

Picture Perfect?: The Dearne Community Story Trail



The stories behind the selfie boards in
Goldthorpe, Thurnscoe & Bolton upon
Dearne

Dearne Community
Arts'
Festival

Goldthorpe
Regenerate Renew Revitalise

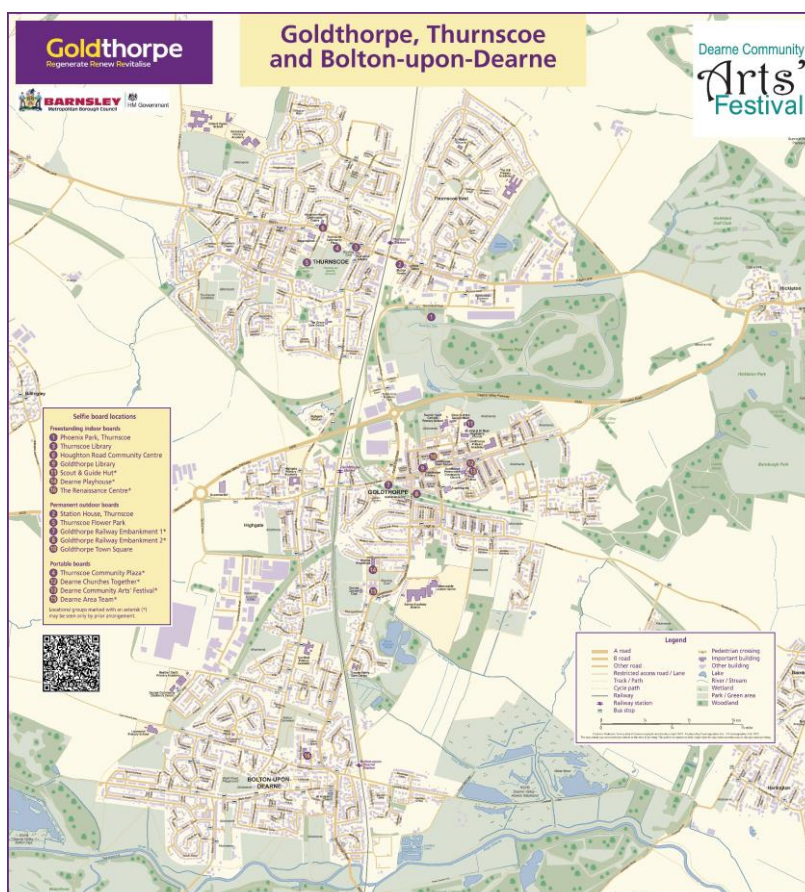

HM Government

‘Picture Perfect?: The Dearne Community Story Trail’ is the community art project for 2023 for the Dearne Community Arts’ Festival. Funded through the UK Government’s Towns Fund through the Goldthorpe Towns Fund Board, the project has seen the creation of 16 selfie boards celebrating key locations and groups in the area, each board containing QR codes which enable you to hear the stories behind those locations and groups. DCAF has worked closely with local residents and groups along with artist Lydia Caprani and storyteller Rebecca Dye and BMBC to leave a lasting legacy of colour in the area which enables selfie photos to be taken which can celebrate our local community. A series of workshops were held throughout April to June 2023 where recordings were made from volunteers, residents and children affiliated to local groups which can be heard through clicking on the QR codes on each board or through the Dearne Community Arts’ Festival website (www.dearnecommunityartsfestival.co.uk). In this way, the art project links local, living history to vibrant designs which help us to discover more of what goes on in Goldthorpe, Thurnscoe and Bolton upon Dearne throughout the year.

Aware that not everyone has access to the Internet or the ability to use QR codes through smartphones, the audio files connected to this project have been transcribed by Julie Turner and can be read in this booklet.

Our thanks to **Rebecca Dye** (storyteller) for recording these conversations with members of the community and to the groups and leaders involved in these conversations and to artist **Lydia Caprani** for her work on designs for the selfie boards. Thanks also go to **Totty Signs** for their fabrication of designs, to **Cosmographics Ltd** for their design of the selfie board trail map (which is located in the ‘Heart of Goldthorpe’ Town Square officially opened on 12 October 2023) and to **Teresa Williams** (BMBC) for her help in funding and facilitating this community art project.

The selfie boards can be viewed at the following locations (numbers refer to the map below):



1. Phoenix Park, Thurnscoe* (to be located in the new visitor hub, due to be completed 2024)
2. Station House, Thurnscoe
3. Thurnscoe Library
4. Thurnscoe Community Plaza*
5. Thurnscoe Flower Park
6. Houghton Road Community Centre, Thurnscoe (opposite Asda)
7. Goldthorpe Railway Embankment, Barnsley Road (opposite Texaco Garage)*
8. Goldthorpe Railway Embankment, High Street*
9. Goldthorpe Library
10. Goldthorpe Town Square
11. Scout & Guide Hut, Lockwood Road, Goldthorpe*
12. Dearne Churches Together (housed at Goldthorpe Pentecostal Community Church)*
13. Dearne Community Arts' Festival (housed at Goldthorpe Pentecostal Community Church)*
14. Dearne Playhouse, Goldthorpe
15. Dearne Area Team, Goldthorpe*
16. The Renaissance Centre, Bolton-on-Dearne* (currently closed for building work)

Some boards are permanently installed outdoors. Others are inside buildings and so only visible when the buildings are open. Some are portable and may perhaps only be viewed by prior arrangement. Locations and groups marked with an asterisk (*) may be seen only by prior arrangement.

NO. 1 PHOENIX PARK, THURNSCOE
TRANSCRIPT OF PHOENIX PARK AUDIO FILES

Recorded at the Phoenix Park Fun Day on Wednesday 31st May 2023 by Rebecca Dye as part of the
Dearne Community Arts' Festival Community Art Project for 2023



Track 1: Phoenix Park: Working In The Park (TCV)

James Fleetwood

"I'm James Fleetwood; I'm a Senior Project Officer for TCV based on a lot of the South Yorkshire pit tips. One of them is Phoenix Park. I've been working here for fifteen years, and I've seen the park grow from trees that were no bigger than me (and I'm about six foot) and now they're nice tall, mature trees. The site is a wonderful resource for the local community: for dog-walking, for playing, for exploring. It's used as a cut-through for people to have a nicer route to walk between the two villages than just along the main road. It's bike-riding – it's everything you'd want to do on here, you can do in the great outdoors."

Female worker

"I like to come here because it's good, especially for the kids, to have a nice green area to play in and not just be indoors, so that makes me happy when I see kids running around and play in a place where I'm part of it. I help with (like) the TCV managed area and so it's amazing."

James Fleetwood

"It's been converted from a former pit tip, so a great big mound of colliery spoil. Now it's covered with about 90,000 trees, a large amount of grassland, with wildflowers in. It's a great asset to the community, and as some old miners have said, it's a permanent reminder of what was here, but it's not a depressing reminder. People can say, 'This used to be a pit, but now look at it, it's this wonderful place for the community.' It's not just been left."

Female worker

"It's very important for the community to have a place to come out, like, relax a bit, like you can take a walk, take your dog for a walk, so it's... that thing is made different in your life and the community's life as well."

James Fleetwood

"Working on sites like this is what gets me out of bed in a morning. Going out there, knowing you're making a difference to the community, and that the community appreciates what you've done for them... what the site means to them as well; they all love it; everyone says lovely things about it. It is a real jewel in the crown of this part of the world."

Track 2: Walking The Dog

"Hello, my name is Amy; I'm a local resident of Thurnscoe and I often come to Phoenix Park. You will literally see me here most days. We come every day with the dog, and often we come during the week, so there's not that many people here. It's not always full like it is today and it's just peaceful, and we get to enjoy... you forget you're in between industrial estates and there's a busy road and all that... You

walk to the top and there's just peace. There's been a few times we've been here and there's been deer... you see deer run across and you think 'oh! There's a deer!' It's just peaceful and relaxing and we came not that long ago over Christmas when it had snowed, and it was just full of families just sledging and it was just amazing because it felt like I had stepped back into a time. You walk around here and I can't walk more than a couple of metres before someone tells me some interesting fact about here or wants to pet the dog or talk about it, so it's nice; it's.. it feels very community-based here, and there's always kids on the climbing wall and my husband trying to get on the climbing wall, which he can't get on! So yes..."

Track 3: Phoenix Park & Groundwork

"I'm Taylor and I'm from Groundwork and I'm currently at Phoenix Park doing the consultation hopefully for a playground that we're hoping to introduce soon. We're trying to get a better understanding of what people want to see here, but I think... us as Groundwork because we're very rooted in nature, and so at Phoenix Park, we want to make sure that we're not disconnecting play from nature. So all of the opinions that we're putting forward are very nature-based, so boulders... logs... We also want to include trees in the playground if that's possible. We have also given the option for traditional play, but we want to add a natural spin on it. We've spoken to quite a few people that have some very interesting opinions, so hopefully when the playground does happen, it will be a good reflection of what people want to see... I think especially because of Covid, people are realising the importance of green spaces.

"I think a lot more money should be put into green spaces. I mean, any time you do the consultation, one of the main questions is 'Do you have the money or are you finding the money?' I kind of want it to get to the point where that's not even a question; it's 'Yes! We have the money, and we just need your opinions so that literally within the next couple of months, we can get started.' That's kind of where I wish we were at. We're working at getting more and more people interested."

Track 4: People In The Park

"Phoenix Park is really good to walk dogs. It's like a really friendly place with loads of ancient like dinosaur bones to look at and it's just really quiet and nice and calm. Benches for you to have picnics on; it's loads of areas where you can go sit with your family and that if it's warm. It's just really nice for you to go walk about and everything."

"Hiya, I'm Sara, and I work for Dearne Kids Youth group here in Thurnscoe. I'm 39 years old, so when I was a lot younger, Phoenix Park was completely different. It didn't look anything like it does now. Now, the park is absolutely beautiful; it's a fantastic place to spend time on yourself or with the children or walking your dog. There's lots to see. I've been here a billion times with my family and friends. We've had picnics, barbecues, funfairs, spent lots and lots of time here throughout the year. It's a beautiful place, and the people who look after the park do a fantastic job."

"To me, it just means, like, it's a nice area to go and walk in; it's nice for you to come and chill here if you need to get out for a bit."

"We've done our sponsored walks here with the children from the Youth group. It's just a fantastic place to be. It's so peaceful – not today, because we've got a fair going on, but usually it's so peaceful to spend some time here. I love this area; I love the Dearne where I live."

Track 5: The Park's History

Julie Turner

"I'm Julie and I was involved in the renovation of Phoenix Park at the turn of the century. It was one of the very first community projects that I got involved with. I worked with Groundwork Dearne Valley

and it was the first time really that I got involved in community art because in Phoenix Park there are a number of sculptures – sheep sculptures, the dinosaur sculpture, the flower sculptures, and then of course the mining wheel sculpture which goes back to the heritage of this being the site on which Hickleton Main Colliery was. So it's very dear to me because it's been wonderful to see the renovation of this park into a beautiful green space. My son's footprints are in the labyrinth here when he was a toddler (he's 32 now), so it's great to see a project that has real long-lasting impact in a community."

Cllr Martin Morrell

"My name's Councillor Martin Morrell and I'm councillor for Dearne North Ward. Before Phoenix Park was Phoenix Park, it was a pit slag heap. After the pit shut, it was left barren, disused, empty...just as a grey mound, a grey-black mound for many years. Eventually they began to grass it and the grass grew, and when the grass became quite nice and they put the tracks in, you could sit at the top on a park bench and look straight out, right across the area, as far as Barnsley. The trees have now grown; the park's absolutely amazing, well-used, well liked, the car park's always full, people taking their dog for a walk, generally walking around... It's a really good place to be.

Julie Turner

"It means an awful lot. During lockdown, this was the place that we came to walk all the time. Literally, just the green space, going high up, seeing out over all the Dearne Valley, it was a lifeline. It's a place where people come to walk their dogs, where the kids learn to ride their bikes, where people can just enjoy being outdoors."

NO. 2 STATION HOUSE, THURNSCOE
TRANSCRIPT OF STATION HOUSE AUDIO FILES

Recorded at a community art workshop on 18th May 2023 by Rebecca Dye as part of the Dearne Community Arts' Festival Community Art Project for 2023



Track 1: What Is Station House?

Charlotte Williams

"My name's Charlotte Williams and I'm lucky enough to be Chief Executive of Station House Community Association. Lots of people ask me what that is... so, we are a hyper local charity, which means we're based in Thurnscoe and we like looking after people in and around the Thurnscoe area.

"Our main activity is around childcare; we have lots of different childcare-type services, but we know that childcare comes in a context of looking after families. So while we're looking after the children, we're also looking after the Mums and Dads and the Grandmas and all the other bits, because children don't come in isolation."

Yvonne

"So my name's Yvonne and I've recently become Deputy Manager, which takes on quite a few new roles, including Special Educational Needs. We care for children 0-3 in a morning, and once they go home, we then have a little break as in lunch and then we do what we call our after-school club... ranging between anything between 22 and 23 children on some nights, so it's quite a demanding role, but plenty of hair dye cover the greys up!"

Charlotte

"So we've been here a long time. We set up in '86 when the coal mines shut, and we didn't do childcare then. I wasn't here then. They were doing things like 'soup kitchen' and then they did re-education, because they realised that people would never work in the coal mines again. So Station House delivered education, and then as people did move on and get jobs, there was a gap and no one could look after the children, so Station House looked after the children, so as our community has moved and evolved, we've evolved with them. We couldn't still be running education, because that's inappropriate; that time has now gone. So it's about being really in tune with what the community needs, and trying to respond as quick as possible ... 'cos when you get a crisis, whether it's Covid, whether it's bad weather, whether it's a big rise in inflation that's unexpected and unplanned and not in your control, people need help straightaway. Don't plan and do it in two years' time. That's too late. That's the difference between big, big communities and big, big organisations and little micro-communities. So really, I sort of really hope that people feel that we're just their extended family and that's how we like to see ourselves."

Track 2: Meeting Needs

Charlotte Williams

"Part of being a community association is that you find the niche, you find what's missing in people's lives and you try your very hardest to help them through that."

Yvonne.

"We're here for the community; we offer a safe place if anyone feels threatened, they can come. We also offer if anyone wants to come and do breast-feeding. We've recently started like a community foodbank, for want of a better word, where a large, big marquee comes outside, and anyone can come. It was free, but it now carries a small charge, and the queue is phenomenal."

Charlotte

"The after-school club enables parents to go out to work. So we pick up from three schools; we bring them down here and children are in a fun, safe, healthy atmosphere while their parents are at work. Keeping people in work is massively important because it helps reduce poverty. I'm not saying that people who work don't find it really financially difficult, but we know that eventually they'll climb up that job ladder and things will get easier for them. So that's a very direct impact that we can show."

"Some of our other services may be for the younger children; that's about giving them life-skills that help them to have better chances as they get older, helps them in education. Then, things like having a food pantry in the porch just means that anybody can help themselves, without question or judgment, if you just need a little bit of food to help them get through the weekend or just the evening or maybe just have a packet of biscuits because biscuits are yummy and most people can't afford little luxuries at the moment, and even something as simple as a packet of biscuits can really cheer somebody up!"

"All these things, it's about pressure, and pressure tends to come because of financial disadvantage, and the disadvantage is not by these people's own making. People in this village are smart and clever and hard-working, but unfortunately, they don't always get the snazzy paid jobs and they're held back because they're in the poverty circle."

Yvonne

"There's a new housing estate that's getting bigger and bigger by School Street and we do see a lot of different minorities coming into the village; we're getting a lot coming for enquiries here, so we're having to sort out our language barriers, things like that for small children, so we do what we call 'points of reference' cards which we all carry on ourselves; we point to a picture so they know this is where we now go out to play, this is breakfast time, this is handwash time, and it just does alleviate a little bit when a child feels somewhere new, and it just makes them feel a little bit more calmer and feeling a little bit.."

"So I think we're doing really well. Our numbers are creeping up and creeping up; we've got a waiting list, and after schools our numbers are creeping up and creeping up, so I think we're doing really, really well. A pat on our backs!"

Track 3: The Children And The Team

Carol Jones

"My name's Carol Jones and I'm Childcare Manager. I've been here forever! – well, 25 years – and it means everything to me, these kids. It's my life."

Children

- “What I like about Station House is having new friends and it’s basically having fun, like playing ‘Tiggy Off The Ground’ or ‘Tig’. You can do lots of things here. That’s why I like Station House.”
- “It’s just a fun place”.
- “I like the slide. You run off it.”
- “It is very nice.”

Chantelle

“I’m Chantelle and I’m an Early Years Practitioner. Station House is a playgroup in a morning and like an after-school club for the children whose parents work and are unable to pick up from school. Station House means a lot, because it’s something I’ve always wanted to do, working with children, and it’s like a little family. It’s like a little community and it helps a lot of people.”

Children

- “I like playing football all the time; it’s so good.”
- “I’ve got a favourite team to do it; sometimes it’s football here – it’s mostly football, and mostly ‘Tig’ on this area.”
- “If we’re allowed, I normally join in with ‘Tiggy Off The Ground’, that’s what we normally play.”

Staff

“Just seeing all the children’s faces light up when they’re having a good time and altogether, and all the staff mucking in with the children.”

Children

- “I like to play outside and I also like the toys in the shed because they look very cool.”
- “There’s so much stuff to do; they have a whole shed full of stuff. There’s basically everything you need and it’s great.”

Staff

“Oh, I’m looking after children now whose parents I looked after when I first started. If I see them in the street, they shout and wave. It’s lovely.”

Track 4: Running Station House

Charlotte Williams

“So my job ... it’s a lot of paperwork and it’s a lot about money, and that sounds really dull, and it’s not that I’m a money-focussed person, but without money, we can do nothing, and so obviously money has to come in. Our families round here don’t have a lot of money, so we have to find other people who want to give us money. People want to give us money when we show that we make a difference. So all my life is about what differences we have made and what impact has that made on people.”

Staff

“I love my job, I really do love my job. I’m from the village anyway, so... no transport, I can walk; I love walking. You know what children you’ve got on certain days, which ones are going to keep talking, which ones want your attention, and you feel like, ‘Yeah! Let’s bring on today!’ “

Charlotte

“Everybody apart from me who works here and volunteers here lives in the village, so they all know each other. So when new parents come, they’ll go, ‘Oh, Carol! I haven’t seen you for ages!’ And it breaks down those barriers. We’re not a stigmatising people; people don’t feel judged because we are literally all in it together.”

NO. 3 THURNSCOE LIBRARY

TRANSCRIPT OF THURNSCOE LIBRARY AUDIO FILES

Recorded by Rebecca Dye at a community art workshop at Thurnscoe Library on Thursday 18th May 2023 as part of the Dearne Community Arts' Festival community art project for 2023.



Track 1: The Library

"My name's Noreen Arif; I normally work at Wombwell Library; I'm covering at Thurnscoe Library. Basically, my job involves covering other libraries on a regular basis. I get to see lots of different groups and different colleagues in libraries which I enjoy. Thurnscoe Library is lovely. It's very community based. I love the children's craft club; you get used to the children; you have this bond with them; they know they can freely come up to you and ask for anything, chat about things and when I'm watching the group from the desk, I find the group interacts really well with each other, so I think it's more of a social group now. Yeah, I really enjoy it, seeing what they're up to. We have the adult games and company club. I would love it if more people could come to that group on a Thursday afternoon at Thurnscoe, just to play dominoes and chat.

"Since I've come here, we've had a massive move around; we've had the posters renewed. We're just on our finishing touches now. Welcome to Thurnscoe Library!"

Track 2: Thurnscoe Library Groups

"I come to the library; I get books every week. I've always come to the library. I enjoy the company of the girls that work in the library, so I pop in whenever I can. So they asked me about starting this game off, so I said, 'Yeah, I'll have a go at it.'"

"It's a game I can only remember from childhood really."

"You don't have to be clever doing it; you just play."

"I'd lost my husband in September, and I was feeling rather lonely and I heard about this group and thought there was more of us, but that doesn't matter; we still enjoy ourselves talking and chatting. It's not just about playing a game; it's about talking to one another and getting to know about local things because I don't come from here, you see."

"And about each other as well..."

"Yes, that's right. We're all in our eighties, I think."

"Somebody told me to go to the Rainbow Centre and I've been going to different things and they've given me new life. It's been lovely."

"It's made a big difference, because instead of staring at four walls, which it's quite easy to do when you get stuck inside and you don't do anything, but while you're able, you go out... I go out on my mobility scooter."

"I've found out you've got to do it yourself; you've got to do it yourself, and people are wonderful. They've been marvellous with me."

"It means the world to me, does the library. I've always used Thurnscoe Library. The staff are brilliant; the girls will pick you any book you want. I don't pick mine up because they know what I like... I've left a list there and they pick what I want. (That's good, isn't it?!) Service with a smile. Children come in and they paint and do all sorts. It's a wonderful place."

Track 3: Reading

"Hi, I'm Andrea, I live in Thurnscoe, and I use the library quite often, maybe two or three times a week, mostly using it for books, but we also come for crafts, reading sessions, and things that are on, particularly told by the librarian, so we like that we can come and basically get anything that we like. (Asks child) Why do you like the library? Drawing? Ah, they sometimes do art clubs and then they can do drawing and colouring... Ah, and Lego. Yeah, they have a Lego club sometimes you come, and we build all stuff, right? They like that. But what's your favourite book? *Fat Alfie*? Yes, we read the whole series. There's not too many books, but he definitely loves them, the *Fat Alfie* books. For his age, I think they're very funny. We have a lot of books at home ourselves, but the variety of books here... I like him to choose, and if he chooses, he's more likely to want to read the book."

Track 4: Learning

"My name's Rory Garforth and I work for Dearne Electronic Community Village; we're a charity and we're based in Thurnscoe Library at the Lifelong Learning Centre. We mainly run courses in IT and employability skills. I've also run courses in film photography, digital photography and music technology. I would say 90% of my learners come from the Job Centre. Generally, they are long-term unemployed and so my job really is to get 'em some qualifications and help 'em apply for jobs and look for jobs, get their confidence up a bit, get their self-esteem up a bit so they're in a place where they can then do their own job search without the help, and that usually takes about six months to a year to get to that level with some of the people that I get. A service like this is really needed in Thurnscoe, Goldthorpe, Bolton. Most of my learners do come from these areas, but like I say, they're generally sent from the Job Centre. A lot of them are in their fifties or their sixties and it's been literally years since they have done any kind of qualification or any kind of learning even, so it's like a first port of call really. And then once they've done something we may, generally I might send them somewhere else or hopefully find them employment. My main aim is to get them employment while they're with me. Sometimes I'll get a text and they'll tell me that they're doing really well. You know, sometimes they might pop in.. yeah, I do get that, which is nice. Yeah, I like that. I do feel like I'm doing something worthwhile, you know, myself, I'm doing this sort of job, so I think that's why I've stuck with it as long as I have. Yeah, you do get job satisfaction when you get people into employment, and you see them doing well for themselves. It's good."

NO 4: THURNSCOE COMMUNITY PLAZA
TRANSCRIPT OF THURNSCOE PLAZA AUDIO FILES

Recorded by Rebecca Dye at a community art workshop at Thurnscoe Library on Thursday 18th May 2023 as part of the Dearne Community Arts' Festival community art project for 2023



Track 1: An Overview

Helen

“My name’s Helen and I live in Thurnscoe, and I joined Big Local Thurnscoe probably about nine years ago. One of the prime things that we’ve done is the Plaza, which is an area in the middle of the village which is for kids of any age really to use with bikes and skateboards and running around over it – just generally enjoying themselves there.”

Alison Vint

“My name’s Alison and I’m the Community Development Worker for Big Local Thurnscoe, and I’ve been in post for around ten years now. We’ve done a huge range of projects over the last ten years, from community events; we’ve done a lot of community information, so we’ve given out newsletters and put up notice boards; we did a lot of regeneration work – we actually purchased and refurbished two houses in the village; we did a lot of work during Covid, a lot of Covid relief; we did food parcels, little projects. We’ve done a lot of cultural things as well, a lot of artistic initiatives, so we had our ‘*Go Wild! In Thurnscoe*’ sculpture project; we’ve done mosaics; we’ve worked with local schools, and we continue to do so.”

Helen

“Just on the edge of our Thurnscoe Park, we created a children and family play area with various pieces of equipment – swings and slides and all sorts – and it’s really well used, and whole families go there and spend time there, and I often walk past it and I just ... I just enjoy seeing people enjoying themselves there.”

Track 2: Regeneration

Helen

“Ten or eleven years ago, the Government set up this scheme of how to improve less well-off areas of the country, and they were called ‘Big Local’. We got a million pounds to spend over ten years to improve the locality of where we live for the benefit of the people who lived there, so that’s really what Big Local is. And we are in fact coming to the end of the ten years now.”

Alison

“After the close-out of Big Local Thurnscoe next year, the Plaza and all of the projects which Big Local has established will be continued and developed by our legacy organisation, which is Thurnscoe Regeneration CIO, which stands for Charitable Incorporated Organisation. So it will continue to be

accountable to the community; we will have charitable objectives, and report directly to the Charity Commission.

“As a worker coming into this area, I’ve seen a huge change in the last ten years that I’ve been working here, and it’s not just about the physical assets that we’ve brought to the village like the Christmas lights, the sculptures, the mosaic, the green space initiatives. We’ve done all of that, but I think beyond that, it’s this confidence that people have got about where they live now, and they’re actually proud to say that they live in Thurnscoe and they want to be part of the community, and I think that’s been a huge achievement in ten years.”

Track 3: The Plaza

Alison

“Big Local Thurnscoe decided to begin the Plaza Project in response to a lot of feedback from our community events, with people telling us there was nothing for young people to do in the village; they didn’t have their own dedicated space; so even though we had a lot of play equipment, and a lot more for young people to get involved in, there was nothing specifically for young people. So we thought it would be an amazing legacy to actually build a plaza in the centre of the village where people can access it and just really bring their own equipment, bring bikes, scooters, skateboards, and enjoy the parkour in the centre. We’ve had an awful lot of problems in the development and building of the project. It took a lot of skills from transferring community assets to getting involved in planning to tree preservation... There were a lot of things we didn’t know we didn’t know! – so it took a long build and also in the middle of all that we had the Covid-19 pandemic; we had our contractors going bust and we had a lot of anti-social behaviour in the beginning, so we’ve had a lot of things to contend with, but I’m delighted to say last summer the Plaza was completed and we had an official opening in June (2022.)”

Helen

“I mean, we’ve never had anything like this in Thurnscoe before, have we? It’s a new thing altogether, and now it’s looking better with the grass growing up and it looks like somewhere you want to go into now. I think it’ll get more and more use, and I hope it will, and I hope the kids who use it will really enjoy it.”

Alison

“I would add that the Plaza is now an established part of the landscape in Thurnscoe. People know about it; people refer to it; people meet each other there; the dog walkers like to walk through; people like to have their sandwiches there in the lunchtime; and I just think that all of that makes it more of a community asset really. What we would like to focus on going forward is enhancing that space, improving the visual appeal, having more benches, having a pretty gateway, and we will, as a legacy organisation, continue to focus on developing that area and improving it and having more events for all the community.”

NO. 5 THURNSCOE FLOWER PARK
TRANSCRIPT OF THURNSCOE FLOWER PARK AUDIO FILES

Recorded at a community art session on Thursday 18 May 2023 by Rebecca Dye as part of the
Dearne Community Arts' Festival's Community Art Project for 2023



Track 1: Pauline Phillips

"I'm Pauline Phillips and I do live in the house at the Flower Park, so it is really important to me. Round about in 2013 this park was awful; it was a no-go area; there was drug use; there was a lot of vandalism, and it was just green: there were no flowers because the Council had no monies, so they just cut it back once a year so the things that flower in the spring you never got because they'd already cut them off. So I just asked if just three of us, I think it was at this point, could we just trim back the shrubs at the right times so we got the spring-flowering shrubs.

"We did such a good job that Barnsley entered into the 'Barnsley In Bloom'; the first year we got a Silver, and we've worked all the way up: just before Covid, we got Platinum. Now we've got the colour all the year round; we do stuff for nature; we've set up a bug hotel; we've put hedgehog places in two parts of the park; we get frogs and toads because there's a waterway over there and they come and like the damp places, and so we just like it to look nice.

"It's getting more difficult now as we're getting older because we're all over 70 in our little group; we're wanting more younger volunteers to help and it's hard in the summer when you're dead-heading roses and you're hoeing and everything, just to keep things nice. It does wonders for your mental health, but it just makes you feel good, being outside, listening to the birds, and looking at everything."

Track 2: Julie Turner

"Hello, I'm Julie Turner; I live in Thurnscoe; I got married in the Pentecostal church there and my wedding photos were taken in Thurnscoe Flower Park, so it's always been a really important place to me. It's a place of real tranquillity, I think, and there's such a lot of nature going on around that it's wonderful that in an area that's often thought of as being quite urban, there are these pockets of greenery and green spaces and just wonderful nature that you can enjoy.

"Pauline, who lives in the Park House, has done an awful lot to get funding from places like Markham Grange Nursery, but she has also worked with the Royal British Legion because the memorial's here and so we've got this lovely space – not only the statue, which has been cleaned up and made to look beautiful, but the memorial area with the poppies and a lovely poppy bench that's been installed here. Then they've worked with Big Local Thurnscoe to do the '*Go Wild! In Thurnscoe*' sculpture trail so we've got a gorilla here. She's worked really tirelessly here on getting funding for the play park, which is just a little bit further on from the Flower Park, and that's a beautiful area where kids can play. It's been vandalised several times, but each time she's come back, got funding, and it's a lovely area. I was there last night with my grandchildren playing and they really had a great time."

Track 3: Mark Oddy

"My name's Mark Oddy; most people know me just as 'Oddy' and I've lived next door to the Flower Park since I was three years old. It's always been a part of my life; seeing as I'm long term sick at the minute, it's a little haven for me, an excuse for me to bump into people and talking!

"Yeh, it's changed a lot. There used to be a concrete shelter there, and there was a sunken rose garden. Most of my generation know it as Stonehenge! – that's what we used to call it. But it used to be funny, because we used to live next door to the Flower Park, me and my friends would be on there, sneaking a can of beer or something like that and my Mam and Dad would be shouting over the fence, 'Keep t'noise down! Keep t'noise down!' and I'd be stood, hiding behind one of these columns so they didn't know it was me!

"But yeah, I can remember learning to ride my bike up and down there... my first bike what my Grandad made me with solid rubber tyres (*laughs*). I used to help old Alf Jessop when all t'greenhouses were on there. Like I say, because we've always lived next door, we always knew Alf. I used to go in and help him pot all the plants up and do seedlings and I must only have been about eight, eight, nine. Like I say, I remember having a day picnic when the pond was in there... and my little wind-up orange frogman that swam around the little lake. Yeah, it's just always been a part of my life."

Track 4: Thurnscoe Park Volunteers

Chris Shaw

"My name's Chris Shaw and I'm a local volunteer at Thurnscoe Flower Park. I've been doing this now for about six years, just on a Thursday, couple of hours... meet a lot of interesting people because it's a park and they come walking through the park. We generally get about 8 or 9 volunteers down here on the Thursday so that keeps it a bit better looking than what a lot of parks are. We've won a lot of 'Barnsley In Bloom' trophies from Barnsley Council and we, like, do some planting, plant trees and just generally have a bit of fun as well while we're doing it... have coffee and a cake and a good chat, meeting interesting people."

Andy

"I'm Andy and I, like, come up here on Thursdays to help out and then do some planting and now pick all the little bits out, and then, I like coming up to see everybody like my friends and all that and then chatting with a couple of people who come through the park. It makes me feel happy, good, coming down and have a cup of tea and all that."

Track 5: Gooseacre Primary School

Teacher

"I'm Miss Jones from Gooseacre Primary School and until the lockdown we used to come down quite regularly. This is the first time we've been since then. So this is our new group of eco-warriors. We've brought thirteen children with us today; they've been doing weeding, dead-heading and we've been restoring the bug hotel."

Children

- "We've been making bug hotels for all the bugs so that they can live in a safe space."
- "We have been picking up bits and helping the planet."
- "It feels really good to be here because you get to help the environment."
- "I've found a bug!"
- "Well, I just want to play a part because of its big monuments and the respect it gives to the people who have lost their lives."
- "I really like this park. It reminds me of everyone's life and I just love it."

- “Also there’s a big statue that reminds me of the people who have died in the war. It’s really spesh to be in here and you can watch all the bees and get all the pollen and can help all the bees get the flowers from over there.”
- “Like... a great place to relax and stuff.”

Teacher

“If they’re involved in something, then they’re going to look after it when they get older. When they come back as adults, they’ll say, ‘Oh, I helped do that’ or ‘I helped do this’, so then they’re going to want to take care of the area more.”

NO. 6 HOUGHTON ROAD COMMUNITY CENTRE, THURNSCOE

Transcript of audio files recorded by Rebecca Dye on Tuesday 20 June 2023 at Houghton Road Community Centre, Thurnscoe as part of the Dearne Community Arts' Festival's community art project for 2023



Track 1: Introducing the Centre

Julie Turner

"Houghton Road Community Centre (however you want to say it!) is a community centre at the heart of Thurnscoe and it's been here, we reckon, since the late 1980s as a community centre. It was owned by Barnsley Housing and is still managed to some extent by what's called Berneslai Homes now, but it's a volunteer committee that works here and basically makes it serve the community."

Carol Howard

"I came on board with it; I run a business from here and have done for about twelve or fifteen years, and then just out of the blue, one Friday afternoon, I got an email from Berneslai Homes saying that the building was shut from Monday. So I just asked them to give me a call before they put the shutters down and I said what the problem was, and there was nobody to run it, so I just asked Berneslai Homes, a lady called Gill Taylor, could she give me a couple of weeks to get a team of people together to try and keep this place, you know, up and running. And that's what we did; we had a group of people that we had as a committee board and things like that from different people that were going to use the Centre, and as I say, the rest's history!

"We've had lots of refurbishments done inside; you know, massive help from Dearne Kids – they are actually the biggest part of the volunteering, along with myself, and we've seen new carpets, new blinds, decorating, new toilets, and it's just a thing that I was never that much involved with the community till I had kind of... not been pushed into it, but edged that way! Now I find such an enjoyment in getting that group in, getting that people in, seeing that they're alright and we've come a long way from being about two groups in here to fully booked, which is fab! So that's me; that's my little bit of history with it."

Julie Turner

"I used to be involved with the community when my son was really young, and I wasn't working; I was the secretary here for about fifteen years. During that time, there was some money that was available in Thurnscoe from Groundwork Dearne Valley and Coalfields Regeneration Trust, and I was involved in a project that saw an extension, a small room added to the back of the Centre, an outdoor play area with some sort of soft surfacing down and there used to be a football compound attached to the Centre that had caused a bit of friction with local residents because the ball kept getting kicked over and people were getting a bit fed-up with young people, so that was changed into a minigolf. So, you know, it was quite exciting to see the building being developed – lots of paving, new railings and things done. This was in the late 1990s/ turn of the century, and when I moved away, other people have been involved. Carol from Slimming World is now involved and other people from the Dearne Kids in

particular, running a coffee morning once a week and their youth club for kids aged 8 to 18. What's so exciting, I think, about a community centre is it becomes the hub of a community: so many things happening locally, so many groups that are run, so you can do extra things."

Carol Howard

"We're always looking for something different. There might just be temporary groups like what started two weeks ago, a Ladies' Couch to 5K running club; well, that's just for 8 weeks, but it's 8 weeks where there are twelve to fifteen ladies going to come, and then (sic) one-off things like the fairs and that that Dearne Kids do; we've got a sale... It's looking for that something different every time, you know, to keep people's interest and getting word of mouth out there that this is what we've got and this is what we can offer."

Track 2: Dearne Kids

Ian Ball

"Well, Houghton Road... well, we were originally invited to become part of the management system and use the Centre. We did use it two nights a week for our youth groups, then we started a Bingo Club for the older generation... coffee mornings as a fund-raiser again for the older generation, and then they offered us office space at a set rate which we knew we could afford over the year, which also helped keep that place open. It's our big base and we've got a lot of stuff down there and we're really heavily involved in it."

Ade Mountford

"I started off up at Thurnscoe up in the industrial estate, in the business centre. I just started volunteering and basically we run for about three or four years up there and then we shut down. We only come to Houghton Road Community Centre because Ian got a phone call; parents were contacting him, saying that he should re-open, and we needed somewhere to re-open and we dropped on that the community centre was becoming available. So we come here in 2019 and re-formed, and we've been here doing activities with people aged 8 to 18."

"We also do different things in here like summer fairs, spring fairs, and invite everybody in the community and show 'em what we do: we have tables with different things that we do; we do arts and crafts tables; we put posters up to say what we've done and what we're doing. You know, we take a lot of kids on camps that we have to fundraise and fund for. We run coffee mornings which for me fetches people like the elderly out of the house. Some live alone and they come across and they get together and have a chat. If we weren't here, they'd sit at home. There's nowt worse than sitting at home on your own. A lot of 'em have said, 'Oh, we come here to have a chat', and they meet new people and make new friends. In fact, there's one old lady that lives just round the corner that has started coming; she lives on her own; she's started coming on trips out with us, just day trips. She gets on the bus, she has a walk around; we went to Mablethorpe, then she comes back home and she smiles... and it's great to see people smiling that you've done summat good for them."

Track 3: Location, Location, Location

Julie Turner

"A lot of groups fought hard to keep this place open and that matters."

Ade Mountford

"It's a part of the village and it should be open for as long as it's standing for everybody for use; it should be here and run by people who love running the building and that live in the village."

Carol Howard

"It's an amazing venue. It just covers a lot of age groups, I think, for the public and it is the hub, it's the hub of Thurnscoe."

Julie Turner

"I think one of the great things about Houghton Road Community Centre is its location. It's on the main road through Thurnscoe; it's opposite the supermarket; it's accessible; it's on a bus route; there's a bus stop nearby; you can get in whether you're in a wheelchair or whatever. You know, it's so open and accessible to everybody and that's great, because a lot of old church halls or whatever, you know, you've got steps, you've got things to negotiate that make them difficult sometimes. In Thurnscoe we've got, you know, St Helen's Church Hall which acts as a bit of a community centre, but that's no longer on the main road, so the location of this is absolutely perfect for the community. It's a big community, Thurnscoe, and it needs a venue where people can come and use it."

Track 4: Volunteering**Ade Mountford**

"I volunteer because I just love seeing the smiles on kids' faces."

Carol Howard

"Initially, mine was for a selfish reason, I'll be honest with you, because my business was here, and then the more I've got involved, the more now I'm looking for different things, you know, to achieve for Thurnscoe and for the community centre, but initially, it was because of my business. But then that's brought on so much more – yes, it's watching what these achieve; it's what groups, classes, achieve... seeing which kinds of people are using the groups that are available, but yes, it was just selfish to start with, from my point of view... but no, so much more now, so much more than that. And I've never had that buzz before I actually became involved with actually running it."

Julie Turner

"I think the key bit with volunteering is that you're working with people and a community of people who have got similar interests to you. You've got different groups in a community centre, so obviously each group has their thing, their interests, their hobbies and activities, but overall you get a feel...[Carol: 'You've got that orchestra bringing it all together, conducting it!'] and the building is just the venue, you know, for all those activities. A community centre is nothing without the people that use it... and it's great to be able to come to places where so many different people use the building."

"We spend, as volunteers, a lot of time behind the scenes, on paperwork, administration and funding applications, and decorating... all those things which are necessary to make the building comfortable and welcoming, but without the people, it's nothing, and so it's the people that make it worth doing."

Carol Howard

"But we do it because we're volunteers; we want to do it!"

Julie Turner

"A lot of people used to say about community centres that they ought to be run by the Council or the Council needs to provide this, that and the other, but I think we, you know, we as local residents have to be involved in our community. If we want to see good things, we have to be the good things."

Ade Mountford

"Our community centre is run by the community because we're local rather than the Council that sit behind their desks."

Carol Howard

"I think as well volunteers... we get involved knowing what other group users need and want. I think it should be run by the community, absolutely."

Julie Turner

"Thurnscoe has a community centre; it's got a library; it's got lots of excellent things, and we need to respect those things and work with the community, so that we can keep those things going."

Additional tracks on Dearne Kids**Ian Ball**

"My name's Ian and I'm the co-founder of Dearne Kids in 1994. Basically, it started out with me volunteering in '84 at the Enterprise Centre with teenage kids. I have a couple of kids and I used to take them camping and hiking and that, and then their mates started coming in and their mates started coming in, and it cost me a packet! So then I got all the parents together and I said, 'We could form a group, get some money in to try and keep these costs down', and that's how it started in '94 as an outreach-based project which we did do for 13 years."

"From my volunteering experience, I got a job at Station House at Thurnscoe, which eventually got the youth club opened at Thurnscoe (Hickleton Youth Project), and in 2007, the year Dearne Kids won the Queen's Award for service in the community, we merged and became two groups called Gr8 Mates. Basically, it went from there."

"In 2014/15 I had to stand back because I had a few mental health issues with losing my wife and everything else got on top of me. Gr8 Mates actually shut in 2016 and in 2018, a couple of the original kids who were now parents asked me to re-form the group, which we did do. Again, this is an outreach-based project. I got some of my old volunteers (Ade, Nigel, and all them) and we re-formed it. We eventually got invited to go to Houghton Road Centre which we use as our headquarters and base now. It's my second life now, my home life, apart from my work as a coach driver. Obviously I lost my wife in 2010; she was a big part in them early years, and I've just gone from there. I get kids, people on the street, pulling me up now: 'Ey up, Ian, how're you doing? Remember when we went to Kandersteg...' I'm like, 'Who are you?!' I've had that many kids through, but I'm just a small cog in that volunteering circle; even if I stood down, I know that group would continue."

Dearne Kids: What It Means For The Children**Ian Ball**

"But for me, a lot of the young people, they come to our places, some of them don't know anybody, and they've not tried a lot of the activities what we've done. But then we let them have a go and build their confidence up, their personal confidence... it comes from talking to the youngsters, like-minded... we've had a couple of lads who've been for a few years, and they never did the climbing on activities 'cos they were scared. Last year, we managed to get one into a harness, then to the bottom of the climbing wall, and he put his foot on the wall, and we were roaring because he'd got that far. He'd got that chance just to put the harness on and then to start on that wall...It's like we said, 'That's your start. Next time, you might only get two foot, and after that, you might be fine.' And then we get kids who *have* got confidence, and they just fly up them things!"

"We also give them the opportunity, once they get to fourteen, to be Junior Volunteers, so they can pass on to the youngsters what they've learned, become mentors, and start taking responsibility, and you can see that improvement and skills. We've had two youngsters go to this year's camp who've never been out of Thurnscoe. You ought to have seen the smiles on their faces as they attempted a lot of the activities which we were surprised they had a go at, and that's what it's about. They were

enjoying it; it was something they'd never done before. Now they've had the opportunity and they're hoping to progress now; they carry on coming and get further and further up that line."

Dearne Kids: Children and Volunteers

Ade Mountford

"Dearne Kids, we're an outdoor activity group, so we're not just a youth club. In winter, we tend to be more indoors, but in the summer, we tend to just go out on day trips, just... rock-climbing, take the kids to Hesley Wood and do different activities that Hesley Wood offer. We either fund-raise ourselves or we get funding for the children or reduce the costs. Basically, we just do it for the children, keep the children off the streets of Thurnscoe, give 'em something to do rather than be sat at home.

Children

- "I've made friends here."
- "I come here to have some fun and I like it here because my auntie works here and my brothers always come. I've got my uncle and loads of friends here."
- "It's fun and nice."
- "I think it's a really nice place for kids to come and have, like, a safe space, go out and it gives a lot of opportunities for us to build confidence and go on lots of trips and stuff, so I think it's quite nice for us to just have somewhere to go. It gets kids more involved in activities outside of school and home. Some kids won't get that opportunity."

NO. 7 GOLDTHORPE RAILWAY EMBANKMENT (BARNSELEY ROAD)
TRANSCRIPT OF GOLDTHORPE RAILWAY EMBANKMENT AUDIO FILES
RAILWAYS

**Recorded on Monday 24th April 2023 by Rebecca Dye as part of Dearne Community Arts' Festival's
community art project for 2023**



Track 1: Introducing the Embankment

Michael Bunting (caretaker)

"I'm Michael, Michael Bunting; I'm the caretaker for the Goldthorpe Railway Embankment, and I've been here for a number of years now working on it with a load of volunteers and all the team from the Dearne Area Team, especially Jenny, who we work with at the moment. People just used to come and throw everything over – settees, chairs, beds – everything just went straight over the bridge. So the BBC got onto the Council in 2013; our boss, Claire Dawson from the Dearne Area Team, she started it all off, saying 'We've got to change this.' With the help of Network Rail, we decided what we were going to do; we're going to clear the rubbish out of there and then – this was tons and tons and tons of rubbish, over 40 skips of rubbish taken out – we had the pond dredged to clear everything out of the pond and then we started to fly-tip along the Embankment walls and take out everything that we possibly could.

"From that, we just started to work; we worked with the University of Sheffield. Part of Claire's thought was that if we get the University in here, then they can have an idea of what we can create and they came up and created some lovely drawings and things like that, and of course, it's turning into a beauty spot rather than an eyesore.

"The level's 3 metres lower than here, so as all the earthworks have gone in to raise it up so we can have people walking down in a sensible manner because we used to have to scramble round this cliff face – that was the only way in to the track bed when we first came. We had to make it a lot easier for people, you know, it's too dangerous. We couldn't manage it ourselves! The sliding was terrible. So they came in with huge earthworks and did all this, and it's beautiful.

"And then we had Dan Jones; he created our sculpture in memory of the two lads that died in the Miners' Strike, very sad, so we asked the parents if they'd like a memorial down here and they said they would, so Dan did it for us and we've got it there. It's beautiful. And then we also had the children coming down from the local primary schools as they transition into the big, what was known as the

Dearne ALC, Astrea Academy now, and so we had a couple of cases where we had 246 children down here. We broke them up into little groups and we all looked after them; we took a group of 8 or 10 kids and we gave them tasks to do and things like that. It was a lovely, lovely day.”

Track 2: The Volunteers

Michael Bunting

“All the volunteers, you know, we have... we have different groups coming down to do what they want on the Embankment, and we’re trying to get a lot more of the general public, you know, involved in it... but you know, it’s like everything: these things take time.”

“It’s really nice what we do. I mean, the bulbs... you might not believe it, but there’s almost 12,000 bulbs in there, which we... It was Nigel, Jenny and myself planted them, and it was a heck of a job. We planted them in December, the first year, about 2019, I think, it was we planted them or 2020... 2020, I think it was... and it was so cold, the ground was frozen, and we had to wait for the sun to come and melt the ground. We couldn’t get into it, couldn’t dig it, and I didn’t think they’d grow, but they’re so strong, are the daffies and narcissi, they just grew, even in freezing weather. Unbelievable! So wonderful, wonderful to see them coming up. You know, it’s really nice. All the orchards were planted by the schoolchildren and that was really nice. Kids, 6, 7 years old, planting big trees; it was nice. I enjoyed that; that was really nice. We have a few shrubs up there to try and give the colour and everything like that; we have herbs over there, all the old rubbish stuff over there so it rots down in the composting and things, and that’s important as well, to teach people about composting. You know, the simple things, it’s important.

“This side down here, that’s genuine Yorkshire rhubarb. We bought some Yorkshire rhubarb... This one was full of strawberries, but now it’s full of cabbages at the moment. What we’re trying to do, we’re trying to help the Salvation Army as well, ‘cos they’re quite short of fresh food, so they’ve asked if we could grow some things for them, hence the big bags of soil. They’ve just been purchased from the Salvation Army and although we’ve got three tons at the top, I have to bring the three tons down in my wheelbarrow because we’ve no way to get it down! Just me and the wheelbarrow! Then we fill the bags up again and that’s what we’re planting this time. We’ll plant anything we get; you know, we’ll share obviously with Barnsley Betta Lives and with the Sally Army.

“We work with all children, schoolchildren, community groups and people with the less able groups, and it’s a real privilege to be able to just work down here, because it’s just such a lovely spot to actually work in the middle of Goldthorpe. You wouldn’t think we could have created something like this out of the tens of tons of rubbish that were down here years ago. It’s just simple Goldthorpe, it’s a little Goldthorpe. We’ve got loads of ideas, you know, and it’s lovely to be able to work with people like Claire and Jenny and all the team at the Dearne Area Team. It’s lovely because I’ve worked with them for a number of years now. I’m just a litter picker really; I just litter pick and various other things, but it’s really nice working with people like that. They’ve got so many ideas, it’s super, it really is, and we all work so well together.”

Track 3: Betta Lives

Michael Bunting

“Oh, they’re special, are Betta Lives. They’ve been down for two years now; I can’t believe it, but it’s two years. They’re so nice, they’re such people, you know, and they love to get involved and stuff, and it’s just a pleasure to work with them.”

Betta Lives

- “Yeah, we’ve been coming a while now, haven’t we?”
- “Yeah, everything’s good down here.”

- “You were our first guests.” / “Yes, and now you can’t get rid of us!”
- “Right, potatoes, where do they go?” / “Here!”
- “I like gardening ‘cos when my Nannan was gardening a long time ago, and I liked gardening then. And then that’s it really.”
- “I like coming here. I’m enjoying it. When it gets warm, it gets red-hot.”
- “[I like] being with the whole group... socialising with everybody.”
- *Background conversation*
- “We’re doing all the working, aren’t we? Plant potatoes, we plant some vegetables, don’t we, Michelle? And some flowers. And some weeding. And some littering.”
- “We like to come and volunteer and do all them jobs, don’t we?”
- *Gardening conversation*

Michael Bunting

“This group put all these petunias in the other month, which was nice. They do all sorts for us. It’s a privilege to have them coming down. It’s really nice.”

Track 4: Volunteering with Martin and Emma

Martin

“I’m Martin and I come all the way on the X19 bus from Doncaster and I have been doing since 2016 when the project more or less started. We were clearing all the rubbish from the Straight Lane bridge down there.”

Emma Bourdon

“My name’s Emma Bourdon. I’ve been with the project from the very beginning. I started painting the bridges when they asked for volunteers; then, when we started to clear the site for the Embankment, there was loads of rubbish right at the bottom of the Embankment and we took it away. Then, when we started doing the pond, I was helping with the pond, digging it up and laying all the slates.”

Martin

“I’ve been doing the herb garden and also brought some trees to plant, and they’re doing quite well now. I come when I can now, so, you know...”

Emma

“Knowing that we can all come down here when it’s open and just walk and relax, it’s such a peaceful place to be.”

Martin

“Oh, it does mean a lot to me, that people are doing this kind of thing. That’s why I sort of cottoned on to the idea of coming myself, like, you know, because it was a worthwhile project that I’d like to be involved with. The people here, the local people that have been doing this project, are really good and are really dedicated to the project here.”

Emma

“It means so much to me. I absolutely love it down here. It’s so peaceful; it’s so quiet; it improves my mental health every time I come down here. I absolutely love it. When it was first opened, I helped volunteer; I used to come down every Saturday morning and open the gates up just for a couple of hours and just have people coming down. There was an 89 year old gentleman and he would walk up... go and get his paper...and come back down and he would walk down the path and sit on the bench and read his paper for twenty minutes, and he came up to me and he said how wonderful this place was and he loves coming down here. He does it every week.”

Martin

"I used to pass here before the project and thought, 'oh, yes, it would be good to do something,' so I was glad that something was done here for the benefits of the local community."

Emma

"I'm glad I actually got involved in this project. It makes me so proud to see this as it is."

Track 5: The Tour**Michael Bunting (caretaker)**

"Would you care to walk down here? If you've never walked down here before, I'll just show you what it was like."

"So.. this is my alliums coming through; they're coming out. It all needs weeding now. It goes in about two weeks... the weeds just come back, you know! We have to get in there and weed them as well, so I hope I've got a list of volunteers that can come along and help, which is nice."

"The lower part of it is quite interesting again. It offers its own challenges. It was all grassed last year, it was lovely, but they had such a heavy leaf fall that we didn't take the leaves off in time and it's killed the grass. So we're starting again! This takes a lot of doing. We'll cut the grass - I think it's next week we're going to cut the grass - and it takes us nearly a day. It's a big thing to cut all this grass and then we've got to keep on top of it every month; it's got to be cut every month or else it just runs away with us. All the trees you see here that were planted by volunteers, you know, we re-did everything; it was amazing; all this was wild scrub, you know - trees and scrub and brambles; all the brambles - cut all the brambles back, dug all the bramble weeds out and everything like that. It was an incredible job."

"So we had so many volunteers to come down and help, it was great; it was good. It's a changing environment, is this. Over the winter, it's harsh here; it's very cold. It holds the temperature so it's very frosty here; it just sticks, does the cold air. But in the summer and the spring, you can see the trees coming now, and that forms a huge canopy, just over there - and it's quiet and all you can hear is the birdsong. You don't really notice the road; you can just hear the birdsong. It's so delightful... You can look down there and see our robin; he's always around. He always comes along to see what work we're doing! All robins are the same; they love to interact with humans. When I leave, sometimes he goes on top of my spade handle, you know, just sits there saying, 'Any more, Michael? Any more worms? Come on, get some more worms for me!'"

"You notice the circles here? This is where we put the anemones; they're just coming back again after the first year. Some have survived; some have died, and they're all equally distant, apart from this here, and when I was digging this, I ran into a huge slab of concrete, reinforced concrete, and I had the Network Rail guy with me, and I said, 'What do you think this is?' And he looked up there, and he said, 'Oh, it's the signal. It's a signal stanchion.' So I said, 'How far do you think it's going to go?' And he said, 'Over to the Embankment over there.' I said, 'How do you get it out?' And he said, 'The best thing to do is cover it up and forget about it.' So that's why we don't plant anything there, because there's a huge mound of concrete, reinforced concrete, under there which you can't get rid of. I'm thinking, 'Oh, I'll have it all nice and neat,' and you can't do it! Nature (or British Rail!) have taken over."

"Other types of garden that we've created... this was just a set of bricks on here because it was the original way down, so we had to take out tons of bricks and infill with soil."

"These things here that say 2019, 2021, 2022 and this is when the children came down from the schools, when they transitioned into the big high school. That's our bug hotel, which you can see unfortunately has been vandalised. We do have trouble with vandals down here, and it's such a shame."

We spend a lot of money, a lot of effort; we have a gardener from Old Moor, the RSPB site just down the road, and he comes and looks after this, so it was really upsetting when this happened, but we'll repair it again. So we do have vandals coming down; it's a shame, you know, because it's a nice site for everybody really. That's the thing.

"Here, we're growing all kinds of stuff – wild grasses, wild garlic, although they never grow as I want them to do. I planted 500 in there and there's nowhere near 500 come up! It's ridiculous. My pond... you wouldn't believe that pond. It looks ghastly, doesn't it? It does: it looks absolutely ghastly. But it's not. It's duckweed on the top and we often have the perpetrators just in a puddle down there, Mr and Mrs Duck, came in with duckweed on their feet, and it just flashed over green! (You know, within about 3 weeks!) It's like an algae – it's not an algae; it's like a special type of... well, it's just a weed and it grows in profusion. It's crystal clear under there; we had all sorts of plants in there; we had loads of lovely lilies and they've just killed... just no oxygen so it kills them. It's such a shame, you know, but that's one of the things you have to put up with in nature.

"We have our friends at the Salvation Army; they're just up there. We're re-doing our tyres; we've got some soil and we're going to put some special ferns in here which are quite nice. Ancient British ferns. We'll do that. The bluebells are just starting this year. You'll see those coming up. We have a whole carpet of bluebells round here which is quite nice. We've planted those over the years and they naturalise and come back one after another.

"This is the old railway bridge. The old trains used to hurtle up and down here on the way to the collieries, all the old pits, out to Doncaster that way, out to Goldthorpe and then out to Liverpool, because a lot of the coal was sold abroad, so it went to Liverpool by train and out abroad. This closed in the 1980s, 1990s, probably the last freight, and then it was just left. But everybody that comes down, especially the children, they love it. You know, they go racing around the place and we've had an Autumn Fair where we do pumpkins and things like that; we have over 300... I think we had over 300 pumpkins we gave away last year. We also had a Spring Fair last time and we had over 300 Easter eggs we gave away. We've got to keep thinking about what we can do for the community and for the children, and it's really nice to see them down here planting and doing stuff. It's lovely."

NO. 8 GOLDTHORPE RAILWAY EMBANKMENT (NR STRAIGHT LANE)

DINOSAUR WORLD

Recorded on Monday 24th April 2023 by Rebecca Dye as part of Dearne Community Arts' Festival's community art project for 2023



Track 1: Plans for the Dinosaur area

Michael Bunting (caretaker)

"Now we've got permission to go through to the Asda bridge, which is the next railway bridge down there. Claire, Claire Dawson (Dearne Area Team) came up with a brilliant one winter's day; she said, 'Look at all this greenery down there.' She says, 'I can see a dinosaur coming out of that!' So we all said, 'That's brilliant!' She said, 'That's my idea, don't you dare pinch it!' I said, 'No, it's your idea, Claire', so what we are going to do, we're going to try and produce like a dinosaur kingdom down there. Me and my mates are going to build a portal here like Jurassic Park where the gates open into Jurassic Park. (Laughs) Although we can't tell Mr Spielberg that as he'll stop us doing that, so we can't call it that! But we'll call it something. But that's what we're thinking of doing and we're going to get the children to create dinosaurs, model dinosaurs, maybe in a 2D fashion so we've got some special boards, 8 x 4, so it's the big boards like that... we can get them to draw and paint dinosaurs and get them cut out, jiggled out, and then I can plant them with steel rods and concrete in there, and the boards are fire-proof, rock-proof, everything, so they should last quite a while. So what we need, what we're going to do, is turn this into a Jurassic area down here so as you walk through, you'll come across various dinosaurs, made by the schoolchildren.

Rebekah Turner (aged 4)

"I want a dinosaur princess!"

Julie Turner (Grandma)

"Do you think when we do the next part of the Embankment that we can have a dinosaur princess, then, as well? Not just dinosaurs but a dinosaur princess!"

Jenny Yates

"That's a good idea!"

Emma Bourdon

"Once we are able to get to the other side of the gates and start on that side, I can't wait! I'll be down here, you know, as much as possible helping them do whatever they ask me to do."

Michael Bunting

"It's going to take a lot of doing, is that, but... we need sponsorship; we need this, we need that; we need help, but the idea of doing something like that, if you can just look down there, and you can see the head of a Tyrannasaur coming through or something like that, you can just imagine going back in time, couldn't you?... into the Jurassic period, and you think, 'Wow!'"

Track 2: Geological Time Travel

Michael Bunting (caretaker) (in storytelling mode)

"Where we're standing now is quite important in geological time. If you think about... if you go back in earth time, you see where the actual level of the soil is now? We are now six metres below that level. So that means we are now six million years back in geological time. Now the important thing about being six million years down here, if that's like a timescale... six million years ago, there weren't any humans. It was only the great apes that roamed... animals, yes, but the great apes were the chief animals on the planet. There were no humans. Humans hadn't evolved at the time where we're standing. So no human would've walked on here, only the great apes. Gradually, as the earth fills, right, go to five million years...where that line is, that's when the first humans evolved. And gradually as you go up, you get right up to the very top, about an inch from the top, that's where *homo sapiens* came in. That's where we came in. So all that's down there, all that six metres, is all going back in geological time. 'Course, it's nowhere near the dinosaurs; it's only six million years ago, but it's interesting because here, no one's walked; they're the stars."

NO. 9 GOLDTHORPE LIBRARY

TRANSCRIPT OF GOLDTHORPE LIBRARY AUDIO FILES

Recorded at the Goldthorpe Library Coffee morning on Thursday 15 June 2023 by Rebecca Dye as part of the Dearne Community Arts' Festival's community art project for 2023.



Track 1: The Importance of Goldthorpe Library

- "The library staff are brilliant. I think they look forward to us all coming."
- "The Council provides for us. We can come in any time; we can sit here, and the staff are that helpful. They're lovely. You couldn't ask for better staff. [No, you couldn't.] I mean...there's been staff before them; they were just the same. They were really helpful, really helpful."
- "I think if you want to know anything, something that's happening, ask them if they know, and if they don't, they'll go on the computer and have a look and come back and give us an answer if they've got one. They're really helpful, they really are."
- "I love reading. I mean, I've always been a member of the library here since I could walk and that."
- "After my husband died at 60, I decided to do my GCSE English, so I was coming for classes for that, classes for art; we used to come in for coffee, so I used to come in regular."
- "They even know how many sugars we have in our coffee! As soon as we come in, she'll say, 'Two sugars, isn't it?' and I'll say 'yeah'."
- "I mean, the librarian, we have her on every week, don't we?! She came one day, and I said, 'Have you baked?' and she said, 'Oh yes, it's in the oven' and so in the weeks following, we kept saying, 'Is it cool enough to eat yet?' So everybody's got this standing joke now that the librarian comes in early every week and bakes a cake for us, and we've all got it now, haven't we?! A bit of daft, but we love it. A lot of us are widows on our own, and to meet up and have a laugh, it's brilliant."

Track 2: Goldthorpe Library – Everyone Welcome!

- "Everybody's welcome."
- "There was a man here one day with his grandchildren... he was sat over there, and we said... someone said, 'Do you want a coffee?' Anyway, he said he'd just had a coffee, but the children came over and they had a piece of cake and they loved it."
- "We've come for the last four years, haven't we?"
- "It's a sanctuary, really... somewhere to come out of the way, somewhere different. I mean, I live by myself, but I could imagine a couple, the lady not knowing what to do; she's stuck in the house with a man all the time and thinking, 'I want to go somewhere,' and she can just come here. She's not doing anything; she's just having a cup of tea and relaxing and just talking, you know. It is a sanctuary; it's somewhere to come."

- “I think it’s brilliant. I mean, I look forward to coming and I make sure that I’m free, that there’s nothing... if somebody asks me on a day to go... like when I phoned for my eye test... not on a Thursday. I won’t miss this group, because it does mean a lot to me – definitely, yes.”
- “The door’s open to anybody as far as we’re concerned and they’re welcome.”

Track 3: Coffee Mornings at Goldthorpe Library

- “It’s quite a magic group! We have sensible conversations about people that have lived here for years. We’ve seen it go good, bad and good again, so I think it’s quite an experience to come here.”
- “We’re not stipulating a particular group like a history group or a craft group; it’s just somewhere to come, to be... where we can express our thoughts, because nobody holds back, do they, if they have any views?”
- “Oh, yes, it’s open.”
- “The thing is, an’ all, we’re so, like, happy with each other, I can say I disagree, and you can say, ‘No, I don’t like that’, but it’s acceptable because we’re doing it in a good way.”
- “It’s a lovely group... it is, it is... it’s a nice group.”
- “I was introduced with my friend, Myrna, and she asked me to come with her, and I think we’ve been here ever since, apart from odd days when we’re poorly, like.”
- “It’s a lovely group, like we’ve just been saying. We’re all from Goldthorpe originally, so we go way back to school. I mean, I’m in my eighties, and we know each other and we talk about things that have happened in the past right up to the modern day. It’s a lovely hour that we can pass with our memories and that is important when you’re getting a bit older. Memories are good, aren’t they?”
- “They’re all good people, every one of them.”
- “It’s a lovely group, and we’ve done all sorts...Anne does a lot of work with flowers on the outside. We’re just a together group.”
- “I think the Council started it, didn’t they? – by just saying, ‘We’ll provide tea and coffee if you’d like to meet’, and, you know...”
- “I think it’s brilliant. I mean, I look forward to coming and I make sure that I’m free, that there’s nothing. If somebody asks me on a day... like when I phoned for my eye test, ‘not on a Thursday!’ I won’t miss this group because it does mean a lot to me, definitely.”

NO. 10 GOLDTHORPE TOWN SQUARE
TRANSCRIPT OF GOLDTHORPE TOWN SQUARE AUDIO FILES

Recorded at a community art workshop on Tuesday 23rd May 2023 at Goldthorpe Pentecostal Community Church & on Tuesday 17th October at The Snap Tin Café as part of Dearne Community Festival's community art project for 2023; recording by Rebecca Dye.



Track 1: Goldthorpe Town Square (History of the Horse & Groom)

Local Resident

“Goldthorpe Town Square is going to be on the site where the Horse & Groom pub stood. There’s been a coaching inn standing on that spot for centuries, even before Goldthorpe was developed as a town, and it was called Lane Ends, and this A635 that runs through Goldthorpe is an ancient cross-country salt route, so it was probably good that there was a coaching inn for people to stop off and rest themselves and rest their horses.

“Still within my memory there were stables there. So sometimes what I like to do is if someone posts an old photograph of Goldthorpe on Facebook, then I’ll save it to my phone and I’ll go and stand in the spot where the photographer stood. It might be from a hundred years ago. It might be from more recently. I’ll stand in the spot that the photographer stood and look what it’s like now and pick out the parts of the building that are the same and pick out what’s different, and sometimes it’s amazing how much is still there from the past and how people used it and how proud they looked using it... the old staff lining up outside for their photographs taken on an old Coronation day with their long white aprons and people milling around with their hats on and just chatting and using the town when the town was a thriving area... and the road before cars and kids standing to have their photographs taken in the middle of the road because it’s alright; there were no vehicles about. You might see a horse and cart in the distance.”

Track 3: Life In Goldthorpe

Local Residents

“I mean, I came from South Africa in 1986 and I must admit, I mean, I came to this tiny village ... and in 1986, everybody made me feel welcome. I joined the Cubs and then I joined WI, and so for me, you know, I made loads of friends. I come to WI, I come to Keep Fit, but I live in Sprotbrough, but I support Goldthorpe because that’s where from South Africa, that’s where I started from, and you could say ‘Hello’ to everybody. My Mum used to love it because she loved the market in those days. The market was fantastic. She’d come up every day and buy things and she’d say ‘Hello’ to everybody. ‘Who’s that?’ ‘Oh, I don’t know, but they’re very chatty, you know.”

“I think there are a lot of people here, very proud people, who are proud of their heritage here, you know, and it’s had a fantastic past, hasn’t it? – with people and communities.”

“We loved each other, didn’t we? I’ve loved every minute of my life in Goldthorpe – in fact, I can’t let go. I’ve bought a property in Sprotbrough, but virtually every day, I come home.”

“I think what the churches are doing for families is very good and I think that’s making people with up-and-coming families integrate a lot better than what they probably have done in the past.”

“I think the footpaths are beautiful, the flowers they have put out have been absolutely stunning. They were beautiful, weren’t they? – hanging baskets, loved every bit of that, I thought ‘it never was like that.’”

“And of course the arts’ festival’s a fantastic thing that’s done every year. There are a lot of things to be proud of and there are a lot of groups to be proud of as well.”

“I’ve had a wonderful life in Goldthorpe and I wouldn’t change ‘em for anything.”

Track 3: The New Town Square

Julie Turner

“Goldthorpe Town Square has just opened, October 2023, as part of the Towns Deal programme, the levelling up programme from the Government. On the site, next to the Library, there was a pub, the ‘Horse and Groom’, which was a very old coaching inn with a lot of history. It had become derelict and run-down and so the Council purchased the land, demolished the pub, and they’ve just built this ‘Heart of Goldthorpe’ Town Square. It’s a lovely area; we’ve now got the market back on the site, and that’s once a week on a Thursday now, from 9 till 3, but as well as the market, we’ve got this lovely area where you can have public events. You’ve got winding paths; you’ve got contrasting paving, informal seating, so it’s a really nice area. You’ve got the mosaic and the pub sign, a nod to the heritage and to the past, but you’ve also got a town map there and a selfie board as part of the arts’ festival programme, so there’s a lot of beautiful things in this Town Square. It’s a place where you can sit, watch the world go by and really enjoy the heart of the community.

“We’ve got 16 selfie boards throughout Goldthorpe, Thurnscoe and Bolton-on-Deane, and we wanted to have a map that you could follow and actually see all of them, and so the Council agreed to have a proper town map done, so it’s a map of Goldthorpe, Thurnscoe and Bolton-on-Deane which was done professionally by a firm called Cosmographics Ltd and then Totty Signs have put that onto an actual map board and it’s there in the Town Square, so it’s a useful facility; if you want to find out where anything is in that area, you can use the map, but you can also see the location of all the selfie boards and hopefully people will want to do the trail, look at all the selfie boards, because that’s a part of the community art project that celebrates all these local groups that are doing so much in our community.

“The Town Square has a lot of art in it, so the original sign from the ‘Horse & Groom’ pub has been renovated and that’s in the Town Square. A local sculptor has done a mosaic which commemorates the pub as well, and so there’s lots of heritage and art in that square: it’s wonderful. We want to thank the artist Lydia Caprani, who’s done designs for all the selfie boards, and Rebecca Dye, who’s done all the audio files, because when you actually click on the selfie board, there’s a QR code and it takes you to the arts’ festival website, and there you can listen to people’s stories: what *they* think of living in Goldthorpe, what *they* want from the market, what these local community groups do. It’s really living history, and it’s very exciting to be part of such a project.”

NO. 11 SCOUT & GUIDE HUT, GOLDTHORPE
TRANSCRIPT OF RAINBOWS, BROWNIES & GUIDES AUDIO FILES
Recorded at community art workshops in May 2023 by Rebecca Dye as part of the Dearne
Community Arts' Festival's Community Art Project for 2023



Track 1: Rainbows 1

(Singing of Rainbows song)

Leaders

- “My name is Carly; I’ve been leading Rainbows for ... oo... five years now.”
- “I’ve been at Rainbows for three years, but I’ve been guiding as a leader for 42 years.”
- “My name’s Sophie and I’ve been involved with Rainbows for a couple of weeks, but I’ve been at Brownies and Guides for about thirteen years.”
- “I’m Sarah Beaumont and I started doing Rainbows just after lockdown. It was a six week temporary ‘will I just fill in for maternity leave?’ and here we are, carrying on ever since! But I do love it.”

Children

- “What I like about Rainbows is that we do activities.”
- “I like (it) at Rainbows because... because we do fun things.”
- “We normally have biscuits after we’ve had.. um... fun.”
- “I like Rainbows because we come and then we have circle time and you share all the things that you did in the week and then we sing a song and do some fun activities...and I like doing them.”
- “I love Rainbows because it’s fun and we get to play games.”
- “Rainbows makes me feel happy.”

Leaders

- “I’m just... just a sucker really!” *(laughs)*
- “I love it, I really do love it and I didn’t think I would.”

(Children sing the Rainbows song)

Track 2: Rainbows 2

Leaders

- “I love seeing the girls coming in... shy, unsure... and then they grow, and we see that growth and it’s absolutely amazing. I get so much out of it, which I didn’t realise when I started Guiding. It’s fantastic.”
- “Just helping and socialising after Covid and that, it’s so difficult for them.”

Children

- "I like Rainbows because we go on nice trips."
- "They made me happy and we can explore."
- "My favourite memory of Rainbows is when we went camping."

Leaders

- "We were on camp over the weekend. It was an indoor camp, But it was great, great fun, and the bonds that they make... obviously, coming two hours a week, you get the friendships, but being together in a space for 40 hours over a weekend... (they didn't know each other),... but by Sunday they're the best of friends, off they go! It's lovely to see; it's great."

Children

- "We went to the fun fair and it was really fun and I went on a HUGE slide."

Leaders

- "And it's important, it's important for them, especially after Covid. They are all struggling massively with confidence, with the world, with knowing how to share, with knowing how to interact with their peers...It's very difficult for little ones now because they've had none of that. We teach them that and it's even more important now."

Children

- "Rainbows makes me feel excited."
- "Rainbows makes me feel happy, excited."
- "Rainbows makes me feel excited."

Leader

- "This is the bit they might not get at home or school, so that's why I'm here."

Track 3: Brownies

(Singing of Brownies song)

Leader

- "I became a Brownie at Goldthorpe when I was six, so it's part of my life. It's who I am; I can't imagine not coming. I guess I do it because I enjoy it. I've always enjoyed it, enjoyed it as a child and I do enjoy it as a grown-up. I enjoy giving the kids the opportunities I had."
- "The thing that I really like about Brownies is it's because everyone helps me. It's really fun and we go on all sorts, like camping trips."
- "When we go camping, we get to go in big tents, and we get to do all sorts of fun things."
- "I like Brownies because we get to do lots of fun stuff and it's really cool to get to know other girls who live near us. It's really fun to do lots of the activities. We do stuff like games and craft, which is really fun."

Leader

- "They have such confidence and independence and I think that's from Brownies, that every week they come and they're like 'yeah, we're ready for this; what have you got for us? We can do it. We're ready!' It's amazing to see."

Children

- "We do drawing; we do lots of like making things and we always do like teamwork games."

- “I love Brownies because I have different friends from school and we get to do loads of different activities every week, like colouring and playing.”

Leader

- “I’m involved in Girl Guiding because I was a Brownie and a Guide myself when I was younger, so I wanted to give something back through volunteering. I come and help the local community to do the things that I loved doing when I was younger. ... so we get to do all sorts of things: learning camping skills, craft, cooking, baking, and all sorts of things... so girls can do some of their favourite things or try some new things and make lots of new friends.”

Children

- “Being a Brownie is making me feel happy because we are doing different things and it’s making me grow.”

Leader

- “We’ve taken girls abroad, but we always go to places that you wouldn’t normally go as a family holiday type thing, so we’ve been to Switzerland. I went to Austria, and next summer we’re going to Brownsea Island, which is where Baden-Powell had his first ever scout camp.”

Children

- “Brownies make me feel very happy and I meet lots of nice friends here.”
- “People are nice.”

Leader

- “I think this is a good vibe. It keeps them being youthful, it keeps them being children, and being able to enjoy the little things in life for a little longer.”

Track 4: Guides

Young People

- “I’ve been doing Guides since I was like one!”
- “So I’ve been to Guides for about a year and a half.”
- “I started Brownies when I was nine and came up when I was ten.”
- “I went through all Rainbows, Brownies, Guides.”
- “I’ve been coming to Guides for maybe about ten months now and I started when I was about twelve, so I started a bit later than the other girls.”

Leader

- “We were just saying ourselves actually that a couple of them have been involved in scouting as well as guiding, but when they reach Guide age, they start to value the girl-only space, so I think that’s where Guides specifically are more important in that sense than Brownies and Rainbows because the girl-only space becomes more significant... that they can come and be themselves, do daft things, make a mess of stuff, but not feel like somebody’s judging them.”

Young People

- “Like... I’ve had a bad day at school or something, and I’ll just come and have a rant with some of my friends.”

Leader

- “It gives them the confidence to speak their own voice and know who they are and learn new skills that they can use in the future as well.”

Young People

- “We had chairs which were old and mucky and brown and we painted them and that was part of our Upcycling Badge. We do a bunch of things, like we did whittling, but we used soap, and then we’ve done cooking on fires.”
- “I just enjoy meeting new people and making new friends and then also going out on camps and stuff. We went to... and that was really cool.”
- “We all got loads of sugar and sweets and Taylor was doing backhand springs at eleven o’clock at night!”

Leader

- “There was a lady here this evening and I’ve known that lady since I was six as a Brownie, and as soon as she walked out, she went, ‘Hello! I wondered if you’d be here; I’ve not seen you for ages!’ It must be 20 years since she’s been up here, but she still talks to me like she saw me yesterday and she’s known me since I was six, so that’s the kind of bonds and friendship that you develop, that you don’t develop the same at school.”

Young People

- “It’s fun and you make lots of memories.”

NO. 12 DEARNE CHURCHES TOGETHER
TRANSCRIPT OF DEARNE CHURCHES TOGETHER AUDIO FILES
Recorded at a community art workshop on 23rd May 2023 by Rebecca Dye for the Dearne
Community Arts' Festival community art project 2023.



Track 1: Julie Turner (Goldthorpe Pentecostal Community Church)

"Dearne Churches Together is a group of local churches working in Thurnscoe, Goldthorpe and Bolton-on-Deerne. We run a variety of events for our local communities... so we run family fun days in the school holidays, where we combine crafts and fun activities and games with food – feeding people in the school holidays. Sometimes those things are done in local churches, sometimes they're done outdoors, so we run events at Goldthorpe Railway Embankment and for the last three years post-Covid we've held an event at Phoenix Park in the Spring Bank holiday where it's not only the Churches Together but other agencies working together... so we've got sports, we've got crafts, we've got different activities and we try to provide something for everybody.

*"I think one of the things about *Churches Together* is it gets people working from different churches together. We've got lots of different volunteers; it brings together the wider community, helps you to see that there is a common aim within different churches. We can all worship in different ways, but when it comes to serving in the community, we all muck in and get on with it and it's great fun. People's talents shine forth, so some people are good at the cooking side of things (the Salvation Army church always provides food for us and sort that out), but then you've got people from different churches that are good at the arts, the crafts; people who are good at organisation, good at putting gazebos up when we're outdoors! It just brings together lots of volunteers and gradually we've seen people who come along take ownership and get involved in it... so we have a lady from our Parent & Toddler group who now helps to lead an activity to decorate biscuits or buns with icing, so she's got involved. As her confidence has grown, she wanted to give something back to the group that helped to give her the confidence in the first place, and so she helps with that – and that's great to see people grow and take responsibility for things."*

Track 2: Alison Sykes (Salvation Army, Goldthorpe)

*My name's Alison and I've lived and worked in the community for nearly thirty years, but at the minute I'm the minister for the Salvation Army on Straight Lane, where I do spend a lot of my time... but a lot of my other time I spend with *Deerne Churches Together*, where throughout the year you will find us doing family fun days, out in the community, at Christmas singing carols by the tree on the Embankment, but what is fantastic is that we can all do this together... so all the church leaders can work together for the good of our community. We can get to know our real community, get to know the families and the individuals, and just share so many fantastic times throughout the year. We've enjoyed so many buffets and family fun days with lots of good food and it's just great to see families engaging and moving around the community, visiting each church, and realising now that churches are*

a safe place. Community is the heart of a village and I think to make your community, you know, just fit together so everybody knows what's going off, you've got to have some key players and you've got to have some key locations, and often it is the churches, the libraries, the police station...

"You know, I just love when communities come together for big events, when we go on Phoenix Park and there's over a thousand people there... and they're there because of some involvement somehow, with the *Churches Together*. They might not know that they're involved with the churches, but just by coming to fun days and, you know, when Julie does the day trips with the Toddler groups and all these other wonderful things that our churches do...

"We've got some very traditional churches, you know, that do the Sunday services, then the choirs, and the music, which is also really, really important to recognise that they play an equal part in our community. You know, in Goldthorpe, we're very fortunate; we have about six active churches that are in our small community, and I just think that is quite amazing. We don't have buildings big enough to cater for all our families when we have events and church services. You know we hold Christmas pantomimes here in the Pentecostal church where children and families come, and the same with the schools; we pay for all the local schools to have access to a theatre company, and it's just great that we can do this together and we can share the cost. I always say that you can change a life over a cup of tea."

Track 3: Diane Webb (Children & Family Worker, St Helen's, Thurnscoe)

"I'm Diane; I'm the Children and Family Worker for St Helen's Church, which is in Thurnscoe and I'm part of the *Churches Together* group that work across the Dearne Valley. I've been involved since 2020, the end of, when I arrived, new in post, with a fantastic welcoming from the group. At the time we were coping with Covid and restrictions on how we could reach and support families and Churches Together came together to provide families with activities to do at home, when we couldn't meet together, and have bag pick-ups, and that was my first introduction to Julie and the rest of the team that meet together.

"It enables churches (some of us are quite small) to work together for the local community, to share God's love in practical ways, to offer families activities during half-term which doesn't cost them anything, whatever their situation. So they can come, and there's always tea and coffee and often a lunch included. So we're really providing for the needs of local families and give them activities if they've got children which are babies or if they've got older children. And also for themselves! – you see them sitting there, joining in the activities. It's given them a place to come; it's given them a sense of belonging. You notice them doing things like tidying up, just the little things that make you feel like community and it's enabled that. For some it's been a place where they can seek additional help with things – a listening ear, and a real supportive place that people come alongside them and walk life with them where they are.

"From the point of view of leaders, *Churches Together* has also provided a support network; it can be quite lonely for church leaders and isolating, and *Churches Together* gives us a place to meet together, to talk about our local issues, to pray and to support each other."

Track 4: Janet Cobourne-Smith (GPCC member)

"I'm Janet and I go to Goldthorpe Pentecostal Church and I've been involved in the *Churches Together* since I joined. It is very hard work to put the events on. Julie does most of the background work and I do things like putting things in bags, being there on the day. So we put a lot of events on for the community in the holidays, not just in Goldthorpe, but in Thurnscoe and Bolton-on-Deerne. And it is appreciated by the community because there's not much to do for free around here. People around here can't afford to go to a park or anything like that, so they do really appreciate it.

“To me, it’s important to be part of the group because we are serving God by serving the community. Jesus was born to be a servant, not just a King, and we are trying to follow in His footsteps.

“It’s a sense of achievement; it’s just doing things for other people... seeing the enjoyment on their faces...that’s the main reason that I do it. I’m hoping that they realise that church isn’t a scary place to come to, that they get used to being in a church building, and then maybe they will approach us if there’s something in their lives that they need help with, they need prayer, or anything like that. We will talk to anybody; we will help anybody.”

NO. 13 DEARNE COMMUNITY ARTS' FESTIVAL
TRANSCRIPT OF DEARNE COMMUNITY ARTS' FESTIVAL AUDIO FILES
Recorded at a community art workshop on Tuesday 23rd May 2023 by Rebecca Dye as part of the
Dearne Community Arts' Festival's Community Art Project for 2023



Track 1: Julie Turner (organiser)

"We started the Dearne Community Arts' Festival in 2017 as a way of celebrating our community and championing creativity. I was particularly struck by how people made such beautiful blankets and cardigans for my granddaughter when she was born, and people gave these things over with a '*oh, it's nothing*', when these things were works of art to me. I realised what talent we have in our community that is unseen most of the time, and so we started the arts' festival so that we could showcase that talent, so that we could give people an opportunity to show off that creativity and to celebrate what was going on locally all the time, but people generally didn't know about it.

"And so each year we hold the festival down in the secondary school now. (The first one was in Dearne Playhouse, but we outgrew that very quickly.) We have a range of exhibitions; we have workshops where you can have a go at something yourself; demonstrations of things such as pyrography or hot wax painting and 3D printing and we have performances on stage: dancing, drama, music... So we've got lots of things happening at the arts' festival.

"The community art projects arose from that in the sense that the arts' festival is just one day a year. It captures what goes on in the community throughout the year, but it's still just one day, whereas the art project that we do with the community goes on throughout the year. We've done a variety of projects such as the mural [at Goldthorpe Railway Embankment], a mosaic, a quilt, and this year we're doing selfie boards. So we like to get community groups involved, local residents involved, so that they can see what it's like to be involved with creativity.

"I think one of the things about the arts' festival for me is captured in our slogan, which is '*championing creativity and celebrating community*.' There's a lot of negativity in our community, but there's some fantastic people doing amazing things, and so we want to celebrate that each year. We want particularly to bring the generations together, so it's wonderful to have someone who's eighty passing on their crocheting or knitting skills to, you know, a young child. It's fantastic to have people sharing their expertise so willingly, and we really enjoy people working together from all generations, from all different community groups, so that we can learn to be creative. For me, that comes because we are made in God's image and He created everything, so creativity is at the heart of who we are."

Track 2: Janet Cobourne-Smith (helper)

"The Dearne Community Arts' Festival, it's a group of lots of different people coming together to showcase their talents. We usually have dancers, singers, artists... we usually have a juggler, which is very interesting...He also does a few magic things as well and there's art groups that come together

and there's also individual people who come together, people who make things, out of material, to make bags, cushions, banners... all sorts of things. Oh, there's a wood-lather who comes and demonstrates wood lathing and last year we had VR, and it was about the pit disaster in Barnsley. I had a go at that and it was very interesting; I found myself looking down the shaft. I was leaning forward, it was that realistic!

"One year they had Elmer the elephant and they got the children in local schools to contribute their pictures and they had some 3D models of Elmer and they were painting them, and then they got a chance to do that at the arts' festival as well.

"I get to help people. Julie has some very, very good ideas. She doesn't necessarily have a way of transferring those ideas into reality and I've helped her with the South Yorkshire map, the celebration quilt that was for the Jubilee, and I helped her and Garry to make a scarecrow for the Scarecrow Trail that happened in the town."

Track 3: Jenny Yates (Dearne Area Team, DCAF Committee member)

"So today we are packing up some bags for the Phoenix Park event in half-term, so they've got books and some little crafts things in... we're charging £2.50 for them and we're hoping to raise funds for the Dearne Community Arts' Festival. The arts' festival runs every year in September... um, it's a fun activity, a fun event for the whole community to come down. There are various different artists that are doing activities that you can take part in... different kinds of art that you can actually take part in, also others are selling their wares and things like that. Then there are performances on the stage as well: drama performances, there's dance, there's music, there's singing. You can come along and have a go at circus skills, painting. In the past couple of years we've made poppies out of the bottoms of plastic bottles to put up on the Embankment for a display. I think this year we're going to be making scarecrows for the Scarecrow Festival.

"...But it requires funding, and it's always a battle to get the funding to keep the arts' festival going. It's something the community all look forward to, so just in a small way we're hoping to raise some of the funds, whether it's towards the hire of the school or whether it's for the insurance and things like that that people don't always appreciate have to be paid for."

Track 4: Pete Davies (Photographer)

I'm the official photographer for Julie etc. I've been involved with the arts' festival for a number of years now, taking photographs. I've kept a detailed record of what's happened for several years now. The arts' festival is important because it brings the community together. The community does come together quite a lot... lots of different people, different activities carried out at the arts' festival and other festivals that were done throughout the Dearne valley.

"To me, it means that I can help out with local activities. Being retired, if you like, I've got time on my hands and it gives me something to do. It's a bit of payback for the community as well."

Track 5: Shirley Swales (Exhibitor & Committee Member)

"Well, it's a collection of exhibitors and people who make things themselves, their own products. We've got singers, we've got storytellers. It's a meeting of like-minded people. When you are by yourself, painting in your own home... but then it's meeting up and seeing what other people can do, how clever other people are, and it inspires you to try and do better yourself. I do go to groups and I do go to classes, but somehow exhibiting your work makes a difference... and the appreciation... you don't realise that people like your work. I mean, art is everything, really."

NO. 14 DEARNE PLAYHOUSE, GOLDTHORPE
TRANSCRIPT OF DEARNE PLAYHOUSE AUDIO FILES

Recorded at Dearne Playhouse on Tuesday 20th June 2023 by Rebecca Dye as part of the Dearne Community Arts' Festival's Community Art Project for 2023



Track 1: The History of Dearne Playhouse and Its Pantos

Julie Turner

“Julie, would you like to tell us about how long Dearne Playhouse has been here in Goldthorpe?”

Julie Medlam

“I can. It was built in 1923 and it was paid for by contributions from the local pit at the time, and I do believe that every miner paid something like 2 pence a week that went towards raising funds to build it – I think they got a little bit of help from other places – but it was always the Miners' Welfare and they used to use it as their event place as many others did all up and down the country with Miners' Welfare Teams. But then there was a group of people that got together who started to do pantomimes, so there was a musical society and they started producing pantomimes and performing pantomimes here, I think in the early '40s. That tradition has continued, so we are still well known for our pantomimes now and do three family pantomimes a year, hundreds of dance school shows, theatre companies... You name it, that's what we do here.

“There are silly bits for the children, but there are always the jokes that go above the children's heads, something for the adults. It brings generations together, because we are now at the stage where we've got great-grandparents coming with their kids, their grandkids, their great-grandkids, and they're coming as a corps. It's always, 'Ah, we always used to sit there; can you remember? We've been coming here for 70 years and we like them seats.'

“Also in our January pantomime, our community panto, it is people from our area, so open to anybody to come. We have auditions, but it's open to absolutely anybody; any ability can come and audition, and then we've got their families watching them on stage as well. It's just a big family feeling; it's not... It's lovely to go and see a big singing, dancing... you know, at the Bradford Alhambra, you know, spectacular scenery and everything, but there's no heart in it; it's great and funny shows, whatever, but you've not got that connection, you know, with the ones on stage and the ones sat around you. So that's why I think it's so important to have community theatre.

“Karl, that works here, is amazing, so talented. He writes the family pantomime, and then one evening I had a chap who was in the audience with his family, saying, 'That were brilliant, never laughed so much in my life. You should do an adult one, because it's great us coming with kids, but we'd like to

come and have a night without kids!’ So I put that to Karl and he did, and we were mortified... but all the shows sell out! They’re so popular. We’ve been doing them for about six years, seven years now. We even go to other venues now with the shows. So they’re really popular, really funny. They are traditional pantomimes; we even have dancers on, full Dame, all costumes on, everything, it’s exactly traditional; it’s just there’s no innuendoes in these pantos; it’s just full on, but they are really funny.”

Track 2: Theatre Can Change Lives

“It’s great having somewhere that’s easy to get to; tickets are affordable and it is a really good way – especially for younger people – of getting involved with something like this. I think if I hadn’t have had dancing when I was younger, and performing when I was younger, I wouldn’t be who I am now. It really shaped who I am.

“I wanted to do a maths degree until I, like, started doing pantos here and then I thought, ‘Actually, I’d be much happier doing theatre and being involved in theatre, so it’s really impacted my life. It’s really affected what I’ve done.

“Volunteering is a great way to get involved. I volunteer in some shows, just behind the bar and stuff, and it’s lovely to see excited parents and children from dance schools and excited children from dance school. It’s just lovely to see them really enjoying what they’re doing and having something that they do enjoy... and I think the friendships that you make and the connections that you make with different people, it’s priceless.

“I suppose it’s just coming to the theatre and the ‘liveness’ of performance... so being present, being involved, especially in pantos when you’ve got your audience interaction, and especially with younger people coming to watch: they’re coming and they’ve got the panto fool who they laugh at – and it’s always good to have a laugh! No one doesn’t enjoy laughing, I suppose, and it’s an experience that you can all share together. I suppose the magic of theatre for me, it *is* that liveness, it is that things can go wrong; it is that someone might forget a line; someone might go wrong in a dance, but that’s the beauty of it; they’re the moments that you can’t get through a screen, which I just think is amazing.”

Track 3: Growing The Imagination

“Dearne Playhouse is important to this community especially, because a lot of these children don’t have access to live theatre, whether it’s because their parents don’t want to take them or the affordability, so the Playhouse puts on affordable tickets to enable these people to come and see theatre live; also, the community groups, Julie, the Theatre Manager, donates tickets to, so Brownies and Scouts and other community groups can bring the children to watch theatre. Sometimes the children get to come up on stage or even just shouting back, being part of the story, is so important for children. It grows imagination. I think it’s just... live theatre is one of the best experiences you can have, and if we can do it here, for the children of this area, then I think it’s one of the best things we can do.”

Track 4: It’s All About Community

“The Dearne Playhouse is a fantastic local community theatre providing experiences for children and adults to perform in dance and theatre productions. As a dance school, the relationship we have with the theatre has opened up doors of opportunity for our pupils, and I hope it continues to do so and goes from strength to strength.”

Julie Medlam

“Literally, I’ve just had an email; she’s booked her very first show in here and she started here as a child, dancing. She’s now got her own dance school and she’s booked her first show in. One’s doing a drama group; one doing a singing group. We’ve got, you know, dancing... dancing is just wonderful to

see; there's so much opportunity for children these days. And I mean, a lot of them have got adult roles; you can join in if you wish as an adult, but I just think that kids have got this on the doorstep. They don't have to travel, so if there's no cars, they can't get on a bus, and we're right in the middle of everything for 'em."

"It's like now, you've just advertised on Facebook that we're doing a panto in January for auditions, so anybody can message Julie and come for an audition; you don't have to be part of a group; it's not through certain channels, but if you want to, the opportunity's there, open to everybody. It's open to everybody and I can remember once Cody being asked after we'd done something else here to audition for something else, so it does open up a lot of doors, and it does open up other opportunities that you probably wouldn't be aware."

Julie Medlam

"But we are a charity, and we stick to our aims and objectives; we stick to our remit of what we do: work with local groups. The people who can't afford to come don't pay. The people who can pay – and we do a scale... so... which maybe don't sound fair to everybody, but we have got to make it available."

Julie Turner

"And certainly, I can testify about the Dearne Playhouse's commitment to the community, because they hosted the very first Dearne Community Arts' Festival in 2017, completely free of charge. Julie, the manager here, just opened the doors and let us come in, let us do exhibitions, let us be on stage, let us use the whole building. We had Ian Macmillan doing a creative writing workshop in the back, and that was such a boost to us, because we were just this new group, never really done anything like this before, but to have this venue, this amazing venue, was absolutely unforgettable, and we can't thank Julie enough for her commitment to the community."

Track 5: Dearne Playhouse: Grassroots for the Arts

Julie Medlam

"We are the grassroots of, I would say, arts in our area. All local communities are welcome. All areas have got little theatres, provincial theatres, and that is where the grassroots take place. That's where, then, anyone who wants to do professional work in theatre or in the arts, they've had a great grounding here. They've had a good start 'cos we are a professional theatre, but for the community. The arts is really important; it's an escape route for people, particularly for an audience, 'cos they can come and sit down; they don't have to think about anything; they can watch beautiful colours, music, lighting, sound and just get immersed in just the feeling of being in a theatre."

"The artists and the performers, obviously, it's a bit different because there's a lot of work for them to do before they actually put that performance on, but I feel that on both sides of it, it's a lovely warm experience, a happy experience – we don't do anything that's sad here; we don't put any sad plays on! – everything that's in here is always singing, dancing, happy, and I can see people's faces when they walk out, and you can see what a difference it's made to them. We are a theatre; we're here for the arts. You know, we're not a sports venue – there's sports venues all over, and I do get people who go 'Can we do this?' and it's more sports-related. We're not, and it's not us saying that 'we don't want you to have your event here'; it's about us saying, 'we are the arts for this area', and we want people to come and join in for the arts. We're very, very proud of the place. I've been here a long time, a long, long time now, and I work with some great people in this area and we're really, really proud. It's not a job for us; it's a passion for us."

NO. 15 DEARNE AREA TEAM

Transcript of Dearne Area Team Audio Files

Recorded at a community art workshop by Rebecca Dye on Tuesday 23rd May 2023 as part of the Dearne Community Arts' Festival's community art project for 2023



Track 1: Thanking the Volunteers

Jenny Yates/ Darryl Hand

"I'm Jenny Yates; I'm Community Development Officer with the Dearne Area Team... I'm Darryl Hand; I'm Community Development Officer for the Dearne Area Team... We're proud of the volunteers in the community because they're always willing to step up and help out with a whole variety of different things, whether it's organising events, running groups, helping out on sites such as the Embankment, plus we have a big team of litter pickers as well. The people in the Dearne are just wonderful, kind-hearted and really enjoy coming out and helping out and volunteering."

"I guess it's important to realise just how much actually goes on in the Dearne. A lot of people say there's nothing happening, but there's a hell of a lot happening. We've got a very high population of community voluntary groups throughout the Dearne, all of which are heavily involved in the events that we run..."

"A lot of people have been here a long time. When I first started working in Thurnscoe, Julie Turner was around doing all the Thurnscoe Environment Group, working on Phoenix Park, and things like that, and now twenty years later she's still around doing an awful lot of things like the Dearne Community Arts' Festival and organising events and part of the Dearne Churches Together, and they come out to the Embankment; we have a lot of involvement with that."

"We want to thank the volunteers for all their resilience, their cohesion and we really do feel inspired by our volunteers."

Track 2: Local Commissioning

Darryl Hand

"I think for me what makes the Dearne Area Team particularly special is Barnsley Council recognise the importance of spending money on a local level, so they give us a devolved budget each year of £200,000, and we get to commission our own services in our own area. So we look at what the needs and priorities are in the Dearne, what the community groups want, what kind of services we think we're missing, and we'll commission that based on the needs at a local level, so I think that works quite well... So we commission services such as Twiggs, which is an environmental group, b:Friend, which looks at social isolation for over 50s; we've got DECV in Thurnscoe (which is all about employability and ICT), so because we're able to commission them (sic) services, we know where there's a gap within the area and it works quite well."

Jenny Yates

"The community groups are running all sorts of activities, whether it's things for elderly people, whether it's things on environmental projects. We also work with all of the local schools, looking at things like 'Reuse, Reduce, Recycle'... a whole range of different things that we get involved in; it's hard to pinpoint one thing. It's such a broad spectrum that we never know from one day to the next what we might be doing as a team!"

Darryl Hand

"One thing I will say, though, is that as a team we're really good at trialling and piloting all sort of projects. They'll tend to come to the Dearne first based on our demographic, the kind of community groups that we've got, and that then sets the precedent for the rest of the area. We'll trial it in the Dearne, realise whether it works well or not, and then it gets rolled out across the Borough."

"We're just working on a project at the moment called '*Storying Goldthorpe*' where basically, it's an unfinished book, and that book has been passed on from down south to Goldthorpe. We're working with the local schools, different children, to finish the illustrations of that book, finish the story, and then we're going to pass it on up north. Loads of schools are involved – and again, it's just a pilot, and then that's going to be rolled out across the rest of the principal towns. We get involved with loads of different projects, and I can say that Dearne, particularly us as an Area Team, are really proud about because in other areas of Barnsley, they haven't got as many community groups that are, say, as active, if you like. We've got that in the Dearne and I'm grateful for that."

Track 3: Why Volunteering Is Good**Darryl Hand**

"We've just started a volunteering passport training course with Barnsley Community Skills and Adult Learning which is an eight-week programme where all the volunteers in the Dearne look at different topics on volunteering, health and safety, quality and diversity, safeguarding, mental health, first aid and food hygiene, and they'll get a Level 2 Volunteering Award, come the end of the programme, and it's the first time Barnsley's had anything like that before, so we've worked with that provider to put this passport training together and we're just piloting it in the Dearne at the moment, so we've got Ward Alliance representation, and we've got elected members' representation and local community groups, all piloting this volunteer passport, and then we're going to celebrate their achievements at our local volunteer event in June. If anyone wants to get involved with any local community groups or local volunteering opportunities, you know, search for us on Facebook, Dearne Area Team, at Dearne Approach, and we'll get in touch 'cos there's loads of opportunities throughout the Dearne – all different age groups, different days of the week, and, you know, lots is happening – so get in touch."

Jenny Yates

"The benefits of volunteering is that it helps with things like social isolation; it can help with your mental health and wellbeing, particularly if it's something that might be outside or mildly active like litter-picking, things like that. Getting involved with other groups and things really has a positive impact on a lot of people's lives, and it makes you feel good about yourself as well, so it's a really good opportunity to come along and get involved as well in some volunteering."

Darryl Hand

"It's a real different society that we live in now. There's been a hell of a lot of change, and we've had to adapt and respond to that. By getting involved with volunteering, it's going to improve your physical and mental health; you know, it gives you a sense of belonging; it's going to reduce that social isolation and it's just really good for everyone to be part of something."

NO. 16 THE RENAISSANCE CENTRE, BOLTON UPON DEARNE
TRANSCRIPT OF AUDIO FILES AT THE RENAISSANCE CENTRE, BOLTON-UPON-DEARNE
Recorded at a community art workshop for Dearne Community Arts' Festival by Rebecca Dye on
Wednesday 28th June 2023



Track 1: Introducing The Renaissance Centre

Emma

“My name’s Emma and I’m currently at the Renaissance Centre in Bolton-on-Dearne, which is a community centre. The Renaissance Centre was originally the Infants’ School in Bolton-on-Dearne; there was an Infants’ School and a Junior School on the same site. We run quite a few local community groups ranging from Tai-Chi to craft classes to karate. What we are currently is not what we’re going to be moving forward. By the back end of this year, 2023, we will be having lots and lots and lots of work done, including a new roof, new heating system, basically to make sure this centre survives for as long as humanly possible. It’s here to serve the community. We have massive aspirations for the building; we want this to be used for everything – not just classes, but we hope to have a tea-room in here which would be an integral part of the Centre so that people can come and meet up. We see this as a melting pot for the community. What we need to do is to encourage people to come and use this facility. This is an old turn-of-the-century Victorian building and we want this to be ran for a lot longer.

“The community is inclusive, isn’t it? It’s for everybody and that doesn’t just mean the older generation who probably a lot of the younger generation think are the only people that use the community centre. That’s absolutely not what a community centre is. You are part of the community from birth to death and that’s it! So you should be able to use it in whatever form that should take. We’ve had teenagers come in and film a film – absolutely! That hall isn’t just for a brass band. If you want to skid down the corridor on your knees because you’re re-enacting the breakfast club, then absolutely, you should be able to do that. It’s for everyone, so community, basically, is for everybody.”

Track 2: A Tour Of The Building

Emma

It’s important that we have a community centre in Bolton-upon-Dearne. The transport is not great around here, so being able to get from one place to another isn’t always in everyone’s means, so it’s important that there’s something embedded within the village and this building can do that, so why not?

“This particular room has its original little stage in it. There are windows behind the sound-proofing, so there is a lot more light in here. We’ve used this previously as the Santa Reading Room, where we had Santa and Santa’s elf dressed up and all the kids were on the floor on the blankets, and they read them a story. We do have a couple of rooms in the Centre which are long-term renters, so people that rent this long-term as additional office space etc.

“To the right of us we’ve got the staff room which still has the ‘Staff Room’ sign on the door. ‘Please knock and wait: Staff Room.’ We’ve all stood outside one of those, haven’t we?!

“Straight across from the staff room we’ve got a classroom that still has all the old cupboards in and shelves, which are glorious. It’s still even got, in this classroom, it’s still even got the chalk board on the wall, which will be staying. Kids love a chalk board!

“To the left of the hall is our craft room which at the moment it’s known as. Long-term, this will be our tea room. There will be a tea room and an emporium which will assist all your local makers and crafters and whatever else, and is an integral part of the Centre that people could come and have a cup of tea, have a cup of coffee, meet up, find out what’s going on in the Centre or just come for a cup of tea or a cup of coffee and a chat. But we see this as a really important part of the Centre, as in Bolton-upon-Deane there’s isn’t really anywhere where people can just go and meet up and have a cup of coffee.

“Work’s moving forward. They’ve been saying that they’ll need to change a lot of the corridor windows to make it fireproof and whatever else. We appreciate that, but we try to retain as much of it as it currently is. On the outer walls you’ve still got, again, the cupboards.

“This is one of the rooms that we haven’t been able to let out; there’s quite a lot of damage on the walls, but the feel of this room is beautiful and I can’t wait for this room to be let out again.

“As we walk around the last bit of the corridor, all this is tiled. Bottle green tiles that have been painted over years, years and years ago. Thoroughly unpicked by myself on the way to the toilets, because I can’t help myself. Again, that’ll all be uncovered and ready.

“Finally, this last room is our old IT suite. When I first came to this Centre, this was rammed full of old, defunct computers, massive computer towers, keyboards, which we donated to Airedale College; they came and collected them all and they re-used them, recycled them, put them back into community centres and whatever else, so we were more than happy to do that. It’s not something that we can utilise here. This room will be, moving forward, a great classroom, so we’d like to get some decoupage classes in or jewellery making classes, where a tutor can walk in between or indeed, you know, aspirationally, we’d like to get a lot of the younger guys in with mobile phones or laptops or whatever with the older generation to teach them how to use them properly.

“We’ve got disabled access toilets, so they’re great, on the end, so they’re really quite recently done. Because some of these toilets are so big, I’m looking to try and get a hoist put in here. It’s really difficult for a lot of people... for a lot of adults of older youths to be able to go to community centres because they literally don’t have the changing facilities for them because they need a hoist to be able to do that, and we have the space here and we could be one of ten or fifteen community centres in the country that could accommodate, you know, everyone inclusively. It’s a joy to behold!

“This is the old school yard, the play yard, where they all used to come out and play. How fabulous is that?! We’d like maybe a couple of sheds round the back that can accommodate the local allotment guys to sell their veg; they do that on the streets currently, florists, whatever. We’d like to use them for our summer events; we’d like to utilise all this space for gazebos and everything else, and come Christmas time... well, donkey all the way! We’re currently having a lot of work being done by the local Payback Team who come and do a lot of work for us. They’re currently tidying up our green space, which is amazing. It’s surrounded by fruit trees; it’s a real reflective space, so again, aspirationally, what we’d like down here is to have yoga on the lawn; we’d like a couple of benches down here so that people who are dog walking or whatever else can come and have a sit down, a cup of tea, sit outside. We’d like to encourage local youth groups or Cubs or Scouts to come and utilise this as well. We’d also like down at the bottom some gardening clubs or something like that so that we can get, again, everyone in the community involved – you know, that may not want to do a class but needs to be

outside for whatever reason. This is a beautiful space to do it. Like I said, it's very reflective, very calming."

Track 3: Dearne Kids At The Renaissance Centre

Sara Greenfield

"For me... well, the Renaissance Centre is a well-used building... by us, when we're in, on a Wednesday night. Dearne Kids love the space. They love the outside space and hopefully the garden. We have done confidence building sessions, sports sessions, crafts; we've done bun decorating... all sorts because it's a fantastic space here. Kids love it, especially the noisy hall that we use because they love the fact that it echoes and they can slide across the parquet floor!"

Ian Ball

"Last year, the middle of last year, when the Renaissance Centre was struggling, they got in touch with us and said, 'Can you run a group in Bolton?' which is something we've always talked about anyway, to spread it out a bit. We've been here since then one night a week. We do everything from arts and crafts, cooking, free play, games, camp trips at weekends and that's what we do. I've enjoyed it."

Sara

"For me, the Renaissance Centre's run very well by Emma and her extended team and I can't wait to see the renovations. I'm looking forward to them."

Track 4: The Renaissance Centre History & Community

Emma

"I'm from Bolton upon Dearne originally; I went to Heathergarth School, but I think I've just been here before, so anything that's older or vintage... or architecturally as well... I just feel really passionately that they should be saved because they're not coming back. We don't build like this anymore, so it's really important that we fight for the bell tower on top of the roof, which some people might not care about, but we absolutely do care about it. We want to hear that bell ringing! We need to teach the children that this is where their Grandad came to school; this is where their auntie came to school, and people walk through those doors now, in its current state, which is nothing like it's going to be, they walk in and say, 'ooh, I used to go to school here. I remember Mr So and So or Mrs So and So.'

"We're going to name each classroom, each room, from one of the old teachers that worked here, because it's important that that heritage is moved forward. You know, we want to have mining memorabilia... you know, classes or talks and whatever else...it's really, really important that we save these buildings because the history of these buildings is woven into most...most families' backgrounds, somewhere along the line if they're from Bolton upon Dearne.

"This centre is a lifeline to the people that use it, but we want to... we want to enlarge that so that it's not just a class, which is why the tearoom is fundamental to that because people need to be able to get out of their home who may not be able to afford a class or can't access or mobility issues might restrict them or whatever else... Everybody should be able to come and have a cup of tea and have a chat to folk. Everybody should be able to do that. It's really important; it's a lifeline to some, but we want to extend that lifeline to everybody, because it's only to *some* at this moment in time for whatever reason. We want to be able to find out exactly what everybody wants, and if we can give it to them, then we will."



Championing Creativity
Celebrating Community