

# Arts at the Farm

A pilot arts programme created for and with the community at Broadwater Farm Estate

July 2023 - May 2024  
Project Report



# Contents

1. Key achievements
2. Summary of Recommendations
3. About The South North CIC
4. Introduction
5. Background and Development
6. Delivery
7. Community Feedback and Response
  - Interview data
  - Workshop survey data
8. Conclusion and Recommendations

Front cover: painting by Henry Murdock

"I'm so proud of what we've been able to do...I didn't imagine this could happen... it's amazing, I can't stop smiling"

Arts at the Farm resident and focus group member

## Key Achievements

- 16 events delivered, spanning workshops across art mediums, resident consultations, and indoor and outdoor public exhibitions.
- Over 90 adults and children engaged, representing a diverse range of people.
- 3 consultation opportunities with action taken.
- Set-up of a dedicated Broadwater Farm arts, culture and heritage focus group.
- 4 Broadwater Farm resident artists supported, and artworks exhibited.
- Trusted community connections and relationships developed.
- Community art space created on Broadwater Farm for the whole neighbourhood to enjoy.
- External and internal exhibition of community artwork installed.
- Collaboration with community stakeholders such as the Willows Primary School, Harmony Gardens and Bruce Castle Museum.

## Recommendations

1. Take advantage of new public exhibition space Community Canvas to show resident artwork and increase resident ownership of space.
2. Early involvement of Focus Group in cultural decision making on the estate for more successful engagement.
3. Continue to offer workshops in accordance with the interest and needs communicated by residents to increase participation.
4. Source artwork from existing Broadwater Farm artists -- and open the call to further artists -- for physical regeneration projects including for Borough of Culture.
5. Redisplay of the artworks produced during the pilot



## **Delivered by The South North CIC**

The South North CIC (TSN) was appointed to deliver the Arts at the Farm pilot work. TSN is a global majority organisation that holds over 35 years combined experience of working within arts, education and heritage, for communities that have been marginalised.

TSN works with Local Authorities, education providers and organisations to support a specific approach that places community-led need and interest at the forefront, aiming to get to know and build relationships with communities rather than focusing on an outcome driven agenda.

Experience demonstrates that outcome driven approaches tend to meet the needs of specific parties whilst leaving others out of the frame or feeling abandoned when projects end or specific goals are met. TSN believes in a long-term approach that supports the development of genuine trust and respect to better support ideas that are led and shaped by voices in the community nurturing skills, that then impact long term equitable change.

## Introduction

Arts at the Farm was a 6-month pilot project which enabled the council to test out community appetite for, and feasibility of, a longer-term arts and culture programme at Broadwater Farm.

Motivation for this pilot was three-fold:

1. To **open up new lines of community engagement and communication** with a specific focus around the murals on the estate, the potential for these to be moved, re-considered, re-produced. This was triggered by the Estate Improvement Programme and the need to sensitively remove the Harmony Mosaic Mural on Tangmere as well as consider future options for the two much loved painted murals on buildings subject to refurbishment works.
2. To **inspire new channels of connection and wellbeing, and nurture interests and resilience amongst the community**, in acknowledgement of the extended, ongoing impacts of regeneration, in order to foster better communication between the community and the council. The pilot recognised the existing pressures that residents face (work, finance, family). It hoped to support residents to influence future art on the estate and encourage a sense of ownership of their surroundings.
3. To **widen participation**. The pilot sought to connect with a wide range of community members, particularly those who would otherwise not engage in arts-based activities. The pilot also aimed to connect and build relationships with residents who did not actively engage with the regeneration processes so that their feedback and comment could be captured.

“Please do more, we can get together and talk about painting and art and expand the conversation.”

Broadwater Farm older resident



## Background

The pilot project was initially commissioned by the Broadwater Farm regeneration team to allow residents to make decisions surrounding Broadwater Farm's existing murals and thereby support increased participation with estate regeneration. The aims of the project were as follows:

- To engage with residents and share an update on the status and plans for the Harmony Music Mosaic on Tangmere.
- To engage with residents to share the impact of the refurbishment programme on the Rochford Peace Mural and Debden Waterfall Mural.
- To set up a working group to consider the approach, including setting out options and a timeline, and what to include in a brief of works.
- Deliver 6 weekly taster workshops at speed to deliver the above, using a variety of mediums from painting to clay as appropriate.

The approach to the pilot shifted iteratively during delivery so that the workshops and resident engagement was directly linked to the various regeneration priorities. As an example, the primary focus was initially the two painted murals, but as there was a delay in a decision from Historic England, workshops shifted to more story-telling and local history, using the hoarding around the mural storage unit as a canvas. The changing course of the pilot was led by feedback from the Focus Group and workshop participants.



## Programme Approach

An open approach to **differing expressive mediums and event formats** worked to provide access to a range of arts activities, offering spaces for connection, relationship and skills development, increased conversation and communication around various aspects salient to residents during the regeneration period and beyond. Avenues that began to be explored as opportune moments for arts and culture to work closely with the regeneration are elaborated on in the Conclusion and Recommendations section.

In consultation with residents and the regeneration team – and working collaboratively with Wheely Tots / the Moselle Community Project, their volunteers and regular attendees – we delivered monthly workshops. **A slower, considerate approach helped to ensure relevance, with the aim of encouraging community buy-in over and beyond the life of the pilot.**

**The workshops emphasised quality,** facilitated by leading artists, including Bhajan Hunjan (currently exhibiting at Tate Modern), Shepherd Manyika (artist in residence at Wysing Arts Centre) and author and artist Tessa Hunkin whose commissions appear at Westminster Cathedral, London Zoo and across East London. Additionally, workshops were supported by local artists including Mark Applegate and Nao Matsunaga. Workshop attendance by residents and broader community members rose consistently over the pilot. This provided the regeneration team with the means to engage with residents outside of usual channels / situations, with solid relationships developed with those keen to support a continuing programme.

## Programme Approach cont.

**It was important that the project was integrated with the community and their experience of living on the estate.** A resulting exhibition of the work created during the pilot, alongside a celebration of four resident artists' work, was led by, created and installed by organisers and community members. This work has created pride for those involved, it directly answered resident requests (e.g., brightening up bin areas, celebrating residents) and has inspired interest to engage from those who are learning about the programme for the first time. Alongside this, it has increased appetites for a continuing, broader project which holds relevance to residents' lives.

The South North has previously worked locally in Tottenham and **invests in all its connections with local community for the long term.** Throughout the pilot programme, the possibility of an ongoing arts programme was given which helped to bolster engagement and create excitement. There is rich potential for a continuing programme that is inclusive across residents and does not negate input from those community members who have given time, thought, work and passion to this project so far.

"These workshops help loneliness, I only know one neighbour."

Broadwater Farm resident  
and mother of 3



## Delivery

A total of 16 events were delivered including:

- 6 public workshops to gauge, respond and support community interest in different art forms. Participation included residents of Broadwater Farm as well as neighbouring communities, encouraging interaction between neighbours. There was a high number of women and families.
- 3 portrait and story sessions to shine a light on those living at the Farm and their stories
- 3 workshops with the Willow Primary School, supporting the relationship between the school and the council, whilst encouraging appreciation of art and artistic talent in children.
- 1 community day, supporting the Residents Association, the Independent Tenant Leaseholder Advisors and the Council reach out to Broadwater Farm residents.
- 2 focus group and interview sessions with residents (alongside 4 consultations and consistent evaluation)
- A celebration event to open the indoor and outdoor exhibition, showcasing the achievements of workshop attendees, including a semi-permanent photography exhibition on hoarding on the Estate.
- A field trip to the Tate Gallery in Central London with residents, as well as locally to Bruce Castle Museum, providing residents with opportunities to go beyond Broadwater Farm for a broader experience and appreciation.



## Delivery (cont.)

There were nine workshops in total.

Of these, seven were delivered at Broadwater Farm Community Centre focusing on zine-making, collages, mosaics, clay, portrait and story-telling sessions. Two were delivered off site, at Bruce Castle Museum and a walking tour around the Estate.

At each session, the Moselle Community Project, (a Broadwater Farm Estate based community project delivering amongst other things a foodbank, community café and cycling classes) provided a hot meal and supported the welcoming atmosphere. This bolstered the aspiration of widening community activities in this important community facility.

Across the workshops over 90 adults and children took part, made mosaics, sculptures, drawings and zines, learning new skills with an additional 11 children engaged with the Willow Primary project. Great interest was taken in exploring the history of Broadwater Farm through the archives at Bruce Castle Museum. At each session we had a majority of Farm residents in attendance, a mix of backgrounds, families and individuals.

The exhibition event attracted over 70 attendees, including residents who had not taken part in the project.

Via the partnership with the Moselle Community Project, trusted relationships have developed with service users leading to increased participation in activities, greater opportunities for conversation and the chance to directly nurture personal creative interests. In addition, support was given by Arts at the Farm to two creative practitioners and regulars at Moselle who started to deliver their own arts and crafts activities for the Friday sessions. These are growing in popularity and are a fantastic contribution that can also be built and expanded on. Artwork from these additional sessions were shown as part of the final exhibition event.



## Community Feedback and Response

Evaluation of the pilot took place via feedback forms following each workshop session, through a mix of interview and anecdotal evidence gathered through conversations with community members, residents, staff at the Children's Centre and the Community Centre.

Consultations ensured resident participation in decisions that would affect their physical spaces, such as the decoration on the mosaic storage units hoarding (exhibition area), the naming of the space (Community Canvas), and the selection of Inga Bystram's paintings to show on the estate. In addition, opportunities were given at the Community Day, the exhibition event and all workshop sessions for attendees to suggest the kinds of arts activities they would like to take part in.



## Community Feedback and Response (cont.)

### Interview and conversations revealed:

- The clear need for residents to feel pride in the estate, for the estate to be better understood by authorities and the broader public.
- Joy in being useful and recognised for the individual skills and talents that residents have and can bring to a community project.
- Real interest in a continuation of the mosaic workshop, with ideas of installing residents' artworks across the estate.
- Most residents spoken to are happy on the estate and have raised children who have successful careers, who have moved "up the ladder", this latter point often raised to counter felt negative stereotypes of Broadwater Farm..
- There is a lack of understanding and disconnect between the varying cultural communities in BWF and a desire for more connectedness.
- A hesitation in joining up to Council run workshops as "We are always being asked (by the council) to do things." This comment related to requests for resident feedback around the regeneration, revealing a sense that more is being asked of residents than given to them.
- More spaces on the estate need to be used for art - undercroft, empty walls etc. There are younger artists on the estate who are keen to have a space to show graffiti and murals (the newly named Community Canvas could be used for this).
- Messaging in general is that the workshops and the art programme are needed and a good thing. Hopes are high for it to continue.
- The offer of food alongside the activities has been popular.



Resident portraiture exhibition. Displayed at Community Canvas space.

## Community Feedback and Response (cont.)

**Feedback forms asked participants to describe their workshop experience in three words. Key and repeated words included:**

Social, relaxing, inspiring, fantastic, beautiful, special, achievement, community, connection, happy, fascinating, informative, interactive, connecting, mind-opening, amazing, makes me feel proud.

**To the question, What could we do more?, participants responded:**

Come back, deliver more, more workshops, more tools, more time, keep children quiet.



## Workshops of interest

Forms to gauge interest in different activities were handed out at 4 events. Suggested activities were listed with space to add additional ideas. 34 forms were completed with the following outcomes showing that Dance, Painting and Cooking garner the most interest, with Photography and Clay-making a close second:

Dance		12
Music		9
Painting		12
Cooking		12
Sculpture (wood)		6
Photography		11
Clay making		11
Performance /theatre		3
Circus		3
Any other not listed here - one vote each unless specified	Candle making and cross stitching Diamond Painting and paper crafting Community Conversation Health Education Gymnastics Hairdressing Volleyball Jewellery More mosaics Sports / black history Female cultures Fashion / catwalk shows	

## Conclusion and Recommendations

This programme enabled residents and broader community members to come together, to talk, share moments of support, to showcase existing and to learn new skills. Participants felt valued as a part of the community, feeling safer and more at home on the estate. It has created excitement, put huge smiles on residents' faces, increased pride for those who took part and keen interest from those who didn't.

Large sections of the resident community missed opportunities to engage. As a pilot programme, the project required time to build relationships on the estate and connect with a wider range of residents outside the council's usual communication channels. But as shown in the feedback, the pilot went a long way in forging new connections and relationships, still more needs to be done to increase an ongoing presence / awareness of opportunity.

Seizing on the momentum built, and the excitement around the outdoor exhibition, with further activities and moments of creative engagement, would be a powerful way to continue nurturing relationships between residents and the Council.

The pilot successfully demonstrated that there is an appetite on Broadwater Farm for resident participation in a broad offer of arts and culture. The recommendation based on this positive delivery is continued delivery of a range of arts based activities, aligned wherever possible with the ongoing regeneration, to continue to bring residents together and help contribute to a more open and positive relationship between council and residents over this extended period of upheaval.



Our Five Recommendations are detailed as follows:

- 1. Community Canvas - enable a changing exhibition schedule**
- 2. Arts, Culture & Heritage Focus Group - sustain resident influence on art on the estate**
- 3. Workshops - ongoing delivery of arts, culture and heritage workshops**
- 4. Regeneration Programme related projects with an arts, culture and heritage theme**
- 5. Redisplay of artworks already produced**

# 1. Community Canvas

The Community Canvas is the hoarding around the temporary Mosaic storage unit. The name "Community Canvas" was coined by the residents themselves as part of the pilot project process.

The Community Canvas is a "rotating exhibition" space, an opportunity to present different community art, with changing exhibits on a regular temporary basis. The advantage is that it is outdoors, and therefore open to the public at all times, without any barriers of travel or cost.

The Community Canvas area has the potential to be used to **show more resident created art, or artists invited by residents** - with ownership of the space and the schedule held by (for example) the arts focus group.

Broadwater Farm resident Henry Murdock created paintings that were showcased as part of the launch day which would be appropriate to recreate in outdoor format for this purpose. Another example of how the Community Canvas could be used is to further explore the future options for the he Peace and Waterfall murals. Another opportunity might be, to connect with the current work carried by out by heritage consultant firm DBR responsible for the restoration of the Harmony Mosaic of DBR to consider the re-positioning of the Harmony mosaic.

These are just three examples of future arts, heritage and culture related installations for the public exhibition space.







## 2. Arts, Culture and Heritage Focus Group

The focus group formed to steer the pilot project has empowered residents to consider influencing arts related projects on Broadwater Farm, including the type of public art on display and resident participation in a variety of arts activities within Broadwater Farm as well as externally.

The council should **continue consulting the group** for their insight on regeneration by meeting with them.



Visitors interacting with Community Canvas exhibition space

### 3. Workshops and trips

The South North would recommend **a continued programme of workshops that can embed and connect with the interests outlined in the feedback.** It is important to keep **these social spaces that are both relevant to residents and support skills development, but crucially that underpin and support a broader focus on wellbeing.** Cultural projects could therefore be linked to ongoing workstreams at the council focusing on health.

Through the work delivered, we feel strongly that **more than one creative offer should be open to residents to combat exclusion,** by embedding accessible opportunities for residents to participate, giving them a sense of belonging with opportunities to share their own expertise with like-minded people.

The workshop themes selected by residents should be used as a basis for exploring the multiple cultural experiences of residents, and in response to - and recognition of - resident choice. In accordance with feedback, activities should target the existing disconnect and build on interest shown to increase participation and engagement, and reflect community needs.

We have learnt from the pilot that the benefits of

active participation in the workshops are manifold and include:

- Opportunities for residents to engage with the Council on decision-making about the Estate.
- Opportunities for neighbours to connect with one another
- Improvement of health and wellbeing, particularly mental health. The nature of quiet work, without direct eye contact can provide a safe space for participants to share thoughts and feelings in an easy manner.
- A wider range of attendees, residents from different demographics come along to participate who might not have previously connected with Council services. This has a positive effect on equalities and diversity, as well as fitting in with the aspirations of the Haringey Deal.
- Opportunities for residents to try out new art activities, develop new skills or improve existing artistic talents.

Resident response to an organised trip to Tate Britain has been very high, with places booked before advertising began in earnest. Arts based group visits can really support existing resident trips organised by the council. Organising a trip once or twice a year would provide an active focus on wellbeing, broaden horizons, support connections and generate increased interest in a broader arts programme.

## 4. Connection with broader regeneration plans

Throughout the pilot, suggestions came from both residents and Council staff as to how residents could influence and shape their surroundings. Pathways for this were not always clear - this could well be due to changing schedules. Extended lead-in times are useful to **enable the fantastic opportunities for residents to get involved** with a realistic idea of the extent of the opportunity being made clear from the start. Examples of upcoming works include floor signage, drying room decor and paint colourways.

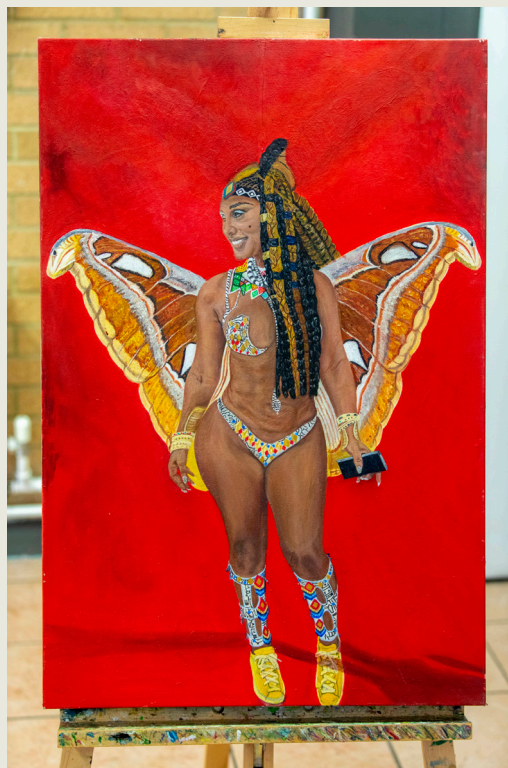
### Haringey Borough of Culture 2027

It is now known that Haringey will be the Borough of Culture in 2027. The current development of ideas for arts and culture on Broadwater Farm connect well with this target. Arts projects developed will fit well with the wider borough plans and aspirations including for example ideas about using art to transform the ground floor parking or undercroft spaces, or using the estate as a fashion catwalk, or using the flank walls of the blocks as blank canvases to exhibit work.

The Borough bid includes a section on Broadwater Farm, with residents, the art community and the council working together to deliver benefits for all. There is great opportunity to build on the work already started through this pilot to support these aims.



Carnival Lady  
Henry Murdock



## 5. Re-display of artwork produced

The works created as part of the Community Canvas exhibition are durable and can be re-mounted in suitable locations around the estate. The Portraits of the Farm exhibition, in particular, attracted a great degree of interaction, with further residents showing interest in taking part. If relocated, the project could be expanded and the space vacated for the next Community Canvas project (we have suggested Henry Murdock).

Quilt Club: separately there is an exploration of textiles as a medium of art, culture and heritage. Workshops have run regularly on a weekly basis at Broadwater Farm Community Centre. A separate report will be available at the end of that pilot. Broader resident engagement from those already interested in the arts programme could be fostered to integrate the project more broadly.

## 5. Ongoing Arts & Culture Programme

It is fantastic that the Council are keen to embed a cultural programme that can support the wellbeing of their residents, skills development and to increase connection and lines of communication between themselves and residents. **Setting out to deliver this with expected return of residents participating in council matters as a planned outcome, can serve to undermine a sense of trust and care.** Several Broadwater Farm residents spoken to feel a sense of distrust, feel that the estate is still misunderstood and generally have a lack of faith in the Council. These feelings hamper the genuine approaches demonstrated by current, on the ground Council staff. By supporting residents via a programme that honestly builds on their ideas demonstrates



an ongoing commitment that places resident interest above expected return.

TSN feels strongly that residents are aware of what they are interested in. Regeneration on the estate must avoid prescribing arts in a patronising manner: specifically, **not applying externally generated ideas without resident input.** Art should not act only as a spectacle but should function to improve resident lives in line with the Regeneration team's existing approach. Residents are fully aware in the long term of decisions being made about their homes and estate they believe may not be in their best interests; a tiredness in response to this shouldn't be mistaken for ignorance and an inability or reluctance to get involved shouldn't be mistaken for being unaware of or disinterested in arts practice.

Inevitably, **through longer term, non-transactional giving and space for residents to grow, trust is reinforced, and lines of communication solidified and strengthened,** leading to more productive relationships between authorities and communities that can produce some genuinely meaningful, great art along the way. The potential for Broadwater Farm as a model partnership between the on the ground Council staff and residents is exciting and important. The pilot programme, through its development with on the ground council staff and residents has already moved this forward into a space of connection and opportunity. TSN hopes that this work will be supported and allowed to continue.

## Relevant reading and case studies

A cultural partnership between Broadwater Farm and the Council has the potential to create a **new model of working**. Long term TSN collaborator Imogen Slater, of Art of Regeneration (an organisation that works with councils and arts organisations to evaluate programmes, support and inform organisational change) comments that, "often, Councils support area-focused delivery rather than focusing on individual estates and these days, tend to support other organisations to deliver the work." This project allows exciting opportunity to directly foster a new working relationship with Broadwater Farm residents and the Council.

- In 1981 **Co-oPepys** was established in response to an outreach project by the Albany Empire to increase access to the arts, and to nurture community life. A colourful programme including arts workshops, festivals, dance classes, and theatre productions arrived on Pepys estate, with the aim of bringing people together "to work and play in a spirit of celebration". Co-oPepys, developed and maintained by residents, is still going today, with an art space (previously Daubeney Tower's caretakers rooms) hosting a regular art club, artist residencies and workshops.

<https://coopepys.org>

- Part of **Lewisham's Borough of Culture: Artists for Change** took an interesting approach to partnering council teams and artists. Read it in the pamphlet Catalysts For Change - Greater London Authority (downloadable [here](#))
- Culture and Placemaking Report by **Centre for Cultural Value**
- The work of **Havering Council** in fostering grass roots / hyperlocal approaches has been particularly successful.

<https://creativebasildon.co.uk/projects/>



Pepys Estate in Deptford London



illustration from Artists for Change

# Index I: Location of activations

● Community Centre

● ● ● ● Inge Bystram works

■ Community Canvas exhibitions





## Index II: Inga Bystram artworks



Artworks for walls on blocks (L-R): Debden,  
Hawkinge, Hornchurch and Hawkinge