

# Annual Review

April 2019 – March 2020





# Welcome to Essex Cultural Diversity Project's Annual Review

**Our Vision:** To energise cultural diversity in arts and heritage.  
**Our Mission:** To create opportunities, stimulate participation and provide a focal point for the development, celebration and co-ordination of cultural diversity through arts and heritage activity.  
**Visit us:** [essexcdp.com](http://essexcdp.com)



## Foreword: Jonathan Curzon, Chair of Essex Cultural Diversity Project

2019-20 was a great year for us. We approached our second year as a new Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation, with an exciting programme of projects, festivals and events

Our programme was underpinned by some powerful themes.

We looked at Legacy: our *Windrush Day* event celebrated important pioneers of today's multicultural Britain; a new heritage trail highlighted the valuable contribution of the Duleep Singhs, the last Royal Family of the Punjab who settled in Norfolk; and at the House of Commons we remembered the Amritsar Massacre, in a special book launch with broadcaster and writer Anita Anand.

We even ruminated on the subject of Truth, the theme for this year's National Poetry Day, with award-winning Sikh poet Daljit Nagra at Chelmsford Library.

2019 was a fantastic year for festivals, and our summer events were no exception...

Our *Caravanserai* project was amazing and ambitious in scale, inspired by the idea of travelling Troubadors and performers along the Silk Road. The *Caravanserai* made its way across the East of England, performing in Southend, Chelmsford and Thetford, giving people a glorious glimpse of Indian acrobats, a Rajasthani brass band, and performances inspired by all corners of the globe, from Brazil, China, India and Africa.

We also delivered the *Festival of Norfolk & Punjab*, building on our work in Thetford last year, working with friends at Norfolk Museums Service to create a county-wide programme.

Our commissions go from strength to strength, breaking down barriers and creating a platform for hidden voices and communities.

As a small organisation with a strong focus on collaboration, we continue to forge new partnerships and cement existing relationships. Thanks to Arts Council England, the funders and partners who have made projects happen, the artists who have helped deliver a fantastic year of activity, and all the audiences and participants who have been part of this year's journey.

I'd also like to thank ECDP's core team for all their hard work this year, and our trustees for their continued support.

### Audiences We've reached over:

**55,000** attendees and participants

**410,000** online visitors

**1,000,000** people through press and media

## This Year's Projects

Our projects often tackle challenging issues, tell hidden stories, and give audiences an opportunity to engage with cultural heritage within their own communities. As a partnership driven organisation, our projects are often creative collaborations with a wide range of artists, performers, partners, funders and participants.

## Windrush Day Essex is the Place for Me!

22 June marks *Windrush Day* in the UK; on this day in 1948 several hundred people arrived from the Caribbean to start a new life in Britain. Passengers of the *Empire Windrush*, their children and grandchildren have played a vital role in creating a new concept of what it means to be British, becoming important pioneers of today's multicultural society. *Windrush Day* encourages us to celebrate companionship and community, and challenge racism, prejudice and discrimination.

We marked the day with an event in Chelmsford. We talked about the Windrush Generation, and celebrated Afro-Caribbean culture with food, music, dance, art and literature. Hosted by Lawrence Walker from Black History Month Colchester, there was live music and a family Carnival mask-making workshop with award-winning British/Trinidadian artist John Lyons. Guest speakers included Anthony Joseph, poet, novelist and musician, who talked about his latest novel *Kitch*, inspired by Lord Kitchener. Sharon Watson, Choreographer and Director of Phoenix Dance, introduced a special preview of *Windrush: Movement of the People*, which has recently been touring the UK.

The event launched a pop-up exhibition, which then toured to different venues throughout Essex and the South East, and a short legacy film to tell the story of the Windrush and its passengers.

The project was funded through the Government's Windrush Day Grant Scheme, with match funding from Essex County Council and Chelmsford City Council, to support communities to commemorate and celebrate the outstanding contribution of the Windrush Generation and their descendants. 50 community groups, arts organisations and local authorities across the country led school projects, street parties, exhibitions, talks and workshops to recognise and honour the immense legacy of those who stepped ashore at Tilbury Docks over 70 years ago.



Front page: The Rajasthani Heritage Brass Band at Thetford Mela, Festival of Norfolk & Punjab  
 Folk Dance Remixed at Thetford Mela, Festival of Norfolk & Punjab, image © Pat Mitchell



## Festival of Norfolk & Punjab 2019

### A county-wide event

Building on the success of last year's *Festival of Thetford & Punjab*, we once again worked with partners and venues across Norfolk to deliver a new programme of exciting events.

The Festival was a county-wide cultural celebration of the life of the Duleep Singh family and their contribution to Norfolk, and an opportunity to explore the under-appreciated links between Norfolk and the Punjab due to this shared heritage.

Over 8,000 people joined the celebrations, travelling from all over Norfolk and beyond. Highlights included a special exhibition and events at Ancient House Museum; a *Maharajah's Feast* at Elveden Village Hall with performers from Rajasthan, India; tours, workshops and family events at Norwich Castle and the Museum of Norwich; Punjabi cooking demonstrations, Bollywood Dance workshops and a grand finale at the *Thetford Mela*.

*"I have thoroughly relished the presence of distinguished guest speakers and the wealth of knowledge they have brought and shared...I very much look forward to continue learning and developing my personal knowledge of the Punjab, the Empire and how our own heritage played a significant role"* Norfolk Resident and Festival attendee

*"Love that we have such connections in Thetford"* Norfolk Resident and Festival attendee

- Project partners: Ancient House Museum, Norfolk Museums Service and Norfolk County Council.
- Funded by: National Lottery Heritage Fund, Breckland Council, Norfolk Arts Services and Arts Council England.



## Caravanserai

### A project inspired by travelling performers

Festivals across Essex and East Anglia saw an explosion of colour and noise in the summer of 2019, becoming hosts to the *Caravanserai*. We brought together artists, musicians and performers from all corners of the globe to create a touring showcase spectacle, which visited Metal's *Village Green* in Southend, *Fling Festival* in Chelmsford, and the *Thetford Mela* as part of the *Festival of Norfolk & Punjab*.

*Caravanserai* was inspired by stopping places along the Silk Road, in the desert regions of Asia. They became cultural hubs through which stories and various artforms travelled and transformed between cultures, from village to village. The project also referenced Troubadours, groups of actors and acrobats who walked the routes of East Anglia and Europe from the 1600's until the mid-nineteenth century.

- Production Partners: Essex Cultural Diversity Project and Cultural Engine CIC.

*"Amazing performances from Circus Raj and I love the Brazilian drumming and Capoeira – brilliant. An inspiring, exciting and wonderful experience celebrating British diversity. Thank you!"* Attendee at Village Green Festival, Southend

*"It has been an amazing experience, colourful, entertaining, beautiful costumes. Good atmosphere. Educational ... inspiring"* Attendee at Thetford Mela, Festival of Norfolk & Punjab



## Kaavad Tradition Showcase

### Surajkund International Crafts Mela 2020

Kaavad Boxes are a 500-year old art and storytelling tradition from India. Traditional storytellers, or 'Kaavadia' carried foldable shrines, richly decorated in painted narratives and unfolding hinged panels. Storytellers would travel from village to village, revealing tales as they opened hidden drawers and panels within the box.



As part of our ambition to revive this tradition and explore its contemporary benefits, we joined our friends at the British Council in India, to create a *Kaavad Tradition Showcase* at the *Surajkund International Crafts Mela 2020*. We displayed work with Kaavad handcraft makers and storytellers of Rajasthan, India to share their traditions and customs with wider communities, linked with Essex based storytellers and craft makers in the UK.

- Partners: Essex Cultural Diversity Project and Rupayan Sansthan in India
- Supported and funded by: British Council (India)
- Featured artists and storytellers: Lata Upadhyaya and Xanthe Gresham Knight from the UK, and Satya Narayan Suthar and Koja Ram in India.

## Vaisakhi at the House of Commons

### with Anita Anand

We held a special Vaisakhi event at the House of Commons. One of the most important dates in the Sikh calendar, Vaisakhi marks the Sikh New Year and commemorates 1699, the year Sikhism was born as a collective faith.

We invited author, broadcaster and political journalist Anita Anand to talk about her new book *The Patient Assassin*. This tells the remarkable story of India's twenty-year quest for revenge, taking him around the world in search of those he held responsible for the Amritsar massacre, which happened 100 years ago in April 1919. It seemed apt to bring the debate to the House of Commons in this centenary year.

- Hosted by: Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi MP
- Chaired by: Mr Jagdev Singh Virdee MBE, Editor of the British Sikh Report.



## The Duleep Singh Family Heritage Trail

### Follow in the footsteps of a Maharajah

In Spring 2020 we launched the *Maharajah Duleep Singh Family Heritage Trail* for the East of England, inspired by the *Festival of Norfolk & Punjab* and the fascinating stories of Duleep Singh and his family.

The last royal family of the Punjab settled in Norfolk in 1854, and left us valuable legacies, embedded in the people, buildings and landscape of the area. The new trail takes visitors to museums, halls, houses and churches across Thetford, Norfolk and beyond, following in the footsteps of these significant historical figures, highlighting their influences and bringing their stories to life.

- Supported by the Heritage Fund, the project is a partnership between ECDP, Norfolk Museums Service and the Anglo Punjab Heritage Foundation.

Access the trail at [duleepsinghtrail.com](http://duleepsinghtrail.com)





## This Year's Commissions

Essex Cultural Diversity Project's commissions help artists explore diversity and develop their participant-led, socially engaged practices. Commissions also capture the spirit of place, give people a voice, connect communities and let people tell their own story in their own words. This year's commission programme focused on rural places and small towns, engaging with the arts through working with a range of partners including National Trust, Rochford Council and Farnham Maltings.

### CJ Clarke and Poulomi Basu Rochford Town

CJ Clarke and Poulomi Basu's approach to their commission in Rochford Town was rooted in the landscape and was an exploration of the area, through mapping and remapping the landscape and its history in order to create a space for community dialogue.

Responding to the theme of 'exploration', their project used film and photography to engage a wide range of audiences, from young to old, and long-standing residents to recent arrivals. At its core, this project was a celebration of people and place – to inspire residents and non-residents alike through the re-telling of hidden, old and new histories.

- Partners: Rochford District Council

### Tom Cross Soap and Porridge in Aylesbury Library

Tom Cross is a visual artist who uses animation and drawing to tell his and other people's stories. He was appointed for our commission in Aylesbury Library, the first in a series of placements in Buckinghamshire over the next three years.

Tom worked in collaboration with poet and writer Aoife Mannix, to create work inspired by the community in response to two questions: 'What is your first memory, and what might be your most lasting memory?' Tom invited library users, staff and community groups in and around Aylesbury to participate in a series of workshops. The final installation in Aylesbury Library and accompanying digital work online comprised multiple playful short videos and displays of animations, prints, poems and spoken word, inspired by participants' stories.

- Partners: Farnham Maltings
- Funded by: the Rothschild Foundation.



Essex Cultural Diversity Project and the National Trust teamed up to create two opportunities for artists, in the shape of two commissions focusing on National Trust properties; Bourne Mill in Colchester, and Paycocke's House and Grange Barn in Coggeshall.

### Mike Roberts Woven Sound: Knitted Community National Trust Coggeshall

Mike Roberts is an award-winning composer with specialisms in electronic, experimental, media and educational music. His artistic practice involves sound, music and multi-disciplinary artforms in collaboration with, and for, local communities to inspire wonder, learning and engagement.

Mike's project, *Woven Sound – Knitted Community* revolved around the historical use of Grange Barn as a combined place of industry (wool) and community gathering, and the musical connection between Paycocke's House and the composer Gustav Holst. He used musical activity and creation as a focus for culturally diverse collaboration.

For his commission, Mike worked with the local community to create patterns captured both in wool and sound, to 'compose' a collection of rhythmic woollen pictures, to be displayed in a unique sonic and visual installation in Grange Barn.



### Nicola Burrell and Lisa Temple-Cox Bourne Narratives: National Trust Bourne Mill

Nicola Burrell and Lisa Temple-Cox work with places and histories to create artworks that sit in and belong to their site. They work in a range of media both permanent and temporary, and their practice is informed by public and community engagement.



For their project, *Bourne Narratives* they worked with Bourne Mill staff visitors and volunteers, and ran workshops with local community groups to create a large felt-based map, which explored this National Trust property geographically and culturally, and highlighted the beauty and ecological diversity of the site.

The artwork was a creative prompt for participants to reflect and share memories and personal histories. Throughout the project, participants' stories added to the rich history of Bourne pond and mill, and the individuals, events and activities that have shaped it.

*"I had a great time and really lost myself in the activity. I am really proud of the first piece of felt making that I have made and am thrilled that it is going to become part of a bigger piece of art that everyone can share and enjoy... Thank you for an excellent, free, fun educational experience!"* Participant



## Productive Partnerships

### Supporting Our Libraries Poetry with Daljit Nagra

We welcomed award-winning British Sikh poet Daljit Nagra to Chelmsford Library, who asked 'What is Truth?' the theme for the year's National Poetry Day. Daljit possesses one of the most distinctive voices in contemporary English poetry; through his work, he explores the idealism and reality of multicultural Britain, and his poems meditate on a wide range of subjects from aspiration, assimilation, alienation and love, to cultural inheritance, legacy and national identity.

For this event Daljit read his poetry, shared his inspirations, and was joined by locally based guest poets.

- Partner: Essex Libraries

*"I very much enjoyed this event. Daljit Nagra has a gift for reading and engaging you with his poetry.... It was good to see so many people at a poetry event, engaging with a diverse artist."* Event attendee

*"About time!! ...It is high time we represented a wider cultural diaspora. We are crying out for modern, multicultural representation."* Event attendee and Chelmsford resident



### Colchester Chinese Culture Society Celebrating Links between Essex and China

We supported a special Chinese New Year event at the Civic Theatre in January 2020. Filled with dance, art and culture, the vibrant celebration marked the start of the *Year of the Rat*, and was one of the opening activities for *Essex 2020: Year of Science and Creativity*.

The event hosted the Guzheng Masters and their students from China; a delegation of 25 people from Yuexiu District, Guangzhou visited the UK for nine days, and played traditional Chinese zithers alongside locally based talent.

Our creative collaboration continues with Colchester Chinese Culture Society, as we work towards the *Festival of Essex & China*, which will celebrate shared cultures, traditions and folklore.

- Partners: Colchester Chinese Culture Society and Chelmsford City Council



Image Credit Cao Tingting, courtesy of Colchester Chinese Culture Society

### New Creatives Championing Emerging Artists

Essex Cultural Diversity Project recently linked Essex Born filmmaker Rehmat Ryatt with the *New Creatives* programme funded by Arts Council England and BBC Arts. As part of her *New Creatives* commission, Rehmat created a short film entitled *Terra Firma*, which explored her cultural background and identity. The short film aired on BBC 4 in September 2019, and is available to watch on BBC iPlayer.

Essex Cultural Diversity Project was a network partner for *New Creatives*, working closely with Screen South. This was an excellent opportunity for us to support an Essex artist from a diverse background, from proposal to the final screening stages.



## Talent Development Supporting artists and sharing good practice

Essex Cultural Diversity Project aims to develop infrastructure to support and strengthen the resilience of diverse art and heritage organisations, artists and individuals. This year we had a number of opportunities, activities and events aimed to further artistic development and share examples of good practice with others.

### Artist Salons and Funding Surgeries Continuing Professional Development

We continued with our series of events offering professional support, insight and training to artists and representatives of arts and heritage organisations. This year's Artist Salons took place at Metal in Southend and Essex Records Office in Chelmsford.



We also teamed up with Chelmsford City Council and Chelmsford Museums to host a special *National Lottery Heritage Fund Surgery* for around 40 artists and representatives from community groups and organisations who are running heritage projects, aimed at those seeking to work with and engage diverse communities in Chelmsford's rich story.



### Stand Up For Diversity Sharing and Networking

We organised our fifth *Stand Up For Diversity* event, in partnership with Essex Book Festival and The Cultural Assembly in Southend-on-Sea.

Hosted in The Cultural Assembly's *Folded Space*, the event brought together people who wanted to champion and celebrate diversity in the arts and in our communities, and share the work they do with others.

This series of events embraces the Pecha Kucha style of three-minute mini-talks and presentations, and takes place at different host venues. People come along to make new connections, find out more about what's in their area, promote their own projects, and collectively celebrate diverse voices involved in the arts today.

*"A - M - A - Z - I - N - G"* SU4D Speaker

*"First time I've experienced this format – great energy and inclusivity"* Attendee



## Financial Overview

Essex Cultural Diversity Project has celebrated its second year supported by Arts Council England National Portfolio (NPO) Funding, which continues to provide a financially secure base on which we can develop resources, support diverse artists and deliver ambitious creative programmes.

We have built on the new financial systems put in place last year, to monitor cash flow and budgets, and plan effectively for pinch points during periods of high delivery.

In 2019/20, our annual income was £269,532; 56% from Arts Council England's NPO fund, the remainder from a combination of other sources. This demonstrates once again that our work is attractive to funders, and we can raise additional income to expand our artistic programmes and audience reach.

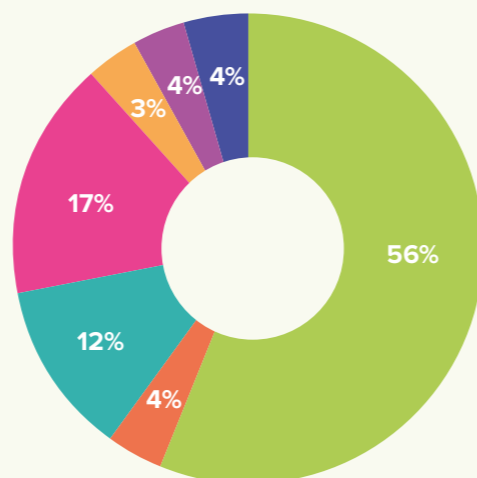
We are continuing to diversify funding sources: this year we've successfully secured funding for specific projects from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Government's Windrush Day Grant Scheme, British Council and National Lottery Community Fund.

Our activity continues to gain financial support from Local Authorities, who value the key role ECDP plays in energising diversity across the region.

ECDP's commissioning programme is also starting to attract partnership match funding from those wishing to host commissions, invest in our work and help us scale-up our ambitions. This year has seen contributions from the National Trust, and a joint project with Farnham Maltings funded by the Rothschild Foundation.

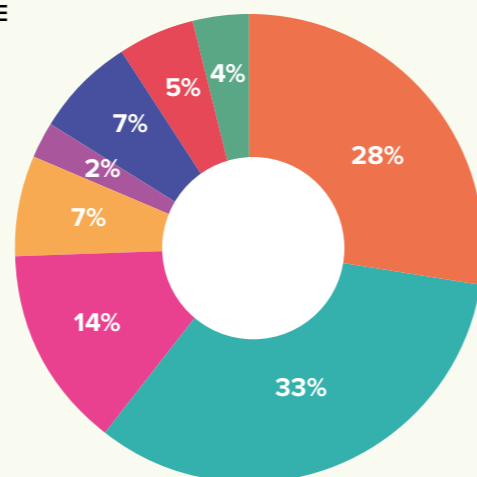
This is an area we are keen to build on for our commissions in 2020/21, with potential contributions in the pipeline from Essex County Council, Brentwood Council and Chelmsford City Council.

### INCOME



- Arts Council England
- Government Windrush Day Grant Scheme
- National Lottery Heritage Fund
- Various Local Authority Funding
- National Lottery Community Fund
- National Trust
- British Council, Rothschild and Partnership

### EXPENDITURE



- Core Team Fees
- Artistic Expenditure and Workshops
- Project Management and Professional Fees
- Marketing and Website
- Materials and Equipment
- Accommodation, Venue Hire and Refreshments
- Travel Expenses and Vehicle Hire
- Administration Running Costs and Insurance

## Looking Forward to 2020 – 2021 Indi Sandhu, Creative Director

We are very much looking forward to building on this year's achievements, and already have some creative collaborations and exciting plans in the pipeline.

It's been a surreal start to the new financial year, with the outbreak of Covid-19 and ensuing lockdown. We acted swiftly, putting systems in place that ensured core team members, artists and arts organisations we work with benefit from our continued support through these uncertain times.

We developed a strong alliance with Essex Community Foundation to support BAME organisations in Essex gain access to funding during the Covid-19 pandemic.

We pushed back the start of new commissions and projects to later in the year, and shifted our festival focus to Summer 2021. Our recent place on the Space's Digital Mentoring Programme, supported by Arts Council England, put us in very good stead to quickly switch to digital whilst in lockdown, supporting our commissioned artists to move their work online.

The national crisis has been difficult for everyone, but these unprecedented times have made us realise how resilient we are as an organisation, how adaptable our artists are to change, and how brilliant the support is from leaders in the arts and heritage sectors, who have weathered the crisis with a sense of solidarity, generosity and sensitivity.

From Autumn 2020 we have exciting place-based commissions coming up in Brentwood, Chelmsford and Saffron Walden. We are also developing ideas for new digital commissions, and looking forward to launching the second commission in Buckinghamshire in partnership with Farnham Maltings, funded by the Rothschild Foundation.

This will focus on libraries in and around High Wycombe, demonstrating our ongoing support for libraries throughout our creative programme.

Future plans also include building on the success of *Caravanserai*, putting together the *Festival of Essex & China*, and developing the *Duleep Singh Heritage Trail* in Norfolk and Suffolk.

As well as working with partners close to home, we have also been cultivating our international connections. We hope that small seeds sown this year will soon come to fruition, in the form of collaborations with our international partner organisations. This includes building on the strong links forged with British Council (India) through their *Culture Connects Us Arts Project*, and British Council (China) with funding from their *Connecting though Cultures Programme*.

We are always open to exciting possibilities new collaborations bring, so if you are working in diversity or want to support diversity in the arts and in our communities, please do not hesitate to get in touch.



[essexcdp.com](http://essexcdp.com)  
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### Thanks special thanks to

OUR CORE TEAM: Indi Sandhu, Creative Director | Giles Tofield, Strategic Lead | Jo Nancarrow, Digital & Admin Lead | Nicky Bettell, Finance Administrator

OUR TRUSTEES: Jonathan Curzon (Chair) | Joanne Webb (Secretary) | David Guy (Treasurer) | Simone Xue | Sean McLoughlin (Vice-Chair) | Miriam Stead | James Wenn | Lora Aziz (Observer)

OUR PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS: Chelmsford City Council | Firstsite | Norfolk Museums Service | Norfolk Arts Service | Essex Cultural Development Team at Essex County Council

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**“The Creative Case is producing art that belongs to everyone. We all want to hear our stories and our passions reflected in the arts we enjoy. We all want work that recognises what we share and what we hold unique; work that shows the power of diversity; work that sets free the creative energy of our nation.”**

Arts Council England:  
Creative Case for Diversity

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