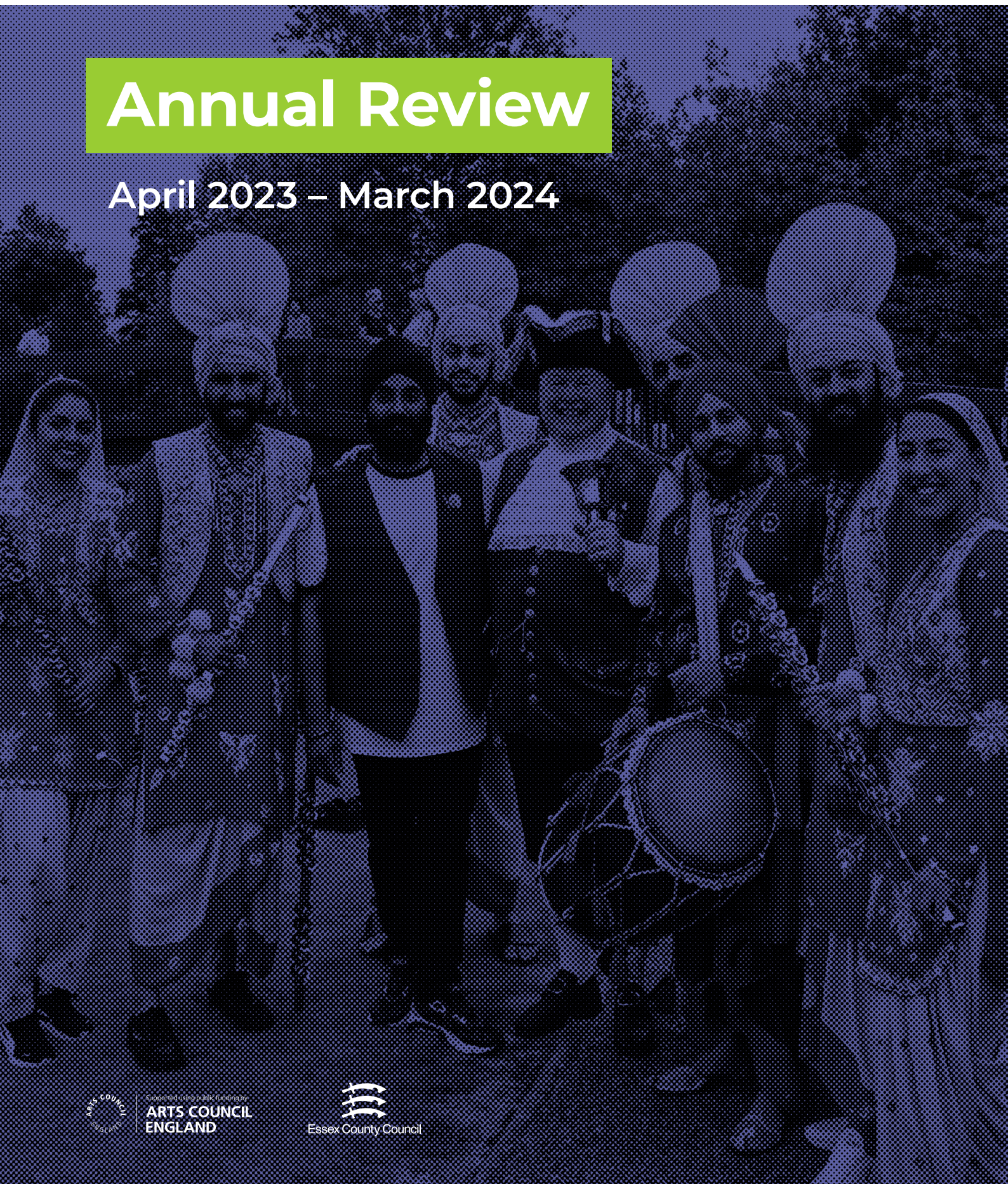


Annual Review

April 2023 – March 2024



Welcome to Essex Cultural Diversity Project's Annual Review for 2023–24

Essex Cultural Diversity Project energises diversity in arts and heritage across the East of England. Our mission is to create opportunities, stimulate participation and provide a focal point for the development and celebration of diversity through arts and heritage activity.

Visit us: essexcdp.com



Foreword: Miriam Stead, Chair of Essex Cultural Diversity Project

This year started off on a good foot, as we celebrated the first of another three years of funding as an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation, recognition for our unwavering commitment to diversity and our strong track record over the last fifteen years.

As an organisation which values collaborative working, our partnerships continued to go from strength to strength as we delivered projects, commissions and festival events to thousands of people across the East of England.

The *Festival of Thetford & Punjab* is always one of my personal highlights of the year. We staged a successful event working side-by-side with Norfolk Museums Service and other partners to put on an exciting three-day programme of activities, talks and workshops, which culminated in the ever-effervescent *Thetford Mela*, with residents and visitors enjoying the music and dancing in the sunshine.

This year's commissions took place across Essex, and projects were delivered in North Norfolk, Tendring, Chelmsford and Thurrock. Nature and the environment was a key theme this year. Primary schoolchildren in Brentwood, Basildon and Thurrock designed wildlife habitats for a new housing development; diverse communities in Chelmsford united to enjoy urban river walks; there was a visual art rewilding of the streets of Colchester; and visitors in Epping Forest championed access for all to nature and vital green spaces.

Alongside our usual activity, we also had an uplift in funding from Arts Council England to take on two new members of the team: one to develop our *Global Village* series of festival events, the other to reach out and strengthen cultural connections in Suffolk and Norfolk. Positive seeds were sown this year, and we are sure to see them come to fruition very soon.

Thank you to Arts Council England, Essex County Council and other funders and partners who have supported us and our community. Thank you to our patrons The Singh Twins, and to all the artists, audiences and participants who have come together this year. I'd also like to thank ECDP's core team for all their hard work, and our trustees for their continued support.

AUDIENCES THIS YEAR

We've reached over:

75,000 at events and exhibitions

500,000 online

2,000,000 through tv, press and media

3,770 community participants

500 creative practitioners have been supported through our work

Festival of Thetford & Punjab 2023

The Festival of Thetford & Punjab 2023 took place in venues across Thetford in Norfolk in July, with a long weekend of cultural celebrations inspired by the life and legacy of the Duleep Singh family, the last Royal Family of the Punjab who lived in Elveden near Thetford.



Working with our partners at Ancient House Museum of Thetford Life, we programmed talks, workshops and activities for all to enjoy. Festival highlights included free cultural activities at Ancient House Museum; talks by Sikh historians Peter Bance, Rav Singh and Gurinder Singh Mann; zine-making workshops at Thetford Library; tours at Thetford Cemetary by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission; the Sikh Museum Initiative's interactive *Anglo Sikh Virtual Museum*; a curry night at the Thomas Paine Hotel; and the *Thetford Mela*, the big finale with outdoor performances, music and dance to celebrate the end of the three-day festival.

Feedback from festival attendees:

"This event is wonderful and the highlight of the year!"

"This is my second year attending. It was an amazing event where my child can learn about other cultures and faiths"

"There were a lot of new and exciting things to see and do. The children couldn't take their eyes off the show. A good way to feel a part of something special"



"The Festival of Thetford & Punjab has become a much-anticipated highlight of the Thetford calendar and brings together people for a wonderful celebration of culture and history. We look forward to building on our rewarding partnership with ECDP, as we celebrate Ancient House Museum's centenary in 2024 and the connections with the fascinating Duleep Singh family" Oliver Bone, Curator at Ancient House

This Year's Commissions

Essex Cultural Diversity Project works closely with community and partner organisations to help artists explore diversity and develop their participant-led, socially engaged practices. Commissions capture the spirit of place, give people a voice, connect communities and let people tell their own story in their own words.

INSTAR

Bourne to be Wild

INSTAR (artistic duo Trish Evans and Nick Humphreys) create artwork inspired by the natural world, from mountain to museum, oceans to uplands, urban to rural. Through their practice they bring together local heritage, culture, place, habitats, and community, combining their love of the natural world with their passion to connect people.

For this commission, organised in partnership with the National Trust, they creatively responded to the wildlife in and around Bourne Mill in Colchester. The project raised awareness of biodiversity, supported positive attitudes relating to the environment, and engaged new and under-represented audiences.

Their project encouraged community groups to explore nature through the art of the paste-up, poster and print. They created joint artworks for a city-centre billboard exhibition at the Jumbo Water Tower and the Minorities' pop-up space - a visual art 're-wilding' of urban spaces. Participants included members from Firstsite's YAK (Young Art Kollektive), The Outhouse Youth Group and Craft Pride, and Level Best Trainees.

"For me it reinforced the connection between art, culture and the environment, and the potential for creativity to be used as a tool to stimulate conversation and reflection about bio-diversity and nature" Trustee, North Essex Heritage Trust (Jumbo Water Tower)

"The YAK members have loved seeing their artwork on display on the billboards and have enjoyed seeing the process of how their individual designs have been transformed into a collaborative artwork through the expertise of INSTAR" Firstsite



Talia Randall

Epping Forest

Talia Randall created a new series of podcasts in collaboration with communities for her commission in Epping Forest. The podcasts champion diversity and amplify the voices of those who face visible and invisible barriers to accessing nature. As an award-winning podcaster, performer, writer and community worker, Talia is passionate about helping others explore vital green space, discussing how issues regarding ableism, sexism and racism intersect and can sometimes prevent us engaging with the nature around us.

For her commission, delivered in partnership with Epping Forest Heritage Trust and supported by the City of London Corporation, Talia's starting points included talking to women of colour who feel empowered by the forest; meeting disabled ramblers; uncovering the history of witches connected to the site; and looking at how children and young people relate to the forest.

"Our relationship to nature can reveal so much about who we are, our position in the world, how we are viewed by others and how we see ourselves. I can't wait to explore this idea with nature lovers who are making others feel a sense of belonging in Epping Forest" Talia Randall

"Epping Forest has a rich history of the interaction between people and nature, where biodiversity, cultural and heritage interweave. We look forward to supporting Talia as she explores the stories of those who face obstacles to engaging with this fantastic ancient Forest, so we can learn how to create a more inclusive and welcoming place" Epping Forest Heritage Trust



Image © the Artist. Walking and recording with Epping Forest Pride group

Sam Williams

Fanns, Woods and Waters

Sam Williams was selected for the third and final commission for the new Dunton Hills housing development, in partnership with Brentwood Borough Council. Sam designed a series of totem wildlife habitats in collaboration with 130 children from four local primary schools: Great Berry in Basildon; Bulphan Primary School in Thurrock, and West Horndon and St Joseph's in Brentwood. Together they explored themes of biodiversity and urban wildlife, inspired by ideas of home and belonging.

Full-sized prototypes of the totems were presented to each participating school to keep on site, and a wider pack of designs will be presented to the developer to consider as a public art trail when Dunton Hills is built, as well as smaller items like bespoke 'bee bricks', bird box street signs and other fun ideas that can be embedded into the streets, houses and community buildings of the new housing development.

Feedback from the children:

"I loved how all of are ideas were lisend to! [sic]"

"Loved the lesson and project. Hope to see our art [in Dunton Hills] in 10 years"

"I have enjoyed this it has been my favourite art lesson ever even though art isn't my favourite subject it was really fun"

"I loved making a Bee Premier Inn"



Global Village

Global Village events took place across Essex capturing the festival feeling, celebrating diversity and engaging communities across the county, in shopping centres, village halls, county parks and other public spaces.

Thank you to all the creative practitioners who joined the *Global Village* community this year: Jitty Bajaj, BrazilArte, Circus Raj, Colchester Chinese Culture Society, George Fiawoo, Sarika Golcha from ABCD Bollywood, Usifu Jalloh aka the Cowfoot Prince, Jonathan Mayer and Gurdain Rayatt.

In Doddingtonhurst



The local community in Doddingtonhurst near Brentwood hosted our *Global Village* event in honour of Princess Helen Rundheer Aluwallia of Karpurthla who is buried at the local All Saints Church. There were Indian acrobatics, African storytelling, Indian food and Henna hand painting. We also shared the story of Princess Helen with a pop-up exhibition and a talk by Rav Singh from *A Little History of the Sikhs*. The event was supported by a community fund grant from Brentwood Borough Council.

Global Village Presents...



Performers Circus Raj from India helped us to launch *Global Village Presents...* when a cast of aerialists, acrobats, musicians, slack-rope walkers and giant puppets performed to hundreds of visitors at Hadleigh Country Park. This was part of a new series of single-act events aimed to strengthen the *Global Village* brand, experiment with the format, and test the public's appetite for world music, dance and entertainment.

In Rochford



Global Village Rochford brought people together to celebrate cultures from all corners of the world as part of ORCHARD, a cultural programme inspired by the heritage and environment of the Rochford District. The local WI Hall was packed with people enjoying African storytelling, Bollywood dancing, a sitar and tabla performance, Chinese calligraphy and henna art.

Developing Partnerships



We developed more partnerships with organisations who could host and help us develop *Global Village*, with an event as part of Chelmsford's *Streets Alive* festival, and with Basildon's Black History Month organised by the New Generation Development Agency. In partnership with Culture Chelmsford, we brought elements of the *Global Village* to 'Chelmsford's Living Room', aka the pop-up cultural lounge at Number 11, The Meadows. Free family friendly drop-in workshops ran throughout the Easter holidays.

International Connections

The Singh Twins' Artwork Goes to India

As part of our ongoing international work and to link in with the *Festival of Thetford & Punjab*, we strengthened cultural connections with Bassian Kothi, a 200-year-old historical monument situated in Raikot, Ludhiana in India. The building, now a thriving museum, honours the memory of Maharajah Duleep Singh, the last ruler of the Sikh empire, who spent time there in captivity in 1849, the night before his exile from the Punjab by the British Army.

The curator of the museum visited our festival in Thetford, and in February 2024 we went to India to present Bassian Kothi with a limited edition print *Casualties of War*, a portrait of Maharajah Duleep Singh by The Singh Twins, internationally renowned contemporary British artists who are patrons of Essex Cultural Diversity Project.



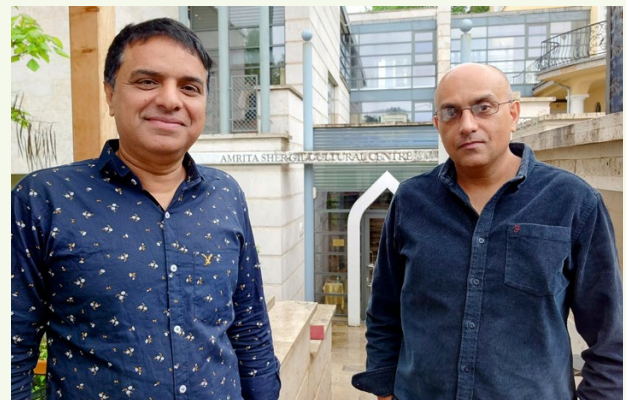
Researching Global Village At Womex 2023

We spent much of this year looking at ways to develop *Global Village*, following the uplift in funding as part of our National Portfolio Organisation programme funded by Arts Council England. This provided opportunities to strengthen the core concept of the *Global Village* brand, pilot different models, and explore potential commercial opportunities, consulting with the festival and events sector more widely across the East of England. As part of our research we attended *Womex 2023* in Spain and made some productive connections that fed into our current programmes and future plans. This Worldwide Music Expo is the biggest conference in the world for those involved in the global music scene, featuring a trade fair, talks, films and showcase concerts.

In late 2023 we launched a consultation with the festival sector in the Eastern region in partnership with the East Anglian Festival Network. The results of this will inform our future *Global Village* and events strategy, and will help to explore where the sector needs support to diversify content, create opportunities to engage more diverse creative practitioners, and identify challenges around sector sustainability and resilience. This is the first consultation process of its kind in the region and results will be shared widely.

Remembering Amrita Sher-Gil

We visited the Amrita Sher-Gil Centre in Budapest to seek opportunities for future collaborations and to highlight the work of Amrita Sher-Gil, a prominent Hungarian-Indian painter who has been called one of the greatest avant-garde artists of the early 20th century. She was born in Hungary in 1913 and died in Lahore (British India) in 1941. The Amrita Sher-Gil Centre is located in the India High Commission building in Budapest. Our patrons The Singh Twins have featured Amrita Sher-Gil in their *Slaves of Fashion* exhibition, which we supported last year, and we are following up interest in a series of city walks and talks in Budapest with Rav Singh from *A Little History of the Sikhs*.



ECDP Creative Director with Amrita Sher-Gil Cultural Officer, Gulfam Sabri

ECDP Salons: Supporting Creative Practitioners

Essex Cultural Diversity Project runs a programme of networking events offering professional support, insight and training to creative practitioners working in diversity, in collaboration with partners across the East of England.

The aims of our *Salons* are to enhance networking, explore funding opportunities, and get to know diverse artists based in the East of England. This year additional aims included sharing insights into the increasing national focus on health and wellbeing, creative sector collaboration, and development opportunities for *Global Village*. We delivered five *Salons* this year, attended by over 80 creative practitioners and professionals working in arts and heritage settings.

ROCHFORD

The Rochford *Salon* took place in the historic WI Hall, involving cultural practitioners who have collaborated with us or taken part in our *Global Village* programme. Many were visiting Rochford for the first time and were welcomed by the Rochford District Council Councillor responsible for Culture. There was vibrant discussion on issues relating to sustaining a career in events for diverse practitioners, as well as funding, collaboration and opportunities for new events in Essex. This *Salon* fed into the future development of *Global Village*.



NORTH NORFOLK / BRECKLAND

Held in the beautiful surroundings of Reymerton Hall in Breckland, Norfolk, this *Salon* focused on exploring opportunities and challenges around staging, promoting and curating world music events in East Anglia, particularly in rural areas. The *Salon* was supported by our regular collaborator Anna Mudeka and was attended by artists and performers in circus, dance and diverse cultural gatherings.

HARLOW

Hosted by Parndon Mill, a thriving creative hub comprising studios, a gallery and project space, this *Salon* focused on opportunities in and around Harlow. An introduction from Harlow Council, Harlow Creates and Parndon Mill set the scene, referencing work taking place to support creatives across the town and the recent £20m investment in a new Arts and Cultural Quarter. We led a discussion on funding, local opportunities, and the relevance of culture and art to health, wellbeing, economy and sense of place.



THURROCK

This *Salon* was held in the Sikh Gurdwara in Grays, a vibrant and inclusive space welcoming all communities. Attended by local diverse creative practitioners (and some from further afield), there was an introduction to the work of Start Thurrock, the Arts Council England funded *Creative People & Places* programme for the district, and a discussion on opportunities for collaboration, funding, and voluntary and community sector partnerships.

MID SUFFOLK

The Food Museum in Stowmarket played host to this *Salon*, which focused on food sustainability and the climate crisis, and how creatives can engage communities across the region. There were introductions from Suffolk County Council, the Sainsbury Centre, the Food Museum and Elma Glasgow, and those attending shared insights into their practice and discussed collaborative opportunities. ECDP led discussions on funding and the importance of diverse cultural engagement with the key themes of the *Salon*.



Stand Up For Diversity

Stand Up For Diversity is a series of regular events taking place across Essex, which brings together those wanting to champion diversity in arts and heritage.

Stand Up For Diversity Harlow

We teamed up with Essex Book Festival and Harlow Art Trust to host a special event at the Gibberd Gallery in Harlow. Guest speakers included, poets, artists, community advocates and a Paralympian, who shared their thoughts on why diversity matters and talked about their own work. The event was part of the Harlow Arts Trust's 70th anniversary year celebrations on the theme of *Our Community, Our Environment*.



Human Library Chelmsford

We have been working in partnership with the Human Library Organisation to bring *The Human Library* to Essex Book Festival. Human Libraries take place across the world, and books are people, reading a conversation. This year we teamed up with Essex Libraries, who hosted an event at Chelmsford Library. The aim was to gently challenge prejudice and create a safe space for discussion, through sharing lived experiences.



Stand Up For Diversity Thurrock

We partnered with Start Thurrock and Grays Sikh Gurdwara, to host an evening of three-minute mini-talks and soap-box shout-outs. Thurrock based creative professionals came along to make new connections, promote their own projects, and collectively celebrate diverse voices. There was food and refreshments as part of the event, kindly provided by the Sikh community in Grays.



Women Assemble Colchester

Women Assemble was a gathering of women from all walks of life, who came together for International Women's Day to connect with like-minded individuals. Activities included long table talks and discussions; art, movement, music and dance workshops; interactive displays; a Venting Room and a Healing Room. The event was organised by *Women Assemble*, a new informal collective of diverse women in Colchester, supported by Essex Cultural Diversity Project and the Eye of Boudica, and funded by Colchester City Council Cultural and Creative Events Fund.



This Year's Projects

Essex Cultural Diversity Project delivers projects across the East of England that celebrate diversity, promote tourism, foster community cohesion and wellbeing, and help local people engage with the cultural heritage and history of the area in which they live.

Celebrating World Music in Rural Norfolk

We worked with Anna Mudeka from Tambai Promotions on a series of mini-commissions and events, to support diverse musicians, artists and DJs and bring world music to the coastal area of Waxham in North Norfolk.

The project aimed to support creative practitioners and help develop the arts infrastructure in rural areas, as well as create opportunities for those visiting and living in remote areas to enjoy music and performance from all over the world. It also sought to encourage more people from ethnic minorities to visit areas of natural beauty in and around the Norfolk Broads.

Focal points for the project included an *Artist Salon*, a family storytelling programme, *Dance and Regenerate* with DJs and a laser show, and live music at *Waxham World Music Day* at Waxham Summer Camp.



Photo credit: Debbie Harris | Instagram/Facebook @thepixelchef

The Tendring Junior Ambassador Project

The *Tendring Junior Ambassador Project* encouraged primary school children to embrace diversity, become more involved in their community and take pride in the area in which they live. It was run by Tendring District Council, supported by Essex Cultural Diversity Project.

588 children took part in cultural workshops alongside interactive sessions to combat hate crime. Activities included African storytelling and singing; a presentation on Chinese culture and a Chinese calligraphy workshop; a session on the culture and history of Ukraine with sunflower making workshops (the national flower of Ukraine); and art and writing sessions to capture the children's thoughts as they journeyed through other cultures, resulting in a comic-style informative resource for participating schools.

The children showcased their learning in a celebration event attended by parents, guardians and carers at the Princes Theatre, Clacton-on-Sea, performing African and Ukrainian songs, poetry, testimonials, and a Bollywood Dance routine.



ActivAte Food Programme

We worked in partnership with Chelmsford Muslim Association to support an eight-week program as part of *Essex ActivAte*, the Holiday Activity and Food programme run by Active Essex in partnership with Essex County Council and funded by the Department for Education. We delivered sessions with Sajida Begum, Community Chef, part of IQRA Learning based in Chelmsford. The focus of the workshops and demonstrations was cooking on a budget including low-cost food and energy usage. The project engaged diverse community groups in Chelmsford including Muslim, Sikh and Bangladeshi families at the Hampton Leisure Centre, the local mosque and community centre. The project culminated in a celebration during the *Muslim Festival of Eid* in April.

Active Thurrock

Active Thurrock was a six-month programme supported by the Lower Thames Crossing Community Fund. The aim of the project was to improve the health and wellbeing of diverse communities through physical activity, to champion the use of local green spaces, and to connect people with the culture, history, heritage and landscape of Thurrock.

More than 300 people took part including the elderly Sikh, Muslim and Bangladeshi communities who live in the new development area of East Tilbury, a number of whom worked at the Bata shoe factory and Tilbury Port. Participants revisited where they had once worked and other historical places of significance, attending guided walks with local historians. The project provided an opportunity for participants to share memories with their families and the wider community.



River Walks

Funded by Active Essex, *River Walks* brought together diverse communities in Chelmsford to encourage exercise and healthy eating, through a series of cooking workshops and guided walks along the River Chelmer, River Can and River Wid. 150 people took part, who were encouraged at the end of each walk to share healthy food tips and recipes from various cultural backgrounds, alongside cooking demonstrations by Essex based community chef Jity Bajaj. Participating groups included Sikhs of Chelmsford, Chelmsford Hindu Society, Chelmsford Muslim Society, the NGDA (New Generation Development Agency), and the Afro-Caribbean community in the city.



Communities we've supported

As well as running our own creative programmes, we use our funding to support other projects and events that share our values, celebrate diversity, explore cultural heritage and promote inclusivity and participation. Our support has helped community focussed organisations create and commission new work, enable new partnerships, develop resources, reach audiences and support their community participants. Events we've supported this year include:

- Sri Lankan New Year Celebrations organised by The Dharma Centre
- *Rice and Spice Festival* organised by Colchester Multi Ethnic Forum
- EVEWRIGHT Foundation's *Belongings: Windrush Weekender*
- Thurrock Screen Culture Festival 2023
- Colchester Carnival and Concert, organised by Colchester and District Community Network
- Essex-wide Black History Month activities with New Generation Development Agency
- *The Lawrence Walker Awards* organised by African Families in the UK
- Colchester Life in the UK's *Cultural Integration Event*
- Colchester Caribbean Society's *More Than History Fashion Show*

"Thanks to the funds, our event was able to open its doors to community groups and hundreds of members of public at no charge. The event successfully brought together people from different countries, backgrounds, and cultures. It provided a platform for individuals to connect, appreciate each other's cultures, and celebrate the diversity within the community. The event's inclusive nature and the participation of various cultural groups contributed to a sense of unity and understanding" Colchester Life in the UK



Nurturing Creatives and Communities in East Anglia

The recent uplift in funding as part of our National Portfolio Organisation programme funded by Arts Council England has given us the opportunity to explore new opportunities and make connections with communities, local authorities, and arts and cultural organisations in Norfolk and Suffolk. We have been focussing our efforts in rural areas and places where we have not worked before.

This has enabled us to map over 50 key strategic contacts in local authorities, Business Improvement Districts, and cultural and heritage organisations across Norfolk and Suffolk. Achievements this year include an Artists' Salon at the Food Museum in Stowmarket to strengthen links in mid Suffolk, and connections with Out There Arts, Original Projects, Marina Theatre, Global Rhythm Festival, Dedham Vale National Landscape, Benton End, Noise of Art, Walnut Works, Suffolk Music Hub, Suffolk Refugee Support Group, Suffolk Artlink and more.

Much of this strategic work is already coming to fruition and starting to shape our current and future programmes.



Productive Partnerships

Partnership is at the heart of Essex Cultural Diversity Project's work, and we value strong alliances and collaborative working to collectively celebrate and energise diversity in Essex and beyond.

Essex Cricket

Over the years, Essex Cultural Diversity Project and Essex County Cricket Club have developed a strong relationship, working together to engage and participate with diverse communities in Essex through the medium of cricket. This year that partnership continued to bloom, through several joint projects and initiatives. This included inviting Sikhs of Chelmsford to welcome Indian Cricket Player Arshdeep Singh to Chelmsford at the Essex v Kent County Championship match; collaborating with ITV News Anglia to create a special two-part report for South Asian Heritage Month, looking at why there is a lack of Asian players in professional cricket; and delivering a project *Leg Before Wicket*, in which cricket was used as the key catalyst to encourage young people to become more active and engaged with their community, setting up a Summer Cricket Club for Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Indian and Sri Lankan communities.



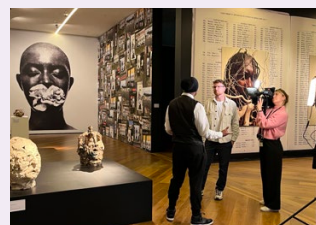
Pop Up Exhibitions At Essex Libraries

Following last year's successful tour of our pop-up exhibitions celebrating the stories of the Windrush Generation and British Indian suffragette Princess Sophia Duleep Singh, Essex Libraries hosted the new exhibition on Princess Helen of Karpurthla, buried in Doddington, near Brentwood, curated by up-and-coming Sikh historian Simran Bance. Over 26,000 people across five libraries engaged with this little-known story, finding out about the interesting and unique Punjabi heritage on their doorstep.



Media Partnerships Promoting Diversity in Radio and Television

Each year we strengthen our productive working relationship with local TV, radio and media, helping key outlets diversify their programming by sourcing interviewees, guests and contributing to news stories. We are a regular feature on BBC Essex's radio programme *Essex Voices*. We are also part of the ITV Anglia Inclusion and Diversity Group, attending local and national panel meetings, and recommending news stories that promote diversity. Other media partners include the Sikh Channel, PTC Punjabi, Punjab Times weekly news and Ajit Weekly, who have been covering projects working with various communities around the *Festival of Thetford & Punjab*.



Financial Overview

Essex Cultural Diversity Project has celebrated its sixth year as an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation (NPO), providing a financially secure base on which we can develop resources, fundraise further and continue to support diverse creative practitioners and communities through ambitious programmes.

In 2023/24 funding from Arts Council England was 70% of our total income of £317,610 due to an uplift in NPO funding from 2023 until 2026. Further grants from Local Authorities make up 24%, which includes core support from Essex County Council, enabling us to contribute to the county’s aims as outlined in the new Cultural Strategy for Essex.

Our commissioning programme continues to attract partnership match funding from those wishing to co-host projects, invest in our work and help us scale up our ambitions. This year has seen contributions from the National Trust and Brentwood Borough Council.

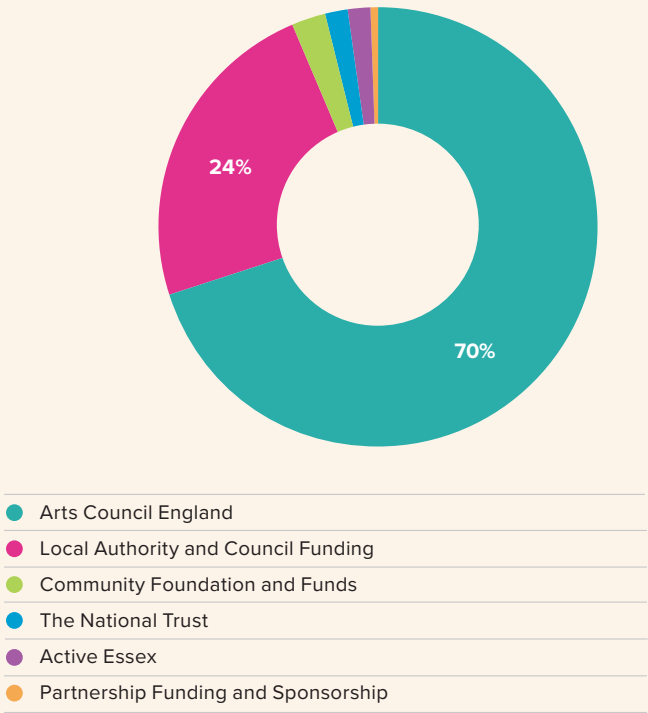
Projects and events have also secured funding from various sources this year, including *Active Thurrock*, a six-month programme supported by the Lower Thames Crossing Community Fund; *ActivAte Food Programme* and a series of *River Walks* funded by Active Essex; and a multicultural assembly for International Women’s Day supported by Colchester City Council.

This year we invested funds to conduct research around one of our main assets, *Global Village*, our scalable festival event which has the potential to generate income to ensure the organisation’s sustainability in an increasingly difficult public funding climate.

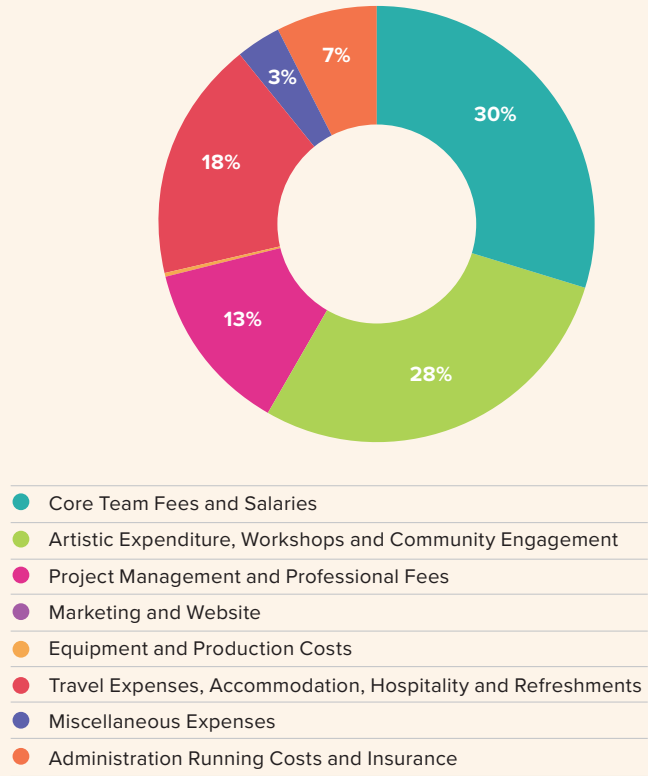
The funding uplift from Arts Council England is also enabling us to extend our geographical reach, supporting artists and communities in Suffolk and Norfolk, and to identify potential partners and funding sources in the area, going forward.

We contributed a further £5,000 to general reserves to ensure that the organisation can cover three months of operational costs if necessary and has contingency to support project work and further investment.

INCOME



EXPENDITURE





Looking Forward to 2024/25

Indi Sandhu, Creative Director and CEO

In the year ahead we will see Essex Cultural Diversity Project developing creative ways of working and increasing its income stream through new programme models.

Our *Global Village* brand is growing and will be a key source of income generation. We are developing a strong partnership with Colchester Arts Centre to host a series of world music performances under the banner of *Global Village Presents...* A return visit to WOMEX 24 in Manchester will seek out new talent and roll the programme out to other music venues across the East of England.

We are putting together an exciting programme of outdoor festivals: *Global Village* will be delivered in new locations including Rayleigh and East Bergholt, and the *Festival of Thetford & Punjab* is attracting wider audiences and funding from various sources.

New partnerships are being forged for commissions, including with community organisations involved in the Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy in Tendring Essex, as well as designmakers²¹ and other organisations in Diss, South Norfolk. We will also be building on our ongoing relationship with the National Trust with a commission in Hatfield Forest. Some commissions will be accompanied by *Salon* events to further support creative practitioners, directing them to funding streams, networking opportunities and collaborations to develop their artistic practice.

This year's groundwork to establish new connections in Suffolk and Norfolk will also progress to more structured support for creative professionals and community groups, with a new seed funding pot for diverse artists to develop their socially-engaged practices.

Already in place is a new series of *Stand Up For Diversity* events, working in partnership with Essex Book Festival, Metal Southend, Human Library Organisation, The Samaritans, Collusion, Dance East and more.

Our international work continues to develop with key partners in India and China, including a Chinese Delegation coming to Essex in May and June 2024. The purpose of this visit is to attend the grand opening of the *Beautiful China, Beautiful Britain - Children of the Yellow River* International Art Exhibition held at Central Hall, Westminster, as well as events such as Thames River Walk, and to learn about and exchange ideas on cultural development, identifying potential future collaborations in the East of England.

A grant from National Lottery Heritage Fund for *After the Partition – A Shared Cultural Heritage* in Essex will provide opportunities to work with heritage organisations such as the Partition Museum in Amritsar, India, collecting oral history from the families of those who settled in Essex in 1947.

Overall 2024/25 will bring new opportunities for Essex Cultural Diversity Project to continue to establish itself as a key arts and heritage organisation through the support from our funders Arts Council England, Essex County Council, Breckland Council and Norfolk Arts Services.

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Special thanks to

OUR CORE TEAM: Indi Sandhu, Creative Director and CEO
 Nicky Bettell, Finance Administrator | Daisy Lees, Community Engagement Lead | Sean McIloughlin, Global Village Lead | Jo Nancarrow, Digital & Admin Lead | Giles Tofield, Strategic Lead

ECDP Patrons: The Singh Twins
 Patron for Festival of Thetford & Punjab: Dr Satinder Sartaaj

OUR TRUSTEES: Lora Aziz | David Guy (Treasurer) | Nita Jhummu
 | Enitan Kane | Kerith Ririe | Miriam Stead (Chair) | Joanne Webb (Secretary) | James Wenn | Simone Xue

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Image credits: Front page - at the Festival of Thetford & Punjab. Back page - The Singh Twins with Indi Sandhu, CEO and Artistic Director of Essex Cultural Diversity Project

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ENGLAND**



Essex County Council

“Having experienced first-hand and also benefiting from the invaluable work that Essex Cultural Diversity Project does in cultivating racial equality and intercultural understanding through arts, heritage and culture, we are delighted and honoured to have been invited to be Patrons. In our own practice as artists, we share many of the ECDP’s values and aims and are very much looking forward to lending our support” The Singh Twins, ECDP Patrons