**HYOC Art of Wellbeing Manifesto**

**Let’s make the ‘New Normal’ a ‘Better Normal’**

**Hertfordshire Year of Culture 2020 (HYOC)** is still going strong, despite Coronavirus, with many activities taking place online and outdoors.

One of the great benefits that have come from HYOC is how many organisations and individuals have come together to fulfil the third of the Year of Culture’s five objectives to:

**Increase wellbeing and a sense of belonging through arts, culture and heritage**

This aspect of HYOC has proved so important that Hertfordshire Public Health has commissioned an evaluation of the health and wellbeing elements of HYOC. This will provide an invaluable evidence-based rationale of the many benefits of taking part in cultural activities.

Covid-19 has highlighted just how beneficial cultural and creative activities can be in combatting anxiety, stress and isolation. The creative sector has quickly responded to the pandemic. Within days or weeks, creatives from all over the globe were putting together innovative and exciting resources and activities online. Galleries, theatre and film reinvented themselves, enabling people to interact with them from their own homes.

At the All Party Parliamentary Group Arts & Health Group meeting Daisy Fancourt, Prof. of Psychobiology and Epidemiology and Lead for the Covid Minds Research Network shared the following findings:

* 9 out of 10 have done something creative (mainly listening to music)
* The uptake of creative activities has been across the whole social spectrum,
* Attendance at virtual museums has been ‘off the scale’

Fundamentally the arts have helped people cope day to day.

The HYOC Art of Wellbeing Group feel that now is the time to come together to ensure that as the ‘New Normal’ evolves it is a ‘**Better Normal**’for the individuals communities living and working in Hertfordshire.

We are planning to create a consortium of arts, social, health and education organisations and individuals that address wellbeing agendas and support the delivery of a high quality cultural programme that will have the most impact on local needs.

The consortium will share a set of values about the people, communities, art and culture and world we live in. These values will be central to the way the Consortium work, informing the programme and guiding how it is delivered.

The consortium will agree a three-year cultural health and wellbeing programme focussing on a number of key areas which could include:

* + Social prescribing
  + Obesity
  + Mental health and wellbeing
  + Loneliness and social isolation
  + Equality of access to cultural activity for all

Let’s put cultural and creative activities at the heart of a ‘**Better Normal’**.

**The HYOC Art of Wellbeing Group**