

CREATIVE
CRAWLEY

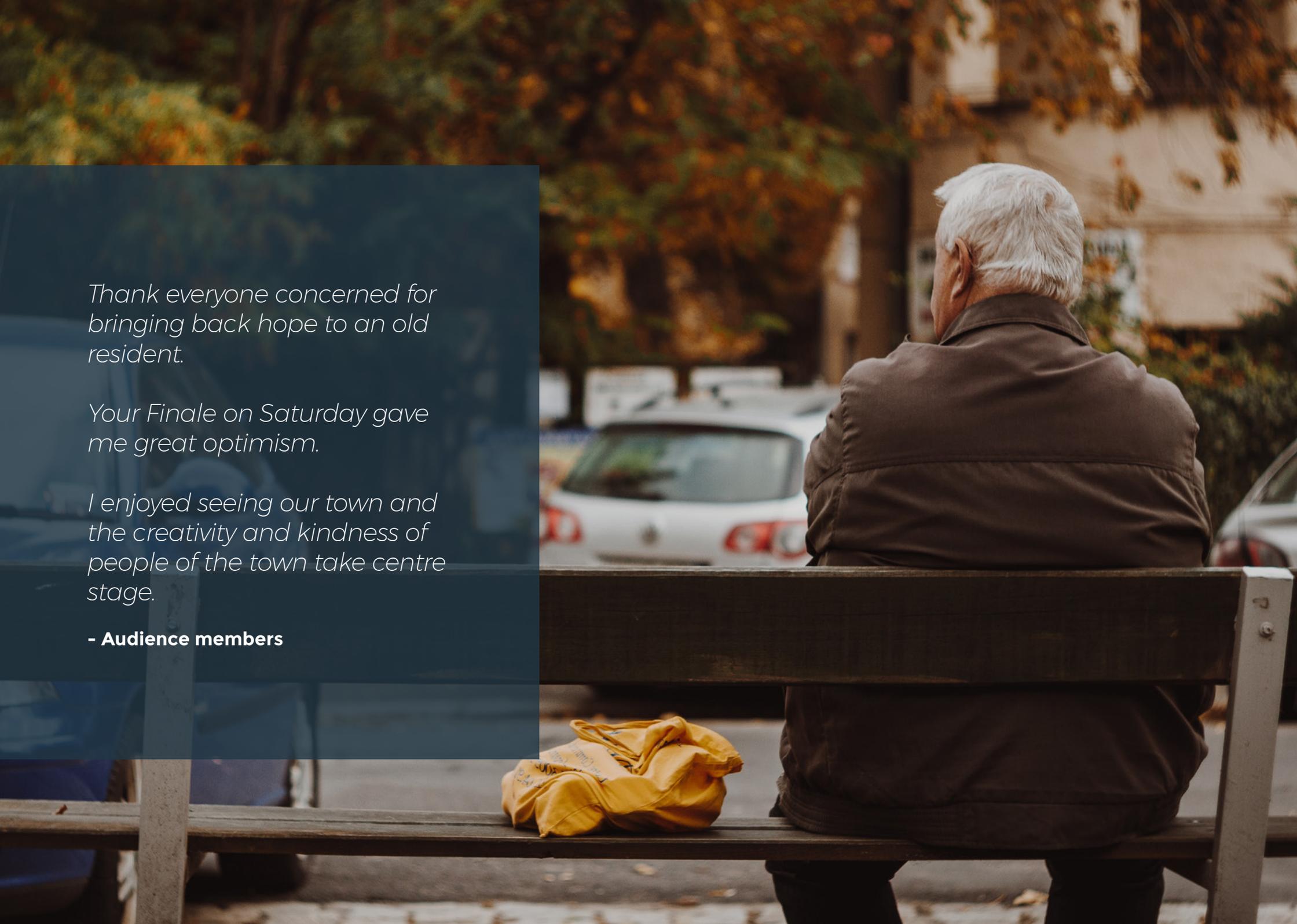


26 - 30 January 2021

WHAT WE LEARNT

www.creativecrawley.com





Thank everyone concerned for bringing back hope to an old resident.

Your Finale on Saturday gave me great optimism.

I enjoyed seeing our town and the creativity and kindness of people of the town take centre stage.

- Audience members

SUMMARY



The free to attend festival took place online and in places in Crawley with 30 different events reaching over 22k people (or around 20% of the total population in Crawley). 21 different community groups and 20 artists took part. The press coverage reached an average of 962k readers. [You can watch a short film about the festival here.](#)

The participants and audience members told us that the festival gave them hope in dark times, a sense of optimism and highlighted the wealth of creativity that already exists in Crawley.

The festival was the beginning of a more concentrated focus for Crawley on connecting people through creativity and how that can improve wellbeing as well as contribute to the town's economic growth post-pandemic. Watch this space.

Louise Blackwell, Creative Caretaker, March 2021





WHERE DID IT COME FROM?



A group of community, business and cultural leaders in Crawley began to meet regularly from January 2020. When lockdown happened in March 2020, we continued to meet and explore how to ensure arts and culture is placed at the heart of the town to support people who work, live and study in Crawley.

We noticed how people were using creativity to respond to the pandemic and help each other. We raised some money to develop an organisation and a festival to shine a light on what creativity exists in the town already and to bring new and ambitious creative acts to Crawley.

“ It will be a wonderful memory of this time and a snippet of what will be history for the town **Audience member**

“ I feel incredibly grateful to have played a part in some way. Crawley has played a huge part in my development as an artist so I am glad I got to give back in some way and help to raise the profile of arts in the town. **Artist**

AIMS



To support the curation and delivery of a micro-festival of cultural activity in Crawley remembering, celebrating and exploring the resilience of residents during lockdown 2020 supported by a Sussex based artist of vision. Connecting and supporting communities to work together to respond to their experience of lock down by inviting them to take part in or become audiences for artworks created in response to the pandemic.

To set up a new creative company; 'Creative Crawley' comprised of diverse local leaders collaborating to establish a reputation for the town as a creative place beyond its boundaries through innovation.

To offer the opportunity to Crawley residents to take part in a series of events that help their mental well-being by finding creative ways to accept and move forward with their lives in the current context.

To begin to build a sense of pride in the town and generate feelings of happiness in the beneficiaries leading to a greater sense of well-being.

Encourage people to use their creative experiences in a bespoke way to help them process their comprehension of the lock down through a series of community meetings.

“ *A consistently kind, good-humoured and passionate group, Creative Crawley continue to surprise me with their dedication to fostering young artists to a high standard with well thought-out processes. Please keep doing what you do.* **Participant and audience member**





WHAT WE DID



We produced a free to attend arts festival that culminated in a weekend of 30 online events on 29th & 30th January 2021 plus two live exhibitions that ran from 26th - 31st January in locations around Crawley.

The festival was led by Creative Caretaker Louise Blackwell and the team consisted of:

The Creative Crawley advisory group: Adam Joolia (AudioActive), Andrea Dumbrell (Crawley Museum), Annie Bowden (The Posh Club), Dave Savage (CCYS), Katie Gledhill (West Sussex Library Service), Laiba Baig (Crawley Youth Council), Liz Hart (CBC), John Williams (CCA), Parveen Kahn (Diverse Crawley), Rachel Cowell (visual artist), Sarah Maple (visual artist), Steve Sawyer (Manor Royal BID) Tony Witton (Crawley Festival), Vanessa Dell (Manor Green College) and Vicki Illingworth (Crawley College).

Lead artist: Sinéad Emery

Trainee Producer: Laura Beecham

Graphic Designer: Ben Lintott

Production Manager: Sam Evans

Technical Manager: Bruce Asher

“ *The team were excellent and worked well together to achieve the goals of the festival.*
Participant

“ *The crew and artists who made the trailer were amazing and it felt like we were creating something special. It is always the people that make an experience and I think that having an amazing group leading this festival has been key to its success.* **Artist**

WHAT WE DID



There were 21 community groups based or making work in Crawley involved in the festival programme including: Audio Active, Crawley Camera Club, Crawley Community Youth Service, Crawley College, Crawley Museum, Crawley Town Community Foundation, Culture Shift, Dance Hub TV, Diverse Crawley, Fi Steps Dance, Louise Ryrie Dance School, LPK Learning, Manor Green College, Priya Bhawaneedin Dance School, Roshe Dance School, Songbirds Choir, Stages Performing Arts, U Dance, Urban City Dance and West Sussex Library Service.

“ *The people I came across certainly seemed dedicated to their art and to promoting it within Crawley.* **Participant**

There were 20 artists involved in the festival programme including: Adam Frost, Anna Jefferson, Ash Dixon, Crawley Film Initiative, Grace Saif, Iffat Rahman, Matt Turner, Neel Ravat, The Posh Club, Quiet Boy, Rachel Cowell, Saaj Raja, Same Sky, Sarah Maple, Sebastian Livingstone, Sinéad Emery and Woodyzy.

The festival was funded by 5 different organisations; Arts Council England, Crawley Festival, Sussex Community Foundation via the Crawley Cultural Fund, Crawley Town Centre Business Improvement District and Crawley Borough Council.

“ *I enjoyed speaking to someone from the same place I grew up in talking about the things that inspired me and got me started in this career. I felt I was able to put the things I have learned as a young actor to some good use, and offer up some advice or information to other aspiring artists from Crawley.* **Artist**

“ *I particularly enjoyed the Meet the Crawley Creatives Series and, of course, the launch video shot around Crawley filled everyone with pride! Thank you so much for inviting us to be part of it. We can't wait to see what Creative Crawley has coming up next!* **Participant and audience member**



OUR SUPPORTERS



With thanks to our partners who helped make this happen Right Here:



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



THE PROGRAMME INCLUDED



7 new films

“ I really enjoyed the diverse range of artists and content available online. There was a good mix. **Artist and audience member** ”

5 online interviews with local creatives

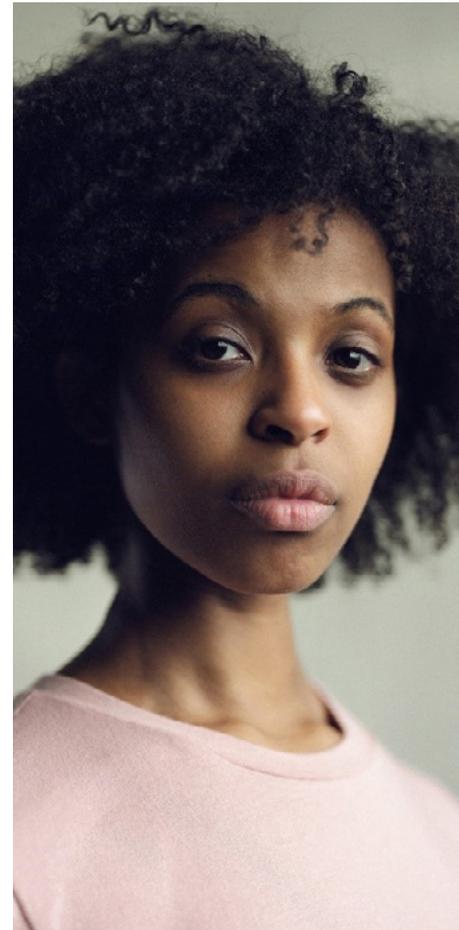
“ Grace Saif has really motivated me into getting stuck into theatre and the arts and again gaining more knowledge into the logistics and aspects of acting. Overall it was fantastic hearing other artists speak about their passions. **Audience member** ”

1 podcast series with four episodes

“ I enjoyed doing my armchair walk, many people told me they had listened and enjoyed it. **Participant** ”

8 online workshops (3 new commissions and 5 existing workshops)

“ Lovely to join into a workshop with friendly like-minded women whilst enjoying some writing. I really enjoyed seeing some of the groups I have worked with in the past and discovering some creative groups I did not know. **Participant** ”



THE PROGRAMME INCLUDED



2 exhibitions in Crawley

“ I enjoyed seeing my pictures on the lamppost covers and having friends send pictures of them from their daily walks. My daughters excitement spotting their picture on our daily walks. **Audience member** ”

1 online launch event

“ I loved performing for the opening and finale, it's the first time I have done anything properly so that was very exciting. **Artist** ”

1 online finale event

“ Your Finale on Saturday gave me great optimism from Ash's musical group in improvised 'studios' with pets' appearances to the information you gave about the people and groups involved. **Audience member** ”

“ The Writer's Circles poetry videos...gave the poets a voice and by putting them on our YouTube channel they've become part of our commitment to working with local communities. **Participant** ”

“ My favourite part was talking about DiverseCrawley Cultural Kitchen and having my photo on promotional material was superb **Participant** ”



HOW WE ADJUSTED



Despite planning for some of the events to take place in person and therefore having to reimagine those events, we managed to present all but two of the originally planned activities adhering to the new restrictions that came into effect in December 2020.

“ Given the pandemic circumstances it was always going to be a challenge to take it online. However, I think that you did an amazing job and people really engaged. I think it got a lot of people’s attention and it will certainly grow from strength to strength for next time.

Audience member

Two events took place in Crawley; an exhibition of 12 sculptures by Same Sky called “Awakenings” made by Sussex artists to represent the pandemic in the centre of County Mall shopping centre and “Capturing Lockdown”, a photographic exhibition on 33 lampposts around Crawley in partnership with LPK Learning and Crawley Museum.

You can watch the online events on the [Creative Crawley YouTube Channel here](#).

“ The finale felt like a very professional production. Beyond the finale the breadth of the activities and different ways the community could be involved was also impressive. **Audience member**

Focus on poet Iffat Rahman



I was lucky enough to have the opportunity to contribute to the start-up of an organisation in Crawley called ‘Creative Crawley’. They had a two-day event at the end of January to celebrate the creativity of this town over lockdown. With my role as the Deputy Member of the Youth Parliament for Crawley and East Grinstead, I was able to work with the producer Louise Blackwell and suggest some ideas so that young people could also get involved, hence, coming up

with the idea of a writing workshop that was run by local spoken-word artist Woodzy. With this, I had the opportunity to perform my own spoken-word poems at their opening and their finale. I performed my poems “Knives by Us” and “Shards of Heart”. It was an amazing experience, even though it was live-streamed online and not in person. I am working with them in the future to get more creative opportunities for the young people in Crawley too!

Iffat Rahman



DIGITAL MARKETING



We made a trailer for the festival with the newly formed Crawley Film Initiative. The trailer has been watched over 1.2k times on our YouTube Channel and over 2K times on featured artists Woodzy and Saaj Raja's Instagram feeds. [Watch it here](#)

We set up the following channels for Creative Crawley and will continue to build on our audience in these areas.

Twitter: 110 followers

You Tube: 64 subscribers

Instagram: 223 followers

Facebook: 232 follows

Linked In: 9 subscribers

Mailing list: 444 subscribers

Website: The Right Here Festival page on Louise Blackwell's website received around 1250 individual visits between Thurs 29th and Sunday 31st January 2021.

We built relationships with Metrobus who advertised the festival on the digital screens of 46 of their buses and shared info about the festival with their mailing list of 14,713 people with an open rate of 17%.



BANNERS & POSTERS



The marketing campaign included placing banners in the town centre on the Boulevard and High Street. Local people put posters up in local shops and even in their car windows. Each poster (and “Capturing Lockdown” exhibit) had a QR code on it and during the festival 34 people accessed the website via the QR code.



MEDIA COVERAGE



We worked with Mobius Industries to run our PR campaign which achieved 17 pieces of coverage with an average coverage reach of 962k readers. This coverage was local, regional and national including articles in the Crawley and Horley Observer three weeks in a row. [You can read the full report here](#)

WHO TOOK PART?



Participants and audiences

Since the launch on 16th December 2020 to date (March 2021) the Creative Crawley YouTube Channel has had 3700 views including around 1300 unique views on the festival weekend.

Between the 26th Jan- 31st Jan County Mall had a total of 21,842 people through the centre. It is estimated that between 70 & 75% of those people will have engaged with the exhibition. The footfall is a 10.6% increase on the previous week and the final Sunday of the exhibition saw a 49.9% increase on the previous week. Sunday 31st January was the highest Sunday footfall County Mall had during the third lockdown.

Therefore, despite not advertising the exhibition and presenting it only for people who were visiting County Mall for essential goods, around **15,000 people** experienced the Awakenings exhibition.

33 lampposts in locations across Crawley and in each neighbourhood in the town hosted the Capturing Lockdown photographic exhibition from 26th - 31st January 2021. If 20 people engaged with each exhibit each day for 6 days, then around **4,000 people** experienced the exhibition.

The artists and Creative Caretaker led a further six online workshops or community meetings that do not feature on the YouTube page with a further 77 participants. This means the total audience and participant reach to date was **22,777 or around 20% of the total population of Crawley.**

“ There was a real buzz over the photo boards popping up across the town. During these tough months it was a nice visual reminder of community. Topped with having the boards placed at points close to home, felt like a prize. They (the photo boards) looked amazing and we got to enjoy them. **Participant**



WHO ARE THEY?



The audience

- 208 individuals booked via Eventbrite and 13% of those filled in a post event survey.
- Based on what we know about how many people were watching with those that booked tickets we estimate around 777 people watched events online at the scheduled times.
- From those surveyed, 46% said they don't attend creative events or activities very regularly or not regularly at all.
- Nearly 18% are 18 - 30 years old and 53% over the age of 46 years with 21% being 60+.
- 59% describe themselves as female. Nearly 15% of people surveyed told us their gender is different to the one they were assigned at birth.
- 79% describe themselves as White British, 7% from an Asian background, 3% White Irish and 3% White Other.
- 65% consider themselves non-disabled, 8% with a mental health condition, 4% with a hearing impairment and 4% with a visual impairment.
- 59% consider themselves to be Working Class.
- Nearly 61% of those surveyed live in Crawley and of the 39% that don't, 46% live in Sussex.
- **96% of people surveyed said they would recommend the festival to others.**





WHO ARE THEY?



The participants

- Of the 21 community groups and 15 advisory board members; 24 people or 67% completed a survey.
- 4% are under 30 years old and 39% are under 45 years old. 30% were 60+ years.
- 87% describe themselves as White British, 9% Indian and 4% Mixed White and Black African.
- 74% describe themselves as female. 9% of people surveyed told us their gender is different to the one they were assigned at birth.
- 78% describe themselves as non-disabled with the remaining people preferring not to say.
- 74% describe themselves as Working Class.

The artists and team

- Of the 20 artists and team members 45% of them completed a survey.
- 33% are under 30 years old and 66% are 45 years or under.
- 55% describe themselves as White British, 11% Indian, 11% other Asian, 11% Mixed White and Asian and 11% other Mixed background.
- 66% describe themselves as female and 11% told us their gender is different to the one they were assigned at birth.
- 44% describe themselves as non-disabled, 11% with a mental health condition and 44% preferred not to say.
- 33% describe themselves as Working Class.

DID WE ACHEIVE OUR AIMS?



The audience reach of the festival completely exceeded our aims. We originally aimed to work with 7 artists, 280 participants, 200 live audiences and 2500 online audiences.

In fact we worked with 20 artists (186% increase), 421 participants (50% increase), 22,156 live audiences (11,000% increase) and online audiences of 3700 (48% increase).

The Right Here festival was a celebration of people in Crawley and their creativity during lockdown.

We have developed a brand identity for a new organisation in Crawley and are in the process of setting up a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). 9 of the original advisory group will become Trustees of the CIO.

We began to build partnerships with a range of community organisations and education partners in the town.

We started a successful relationship with Crawley Town Centre BID through the work we did in County Mall.



WHAT DIFFERENCE DID WE MAKE?

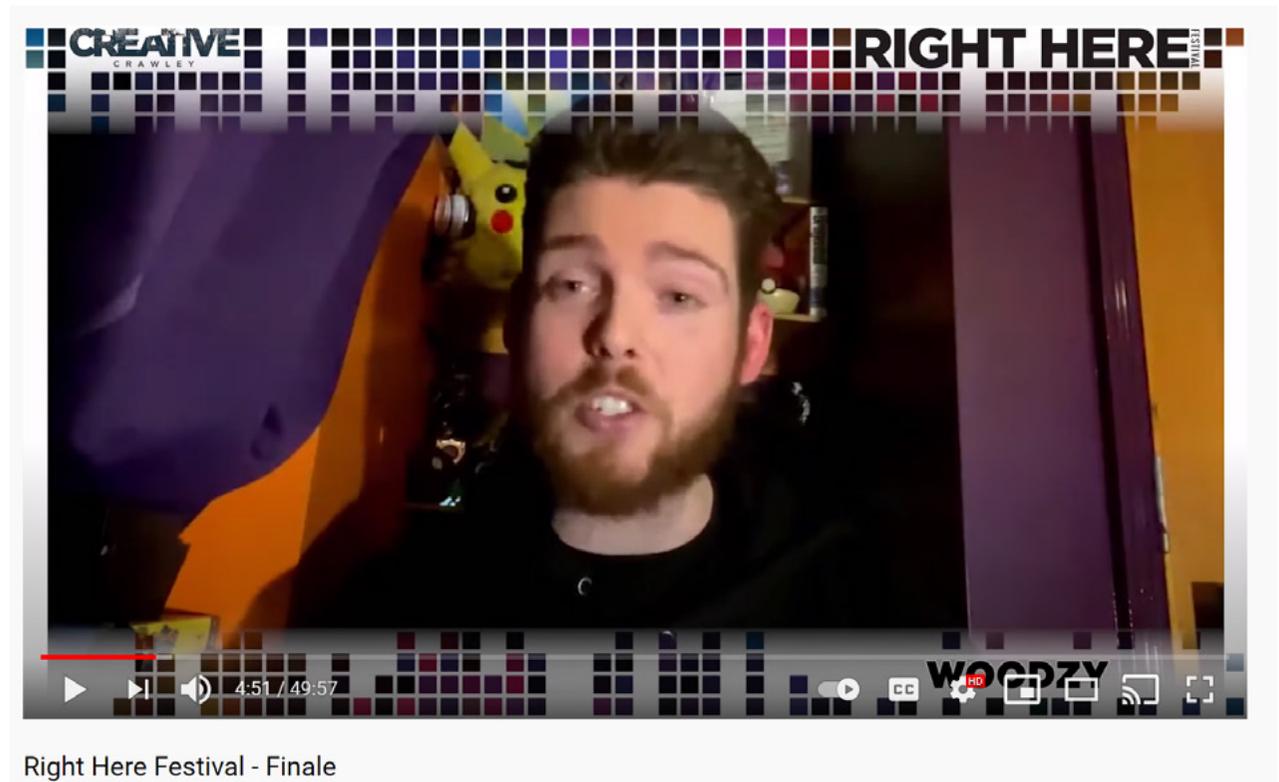


We offered a beacon of hope in lockdown:

“ Love the idea of pushing creativity in Crawley and supporting other creative so this was lots of fun. Also added a light into our current dark lockdown. **Audience member** ”

“ I almost accidentally learned about the Festival and found there was an immediacy which I have missed in life over these last months. I've lacked creativity myself - but realise how much I enjoy others' performances, creations etc. I look forward to more events. Thank everyone concerned for bringing back hope to an old resident. **Audience member** ”

“ Filled me with hope for a technology revolution and inspiration for everyone to get creative and maintain their wellbeing. **Audience member** ”



WHAT DIFFERENCE DID WE MAKE?



We helped make connections between community groups and artists in the town:

“ I enjoyed seeing our town and the creativity and kindness of people of the town take centre stage. **Audience member**

“ As a born and bred Crawley resident I felt connected to my town and family members of present and past. Thank you for asking me to be a part of what was a fantastic festival. **Participant**

“ It was a great project and it captured the experience of being in irregular lockdowns while also still being creative and social. **Audience member**

We represented Crawley and the people who live there positively:

“ It was great to see Crawley being actively promoted in a positive light. **Audience member**

“ I thought that it was a very positive and upbeat festival, the trailer and films were very professionally produced and all the participants were excellent. **Audience member**

“ It's great to hear from young creatives in the area, and have LGBTQ+ representation in an otherwise 'grey' area for the Queer community. **Audience member**

It brought the communities of Crawley together:

“ The fact that we knew others were watching at the same time made it a really great experience and like you were part of a gathering / festival even though it was virtual. **Audience member**

“ I thought the festival was amazing, it was great to see how talented our community is, it certainly brang us together in this difficult time. **Audience member**

“ Watching the live stream on Saturday night.. it really struck me just how important taking part and sharing creative activity is for our communities. **Audience member**



WHAT CHALLENGES DID WE FACE?



The mainly digital nature of the festival offered positives in terms of the legacy of the event (YouTube Channel) and accessibility of events to those who could access them but it also brought challenges. We were planning to launch a new website alongside the festival launch but for various reasons this was not possible. We utilised the Creative Caretaker Louise Blackwell's website which worked well but was not ideal:

Lack of ease of digital access for some:

“ I enjoyed it - but did not manage to find my way around the website to see everything. **Audience member** ”

“ It was great but accessing the events online was not easy. **Audience member** ”

Lack of face to face contact for the team:

“ The lack of face to face meetings and/or collaborative mind mapping was something I had to adapt to and certainly felt it's absence in this process. In the future I would be mindful of asking that as lead artist, I get to run some creative workshopping with the teams too. Meetings to catch up are one thing but getting creative together and perhaps trialling some of the participatory material with the team, prior to launching them for the community would be something I would look to do in the future. **Artist** ”

“ I liked using online software because it meant I could squeeze things in especially as December was a busier time for me with mocks. However, I would have loved to see people in person too and to also have a live audience would have a better atmosphere. **Team member** ”

“ Usually I would do a talk in person, it happened over teams which was challenging as I couldn't interact how I normally would. It was also difficult as we weren't able to see the participants as they were under 18. Hopefully next time it will be in person. **Artist** ”



WHAT CHALLENGES DID WE FACE?



Although most of the communication between the team, artists and participants was very good, the necessary speed of adaptation to new restrictions, lack of face to face contact and large workload for the very small, part time team led to some communication challenges. There were positives and negatives in this area:

“ Weekly production meetings were a useful method of communication. early on in the process I was introduced to all key members of the team. Email chains were also useful and it was made clear that Louise would be on hand to talk through anything over the phone if needed. **Team member** ”

“ Enjoyed the ideas exchanges and developments... Felt we all worked well together in an amongst all the changes and kept things moving and responsive. **Team member** ”

“ Communication with other team members was timely and concise throughout the project, something I am very grateful for! There were some small disadvantages of not being ‘in the rehearsal room’ together, but otherwise fine. **Team member** ”

“ I loved working with everyone, everyone was so kind and considerate. It was great, lots of communication and everyone very approachable. **Artist** ”

“ Overall communication was the biggest challenge for me. I was often left feeling confused and on edge by inconsistency in communication across the project. That for me was the start of a not very satisfying or truly collaborative end to the project which was a shame because despite frustrations around communication in the lead up to this, the process had felt collaborative up to that point. **Artist** ”

WHAT DID WE LEARN?



The joy of the digital legacy means we can continue to share the festival work with audiences. Unlike live performances, the digital work can live on, not only in the audiences' mind.

“ I loved it - the film events were very professionally put together, the Participants were brilliant and very entertaining. I will go back to the YouTube channel and watch the ones that I didn't see when they launched. It is great that they will still be available. **Audience member**

“ Huge positives and value in the workshops being recorded and free for all to access and a fun creative process in making these happen with Jake. I think the only project where the digital element caused little to no negative impact was Peoples Pathways. This I feel we adapted very successfully to the changes. **Artist**

“ We can help artists develop their practice in practical ways when working digitally and there's huge potential to develop more in this area. I participated using a mobile device that I was able to film on and connect to the live stream. I think this is very accessible for any other artists who may need to live stream from home. If there could be any improvements, perhaps for those who do not have a space they can film in or a device they could use, a 3rd space could be hired for artists to film in for their stream. **Artist**

“ I have adapted by making my home space as functional as possible for self-tapes and voice work. The challenges of this is that it is financially a big cost, and sometimes isn't effective due to noise or internet connection. The positives of this were that I didn't need to leave my home for any reason during the Covid-19 travel restrictions. **Artist**

“ I wasn't in contact with any of the other artists that were present at the festival, understandably due to the nature of the current COVID19 restrictions. In future, it may be enjoyable to have a panel type event where we can discuss among ourselves to find even more interesting perspectives. **Artist**

“ I am really grateful for what has been a major learning process for me in this strangely disconnected time. The festival has helped me develop further my approach to digital delivery and ideas for future work. It has also made me keen to explore both my expectations and my own professional needs as a collaborative practitioner working in a non-face to face way and how to better communicate and lay those out, whilst also taking time to understand those of others from the start. **Artist**

WHAT NEXT?

The Right Here Festival is just the beginning of what Creative Crawley wants to make happen in the town. We are in the process of setting up a new Charitable Incorporated Organisation and the Trustees include:



ADAM JOOLIA
CEO for AudioActive, a company that provides better futures through music.

[\[Find out more here\]](#)



ANDREA DUMBRELL
Learning and Liaison Officer for Crawley Museum.

[\[Find out more here\]](#)



DAVE SAVAGE
CEO of Crawley Community Youth Service (CCYS) a community driven youth service, open to all.

[\[Find out more here\]](#)



LAIBA BAIG
Chairwoman of Crawley Youth Council.

[\[Find out more here\]](#)



PARVEEN KHAN
Member of Diverse Crawley.

[\[Find out more here\]](#)



STEVE SAWYER
(Interim Chair) Executive Director of Manor Royal Business Improvement District (BID).

[\[Find out more here\]](#)



TONY WITTON
Chair of Crawley Festival and Arts & Culture Service Manager at Kent Council.

[\[Find out more here\]](#)



VANESSA DELL
Art Teacher at Manor Green College.

[\[Find out more here\]](#)



VICKI ILLINGWORTH
Principal of Crawley College.

[\[Find out more here\]](#)

The advisory group will continue to meet and with the Trustees, help shape our plans for the coming years. Other specialist advisory groups will be developed. Louise Blackwell will take on the role of Creative Director and will lead the organisation; developing the creative programme, building new partnerships and teams to deliver our mission of developing Crawley as a creative place beyond its boundaries.

We want to:

- Support emerging and existing creative workers of all ages in Crawley to develop their work
- Produce and present new, bold and innovative creative events by local, national and international artists in the town
- Develop new audiences for the work we do by working in partnership with local people to create and present work that is relevant to them

If you are interested in working with us, don't hesitate to get in touch.

We touched the surface of what's possible in Crawley, in bringing artists, communities and audiences together.

I think the only way I'd say to develop this further is to simply let it grow and expand to reach out to other artists within the Crawley community and beyond, so it reaches out to other artists in surrounding areas as a lot of artists and people associated with the arts can share their experiences which can really help and motivate others.

- Audience member



FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

hello@creativecrawley.com

www.creativecrawley.com

@CreativeCrawley



Images by Jacob Punter, Louise Blackwell and Crawley residents. Design by DogFish Design

Images: Front cover and page 4: Right Here Festival publicity featuring Brittany Johnston, Marilyn Le Feuvre, Saaj Raja, Ross Crow and Laura Beecham,P3: Louise Blackwell by James Pike P5: Urban City Dance P6: Laura Beecham P9: Crace Saif and Peter Bastible, P10: Anna Jefferson's Writing Around the Kids workshop, People's Pathways and Manor Green College P12: Right Here Festival publicity on a Metrobus P14: Capturing Lockdown exhibition P15, 16 & 21 Same Sky's Awakening, P17: Saaj Raja P18: Woodzy P24: Crawley Film Initiative and the Right Here Festival Trailer team