

Medway Arts Forum | Meeting Minutes | Monday 3rd February 2020

<i>Attended by:</i>	<i>Organisation:</i>
Heather Burgess	Sun Pier House CIC / Medway Open Studios / Tiller & Wheel Ltd
Xtina Lamb	Intra Arts / Medway Fine Printmakers CIC
Robyn Goldsmith	Medway Council Arts & Development Team
Sophy Millington	
Dinah Winch	The Huguenot Museum
Rebecca Blackburn	The Royal Engineers Museum
Rikard Österlund	Hulkes Lane Darkroom and Studio
Tracy Brunt	Ideas Test
David Stokes	Halpern Charitable Foundation / Nucleus Arts
Sam Fentiman-Hall	Wordsmithery
Miriam Dooley	Play On Words Theatre
Aiden Dooley	Play On Words Theatre
Genevieve Tullberg	Nucleus Arts
Margherita Gramegna	51zero
Christopher Sacre	The Mess Room / See & Create
Allison Young	Rochester Art Gallery

Agenda

- Introductions
 - What is Medway Arts Forum (MAF)?
 - How does MAF link to other forums or groups?
 - Sharing our data
 - Creating a shared calendar
 - Chatham Fest
 - Any other business / Next meeting reminder
 - Photographs
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Introductions

All present introduced themselves and their organisations.

What is Medway Arts Forum (MAF)?

Heather Burgess outlined the Forum's purpose as initially conceived by herself, Xtina Lamb, Genevieve Tullberg, and Allison Young.

The Forum's ambition is to arrange regular proactive and positive meet ups for Medway's cultural organisations. Creating a professional network and opportunity for us all to meet, share information, learn about each other, update on funding applications, encourage collaborations and open up new dialogue.

The Forum's purpose is not necessarily suited to independent artists developing their own practice, it is designed for those working in the broader sense of arts engagement, delivering arts for the public and running creative venues. Kent Creative Connect hosted by Nucleus Arts is an excellent forum with the aim to support local artists.

MAF is a co-managed forum, working together with a shared ambition to promote dialogue between local arts organisations, and create a stronger profile of Medway's arts community. More partners are welcome to join the running of the Forum, and organisations within all arts and culture disciplines are encouraged to attend. A governance structure and terms of reference will be developed with Forum members.

The MAF meeting format includes a registration board where contact details are shared, agenda items put forward by attendees, table to share leaflets / business cards etc., chairperson to lead discussions, opportunity for attendees to network afterwards, or use Sun Pier House as a co-working space for the afternoon.

Initial ideas for MAF to work on together include:

- A printed guide to arts venues in Medway. There are a lot of venues in the four miles from the Brook to Rochester Bridge. Design, print and distribution costs could be shared. Online version possibly.
- An online calendar of events, festivals, workshops, exhibitions, private views, etc. As a means of avoiding clashes, understanding what we are each doing, and creating a better structured programme of arts for local audiences to attend. To be shared within the MAF membership, not as a public events calendar.
- Working together on shared bids for funding.

Discussion

The recent Open Space meeting in the Corn Exchange, held for the development of Medway Council's cultural strategy, had a positive atmosphere and high number of productive discussions arising from it. Perhaps we might incorporate an Open Space format into MAF meetings in the future on some occasions to facilitate similar linking up around discussion topics.

MAF may offer opportunities to make more connections and focus energies on working locally.

Are there younger people who could join the Forum? We could reach out to university societies, they need to attract students who spend more time in Medway.

Could we have informal evening meetings in the alternate months when MAF meetings are not held at SPH? Possibly in other MAF member venues, and could include talks etc. themed in advance. The Youth Arts Network have done this successfully.

Is there an audit of arts organisations locally?

- Priti Paintal (ShivaNova, Diversity Arts Network) is creating a cultural diversity directory.
- The [Medway Artsmark Directory](#) commissioned by Medway Teaching School Alliance and compiled by Natasha Steer lists many local artists available to work with schools and organisations that seek Artsmark accreditation.
- We could approach GJG Consultancy (commissioned by Medway Council on the cultural strategy development) and ask if an audit of Medway arts organisations could be an outcome of their work.

James - james@gjgconsultancy.com

Ben - ben@gjgconsultancy.com

Cultural Consultancy @gjamesgough www.gjgconsultancy.com

MAF members could find ways to share not only events about to happen / completed projects, but plans in earlier stages. Look ahead and open up more opportunities to collaborate and involve other partners.

Potential for projects reconnecting arts with STEM subjects, given that Medway has a strong technology industry base, there are several universities, and many of us have experience weaving science and research partners into projects, including: scientific evaluation of projects, work placements / internships, application of wellbeing scales, developing ways of visualising data, sharing research, and free [Fun Palace](#) events. A gaming festival is planned in Chatham Historic Dockyard in 2021.

We can share information via a newsletter, or social media, but more meaningful connections can be made in person. Collaborations can be made that cross disciplines. Natural conversations lead to developing ideas in an organic way. It's more comfortable to share things verbally and informally in person than online, and easier. We should individually make an effort to introduce people and facilitate connections. Having details to take away can be preferred to digital links – use the leaflet table.

On shared distribution of printed flyers etc. Mail drops might be intermittent or on different schedules for each organisation. Can we find a mechanism that would be fair to all who pay in?

Medway Council's Arts Team can help to distribute leaflets to libraries, they don't have to be council affiliated. Contact Robyn Goldsmith.

How does MAF link to other forums or groups?

Where we can, act as fact finders at other meetings and give feedback to MAF.

Forum members to attend wider strategic and cultural meetings,. This could be done on a rota basis so that a wider range of voices are heard from MAF, and to share the commitment.

Imogen Robertson starts role end of February managing the City of Culture bid.

Sharing our data

On registration at meetings we share our contact details, but this is only for the people in attendance. Email addresses may be shared in minutes if an individual is requesting that people get in touch. We can take photos of the registration board but only for our own use. Photos were taken of attendees to facilitate introductions, for use within MAF meetings or private platforms. A Mailchimp list could be created to manage emails, or [Slack](#) was suggested as a business messaging / sharing platform we could use.

Creating a shared calendar

Which mechanism shall we use for the shared calendar?

If organisations already manage a Google calendar, this could be imported to a MAF calendar that compiles all our dates into one place. When the organisation updates a calendar for their own use, it would also update automatically on the MAF calendar, so no extra work. This could be viewed on a password protected page (anyone with the password can see it). Dates included could be a long time ahead.

If you manage an events calendar in Google, and you would like to see this combined calendar demonstrated at the next meeting, please contact Xtina Lamb xtinalamb@gmail.com

Chatham Fest

A new initiative developing from Chatham Town Centre Forum, an event on Sat 20th June 2020 celebrating the diversity of Chatham and to show how much there is to be proud of in the town. Road closure of the High Street between Nucleus and Military Road, with activities and stalls representing any community group or organisation in Medway, with a focus on Chatham-based ones. Activities could be free, charged or fundraising. The date is Thomas Waghorn's 220th birthday, and the event coincides with the Pentagon Centre's fairground event. No funding in place as yet, but bids will be made, possibly to cover infrastructure primarily. Love Chatham website to be launched alongside the event. Please contact David Stokes david.stokes@nucleusarts.co.uk if you are interested in taking part.

AOB

Dinah Winch: A Christmas late night shopping event is being planned in Rochester High Street for the end of November. Hopefully this can be publicised via the council's Whats On magazine if it could be linked with council-run events.

Sam Fentiman-Hall: Wordsmithery's [The Empty Chair](#) writing project, inspired by the life and works of Charles Dickens, monthly afternoon [Confluence sessions](#) showcasing poetry and short stories at Breaking Bread cafe, and a walking and writing project exploring locations in Rochester, called [We Live By The River](#).

Margherita Gramegna: The [51zero](#) festival is shifting towards a more community-focused approach, and will move month from October to May in 2022.

Xtina Lamb: 'Wave', a twice-monthly free arts club runs at INTRA for young people aged

15 – 24 who are at risk of suicide and self-harm. New members from Kent are welcome, please spread the word. Meetings are fun and creative; social time spent with peers being the most important part of the sessions. Fill in a short form for referral, and this can be completed by the young person themselves, or a parent, social worker etc.

Contact Xtina Lamb for details intraarts@gmail.com

Allison Young: [Medway Print Festival](#) runs 6th - 21st June 2020. Deadline for inclusion to the brochure is end of February. The Huguenot Museum has space during the festival that could be used to programme printmaking events. Contact Dinah Winch director@huguenotmuseum.org

Printmaking open call on a '[Dickens, Death & Droid](#)' theme deadline has been extended to 6th February. Private view for the exhibition is 9th April at Rochester Art Gallery.

Heather Burgess: [Medway Open Studios and Arts Festival](#) (MOSAF) runs 4th – 12th July 2020 and the deadline to be included in the festival brochure is the end of March.

Advertisers / sponsors are sought to fundraise for the festival, options from £100 - £400.

[Sun Pier House](#) is open to proposals from anyone wishing to use their spaces to test ideas, run events or pop ups etc. They are also working with The Mess Room on the ground floor to provide accessible space.

Heather is also seeking artists working on themes around rivers. [Tiller & Wheel](#), her historic sailing vessel business, is looking to incorporate community activities to their offering, possibly in other areas of the UK as well as Medway.

Contact Heather heather@sunpierhouse.co.uk

Rikard Österlund: A series of workshops connected to Zara Carpenter's Echoes exhibition (currently at Rochester art Gallery) are available at new photography space [Hulkes Lane Darkroom and Studio](#). The studio is offering space for photoshoots, darkroom hire, film processing, negative scanning and a giclée print service.

[Photobook Club](#) is running at Rochester Art Gallery on Saturday 8th February 11am, this time focusing on artists books. Free event.

Christopher Sacre: Focusing on community projects and gaining experience working with a wider range of children with special educational needs. A course teaching British Sign Language is being planned at [The Mess Room](#).

Genevieve Tullberg: [Kent Creative Connect](#) runs a monthly networking and sharing event for artists and creatives, hosted at Nucleus Arts, Chatham. Next date 18th February.

Happy to see the return of [What's On Medway & Gravesend](#) and will be advertising in it.

David Stokes: [Waghorn Sez](#) a collaboration between Nucleus Arts, Colony, Kent Illustration Network and Wordsmithery, will be offering a month of short creative challenges throughout February.

Topics for discussion at future meetings:

- What is the state of things in Medway for artists and cultural organisations?
- Chatham Intra High Streets Heritage Action Zone

Chaired and minuted by Xtina Lamb.

