

<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
Lucy Medhurst	Ideas Test
Lauren Baldock	University of Kent
David Stokes	Halpern Charitable Foundation / Nucleus Arts
Kevin Grist	SparkedEcho
Imogen Robertson	Medway 2025 City of Culture bid
Allison Young	Rochester Art Gallery / Medway Print Festival
Wendy Daws	The Mess Room
Ruth Melville	Ruth Melville Research (Cultural Strategy for Medway)
Christopher Sacre	The Mess Room / See & Create
Louise Bodycombe	BSL Interpreter

Agenda

- Introductions
 - Ideas Test update
 - Nucleus Arts update
 - Medway Cultural Strategy
 - City of Culture
 - Psychology in lockdown time, community engagement & resources
 - Arts Development Team update
 - University of Kent update
 - Any other business
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Introductions

All present introduced themselves and their organisations.

Ideas Test update

Lucy Medhurst updated the group on Ideas Test's activities. They have been running surgeries to assist creatives during lockdown, with good uptake. They are socially distancing at their new office in Kingsley House, Gillingham. It's a lot smaller than No 34 was (their previous home in Sittingbourne) so this hasn't been easy. They are working with Swale Libraries and running free online 'Try New Things' sessions, a monthly lockdown art club. Research into how they can reach audiences who are not online is being carried out, as well as looking at online data collection.

Nucleus Arts update

David Stokes has applied for Innovate funding that would allow him to offer approx £300

bursaries to artists. Nucleus have been involved in masks and scrubs making and are developing a pattern to share.

David suggested producing a survey to assess the impact of the pandemic on local creatives and producers. Kevin from SparkedEcho has recently been involved in a Voluntary Arts survey. Ruth Melville offered to help David to set this up, and asked that he send her a wishlist of questions.

Medway Cultural Strategy

Ruth Melville spoke about the Cultural Strategy for Medway for 2020 – 2030. GJG Consultancy supported by evaluation and research specialists Ruth Melville Research (RMR) and The Audience Agency (TAA) are working in partnership with Medway Cultural Partnership and Medway Council to co-develop the new strategy.

The team has been engaged in 'on the ground' consultation and has produced a draft vision, that will be refined to a clearer version following feedback. However the work is on hold following lockdown, with the understanding that things may be very different in the wake of the pandemic. They will start again with a light touch, and will hold open meetings again when this is possible. Help from MAF members to advertise these would be appreciated later.

A 3-year action plan was developed for the strategy, but this will be given a more flexible approach now.

City of Culture

Imogen Robertson gave an update on the Medway 2025 City of Culture bid.

Repositioning places through arts, culture and creativity and a focus on what makes a place unique are key parts to the bid. Hull is a good example of how successful the transformation can be, and engagement is key. Imogen is setting up chats individually with people and looking at collaborative and creative ways of engaging. She is interested in ideas on how to connect with harder to reach communities, and young people.

There is an independent trust set up to deal with the bid. An expression of interest will be sent out to invite involvement on this.

The bid is aligned with the Cultural Strategy work.

Psychology in lockdown time, community engagement & resources

Natasha spoke about the work that Dragon Co-working was doing to support its members including online keep fit sessions and other ways to connect during self-isolation. She led discussion on issues around psychology, reshaping things, working with young people, and staying healthy with challenges around not exercising enough and people drinking more. She talked about how she had been looking at the The Kübler-Ross 5 stages of grief, and how David Kessler has identified a 6th stage around finding meaning. Natasha sees parallels with the pandemic situation and wants to look at how to have useful conversations and draw meaning from them, and look at gaps in training in this area. She proposes setting up a shared Goggle drive space for MAF to facilitate and document conversations.

Arts Development Team update

Allison Young told us about changes to the council's website, how it is being refreshed and now covers more support for the arts sector. Opportunities will be shared on the new website, and the Arts Development Team have added a lot of information for creatives, both in terms of support available during the crisis, and listings of activities being offered. She asked MAF to help her fill any gaps.

medway.gov.uk/info/200382/creative_sector

Medway Print Festival is now being planned as an online / lockdown version, and Allison is looking at ideas for what this might look like. The Dickens-themed exhibition is paused, and will open later in the year.

The council is planning an online exhibition of children's artwork from the lockdown.

University of Kent update

Lauren Baldock told us about a new apprenticeship course and scheme planned by the university for the creative sector, with a launch planned in September. They are looking for interest from the sector, and feel it might be a good time to offer support. It is expected that there will be a local cohort to begin with, but expanding to national later. Several MAF members felt that this would be of great interest to them.

Any other business

Christopher Sacre from the Mess Room will be a qualified BSL teacher soon and will be offering training as part of his mission to make Medway a deaf friendly place.

Kevin Grist has led an online Q&A about SparkedEcho's exhibition Solace, and you can see this along with 'Solace 360', a behind the scenes experience from the project, on the SparkedEcho website

sparkedecho.org/solace.html

With Kevin's Voluntary Arts hat on, he told us that the Get Creative 2020 Festival is cancelled, but replaced by Get Creative At Home

getcreativeuk.com

Heather Burgess told us how Sun Pier House were using lockdown time to re-evaluate their business model. Also, Medway Open Studios and Arts Festival will be cancelled, but will be run as far as possible in an online version.

Chaired and minuted by Xtina Lamb.

