

# EVALUATION REPORT

April 2022 – March 2023



the  
exchange



# LETTER FROM THE DIRECTORS

Dear all,

It is that time of the year again when we look back to see what we have achieved here at The Exchange and within Erith, and think about how we move forward.

This report covers the period from April 2022 to March 2023; an incredible year filled with some firsts, some nominations and some positive next steps, including a full 12-months of open **workshops**, our first **New Year's Eve** party, our first **wedding**, the launch of **AKWAABA** – a 10-month programme of activities and events exploring Ghanaian culture and heritage, the delivery of several incredible **craft commissions** to create furniture, tableware, tiles and window blinds, another amazing **ERITH MADE** festival, the launch of a **community choir** in collaboration with Theatre Box, a nomination for **Sustainable Project of the Year** from the Museum + Heritage Awards, a nomination for **National Chef of the Year** for our incredible Head Chef, and the award of **National Portfolio** status by the Arts Council.



We continue to work with some incredible local residents who volunteer their time to take the lead on key events, including **Pauline Brobbey** (AKWAABA), **Phil Hall** (The Carnegie Ensemble), **Colin Dyer** (Print Workshop/Life Drawing), **Usha Vella** (Festive decorations), **Richard Websdale** (Timber Workshop), **Hugh Neal** (Old Library History Tours), and **Mandy Johnson** (Crochet Corner/Wool + Wine); and continue to work with some incredible local partners that make what we do so much better including **Theatre Box Performing Arts Academy**, **Bexley Brewery**, **Youth Unity** and **Miskin**.

We also worked collaboratively with the Bexley Culture Network to develop a **manifesto for culture** in Bexley and are now working together on plans for 2025's **60<sup>th</sup> anniversary** of the borough of Bexley. Our partnership with the **Crafts Council** and the **Craft UK Network** is developing having led on a discussion about the social impact of craft. With our friends that form the **Erith Town Partnership** we delivered a **pop-up cinema** in the Riverside Shopping Centre, and have now formed a **new CIC** for the partnership creating more opportunity for bringing activity and investment into Erith.

In terms of our beautiful building, Erith's Old Library, the **community-hand-made bricks** made from construction waste were installed into the garden, the new **front railings and gates** were installed and the wall repaired, and the Timber Team have been making **tables and chairs** fitting for our proud heritage space, designed by design group **Mentsen**.



We have said some goodbyes this year – this includes farewells to **Alexei Hartley** who as Chair of the Board greatly supported the Directors through some challenging times and in providing invaluable guidance around brand and communications; **Louis Schultz-Wiremu** who as Head Gardener nursed the Sarah Price Garden through a tough first year; and more recently a farewell to **Lucy Fry** who as Operations + Events Manager built some incredible new local partnerships and went out on a high with a second **Here Comes the Sun** festival; and to **Jade Flannery** who as Town Partnership Coordinator has brought the town centre businesses and groups together and provided us with an exciting collaborative future.

And we have welcomed new people to the team. Our new Board Members include **Zohra Soorma** (previously an Exchange employee), **Aleem Baksh**, **Jennie Blake**, **Tim Stringer** and our new Chair **Emma-Jayne Taylor**. New members of the staff team include **Lilly Maetzig** (Sales + Marketing), **Colin Stewart** (Head Gardener) and **Marie-Clair Foley** (Garden Room Manager).

A massive thanks as ever to all the staff team and all the volunteer team for their enthusiasm, energy and dedication, to our funders for believing in what we are doing, and to all our shareholders and members that continue to visit us and support us each day. We couldn't do it without you.

Sarah + Peter



**Sarah Batten**  
Strategic Director



**Peter Nutley**  
Creative Director



# OUR THREE PILLARS

**Craft. Empowerment. Community.**

These are the three pillars that run through everything that we do. This is the way we keep our heritage as a community-built space, as a library, as a space for coming together alive.

## 1. CHANGE STARTS HERE (In a word: Empowerment.)

### THE BOARD

To be an empowering local organisation, we believe that local people must lead the organisation bringing not only professional expertise and knowledge but also a lived experience of Erith, the surrounding area, and the issues that we are trying to address.

We are really proud to have such a brilliant group of people on the Board who bring a diversity of experience and knowledge, and all share an ambition for The Exchange and Erith's future. Board Members give their time for a 3-year term.

This last year we have focused on developing a stronger reporting structure so that the Board can better understand how things are going against our local ambitions. Now – with Arts Council support – we have access to evaluation toolkits that we are putting into action.

To ensure we maintain a confident and forward-looking board we will this year focus on Board training in areas of weakness including green leadership. We will also be developing training opportunities to demystify what it means to be on a board, to encourage more local residents to take on a Board position in the future.



## WIDER VOLUNTEER PROGRAMME

Over this year, volunteers have contributed over 10,000 hours of support to The Exchange in many different ways including leading or supporting events, being volunteer makers in our workshops, being on the board and supporting with general operations. This equates to roughly 5 volunteers supporting us each day of a five-day week.



Recently we have redefined our volunteer roles – there is more work to do to communicate these opportunities – but in general these include:

The Makers – Those that make things in our workshops for use or sale.

The Gardeners – Those that care for our garden.

The Eventers – Those that lead or support our events programme.

The Operators – Those that help to keep the doors open and operating well behind the scenes.



## THE DEVELOPMENT LAB

### New Lab Workshop Programme

***“The best fundraising workshop I have attended in the last 7 years!”***

We continued to deliver the Development Lab workshops, which this year included 4 sessions in:

- Smartphone Photography
- Instagram Marketing
- Product Development
- Project Fundraising

51 people attended these workshops gaining skills to take their ideas for businesses and projects forward. This included some incredible ideas for local projects that require funding, including:

- Lewisham Arthouse capital renovation project
- A business to support families with autistic children
- An environmental project for Slade Green

***“The workshop was so informative and helpful!  
I have learnt so much and feel inspired to get started! - Thank you.”***

### Support Programme

Because of capacity, we had to reduce the one-to-one support to individuals with business proposals with social impact. However, one group that we have previously supported – Theatre Box Performing Arts Academy – was awarded Performing Arts School of the Year at the Prestige Awards, and another – The Wasteless Market – now have temporary space in Bexleyheath.

We have however been able to continue to offer reduced venue hire costs for groups with ideas for businesses or projects that have social impact; this year that has included:

- The Voices of the Makers Choir (new Theatre Box initiative)
- Unlikely Mummy / Wellbeing Within events
- Wasteless Market
- Parent2Parent
- Lauriann’s STEM Club
- ArtsTrain
- Youth Unity

The value of this support is c.£2,500, covered by funding provided by the Community Fund and the interest on Orbit’s community shares investment.



## ERITH TOWN PARTNERSHIP

The Town Partnership was initiated by The Exchange, and, with staff resource allocated to its development, has grown to now become its own legally constituted group. This has empowered local businesses – through collective action – to access funds for wider Erith. This includes £5K from Three Rivers towards ERITH MADE.

The Town Partnership is now responsible for delivering the joint town-wide programming which focuses on summer's ERITH MADE and an annual Festive Programme.



### Next year

- A focus on and allocated budget for staff development
- Clearer communications around volunteering opportunities and the skills development that is possible through support
- A training / support programme for potential and current Board members
- Find funding to grow the Development Lab workshop and support programme.



## 2. COMMUNITY CREATES CULTURE (In a word: Community.)

### COMMUNITY-LED EVENTS PROGRAMME

The Town Square continues to be activated with a diverse community-led programme, from dog shows to classical concerts. Here is a list of all the community-led events that have happened this year; collectively these incredible local residents have encouraged 9,523 visits to The Exchange, out of a total of c. 30,000.

Life Drawing Sessions (weekly)	Colin Dyer / Jonathan Batten
The Carnegie Ensemble Concerts (x3)	Phil Hall
Karaoke Nights	Jade Flannery / Manny Hedges
Quiz Nights	Jade Flannery
Voices of the Makers Choir	Jade Flannery / Theatre Box
No Frills Theatre (x2)	Andrew Hogarth
Dog biscuit making (ERITH MADE)	Sandra Hall
Louis Wain exhibition (ERITH MADE)	Ken and Kathy Hampson
Rosette making (ERITH MADE)	Anna Hall
E'Ruff Dog Show (ERITH MADE)	Anna Hall, Ashley Peterson
Keeping it Wheel (ERITH MADE)	Boyd Wardell, Men in Sheds
Send a friend a postcard (ERITH MADE)	Lauren Price
Vinyl Party (ERITH MADE)	Nick Davey
History Cycle Ride	Kevin Winch
Library of Sound (ERITH MADE)	Dave MacKinnon / Miskin's young people
Flower arranging with Usha	Usha Vella
Art of Life Drawing – exhibition	Colin Dyer / Life Drawing Group
Annual centrepieces exhibition	Centrepieces Mental Health Project
Festive Live Lounge	Dave MacKinnon / Miskin's young people
New Year's Eve Party	Nick Davey, Sarah Batten, Peter Nutley
A Night at the Movies	Bexley Music
Here Comes the Sun	Bexley Brewery / Miskin
A Sure Beginning (Akwaaba launch event)	Pauline Brobbey
Unlikely Mummy Market / Events	Kavita Trevena
Wasteless Markets	Teresa Ewert
Crossing Boundaries	David Tate, Eva Lis
Elaine Everest Talk	Elaine Everest
Old Library History Tours	Hugh Neal
Memories Talk	John White
Theatre Box Performing Arts Academy	Jade Flannery
Crochet Corner / Wool + Wine	Mandy Johnson

#### Next steps:

- To reinstate more decision-making powers to local residents – how we spend our budget relating to community-led events
- To continue to build and diversify the team of community event leaders.





### 3. CRAFT IS FOR EVERYONE (In a word: Craft.)

#### VOLUNTEER CRAFT WORKSHOPS

This has been the first full year where the workshops have been available for use, and they have been busy. The ethos behind the workshops is that they are free to access, but in return for skills development (working alongside some brilliant craftspeople) and use of the space, our craft volunteers (The Makers) make things that we can either use or sell. The things that The Makers have been making include:

- Tables, Chairs and exhibition board for the “Town Square” (our main space), designed by Mentsen
- Tableware for The Bookstore and for sale, designed by Jessica Thorn
- Tile for The Exchange and for sale, designed by Natalia Kasprzycka
- Window blinds for The Exchange, designed by Sara Kelly
- Prototyping for an artist exhibition – commissioned by IntoArt
- Embroidered bookmarks and coasters for sale
- Embroidered pictures for exhibition / sale
- Ceramic milk jugs for use in The Bookstore
- Candlesticks and vases made from foraged wood
- Crocheted blankets for use on The Bookstore patio
- Designs for and Lino-printed artwork for sale



## CRAFT 'EVENTS' / HERE COMES THE SUN

As well as our volunteer craft opportunities, we also provide one-off craft learning opportunities – some of these are paid-for/ticketed, some are drop-in. We will be expanding this programme in the year ahead, but this year, this has included Embroidery Classes, a Wreathing Workshop and a series of drop-in craft activities (Stool making, jug making, weaving, garden-inspired drawing, and tile making) as part of our craft festival Here Comes the Sun, a partnership with Bexley Brewery.



## CRAFT MARKETS

We also aim to support local crafters who are running their own craft businesses, and do this through our craft markets. Over the course of the year, we have provided stalls to 80 stallholders providing them with an opportunity to sell locally.

### Next steps:

- Increase and diversify participation through our various workshops
- Provide increased opportunities for young people
- Focus on sale of products to demonstrate the impact of our unique workshop model
- Build our craft event programme, providing opportunities for those that cannot commit time to volunteering.





## OUR AIMS

Our aims came out of community conversations and consultations. We have grouped these aims into four areas to streamline our reporting. These are:

- Culture + Heritage
- Climate Action
- Inclusion and wellbeing
- Innovation + ideas



## CULTURE + HERITAGE

*Relating to the following aims:*

- We actively seek out and champion cultural diversity
- We shine a light on and celebrate local heritages

Examples of what we've been up to:

- Tile Making using wild clay from the Thames
- Old Library History Tours
- Crossing Boundaries – Exhibition + Workshop (exploring Roma, Gypsy, Traveller culture and heritage)
- A Sure Beginning – the launch of our Ghanaian programme
- Elaine Everest talk – the author has set her novels in old Erith
- Memories Talk with local resident John White exploring the area's history
- Encouraging access to heritage sites at ERITH MADE (Playhouse, Rowing Club, St John's Church)





## CLIMATE ACTION

*Relating to the following aim:*

- We take action to tackle the climate emergency

Examples of what we've been up to:

- Plant Doctor events
- Terrarium making workshops
- Wasteless Markets
- Re-use / Recycle approach in craft workshops
- Wasted Museum activities and exhibitions
- Team Sikel keyring making (From old bicycle tyres)
- Repair + Rewear service (clothing/textiles repair)





## INCLUSION + WELLBEING

*Relating to the following aims:*

- We take action to tackle racism, lack of cohesion and inclusion
- We take action to tackle poor mental health, poor wellbeing and loneliness

Examples of what we've been up to:

- Culture Days programme
- Centrepieces Mental Health Project partnership
- Garden + Craft volunteer programme
- Warm space – The Town Square
- Unlikely Mummy Market
- Anna's Crafting Nook – family workshops
- Initiated a community choir in collaboration with Theatre Box

***“I find that volunteering in the workshops helps me to destress and if I can be doing something helpful for The Exchange, then that's great!”***

***“I am widowed and lockdown made it hard to get out and socialise. I'm finding my feet because of The Exchange.”***



## Our audience stats:

The below tables show our audience data against 2021 census data for Bexley.

### Ethnicity

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>2022/23 audience figures</b>	<b>2021 census data for surrounding area</b>
<b>White (British, Irish, Other white)</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>72%</b>
<b>Black / Black British</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>12%</b>
<b>Asian / Asian British</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Mixed / Multiple Ethnic</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>4%</b>
<b>Other ethnic</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>2%</b>
<b>Prefer not to say / not known</b>	<b>1%</b>	
<b>Not answered</b>	<b>7%</b>	

### Age

<b>Age bracket</b>	<b>2022/23 audience figures</b>	<b>2021 census data for surrounding area</b>
<b>Under-16s*</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>19%</b>
<b>16 – 24</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>11%</b>
<b>25 - 34</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>13%</b>
<b>35 - 44</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>14%</b>
<b>45 - 54</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>14%</b>
<b>55 - 64</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>12%</b>
<b>65 +</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>17%</b>
<b>Prefer not to say/not answered</b>	<b>6%</b>	

*\*(under-16s rarely surveyed so figures will be skewed)*

### Disability

<b>Are your day to day activities limited because of a health condition or disability?</b>	<b>2022/23 volunteer figures</b>	<b>2021 census data for surrounding area</b>
<b>No</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>84.6%</b>
<b>Yes, limited a little</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>8.8%</b>
<b>Yes, limited a lot</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>6.6%</b>
<b>Prefer not to say</b>	<b>4%</b>	

The below tables show our volunteer data against 2021 census data for Bexley.

### Ethnicity

Ethnicity	2022/23 volunteer figures	2021 census data for surrounding area
White (British, Irish, Other white)	56%	72%
Black / Black British	6%	12%
Asian / Asian British	11%	10%
Mixed / Multiple Ethnic	4%	4%
Other ethnic	18%	2%
Prefer not to say / not known	5%	

### Age

Age bracket	2022/23 volunteer figures	2021 census data for surrounding area
Under-16s*	Not applicable	19%
16 – 24	5%	11%
25 - 34	14%	13%
35 - 44	7%	14%
45 - 54	24%	14%
55 - 64	24%	12%
65 +	20%	17%
Prefer not to say/not answered	6%	

*\*(under-16s rarely surveyed so figures will be skewed)*

### Disability

Are your day to day activities limited because of a health condition or disability?	2022/23 volunteer figures	2021 census data for surrounding area
No	72%	84.6%
Yes, limited a little	19%	8.8%
Yes, limited a lot	5%	6.6%
Prefer not to say	4%	

### Next steps:

- Continue to reach out to underrepresented groups, encouraging leadership within The Exchange
- Source funding for a Schools / Young Person's programme
- Improve our reporting / evaluation processes to ensure data collection is consistent across the year
- Encourage "audiences" to become "participants", and measure quality and depth of participation
- Better measure the mental health benefits of our work



HERE  
COMES  
THE SUN  
2023  
AT THE EXCHANGE

# TODAY'S LIVE MUSIC:

5pm THE VOICES OF THE MAKERS  
CHOIR

3.45pm MARIAN THE IMPOSTERS

5.30pm PLOPMAH BAND



WE WILL BE TAKING PHOTOS ACROSS HERE  
COMES THE SUN 2023.

THESE PHOTOS MAY BE USED ON BEXLEY  
BREWERY'S AND THE EXCHANGE'S SOCIAL  
MEDIA AND WEBSITE.

IF YOU DO NOT WANT TO BE  
PHOTOGRAPHED, PLEASE LET A MEMBER OF  
STAFF KNOW.

## INNOVATION + IDEAS

*Relating to the following aim:*

- We support local innovation + ideas

Examples of what we've been up to:

- Community-led events programme
- Development Lab workshops and support programme



Next steps

- Source funding to further develop the Development Lab programme, including for young people
- Improve our processes around the community-led programming, empowering people and groups and sustaining activity beyond our funding

