

# ReNEW Sharing Stories Shaping Futures: Developing Skills and Capacity



## **Programme Description**

ReNEW is an ambitious large scale project managed by Bromsgrove District Council, with Redditch Borough Council support, and governed by the Cultural Compact for North East Worcestershire partnership. It is what we call a “concerted place based effort” with national and local cultural organisations, artists, local communities, young people, organisations from a broad range of sectors, and leaders from across Redditch and Bromsgrove all working together to build pride of place.

ReNEW: Sharing Stories, Shaping Futures is a landmark 2.5-year cultural development initiative, launched by the Cultural Compact for North East Worcestershire, funded by a £550,000 Arts Council England National Lottery Place Partnership grant and supported by further local investment from amongst others the National Trust, Redditch Borough and Bromsgrove District Councils. A brief description of what this project aims to “look and feel like” can be found [here](#).

A broader range of evidence leading to the funding application was creatively shaped in direct response to extensive action research and can be found [here](#). ReNEW addresses the structural and social barriers that prevent broader engagement in creative activity of all kinds across Redditch and Bromsgrove. This flagship programme is the first major investment in a vision that places local people, particularly young people, at the heart of the area’s cultural regeneration.

*ReNEW: Sharing Stories, Shaping Futures has two core aims:*

1. To develop the creative skills and industry potential of local young artists aged 16 and above, by providing applied training, mentoring and industry-specific co-production experiences.
2. To build ambition, capacity, and long-term sustainability within the Local Cultural Sector, improving its ability to serve local communities, especially under-represented and marginalised groups identified in the action research as target groups.

## **A Place-Based Response to Local Need**

As described in some depth at the hyper link above, the origins of ReNEW lie in work initiated in 2020, when a coalition of public, private and community sector partners in Redditch and Bromsgrove came together to explore the feasibility of establishing a *Heritage Corridor for North Worcestershire*. Research funded by Arts Council England\* revealed a strong appetite among residents for greater cultural connectivity, increased participation, and for their voices and everyday experiences to be more visible and valued. Young people in particular expressed a desire to “share their stories” as a means of belonging, agency, and cultural expression.

This insight gave rise to the twin themes of *Sharing Stories and Shaping Futures*, which now form the core of the ReNEW programme. The initiative is shaped by the Cultural Compact involving partners from business, community, culture, education, environment, and health - with young people playing a leading role in its design and delivery.

*\* Funded by Arts Council England- Beatfrecks Collective were commissioned to carry out a research project called Tell Me What You Want, engaging more than 100 local cultural organisations and 1000 local people.*

# **Programme Structure**

## **Strand One: Shaping Futures**

A development strand designed to embed improved skills, leadership, and resilience within the local cultural sector.

Running in parallel with the creative activity in strand two (Sharing Stories Projects), *Shaping Futures* supports two important development initiatives:

### **Young People Skills Development:**

This aspect of the programme will support career development for local young people and specifically young creatives.

This will be achieved through the following activity with the support of Worcestershire based Young Solutions and the Cultural Compacts Youth Theme Group members:

- 2 Apprenticeships, Level 3 Learning & Participation Officers, hosted by the Local Cultural Sector, delivered in partnership with Creative Alliance.
- 3 Skills Cohort Groups of 10 young people (aged 16 years of age and above), committed to co-producing Sharing Stories project Strands across the two years of the project.
- Short-term training opportunities for up to 70 young people across ten skills camp style training activities in areas of interest to include cultural leadership, events management and marketing.
- Wider skills development for up to 100 local young people in relation to each Sharing Stories Project Strand as participants in artform specific workshops- digital, performing and visual arts.

### **Local Cultural Sector Development:**

A Cultural Sector Skills and Capacity Building Programme, designed in collaboration with Culture Central, a regional organisation that acts as a collective voice and advocate for the arts and cultural sector in the West Midlands. This strand aims to support the growth and resilience of the sector which currently includes a broad mix of amateur and community-led initiatives, alongside a small but growing professional network.

With the support of a £50,000 budget this aspect of the programme will provide training, networking opportunities, research, and advocacy, including:

- Sector audit and consultation
- Leadership development and governance support
- Communications and digital training
- Developing environmental sustainability practices
- Event management and space activation
- Network-building and shared strategy development
- Inclusive practice and audience engagement support

The goal is to catalyse a step change in how the Local Cultural Sector engages, operates and evolves. Participants will benefit from cohort-based learning, support networks, and direct engagement with expert practitioners- empowering them to become more resilient and sustainable.

## ***Strand Two: Sharing Stories***

A creative project strand rooted in lived experience, community voice and co-production.

The three *Skills Cohort Groups* (SCGs) of 10 young people aged 16+, each working alongside a professional artist or arts organisation specialising in either digital, visual, or performing arts. These SCGs will design and deliver creative projects that respond to themes of place, heritage, and local identity.

The three major community-embedded projects are:

### **1. Gateway to Nature (*Visual Arts* – £90,000)**

Led by the National Trust, and with the support of Bromsgrove Society, this project focuses on developing a new cultural identity for the proposed National Trust Regional Park in the Bromsgrove District (draft title “8 Hills”). The SCG will work with local residents from areas of highest need such as Charford, Catshill, Sidemoor and Rubery to co-design public art and wayfinding features. Drawing on themes of nature connection, the project will result in a landmark visual art installation at a key gateway into the new park and culminate in a celebratory public event.

### **2. Awe and Wander (*Digital Arts* – £70,000)**

Led by Rubicon Leisure, with support from Heart of England Forest and Worcestershire Wildlife Trust, this strand uses digital storytelling to engage underserved communities in East Redditch (including Winyates, Matchborough and Churchill) with the great and green open space of the Arrow Valley Country Park. A digital arts provider will work with the SCG to co-create an interactive digital artwork exploring the “5 Pathways to Nature” (Contact, Beauty, Meaning, Emotion, Compassion), combining art, architecture, storytelling and signage to encourage braver, more joyful journeys into nature.

### **3. Wagons Roll (*Performing Arts* – £70,000)**

In partnership with Redditch, Bromsgrove and Astwood Bank Carnivals, this strand celebrates the legacy of the local Showman’s Family community and outdoor arts traditions. Inspired by the Avoncroft Museum’s restoration of the Showman’s Wagon, the SCG and performing arts provider will co-create three touring performance platforms that “show off” the region’s past and future through carnival arts. Participants will gain industry-standard experience in producing, performing, managing and marketing large-scale outdoor events.

Each *Sharing Stories* project culminates in public-facing activities, pilots delivered in 2026, and full-scale projects in 2027, targeting key groups identified during the Tell Me What You Want Project as being most in need (young people (15–20), isolated older adults, families with older children, and residents from lower socioeconomic backgrounds). The projects will take place in accessible, local, and virtual spaces - encouraging inclusive participation and increasing pride of place.

### ***A broad range of other areas of work in support of the project***

- An external evaluation for the project is being commissioned with a £20,000 budget in July 2025
- A marketing and communications budget of £18,000 is available to support the project with oversight provided by the Cultural Compact’s Communications Theme Group
- A contingency budget of just under 5% is available for the project to provide the necessary provision to respond to change as the project develops and grows

## **Project Governance**

The Steering Group for the Cultural Compact is made up of partners from the National Trust, Canal and Rivers Trust, Rubicon Leisure, senior officers and elected members from the local authorities, Worcester University, Chairs of the six theme groups (communications, access and inclusion, youth, culture and heritage, business and environment), local networks artsinredditch and Bromsgrove Arts Alive, the Creative People and Places scheme Reimagine Redditch and the Central Region Schools Trust. Outgoing Chair Jane Earl and the new Chair of the Cultural Compact Prof Petro Nicolaides oversee the group. Membership of each of the six theme groups reflect the expertise and background of their themes and each contribute in part to providing oversight during the delivery of the project.

## **Outcomes and Legacy**

ReNEW will:

- Equip a new, diverse cohort of young people with the skills, confidence and industry knowledge to enter and shape the creative industries.
- Strengthen the Local Cultural Sector's capacity to create relevant, inclusive and sustainable cultural offers for its communities.
- Build new platforms for storytelling, visibility and civic pride.
- Connect residents across urban and rural areas through shared cultural experiences and enhanced access to green and creative spaces.
- Leave a tangible legacy of public art, digital works, performance platforms, and embedded organisational development.
- Culminate in the publication of a new Cultural Strategy for the areas in early 2028

In the words of one local resident as part of the TMWYW research project:

*"Storytelling is key - it's a common thread of humanity. This is how we make connections. This is how we feel like we belong."*

**Applicants who are shortlisted for interview will be provided further information about the project, the details of which will be provided at a later date further to invitation to attend.**