

# Bradford Cultural Voice Forum

## Meeting Minutes

The Thornbury Centre - 21st July 2022

10.30am -12.30pm

### **10.30am-10.40am Welcome and Introductions**

Co-chairs Kirran Shah and Alex Croft opened the session and 65 attendees introduced themselves. Sarah Shead introduced herself and Spin Arts as the new Cultural Voice Forum Coordinator for the next 12 months.

### **10.40am-10.50am Kick off with Culture (formerly Start with Art)**

A performance set by Song-eet!, **Bradford's first female South Asian Choir** - exploring heritage through music and lyrics. Performers told the attendees the meaning of the music being sung and that these were traditional South Asian wedding songs filled with hopes and excitement for the future. (Very fitting for today's session).

### **10.50am -11.00am Update from BD25 by Shanaz Gulzar**

Shanaz Gulzar opened by thanking the cultural sector for the role they played in Bradford winning the title of **City of Culture 2025 - BD25**.

#### **Priorities**

- At present there is an extremely reduced delivery team and BD25's first priority is to recruit an Executive and Creative Director. Interviews will take place in August and these roles are expected to start in late autumn/early 2023.

#### **Communication**

- There is an online form on BD25's website to submit ideas to the current and future team. Shanaz has seen every form completed so far.
- At this point there are no commissions/open calls for artists/creatives. These processes will be decided once a delivery team is in place.

#### *Question from Attendee -*

Who is the selection panel? How will that process work? - A brief discussion was held around local representation.

#### *Response from Shanaz -*

The panel will be made of local members of various sectors - specific names unknown by Shanaz. The recruitment process has been an open call with a strong desire for local people to apply. Shanaz concluded by encouraging people to apply for job opportunities and make themselves visible if they have a desire to be part of the BD25 team.

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### 11.00am -11.15am Update from Bradford Council Culture Team by Nic Greenan and Team

Nic Greenan opened by speaking about Myth Busting, giving attendees a snapshot of what the Culture Team has been up to over the last 3 years.

#### Overview:

- The team has grown
- The budget was £700,000 for the entire culture sector in 2019
- The budget is now 1.2 million - 78% directly out to sector
- The team has raised just over £1 million to support outside organisations - The Leap, BPH, CVF
- Core funding is set at just under £1 million
- Investment from other sources sits at just under £1 million

Their aim is to keep a small core team and continue to work with freelancers/organisations with specialist skills. They want as much money as possible to be leaving the council and sitting in the hands of the sector.

#### Approach to festivals and programmes:

BD Festival is the new summer festival replacing the previous Bradford Festival. This will take place on 19th & 20th August. The programme will be part curated, part call out and led by the council with a Made in Bradford strand featuring local artists.

Phill Hargreaves leads on the Culture Programme, this covers the whole district and runs on a 12 month programme.

Phill's has work included:

- Supporting the programming of festivals - Little Amal at BLF & People Powered Press installation
- Working with strategic Interventions - Music Network and CVF
- Enabling District wide festival's in development - 2 confirmed for now
- Relaunching BD Festival - 19th & 20th Aug - Festivals will be part curated and part call out
- Bringing ideas to team that are development

#### Partnerships:

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Joel Mackay, Cultural Partnerships Manager - is focusing on where work aligns, synergies, and identifying gaps - The Leap, Cultural Voice Forum, Bradford Producing Hub & City of Culture, to name a few.

Joel's has work included:

- Screen Strategy with [The Unit](#) - Currently located at Impact Hub and will move Keighley Creative
- Short Screen Content - commissions with local creatives and Channel 4
- Partnerships with BCEP - We're all encouraged to sign up [Bradford Cultural Education Partnerships](#)
- [Born in Bradford](#) looking at the effect of wellbeing opportunities on young people with NHS
- [Wellcome Trust](#) to better understand the impact of culture of their lives
- Strategic Interventions - Music Network & supporting the growth of Bradford District Heritage Action

### Grants:

Karen Lewis, Cultural Programmes and Grant Officer for Culture and Sport - Developing a stronger embrace with Heritage is a strand.

Karen's work has included:

- Working with Heritage Lottery Fund to instigate action plans, instigators and open call projects with Windrush and BMP are partners
- [Artist in Residence](#) at City Hall
- Opening up heritage funding - open grants up to £1,500
- Supporting The Leap with the investment of large grants from HLF
- Strategic Interventions - [Bradford Music network](#) - managed by Sinead Campbell - 12 partners involved in steering group - looking at creative strands, performances - working towards a district wide music month and a music festival across the city centre. Gail Simpkins has recently taken the role of Network Coordinator to support this.
- Doing their best - trying to get money out of the door and into the cultural sector

### Events:

Emily Spencer - Events Manager - main point of contact for everyone in Bradford when running events.

### Evaluation:

Rachel Firth- Monitoring and Evaluation of Culture is our Plan. By May next year Rachel will produce an evaluation that will look at what has been achieved and has not. Targets will then be set for the next 2 years, this will continue on a 2 year rolling programme.

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### Recruitment:

Bradford Council will be recruiting a Creative Producer with a focus on Sustainability and Environmental impact and will coordinate a Climate Symposium later in the year. (This is now live [Bradford Council - Creative Producer role](#))

### 11.15am-11.25am Context setting for Cultural Voice Forum by **Sarah Shead and Alex Croft**

In this section of the session Sarah Shead, CVF Coordinator and Alex Croft, CVF Co-Chair discussed the history of CVF and where CVF sits Strategically in Bradford's Cultural Sector.

### Overview

Historically:

- The Cultural Voice Forum was created in 2019.
- It was one of a series of recommendations made by Andrew Dixon of Culture Creativity and Place as part of his work on the feasibility and readiness of Bradford to mount a convincing bid to be UK City of Culture in 2025
- It is currently a network with no formal entity, legal structure, governance, constitution, or membership Rights.
- It is a combination of cultural organisations and the freelance sector (which is much larger in Bradford district than across the rest of the UK)
- It invites artists, culture and heritage professionals & volunteers, and it's free to join.
- Meetings happen every two months and, in the months in-between, a newsletter is shared instead.
- Bradford Council currently provides 100% of the funding for it and runs a tender process for the coordination of it. For transparency, that's £20,000.
- £15,000 that goes to the coordinator, only £1,000 to spend on the membership & meetings, remaining to the freelance chair and financial administration.
- This was originally awarded to The Brick Box (2.5years) and has recently been awarded to Spin Arts, who hold a 12- month contract.
- There are two co-chairs Kirran Shah and Alex Croft, who are due to change this year.

Strategically:

- We have a seat to represent the sector on the Bradford Cultural Place Partnership board (Cultural Place Partnership is chaired by Leader of Bradford Council, Susan Hinchcliff, and includes Bradford Council, University of Bradford, Bradford College, and other representatives of the cultural sector i.e. The Leap and Bradford Producing Hub, as well as national funders. Bradford 2025 was driven by the Cultural Place Partnership.

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- It is unique and powerful that CVF has representation at this table. It is regarded as a vital connection out to the sector, and I would add for the sector to influence policy and strategic developments.
- It is very rare for a sector network to have such a high-level strategic positioning.
- The Cultural Place Partnership meets quarterly and is charged with oversight, horizon scanning and coordination of cultural activity across the district at a strategic level.

Strength in the Network:

- As a result of all of these things, The district's 10 year cultural strategy Culture Is Our Plan points to significant opportunity and role for an enhanced CVF going forward.
- Bradford has 10 ambitions to realise its plan. CVF sits at the heart of one of the ten ambitions:

### **Network capacity**

*We are at our most powerful, effective and sustainable when we work collaboratively.*

*By sharing resources, we will build and diversify our sector networks. As a creative community, we will share equipment, knowledge and skills, supporting, championing and mentoring each other. We will work collectively to develop inclusion, talent, participation and audiences. We will ensure every District agenda, from health to planning, education to transport, keeps culture in mind.*

This led into break-out groups to discuss the future of the forum, informing the strategy that Spin Arts is currently developing.

### **11.25am-12.00pm The Future of Bradford's CVF - Have Your Say**

**Facilitated by Sarah Shead (Breakout groups)**

The attendees were then invited to switch tables, sit with new people and begin a discussion around two questions.

### **12.00pm-12.15pm Group feedback/discussion from breakout groups**

**Facilitated by Alex Croft**

**Question 1 - With Bradford 2025 on the horizon, what is the purpose and value of having a Cultural Voice in Bradford? Who needs to come together, why and what for?**

*Select responses: Inviting people to "belong" to an arts/cultural network, peer group support, writing support groups (funding and other), communications, representation from groups and orgs i.e. young people, education, BIPOC, BIASAN, Muslim Women's network, community centres, queer network, Database/directory of members, accountability for cultural activities, disseminating info and resources fairly, a place for open conversations.*

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**Question 2 - If Cultural Voice had more capacity & resources, and was to play an enhanced role in the cultural sector, what would that look like and what would that be?**

*Select responses: Access, equity, need for freelance support, greater diversity of membership, member benefits - managing membership expansion, independent forum away from council, environment and heritage, how isn't here, city centre focused, better digital resources, social media channels, parties, celebrations, CVF linkedin - identify barriers to access CVF*

- Pictures from the group discussions can be found [here](#)
- The Cultural Voice Forum will shortly be announcing other ways that people can feed into the strategy and future planning.

Alex and Kirran will be stepping down next as co-chairs within the next 6-12 months. The roles will evolve but freelance representation will be a strong priority.

### **12.15pm - 12.25pm Any Other Business**

- Ezra Nash - Sharing information on the new [Youth Theatre Lab](#) with Common Wealth Theatre
- Liberty Arts - Seeking out women working in STEM for the next phase of STEM Theatre In A Box
- Rosie Freeman - Encouraging people to get [in touch](#) to discuss the future of Queer Arts in Bradford
- Spiltmilk Dance - Recruiting community dancers/choreographers to be part of their project [It's Your Move!](#)
- Sarah Shead - shared news from -
  - [Sisterhood Poetry](#) with Sharena Lee Satti will take place on last Friday of every month at Bradford Libraries.
  - Colin Nevill's book - describes and illustrates wall and other murals to be found in publicly accessible spaces across the district, including Keighley, Silsden, Menston, Baildon and Ilkley. The cost is £9, including p&p, and it can be ordered via the homepage of *Not Just Hockney* website at [www.notjusthockney.info](http://www.notjusthockney.info) (see 'Books').

### **12.25pm-12.30pm Closing words from guest speaker by Labour MP for Bradford East - Imran Hussain**

Imran Hussain spoke of the importance of culture and it being at the heart of Bradford's regenerations. Thanking everyone in the part they played in Bradford successfully being crowned City of Culture 2025

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The meeting closed with networking and lunch supplied by Tazza's Kitchen