



In Summary

May 2022



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Front cover images (top to bottom):

1. Graffiti workshop at Prom Xtra
2. Imagine Trail Scooter Rally Recording
3. Archive image of Station Road
with green screen images from Launch
4. Animation workshop at the Colwyn Bay
Artisan Market, © Hedd F Williams



Bay of Colwyn aerial view © Mel Hughes

About The Project

Imagine Colwyn Bay was a National Lottery Heritage Fund Great Place Scheme, which was led by a cross-sector Steering Group with additional partnership funding from Conwy County Borough Council, the Bay of Colwyn Town Council and the now disbanded Colwyn Business Improvement District (BID). This summary offers a snapshot of the activity delivered and some key learnings from the project. A full project evaluation report is also available.

Where? The project area covered Old Colwyn, Colwyn Bay, Rhos on Sea and Mochdre.

When? January 2019 – March 2022 (extended from March 2021 due to COVID-19).

What? The project's vision was to place *"Culture, creativity and community at the heart of Colwyn Bay"* through:

- Mapping, recording and celebrating existing cultural and heritage assets and resources.
- Developing and strengthening culture and heritage links with third sector organisations.
- Inspiring and connecting people through a programme of engaging heritage and cultural activities and events.
- Supporting creative industries by offering training, upskilling, networking, peer support and delivery opportunities.
- Developing a culture and heritage strategy and embedding it within local organisations, plans and strategies.

The Activity

Mapping

136 cultural and heritage assets and resources were recorded across the project area as part of an initial mapping exercise.

Legacy

The mapping helped to guide the project's activities. It will be maintained as a live document by Colwyn Bay Heritage Group and made available as a resource for future projects.

Community Programme - 580 workshop sessions and events delivered which recorded over 5500 participations.

From the sample of 168 people who completed project evaluation forms:

- 80% indicated the quality of the event / activity was 'good' or 'very good'
- 79% agreed that they learnt more about local heritage as a result
- 65% agreed that taking part in the activity made local heritage more relevant to them
- 92% said they had a good time!
- 80% indicated they liked living where they live
- 58% felt more hopeful for the future of Colwyn Bay since their involvement



Community Engagement

Between March and October 2019, 47 events and workshops were held to raise awareness about the project, explore sense of place and engage people in shaping the activity plan. Over 900 people were engaged in activity that included: graffiti at Prom Xtra, community theatre and VR modelling.

“ It was lovely to meet up with people from the community a real 'buzz' in the place”

“The cross generational appeal of today has been inspirational. Well done to the organisers”

“ Many thanks - this sort of event would not happen where we used to live”

Launch Event Attendees

Legacy

This activity early in the project informed and shaped the activity plan and ensured a co-produced element to the project delivery.



Imagine Trail visuals

The Imagine Trail

An augmented reality app was produced by Tape Community Music and Film and Reality Boffins. The app features 155 locations based on local heritage trail resources. 22 local creative facilitators worked on the project and a community production team of over 400 people took part in 290 community workshops, which produced over 52 pieces of heritage-inspired community content (including films, creative writing, animation and soundscapes). Following the launch in September 2021 over 900 downloads of the app were recorded.

"I am proud to have been involved in this project, I met people who I would not have met otherwise and it gave me something constructive to focus on, and some 'normality' during the pandemic. The app and content that has been created will be a great asset to the area for years to come."

Member of Imagine Trail, Community Production Team

Legacy

A second phase of app development is now underway in the form of a skills and employability project. The Imagine Trail app and the creative content are community assets and will be maintained for a minimum of 5 years. It can be downloaded via: www.imaginetrail.com

Education

More than 35 sessions were delivered in education settings, engaging with over 1300 pupils and students. Key Stage 2 film and activity packs, linked to the new Curriculum Cymreig and Conwy Museum and Archive collections, were created by Pigtown Theatre and successfully piloted with schools.



A still image taken from the education film resource

" I am really impressed with both the written resources and the videos and we will definitely use both in school. We are going to include a local history study for each year group through the Prep School and these resources are excellent."

Deputy Principal, Rydal Penrhos

Legacy

The film links and downloadable activity packs are available and will support schools with engaging resources that enable children to learn about their local history.

Re:Collection

3 new handling collections and 60 multi-sensory activity packs themed around the 60s, 70s and 80s were created along with a film resource to support and promote creative reminiscence for people living with early-onset dementia. Artists Ticky Lowe, Lisa Heledd Jones and Penny Alexander worked collaboratively and 129 people were engaged in developing and piloting the resources.

" As we emerged out of the strict Covid-19 restrictions staff and residents benefited from accessing the activities, resources and sessions with the creative facilitators. In addition the project offered a development opportunity for our Activities Co-ordinator to work alongside the commissioned artist."

Care Home Manager

Legacy

The resources created can be borrowed for free from Conwy's Library service. The film will increase awareness of the resources and promote the benefits of creative reminiscence.



Place branding window display at the Bayview Centre, Colwyn Bay

‘Colwyn’ Placebranding

Over 300 people engaged with developing the placebrand for the Bay of Colwyn which was created by the View Creative Agency. 15 ‘welcome’ signs that feature the brand have been installed at gateway points and a vacant town centre shop has been secured to promote the brand with an impactful window display.

Legacy

The placebrand has been adopted by a number of groups and organisations; the guidelines and assets are available to download from the Bay of Colwyn Town Council website. The ‘Welcome’ signage will be in place for a minimum of 5 years.

Public Art

Sculpture Trail

In partnership with Colwyn in Bloom and with additional funding from Gwynt y Môr, Small World Theatre were commissioned to create a Bay of Colwyn sculpture trail. There are 7 installations with local and environmental themes, along with 30 seagulls that link the trail. 191 people engaged in the concept development, environmental art workshops and community clean-ups that were held as part of the project.

“ Including young artists and students in projects like this is very important. To be able to see my art transformed and put into the real world is a dream come true.”

Coleg Llandrillo
Foundation Art Student

“ I have really enjoyed being involved, the sculptures are amazing and the way local people have engaged has been wonderful.”

Workshop Attendee



Examples of the sculptures installed across the Bay of Colwyn

Legacy

The sculpture trail has a minimum 3 year lifespan and additional installations are being considered by the Colwyn in Bloom committee. The Cormorant, Octopus Ice Cream and other installations have become local landmarks and meeting points for the community.



The artwork at the underpass



Underpass Artwork

Over the course of 6 creative workshops artist Wendy Couling worked with more than 45 people to develop heritage-themed concepts to link the pedestrian route between the town centre and the promenade. These concepts inspired Andy (Dime One) Birch's large scale artwork in the Network Rail underpass.

"I really enjoyed taking part in the concept workshops with Wendy, where we used some techniques I had not used before. It was interesting learning a bit more about the history of the area and seeing the collection of old photos we used for inspiration. Best of all for me was being given the opportunity to work with Andy and be hands on creating the artwork on the walls in the underpass."

Workshop Attendee

Legacy

The artwork will remain in place for a minimum of 3 years, enhancing the appearance of the underpass and increasing awareness of local heritage.

The business and creative industry element of the project delivered a programme of over 30 workshops, sessions and network events recording over 400 attendances.



A Rhos on Sea prom shelter, which is part of the State of Independents exhibition. © Kev Curtis

State of Independents

A large-scale, outdoor portrait exhibition that features 24 local businesses was installed in 6 prom shelters between Old Colwyn and Rhos on Sea. Developed with Oriel Colwyn as part of the 2019 Northern Eye Photography Festival the exhibition showcases the unique independent traders in the area. The aims of the project were twofold: 1) to create highly impactful public art and 2) to support independent businesses and encourage footfall into the town centre.

Legacy

There is an increased visibility of local independent businesses. A phase 2 of the project is underway and a project to install a dedicated outdoor gallery along the Conwy coastline is being explored.

Creative & Digital Colwyn

A programme of training and development activity for the creative industries was offered in response to a needs analysis that was undertaken with 80 local creatives. The programme included PechaKucha events (a form of visual storytelling where a presenter shows 20 slides for 20 seconds each) and working with Ffiwsar to support 'Beth Nesaf' cultural conversation events. During the COVID-19 restrictions a collaboration with Menter Môn offered online networking and development opportunities. Additional activity included:

- A pilot bursary scheme was developed in response to the creative sector's wide range of bespoke training and development needs. In total £13,468.47 was awarded to 12 applicants. Activity supported included: drone piloting, sound recording and engineering training, upskilling in social media and motion graphics software.

“ The opportunities accessed through the bursary have boosted my confidence. Not only have I learnt new skills, I've also realised the strength of my existing skillset and have felt encouraged that a local initiative is willing to invest in me and my business.”

Creative & Digital Colwyn Bursary Recipient

- M-SParc 'on tour' - A creative industry hub and 'maker space' was established in an empty high street unit. To support the sustainability of the space a partnership approach has been adopted. Between September and December 2021 activity included:
 - 357 people used the co-working space
 - 17 people attended 'Train the Trainer' sessions
 - 13 business events
 - 26 STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) Education sessions
 - 24 maker space sessions

“ The M-SParc on tour venue in Colwyn Bay has given me access to a productive workspace that also offers on site IT support.”

M-SParc on Tour @ Colwyn Bay User

Legacy

Opportunities created through the project have increased capacity and encouraged collaborative working between local creatives and organisations. Funding is now being identified for a county-wide pilot of the bursary scheme. With the support of Together for Colwyn Bay a 'Creative Colwyn' Facebook group has been created. This networking forum has over 180 members. The initial M-SParc on tour pilot has been extended and the potential for a longer term creative industry hub is being explored.

Developing Cultural Capacity

3rd Sector Support

- A Conwy-wide Heritage Forum has been supported to meet quarterly throughout the project in partnership with the Rural Local Action Group.
- 3rd Sector and community groups have been offered support and development opportunities that have included:
 - Attendance at the 2020 Digital Past conference
 - Consultancy support with governance, business plans, funding applications and reviewing heritage interpretation across the area
 - Support with delivering quarterly community 'Then and Now' sessions

Legacy

The Conwy Heritage Forum is being reviewed as part of the development of the governance model for Creu Conwy. There is increased 3rd sector capacity; as an example the Colwyn Bay Heritage Group are exploring offering blended in-person and online community 'Then and Now' sessions and a potential project to renew and upgrade interpretation signage across the area is being considered.

Creu Conwy

A cultural strategy for Conwy has been developed; the process was informed by conversations with over 200 individuals and organisations. Built around **people, programmes and place** and the vision that **'Culture creates the spark for economic growth, wellbeing and connection'**, the strategy provides a 5 year framework and action plan which is underpinned by the principles of **adventurous, playful** and **connected** to inspire and support accessible cultural activity across the county.

In order to support delivery of the strategy at a local level, Abergelle, Colwyn Bay, Conwy, Llandudno and Llanrwst have been identified as cultural 'Launchpads' for the wider county. The approach has been pioneered in Colwyn Bay with the development of a Town Team creative alliance with a shared vision and action plan.

Legacy

Creu Conwy has embedded culture as a key driver for economic growth and wellbeing in Conwy. Several members of the Imagine Colwyn Bay Steering Group are represented on the new Colwyn Town Team; they will continue to lead on culturally-led regeneration and placemaking activity in the area. Learning is being shared to inform the approach in other areas around the county.

What we learned

Legacy where possible was embedded into the delivery of the project. In addition to the tangible outputs and creative assets that have been created there is a legacy of learning and collaborative working. In total over 20 partner organisations have contributed to the delivery of the project.

A summary of the key learnings from the project include:

- The dedicated project support offered by the Programme Co-ordinator role was essential for the scale of activity and delivery.
- The Steering Group's collective skills and influence was key but some gaps (particularly around business representation following the BID disbanding) impacted delivery.
- True community co-design takes time and is difficult to achieve in short project timescales.
- Adapting delivery due to the pandemic highlighted the importance of being flexible. There were positives from online delivery but the spontaneous and organic linkages that occur when face to face were missed.
- Appointing an evaluator early in the project was essential to developing a framework, ensuring focus on the approved purposes and that the requirements of the programme evaluation were met.
- Raising awareness and encouraging a culture of placemaking across all services and sectors is key to enabling delivery.
- The project area was determined by match-funder requirements. In future more consultation would be recommended to define a project area according to shared characteristics and sense of place.
- Effective communication is key for placemaking projects, but wide-ranging objectives and multiple stakeholders present a challenge and specialist input should be factored in for future projects.
- The importance of considering legacy at the outset and embedding into delivery should be appreciated.