

Bridport Town of Culture 2024 – celebration of people and place

What is Town of Culture? (ToC)

In 2024, Bridport will be Dorset's inaugural Town of Culture (ToC). ToC will celebrate the rich artistic ecology of the town, bring together communities, artists, festivals, venues, arts organisations, and promote collaboration and co-production. From July – December there will be 6-months of diverse cultural activity that will be underpinned by a bespoke skills development programme for young people, where they take active roles with festivals and venues, co-curating public spaces and events.

How has it come about?

County of Culture is an initiative created by The Arts Development Company, funded by Dorset Council. Because of its reputation as an 'eventful town' Bridport has been chosen as the first Town of Culture in Dorset; other towns will bid to become Town of Culture in future years. The project is led by Bridport Town Council, who are investing additional money into this programme. ToC delivery will be led by Bridport Arts Centre. There will be an open Advisory Group for anyone to come along to and input ideas and suggestions.

What does it mean for my organisation and community group?

This project will embed partnership working between artists, festivals, venues and arts organisations that continue after 2024 so they continue collaborating openly and generously with each other and different communities in the town.

Community groups, organisations, artists, venues, businesses, individuals and young people are all invited to join the open Advisory Group to help plan and co-curate additional events and bring extra opportunities to existing events in the town.

Young people will be recruited and trained to co-curate and organise events both specifically for young people and within existing festival programmes .

Events including workshops will take place across the town like skate parks and playing fields, on estates, in empty shops, on allotments, not simply in 'traditional' arts spaces . More people will engage with events and activities and hopefully become future volunteers and active in culture and arts

What could this look like in practice?

We don't know exactly because this is about young people, community groups and festivals deciding together. The programme may include new events as well as incorporating additional arts activities into existing festivals and venues. The programme could include:

- ToC opening party with dance, lights and food across multiple sites
- Hat making workshops for Hat Festival
- Carnival costume / float making workshops from leading national carnivals (eg Bridgwater)
- Theatrical pyrotechnics as part of the Torchlight Parade
- A week of Young People curated activities in and outside Bridport Arts Centre
- Fringe events and young people led events during existing festivals and gigs

- A new Multi-Cultural festival led by Jurassic Multicultural in Plottingham Fields

What’s the thing about Young People? (YP)

One of the aims of the project is for young people to have opportunities, to be seen and heard positively in the community and within organisations. An 8-month youth cultural skills and leadership programme will be delivered by experienced local professionals to 12 Young People (with different lived experiences), who will be mentored and receive on-the-job training in leadership, event coordination, curation, volunteer management, budgeting, technical skills. These YP will be ToC ambassadors and, in the spirit of reciprocity, be encouraged to support other YP in the future through an ongoing peer mentoring process. One Young Person will be employed as intern (Jul-Dec) to assist the ToC Producer in programme delivery. Local artists and festival leads will also be offered training in mentoring YP. They will be guided by a senior mentor, as part of a cascading of skills, with the aim of retaining YP as co-producers.

What’s in it for me as an artist?

- Local community artists will be offered training in mentoring young people
- Being part of the Advisory Group involved in co-directing and inputting ideas
- Contributing to training programme for young people

What’s in it for me as a business?

We know culture has a positive impact on tourism and jobs; more people recognise the joy of Bridport, come, spend money and live in the town. Making the town beautiful gives local people pride of place, greater sense of community and helps reduce litter and neglect . Taking culture out beyond the main street and having a voice on the open Advisory Group with others

Who do I contact to be involved and find out more?

Rosie Russell is working as ToC Producer for next 5 months in a fundraising and community involvement role. She can be contacted on email: townofculture@bridport-arts.com ...

 <p>Bridport Town Council</p>		
		