

Impact Report

We Are Lewisham

London Borough of Culture 2022

London Borough of Culture is a Mayor of London initiative

- Mayor of London

Presented by

- Lewisham
- the Albany

Accessible PDF version



Lewisham's year as London Borough of Culture

Website: wearelewisham.com

Cover iamge: Manuel Vason

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Foreword

Sadiq Khan

Mayor of London



When I was elected in 2016, we immediately made expanding access to London's worldclass culture a priority. Inspired by the successes of the European Capital of Culture, we wanted to shine a light on the talent, innovation and artistry in all of London's boroughs and ensure more Londoners, from a wider range of backgrounds, could get involved. This is exactly what London Borough of Culture does – it brings diverse communities together, gives grassroots creativity the chance to shine and shows how culture can inspire and unleash the potential of young Londoners.

I announced Lewisham would be London Borough of Culture back in February 2020. Back then, we could not have imagined the challenges that COVID-19 would bring to our cities and our communities. What the pandemic did show us is the importance and the power of culture – to connect us, inspire us, lift our spirits and act as a vehicle for positive change.

It has been wonderful to see how Lewisham has seized this power, putting cultural activism at the heart of a programme built by residents and communities, with over 200 partners and 600 events taking place in venues, parks and streets –

widening access to the arts and truly bringing culture to everyone's doorstep.

We Are Lewisham demonstrated how culture has the power to spur us into action on the most important matters facing us today, including climate change and the right to clean air. The incredible artwork 'Breathe: 2022' movingly reminded us that air pollution isn't an abstract threat, but a matter of life and death.

The programme truly put Lewisham on the map as a cultural destination, highlighting local treasures and presenting internationally acclaimed work. The award-winning 'Sun & Sea' had its UK premiere in Lewisham, after winning the Venice Biennale's top award, the Golden Lion. 'People's Day' brought tens of thousands of Londoners to Mountsfield Park, with its joyous combination of great music, amazing art and food from all over the world. And 'LIT!' brought the year to a spectacular end, with light shows, puppetry, circus and spectacle, bringing the community together.

London Borough of Culture has never simply been a year-long festival. It is also a deep programme of change, enabling councils to reimagine what role culture can play in how they engage their communities and deliver their services. This was embodied in 'Artists of Change', which invited artists into Lewisham council to discover new ways of communicating with and listening to residents.

We Are Lewisham has brilliantly demonstrated the value of culture to society, while opening it up to more Londoners. It has shown how investing in culture means that you invest in the local economy, in the health and wellbeing of Londoners, in communities, and in the next generation. This will truly be the impact and legacy that London Borough of Culture leaves in Lewisham.

"The programme truly put Lewisham on the map as a cultural destination"

Foreword

Damien Egan

Mayor of Lewisham



When we were developing our bid to be the London Borough of Culture, we knew that we wanted to use the opportunity to celebrate the things that make Lewisham unique; our creativity, our diverse communities and our proud history of standing up for the values that matter to us.

Little did we know just how important those values would become as just a few months later, the global pandemic struck, impacting our residents and business in a way that none of us had experienced before.

We delayed our programme by a year, and at the start of 2022 **celebrating our borough felt more important than ever.** There was a weight of responsibility to make the most of this opportunity and the focus on our part of south London to benefit our residents, our communities and our businesses – particularly our creative and hospitality sectors.

For me, the thing that stood out most clearly was the appetite and enthusiasm for events that brought our community together. As the year went on and more and more creative organisations, community groups and individuals took part in or hosted events, there was a genuine buzz about the borough.

From the start, we were clear that local people should be at the heart of our programme, and they came out in force. More than 400,000 people took part, and together we hosted over 600 brilliant events right across Lewisham, from Deptford to Downham, in our venues, libraries, parks and high streets.

More than 8,000 young people were directly supported with training and careers advice to access jobs in the creative sector. Our legendary free festival, 'People's Day' returned, with over 30,000 people joining us for a beautifully sunny afternoon celebrating local talent.

Our Climate Emergency programme got people actively talking and engaging with climate issues in a creative and inspiring way. Hundreds of local businesses who have got involved told us they've benefitted from people re-discovering their local area.

But it's the stories and relationships formed that show the true impact. Like the residents of The Swallows care home in Catford who got involved in 'The Home Roadshow'; the community choir formed for 'Sun & Sea'; and the young people from the Pepys Estate who were mentored by fashion designer **Romero Bryan**. Most importantly of all, at a difficult time for so many, we came together and had fun!

2022 was just the start. We are committed to continuing our work with the Mayor of London and Greater London Authority and thank them for their support and commitment to Lewisham.



Images: Manuel Vason

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Thank yous

GAIA



Contents image: Ellie Kurtz

Introduction

Lewisham was the Mayor's London Borough of Culture 2022. The year-long cultural programme, We Are Lewisham, was a celebration of the borough's history, people and place. Led by Lewisham Council and the Albany and created by the people of the borough, it was inspired by Lewisham's history of activism and about highlighting the power of culture to create change.

Planned and delivered in the aftermath of the COVID pandemic, the programme was hugely anticipated and bravely ambitious. Over 12 months, 16 key strands responded to three themes with over 600 events shaped by thousands of the borough's artists, residents, schools, businesses and organisations.

This report is a snapshot of the year.

It's impossible to do justice to all that happened. Instead, it tries to offer insights into the breadth and depth of the programme and its impact – the ways it was meaningful, enjoyable, valuable and sometimes challenging.

Like the programme, creating this has been a collaborative process. Shaped by evaluation partner **Art of Regeneration**, it draws together data and feedback from lots of people involved in different ways – as audience members, participants, creatives, partners and producers.

Together, we want to consider what the year tells us about the value of arts and culture in Lewisham and how this is informing what happens next.

Themes

- **We will protect this place we love:**
a call to action on climate change
- **We are strengthened by our diversity:**
a celebration of our Borough of Sanctuary
- **We will be happy here:**
a commitment to building an inclusive society

Aims

Optimism, wellbeing and confidence

Feeling Better: Individuals, communities and the whole borough are provided with a platform for celebration, re-booting our sense of joy and collective confidence post-COVID, and supporting people to gain new skills and experiences.

Lewisham on the map

Looking Better: A strengthened sense of pride and ambition for Lewisham as a place to live, work or visit. A re-energised local economy and a more compelling profile of the borough as a destination of choice. Heritage is identified and better explained.

No one left behind

Hearing Better: The understanding and support that exists between our communities is strengthened. Our programme of cultural activities enables us to reach a wide range of people and provide new and positive insights into the diversity that defines us as a borough.

Standing up for what's right

Doing Better: People unite with a shared sense of purpose, using culture as a catalyst for positive social change.

Close To Home: The Mass Dance Event



Images: EllieKurtz

Welcome to Lewisham

To build an inclusive programme, understanding the context of the borough was key. Below is a snapshot of some of the considerations.

Richly diverse

Lewisham is young and diverse with a fast-growing population of 300,600, including 20% who do not speak English as their main language. It was the first in the UK to be named a Sanctuary Borough, for its commitments to refugee resettlement.

A borough of independent neighbourhoods

One of London's largest boroughs, it is made up of independent communities with distinct identities. With residents identifying as being from Deptford or Downham, from Catford or Forest Hill, uniting Lewisham under a shared identity was key.

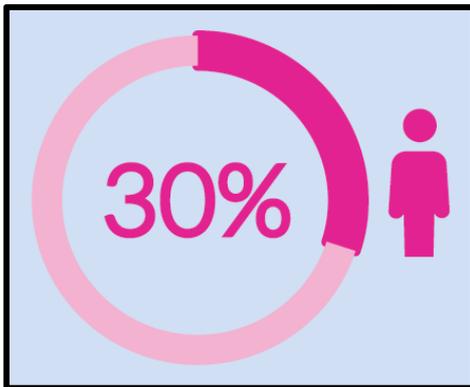
A creative hub

Lewisham is home to influential cultural institutions **Trinity Laban; Goldsmiths, University of London; the Horniman Museum and Gardens;** and **the Albany**, with over 3,000 visual artists living and making work in the borough. However, with varying levels of cultural provision and concentrations around Deptford and New Cross, it was crucial that the programme reached across all 19 wards, to the benefit of all residents.

A proud history

Lewisham has a rich social history, influenced by waves of migration. From the work of Lewisham suffragette Rosa-May Billingham, to the 1977 Battle of Lewisham and the Rock Against Racism movement, instances of activism have gone on to spark change felt across the UK and internationally.

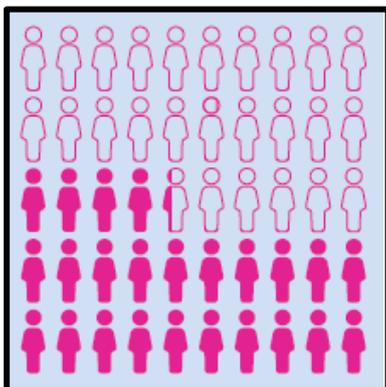
30% residents aged 0–24



170 languages spoken



48.5% identify as Black, Asian, Arab or mixed heritage



Top 10 Languages

- English
- Arabic
- French
- Pashto
- Portuguese
- Romanian
- Somali
- Spanish
- Tamil
- Turkish

[Page 9 of the standard print version contains a map]



[The map above shows the following areas:

- Deptford
- New Cross
- Lewisham
- Catford
- Forest Hill
- Sydenham
- Downham

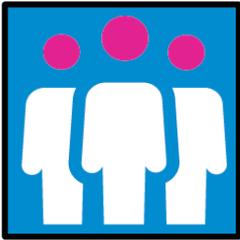
A circle is drawn around these areas: Lewisham, Catford, Forest Hill plus part of New Cross and Downham]

Our year in numbers

696 events



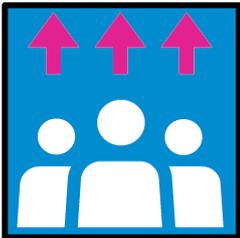
436,294 audiences and participants (in-person)



92% local schools involved



8,854 young people supported



474,657 digital audiences



15 million + public art views



1,800+ volunteers



10,000+ volunteer hours



200+ partner organisations



520 participating local businesses



4 million + views of media coverage



Over **£4 million** inward investment (grant funding received)



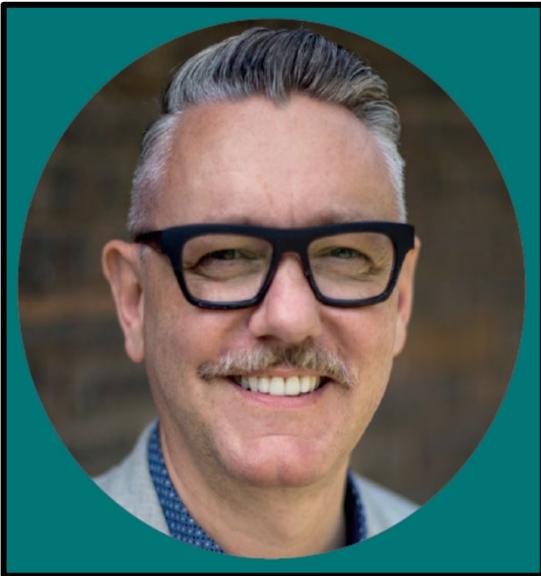
The above are minimum figures, collected as of February 2023.

The Programme

- **696** events
- **436,294** audiences and participants

How we made **We Are Lewisham**

Gavin Barlow



Vicki Dela Amedume MBE



A year-long celebration of culture across a whole borough raises many expectations and prompts more than a few questions. Who is it for? What is it expecting to achieve?

A successful London Borough of Culture year needs to connect to larger strategies, meet the needs of multiple stakeholders, and create a tangible legacy. More importantly, it needs to bring people together, create joyful shared moments, express the uniqueness of a place, spark new ideas and aspirations, and have a lasting impact for the people involved and more widely for local communities.

In the summer of 2019, the team sat in a stuffy basement office, trying to distil big ideas onto tiny post-its as part of an attempt to outline the qualities that define Lewisham. An initial provocation was spread far and wide for people to respond to. It was around the theme of home – what does Lewisham mean to you? We held open engagement sessions and invited residents to respond with ideas.

What came back was much more interesting than what had been originally put out. It led us to think about the borough's radical history and the idea of Lewisham as a place that stands up for things that are important – giving us the starting point for a programme built around the core theme of Cultural Activism.

With the breadth of people involved, putting the bid together felt like a real co-creation process, involving the Council, arts organisations, and local people. Like most successful co-creation processes, it took time and sometimes felt uncertain, but keeping faith with it led to something much more distinctive, something that could only have come from Lewisham and truly reflected the spirit of the place.

COVID-19

Lewisham was named as the new London Borough of Culture in February 2020, but soon afterwards, the year was postponed from 2021 to 2022, and the attention of the Council and its partners was turned to supporting their communities directly during the pandemic lockdowns.

By the time the Albany was appointed as Lead Delivery Partner for the year in October 2020, the environment had changed, budgets were much tighter, and the future was uncertain, but the principles and aims for the year seemed more relevant than ever.

COVID added complexity to planning. Uncertainty around the delivery of major events meant we needed to think fluidly, a skill which helped us navigate changes throughout the year. Building partnerships was a key part of the process, developing networks across community and creative sectors within Lewisham, building new regional and national partnerships, and attracting new funders, sponsors and investment. Creating trust through this process allowed us to focus on the overarching aim and purpose of what we were doing despite the difficulties.

Day One

The launch of the year in January 2022 had to be rethought from one large-scale event to a distributed borough-wide action. Thousands of people were involved in over 50 events in open spaces across the borough over the course of one day. Everyone was working to the same brief with access to resources to create hyper locally, making the day resonant and relevant to their local communities. It was wonderful to see people come together, to focus on something positive and joyful amid the challenges.

Removing barriers to access meant recognising and building on the strengths and talents already within the borough. We Are Lewisham was not about top-down decision making or helicoptering in a programme, it was built with partners, residents and communities. **Diversity was in the design of the year.**

It was important that the programme came out onto the streets, to where people are, in our parks, markets and on street corners. This really came into its own in May when 9,000 people came to Deptford for the hugely successful 'Lewisham Sound System Trail', the first of a series of free outdoor festivals for the 'Revolution Through Music' programme. 'People's Day' in July attracted 30,000 people, community led festivals popped up in every ward of the borough, and 'LIT!', the finale at Beckenham Place Park, was enjoyed by 20,000 people and brought light to the shortest day in spectacular fashion.

Cultural Activism

The theme of Cultural Activism for We Are Lewisham created a unique opportunity to demonstrate what culture can do. It was about culture being able to lead the conversation around big issues from the climate emergency to social equity, amplifying voices of London's diverse communities and inspiring local activism in its widest sense.

Programmes such as 'Artists of Change', which embedded artists within Council teams, were part of an aim to rethink how things are done. It allowed us to approach difficult and challenging issues, bringing new people into a positive dialogue, and ultimately **pointing the way to how culture can lead to new solutions and real change.**

The programme engaged people across the borough and beyond, from 'Climate Home', a six-week festival led by young people which led to the rethinking of a valuable community asset impact was far reaching, from the mass scale, national success of the 'Breathe:2022' images seen over 13 million times, to 'Sun & Sea', a ground-breaking international production, playing to sold-out audiences and chosen by **Time Out** as **London's theatrical experience of the year**.

Every programme like this has difficulties and problems to overcome. There was undoubtedly some cynicism early on, but that had largely disappeared by the end of the summer. Teething problems at the start of the year are not unexpected, but the commitment to work through issues carefully with stakeholders was successful over time.

We kept faith with the original intentions but also with the huge ambition for the year and arguably attempted too much, which stretched limited resources too far. There was an ambition to invest in activity and people but a greater investment in communications might have been better, even if it meant a smaller programme.

Despite this, we did certainly shift perceptions of Lewisham, celebrating the unique culture and creativity of the place, and its radical heritage, while shining a spotlight on its many hidden gems – its open spaces, venues and newly exciting high streets.

Working in depth across multiple communities can be difficult and time consuming, but seeing how different experiences and perspectives transformed the year, has made it worthwhile, and these new relationships are an essential part of the year's legacy.

There was always an optimism and great enthusiasm for the year within Lewisham and it was a success overall, exceeding targets and expectations. It was a year that truly involved people across the whole borough and reflected the spirit and identity of the place. It has brought real benefits to the communities of Lewisham in a myriad of ways, some of which we aim to explore in this publication.

We Are Lewisham tells a story of the powerful role culture can play in communities, and the positive impact it can have on a place. The real impact of the year will unfold over many years to come, but there are clear signs of a strong and lasting legacy. We hope and expect that this is just the start, and that We Are Lewisham is the catalyst for many positive changes whose influence will stretch far beyond the borough itself.

“We Are Lewisham tells a story of the powerful role culture can play in communities, and the positive impact it can have on a place”

Gavin Barlow, Director, We Are Lewisham

Vicki Dela Amedume MBE, Associate Director, We Are Lewisham

Launch Day



The Feminine and the Foreign



Images: PA, Stephen Akinyem, Femi Richard

Apples & Snakes



Liberty Festival



Lewisham Sound System Trail



People's Day



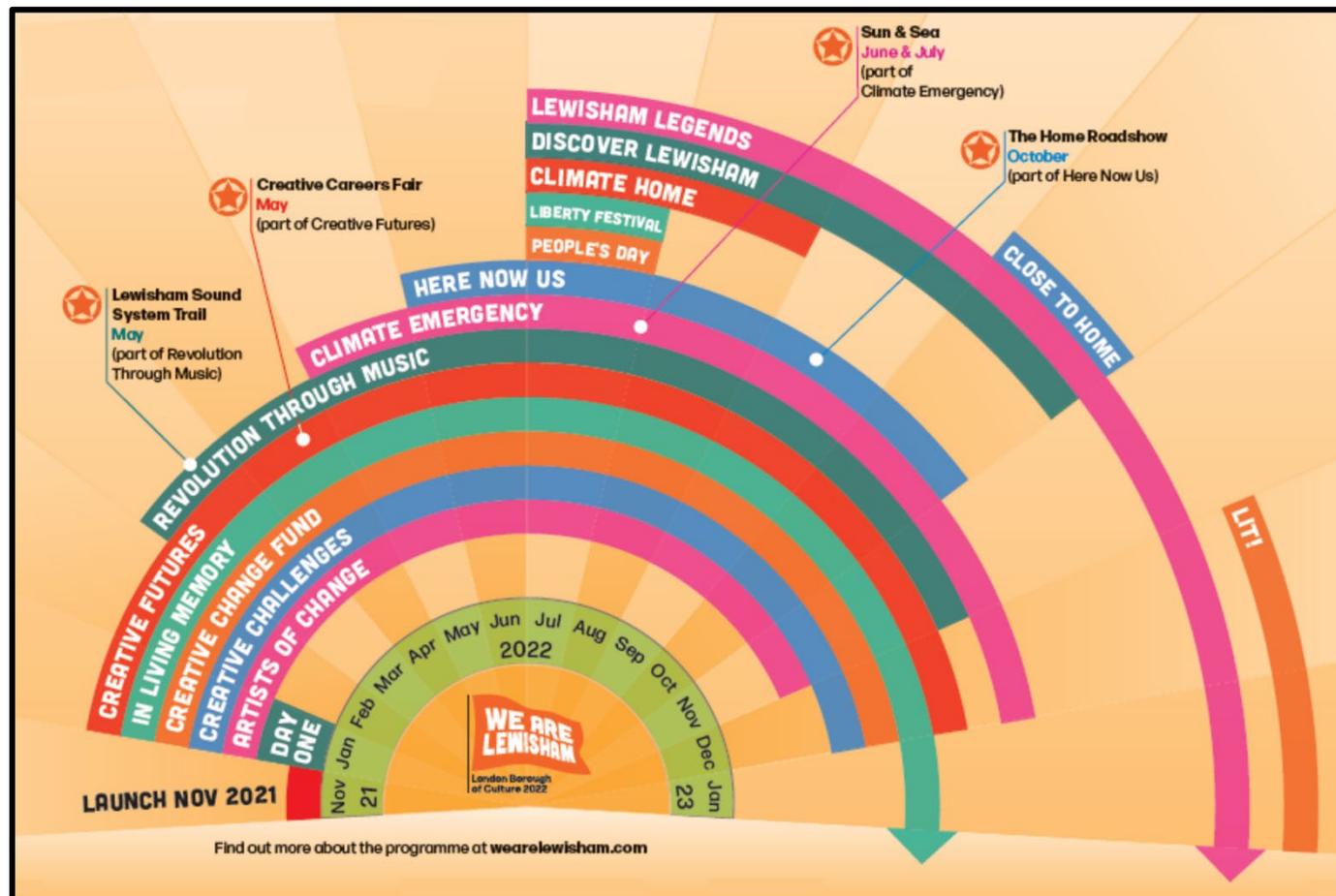
GAIA



Images: Samuel Dore, EllieKurtz, Roswitha Chesher, Christa Holka

Timeline

[Page 17 of the standard print version contains a diagram]



[The diagram details the following information:

We Are Lewisham London Borough of Culture 2022 Timeline

Nov 2021

- Launch (Nov 2021 only)

Jan 2022

- Creative Futures (until Dec 2022)
- In Living Memory (until Jan 2023 and beyond)
- Creative Change Fund (until Dec 2022)
- Creative Challenges (until Dec 2022)
- Artists of Change (until Nov 2022)
- Day One (Jan 2022 only)

Mar 2022

- Revolution Through Music (until Nov 2022)

May 2022

- Climate Emergency (until Dec 2022)
- **Lewisham Sound System Trail** (May 2022 only, part of Revolution Through Music)
- **Creative Careers Fair** (May 2022 only, part of Creative Futures)

Jun 2022

- Here Now Us (until Oct 2022)
- **Sun & Sea** (June and July 2022 only, part of Climate Emergency)

Jul 2022

- Lewisham Legends (until Jan 2023 and beyond)
- Discover Lewisham (until Oct 2022)
- Climate Home (until Aug 2022)
- Liberty Festival (Jul 2022 only)
- People's Day (Jul 2022 only)

Oct 2022

- Close To Home (Oct 2022 only)
- **The Home Roadshow** (Oct 2022 only, part of Here Now Us)

Dec 2022

- LIT! (until Jan 2023)

Find out more about the programme at wearelewisham.com

End of diagram]

Culture on Every Corner

From **the Horniman Museum and Gardens** to the iconic **Rivoli Ballroom**, Lewisham is home to some of London's cultural gems.

As well as spotlighting these, the We Are Lewisham programme was designed to bring art and culture out into public space, using locations in new ways. Across the year, from Deptford to Downham, free events popped up in parks, high streets, libraries, care homes and shopping centres.

As well as addressing cultural inequality and making the programme accessible and inclusive, this was about celebrating the power of everyday creativity, and unleashing the potential of Lewisham's places and spaces.

Day One

28 January 2022, across the borough

Kicking off the first official day of the programme, 'Day One' celebrated the everyday creativity of Lewisham, with over 50 events springing up in public spaces. From 9am to 9pm, activities included live music at train stations, a short film projected onto buildings and 'Artists in Residence' leading creative workshops in every ward.

Lewisham Sound System Trail

29 May 2022, Deptford and New Cross

Over 9,000 people filled the streets for a free day of music celebrating Lewisham's sound system culture and its importance to Global Majority and LGBTQ+ communities. Part of the programme strand, 'Revolution Through Music', it showed the role that culture can play in connecting and shaping the identity of a borough.

Sun & Sea

23 June – 10 July 2022, the Albany

Part of the 'Climate Emergency' programme, this high-profile collaboration with **LIFT** and **Serpentine** was named as **Time Out's** top London theatre experience of 2022.

People's Day

16 July 2022, Mountsfield Park

Returning after four years, this free festival brought over 30,000 people to Mountsfield Park and was voted Event of the Year by the National Outdoor Event Association.

Liberty Festival

22–24 July 2022, various locations

The Mayor of London's flagship free festival celebrating D/deaf, disabled and neurodiverse visual artists, theatre makers, dancers and drag performers came to Lewisham involving 56 events and 133 artists over 3 days.

Discover Lewisham

July-September 2022, across the borough

The We Are Lewisham programme peaked across summer 2022, with events and festivals attracting visitors and putting Lewisham in the cultural spotlight.

Beyond Borders

August 2022, various locations including The Horniman Museum and Gardens

Voted **Art Fund Museum of the Year**, the Horniman hosted collectives DLT and Daytimers, with live music and food to celebrate Lewisham's global cultures happening across the borough.

LIT!

15 Dec 2022–8 January 2023, Beckenham Place Park

Over 20,000 residents came together to celebrate the finale of Lewisham's year as London Borough of Culture 2022. With **The Revel Puck Circus**, a family fun fair and an illuminated parade, 'LIT!' used Lewisham's largest green space in a new way, highlighting its potential as a winter destination.

Day One



Lewisham Sound System Trail



LIT!



People's Day



Sun & Sea



Liberty Festival



- experience
- atmosphere
- thought-provoking
- impressive
- ambitious
- theatre
- heritage
- vibe
- artists
- uplifting
- poignant
- laughter
- **community**
- different
- beautiful
- **diverse**
- children
- joy
- buzzing
- **accessible**
- powerful
- friendly
- quality
- circus
- love
- **inspiring**
- excellent
- **authentic**
- poetry
- brilliant
- fantastic
- **hope**
- **local**
- performance

- soul
- thoughtful
- passion
- **welcoming**
- **proud**
- family
- art
- amazing
- dancing
- memories
- inclusive
- music
- funny
- **fun**
- wonderful
- ideas
- remarkable
- electrifying
- performers
- belonging
- everyone
- moving
- enjoyable
- renowned
- climate
- heart
- enthralled
- creativity
- change
- entertaining
- together
- venues
- collaborative

Words shown in **bold** are larger in the wordcloud]

Making Change

- **89% agree**

“it is important for Lewisham and its people to respond to the climate crisis”

- **82% agree that**

“Seeing these kinds of arts and cultural activities gives me a sense of belonging and makes me feel proud”

At the heart of the We Are Lewisham programme was the aim to harness the power of culture as a catalyst for social change, uniting people and inspiring collective action on key issues like migration and the climate emergency.

The programme built on the borough’s history of activism. The idea of Lewisham as a place that stands up for things that are important has resonated with residents; there is pride in the way this was visibly threaded through the programme, from murals of today’s community heroes (‘Lewisham Legends’) to high profile music gigs.

With 139 events throughout the year, the ‘Climate Emergency’ programme provided multiple opportunities to forefront climate and social justice, getting the borough talking and influencing attitudes, perceptions and behaviour. Across 2022, over 38,000 residents engaged in climate-focused shows, talks and workshops.

Change was not just about individuals but organisations too. ‘Artists of Change’ placed creatives in residence at Lewisham Council, using culture to provoke new ways of working. Despite initial scepticism, projects created by **Teatro Vivo** and **Dima Karout** have transformed the way Council teams think about engaging with residents. A few months on, there are indications that change has begun, showing the value of culture and its potential to influence policy.

It hasn't been without challenges, but the year has shown how culture can encourage active citizens and help find new solutions. Alongside this, the story of activism and change has helped shape a sense of shared identity, generating a renewed interest and pride in Lewisham for both residents and visitors.

Breathe: 2022

'Breathe:2022' was a new artwork by **Dryden Goodwin**, produced by **Invisible Dust**, which saw over 1,300 drawings appear on bridges and buildings across the borough, culminating in a projection on the side of Lewisham Old Town Hall.

Six local clean air activists sat for portraits of them 'fighting for breath' to highlight the impact of air pollution at heavily polluted sites such as the South Circular Road.

Among the sitters was **Rosamund Adoo-Kissi-Debrah CBE**, mother of 9-year-old Ella, who in 2020 was the first person in the world to have air pollution ruled as the cause of death, propelling Lewisham into the centre of a global debate around air quality.

Alongside 'Breathe:2022', an engagement programme 'Drawing Breath' saw over 100 local school children create their own animation. Meanwhile, residents got involved in a 'Community Day of Action' at **the Horniman Museum and Gardens** in July.

Part of its power was the way 'Breathe:2022' interlinked with political discourse, including the expansion of London's Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) and the proposal of **Ella's Law**, which fights to establish clean air as a human right into UK law.

'Breathe:2022' became a national project, viewed an estimated 13 million times. Together with the surrounding media, it raised awareness of air pollution as one of the biggest dangers we face today, encouraging action on both an individual and political level.

“This event taught me how I can act, change and do more for good”

Teacher, Twilight Continuing Professional Development event

“I wasn't expecting to learn so much about Lewisham and its passion for Climate Change Awareness”

Teacher, Twilight Continuing Professional Development event

Artists of Change

Delivered in partnership with Counterpoints Arts, 'Artists of Change' placed creatives within Lewisham Council's Climate Emergency and Sanctuary Borough teams for six months. The aim was to see how this could facilitate dialogue between the council and local communities, foster greater understanding and influence policy.

Arts Curator **Dima Karout** created a community-building programme, running print-making workshops in local libraries around Lewisham's meaningful places. She also visited a local hostel where people recently arrived in the borough struggled to integrate. Conversations around home and belonging were transformed into poems through a collaboration with two writers and showcased alongside the prints in an art exhibition at the Horniman and an art book, titled 'Internal Landscapes'. The project provided new ways of engaging with residents and deepened the council's understanding of the situation of many newcomers.

Local theatre company **Teatro Vivo** created characters called the 'Lewisham Usherettes' who walked the streets, gathering residents' views on climate issues. Combined with council research, these conversations were woven into a new participatory theatre show, 'Lewisham Speaks', performed in parks and high streets in all 19 wards of the borough. The residency impacted both the public and the council. Over 5,000 people watched or participated in the show, which captured the views of many communities often left out of the climate conversation. It has left, as a legacy, a documentary film for staff training, a co-produced map of local issues, a play script and education pack, a community-led 'Climate Manifesto' and new ways of working in the Climate Resilience team.

“It has inspired me to become an activist!”

10-year-old participant in 'Lewisham Speaks'

“A heroic and highly effective piece of community engagement”

Cllr Louise Krupski, Cabinet Member

Achievements and Challenges

Achievements:

- Issues on climate and migration were meaningfully addressed, with strong engagement with the borough's diverse communities.
- The programme created numerous platforms for exploration, dialogue and learning, all of which are opportunities for individual and collective change.

Challenges:

- Evidencing a shift in attitudes as a direct result of We Are Lewisham events and activities is complex and hard to quantify.

- The true implications and impact for the council, organisations and communities are still emerging, as well as how learning will be carried forward.

Hope 4 Justice



Image: Matt Alexander_PA Wire

Teatro Vivo



Breathe:2022



Images: Matt Grayson, Suzi Corker

Creative Connections: Partnerships

- **200+** partner organisations

Lewisham's year as London Borough of Culture was created, produced and delivered by thousands of individuals, groups, organisations, businesses and schools. It is impossible to put a figure on the total involvement, however **every event and activity has involved partnership**. Collaboration has been central to the programme and the level of commitment and passion is notable. Good partnerships involve trust, which takes time to build and can only really be honed through action.

A collaboration between Lewisham Council and the Albany led the programme, with the aim of one team with shared resources and targets. Core delivery partners held key areas – **Lewisham Local** (volunteering), **Lewisham Education Arts Network** (schools) and **Goldsmiths, University of London** (heritage) with a multitude of venue and project partners feeding in and taking the lead on individual projects.

Partners brought a rich mix of expertise as well as funding and resources. Crucially, their networks and participants enabled the programme to connect with diverse communities. New links were formed such as refugee organisations with the **Horniman**, and creative organisations such as **Cockpit Arts** and **South London Film Festival** benefitted from an enhanced platform and profile. A high profile collaboration between We Are Lewisham, the Albany, **LIFT** and **Serpentine** brought international performance 'Sun & Sea' to the borough.

Partnership building evolved while under pressure to produce an ambitious, large-scale programme of events, with remote teams in the aftermath of the pandemic. Despite forethought and planning, implications of working with multiple cross-sector

partners with different organisational cultures weren't fully clear until the programme was up and running. Early "bumps in the road" required flexibility and bravery in response to challenges and risk. For example, the Albany CEO took on programme leadership.

Team members have commented that opportunities to integrate and work together earlier would have been beneficial when thinking about resources, tenders, and cross-programme objectives. However, with London Borough of Culture set to focus on a single year, this is a challenge inherent in the model.

As the year progressed, team members worked across organisational and service boundaries establishing strong relationships. **Working collaboratively to overcome challenges was an emerging theme.** As relationships grew, systems became more embedded and a confidence emerged, creating new ways of working that will inform the legacy of the year.

"Sun & Sea has been a fantastic collaboration between LIFT, We Are Lewisham and Serpentine... We are grateful for the opportunity to present the UK premiere of this historic and timely performance, and to do so with partners that have enabled us to engage with communities beyond our gallery walls."

Bettina Korek, CEO and Hans Ulrich Obrist, Artistic Director, Serpentine.

"Trust has been built piece by piece – with every event that has happened and gone well, it has grown"

Partner

Hope 4 Justice – Trinity Laban

On Saturday 18 June 2022, an audience of 1,421 people gathered to watch two extraordinary performances of 'Hope 4 Justice' in Mountsfield Park, Catford.

A new large-scale performance calling for action on the climate, it was the result of a year-long collaboration. Co-commissioned by Trinity Laban and the Albany for We Are Lewisham, **Trinity Laban** worked with 1,235 young people from 26 local schools to create the performance. Weaving together dance, music and poetry performed by primary school choirs, young dancers, musicians and spoken word artists, it captured young people's concerns and their hopes for change.

Audience feedback was extremely positive with 77% of those surveyed saying they would give it a five star review.

“I learnt so much from the young people: all the answers were there throughout from them, and that's why we were able to amplify the young people's voices”

Commissioned Artist

“Remarkable performances by all. Magnificent music, production and direction. To be able to organise such a vast project was quite remarkable”

Audience Member

“I was really happy because our school has beautiful singers and loud voices for people to hear that now is the chance to change the earth”

Young Participant

Landsec

Partnering with **Landsec** – one of Europe's largest real estate companies – helped widen access to the programme, bringing art and culture to high streets and shopping centres.

Lewisham Shopping Centre became home to a We Are Lewisham unit, with music and theatre popping up in the main thoroughfare and marketplace. It hosted free talks and exhibitions, attended by many unlikely to visit an arts venue. The partnership evolved the fabric of the centre itself, with the creation of seven new murals by local artists – six depicting Lewisham Legends and a large-scale artwork chosen by residents as a reminder of the rich diversity of the borough. 'Sanctuary Café', a sculpture incorporating seating, is now resident inside the centre as a legacy of the collaboration between local activist **Stella Headley**, blind artist **David Johnson** and neurodiverse young artists from Lewisham College. London's only sculpture of a female Rastafarian, it's already a favourite of local shoppers.

The partnership has continued beyond 2022 with the We Are Lewisham unit, re-imagined as a new Lewisham CommUNITY Space - offering a warm space for those who need it and creative activities in the heart of the shopping centre.

Like many areas, the fabric of Lewisham is evolving and – when values align – culture can be part of the conversation. The ongoing relationship with Landsec is showing what's possible and the value culture can bring when it comes to placemaking and inclusive regeneration.

Achievements and Challenges

Achievements:

- The numerous cross sector partnerships involved in delivering the programme, have led to new relationships and ways of working that will be carried forward.
- Partners were highly committed; there was a real determination to overcome challenges.

Challenges:

- Building trust-based partnerships that could effectively deliver a complex large-scale programme in an extremely short time.
- Navigating different organisational systems and ways of working took time.
- Some partners and strands operated discreetly with less of a connection than they would have liked to the stretched core team.
- Parts of the Council such as Libraries, Community Development and Public Health would have benefitted from being involved earlier.

Sun & Sea



Day One projections at the Piccadilly Lights, in partnership with Landsec



Images: Sky Power, Martynas Norvaisas.

Hope 4 Justice



The large-scale artwork chosen by residents by Gaurab Thakali



Images: Matt Alexander_PA Wire, Gaurab Thakali

Creative Communities

- Over **200,000** people engaged with 12 Creative Challenges
- **71** projects funded through the Creative Change Fund
- **£162,500** awarded through the Creative Change Fund
- **£4,693** awarded through Discover Lewisham

We Are Lewisham was designed by, with and for the people of Lewisham, and co-creation was at the heart of the programme. Mass participation projects like 'Close To Home: The Mass Dance Event' and 'Hope 4 Justice' encouraged individuals to become active citizens, whilst smaller festivals and community projects took culture into every corner of the borough.

An effort was made to engage people across the borough to get creative in a light-touch, low pressure way. A series of 12 **Creative Challenges** were developed to mirror the programme and allow schools, community groups and individuals to explore different art forms including music, dance and architecture. Various touch points were offered to appeal to a wide range of people and allow them to engage in a number of ways. For example, In May the 'Creative Challenge' focused on gardening and wellbeing. A gardening grant of up to £300 was awarded to 16 gardens and growing projects; a mosaic bench was created by the Arts Network; and 500 herb growing kits were distributed via groups in partnership with the RHS.

The Creative Change Fund offered grants of between £1,000 and £5,000 to voluntary and community sector organisations and schools to deliver activities in response to the programme themes. Over 300 applications were received and a diverse range of projects were funded from murals and quilting workshops to local history, drumming, clay and tile making. This

funding was vital as it democratised the programme, enabling grassroots organisations to use their expertise to design and deliver projects which spoke directly to their communities. Some were then able to leverage additional funding to continue or expand their projects.

Additional small grants of between £300 and £1000 were offered to community libraries, community groups and active park friends groups to stage their own events, amplifying the London Borough of Culture celebrations in public space. Pop-up music stages, workshops and family picnics were community-led and sat alongside the summer programme of outdoor festivals like 'Beyond Borders'.

Events were diverse, attracting a wide range of audiences of different ages and backgrounds, from right across the borough. The music programme in particular reflected the diversity of the area, with events celebrating African, Caribbean, South American and South Asian music and cuisine.

A direct effort was made to include communities who may usually find it difficult to engage with arts and culture. 'The Home Roadshow' toured to residential care homes across the borough, and **New Earth's** 'Sonic Pho' engaged Deptford's Vietnamese community with an audio drama available in local restaurants in both English and Vietnamese.

Looking back on the year, a recurring motif has been the power of storytelling. Local people have had an opportunity to explore shared history, experiences and hopes for the future, and tell their own narrative about what it means to live in Lewisham.

"It was lovely to have people dancing of all ages, genders, races, sexualities, religions together in the sun. It was so fantastic!"

Audience Feedback, Lewisham Sound System Trail

“My family and I really enjoyed the experience and were so happy to see so many people of different ages and backgrounds enjoying it too”

Audience Feedback, GAIA and Friends.

In Living Memory: Exploring our Local History

Delivered in partnership with Goldsmiths, ‘In Living Memory’ unearthed lost or untold stories to construct a new history of the borough, as told by its residents. Its six projects explored key moments in Lewisham’s history from the Great Flood of 1968 to Black People’s Day of Action.

‘Where to, now the sequins have gone?’ uncovered the histories of Lewisham’s lost LGBTQ+ venues. Through the creation of a temporary queer space in Lewisham Shopping Centre, local people were invited to take part in a series of workshops and discussions, and the memories and oral histories created were incorporated into an exhibition in the Autumn.

In the same space in the shopping centre, fashion designer **Joy Prime** launched an interactive installation celebrating the life of her mother and other Caribbean women who worked in textiles after making London their home in the 1960s.

All the projects will have a future life in a new digital archive, forming a virtual museum of the borough which will provide a rich resource for curious residents, local historians and researchers for years to come. A resource pack is also being created which can be used by schools across the country.

“People from all walks of life saw themselves reflected in [the installation]. It was really amazing to see the diversity within the borough and it was interesting to see how much things had changed, but also how much things hadn’t changed”

Joy Prime

Seasons Change: A Creative Change Fund Project

Brookmill Park in St Johns used their Creative Change Funding to deliver a series of workshops celebrating both biodiversity and neurodiversity. Led by artist **Cash Aspeek**, 24 neuro-diverse students from Lewisham College were invited to create artwork from natural materials found in the park. Images of their work have been widely exhibited and were even invited to be a part of the **Royal Academy’s** Summer Exhibition.

“Creativity is at the heart of sanctuary, when we bring people together we release the true potential of our community’s musical and cultural talent”

Keith Sykes, Lewisham Music (Partner org on the Lewisham Refugee Week Festival)

Lewisham Refugee Week Festival: Celebrating Sanctuary

This was a mini festival in collaboration with refugee artists and chefs. The programme was cocreated by local community organisations and the activities - from live music and dance to storytelling and workshops - were led by people newly arrived in Lewisham from around the world. Participants described the event as visionary, healing, homely and nurturing.

The Home Roadshow: Bringing Culture to Everyone

'The Home Roadshow' was a 30 minute interactive theatre piece which toured to 12 residential care homes around the borough in October. Whilst it explored some complex issues such as surviving the pandemic and what it means to be vulnerable, it was also fun and entertaining, with chances to interact with sing-a-longs and quizzes. It offered a short period of respite for care home residents, their families, visitors and the staff who care for them.

“Leaving a home in Blackheath, we reflected how few people walking down the local high street ever go into a care home. We are delighted that with this tour we are able to perform for, and listen to, these vitally important members of our communities”

Christopher Green, Artist and Creator of The Home Roadshow.

Achievements and Challenges

Achievements:

- There was a huge amount of interest in the programme, with a diverse range of hundreds of community groups and organisations taking part.
- The Creative Change Fund was very successful in enabling communities to design and deliver their own projects.

Challenges:

- The Creative Change Fund was oversubscribed, so it wasn't possible to offer funding to everybody.
- Some projects were discrete and hyperlocal, meaning they had varying levels of connection with the wider programme.
- It was hard to keep up with the pace of having a 'Creative Challenge' every month, and give each challenge enough focus.

Close To Home: The Mass Dance Event



Movimientos



Images: EllieKurtz, Christa-Holka

Lewisham Underwater – In Living Memory



Joy Prime



The Home Roadshow



Images: Suzie Corker, Dan Frampton

Creating Futures

- **8,854** young people supported with career and development opportunities
- **1,674** young people engaged in training
- **585** young people attended the Creative Careers Fair
- **75** paid roles for young people on Climate Home

Our year as London Borough of Culture brought with it an exciting platform to directly connect local young people with real opportunities for work in the creative industries, laying the groundwork for the cultural future of our borough.

Young people directly fed into planning to ensure the 'Creative Futures' programme appealed to their interests and needs, addressing barriers to access and making an effort to target those who are underrepresented in the current sector workforce – including global majority young people, those from low-income households or who are disabled. The resulting events ranged from talks with industry experts to training and masterclasses, available both in person and online. A highlight of the year was the 'Creative Careers Fair' held at Goldsmiths in May.

Industry talks covered art forms from film to fashion, photography, radio, and podcast producing. Of the 26 panellists, 93% were from black or middle-eastern communities and over 50% were female or non-binary. It was important that the panellists reflected the diverse make-up of the borough, and one attendee of the 'Kickstart Your Career in Film' talk commented on how inspiring it was to see black professionals progressing in the industry, and how important it was for them to explain their pathways and entry points.

The programme has offered a vital bridge between developing skills and accessing paid work in the sector. After attending events and undertaking training, young people gained paid work as Creative Assistants involved in curating, marketing and hosting events as part of the We Are Lewisham programme, as well as employment with partners across the borough and beyond.

Creative Futures

Nicolette

Participant – Set Ready and Iconic Steps courses

After the set-back of the pandemic, **Nicolette** was able to take part in two training programmes and three paid work placements over the course of the year, gaining a much-needed confidence boost. She is now focused on her goal of pursuing a career in live TV production and is inundated with offers of freelance work.

“It has helped me cement my goals [and] has helped my confidence. After August I emailed everyone I know and in September and October I have had constant gigs!”

Nicolette

Toni-Ann

Participant, Producing Live Events course

Toni-Ann grew up in Lewisham, with experience of the care system. She has a hidden disability, and had missed out on opportunities that were only open to under 25s.

After attending the ‘Creative Careers Fair’, Toni-Ann connected with **Lewisham Music**, signing up for their Audio Production Course and ultimately being hired in her first official job as a Young Producer. She is currently helping to plan and curate a podcast about how music influences youth mental health.

“I told the course lead after the first day that I didn’t belong there... his response was, “you belong here, you’re in the right place, you got this”. That course literally changed my life, without it I wouldn’t have the confidence I have now”

Toni-Ann

Climate Home

‘Climate Home’ was a brand new performance space co-designed and built by over a hundred young people, primary school children, activists and artists on the site of an underused adventure playground in Deptford with a climate as a focus embedded in every aspect of the project.

Led by youth collective **SOUNDS LIKE CHAOS** in partnership with the Albany, they created a six-week ‘Festival of Action and Resistance’ during the summer holidays. Young people were in charge of creating the programme – which included a carnival, sustainable fashion show and more – and also staffed the venue, taking up roles in event management and selling refreshments and merchandise. Workshops were offered in skills ranging from construction to fashion design and street dance.

£100,300 worth of paid work, alongside training and leadership experience, was offered to 75 young people as part of ‘Climate Home’. In 2023 the project will continue, with a new music production studio and community kitchen being built on the site and run by local young creatives.

“The fact that we as young people can have ideas and they can actually happen, that gives us a lot of hope for us in the future”

Climate Home Participant

Romero Bryan and Associates Fashion Training Course

Romero Bryan is a lecturer at London College of Communications and a fashion designer whose work has been profiled in Vogue and worn by **Michelle Obama** and **Beyoncé**. Along with his associates he ran a six month training course in fashion for young people living on the Pepys Estate in the north of the borough.

The course involved workshops, field trips to exhibitions at the V&A, and culminated with a pop-up shop in Lewisham shopping centre selling the participants' designs.

“It’s taught me to always follow through on your plans and your ideas however it may be that you might be feeling”

Josh, Fashion Training Course participant

Achievements and Challenges

Achievements:

- Young people were given agency - they were involved in the design and delivery of the events, rather than just being attendees.
- Multiple innovative ways to access support and opportunities were offered, and as a result a large number of young people engaged.

Challenges:

- With limited comms resources, there was a focus on promoting headline events such as the careers fair, and other events got less attention.
- This strand was focused on embedding legacy into its design – so opportunities weren't just a one off. There is an obvious challenge here in terms of funding and resources to sustain delivery.

Climate Home



Image: Ines Yearwood-Sanchez

Nicolette @nico_creates



Toni-Ann



Amaarah from Climate Home



Image: Ines Yearwood-Sanchez, Dan Frampton

Lewisham Locals: Volunteers

- **Over 1,800** volunteers
- **Over 10,000** total volunteering hours

Volunteering was core to the ethos of We Are Lewisham, as another way to upskill and engage local residents in the delivery of the programme. There were a wide range of volunteering opportunities offered throughout the year - from stewarding at 'People's Day' and 'LIT!' to performing alongside hundreds of others in 'Close To Home' and posing as a beachgoer during 'Sun & Sea'.

Lewisham Local were the volunteering partner for the year, and their approach was built on the resources that local people, community groups and businesses have to offer in Lewisham. Lewisham Local's research suggested that a key motivation for volunteers was social, especially coming out of the pandemic. Because of this they ran socials and there were monthly prize draws with prizes offered by local businesses. Comprehensive training was also offered, covering Health and Safety, Safeguarding and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, providing new skills and increasing employability.

The backdrop of the pandemic and the cost of living crisis meant there were fewer people with available time to devote to volunteering, and at times it was difficult to recruit. However, of those who did take part, many were brand new to volunteering and hope to continue with it going forwards. It was also successful in forging links between community groups and individuals in the borough.

“The LBoC programme involves so many different organisations in Lewisham, I feel like I’ve gained such a better understanding of the place where I live.”

Volunteer

Close To Home: The Mass Dance Event

In October, hundreds of dancers took over the grounds of **Sedgehill Academy** in Bellingham for a large-scale outdoor performance telling stories of migration, community and activism in Lewisham. Alongside professional dancers led by **Alleyne Dance, IRIE! dance theatre** and **Trinity Laban**, volunteers were recruited throughout the year to take part. Four dance captains led a series of 34 workshops with cross-generational groups and schools, including **Lewisham MENCAP** and **Meet Me at the Albany**, over a series of six weeks. Individuals were also recruited, and given the opportunity to learn the dance at home via a tutorial video, before joining in with in-person rehearsals. In total 168 volunteers performed as part of the piece.

Whilst it was a big commitment, the project offered volunteers a chance to get active and to meet others from their community.

“It was a really enriching project, because we got to work with so many different people from different walks of life, and we got to form some beautiful friendships”

Dance Captain

“It is a big challenge for me with my age... my family can’t believe I am doing what I’m doing! There is a lot more camaraderie in the community now... we are a family.”

Volunteer

LIT!

The finale event aimed to light up Lewisham on the darkest days of the year. It featured illuminations, a parade by giant glowing puppet DUNDU, performances by **The Revel Puck Circus** and a family fun fair, all taking place in **Beckenham Place Park**. Volunteers were recruited to be light bearers, and the volunteer choir formed during 'Sun & Sea' earlier in the year was expanded to become the LIT! Chorus, giving residents a chance to perform as part of the parade.

Volunteer Stewards were instrumental in helping with wayfinding around the park over the three days of illuminations, assisting 8,500 audience members. 143 volunteers were involved as stewards and participants, contributing 892 volunteer hours.

“I am part of the LIT! Chorus now... it’s made of people from different cultures, different ages. It’s so new to me, and that’s why I felt I should be better getting involved with the different groups here in the borough”

Volunteer

Sun & Sea

Internationally acclaimed opera production 'Sun & Sea' was brought to Lewisham in a partnership between We Are Lewisham, **the Albany, Serpentine** and **LIFT**. Staged on an indoor beach, the show played out on a loop over several hours as the performers sang on themes of climate change and our relationship with our planet. Alongside 13 professional opera singers, 91 volunteers were recruited as beachgoers, to help bring the beach scene to life by reading, playing sports and eating ice creams on stage during the show. Some of these volunteers also formed a community choir to enhance the music in the piece.

“It’s a beautifully ambitious project. These people didn’t know each other before, so we’re making new creative friendships and connections through it”

Kirsty Martin, Sun & Sea Choir Leader

“Being in Lewisham gave the piece a resonance, urgency and a connection to community that it's not had anywhere else in the world. Hundreds of local volunteers made it happen – they sang, played badminton, read on the beach and chased after kids and dogs – all part of bringing this unusual piece to life”

Kris Nelson, CEO and Artistic Director, LIFT

Achievements and Challenges

Achievements:

- Lots of opportunities were offered including creative involvement in choirs, dance performances and processions.
- Partners worked to overcome early teething issues, including adapting how volunteers were matched with opportunities.

Challenges:

- **Lewisham Local** could have been more integrated into planning and delivery – this would have enabled them to be more responsive to needs and issues.

LIT!



Images: Femi Richard

Close To Home



LIT!



Sun & Sea



Images: EllieKurttz, Doug Southal

Creative Learners: Schools

- **92%** of Lewisham Schools involved
- **168** Cultural Connectors

49 primaries and 10 secondaries were directly involved with the programme, as well as, SEND schools, sixth forms and the Young Women's Hub.

Education partner **Lewisham Education and Arts Network (LEAN)** coordinated activities, consulting with schools and hosting over 50 advisory meetings between May 2021 and December 2022 to support producers and artists to shape the offer. Termly events ran across the year with opportunities for teachers to meet artists, take part in workshops and make links with local creatives and other teachers in the borough.

LEAN recruited 168 Cultural Connectors to distribute information within their schools. Thirty curated bulletins sent across the year supported busy teachers with programme updates and opportunities, empowering them to become cultural champions, advocating for the importance of creativity in education. 100% of Cultural Connectors agreed that bulletins helped keep them informed about cultural offers in the borough.

The year has been valuable for schools and for LEAN, leading to new partnerships between schools, arts organisations and artists. Going forward, relationships with Cultural Connectors and the wider education sector will enable LEAN to work towards reaching all Lewisham school children, including those not in mainstream education.

“This has been a great opportunity for our students and for our community”

Cultural Connector

“The Zine workshop we attended at Crofton Park was inspirational and we now run a Zine Club, linked with our English Department”

Cultural Connector

“We have made huge strides in making new connections...There were challenges but it brought about thinking on how we continue to keep hearing what schools need in a changing landscape”

LEAN

Kender Primary School – Halo Hair

Kender Primary School were involved in learning the LBoC Bop; performing in ‘Hope 4 Justice’; and leading their own Creative Change Funded project, ‘Halo Hair’.

The school wanted to use the funding to respond to Black Lives Matter and the borough-wide Race Equality Pledge. They were keen to make a statement about diversity in the school, involving the children in shaping the curriculum.

They worked with **Heyday Films** to create a series of films about hair and identity, recruiting pupils from years 4, 5 and 6 as ambassadors, film crew and producers. The children were highly engaged, steering the project, brainstorming ideas and creating storyboards. A special event was held to premiere the final films, which brought the whole school community together.

“We wanted to put the children’s voice on the map within the borough’s celebration to enhance creativity in the school. As a project it had its own momentum, getting more children and parents involved too. We often find it hard to engage parents, however, this was a great success – we want it to continue!”

Keith Barr, Head of Kender Primary School

Dalmain Primary School – National Poetry Day

As part of the October ‘Creative Challenge’ and National Poetry Day, children across the borough were invited to write poems about the environment. Following workshops with poet **Francesca Beard**, poems written by children from **Dalmain Primary School** took over 48 billboards across the borough to inspire residents to reflect on the climate and to get creative themselves.

“We were delighted to collaborate on this exciting project. Poetry allows children to be free – it shows them at their most creative, spontaneous and joyful.”

Writing Lead, Dalmain Primary School

“I loved performing our poems in front of the school. It made me feel exhilarated.”

Toby, Pupil at Dalmain Primary School

Achievements and Challenges

Achievements:

- Involving children and young people was a core part of the programme, resulting in lots of unique and exciting projects for schools to be involved with.
- LEAN created a responsive interface and hub for schools involvement, ensuring a high number of schools were actively involved.

Challenges:

- Schools needed long lead-in times to plan activity. This didn't always align with programme timelines, which needed to respond to a changing covid context.
- Schools wanted a co-ordinated platform to share and sing about their activity, which was beyond the capacity and resources of the team.

Pupils from Dalmain Primary School



Pupils from Dalmain Primary School



Images: Suzi Corker

Local Economy and Business

- **520** businesses engaged
- **96+** businesses received grants
- Over **£1.1million** spent in the local area across 4 key **events** (see note)

Note: Lewisham Sound System Trail, People's Day, LIT! and GAIA

We Are Lewisham coincided with a return to the high street after the pandemic. **Across the 10 key high streets in Lewisham there are 860 businesses**, many of which were still in recovery even after restrictions were lifted.

Businesses benefited from events keeping people with spending power within the borough and bringing new audiences in, particularly around larger events such as the 'Lewisham Sound System Trail', 'GAIA' and 'LIT!' Businesses were actively invited to exhibit at large scale events such as 'People's Day' and 'Close To Home', and connections were made with cultural organisations, offering special deals for ticket holders of events such as 'Sun & Sea'.

£200,000 of funding was made available to support high street businesses to engage with the programme. Grants of up to £2,500 per business were offered to develop their own projects, activities or initiatives. **Goldsmiths, University of London** provided support in developing project ideas and completing applications. The resulting funded projects were wide ranging – from workshops on sustainable shopping, to LGBTQ+ dating events, bread making and yoga. The grants were successful in generating benefits beyond the economic – in creating connections between businesses and creatives, arts and culture.

The programme was responsible for bringing additional funding into the borough, and offered valuable leverage and profile to projects, venues and cultural organisations. For example, **Grow Lewisham** secured a Creative Change Fund grant of £4,500 to build their Growmobile, which was exhibited at 'People's Day', and based on this they were able to secure a further £9,450 of National Lottery Funding. 'Climate Home' brought in £345,190 of additional funding, as well as offering £92,236 of paid work to young people, helping to keep them economically active.

“For GAIA and friends, there were 6,200 visits to Forster Memorial Park over two days. There was great community engagement with lots of local attenders, plus a large contingent of people who had travelled from other parts of London. The Frothy Coffee Hut said it was their best day of business ever”

Producer

“To share in such a fantastic day [People's Day] was a complete pleasure. In total we sold over 100 memberships on the day and gave out 200 lucky dip prizes”

Assistant General Manager, Catford Mews.

Brockley Brewery

Brockley Brewery used their grant to brew a new We Are Lewisham beer, which was distributed in 28 pubs and 30 bars and shops throughout the borough, and sold to over 150 customers online. The beer was served at 'People's Day', where a dedicated craft beer stall was featured for the first time in the event's history.

Brockley Brewery also partnered with **QWAG** (the Quaggy Waterways Action Group) to produce a Deluge beer, raising awareness around the 1968 floods and the impact of climate change.

They have made new connections with other Lewisham-based breweries such as Ignition and Villages, with the potential for economic advantage in future in terms of information sharing and supply chain needs.

Achievements and Challenges

Achievements:

- Reaching large numbers of high street businesses in a short period of time.
- The business grants and support worked really well and demonstrated the value of connecting cultural activity with economic benefit.

Challenges:

- External factors such as the pandemic and cost of living crisis have had an impact on businesses.
- The business sector could have been more integrated into the main programme early on, with more visibility of opportunities.

GAIA



People's Day



Brockley Brewery



Images: Roswitha Chesher, EllieKurtz

Telling our stories: Marketing and Comms

- **130+** pieces of press coverage with over 4 million views
- **474,000+** digital engagements
- **65%** estimated brand recognition

Marketing and Communications was key to the impact of the year, raising awareness; driving engagement with a high-volume programme; and boosting Lewisham's reputation as a place to live, work and visit.

The initial context was a challenging one. Despite limited resources, ambition was high, with expectations of reaching everyone and everywhere in the borough. As London emerged from Covid, the return of events postponed from 2020 and 2021 meant competition for media, visibility and audiences.

To cut through the noise, there was an investment in a new brand identity and website as the face of the year, working with local agency **Cog Design**.

To maximise resources, the team worked with PR partner **Four Communications** to identify and focus activity around seven key milestones. This approach meant difficult conversations about the level of activity individual events could expect, but enabled impact and cut-through with media and audiences.

Given the themes of the year, there has been a clear intention to not only profile events but amplify wider stories. In this sense, communications has played an important role in helping to shape local identity and pride in Lewisham's history, people and place.

Building the Brand: We Are Lewisham

Local agency **Cog Design** were appointed to develop a new identity to bring the programme to life. It needed to speak to Lewisham's diverse communities and attract visitors, establishing the borough as a cultural destination.

Consultation with creative and community partners revealed three priorities for the brand: to be rooted in the borough, inspiring local pride; to be vibrant and celebratory; and to embody a call to action.

We Are Lewisham, kept residents at the centre, and a vibrant flag motif drew on themes of identity, celebration and protest. Patterns are drawn from the history and fabric of the borough – from Rock Against Racism to local landmarks, the **Horniman**, **Sivan Temple** and **Moonshot Centre**.

Flags were designed to be printed and flown at events, businesses and in public space, promoting inclusion and maximising visual presence. The logistics of transporting physical flags to hundreds of events was a challenge early on, but investment in a focused role to manage this saw recognition grow from May 2022.

Brand recognition is now strong, estimated at over 65% within the borough.

Storytelling: Rebel Music Press

'Rebel Music' was a series of gigs and events in May 2022 that celebrated the borough's activist history.

Working with PR Partner, **Four Communications**, the aim was to use media around the programme to amplify awareness of the borough's history, and the role music has played, sparking social change in Lewisham, London and beyond.

Seven in-depth pieces of coverage across local, national and trade media included an interview with **Linton Kwesi Johnson** in the Evening Standard and an extensive feature in **Rolling Stone UK**: ‘when London’s music scene took on the racists – and won’. For the latter, the team worked with **Syd Shelton** – the photographer who covered the Rock Against Racism movement in the 1970s – to present a story that captured the imagery of the time and its continued relevance today.

Discover Lewisham

A destination campaign ran in summer 2022 to attract audiences to a programme of free outdoor events and festivals. It aimed to increase awareness of London Borough of Culture 2022; boost local business and improve perceptions of the borough.

‘Discover Lewisham’ targeted three key audience groups: local families, low-income earners and visitors from neighbouring boroughs, with tailored messaging for each. Outreach was undertaken with local food banks and children’s services. We also invested in outdoor advertising, achieving over 34 million impressions. A paid digital campaign increased website traffic by 22%.

The campaign attracted 45,000 people to events over a six-week period, 38% of them from outside the borough. The economic impact on local cafes, eateries and businesses was significant, with £11 generated for every £1 spent on the campaign.

Going forward, there are plans in place for ‘Discover Lewisham’ to evolve into a placemaking campaign for the borough.

Achievements and Challenges

Achievements:

- A strong visual brand, rooted in the borough and widely recognised, which has the potential to continue as part of the legacy.
- High profile media coverage with in-depth brand storytelling
- A legacy-building 'Discover Lewisham' campaign

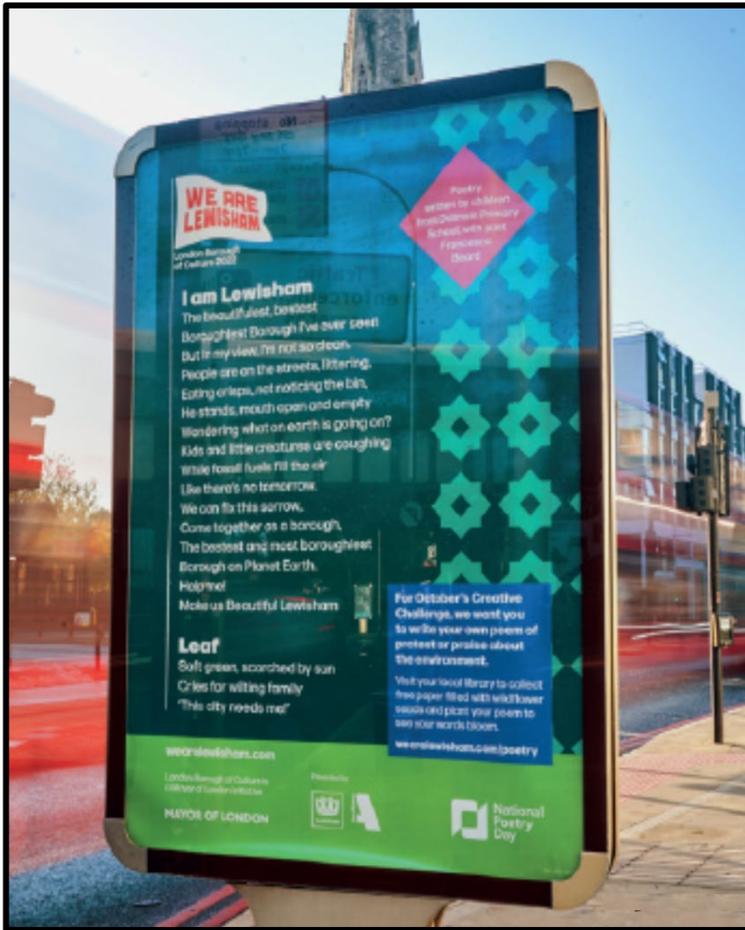
Challenges:

- A gap between ambition and resourcing meant difficult choices on how to prioritise time and budget.
- Brand visibility was a challenge early on, with residents not always making the connection between We Are Lewisham and London Borough of Culture.
- With 600+ events and 200+ partner organisations, the breadth of the programme was complex to communicate and stakeholder relations time intensive.

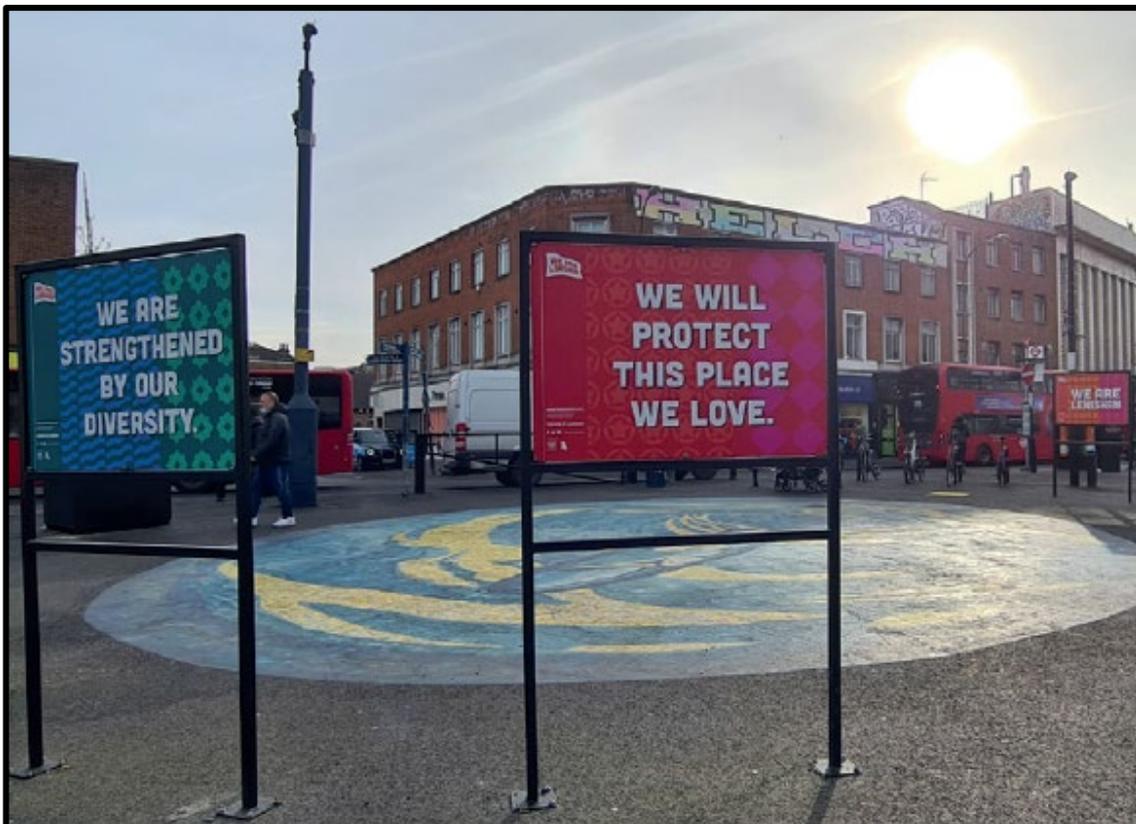
People's Day



Creative Challenges



Lewisham Shopping Centre



White Riot



Images: Suzi Corker, Syd Shelton, Roswitha Chesher

Key Findings and Achievements

Only now that we are able to look back on the year as whole is the impact becoming clear. **Here we acknowledge what was achieved in terms of the programme, themes, and places,** and how this generated benefits for local people, artists and creatives, and for organisations and businesses.

The themes of the programme, especially migration and climate, resonated with many people and have been interpreted, explored and translated in a myriad of ways. The creativity in the borough has been celebrated, platformed and appreciated in ways it hasn't before.

The programme has innovatively used local spaces and venues to bring culture to streets, markets and parks. Events have attracted new audiences from both within and beyond the borough, have gained notable media coverage and have even won awards ('People's Day' and 'Sun & Sea'). People of all ages have been involved and there has been the very tangible impact of training and employment for young people. Pride and sheer enjoyment resonate throughout the audience feedback and there is a strong sense of success from those involved.

There has been a boost to the economy, with Lewisham promoted as a destination and drawing new business into the borough. Funding going directly to community organisations has created real agency, and many Lewisham-based organisations have been able to attract additional funding. Three organisations (of only 10 nationally) who were involved in the delivery of the year – **the Albany, Entelechy Arts and Migration Museum** – have been shortlisted for £150,000 of funding from the **Calouste Gulbenkian Award For Civic Arts Organisations** for their work engaging local communities.

Whilst there have been immense benefits, there have also been considerable challenges. One of the key learnings has been to anchor ambition – in the words of one producer, ‘less is more’. Ambition needs to be carefully balanced with adequate resourcing, and it would be beneficial for the GLA to establish a structure for learning to be shared across boroughs.

“I am a Lewisham resident and feel very proud of being a part of it”

Audience feedback, LIT!

“We felt lucky that this was happening just down the road from where we live”

Audience feedback, GAIA

“Moses Boyd went to lengths in his performance to describe Lewisham's cultural impact on his work. He talked about the migration of West Indian communities who brought various musical forms with them post Windrush, especially Soca music, and went into depth about the rhythms of those musical styles that influenced his development as an artist growing up in Lewisham”

Producer

Achievements and Challenges

Achievements:

- The programme was innovative, high quality and well received – and exceeded all of its targets.
- An effective partnership was built between the Albany and Lewisham Council, who were able to ‘hold’ the programme for wider partners and hundreds of other organisations and groups.

Challenges:

- There were external impacts during the year – Covid, the cost of living crisis, local elections and HM the Queen's death have all had an effect.
- The resources needed for this kind of work were underestimated – not simply funding but the support and wrap around. This was in part because there was a desire to maximise spending outwards rather than internally.
- There was a tension between people wanting to know what would be happening throughout the year at the outset and allowing room for engagement and evolution.

Seun Kuti



Sculpture of Stella Headley by artist David Johnson – Liberty festival



Images: Samuel Dore, Caro Gervay

Lewisham Looks Ahead: Legacy

“How far can this go? What can we learn from this? How can we influence policy?”

Climate Home young leader

Lewisham’s year as London Borough of Culture 2022 has had a significant impact across the borough. The year has led to new partnerships and new ways of working. It has shown that investing in culture is investing in the local economy, in people’s wellbeing and in future generations.

Although the true legacy of the year won’t be clear for years to come, we want to harness these benefits and build on the key outcomes beginning to emerge.

Legacy was a fundamental ambition of the original bid. Below are some of the headlines we know will continue beyond 2022. This isn’t aspirational but rooted in local knowledge and plans.

Strategically, London Borough of Culture is already having an impact, feeding into the Council’s **Corporate Strategy, Local Plan, Local Strategic Partnership, and Cultural Strategy**. Below is a snapshot of how legacy is being followed through in four key areas.

“The value of the funding is starting to sink in”

Producer

[Start of box]

Climate Manifesto

1. We need more green spaces
2. We want better transport links
3. We care about clean air
4. We value life over money, and want those in power to do the same
5. We love to be local
6. We demand cheaper energy
7. We need to know what happens to our recycling
8. We insist that leaders in business and politics lead by example

Signed:

The people of Lewisham

[End of box]

Creative enterprise:

The creative, cultural and digital industries contribute to the economic prosperity of Lewisham. Job opportunities are accessible to all communities.

- The new draft **Local Plan** recognises the importance of creativity and culture to the future of Lewisham, and formally designates cultural quarters and the **Creative Enterprise Zone** in Deptford and New Cross. It also includes policies to support the sustainable growth of the night-time economy, closely linked to creative and cultural activity.
- ‘Creative Futures’ opened up pathways for residents, especially 16–30 year olds, into the creative and cultural industries. The Skills Highway of post-16 providers, launched in October 2022, will continue this work.

- An **Affordable Workspace Strategy** is being finalised for Lewisham, with a focus on spaces for creatives to work and rehearse.
- The 'Revolution Through Music' programme brought audiences and spending power into the borough, and Lewisham's new **Cultural Strategy** will include a focus on supporting live music.

Creative connections:

Ways of connecting the Council and communities developed and tested during our year as London Borough of Culture will be embedded.

- The creative forms of engagement developed throughout the year, for example through the 'Artists of Change' programme, will inform engagement approaches in the borough going forward. A toolkit and guidance will be developed to help council staff and partners work with artists.
- Lewisham's Schools Climate Network - an online, termly meeting for school environment leads - will give teachers a chance to build connections across schools and share best practice on climate conversations and learning.
- 'Climate Home' reimagined an adventure playground as a space for young people and this has informed the council's play strategy. The 'Climate Home' space is being further developed to include a media suite and upgraded kitchen.

Creative places:

There are a range of cultural and creative places to support our communities and creative and cultural sectors.

- Over £19m of **Levelling Up** funding has been secured for Lewisham town centre, which will involve creating a new outdoor event and performance space in Lewisham market, as well as transforming Lewisham Library into a cultural hub for events and exhibitions.
- The **Broadway** Theatre in Catford re-opened in February 2023 following a £7m restoration. Further investment is being made in cultural spaces including **The Catford Constitutional Club**, **The Brookdale Club** – which will become a community-owned live music venue – and a four-screen cinema in **Ladywell Playtower**. The **Triangle LGBTQ+ Cultural Centre** has also opened.
- Public art created throughout the year will continue to be enjoyed by local residents, including murals in and outside Lewisham shopping centre.

Creative communities:

Everyone has access to the positive benefits of engaging with creative and cultural activities.

- The **Lewisham Strategic Partnership** (LSP) has been formed with partners across the borough, to improve outcomes for everyone who lives, works, studies or spends time in Lewisham. The LSP will work on a resident-led community engagement programme to develop a shared vision for Lewisham's future, and deliver a place making campaign building on the sense of local pride that emerged during the year.

- New companies and initiatives have been attracted to the borough. For example, award-winning theatre collective **Nouveau Riche** have been appointed Associate Artists at the Broadway Theatre. Existing companies have secured additional funding and profile, for example key partners **Deptford X** and **IRIE! dance theatre** who have joined the Arts Council's National Portfolio.
- Resources such as the the 'In Living Memory' archive and Rebel Music map will continue to be available for residents to engage with, and add to over time.
- A new **Cultural Strategy** will be agreed for the borough by summer 2023, building on the benefits of Borough of Culture to deliver a legacy for years to come.

Closing thoughts

The dust is still settling and it's early to be drawing conclusions, but there is a sense of perceptions shifting in Lewisham.

London Borough of Culture has proved there is an appetite for a strong local cultural offer. It has shown the role that culture can play, feeding into the redevelopment of Lewisham town centre and boosting the night-time economy.

Partnerships sparked by the year have already led to new collaborations and ventures that will take learning forward. Within the current economic climate, this is more vital than ever – bringing together organisations and communities to drive social change.

Day One



Image: Roswitha Chesher

Kwake Bass

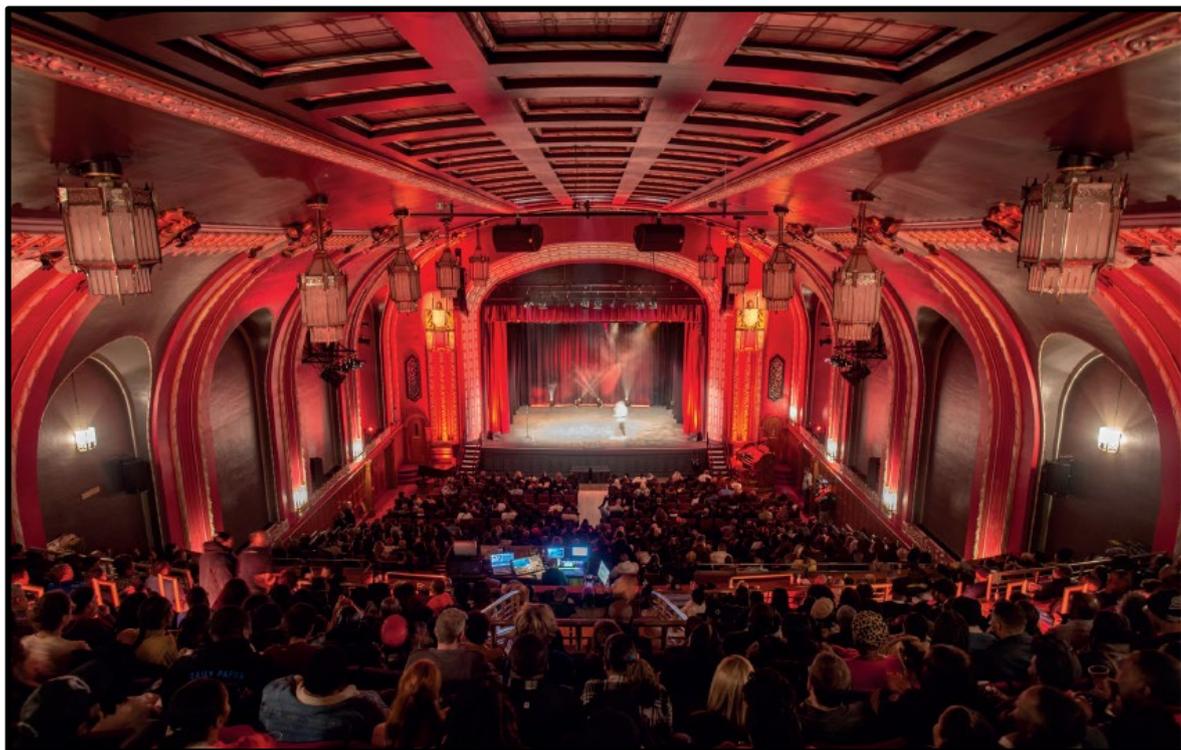


The Climate Manifesto displayed at People's Day



Images: Roswitha Chesher, Christa-Holka

Opening night at the Broadway



Ono Dafedjaiye with her mural



Launch Day



Catford Library



Images: Jeff Teader, Dan Farmer, Manue Vason

Thank Yous

We Are Lewisham was built with thousands of individuals, organisations, schools, businesses and community groups. Thank you to everyone who took part in, attended, supported, volunteered and worked with us to deliver the year.

Thank you to the staff teams from the Albany and Lewisham Council and all the freelancers who worked with us over the year.

Core Partners

- **Delivery Partner:** The Albany
- **Evaluation Partner:** Art of Regeneration
- **Heritage Partner:** Goldsmiths, University of London
- **Education Partner:** Lewisham Education Arts Network (LEAN) and Lewisham's schools
- **Volunteering Partner:** Lewisham Local
- **Press Partner:** Four Communications
- **Brand and Website Partner:** Cog Design

Supporters

Core supporters

- Arts Council England
- Muse
- National Lottery Heritage Fund
- Paul Hamlyn Foundation

Supporters

- Better
- Chartwell Compass
- Deptford Challenge Trust
- FM Conway
- Golsoncott Foundation
- Jack Petchey Foundation
- Landsec
- Leche Trust
- Lendlease
- Lewisham College
- Lewisham Homes
- National Lottery Community Fund
- National Lottery Places Called Home
- Noël Coward Foundation
- Phoenix Community Housing
- PRS Foundation
- Royal Victoria Hall Foundation
- UK Community Renewal Fund (UKCRF)
- Welcome Back Fund
- Youth Music

Venue Partners

- Horniman Museum and Gardens
- Migration Museum
- Shipwright
- The Fellowship Inn
- Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance

Additional Artistic and Community Partners – by Project:

Artists of Change:

- Dima Karout
- Teatro Vivo

Climate Conversations:

- Avant-Gardening CIC
- British Ecological Society
- Climate Action Lewisham
- Climate Museum UK
- CoCo Collective
- Deptford Green School
- Guerilla Science
- Heart of Steel
- Lewisham Arthouse
- Other World Arts
- Rosie Riot!

Climate Emergency:

- Apples & Snakes
- Cecilia Knapp
- CIC
- Culture Declares Emergency
- Deptford X
- Dryden Goodwin
- ESKA
- Friends of Forster Memorial Park
- Forest Hill School
- Fuel Theatre
- Heather Ackroyd
- Invisible Dust
- LIFT

- Lucy Wood
- Luke Jerram
- Matthew Schmolle
- Max Barton
- Melly Still
- Ninth Life
- Rosamund Adoo-Kissi-Debrah
- Sarah Golding
- Second Body
- Serpentine
- Street Trees for Living
- Sud Basu
- Wellcome Collection
- Zena Edwards

Climate Home:

- Alchemy
- Big City Butterfly
- Bonus Pastor Catholic College
- Build Up
- Chaka Chaka Radio
- Ducktape Collective
- Lewisham Young Mayors
- London College of Communication
- Love2Dance
- METRO Charity
- Playing On
- Practice Architecture
- REZON8 Records
- SOUNDS LIKE CHAOS
- Staying Out Collective
- The Unknown
- Tidemill Academy
- Touretteshero

- VIDEOfeet
- Youth First

Close To Home: The Mass Dance Event

- Alleyne Dance
- Dance Umbrella
- E Squad
- IRIE! dance theatre
- Lewisham Mencap
- Magpie Dance Team
- Meet Me at the Albany
- Rushey Green Primary School
- Sedgehill Academy
- South Asian Community Group
- Trinity Laban: BA Students
- Trinity Laban: Community Group

Creative Challenges:

- Adult Learning Lewisham
- Centre for Sustainable Fashion
- Circle Collective
- Lewisham Visual Art Network
- London Arts and Health Alliance
- National Poetry Day
- RIBA
- Royal Horticultural Society
- WWF

Creative Change Fund:

- Acme Studios
- AFRIL
- Bethlem Gallery
- Blackheath Halls
- Catbytes

- Corbett Community Library
- CraftA
- Creekside Education Trust
- CRIPtic
- Early Years Alliance
- Friends of Brookmill Park
- Grim Times Events
- Grow Lewisham
- hARTSlane
- Kender Primary School
- Lewisham Irish Centre
- Max Media Arts CIC
- Midi Music Company
- Myatt Garden School
- New Cross Learning
- Pinkies / LCVA
- Refugee Café
- Selfish Alliance
- South London Film School
- Spontaneous Productions
- St Laurence Church
- Vietnamese Family Partnership
- Wuntanara Drummers

Creative Futures:

- 2000 Community Action Centre
- Ann-Marie Douglas
- BFI Film Academy
- Craft Council
- Creative Access
- Creative Sparkworks
- Cockpit Arts
- Denise Brown
- Dr Francesco Mazzearella

- Film London
- Games London
- Lewisham Youth Theatre
- London College of Fashion
- Ravensbourne, University of London
- Romero Bryan
- Rose Bruford College
- Salima Sule-Ali
- Second Wave Youth Arts
- Splash Damage
- Tayo Odesanya
- Theatre Craft
- The Photography Foundation
- The Rebirth Project
- University of the Arts London

Day One:

- Concise One and Dem Drums
- Continental Drifts
- Jacob Sam-La Rose
- TfL
- The Cogency

Here Now Us:

- Chris Green
- Emma Halstead
- Entelechy Arts
- Glorious Age
- Heart n Soul
- New Earth Theatre
- Spare Tyre
- Spread the Word

In Living Memory:

- Anila Ladwa
- Ben Prideaux
- Beverley Glean
- Brockley Society
- Hummingbird Community Centre
- Joy Prime
- Julia Honess
- Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust
- Lewisham Pensioners' Forum
- Lewisham Positive Aging Council
- Maternity Voices Partnership
- Nubia Way
- Open House
- Paul de Zylva
- Quaggy Waterways Action Group
- Telegraph Hill Centre
- Tim Oshodi
- Will Cenci

Liberty Festival

- Linda Rocco
- Moni Onojeruo

LIT!

- Beckenham Place Park and Mansion
- GDIF
- Kirsty Martin and the LIT! Chorus
- The Revel Puck Circus

Murals:

- Art Mongers
- Boudicca Collins
- Damian Simon

- Emma Barnie
- Gurab Thakali
- Molly Hankinson
- Shauna Blanchfield

Revolution Through Music:

- Angel Dust
- Balamii Radio
- Creekside Arts
- Dave Okumu
- David Ogbuehi
- Emily Tran
- FORM
- London Community Video Archive
- Matchstick Piehouse
- Moziah de Roche
- Novelist
- Oscar Loughlin
- Paige Michel
- Rerezent Radio
- Rivoli Ballroom
- Shahlaa Tahira
- Social Records Society
- U+I
- Unit 137
- Zahra Kiernan

We Are Lewisham Projects:

- Antonio Delicatessen
- Artdog
- Artis Blackheath
- Artisan Village
- Badger, Badger
- Bearspace

- Beetroot & Beans
- Blackheath Pantry
- Blackheath Studio Fitness
- Blackheath Yoga
- Bohemians
- Brockley Brewery
- Brockley Jack Theatre
- Buster mantis
- Canvas & Cream
- Catford Mews
- Chichita Limited
- Coffenlove
- Come out of hiding the lighthouse network CIC
- Corner New Cross
- Crofton Brooks
- Cummin Up
- Deptford Does Art
- Dirty Apron
- Doorstep Bakery
- Drink at Bob's
- Ed Baker Ltd
- Ed sys ltd
- FIND STORE
- Floating Fitness London Limited
- Found Hope
- Fourteen87 Restaurant and Cocktail Bar
- Fox and Firkin
- Fresh Prints Solution
- Dragonfly Yoga Studio
- Gnarbecue
- Good Food
- Gossamer Fog
- Grant Brooke-Holt Hospitality
- Grove Hair

- Guava Kitchen Limited
- Hally Hair and Beauty
- Hill Station Café
- Hullabaloo
- Ignition Brewery
- Inclusive Trade
- Inkwa Tattoos
- The Dolphin
- Isla Ray
- Jazzbourne
- Joy's Health Sanctuary
- Kirkdale Bookshop
- Klose and Soan Banquettes
- Ladywell Village Fruit n Veg
- Lagos Bar
- Le Sandra
- Llamas Head
- London Terrariums Studio
- London Velo
- Lorenzo's Records
- Luce's Stitch and Design
- Magi Gifts
- Make Mee Studio
- MMX Gallery LLP
- Moon Lane
- Morells Limited
- My Eco Order
- Oliver's Food4Life
- On the Hoof Limited
- Pagemasters
- Parlez
- Petit Village
- Planet wax
- Precious Sprouts

- Elements Bar
- Seager Gallery
- South Parade Enterprises
- Spelling mistakes cost lives/Museum of Neoliberalism
- Sydenham Arts
- The Canvas Café
- The Lord Northbrook
- Tony's Daily
- Totu
- Two Spoons
- Villages Brewery
- Yolly

Individuals and organisations are only listed once. They may have been involved in more than one project.

Lewisham's year as London Borough of Culture
Website: wearelewisham.com