

CREATING THE SPARK

Creu Conwy Newsletter

Winter 2023/4



DIWYLLIANT
CONWY
CULTURE

Welcome to Creu Conwy's Winter newsletter, which looks back over the second half of 2023. As we move into 2024, demonstrating the role of culture in supporting happier and more connected communities is critical. We are delighted to have secured UK Government Shared Prosperity Funding (UKSPF) to support our work over the next 12 months.

A key element of our UKSPF project is developing a model for measuring the social impact of Culture in Conwy County, and its role in reducing the need for more costly services.

Amdani!

[Amdani! Conwy](#) has now recruited 50 volunteers and supported over 30 different opportunities! The project is busy preparing for its next recruitment wave in Spring 2024.



Amdani! Volunteers

Bayside radio, Colwyn Bay's community radio station has worked with Amdani! Conwy during 2023:

"Working with Amdani! Conwy has been a pleasure for us all at Bayside Radio." The process was very straight forward "and this is such a benefit to a small team like ours. We really look forward to helping volunteers gain some unique skills and have fun in the process."



Simon Wynne - Bayside Radio

Creu Conwy Ifanc

[Creu Conwy Ifanc](#) (Young Creatives) has continued to provide inclusive, free and low cost artist-led activities for families, children and young people, thanks to funding from Arts Council Wales and the Welsh Governments Children and Communities Fund.



Young Creatives

Between May and December 2023, 776 people took part in sessions like Deud O! (spoken work), mixed media arts and Babi Brahms (classical music performances).

"As a family of six with four children under 7 I am very grateful as a mum that we are able to attend, as family events usually are out of our budget. One of my children is autistic and is non-verbal and if you could see how happy she is being creative in Wendy's classes, it's magical".

LLENWI

An exciting fusion of digital and traditional art forms have been brought together through our Welsh Government, Brilliant Basics funded project LLENWI. 3D artist Livi Wilmore is working with sign writer Tomos Jones to develop innovative and impactful destination signage installations across the county that celebrate Welsh Language, culture and sense of place.

Concepts will be developed through artist-led community workshops that will be advertised soon. Participants will be invited to share imagery, sayings and stories that are meaningful locally.

Open Doors

Creu Conwy were proud to support Cadw's, September 2023 Open Doors initiative by offering a successful programme of free activities across the county for the public to enjoy.

This celebration of Welsh heritage saw 14 activities take place at libraries and other cultural venues with over 150 people attending a range of activities ranging from clog dancing and author events to gallery tours!



Open Doors



Author Event

Creative Journeys to Wellbeing

Conwy Artist Katie Ellidge has been appointed as Lead Artist on Taith - Creative Journeys to Wellbeing. Supported by Arts Council of Wales, Taith is a pilot project offering artist-led group activities for people experiencing mental health difficulties.

Participants will be supported and empowered to co-produce a route to improved wellbeing through mindful exploration of creativity. The project is a partnership between Creu Conwy, Conwy Mind, and Conwy's Mental Wellness Team.

Town Teams and Cultural Capacity Building

Culture-led Town Teams are established and meeting regularly in Abergele, Conwy, Colwyn Bay, Llandudno and Llanrwst. UKSPF funding is supporting the development of some exciting projects that will be delivered in 2024.

Already they have developed a promotional Conwy town Christmas leaflet, held a community Christmas film screening in Llanrwst Library and a Lumière project in Colwyn Bay. With UKSPF funding, a programme of capacity building and networking will take place throughout 2024 in support of local independent cultural organisations.

Archives and Museums

Conwy Archives & Museum staff have been working hard to make CCBC heritage collections accessible to new audiences and interpretations. Conwy Culture Centre's remarkable collections are now part of a new national Amgueddfa Cymru House of Memories Cymru app for people living with dementia.



Image of Joe Taylor

The Re-Imagining Congo House/African Institute project will be a new exhibition at Colwyn Bay Library which tells the history from the perspective of local community and schools through the medium of art and animation.

The Congo Training Institute or Congo House, later called African Institute was founded by Rev William Hughes. From 1889-1912, over 100 Black students from Africa and Caribbean visited the Institute to learn skills such as printmaking, tailoring, medicine, and religious studies.

The museums service has also hosted a series of Welsh Museum Funded LGBTQ+ heritage sessions at Conwy Culture Centre, working with artists and writers including Katie Ellidge's Flower Sketchbook Workshop and Norena Shopland for a 'Proud Creative Writing' workshop and Mair Jones' led Queer Welsh Stories, a bilingual creative writing workshop aimed at those interested in exploring LGBTQ+ Welsh history.

Winter Sounds

Building on the learning and success of the first Winter Sounds festival in 2022 we are excited to be kicking off 2024 with Winter Sounds Ifanc.

Beacons Cymru are working in partnership with Tape Community Music and Film and Menter Iaith Conwy to deliver a young people's music industry mentoring programme funded by Arts Council Wales.

A Young Promoters Network of young people will be supported by industry professionals to plan and promote their own series of gigs this Spring. The project will culminate in Basecamp - A music industry network event planned and produced by young people involving skills workshops and networking with industry professionals.

"I feel like in the arts in particular networking is a really important part of it if you do want to get into that industry. It's really great to be able to hear off people who have those connections".

Beacons Basecamp 2022 attendee.

To find out more visit [Winter Sounds Ifanc](#). We will be announcing plans for further Winter Sounds Ifanc activity soon!



Libraries

Over the summer holidays, the library teams signed up an amazing 1,180 children to the Summer Reading Challenge, hosted 60 Snack and Story sessions and read almost 100 stories!

Over the last few months Conwy Libraries have welcomed authors Andrew Hesketh, Rebecca Roberts and Nicola Edwards for events. During September Llanrwst Library welcomed Joseph Coelho, Waterstones Children's Laureate (2022-2024) for an extra special story time.

There has been an absolutely fantastic increase in visits to our library buildings over the first six months of this year, which is testament to the hard work and leadership of everyone in the team.



Showcasing the new library membership cards

Northern Eye

The biennial Northern Eye International Photography Festival was delivered by [Oriol Colwyn](#) across Colwyn Bay in October/November.

The festival centred on a core Speaker's Weekend at Theatr Colwyn and 13 free festival exhibitions across the town.



Northern Eye exhibition

An incredible 17 photographic artists shared their work via speaker talks and events. A free photo film night was held at Theatr Colwyn cinema where 4 artists shared their short films with a local audience. The Northern Eye speakers event saw 120 people each day with 13 people streaming in and the Northern Eye Photo Film night saw 98 people in attendance.

"The exhibitions are spread across Colwyn as well as at the gallery space...This is an approach used by many towns and cities to use culture to boost local economy. I think that Oriol Colwyn demonstrates how well this can be done - many towns could learn from this festival at Colwyn..."

Stephen Clarke -
Senior Lecturer
Art/Photography
Chester University



To find out more, or to explore collaboration opportunities please do not hesitate to get in touch with the Creu Conwy Team

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