



**Creative
Lives**

**Creative Citizens
Calderdale**

**2021 - 2022
Report**

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INTRODUCTION



Creative Lives is a registered charity established in 1991 (formerly known as Voluntary Arts). We champion community and volunteer-led creative activity, and work to improve opportunities for everyone to be creative.

With over 63,000 voluntary and amateur arts organisations across the UK and Ireland, the vital importance of everyday creativity for individuals and communities is continually reaffirmed: [Creative Lives Policy Statement \(June 2021\)](#).

Creative Lives' development approach has enquiry as the starting point for all activity, ensuring that a robust understanding of the existing circumstances and priorities of the groups that we work to support informs the development of initiatives and interventions at a local level:

- Establishing what support needs exist and responding to these;
- Seeking out and sharing inspiring examples and approaches;
- Championing the concerns of local groups to increase wider support.



CURRENT CONTEXT

This research was conducted on behalf of Calderdale Council between September 2021 - January 2022. It constitutes the first two phases of a process intended to better understand the current conditions for everyday creativity and culture within communities across Calderdale.

It identifies where support can be better focused to ensure that this voluntary, community-led activity is recognised alongside the formal arts offer, in ways that enable plural forms of expression to thrive across Calderdale's diverse communities.



This research was timed to coincide with the publication of Calderdale Council's new [Cultural Strategy \(2022-2032\)](#) and to reflect the wider ecosystem for creative cultural activity within localities, acknowledging regional and demographic inequalities.

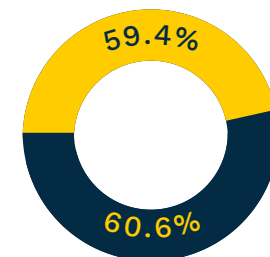
Arts engagement in the local authority area is comparable with the national picture ([Active Lives survey 2015-17](#))

- Arts participation/attendance, 59.4% (60.6% nationally, England)
- Museum/gallery attendance 47.6% (compared to 46.6% nationally)
- Library use 33.9% (compared to 35.5% nationally)
- A combined total of 75.80%

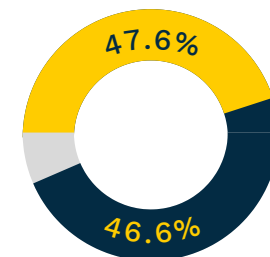
The area is not classified as an area of low engagement but has pockets with limited formal infrastructure. There is a lack of coherence in the support and knowledge about the local creative ecology within these wards, while other areas have an extensive and nationally, in some cases internationally, renowned offer. This report seeks to establish a clearer understanding of these distinctions and the provision and gaps within the local infrastructure.

● Local authority area ● National [England]
● Combined total

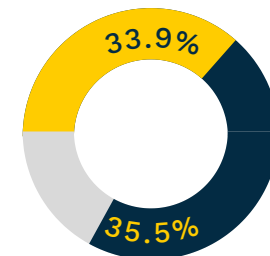
ARTS ATTENDANCE



MUSEUMS / GALLERIES ATTENDANCE



LIBRARY USE



COMBINED TOTAL

75.8%

Regional disparities in the voluntary and amateur sector were highlighted in the DCMS report 'Our Creative Talent' (DCMS, 2008). Yorkshire and Humber amateur creative groups and membership figures are some of the lowest in the country with:

- 8% share of groups (3,930 of 49,140)
- 5% share of membership (316,000 of 5,923,000)

8%

3,930 of
49,140 groups



5%

316,000
of 5,923,000
membership



This equates to only 10% of regional arts participation being through voluntary and amateur groups. By comparison this activity accounts for 25-36% South East, North East and South West (average 19% nationally).

The timing of this work was a significant factor in the process, findings and recommendations. With planning and launch during the Summer period of 2021 with limited restrictions and significant investment in recovery schemes (eg. Calderdale's [Healthy Holidays](#) HAF scheme), new activities have emerged, with the legacy still unclear. Much of the existing (pre-pandemic) public, private and third sector activity was re-adjusting gradually, with 'Plan B' notifications by mid-September, and rising Delta case numbers extending this cautious recovery.

Creative Lives' [national survey of groups and spaces](#) (Autumn 2021) indicated only 51% of groups had returned to meeting solely face-to-face during this period, with safety concerns and the continued diversion of time and resource likely to take some time to stabilise.



We need to see empty buildings made safe, so art can be at the heart of our community.

However the COVID-19 pandemic has also demonstrated the adaptability of creative citizens and groups across the UK and Europe, including:

- The rapid learning that took place (see [Learning from Lockdown](#), Creative Lives, 2021)
- The impact of this participation on individual wellbeing (see '[Community COVID: How can community assets address health inequities?](#)', UCL 2021)
- The outstanding resilience of community led creativity (two Calderdale groups, Grand Northern Ukulele Festival and Snappy Valley, were shortlisted for the [2021 Creative Lives Awards](#))



We need continuity - a place of our own that would become a hub of activity.

[Extracts from the Spaces for Creativity survey]



SCOPING PROCESS

Creative Lives is supporting Calderdale Council in mapping and developing local infrastructure that enables culture to be celebrated and creativity to flourish in all communities.

Our ‘open conversations’ research approach is responsive to the issues and priorities raised locally, to build on national research, such as [Common Ground: Rewilding the Garden \(2020\)](#), which identified three core benefits (social connectedness and community identity, fun and enjoyment, positive impacts on health and wellbeing) and requisites (space, creative citizens, recognition) for thriving community-led culture and creativity.

PHASE 1

Initial scoping and reporting headline findings happened in September 2021, to share feedback from two target communities (Park and Mixenden) in advance of the cultural strategy draft committee review.

This sought to identify and map key spaces, individuals and organisation (and scope regional infrastructure) through:

- Desk based research
- Visits and street interviews (Park and Mixenden wards)
- Interviews with leads of existing mapping, network and development projects
- Enquiries with local spaces and infrastructure organisations

This provided an initial understanding of the existing offer and local perception of arts, culture and creativity, in terms of the scope of community-led activity and professional roles within this:

- What is going on regionally and in local communities: What is available? What is supported? What is valued? By whom? (location and characteristics)

Deliverables

Headline summary of community creativity.

PHASE 2

Following the committee (4 October), phase two sought to widen engagement and deepen understanding of local development and support needs to assess what interventions and approaches could respond to these.

- Remote engagement with existing sector partners (arts/culture, education, health, voluntary)
- Network meetings and site visits (Calder Valley)
- Interviews with community groups and organisations

This continued to build connections at community level (plotted using the Creativity Map) and use the open conversations model to build understanding of target localities to compare needs and support, including:

- What obstacles and enablers exist for communities
- What would support the needs of the different areas
- What would support greater connection and when/how is this appropriate

Deliverables

Public mapping of grassroots creative ecology.
Draft report with analysis and recommendations

PHASE 3

A community consultation focus with local connections will gather feedback directly from community members in areas with resource gaps and significant obstacles. Information gathered during the research will be shared to assess access and relevance.

- Planning to facilitate exchange between sites (while supporting necessary variety across community and regional networks)
- Developing public communications

Deliverables

Full public report shared with cultural leads' steering group in West Yorkshire.
Recommendations and community offer based on needs identified

Further community consultation focussed on the development of initiatives addressing recommendations via local connections. Feedback community members in areas with resource gaps and significant obstacles will contribute directly to tangible local activities and outcomes that:

- Facilitate exchange between sites (while supporting necessary variety across community and regional networks)
- Develop and enhance public communications

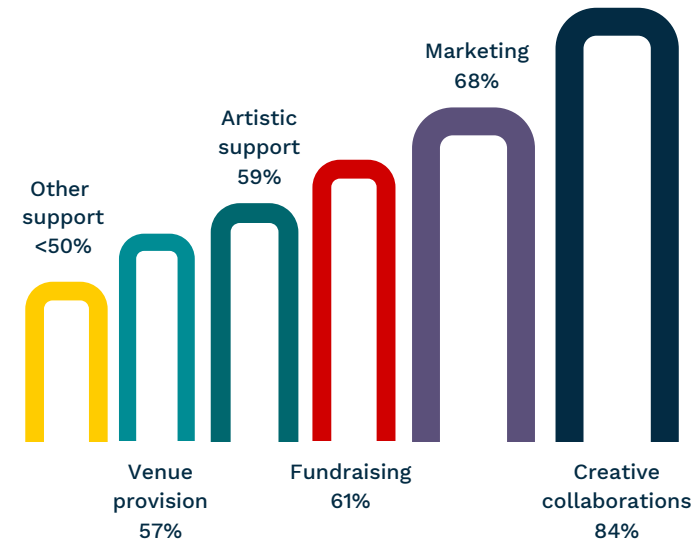
DEFINING THE ARTS, CULTURAL AND CREATIVE ECOLOGY IN CALDERDALE

The development and sustainability of the supportive ecosystem is the focus of Creative Lives' ongoing research, development and advocacy work.

The move towards Cultural Democracy (see eg. [King's College London, 2017](#)) and everyday creativity demands that we look beyond the traditional taxonomies of 'the arts' to allow for more diverse, inclusive and integrated expressions of culture and creativity within communities.

This can make it hard to find a common language or understanding and set clear parameters - but also raises the question of what relevance these hold and whose interests they serve. Therefore the terms and descriptions we use are broad and porous, seeking to represent a diversity of practices and approaches and identify common themes and concerns.

For instance, in a recent Creative Lives survey of local creative groups, specific areas of support that the formal sector could offer indicated that 'Creative collaborations' (84%) and 'artistic support' (59%) were consistently valued, alongside practical support such as marketing (68%), fundraising (61%), venue provision (57%) and other forms of support (<50%).



Community groups also recognised reciprocal benefits, offering the formal sector support with*:

**community
engagement**

91%

local knowledge

77%

**pathways for
emerging/early
career artists**

57%

Creativity and culture are expressed and encountered in broad and varied ways - in our environments, our food, our beliefs, histories and communal and solitary pursuits, with direct and indirect support from a wide range of infrastructure.

*Source: Creative Lives survey conducted September 2021 (50 respondents from UK and Ireland)

The formal arts and cultural sector:

Larger public institutions ([The Piece Hall](#), [Victoria Theatre](#)) and independent venues in the centre of Halifax ([Square Chapel](#), [Orange Box](#)) play a variety of roles in supporting local creativity, alongside venues hosting a variety of art-form groups and non-venue based organisations across the borough.

[Calderdale Creates](#) /@CalderCreates, network for cultural organisations, replaced Professional Arts Network Calderdale, with a wider and more inclusive vision. Coupled with the community focus within [Calderdale Cultural Strategy 2022- 2032](#).

These developments provide opportunities for all areas of the sector to be valued and represented if the level and type of engagement appropriate for meaningful involvement of voluntary and amateur groups can be achieved.

Formal education sector:

Schools and colleges play an integral role in community fabric and can encourage access, skills, space and resources. The redevelopment of the [Local Cultural Education Partnership](#) (overseen regionally by [IVE](#)), seeks to build and formalise stronger connections and understanding between the arts, culture and education sectors, to widen access and opportunities for young people. There is scope for those involved to support wider community/life-long creative learning opportunities by providing facilitation and resources.

Formal health and social care sector:

Calderdale's health and social care has a history of engagement with arts and culture for wellbeing and recovery, With [Creative Minds](#) (South West Yorkshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, SWYPFT) established in 2011 and the council led, [Staying Well](#) scheme initiated in 2014.

Since national adoption of social prescribing in 2019, Calderdale is currently delivering a [Thriving Communities](#) project to support development of the Arts and Health network and is one of the new [National Centre for Creative Health Hubs](#).

Local public health consultation during the pandemic included feedback about the value of creative activities for adult and child mental health, while highlighting the challenge of voluntary services being overwhelmed by responding to the crisis and immediate needs, capturing testimony from Park residents:

“creativity is positivity”

creativity
across generations through
the Creativity Club was
mutually beneficial

In North Halifax, the natural assets were also cited for their health benefits.**

Other organisations with a Calderdale wide health remit that bridges social and cultural dimension include:

- [Disability Partnership Calderdale](#);
- [Healthy Minds, Calderdale Cares for Us \(and database development\)](#).

****Source: Arts and Health Inequalities Insight Report Final (North and Central Halifax, ICR 2020); <https://communityreporter.net/story/creativity-lockdown-monday-december-7-2020-2244>**

Voluntary sector support infrastructure:

There are a number of established service providers working and connecting across Calderdale that bridge sectors and needs.

The Voluntary Services Infrastructure Alliance includes six members:

- [Voluntary & Community \(VAC\)](#) - NHS/CCG service user voice
- [North Bank Forum \(NBF\)](#) - Organisation and community development
- [West Yorkshire Community Accounting Service \(WYCAS\)](#) - offering financial advice and support
- [Locality](#) - national membership organisation supporting local initiatives
- [Calderdale Clinical Commissioning Group](#) - consortium of 23 GPs
- [Calderdale Council](#) - funding partner

The Voluntary and Community Sector team at Calderdale Council oversee policy and funding, partnership building /networks and strategic pilots, eg. Inclusive Economy. The team support local commissioning (including creative and cultural activities) via [Staying Well](#) (hosted by local anchors at [North Halifax Partnership](#), [Halifax Opportunities Trust](#), [Hebden Bridge Community Association](#)) and directly funding a small number of arts organisations to support delivery of strategic objectives over three years ([Hebden Bridge Arts Festival](#), [Handmade Parade](#), [Square Chapel](#), [IOU Theatre](#), 2019-2022) with a focus on outreach, participation and cultural volunteering.

VSI
ALLIANCE

Calderdale
Council

M A C VOLUNTARY
& COMMUNITY

forum

NHS
Calderdale
Clinical Commissioning Group

locality
the power of community

W
COMMUNITY
ACCOUNTING
A
S

Other organisations with a Calderdale-wide voluntary remit that bridges social and cultural dimension include: [Community Foundation For Calderdale](#) - grant and support giving.

Community organisations:

Diverse religious, political, interest and support groups and organisations operate in communities, hosting, instigating and enabling diverse activities that incorporate culture and creativity.

Business and industry:

Both the small, localised and large scale, multinational businesses with local presence can assert a significant cultural influence on people and place, including but not limited to the informal support and sponsorship or more formalised activities of [Rotary Clubs](#) and [Local Enterprise Partnerships](#).

Strategic and Infrastructural Consultation and Development

Other developments with community consultation and a role in defining Calderdale's collective cultural landscape include:

- [Vision 2024](#) - Setting objectives for 50th anniversary and Year of Culture.
- [Calderdale Next Chapter](#) - includes crucial civic engineering plans regarding physical and environmental developments in Calderdale.

Community Asset Mapping projects are also underway:

- A directory of services, led by [Healthy Minds](#) on behalf of Calderdale Collaborative Community Partnership Board (3CPB, formerly Care Closer to Home CC2H, eight partners: Calderdale and Huddersfield Foundation Trust, SWYPFT, 5 PCTs, Calderdale Council, VAC, Calderdale CCG, Locala, West Yorkshire Pharmacy) to consolidate existing mapping and support greater integration and sharing and improve public awareness;
- [Calderdale's Culture Map](#), of the people, places and organisations that make up the sector, part of the Thriving Communities developments (led by [Artworks](#)).

Funding and support

Funding from the voluntary and communities sector is available at a variety of levels to support varying objectives:

Those [administered by the council](#), vary to reflect differing strategies and agendas, with some recurring themes (eg. [Stronger Neighbourhoods Grants](#) 2020-2021).

Centralised one off:

- [Community Small grants](#), <£3000 aligned to Vision 24 objectives, Strong and Resilient Town, Reducing Inequalities, Tackling the Climate Emergency
- [Calderdale Cultural Fund](#) 2022-2025 £5-25,000, £-year, multi-annual
- [Community Foundation for Calderdale](#) administered eg. #LetsCreate Jubilee Fund

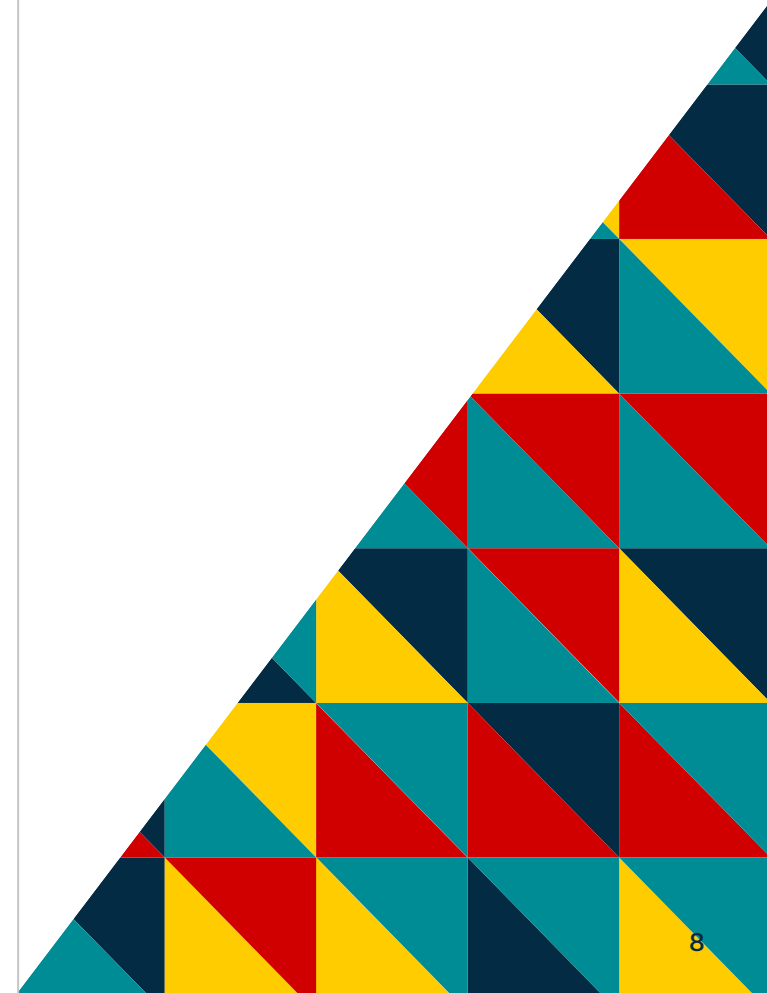
Localised streams

Microgrant level funding (£300-500).

Available via:

- [Ward Forum grants](#)
- Town and Parish Council giving varies by scale, with [Todmorden](#) and [Hebdenroyd](#) offering the most consistent offer
- [Staying Well](#) (varied central sources inc. Active Calderdale/Sports England, distributed through Upper Valley, Central and North Halifax, Lower Valley local commissioning process)

While locally funded and commissioned projects addressing health, community development and other agendas often have a creative dimension, the current lack of central records and monitoring data to identify and communicate these consistently prevent accurate figures being presented and the use of this information to inform strategic spending.





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2021 - 2022

Report



Mapping Assets

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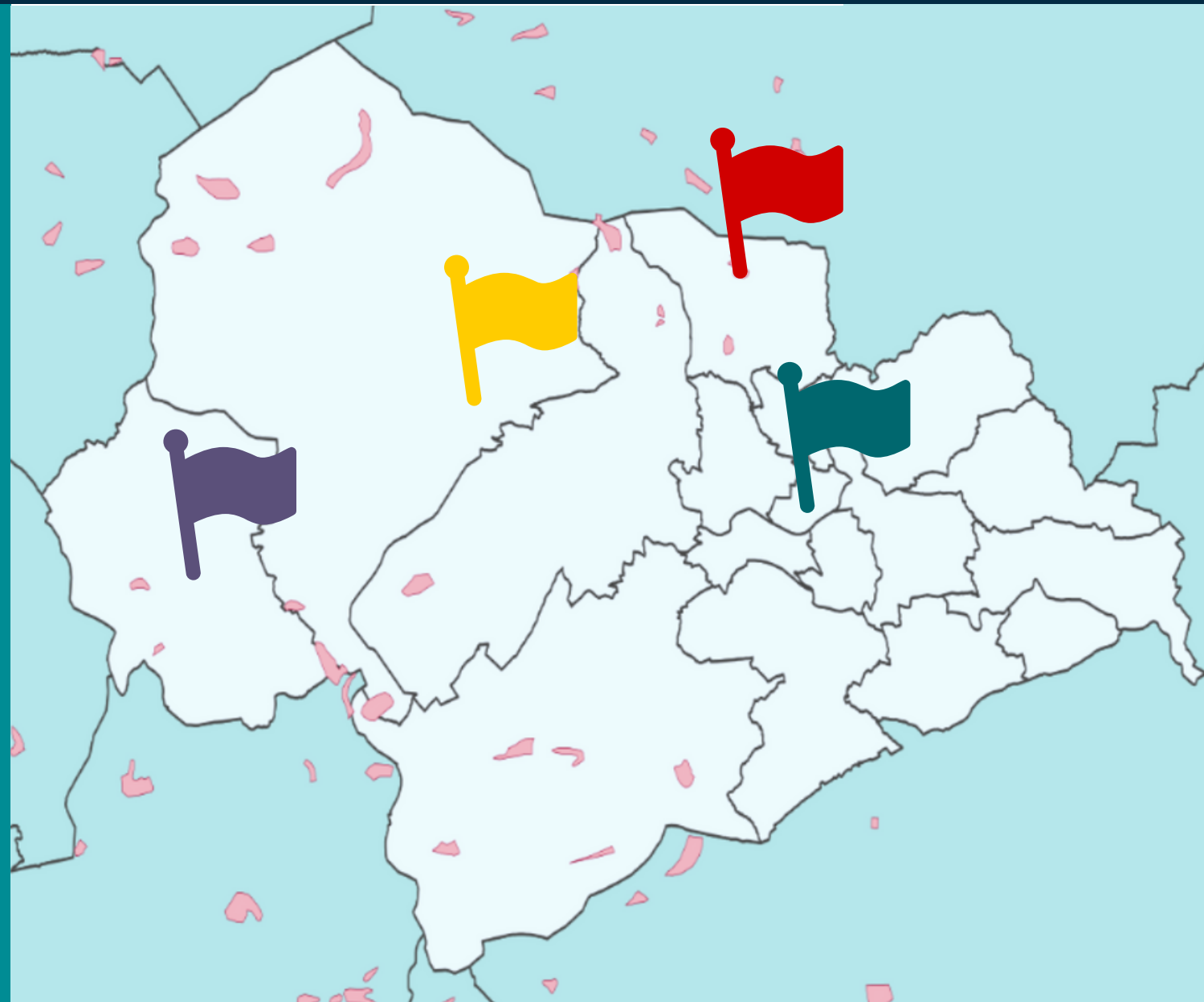
The scoping reviews the Common Ground - Rewilding the Garden (Creative Lives 2020) requisites of space, creative citizens and recognition and captures other factors observed in the 'self-cultivating culture' in Calderdale communities.

Localised scoping activity focussed on two areas with limited engagement with and/or visibility of arts and culture in Halifax, despite proximity to the centre:

- Mixenden
- Park

This was complemented with scoping in two areas with a reputation for active community, voluntary and amateur arts:

- Hebden Bridge
- Todmorden



Teal Park ward (Kings Cross and Pellon) 11

Yellow Hebden Bridge, Calder ward 24

Red Mixenden, Mixenden and Illingworth ward 20

Purple Todmorden town and ward

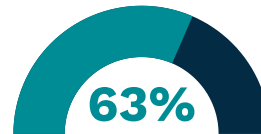


PARK WARD

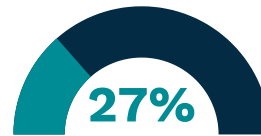
(Kings Cross and Pellon)

Park ward is adjacent to the town centre and contains many regional assets, including the offices of several of the voluntary service bodies operating across the region.

The smallest of the wards, of traditional stone terrace and semi-detached housing, with a resident population of 16,371 (7.74% Calderdale in 2020), 63% are aged 16-64, 27% under 16 and 9% over 65.



residents aged 16-64



residents aged under 16



residents aged over 65

- 65% of residents were born in UK
- 68% Asian/Asian British heritage
- 28% White ethnicity
- 65% Muslim (5% England / 7.5% Calderdale)
- 18% Christian (58% England / 57% Calderdale)
- 8% No religion (25% England / 28% Calderdale - 'other' comparable with av.)

Education levels differ from England and Calderdale average (consistent by 2.5 percent margins) significantly:

- No qualification: 37% (24% Calderdale)
- Level 4 (graduate equivalent): 12.5% (25% Calderdale)

Employment also from differ England and Calderdale averages in specific occupation areas;

- Elementary: 17% (10% Calderdale)
- Process, Plant, Machine Operative 19% (9% Calderdale)
- Sales and Customer Services 12% (7% Calderdale)
- Associate professional and technical: 7.5% (12.5% Calderdale)
- Professional: 10% (17% Calderdale)
- Managers, directors and senior officials: 6% (11% Calderdale)

SPACES

The area is densely populated with residential terrace/semi-detached housing and a diverse mix of heritage affluence (eg. Crossley House' Grade II* Mansion), People's Park, alongside, historic 'works' and warehouses (many used for garage/motor, fabrication, showrooms, office conversion. c. 50% in use or 'to let', while other sites remain boarded). Significant numbers of schools, places of worship and community venues and organisations (many of which include arts offers as part of their wider program).

There's a wide variety of arts and cultural (2), public (2), educational (11), community (23) and business premises within the ward (see appendix 1). While The library and community garden are the only spaces with a more direct 'arts/cultural' focus, community venues such as Hanson Lane Enterprise Centre, includes a community room designed by the public (paintings on the walls and colour scheme) and host knitting groups alongside other user groups.

King Cross Library will be the pilot [Library of Sanctuary](#) site in Calderdale, which will reinvigorate some of the links with library users. Park is also home to West Yorkshire Police Station and Probation centre.

PERIPHERY

Within 500m of the ward are a number of organisations that can be accessed on foot.

- [Dean Clough](#) (NE)
- [51st Scout Group](#) (NE)
- [Halifax Playhouse](#) (E)
- [Fire Station with Community Room/Bike](#)
- [Library](#) (SW)
- [The Fountain Head Inn Community Pub](#) (NW)
- [The Gathering Place](#) (E)

CREATIVE CITIZENS

There is a wide range of charitable enterprise within the ward, supporting causes and direct action locally and globally (as well as the venue based support organisations listed in the table) self organising and voluntary groups include [Sisters United](#), [UC3/Unique](#), [Calderdale British Muslim Association](#), [Growing Together](#).

This activity is more community oriented than arts focussed, with a number of external arts organisations working in partnership with local groups and organisations to deliver specific projects. However some groups, such as [Light Up BAHC](#) highlight the broader cultural focus within their community work.

While groups with a community support focus were active, some of the regular creative groups (eg. library users) had not yet returned.

There is a strong need for, and clear sense of, collaboration and partnership, with so many groups and organisations operating locally and the necessity to adapt and respond to varied needs within the community, that may require different approaches and languages than those that are centrally prescribed.



Staying Well (hosted at HOP, Hanson Lane Enterprise Centre) offers arts alongside other activities, to address loneliness and isolation, but through these relationships, identify and address other issues and find effective ways of working.

Farrakh Hafiz, Staying Well & PBSA Coordinator, shared how this process works in Park:

"It started getting really big, bigger than we thought.... A lot of that success came from being co-produced with the participants that were coming in joining us... We use those activities to have those discussions..."



Staying Well direct referred and self-referred individuals to relevant activities, so are familiar with the initial reticence and uncertainty that can be encountered:

"If people don't have an understanding of it, they'll just be quite ignorant towards all of it. You know, it's just like, that's not for me, that's not for me. And that's, I think, the real challenge. Loose that mindset.

"I think that's why the micro-commissioning works really well. Because we can manage it. We know the local groups, attend the groups. And what you find is you won't get the usual suspects turning up all the time, you know, it's new people. And that's what you want to see..."

"Because it's not just about that one individual that loves coming to all the groups, it's about that other person that wouldn't usually go to a group, and now he's enjoying it. And I think it just comes down to that education side, people's understanding of what all these things are and why it is beneficial to me."

Staying Well administers the commissioning of local activity, with funding decisions made by panel members that live in the community, involved in a voluntary capacity, 'experts within their own areas'. Funding over 30 projects with grants of £300-500:

"But it's amazing, these community groups, absolutely amazing how they can make 500 pounds stretch, so far, it's unbelievable. They really know what they're doing."

The relationships built through this work also identifies community concerns.

"So it can become a little bit more real..."

For example, 50% of one group had diabetes, resulting in training with Diabetes UK. However this information wasn't culturally appropriate, with generic examples based on a traditional British diet and unsuitable for people whose first language isn't English and the support network was able to adapt this and feedback.

Other examples given, were the consultation surveys that cannot be shared with someone who's digitally excluded or faces language barriers (not only for level one learners, but also more advanced learners dealing with new 'professional' terminology):



"So you find yourself having to speak in a completely different language, to what you're reading off of, what you're seeing on a form. And that's what's worked well for us. We've been able to do that."

Artists' roles working with community groups can bridge cultural and communication barriers. Espresso Arts worked with St. Augustines to produce a cultural cooking book. Some projects using the microgrant to pay for tutors became sustainable; with participants that were able to pay a few pounds or tutors continuing the relationship on a voluntary basis.

"Someone passionate about doing something may not know what to do, and how to do it.... arts and culture, I think, is really therapeutic. I think it's really good for people's mental well being. But there's not enough of it. In my opinion, I think there could be more..."

"If we start at the grassroots as to what the community might want, I think there might be a different kind of take on what would benefit the community. And I think we're starting to see that a little bit."

RECOGNITION

The impact of Covid has been significant, with more focussed crisis support leaving little capacity for additional offers from community organisations.

"Pre-Covid children and families had a creative offer, since Covid we've not been able to offer that.... At the moment I don't think it would benefit because of the extremity of need for shelter etc., but once in a better place that could change. I know that there are people in our 24 hour shelter that are artistic and crying out for books. One gent enjoys drawing and would love access to materials."

The Gathering Place

Initial street interviews reflected the wider view of local culture and heritage, with activity for children being the main arts offer referenced (through organisations such as the Himmat) and feedback that a diversified sports offer was more in demand locally. [group of three males volunteering at mosque]

Despite proximity to Halifax centre, all interviewed said they rarely visited:

"We do lots, get about' - giving local parks as an examples, and visiting Bradford rather than Halifax centre 'more to do, museums and that."

There was greater interest and recognition of local community and history - Halifax Gibbet, 'where they chopped off people's heads. [two teenage males]

"I've just been down there taking photos."
[male, 70s, retired]

The area was widely referenced as a site for creative interventions:

"People usually don't recognise maps of deprivation. If you live in Park or Mixenden for example it's just where you live. Conversations about our communities are too often really deficit based - we tend to focus on the negative issues and forget that for people who live there it is home. Also places like this don't get featured much in our marketing for Calderdale but there is a huge amount we could be celebrating about culture and diversity, about distinctiveness and about kindness and resilience here."

Vicky McGhee, lead for inclusive economy, Calderdale Council

Calderdale College, have a commitment with the Voluntary and Community Sector team to support an annual event for the local community

Dean Clough and it's inhabitants Annapurna Dance, Phoenix Radio, Northern Broadsides.

"Calderdale is home but historically we haven't worked with the community here, that changed with Quality Street – when we worked with Creation Squads (workers from the factory to help in rehearsals, feedback as a sounding board to help develop the play) ... We're part of the 'Of By For All' network, learning how to work with your community of interest to make inroads and build relationships, and learn to ask what they want from you.

"The company is half way through this year long process, including board members who are part of the regular fortnightly meeting. Laurie and Shabina are running a writing course at St. Augustines, following up from our work with them in 2019, when we worked with two people seeking asylum, a local folk musician from Ripponden and two actors to create Christmas Broadsides performed at the Viaduct Theatre Dean Clough.

"A big community project with the starting point being the work of Ted Hughes Iron Man/Woman, to explore sustainability, pollution and the environment. Needs to be a collective conversation... Artists at Dean Clough and throughout Calderdale with outreach at schools, piloting with schools in Mytholmroyd... I hope to align with year of Culture 2024."

Kay Packwood,
Northern Broadsides

"Community Foundation For Calderdale supports arts project and provides a lot of grants... There's lots of pressure, food and fuel poverty which is where a lot of the fire power goes."

Rob Billson,
**Community Foundation
for Calderdale**



Socially engaged artists moving to the area 20 years ago, note the absence of this work (relative to places like Liverpool, even neighbouring Huddersfield, Kirklees, where voices such as Phil Wood's, were influencing change within the council).

"There wasn't any of that work. Nobody really understood that you could use the arts..."

Jeff Turner, verd de gris

As independent artists at that stage, Sharon Marsden and Jeff Turner found connections with the voluntary sector:

"The Women's Centre, for example, you could develop creative arts projects that could explore areas around self expression.. wellbeing wasn't a phrase back then... articulating some of the issues that they live with. And then both in their own personal journey... but also in sharing that with a wider audience. That's what the arts are great for."

These artists operate in the complex terrain between professional expertise, voluntary arts and the voluntary sector, playing a significant developmental role that identifies and addresses social issues, working collaboratively with a variety of groups to explore and address these.





For instance, the enclosed neighbouring South Asian and White British communities:

"Nobody [was] doing any work to bring those groups together. So we did. And if you look at the work that was done, just within that year, was all around community cohesion, emotional resilience and wellbeing support.... And they were not being engaged through creativity, and not having a wider discussion with the rest of the community, which is at the heart of the work that we do."

Over the past 15 years, 51 projects ranging from 6 months to 10 years have been supported, working with a wide range of individuals, groups and agencies. Often the content emerges organically as a result of these links:

"Mary Brooks and Sameena Hussain, they both had stories about their fathers. So when we wrote down what we were going to do as part of a Reaching Communities application, we didn't know... and a lot to me is brilliant about that."

"They just picked upon the themes because of the work that we've done in the past, the quality of work and the quality of engagement."



Jeff notes that Sameena (who has worked extensively at Leeds Playhouse, Laurence Batley Theatre, The Vic) could not get work and recognition in Halifax, where she lives.

"As part of our TNL Reaching Communities partnership with Square Chapel Arts Centre, we developed a piece called 'Out of the Blue' drawing on the experience of asylum seekers - to educate and inspire local people about their plight."

"These people and their families came down to Square Chapel - for some, the first time they've been in a theatre in their lives. And that's what we try to do... but there is little infrastructure to show that work and broadcast that work... for example, no real accessible gallery spaces."

"There's no really good public spaces to have community conversations, which is what we like to do. You're working within a context of topography, very separate identities in very separate towns."





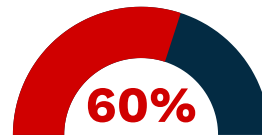
MIXENDEN

Mixenden and Illingworth ward

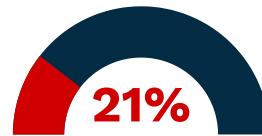
Mixenden's topography creates a level of isolation from the wider metropolitan area despite its relative proximity (3 miles from Halifax centre). The local authority ward is coupled with the adjacent Illingworth.

Mixenden's high density residential housing (mid-late 20c high-rise and semi-detached housing) is set in a semi-rural landscape.

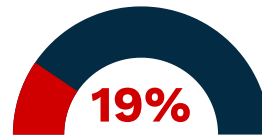
The ward has a resident population of 12,805 (2020), 60% are aged 16-64, 21% under 16 and 19% over 65.



residents aged 16-64



residents aged under 16



residents aged over 65

- 94% of residents were born in UK
- 98% White ethnicity
- 63% Christian (58% England / 57% Calderdale)
- 29% No religion (25% England / 28% Calderdale)
- 0.3% Muslim (5% England / 7.5% Calderdale - 'other' comparable with av.)

Education levels differ from England and Calderdale average (consistent by 2.5 percent margins) significantly:

- No qualification: 30% (24% Calderdale)
- Level 4 (graduate equivalent): 15% (25% Calderdale)

Employment across the ward are similar to England and Calderdale averages, differing marginally in specific occupation areas;

- Elementary: 13% (10% Calderdale)
- Process, Plant, Machine Operative 11% (9% Calderdale)
- Sales and Customer Services 9% (7% Calderdale)
- Associate professional and technical: 10% (12.5% Calderdale)
- Professional: 10% (17% Calderdale)
- Managers, directors and senior officials: 9% (11% Calderdale)

IMD 2011: There is a clear split between LSOAs in Mixenden and those in Illingworth. 3 of 4 Mixenden LSOAs are in 10% most deprived (Calderdale 002B-C)

SPACES

Given the densely populated area, public spaces are limited within Mixenden, with visibly closed facilities in the heart of the ward, the old library building and health centre are sealed and Mixenden Activity Centre, formerly providing access to the open space and reservoir for activities, is currently a temporary library site and in use by the probationary services.

Despite proximity to outdoor sites, consultation reflected a sense that local facilities were closed off or inaccessible to members of the community. Some of this is a result of community assets falling victim to arson attacks (Library 2020, Ash Green School, 2022), or closure due to financing: Mixenden Activity Centre/Library (restricted), [Mixenden Parents Resource centre](#).

The mapping (appendix 2), demonstrates this mix of unique natural resources and businesses alongside limited arts and cultural, public and community provision.

While schools (Ash Green) and local churches (Mount Zion's heritage focus, sun dial, organ, garden, ceramic collection, historical costume) were mentioned for their wider cultural engagement with the community.

PERIPHERY

Some facilities on the border have prohibitive costs, serving more affluent or neighbouring community members, or external markets:

- [Forest Cottage Community Centre](#) (South)
- [Moorlands Inn](#) (North West)
- [Cross Roads Inn](#) (North East)
- [Meadow View Stables](#) (North)
- [Ogden Water / Ogden Methodist Church](#) (North)

Community facilities within this proximity have also been closed:

- [Threeways](#) (a former CAT closed shortly before the pandemic)

CREATIVE CITIZENS

There is an active community of people that want to do things and support the local community, described as “Families helping families” and “Community coming together”. (Natalie, volunteer led [Halifax Homeless and Community Kitchen](#), which runs with business sponsorship, surplus and via informal networks). Many of these work together to cover the wider North Halifax area (the wards of Illingworth and Mixenden, Warley, Ovenden, such as [Fountain Head Community Pub](#)).

While not arts focussed, these groups highlight opportunities for local people that are inclusive of cultural exchange and entertainment, referencing the diverse culture of Calderdale and opportunities for different groups to come together in neutral spaces such as parks, for key events, that could be run in collaboration, with members of all groups willing to volunteer to support integration and widen opportunities.

A number of key groups and figures were highlighted in Mixenden, emphasising the role of the local churches in the social and cultural fabric of the area, including: Mungo Shepherd, Head Teacher at Ash Green school

- Robb Sutherland, Rev. Holy Nativity Church
- Paul Welsh, Rev. Mount Zion Methodist Church

As well as the parents and parishioners that support groups, weaving, restoration, gardening. Independent groups such as the [Mixy Marchers](#) have also been established by local residents.



RECOGNITION

There were examples of successful cultural events and partnerships happening over the years including LightUp BAHC collaboration with Halifax Homeless and Community Kitchen (offering themed food, costume, music during one of the regular service days) and FLY! Kite Festival in Mixenden (a year long project in 2018 led by Handmade Parade, with support from Pennine Prospects and Yorkshire Water), which culminated in a day event flying the kite's people created.

The appetite for more opportunities for the community to get together in creative and celebratory ways, with funding to support collaborative planning of these specific initiatives, is evident. However investment and infrastructure to boost and enable members of the community to shape and sustain these is also crucial.



Craig Watson, Staying Well, hosted by North Halifax Partnership, shared links and challenges in Mixenden:

"There's very little, there is a Children's Centre, the outdoor education centre... it's a temporary library, so you've got the aspects I suppose."

Planning for a new community centre or community hub has been going on for 15 years. Progress on plans have been made but it's not going to open for several years:

"There's a lot of dissolution in that in the Mixenden area in particular. So I think in terms of anything, art or cultural or whatever, anything around Mixenden will be very valuable... In the whole of the area, we've got a massive shortage."

Pockets of activity, from the groups and creative citizens referenced were noted by Craig, some of whom have accessed Staying Well microgrants, to boost arts and heritage focussed activities within their groups, or supported the commissioning process, however access and recognition for the wider population suffers because of the lack of infrastructure.

The team have also supported local Thriving Communities consultation:

"I did a workshop with Men United at the rugby club... 19 people around what is art and culture to them..."

"So it's quite interesting to start off with graffiti on toilet walls... they recognise the museum's, they mentioned the Piece Hall, they mentioned, Kate Lycett came up quite a lot, which is quite interesting. These are all men's men and then they mentioned how amazing Kate Lycett is... And then we mentioned cultural aspects around sport, what it means to them about identity and community and that sort of thing."

Despite the lack of community infrastructure in Mixenden he encounters a wide range of individuals that have been active in the arts in the surrounding area, retired Shakespearean actors, amateur poets whose words are turned to songs:

"There are people out there, it's just really private, and it's getting the info out. But it makes things harder to crack."



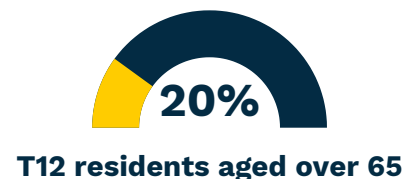
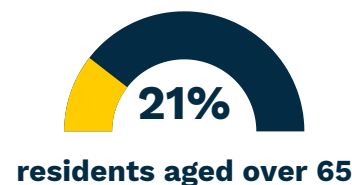
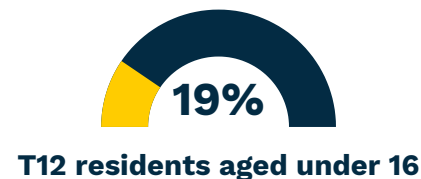
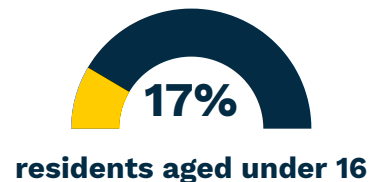
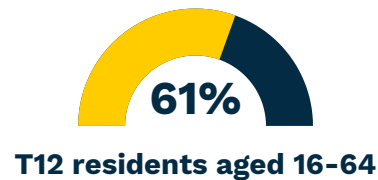
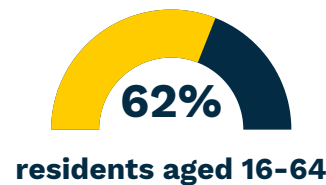
HEBDEN BRIDGE

Calder ward

The largest ward by geographical area, in the rural west of the borough. The town of Hebden Bridge is in the East, bordering Luddenfoot and part of Hebden Royd Town Council, which bridges the two wards, while the North of the ward is split into the smaller Parish Councils of (from North to South) Wadsworth, Heptonstall, Blackshaw, Erringden.

Calder valley has a distinctive topography and outlier community characteristics.

The ward has a resident population of 12,065 (2020), 62% are aged 16-64, 17% under 16 and 21% over 65. / T12,414 (2020), 61% are aged 16-64, 19% under 16 and 20% over 65.



- 93% of residents were born in UK
- 97/5% White ethnicity
- 1.6% Mixed/multiple ethnic groups
- 50% Christian (58% England / 57% Calderdale)
- 42% No religion (25% England / 28% Calderdale)
- 0.5% Muslim (5% England / 7.5% Calderdale - 'other' comparable with av.)

Education levels differ from England and Calderdale averages (consistent by 2.5 percent margins) significantly:

- No qualification: 16% (24% Calderdale)
- Level 4 (graduate equivalent): 45% (25% Calderdale)

Employment across the ward is similarly weighted significantly to the professional/managerial roles:

- Elementary: 6% (10% Calderdale)
- Process, Plant, Machine Operative 4% (9% Calderdale)
- Sales and Customer Services 5% (7% Calderdale)
- Associate professional and technical: 15% (12.5% Calderdale)
- Professional: 25% (17% Calderdale)
- Managers, directors and senior officials: 13% (11% Calderdale)

IMD 2011: Calder is predominantly in 50 least deprived, with only East Todmorden (Calderdale 022D/C) 30% and Hebden Bridge Centre/West (Calderdale 004F) at 38% percentile of most deprivation.

SPACES

Focussing on Hebden Bridge, the environment as a whole is creatively and economically active, with a thriving scene of smaller, independent arts organisations and strong local identity around alternative, often creative approaches (eg. Steiner and homeschooling networks). The mapping examples (see appendix 3), including ten specifically arts and cultural community spaces and rich natural assets are indicative rather than exhaustive, and more focussed on art and culture specific examples and larger networks.

The same turn-over and challenges of space occur (eg. Linden Mill owners taking it back from arts use for redevelopment) but the range of options and local investment in the areas' social and cultural capital (and critical mass) offer a degree of resilience, enabling existing activity to regroup and new activity to emerge.

"The club is owned and run.. 1300 members for the local community..."

"There's a homemade group that meets and there's a guitar group which has about 25 people... An open mic night, writers group... We also do a lot of fundraisers for the local college, local food banks, with St. Augustine's... We started collecting our smartphones. And that's going amazingly, as well as raising money. So it's quite a wide range of how we use this space."

"Quite a lot of different groups and organisations use different spaces in the town in the valley. It's difficult because people don't people don't always come forward and say what they need so you're kind of responding, to keep your ear to the ground... Town does have quite a lot of space."

Mal Cambell, The Trades Club

"In a normal year we would normally report that we have something like 40 to 50 regular users and about 100 other ad hoc bookings during the course of a year. And we're not going to be operating at that level for a little while yet... we're not the only venue in the Upper Valley, of course, there are plenty of other places where activity takes place..."

"We had an appreciation and understanding of what the pre-COVID landscape was like. And what's still not really clear is how much of that stuff is gone forever? How much is going to come back? How much is going to come back in a different way?"

Graham Mynott, Hebden Bridge Community Association



CREATIVE CITIZENS

Several of the participatory creative organisations that work in other wards are based in Hebden Bridge alongside a thriving amateur scene, with groups gathering in all the usual community spaces as well as workshops and studios and collectively run spaces such as the Trades Club and Little Theatre - and a multitude of festivals reflecting a range of cultural interests, including piano, jazz, cinema, books, real ale, combined arts, dance, folk roots, burlesque, pride etc.

"The company itself is basically a collective of artists who came together once to do something because somebody had a brilliant idea. Everything we do is community focused... It is all about meeting the needs of the community."

"And when I say community, so our work is participatory... Workshops and activities and making opportunities where anyone in the local community who has participated in one of those is welcome to come and bring whatever it is they've made to be part of that..."

"They get that thrill of seeing their own work, learning a new skill, learning about cooperation, and then going on to show it."

Elaine Price, Handmade Parade

"Our project called OPEN SPACE that's all about opening up people's personal spaces - barns, gardens, boats etc - and public spaces, to host, exhibit or, with the support of a partner artist, creating something new."

"We're currently working with six community groups making a project called LANDMARKS. One element of this - 'Crossings' is for the public and is in partnership with local walking groups and CROWS, an organisation of volunteers who do a lot of work on footpaths, stiles and other rights of way and passage across the land. We're making a photography project that's all about getting people walking and noticing the environment. The photos will then form part of a large exhibition, with guided walks with artists' activities on route."

"For the future we're planning to create a much larger scale community based public event every few years. That might be a large piece of outdoor theatre that takes the audience on a promenade journey through a town with a couple of 100 community members involved in creating it working alongside some professional artists..."

"So we're turning on its head the idea of how are we working with professional artist so that rather than the old festival model of bringing in artist to, say, do a one off gig, the artists are much more embedded in a relationship that is developmental and is a genuine partnership with 'ordinary' - to put it in inverted commas - people."

**Amanda Dalton,
Hebden Bridge Arts Festival**



Fiona Patterson, Inter-Arts works with local artists on a voluntary basis, building up approaches to support artists with more complex needs to create and present work, providing a forum for their mutual development 'within the structure of a festival and theme to guide creation', building trust so that these artists can be and feel 'held' and mentored if they're going through a lot and ensuring that they can achieve the level of work they desire, with the energy they have...

Before COVID-19 the group had performed at The Trades Club as part of International Women's Day and an arts club is now planned at Hope Baptist Chapel.

"We have an amazing community in Hebden Bridge that's engaged with creativity and the arts and engaged with finding better solutions, alternative solutions, whether that be in the creative sector, or in food or in enterprise. It's an area that takes pride in supporting its independent businesses and taking pride in our local artists."

"When we started Handmade Parade, we wanted it to be a creative masquerade. We're not asking people to march with their signs with their organisations, there's no words, no signs, no logos allowed. So you decide to make something based on the theme of the parade, and it's all handmade and people-powered. We didn't know what the turnout would be. But from the first year we had 300 people coming and grew to about 800 costumed participants—not bad for a town of 5000."

"It works really well because it's an opportunity to work with other local artists contributing to something that's an exciting gathering for the community. It gives you a sense of occasion to display your creative, most generous self... It has room for people who have a high level of skill and there's also a place for people who just want to help and hold something or, or help make and perform something that somebody else has designed."

**Andrew Kim, Artistic Director,
Thingumajig Theatre and Founder and
former Director of Handmade Parade**

"The upper valley is really full of creative activity. And, you know, probably far more than other parts of Calderdale. I think it's really difficult to say there's a gap of any sort in the Upper Valley, because as soon as there is a gap, somebody creates something to fill it really, and you get caught in the stampede..."

"We're not short of people who want to do stuff. And it's more about actually trying to make sure that you don't get two lots of the same thing happening. Rather than creating something new."

**Graham Mynott, Hebden Bridge
Community Association**





RECOGNITION

With transport connections to Halifax and Manchester, local and national press coverage, Hebden Bridge has a significant profile, well beyond other towns of its size and comparable geography, largely because of its creative reputation and links. However, note that support and recognition hasn't always been consistent.

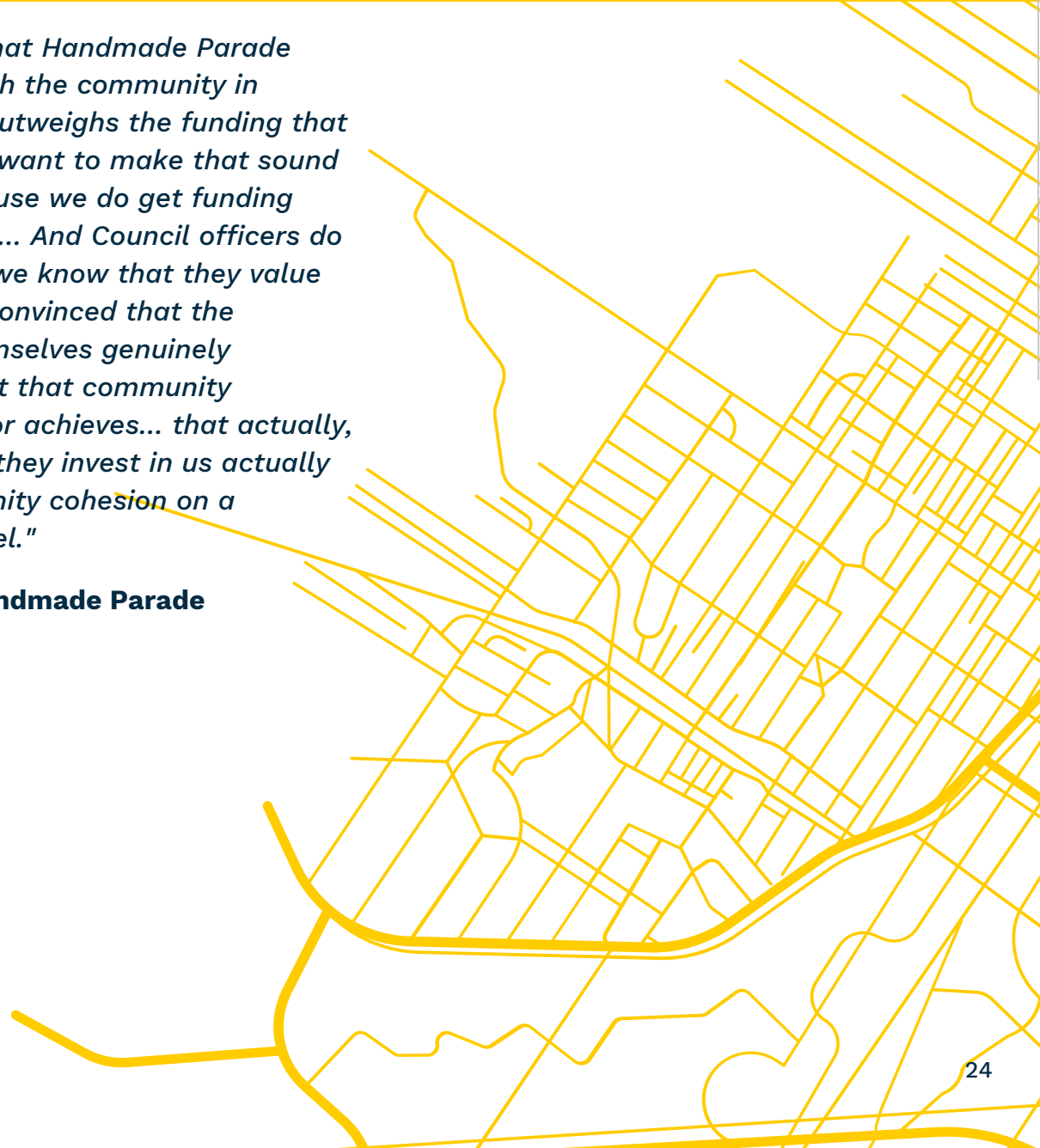
"We do all of our event planning and a lot of our kind of work outside of the festival in Calderdale. But the festival itself is in Kirklees. So for the first few years until we proved ourselves by having a festival and getting the festival in the press and things like that, we didn't really get much support at all in Calderdale..."

"When we got the Queen's award from our tree service, which was the year before we got the Epic Award, Calderdale and the Council started taking this more seriously, local groups started taking this more seriously."

Mary Agnes Krell, Grand Northern Ukulele Festival

"The value of what Handmade Parade does for and with the community in Calderdale far outweighs the funding that we get... I don't want to make that sound ungrateful because we do get funding from Calderdale... And Council officers do support us and we know that they value us. But I'm not convinced that the counsellors themselves genuinely understand what that community involvement is, or achieves... that actually, the money that they invest in us actually delivers community cohesion on a phenomenal level."

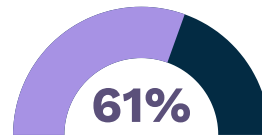
Elaine Price, Handmade Parade



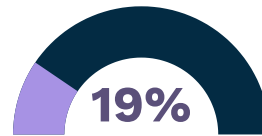
TODMORDEN TOWN AND WARD

A ward and town (which bridges both Todmorden and the southern tip of Calder ward) in the rural west of the borough, overseen by Todmorden Town Council, sharing the distinct Calder valley topography and rail and canal links with Hebden Bridge to the East. This has resulted in recurrent flooding in recent years, with finance and community energy invested to support recovery.

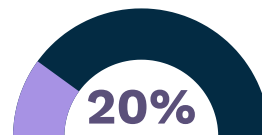
The ward has a resident population of 12,414 (2020), 61% are aged 16-64, 19% under 16 and 20% over 65.



residents aged 16-64



residents aged under 16



residents aged over 65

- 93% of residents were born in UK
- 95% White ethnicity
- 3.5% Asian/Asian British
- 1.3% Mixed/multiple ethnic groups
- 54% Christian (58% England / 57% Calderdale)
- 33% No religion (25% England / 28% Calderdale - 'other' comparable with av.)

Education levels and employment is in line with national and Calderdale averages for each qualification level and occupational category, with the most significant variance of 3%:

- Skilled Trades 15% (12% Calderdale)

IMD 2011: North Todmorden has 3 LSOAs in 20% most deprived (Calderdale 013B/D/F) with the remaining wards (Calderdale 013A/C/E and 022C) excluding only one (022B) in the 30% percentile.



SPACES

Like Hebden, the environment as a whole has a visible creative culture, with [Incredible Edible](#) planters dispersed throughout the town, murals, 'Kindness' signs.

The 'arts and culture' reflects a broader creative culture tied into the local environment and heritage across cultural, public spaces, education, community spaces and those run by private businesses (see appendix 4), as well as the presence of independent and amateur artists and both formal and informal arts education provision.



CREATIVE CITIZENS

A clear collective identity and collaborative spirit exists across the town. There are lots of examples of people establishing creative endeavours independently or separately, but also linking on a variety of formal and informal projects and networks, points of overlap with key individuals and a cascade effect, with members of the community picking up and extending an initial idea or action.

Todmorden Learning Centre and Community Hub is a recent communal effort, with the asset transfer of the former FE and adult education college (subsequently used as a youth centre) completed in March 2021, after the community fought to save it from becoming a carpark following closure in 2016:

"We're pleased how quickly the Centre has taken off, not just arts, but a sports hall, gym, educational classes, and social spaces."

"Examples of the activities include life drawing, sewing, children's theatre, a disability art group, Tod Makery repair cafe and creative space, printmaking, scrap or junk art. We depend on Todmorden for the ideas and try to support small-scale and home-spun. Not just volunteer led but also a space for professional art teachers to provide high quality classes. We've just completed restoration of the hall to be a big venue for performance and dance."

"We've kept hire charges as low as we can so these don't get in the way. We would rather have lots of people in the building than only a few groups being able to afford it."

Julie Thorpe, Centre Manager



RECOGNITION

Mary Clear, a retired community development worker, active in [Incredible Edible](#), Incredible Little Libraries and the Kindness signs says, 'Everything we do is art', driven by a DIY, activist approach, based on gifting rather than funding. The first public 'Kindness' sign in Todmorden was a birthday present to her husband, who had all he needed, after Mary read about the serotonin that can be released by seeing certain words.

The Incredible Libraries network of 25 mini book exchange libraries around the town were the result of 'Roady Pete' creating a model of Stoodley Pike (the monument to the Crimean war, which overlooks Todmorden) for his own pleasure and getting the suggestion to "add doors and make useful". The bespoke libraries were created with and for local people, while similar projects elsewhere have required significant funding.

The Golden Lion Pub landlord Gig (Matthanee Nilavongse) is active in these

initiatives, with the pub as a community hub and base for creative activity and community action - as well as having a reputation for hosting world renowned musicians.

Snappy Valley, local photography group shortlisted for the 2021 Creative Lives Awards, have used the pub as a base for meet-ups and talks and reflects on the positive response that came from her initial interest in starting the group:

"I joined the local groups that are dedicated to Todmorden on Facebook... We were meeting in person and a room upstairs in the pub for free was amazing... she usually brings food for lunch, like she always brings something so she's involved in most things in the community..."

"There are a couple of people that said that they will be taking on the running of it... so they're going to start meeting up once a month, face to face and once a month online, so every other week."

Lāsma Poiša, Snappy Valley

The support and recognition within the community has enabled activity or ideas initiated by one or two individuals to take root and flourish. It is a reflection of people's desire to connect with their local community and to see the potential and promise of these ideas recognised and released fully:

"I started the parade because we were doing puppet shows all over the country but never locally..."

"Todmorden is a little behind Hebden Bridge in celebrating the many artists who live here. If Todmorden were to invest in their creative sector, there would be a whole business renaissance of this area... We all live in Todmorden because we love the area. We love the people, we all love the geography. I'm walking my dog in the park and I run into, you know, a professional wig stylist who works for national companies. Top creatives have come to live here from all over the place."



"We've all chosen to live in a beautiful place which is not so far from Manchester, or from Leeds. So we can live a quiet life and still be connected to the outside world. There's the start of a healthy creative alternative community. But it feels like on the council level, business level, we have not figured out how to showcase this and turn this into opportunities for the community."

Andrew Kim, Artistic Director, Thingumajig Theatre and Founder and former Director of Handmade Parade

The growth and spread of Incredible Edible since its began in Todmorden in 2007 acknowledgement of 'Kindness' (Kindness Warehouse in Sheffield, linked to The Real Junk Food Project) and exhibition and archiving of the towns Kindness Covid banners in the Science Museum's Covid-19 Collection Project are testament to the significance and propagation of the ideas that sprout from this fertile community, despite sometimes hitting points of resistance.

"Running a building comes with huge regulatory requirements. Things have got to be done to be safe and well maintained. Community Anchors meetings have identified areas everybody could do with more help, as many centres like ours are run by volunteers with not a lot of prior experience in building management."

"We got good support from Locality and the [Community Anchors](#) network of embedded community centres in Calderdale, sharing experiences. Locality helped with our legal formation .At times it was slow, we hit obstacles etc. but in the end it was successful - getting volunteers with skills and expertise putting in time and energy, despite times we thought we might have to walk away..."

Julie Thorpe, Todmorden Learning Centre and Community Hub



W

Both the formal and informal aims and infrastructure in Calderdale reflect the 'benefits' of creative cultural activity that were identified in the Common Ground research that took place across UK and Ireland.

Social connectedness and community identity have a long term legitimacy within policy objectives and local funding opportunities in Calderdale. The examples demonstrate this as a core part of professionally and community instigated creativity (participatory arts territory which is complex given the many roles, responsibilities and personal commitments that individuals take on).

"People need to feel enabled through culture, and they need to feel that culture is enabling. And those two things maybe don't happen everywhere.... Providing opportunities for arts and cultural infrastructure to see what cultural activity is happening and how cultural activity looks when it's not happening in their buildings or sessions might help things get better."

Lauren Iredale, Artsworks, The Everyday Art School

WHAT ELSE HAS BEEN LEARNT?

"[We] adapt in a plastic way to different characters and the people that come in... vision is between having a wish and actually finding out what is real.... It's a microcosmic integrated place where people take care of each other.... We have three separate board game groups that have no status at all within any kind of institutional space... They're such a lovely group of people... Fraternity is one of those areas wildly overlooked. They live in a way which isn't obsessed with big money acquisition. Their kind of ethos is about being supportive and helpful...."

Vic Allen, Arts Charity Dean Clough

Fun and enjoyment while crucial for full and happy lives, often remain a 'private' concern, justifiable on other grounds only, despite unequal access to some of the crucial resources, capabilities and expectations that support people to fully engage in pleasures, large or small, throughout their lives.

The ideal scenario of this emerging spontaneously is reliant on conducive conditions and a basic degree of comfort and permission. The ability to 'let go' in ways that can be diminished by constraining objectives and measurements.

It's were the voluntary and amateur arts thrive, but where some people, for a wide range of reasons, need a little help and encouragement, while acknowledging personal choice and preference:

"There needs to be an acknowledgement and case that sometimes people don't want to do strategy, they just want to have fun. And that's all. And I don't think there's anything wrong with that.... it's not always easy to find the money to do things where people just want to have fun."

Elaine Price, Handmade Parade

"We will judge things separately what's a success, and it may be five people attending in one community. Whereas, if we put the same event on somewhere else, we probably get 50.... But you can't always tell, and I think it's still a disservice to people in many ways to pigeon hole about what they'd be interested in."

David Duffy, Libraries lead, Calderdale Council

Positive impacts on health and wellbeing

have a growing currency in Calderdale, often focussed on the rewards of active participation rather than more passive creative and cultural experiences. The work of the National Centre for Creative Health and Thriving Communities work will develop this local knowledge and practise further.

“There are four different tiers that we’ve been working with and one of those is around targeted interventions. How do we create those in a co-produced way?”

“Those innovations are with people with lived experience with artists and with the health sector. And what are those targeted interventions that use creativity and art to tackle some of the issues in areas where people have the greatest health inequalities....”

“If you map areas with the greatest health inequalities, there’s overlap with multiple disadvantages, and with the least engagement in arts activities. How do you count? How do you combine all those things? So some of it’s about geographical areas, some of it’s about different communities, some of it’s about specific health problems.”

David McQuillan, Arts & Health Programme Manager, South West Yorkshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust



There’s a high degree of consistency in the feedback provided across Calderdale regarding improvements that would create a more fertile environment for culture and creativity to flourish within and across boundaries, regardless of the assets already within communities.

Supporting Access to Space

- **Investment - Adaptability and Change**

Those with spaces highlighted the need for income to be sustainable (maintaining the building, ensuring safety) and the desire to be welcoming and responsive to a more diverse range of users and audiences. This meant resetting expectations with existing groups to create the space required - and stepping into other, more familiar spaces used by communities to build relationships, share resources and offer meaningful routes into venues. This work is beginning to happen but access to local spaces is a priority for Mixenden.

WHAT IS NEEDED?

Potential users emphasised willingness to utilise a wide range of communal spaces for differing needs: workshops, exhibiting, performing - and potential for shared use and in-kind approaches that benefit all parties.

- **Access - Visibility and Openness**

Accessibility requires some facilitation and clarity of information for potential users regarding the opportunities/spaces available and steps required to make use of these. A closed door and no response sends a clear message and places a level of demand and commitment on individuals seeking to make use of the facilities, with no guarantee of a positive outcome or any reward for their time and efforts.

- **Civic Pride - Ownership, Collaboration, Cooperation**

Many groups cited plans (and frustrated plans) to occupy meanwhile spaces, outdoor spaces to create moments of celebration and inspiration.

Creative culture within community spaces has the potential to be open and enabling for all members of the community - not only consuming a managed artistic product, but immersed in the process as a whole, with self-determination and a stake in any outcomes. To achieve this people must feel welcome and represented, with proportional demands on their time and resources.

Enabling Creative Citizens

• **Investment - Adaptability and Change**

A perceived resistance for real change was commented on. There is some historical mistrust regarding the promise of strategic interventions, with a sense that it will offer more of the same for the same people. This challenge was recognised by those within as well as outside the formal structure:

“[Calderdale Creates] needs sharp mechanisms and structures that are holistic and diverse rather than top down. It’s all in development with a timely strategy.... arts and health... local cultural education partnership work.”

Tim Fagan, Theatre Manager, Calderdale Council (involved in Calderdale Creates and LCEP)

Engagement must be practical as well as strategic, leading to concrete opportunities and outcomes and acknowledging the time demands on smaller and voluntarily run groups. A resources sharing aspect with business and governance support, space, artistic collaboration, communications that value differing contributions and needs.

• **Access - Visibility and Openness**

The perception that existing grants (via Staying Well, town councils, wards and voluntary providers such as CFFC) were only available to entrenched ‘favourites’ who monopolise was also an issue expressed from both sides.



“I didn't get any sort of surprising applications or didn't get any amateur or volunteer groups.... there is a question about how groups find out about these opportunities.”

David McQuillan, Arts & Health Programme Manager, South West Yorkshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

“It was really difficult to see whether they had any support at all for the arts. And for the most part if you weren't tied to the town hall and Hebden Bridge, or if you weren't a portfolio funded group for the Arts Council, it was really difficult to figure out what was there...”

Mary Agnes Krell, Grand Northern Ukulele Festival

The need to increase visibility and transparency of opportunities for groups and communities, offering a better ‘curated offer’ at every level is necessary, as well as recognising the stages and capacity required to respond and take up those opportunities. Blending personal relationships and adaptable support with clear, two-way communication.

This takes time and a variety of approaches:

- Relevant summaries via partners and engaging public communications.
- Timely sharing and consistent opportunities with the potential for feedback and advice. One-off, short-term will always favour those that are most aware and ready to respond and fail to widen access.
- Apprenticeships, mentoring and volunteering encouraged and developed.
- Networks of varying scale and purpose linked into communities sharing opportunities.

Some aspects are being done very effectively at a local programme (Staying Well’s commissioning approach encourages development, arts organisations connecting volunteering opportunities) and strategic level but not fully joined up and consistent, with improved public communications an essential.

• **Civic Pride - Ownership, Cooperation and Collaboration**

Community asset development can support economic needs and external income (business, tourism etc.) but must be supported to do so.

Financially prohibitive events and spaces must be countered by a rich alternative offer (alongside some access opportunities) that are locally relevant and distinctive, recognising the need to maintain differing approaches given diverse communities:

“These are groups that wouldn't traditionally see themselves as being connected with any kind of formal arts or culture offer. The idea then in the longer term is that through building these links, and these connections, and then getting them networking and working with each other a bit more....

“Rather than just entirely saying, ‘What do you want to do and will enable you to do it’ given that, in my experience, people often don't really know, because they don't know what the possibilities are. So it's about actually putting together where people are at, but also where artists can, without taking over can encourage new thinking, and take people beyond what they thought they were capable of.”

Amanda Dalton, Hebden Bridge Arts Festival

Collaboration avoids assuming you know what people want and needs and presenting it regardless and enters a more respectful and mutually beneficial dialogue, from which all parties can benefit from more interesting, unexpected results and a greater likelihood of sustaining relationships and activities locally.

This ethos and expectation is required for all funded groups to build trust and cooperation and avoid obstructive or exploitative practices that exclude or demean other parties and perspectives. The time investment required from all parties to ensure a level playing field and create this additional value must be supported.

Increasing Recognition

- **Investment - Adaptability and Change**

Encouragement and support that recognises and fosters creative habits and skills and cultural understanding is fundamental to a responsive and evolving development approach that is attuned to personal interest, local needs and wider trends and issues:

“Art and Design TeachMeets have worked as a peer group for professionals delivering arts curriculums in primary and secondary education, we also have our Artworks for Wellbeing peer group for people using art to support their mental health. We'd like something around the environment to be established as well... we did try an art and activism group with young people, which we would like to start again”

Lauren Iredale, Artworks, The Everybody School of Art

This process can work as small pilots, practical and hands-on approaches that encourage learning and development through the creative process, which smaller grant schemes offer, but require a degree of openness within the commissioning objectives, process and panel.

Creative citizens are adaptable citizens, familiar with taking risks, trying something new or different and identifying and drawing together the skills and resources required. There is significant personal investment in this process and to recognise and this is to invest in it, offering support mechanisms and support capacity, extending beyond advice and training.

“We're all trying to run tiny little businesses here. So if there's people that can help with promotion, with our taxes... it makes or breaks a smaller company like ours... A lot of individuals fall down at a certain point because they just can't do everything.”

Andrew Kim, Artistic Director, Thingumajig Theatre and Founder and former Director of Handmade Parade

- **Access - Visibility and Openness**

The ongoing challenge of visibility, knowing what others are achieving and being seen, promoted and celebrated, within local networks and across borders, was one of the most significant hurdles referenced by all parties consulted.

“I kind of know what's happening here and I do my best to look around. We did the Culture Map, for example, but that hasn't reached everybody. It's not representative but hopefully that can change. We know culture is happening... but it's not maybe seen as cultural, recognised as cultural or captured as culture.”

Lauren Iredale, Artworks, The Everybody School of Art

This can be about providing basic practical access to facilities and expertise such as printing and communications and PR support and links through other organisations and groups, unexpected partners to create links across communities.

There is a resource challenge collating and publishing events of differing scale and planning schedule - even at a local level, but immense value in increasing the profile of the approaches and impact that groups have across communities, in inspiring the wider public and developing positive relationships.

- **Civic Pride - Ownership, Cooperation and Collaboration**

Recognition of local groups and people, collaborating, sharing a platform or stage: civic pride in place and people is more localised in Calderdale, with the Calder Valley examples providing a subtle contrast with one another and far more dramatic with Halifax and its wards, as a result of its geography, structure and history:

“Boundaries are sort of arbitrary, and I feel like I probably do more with Rochdale and Burnley than I do with Halifax, they're about equal distance to me.”

Todmorden

“There have been lots of attempts to try and coordinate some stuff... all of interest to local people, all of interest to tourists coming into the area, but if you can't physically get to all of them inevitably footfall for events is much lower. So that is a challenge in this area.”

Hebden Bridge

This requires not only a forum to communicate (eg. listings website and public calendar) but also time and investment to coordinate planning and find shared territory and mutual benefit where this is appropriate, while supporting varied and diverse areas and groups to define their own course:



“It doesn't feel as if people are proud of Calderdale. And I think that doesn't help. When you're trying to do something that looks across the whole that you do get people saying, well, we do this here, and we're not willing to share. Or we don't do this here and you get all the money.

“I wonder if Calderdale needs to celebrate each place for its own unique identity, and its own culture and its own voluntary groups.. and everybody celebrates their own place and be quite happy and welcome people in to see what they're doing differently. Yeah, I think there's a lack of voluntary groups working together. Some of the voluntary groups are empowered, they have that thing of, well, this is ours.

“Parts of the pieces of the same Jigsaw.. to make the Calderdale region as strong as it can, we want to make it absolutely formidable and you know, there's loads of formidable stuff already in existence.”

Halifax



NEXT STEPS IN CALDERDALE

Community consultation

Given the other agencies and strategic development that link with the groups and communities considered harder to reach, further consultation with the community should be conducted with relevant partners and focus on specific support or outcomes being offered. This could reference existing resources and support available now more of this is active following the pandemic, but would benefit from a strategic focus tied to the 2024 year of culture plans.

Communication

Platforms for sharing opportunities directly with the local community and ensuring distinctive local culture and activities are visible and celebrated should be better linked, with a focus on this becoming a sustainable local resource.

The process should make use of existing online information provision, including blogs for [Lower Valley](#), [Halifax Central](#), [Halifax North and East](#).

It will build in relevant Creative Lives support and opportunities where these offer additional support ([Creative Lives resources](#)) and platform ([Creative Lives Awards](#) and [Stories of Creativity](#)) while maintaining the local focus, with the [Creativity Map](#) plotting and linking back to other networks and local links.

Programmes, initiatives

Vision 2024 and the year of culture is an opportunity to encourage greater link up between distinctive local areas and celebrate this diversity within the region and further afield. A collaborative moment will offer something tangible to work towards and create a clear moment for public awareness-raising, while focussing on the engagement process and development opportunities for local groups to identify locally relevant approaches and sustain activities.

Council Action: Confirm next steps and valuable areas of support. This could include:

- [Spaces](#): 'Pop up' showcasing sites in each ward (eg. empty shops) with ongoing display of community produced artifacts and activities and one-off engagement days.
- [Creative Citizens](#): Fund exchange/mentorship in Park and Mixenden.
- [Recognition](#): Develop communications support (Calderdale Creates offer to community).

Creative Lives Action: Inside Culture Proposal for improved community engagement with the full arts and cultural offer, to produce community led communications.

Support 2024 community led actions and evaluation led by Leeds University.

Inside Culture Proposal

LEAD PARTNER: Peoples Voice Media

Offering digital/reporting skills development

PARTNER: Creative Lives

Supporting awareness of and access to the widest possible

LOCAL PARTNERS:

Staying Well (HOP and NHP), Libraries and groups.

LOCAL CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT TASTERS:

Artworks
Handmade Parade
Northern Broad­sides
Square Chapel
Verd de Gris

SUMMARY TIMELINE

- June-September 2022: Reporter recruitment/training
- July 2022-June 2023: Ongoing experience/visits, public and amateur arts/cultural offer [Sharing of content via reporters, map, social media and public library]
- June 2022 - November 2023: BBC Editorial training, Sector and regional sharing.
- January 2024: Embedding approach and legacy phase - monitoring and supporting sustainability.
- September 2024: Reporting

Evaluation as ongoing embedded process, action research cycles with interim and final reporting.

Inside Culture Proposal

Pilot project that merges 'Culture Guides' model - local advocates and champions for community creativity and culture (delivered with libraries in St. Helens) and PVM 'Community Reporters' approach (commissioned a number of times in Calderdale to investigate health inequalities and the impact of the pandemic on community wellbeing).

This would be a natural continuation of the work underway in Calderdale. Upskilling community members (media/reporting and reflecting on diverse cultural and creative experiences) and encouraging peer-to-peer sharing with other members of the community.

This will support cultural organisations and creative groups (of all size) to communicate their offer and gather feedback and the council and voluntary services to share development opportunities.

The process will enable community members to identify and tackle barriers and provide a vital missing voice across platforms for sharing current opportunities and influencing future offers in ways that are more relevant for underrepresented groups.

With thanks to all the individuals consulted, who generously shared personal and organisational experience, information and contacts.

Calderdale

Arts and Health Network - Calderdale (org/practitioner)
Calderdale Council (Libraries team, Voluntary and Community Sector Team)
Voluntary Action Calderdale
Community Foundation for Calderdale
Healthy Minds (Calderdale Cares for Us)
Staying Well Neighbourhood teams: Upper Valley, North (Mixenden), Central (Park)
SWYPT (Arts and Health)
VSI

Calder (Hebden Bridge)

Artsmill
Grand Northern Ukulele Festival
Handmade Parade
Halifax Festival of Words/The Festival of Halifax
Hebden Bridge Town Hall/Community Association
Inter-Arts
The Trades Club
Verd de Gris

Todmorden

Incredible Edible
Snappy Valley
Thingumajig Theatre
Todmorden Learning Centre and Community Hub

Wellbeing Network (led by Healthy Minds, Todmorden)

Halifax

Andy's Man Club (Park)
Annapurna Indian Dance
Arts Charity at Dean Clough (Pellon)
Artworks (Thriving Communities, Arts and Health, LCEP)
Ash Green School/Children's Centre
Calderdale Music Trust
Councillors (Mixenden, Park)
Forest Cottage Community Centre
Fountain Head Community Pub
Halifax Homeless Kitchen
Halifax Playhouse
Hanson Road Enterprise Hub
Happy Days Ministries (Recovery Project, Town)
Himmat (Park)
Holy Nativity Church
IOU Theatre
Light Up BAHC
Northbank Forum
Northern BroadSides
North Halifax Partnership
Phoenix Radio
Square Chapel (Halifax)
St Augustines.
The Gathering Place
The Outback
UC3
Victoria Theatre (LCEP, Arts and Health, Calderdale Creates)

References

- [Calderdale Cultural Strategy, Draft 1:0, 2021](#)
- [Common Ground – Rewilding the Garden: Reconnecting with overlooked, self-cultivating culture in our communities, Creative Lives, 2021](#)
- [Out Creative Talent Our Creative Talent – the voluntary and amateur arts in England, DCMS, 2013](#)
- [Towards Cultural Democracy, King's College London, 2017](#)

Data sources:

• Park

<https://reports.esd.org.uk/reports/shared?encryptedId=AEB4FCED1D4BC8BB3BF335FED1C46EA70D753ED57C57C8D2BCC4DCC5132CA94E936E0D60819D9D0EE42107A6095091860842A0E664E77704BD20EC6D601EB8DF>

• Mixenden

<https://reports.esd.org.uk/reports/shared?encryptedId=AEB4FCED1D4BC8BB3BF335FED1C46EA70D753ED57C57C8D2BCC4DCC5132CA94E705E15735D2C96BAC0B4E6B111809D8ACC767C1049EDF37A8F14C99B4D44DD94>

• Calder

<https://reports.esd.org.uk/reports/shared?encryptedId=AEB4FCED1D4BC8BB3BF335FED1C46EA70D753ED57C57C8D2BCC4DCC5132CA94E8A7CC32F2BCA3983131262132CDE0B04AFBB21B13D96D7E36E0570D4F06C22DE>

• Todmorden

<https://reports.esd.org.uk/reports/shared?encryptedId=AEB4FCED1D4BC8BB3BF335FED1C46EA70D753ED57C57C8D2BCC4DCC5132CA94E6B6F460505D6B49CD37CD1287042E6DA5B56EAE21A5BEFE3DF2F7724AD765AFD>

• Active Lives

<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/research-dashboards/engagement-arts-and-culture-dashboard>

• IoD Statistics

<https://opendata.calderdale.gov.uk/extensions/IoD-IMD/IoD-IMD.html>



Creative Citizens Calderdale

2021 - 2022 Report

Appendices



Arts and culture	Public spaces	Education	Community	Business
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kings Cross Public Library • The Outback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People's Park (FOPP) • Gibbet Park 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creations Community Children's Centre (SS) • Little Stars Children's Centre (HOP) • Jubilee Children's Centre & Nursery (HOP) • Beacon Lights School • Beech Hill School • Parkinson Lane Community Primary School • St Augustine's CE • Warley Road Primary Academy, • Ling Bob J, I and N School • Mount Pellon Primary Academy • The Halifax Academy • Calderdale College 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AICP Sunniyy Centre • Al Jamia Al Zahra • Jami' Masjid Noorani • Jamia Masjid Ahl-e-Hadith • Jamia Mosque Madni • Makki Masjid • Markazi Jamia Masjid Ghousia (Ahl e-Sunnah Wal Jamat) • Halifax Ukrainian Church • New Testament Church of God • Northern Lights Church • Salem Methodist Church • St Mary's Church • The Kings Church • Hanson Lane Enterprise • Queens Road Neighbourhood Centre (HOP) • Himmat Project • St. Augustines • Womens Activity Centre • Halifax Rambling and Social Club • Kings Cross RLFC/Social Club • Kings Cross Working Mens Club • Pellon Care Centre • Park Community Practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kings Cross, Road/Queens Road, highstreet of small traders, food, pubs, betting, charity • Pellon Lane/Hanson Lane, large business park traders - home, car, discount • Heritage local shop parade • The Elsie Whiteley Innovation Centre • Crossley House

2.

MIXENDEN SPACES

Appendices: Mixenden & Hebden Bridge Spaces

Arts and culture

- [Mixenden Public Library](#) (temporary site at Activity Centre)
- [Mixenden Activity Centre](#)

Public spaces

- Mixenden Reservoir
- Boggart Wood

Education

- [Ash Green Community Primary School](#)
- [Abbey Park Academy](#)
- [The Whitley AP Academy](#)
- [Moorside Community Primary School](#)

Community

- [Mixenden Addy Holy Nativity Church](#)
- [Mount Zion Methodist Chapel](#)
- [Christ Church](#)

Business

- [Gardenius Nursery](#)
- [Halifax Golf Club](#)
- [Stod Fold Brewing Company](#)

3.

HEBDEN BRIDGE SPACES

Arts and culture

- [Artsmill](#)
- [Curious Motion](#)
- [Hebden Bridge Little Theatre](#)
- [Hebden Bridge Library](#)
- [Hebden Bridge Picture House](#)
- [Old Stables Pottery Studios](#)
- [Northlights Arts Studios](#)
- [Trades Club](#)
- [Wainsgate Chapel](#)
- [Victoria Works](#)

Public spaces

- Calder Holmes Park and Skate Park
- Little Park
- River Calder
- Rochdale Canal
- Surrounding woods and moorland

Education

- [Steiner Kindergarten](#) (5-12 school closed 2020)
- Early years, and primary level schools
- [Learning Community for home schooled 5-15 year olds](#)

Community

- [Hebden Bridge Town Hall](#) ([Community Association](#))
- Highhirst Allotments
- [Hope Baptist Church](#)

Business

- [Hebden Royd Business Forum](#)
- Hebden Bridge Market
- Independent Galleries (Kala, Heart etc.), music (Jacks Guitars)

Arts and culture

- [Incredible Little Libraries](#)
- [Todmorden Library](#)
- [Tod College Learning Centre and Community Hub](#)
- Independent galleries / workshops ([Creative with Nature](#), Legacy Arts, Water Street, Todmorden Life Drawing)

Public spaces

- Bridestones Moor (North)
- Centre Vale Park
- Langfield Common and Stoodley Pike (South)
- River Calder
- Rochdale Canal

Education

- [Dobroyd Castle Activity Centre](#)
- Primary schools and [Tod High School](#) (specialist visual arts school)
- [DC Dance](#)

Community

- [Fielden Hall](#)
- [Todmorden Town Hall](#)
- [Todmorden Working Mens Social Club](#)
- Todmorden Information Centre
- [St. Marys Church](#)
- [Todmorden Unitarian Church](#)

Business

- [Golden Lion Pub](#)
- [Todmorden Market Hall](#)
- Todmorden Arts Dealer

Creative Lives Charity Limited is registered in Scotland as
Company No. 139147 and Charity No. SC 020345.

Registered office: The Melting Pot, 15 Calton Road,
Edinburgh EH8 8DL.

Creative Lives acknowledges funding from Arts Council England,
the Arts Council of Ireland, Creative Scotland and the
Arts Council of Wales.

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