

The Culture Trust Luton is a vibrant and progressive charitable trust connecting our community through arts and culture. We promote skills, cultural learning for young people, high profile cultural events and family engagement in healthy cultural activities.

Our focus is on ensuring the communities of Luton have access to free museums of the highest quality at Wardown House and Stockwood, accessible culture through our activities and a world-class arts offer at the Hat Factory Arts Centre and Luton Library Theatre.

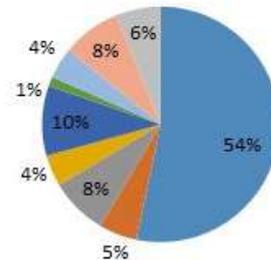
Our community use data tell us that we're getting things right and we're inspiring local people to be active in arts and culture.

The survey kiosks in our sites provide invaluable feedback on demographics, location and likes/dislikes.

We are pleased to report that our data mirrors the demographic breakdown of Luton [UK Census, 2011]. The pie chart to the right shows that nearly half our users identify as being non-white British. We are using this data to look at communities we currently under-serve and we are developing activity and partnerships to address these gaps.

## What is your ethnicity?

- White British
- White Irish
- White Other
- Black/Black British
- Asian/Asian British
- Chinese/Chinese British
- Multiple Heritage
- Other
- Prefer not to say



## STOCKWOOD SAFE AND OPEN FOR THOUSANDS



Covid-19 closed our sites in March but we have continued to keep Stockwood open whenever we can. Our customers have really enjoyed coming to our safe and inspiring site and its healthy food offer.

Despite restrictions on times and visitors, we have welcomed over **17,500** visitors since we re-opened in August 2020.

# COMMUNITY ARTS AWARD



We are thrilled to be once again supporting the Luton Community Awards - This year we are sponsoring the Community Arts Awards.

More than ever we have seen how our community has turned to the arts during lockdown for their health, wellbeing and entertainment. From singing and playing musical instruments to designing rainbow art and writing stories.

To nominate a group or individual for this award: [www.ciluton.co.uk/awards-nomination/](http://www.ciluton.co.uk/awards-nomination/)

## TEAM HAT FACTORY CREATIVITY DURING LOCKDOWN

The Hat Factory is a hive of activity for many local creatives and during lockdown we have supported them on site and online to continue their work.

### YVA JUNG



Art workshops at the Hat Factory continued in a new way during lockdown. We prepped a package of materials, reworked the curriculum and continued the courses online via Zoom, allowing participants to continue the courses from the safety of their own homes.

### ODD SOCKS



It was great to have Next Generation Youth Theatre back in the Hat Factory recently. They offered a free dance tutorial for their partner schools for #OddSocksDay and #AntiBullyingWeek.



## THE BASEMENT BUNCH

These Hat Factory Arts Centre regulars are no strangers to our stage or our office spaces! They are a Luton based company devising bold and vivid stories. They make films & theatre which have a connection with our community and the current issues they are facing.

They have recently branched out and are creating a brand new web series called 'Thick as Thieves' using all local Luton creatives. The show 'unmasks the reality of friends who are just trying to make ends meet in a world of adulting.' Head on over to their fundraising website here - [www.indiegogo.com/projects/thick-as-thieves--2#/](http://www.indiegogo.com/projects/thick-as-thieves--2#/)

# STOCKWOOD GARDENS: A SITE OF SPECIAL HISTORIC INTEREST



In August the Culture Trust and Luton Council celebrated Historic England's decision to classify The Improvement Garden by Ian Hamilton Finlay as a site of Special Historic Interest in England.

The Garden is considered to be the most important example in England of the work of Ian Hamilton Finlay and was originally commissioned by Luton Council in 1986.

Finlay is widely considered to be the most adventurous and controversial sculptor-cum-landscape designer of the post-war era in Britain.

## FUNDRAISING SUCCESS TO FINISH HAT WORKS

We were delighted to announce that during Covid-19 we secured over £1.5 million to finish Hat Works – the oldest remaining hat factory in Luton. Hat Works is part of the Hat District heritage regeneration project led by The Culture Trust to repair and re-purpose historic hat factories and transform them into inspiring and much-needed creative workspace. The picture to the right shows the National Lottery Heritage Fund senior officers visiting Luton.

Hat Works is situated in the heart of the Hat District creative cluster that consists of the Hat Factory Arts centre, Storefront Gallery and Hat House in Guildford Street. A key focus of the project is to provide an opportunity for local creatives in the town to set up business.



## VAUXHALL EXHIBITION

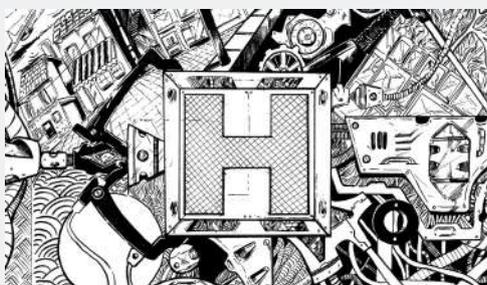


From September 2020 to late-March 2021 Stockwood is showcasing a curated selection of vehicles from the Vauxhall Heritage Centre in a very popular free exhibition - during September alone we had **1500 visitors** to see the cars. Operating on a limited Covid-19 safe ticket-only entry scheme, we were really pleased to learn more about our customers and the exhibition so far has seen **85%** of our visitors from Luton.

The exhibition provides an opportunity to get close to some of the iconic vehicles produced by Vauxhall over the last 115 years and presents the story of a major employer in Luton and the impact it made on the town.

## DIGITAL ART - FREE FOR ALL

We are delighted to have been able to commission work from artists in Luton or with links to the town through our large-scale digital screen in the Hat Factory window in Bute Street. The video installations cover a wide range of styles including animation, dance and movement and time-lapse art. Current film 'A River Runs Under Your Feet' by artist Abi Spendlove is a meditative exploration of her journey along the exposed and culverted parts of the River Lea. Other artists who have benefited from this creative opportunity are Jakob Rokita, Tom Young, Julia Cheng, Karl Brown, Simon Cleary and Stephen Whiting. Do have a look when you're next passing the Hat Factory as they will change on a regular basis.



# WHAT THE DICKENS?



Our Christmas Wardown extravaganza is going online and will be free for all with Dickens' popular A Christmas Carol due to air from the 15th to 31st of December.



# SCHOOLS ENGAGEMENT



Core to our charity objectives is education and learning, this underpins the work we do across our venues and outreach.

We have a very successful programme of work with school and out of school establishments in order to involve, inspire and culturally educate.

In 2019-20 we worked with **216,476** young people and are proud to host **94%** of Luton's primary schools in our award winning Schools Link programme.

We regularly receive wonderful feedback from our participating schools for our teaching and activities:

*"Thank you for our visit to Wardown House and the the excellent hat making and history workshop..."* Headteacher, Warden Hill Infants School

*"Our children loved the friendship-building activities at Stockwood Discovery Centre today. Many thanks."* Teacher, Tennyson Road School

# WE'RE GOOD TO GO



We have secured accreditation through Visit England for both Stockwood and the Hat Factory sites to prove we are safe and Covid-compliant in our health and safety procedures.

## STOREFRONT GALLERY



Storefront in Bute Street has continued to show work in the windows of the gallery but has re-focused to provide an increased amount of online content in 2020. Interactive artworks have included a live stream of live stream of activity in Bute Street and a mystery phone number where you can select one of several well-known writers' works and even leave a short story yourself!

## KEEP THE HOME FIRES BURNING



The play was originally performed at Wardown House in 2019 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Luton's Peace Day Riots. Written by Luton-born writer Teresa Burns, it was recommissioned and adapted for radio during lockdown. It's a poignant and relevant piece and is still available to listen to on Soundcloud.

## ARTSMARK AWARD



During lockdown we launched this free arts award aimed at young people aged 5 - 25 years. It's an accredited certificate recognised by Arts Council England offered at five levels to help people explore the arts and gain a qualification at the same time. So far we've had 83 engagements..

## LOCKDOWN DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT



Our audience has stayed engaged with our content through the shutdown period with figures remaining consistent across all social media.

In the past 6 months we have seen online traffic at around 70% of normal engagement when a full programme is in place.

Content relating to Luton remains the most popular with an excellent responses to Keep The Home Fires Burning, Stockwood re-opening, #LightinRed initiative and the Vauxhall exhibition.

## With thanks to our regular funders:



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**