



# ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24 SUMMARY



# CHAIR'S REPORT

As Chair of the Board, I would like to welcome you to the Arts Derbyshire Annual Report 2023 - 24 Summary.

This year has been one of **change and development in our management structure**, accompanied by **visioning, strategic planning and fund-raising** work to build an ambitious and innovative future for the organisation, with our key aims - to be **collaborative, creative, responsive and accessible** - at the core. We continue to grow our ability to enable and catalyse arts across the county, laying strong foundations for Derbyshire people to have a diverse and place-based opportunity to be involved in the arts and gain the life enhancing benefits that participation can bring.

At the close of the previous year, we had completed a very positive visioning day with Trustees and staff which focused our determination to appoint a Director to the organisation. From a very high quality field of candidates, we were delighted to appoint **Stephen Munn as Arts Derbyshire Director** in October. Stephen brings his considerable experience and understanding of the sector to the role and has lost no time in creating an exciting strategic framework and action plan, in producing fund-raising bids to national, public and private organisations, and in consolidating important partnerships across the county.

On the other side of the coin, we were very sorry to say goodbye to **Ann Wright**, former Head of Arts at Derbyshire County Council, at her retirement in October. Ann has worked tirelessly, with vision and foresight, knowledge and understanding for the arts in Derbyshire. Having started the Derbyshire Arts Development Group in 2012, Ann, foreseeing the need for an independent organisation to carry on the countywide work, steered DADG towards charity status in 2019. Through her role at Derbyshire County Council, and Arts Derbyshire CIO, and underpinned by her sincere belief in the power of creativity, Ann has brought the joy and profound benefits of the arts to countless people across Derbyshire. We thank her wholeheartedly for everything she has done in leading Arts Derbyshire in its formative stages, and wish her the very best time in retirement.

In other changes we said goodbye to Trustee **Matt Black**, and thank him sincerely for his much valued contribution to the Board, combining insight and hard work with positivity and wit. We have welcomed new Trustees **Gary Brockway** (as Treasurer) and **Simon Hobbs**. **Dan Oakley** and **Alice Marshall** were re-elected to a new term on the Board.

Our **Creative Health Team** continues to work with passion, understanding and integrity on a programme that addresses the participation of those in most need, builds connection and collaboration with the health sector, and develops core Creative Health frameworks that have been recognised at a regional and national level.

We have successfully developed our offer to our members, through **new look e-newsletters**, our attractive and busy **website**, and our **New Horizons Members meetings**. This year we held three successful well-attended meetings, each one with a different theme for focused input and discussion - **Disability in the Arts**, held at Level Centre; **Exhibiting and Talking About Your Work**, at the Ikon Gallery; and **Cultural Strategy and Producing**, at New Mills Town Hall. As well as in-depth discussion, the meetings allow time for networking, What's On noticeboard and members' Pop Up Exhibition, giving opportunity for members to share, present and talk about their work. This format has proved very popular as there is plenty of scope for personal involvement and input.

As Chair, I would like to sincerely **thank all those in our organisation** who continue to work, in their own role and in collaboration with others, with so much dedication, hard work, perception and in-depth knowledge. We have a wonderful team across our professional team of consultants, freelance contractors, and voluntary Board of Trustees. Although there is not room here to thank everyone individually, I can say I am proud and privileged to work with such a great team, and chair a vibrant organisation that brings arts and creativity to so many, enhancing wellbeing and enriching lives across the county.

*Debi Heddernil*



## DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The year has been one of **laying the foundations for the future with the Trustees prioritising the recruitment of a Director to enable a sustainable future for the organisation**. I was delighted to be brought into this new role in October 2023.

My first observation was the focussed commitment of the Staff and Trustees. There was, and is, a determination that Arts Derbyshire will succeed even in these most challenging of economic times. The year has witnessed many Local Authorities struggle to balance their budgets and Derbyshire County Council (DCC) was no exception. October 2023 sadly saw the cutting of the DCC Arts Service. The Council has remained an advocate for culture and through the Culture, Heritage & Tourism board other opportunities have arisen.

The strengths of the organisation lie within its flexibility and partnership working but there is also a massive potential for growth and increased impact across the County. The year has been about defining what the organisation is and looking to what the next five years could bring. In March 2024 the Board approved The Strategic Framework 2024/25 - 2026/27. We are a small organisation with big ambition, we focus on four key strands / areas of activity:

- **Capacity:** we convene networks of arts organisations and practitioners to share knowledge, expertise, training and encourage collaboration.
- **Strategy:** we provide a strategic overview of culture in Derbyshire and identify where gaps are leading to people being excluded from accessing cultural opportunities.
- **Investment:** we deliver responsive programmes in partnership with key organisations across Derbyshire to maximise our impact and create real change, as well as increasing investment into the Derbyshire arts sector.
- **Advocacy:** we showcase the cultural activity

happening in Derbyshire, and represent Derbyshire's cultural sector nationally, giving local artists and organisations a voice and a platform.

Significant applications and tenders were submitted to **Arts Council England** and **Derbyshire County Council (Derbyshire Makes)** which have been successful. This allows us to fulfil our mission of providing strategic direction for arts development in Derbyshire, building on the unique creative, cultural, natural and heritage assets of our county.

2023/24 key developments include

- **1,030 Arts Derbyshire Network Members** comprising of artists and cultural organisations
- **Three monthly Newsletters produced:** What's On, Arts Industry & Creative Health
- **Three New Horizon Network Meetings per year** hosted countywide; alternating discussion themes
- **A Necklace of Stars** worked with 75 housebound, isolated older people over 375 creative sessions. The exhibition has reached 120,000 visitors across 9 venues April 2022 - March 2024
- **DCC Public Health financial support Creative Health Programmes 2023/24**
- **New Director** started in position on an initial 12 month contract October 2023

We look forward to opportunities that may arise though the new East Midlands Combined County Authority and the next Arts Council England National Portfolio round in 2027/28. Arts Derbyshire is on the move and is proud to be working with its partners on helping to create a vibrant, connected and resilient arts ecology across our amazing county.

Director

*Stephen Munn*

# CREATIVE HEALTH

Arts Derbyshire has been developing **Creative Health** in Derbyshire since 2008. Our work includes building a network, strategic advocacy, project management, and sharing information. We aim to empower the creative health sector in the county by connecting it to opportunities, advocating, and promoting best practices.

Creative Health is led by a **Creative Health Manager**, also serving as an East Midlands Arts Champion for the **Creative Health and Well-being Alliance (CHWA)**. From September 2024, Arts Derbyshire will host the **CHWA Midlands Regional Lead** role.

Arts Derbyshire specialises in **Social Prescribing**, commissioning and developing creative health

work across the county and working closely with Link Workers, GP surgeries and wider health and community services to improve patients' health and wellbeing. This work is led by our **Social Prescribing Development Manager (Culture)**.

Social Prescribing has been part of the Voluntary, Community and Social sector for over 30 years, and we are committed to ensuring access to these services across Derbyshire. Our aim is to drive a cultural shift in Social Prescribing and health systems and improve funding and opportunities for the Creative Health sector. We work closely with Derbyshire County Council Public Health, one of our core funders.

We are currently delivering a Service Level

Agreement with Derbyshire County Council Public Health until August 2025, with a possible two-year extension. This work is supported by funds from the Sowerby Foundation and Arts Council England. The first phase included creating a Link Workers Manifesto, and we are now developing a Living Newspaper to guide and drive pilot projects. A **Creative Health Producer** will be recruited in October 2024 to support this work.

Our project **A Necklace of Stars** involved 75 isolated older adults through 375 creative sessions and reached 120,000 exhibition visitors across 9 venues. Building on its success, we are expanding our Social Prescribing programme and also looking to use techniques learned in a new programme for young people, to support positive mental health.





# ARTISTIC MANIFESTO

We believe that the arts are a powerful tool for change.

Our mission is to provide strategic direction for arts development in Derbyshire, building on the unique creative, cultural, natural and heritage assets of our county. We are passionate about the arts and culture being for everyone, regardless of their background or circumstances.

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ACCESSIBLE

We understand that by working together, we can create cultural experiences that are meaningful, impactful, and transformative.

We advocate that art has the power to heal, inspire, and connect people from all walks of life.

We are committed to supporting artists at all stages of their career and providing opportunities for them to showcase their work.

We believe that the arts are a vital part of our cultural heritage and that should be preserved and celebrated for future generations.

We are dedicated to promoting the arts in Derbyshire and beyond.

By working with our partners, we can inspire change and make a positive impact on the world.

**NHS**  
Derby & Derbyshire  
Clinical Commissioning Group

**Festivity**  
DERBYSHIRE FESTIVALS

phf Paul Hamlyn  
Foundation

ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND  
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WELLBEING  
ALLIANCE

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ARTISTS'  
NETWORK

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