 5,000 children, young people and their families/carers across the UK. Working with the specialist schools in the Borough and local families, they tailor performances to individual children and young people for whom standardised theatre formats or larger audiences create barriers to access and engagement. They also produce accessible family shows that provide opportunities for the integration of both disabled and non-disabled audiences.

For almost forty years Oily Cart have played a key role in supporting young people, demonstrating their absolute commitment to:

- Making a positive difference to the lives of disabled children and young people and their families, who are often excluded from cultural activities because of the barriers they face.
- encouraging participation in and enjoyment of cultural activity for disabled children and young people who face complex barriers to engagement, and to provide shared social experiences where families can participate together
- responding to significant demand from specialist school and family audiences where there is a serious gap in cultural provision for these audiences
- raising the public and cultural profile of these audiences and the importance of cultural provision for them

- placing the disabled child or young person as the reason for and the central focus of the work.

“Every child’s need was met. We saw reactions in some children that we hadn’t experienced before. Very emotional and very moving!” Audience feedback from Oily Cart’s ‘Splish Splash’ show

“I have taken my daughter to five different Oily Cart shows and each time I am reduced to tears. Tears of relief that a group of talented artists actually want to work with children like mine and are attuned to awakening interest and enjoyment in a wide variety of needs. In an Oily Cart show, everyone is equal. You cannot put a price on the feeling of acceptance and pride in seeing your child take part in a performance with people they haven’t met before; these are valuable skills being taught beyond just the experience of the show.” Audience member

Over the pandemic Oily Cart have taken their Doorstep Jamboree on tour across London to families with children needing to shield. Image credit: Suzi Corker.



# 6. Health & Wellbeing

2021 offers Wandsworth the opportunity to not only embed arts and culture into the emerging Local Plan and the Smart Growth Plan, but also into the new Joint Strategic Needs Assessment – the process by which the local authority and Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) assess the current and future health and care needs of the local population. Now is the time to develop a more sustained and strategic approach to utilising arts and culture to support health and wellbeing.

# Case Study: Supporting People With Neuro-Divergent Needs

**C**oDa Dance Company is a unique contemporary dance company specialising in thought-provoking outdoor and site-specific performance, participatory community work, and utilising dance as a physiotherapy tool for neuro-disabled people. CoDa has been creating work for, by, and with the local community in Wandsworth since 2013, with a specific focus on Roehampton and Putney wards.

In 2018, using funding from the Wandsworth Grant Fund, CoDa established a pilot programme at Royal Hospital for Neuro-disability (RHN) in Wandsworth. The workshops were designed to give patients, family members and carers a space to increase their physical activity, improve mood and wellbeing, and increase social interaction within the hospital. The sessions were also designed to help family members and carers gain insights into the lives of people living with neurological conditions. Three years on, the pilot programme has turned into an established programme, funded by the hospital, and delivered regularly in a number of wards and in two of the residential wards to 100+ patients a year.

Most recently, and partly in response to Covid-19, CoDa is creating work that will be able to be viewed through digital technology. They will continue to develop work that sheds light on the unique and unusual symptoms experienced by people living with neuro-disabilities. CoDa works closely with Creative Consultants who are people living with neuro-disabilities to enhance audience experiences, the stories we tell, and how they are told.

Case study: Stuart\*, who is in his 70s, fell off a ladder, sustaining a head trauma and severe brain injury. He has been a residential in-patient in Royal Hospital for Neuro-disability for a number of years, living with complex physical and cognitive disabilities that severely limit his ability to actively participate in everyday life. Stuart's severe mobility and communication issues makes it difficult for him to join in activities or interact with others. He has been taking part in CoDa's weekly dance sessions at RHN for the past 12 months, providing the gentle stimulation that Stuart needs. With the support of his wife Nora, Stuart moves his arms and hands in time with the music and makes eye contact with others. Nora initially accompanied Stuart to the sessions to support him. However, she has found them an enjoyable way to spend time with him and continues to attend each week. "It is good to see him interact with other patients on the ward and I like to see his movements." Nora also observes that Stuart likes the attention he receives from the dance leaders, and has a favourite! "I'd go mad without it [dance sessions]. They use inspiring and inventive ways to encourage everyone to take part, including myself. I've also got to meet other patients on the ward and know them by name. It's a social lifeline, not just for Stuart but also for me."

\*Names and identifying features have been changed to maintain patient anonymity



CoDa Dance deliver dance sessions for people with MS and neurological disabilities, helping them move in new ways, build strength, improve mobility, socialise and be creative, at the Royal Hospital for Neuro-disability in Roehampton. Image Credit Jonathon Vines.

# Case study: Moving Kinship

The Moving Kinship hubs have been developed by Dr Beatrice Allegranti from the University of Roehampton for people and their families affected by young onset dementia.

**T**he programme offers a combined artistic and psychological service to support these people and their families. Her research investigates the use of choreography and dance as a way of processing trauma and challenging life experiences. In stark contrast to biomedical prognoses of silence, language impairment, and individualism, Dr Allegranti's work offers something previously unknown in dementia care: through choreography, performance, and participation both the person living with young onset dementia and their family carers are able to communicate and examine the emotional and physical life-shifts that have been brought about by dementia.

The performances are followed by an opportunity for everyone to respond and reflect creatively through movement improvisation, live music, and words. The project's ethos of mutual recognition has resulted in feelings of empowerment and improved the wellbeing of the participants.

The success of the hubs has led to them becoming part of the social prescribing model currently being rolled out within London. Within Wandsworth, St George's NHS neurology unit has bought into the programme, along with Haringey and Merton Councils, Dementia Action Alliance, and Alexandra Palace.



# Case study: Wandsworth Music Community Choir

**W**andsworth Community Choir (WCC) was formed in April 2018 after demand from the many parents and carers, teachers, and Head teachers who had engaged with Wandsworth Music singing projects in schools. The choir was established by Wandsworth Music in partnership with Lifelong Learning as a community choir open to all, and is made up of people who live or work in Wandsworth. There are no auditions, no fees and no previous experience is required. Members come from all walks of life and with varying degrees of singing experience – some have sung in choirs all their lives whilst for others it is their first taste of being part of a choir.

The choir is run by a dynamic team from Wandsworth Music who facilitate a fun, safe and friendly environment in which to learn some great songs, take part in performances and enjoy the many positive mental health, social and wellbeing benefits of singing together with others.

Since its formation, WCC has taken part in a variety of events, including community events such as the Tooting Food Festival, the Furzedown Festival, and Wandsworth Music Academy Summer Fair. WCC has also taken part in Borough-wide events, such as the Lifelong Learning Annual Awards Ceremony, Winter Sounds at Fairfield Halls, and Brighter Sounds at the

Royal Festival Hall.

Over the last two-and-a-half years the choir has steadily grown in numbers and there have been 90 members on the register since the choir formed. The choir offers a space for connection, collaboration, a sense of wellbeing, and a real feel-good factor. This is evident in the feedback from members who openly share the impact that coming together and meeting once a week for a good sing has had on their mental health, wellbeing, self-confidence, and self-esteem.

Whilst the Covid-19 pandemic sadly meant an end of face to face rehearsals in March 2020, the choir have continued to meet weekly online. Although all the benefits of coming together as a singing community can never be entirely replicated online, the joy of meeting, seeing each other's faces and sharing a joint love of singing is felt every week.

WCC has continued to meet online throughout lockdown. They have recently produced their own lockdown video and participated in the virtual Wandsworth Music Winter Sounds concert in December 2020, performing alongside singers from the National Opera Studio, Wandsworth Music Academy, and schools from across Wandsworth.