



Hertfordshire
2020
Year of Culture
Evaluation, Impact and Legacy

Hertfordshire
2020
Year of Culture

► Background and Campaign Overview

► Impacts

► Legacy

► Impact of Covid-19



Hertfordshire
2020
Year of Culture

Information in the today's presentation has been collected from a range of sources – there's some statistics and analytics but also feedback from key partners and local organisations collected via the online surveys and also from the Celebration Event in March.

The final Evaluation Document on which this presentation is based is now complete and will be circulated the notes from today.

Background

- ▶ Discussions started in 2018
- ▶ Endorsed by Chief Execs Group and funding secured
- ▶ Governance established
- ▶ A collaborative, promotional campaign to showcase Hertfordshire as a county of creative and cultural opportunity
- ▶ Aims and Objectives established

Hertfordshire
2020
Year of Culture

Discussions around a year of culture started in 2018 with the success of the Year of Physical Activity alongside recognition of a lack of collective countywide action on culture and relative underrepresentation in funding received from larger national funders.

HACO managed, via the endorsement of the Chief Execs Group to secure £30k over 3 years from 11 LAs, HSP and HACO with Hertsmere Borough Council agreeing to allocate a .6 FTE Project Co-ordinator and a Full Time Intern post to support the campaign.

In the absence of a lead organisation, a Programme Board was established to provide strategic direction with representatives of the funder organisations, Visit Herts, the University of Hertfordshire and Trestle and Letchworth Heritage Foundation from the cultural sector. Regular reporting lines were established into HACO and the Hertfordshire Lifestyle Network and in line with YOPA we established a monthly Delivery Group to manage and monitor on the ground activity.

Discussions with the wider creative sector set the tone for the campaign as all encompassing with a promotional rather than commissioning focus and established the aims and objectives of increasing participation, promoting the wellbeing impacts of creativity, supporting employment pathways and generating new partnerships.

Campaign Overview

▶ 2019

- ▶ Initial Promotion Began
- ▶ Website and Social Media Launched
- ▶ Launch

▶ 2020

- ▶ 800 events listed
- ▶ National Lockdown and renewed focus on wellbeing
- ▶ Move to ONLINE

▶ 2021

- ▶ Evaluation, Celebration and Legacy

Hertfordshire
2020
Year of Culture

Initial promotion of the campaign began in 2019 with an awareness raising exercise which saw face to face contact at conferences and events, radio appearances and features in local and countywide publications.

The website, hosted as part of the Visit Herts site, launched in July alongside social media across Facebook, Twitter and later Instagram. These were used to promote general messaging around the year and the monthly themes, with the existing Creative Hertfordshire website and social media accounts acting as the What's On Guide.

Organisations were encouraged to complete activity forms to tell the central team about their activity (existing or new). On receipt of a completed form, organisations were sent a toolkit containing the logo for use on publicity and encouraged to register themselves and their event onto Creative Hertfordshire. Individual organisations and authority areas were encouraged to use the campaign as they felt appropriate, recognising the differing levels of development of both the creative sector and the support available across the county.

Cllr Terry Douris, HCC Executive Member for Libraries and Localism, launched HYOC2020 in November 2019 at the Member Champion Event at County Hall, and online, a 10-day countdown giveaway competition with prizes sourced from local partner organisation ran from 21st December 2019. A number of local launch events were held across the county.

At the start of 2020 almost 800 events were listed for the year with 100 listed in both January and February. The first HYOC2020 flagship event, the Hertfordshire Schools Gala, took place in March but was one of the last large scale events to take place.

The introduction of a National Lockdown on 23rd March meant that all face-to-face events were immediately cancelled.

Very quickly, it became apparent how important creativity was going to be for the nation as a whole. There was an immediate increased accessibility for national events with a range of free concerts, plays and other resources made available online whilst individuals and families displayed art in their windows as a way to reach out to their communities.

HYOC2020 refocused, immediately established the What's ONLINE section on Creative Hertfordshire and uploaded a range of local and national resources and events onto the platform whilst encouraging local organisations to upload their own content.

Focusing on the objective to 'Increase wellbeing and a sense of belonging through arts, culture and heritage', the campaign agreed to abandon the activity forms and toolkit format instead looking to promote positive stories of creativity. Overall we became more proactive, generating content and using infographics to promote creativity as a way to improve wellbeing. The newsletter focused on local organisations that were adapting to social distancing and supporting their communities using creativity. As the year progressed, most of the flagship events were still able to take place virtually and by the end of 2020 many organisations had found ways to deliver their regular activities and keep communities together online.

In place of the planned awards and conference, an online Celebration Event was held on 2nd March 2021, delivered in partnership with the University of Hertfordshire Business School. The event was attended by 91 local organisations and aimed to recognise the challenges of 2020 whilst also celebrating successes and looking to the future. Had really positive feedback from that session.

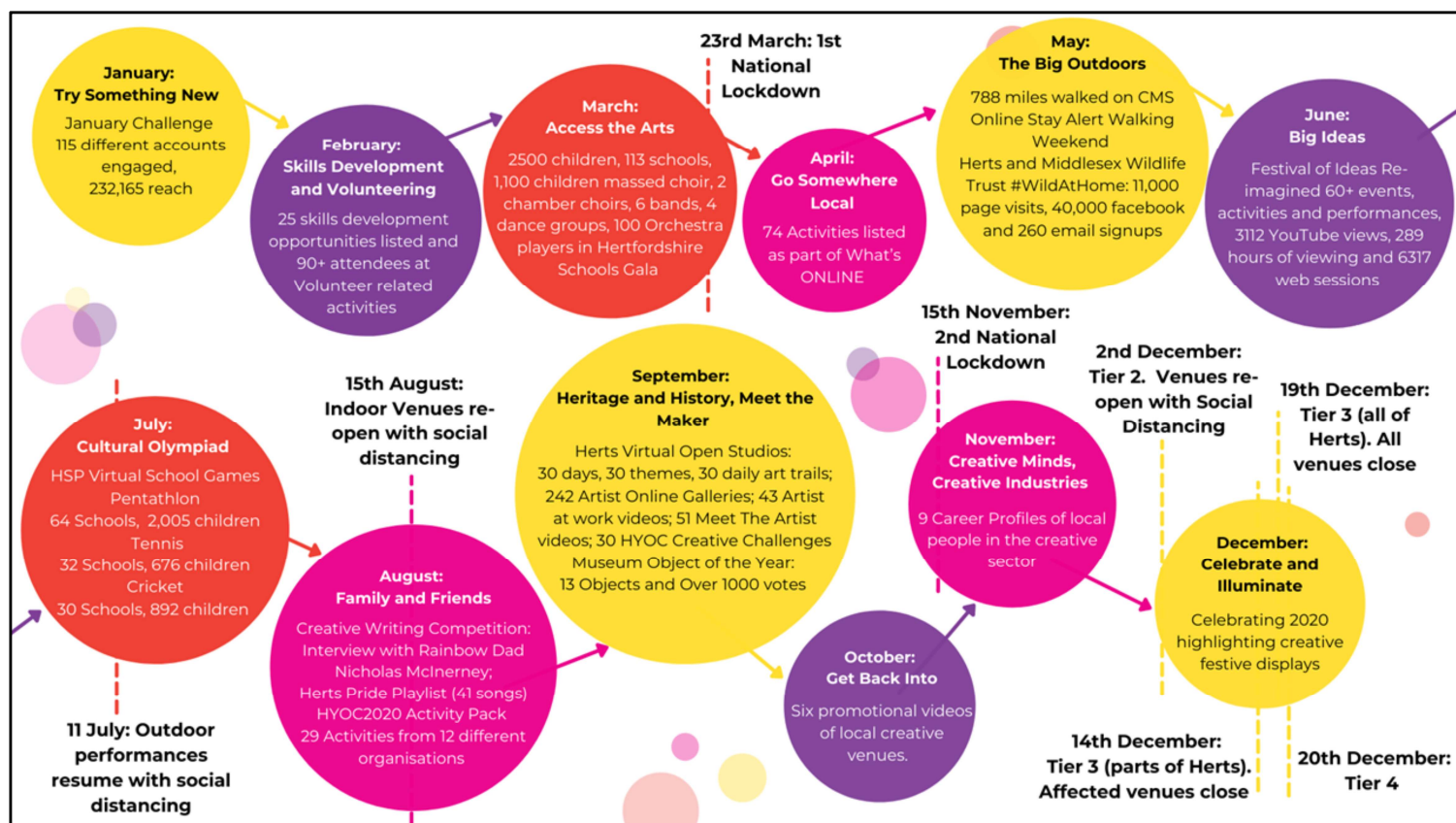


Impact

This is the overall infographic for the year and is available, along with one for each month, on the Creative Hertfordshire HYOC2020 pages.

Cover:

- Campaign Output
- Awareness Raising
- Partnership Development
- Impact on External Funding
- And Creative Hertfordshire



Output

I've used the month themes to create a timeline of the year to illustrate what happened, whilst also marking some of the key events that we hadn't planned!

The campaign was guided across 12 themed months based on known activities or themes that had performed well during YOPA18. The themes aimed to provide inspiration for events and were not prescriptive or exclusionary. As the year developed the themes became more important as a way to generate content for the campaign.

In terms of actual delivery – You can see that most of the key flagship events planned were still able to take place in some form or another and were successful, reflecting the effort and creativity of key partners as they changed the way they delivered and adapted to the social distancing regulations in place – managing to deliver a range of content for local communities. It's testament to local organisations and partners that we were still able to deliver over 700 HYOC2020 events despite 2 national lockdowns and 9 months of social distancing at various levels.

The newsletter itself was compiled month by month to reflect the relevant theme and aimed to share positive stories, promote organisations and activities. It was sent to the 810 inboxes via the HYOC2020 mailing list, promoted over social media and shared by partners. Over the year we highlighted stories from 81 local organisations, shared updated information on funding sources alongside a how to guide for Creative Hertfordshire. In total across the 12 editions there were over 34,000 individual article reads.



How did the campaign raise awareness of culture in Hertfordshire?

The campaign always aimed to be promotional and to celebrate the opportunities for culture and creativity within Hertfordshire so this was a really important aspect for us to evaluate.

In addition to the 2000 people we spoke to face to face about the campaign, most local authorities carried regular stories in residents magazines and there was countywide print media coverage including Hertfordshire Chamber Inspire Publication, Discover Hertfordshire and Hertfordshire Life. Also appeared on SG1 Radio and Radio Verulam.

Campaign funded promotional materials were circulated including banners, t-shirts and badges. Flags were flown above the civic centres and YOCl the mascot appeared at 41 events, 35 before March 2020 and others online and socially distanced.

The campaign was heavily driven on social media. HYOC2020 accounts were launched in July 2019 and were used to tease the logo and to spread messaging about the campaign aims, encourage people to visit the website and sign up to the mailing lists. The HYOC2020 channels aimed to post more generic, countywide and inspirational content, promoting the month themes, flagship events, newsletters and objectives rather than act as a promotional channel for specific events. These channels ceased to be used in March 2021, after the Celebration Event. Later in 2020 as the campaign began to generate more of its own content including infographics and competitions and focus more on the monthly themes as a way to curate and gather content, social media posts increased on HYOC2020 channels. At the end of the 2020 there were 3,981 followers, had been 1,639 posts and 10,836 engagements across Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

Stevenage based Pearldrop Productions were commissioned to produce a launch film for the campaign filmed with local organisations and celebrating the reach of culture across the county. This was used at a number of 2019 promotional events and was uploaded to the HYOC2020 YouTube Channel. To date it has 1,200 views. Plans were in place to create a celebration film throughout the year, filming at a range of events. Social distancing restrictions meant that this was unable to take place after January. Instead the Celebration Film was compiled at reduced cost from films, photographs and images collected throughout the year. Funds were released and used to create a film for Herts Visual Arts 30th Anniversary and an animated short as a prize for the August Friends and Family Creative Writing competition. In addition, 6 short films of local covid safe venues were made in house and shared on social media through October's Get Back Into month, although promotion of these was constrained by the second national lockdown.

Information on the year featured regularly in Council and other local publications and partners reported that collective local and countywide publicity meant an increased awareness of creative activities locally as "the campaign brought together many disparate strands" and consequently this led to "increased confidence reported from artists" to take part in exhibitions, try new projects, apply for funding sources and approach local businesses for support. Other organisations were "grateful for the additional publicity, particularly during lockdown".

The importance of the wellbeing aspects to creativity has also been highlighted through HYOC2020 and this proved particularly important during the lockdown.

Impact on Partners



Hertfordshire
2020
Year of Culture

Impact on Partner organisations can be organised into two main themes: Increased focus on Arts and Culture and Partnership Development

Partner organisations reported an increased focus on arts and culture both across the county and within individual local authorities. As part of the preparations for HYOC2020, each local authority was required to identify a named contact, a lead senior officer and a Member Champion. This consistency was not in place before HYOC2020 with varying levels of support for cultural activities within Council's.

An increase in commitment was evidenced in a number of authorities for example Dacorum Borough Council created a post specifically to support HYOC2020, initially a temporary post for the year, but now permanent. Others e.g. Hertsmere and East Hertfordshire prioritised applications on arts and culture through their community grants programmes.

The campaign stimulated discussions within local authorities around the development of Cultural Strategies, although this was halted in some areas due to workload pressures from Coronavirus. East Herts DC has recently approved their strategy which focuses on the wider impacts of creativity for the local area. One element of the Hertfordshire Lifestyle Network's commitment to developing a Countywide Cultural Strategy is to provide a framework within which local strategies can develop.

The ability to network, make new partnerships and collaborate was consistently given as a key benefit from HYOC2020 across all strands of feedback collected.

Organisations saw the benefits of this at a countywide and local level and particularly highlighted that the campaign encouraged partnerships with organisations outside the creative sector, it

“gave the excuse” to approach a new partner or make a new connection.

Throughout 2019, the development of the campaign saw the establishment of a range of new groups both at a county and local level. The Programme Board, the Delivery Group and a Herts Venues Group were established at a county level with the Delivery group meeting regularly throughout 2020 and a strong desire expressed for this group to continue in some form into the future.

Connections made at that group led to cross district projects and funding bids e.g. #TAG Community Dance project which ran across Watford, Three Rivers and Dacorum. The group also provided a support network for participants during a challenging year.

Organisations outside the traditional cultural sectors were also able to approach and work together with creative organisations. For example the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust were able to use the connections made at Delivery Group meetings to deliver their #WildAtHome online programme and have continued to deliver creative based activities in partnership with local artists.

At a district level new networks were set up where they didn't exist (Three Rivers) or extended (Hertsmere Heritage Forum) to bring groups together under the HYOC2020 banner. Local Authority feedback suggests that this helped to bring smaller organisations forward who want to 'be part of it', use the promotional merchandise and YOCI the mascot. This has helped those groups to access support, whilst strengthening relationships in local areas.

External Funding

Arts Council Project Grants – 2018/19 – 2020/21 (Source: Arts Council)

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Hertfordshire	£421,997	£864,062	£645,276

HCC Locality Budget Expenditure on Arts and Culture– 2018/19 – 2020/21 (Source: HSP and HCC)

	2018/19			2019/20			2020/21		
	Value	Awards	Cllrs	Value	Awards	Cllrs	Value	Awards	Cllrs
Broxbourne	£750	2	2	£6,980	9	3	£3,850	6	2
Dacorum	£1,500	1	1	£9,349	20	7	£7,850	13	6
East Herts	£11,720	14	7	£14,877	22	9	£11,855	15	6
Hertsmere	£3,100	8	5	£9,378	15	6	£4,150	7	4
North Herts	£5,750	8	5	£9,550	21	8	£8,305	13	7
St Albans	£5,650	14	6	£17,560	21	9	£11,700	15	8
Stevenage	£3,903	7	3	£3,600	4	3	£5,000	4	3
Three Rivers	£4,250	8	4	£4,600	8	5	£4,862	7	4
Watford	£1,800	5	3	£4,196	10	4	£4,843	10	5
Welwyn Hatfield	£2,119	3	3	£8,075	13	7	£5,450	12	7
TOTALS	£40,542	70	39	£88,165	143	61	£67,865	102	52

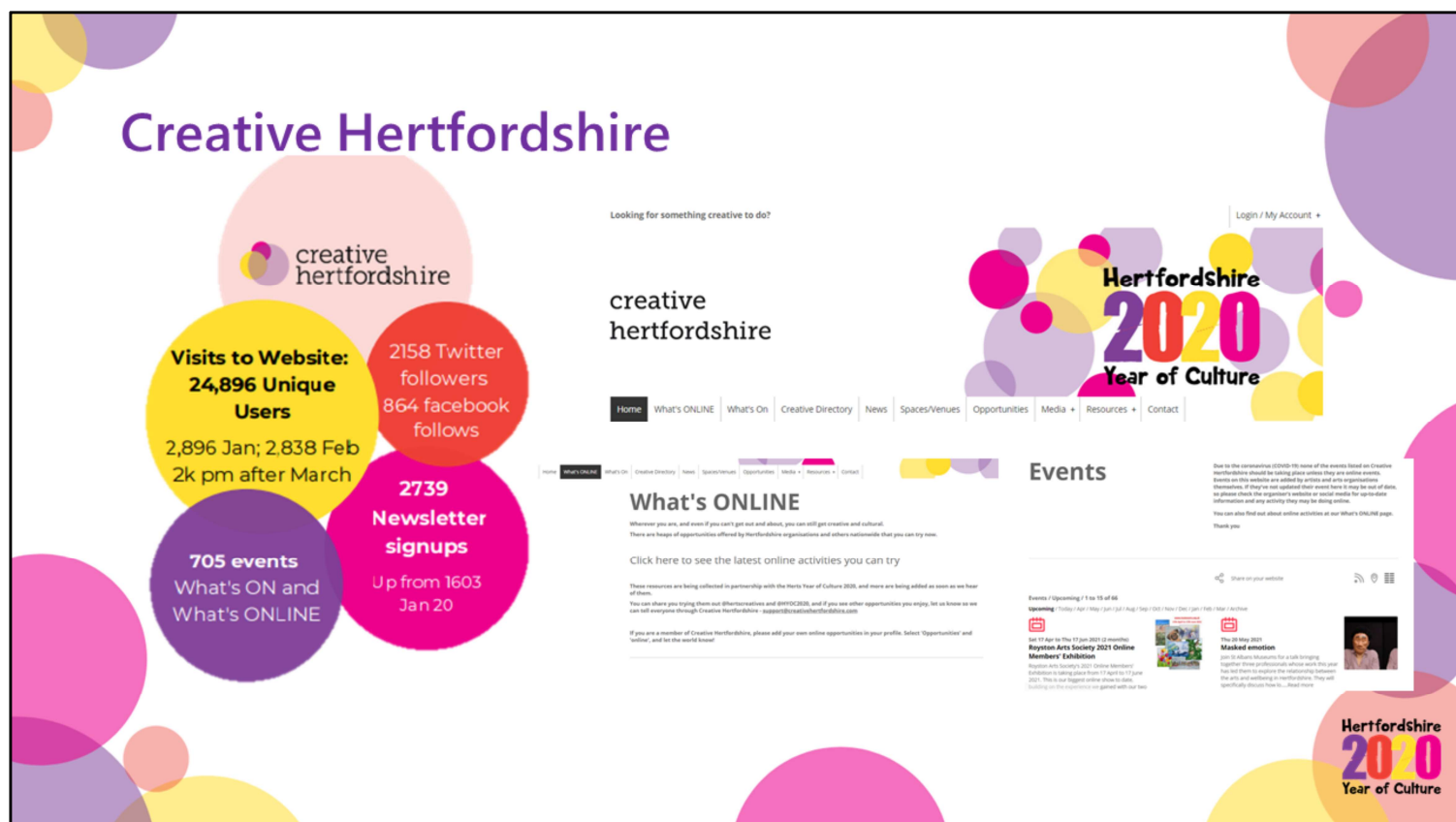
Hertfordshire
2020
Year of Culture

Funding to the Creative Sector

As an indicator – looked at 2 particular funding sources: Arts Council Project Grants and HCC Locality Budgets

Funding in both sources doubled from 2018/19 to 2019/20 in the build up to HYOC2020 and although there was a decrease into 2020/21 levels were still higher than 2018/19 despite Arts Council Project Grants being closed between April - July 2020 and Locality Budgets having a specific focus on covid related activity.

Of the 2019/20 locality budget allocation £3,750 was given directly to HACO to support the HYOC2020 Enabling Fund which was reinvigorated post march to support organisations delivering socially distanced activities. All the funding was allocated across 14 local organisations.



Creative Hertfordshire was used as the What's On and What's ONLINE guide for HYOC2020 and was considered an integral part of the campaign from the beginning and has been heavily promoted throughout.

Pre-March, all registered events were posted on Creative Hertfordshire accounts. These were already well established channels, with around 2000 followers on Twitter and 650 on Facebook rising to 2150 and 886 respectively at the end of 2020. Before March, all HYOC2020 listed events were promoted twice on Creative Hertfordshire social media and any tagged posts retweeted or shared. After March, the account focused on retweeting and sharing events and other posts relevant for the sector.

Creative Hertfordshire sends out a weekly e-newsletter to subscribers. In January 2020 the newsletter was sent to 1603 subscribers and by December this had increased to 2739 and as of March 2021 is at 2788, a growth of 74%.

The Creative Hertfordshire Website received 24,896 unique user visit during 2020. Visits to the site peaked at 2,896 in January and 2,838 in February and dropped to 2k per month for the rest of the year.

Illustrates the desire and potential for a central hub for both local artists and groups but also the general public looking for things to do.

Legacy



As we moved towards the end of the campaign, we were asked whether we were able to provide support for those events planned for 2020 that have been rearranged for 2021. In addition, we were keen to find a way to harness the increased interest in the sector and local conversations that the campaign has generated.

The We Are Creative Hertfordshire campaign was launched at the end of 2020 and is designed to demonstrate the breadth and depth of art and heritage in Hertfordshire. We Are Creative Hertfordshire shows that whether you are a venue, a council, a creator a performer or a consumer, you are part of what makes a Creative Hertfordshire. The branding will work in the same way as for HYOC2020 with organisations encouraged to use the logo and resources to promote their activity and continue to explore the links that have been made within districts and boroughs and with local arts officers. The remaining HYOC2020 funds will be used to provide branded banners and other merchandise (YOCI has her new outfit) to funder partners, which can be borrowed by local organisations. All branding and resources are now available from a dedicated page on Creative Hertfordshire.

Members of the Delivery Group were keen to continue to meet in some form to share information and continue to collaborate, – this was echoed in the questionnaire with many respondents willing to support the administration of continuing the group.

Impact of Covid-19

- ▶ Importance of creativity to organisations and the wider community
- ▶ Movement to online or postponement
- ▶ Time to regroup and reflect
- ▶ Financial challenges

- ▶ Future needs:
 - ▶ Desire to network
 - ▶ Shared space or hub for those looking to collaborate
 - ▶ Promotional campaign to support face to face events and build audience confidence
 - ▶ Channel in to Local Authorities
 - ▶ Improved access to funding, through a central point
 - ▶ Training and Resources with focus on digital skills and online promotion
 - ▶ Training and support for those groups and individuals unable to access online delivery

Hertfordshire
2020
Year of Culture

As I've already said the Covid-19 pandemic, resulting lockdowns and social distancing regulations had an enormous impact on the HYOC2020 campaign and on the delivery of creativity itself.

As part of the Celebration Event, attendees were asked their thoughts and experiences of creativity through 2020, how the year impacted on their organisations, how it will change delivery moving forward and potential support needs.

Creativity formed an essential part of life during 2020. When asked 'what did creativity mean to you in 2020' participants said 'everything', 'a lifeline' 'survival' with others reflecting on the need to 'adapt', 'be creative' and 'innovate'. On the whole organisations were positive about the future, with many recognising the increased importance of creativity in maintaining connections "at a time when people are more isolated than ever before" and the hope that this will be recognised as we move into recovery.

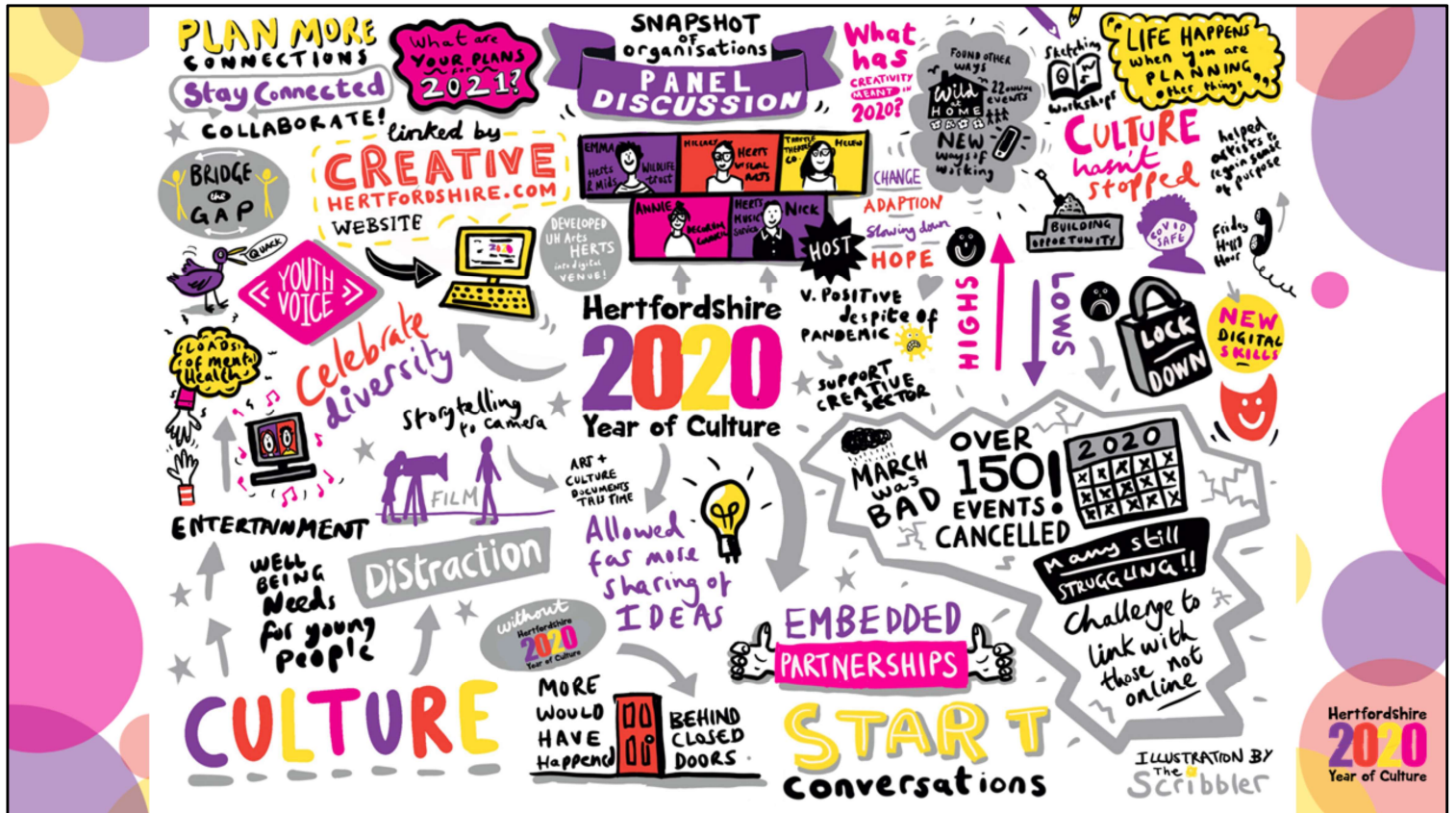
Where they could, organisations moved quickly to online delivery and found that they were reaching wider audiences, many who were taking part for the first time. In the future, most said they would look to a mix of online and face to face delivery but many highlighted the digital divide, with whole groups unable to access online services due to access, skills or desire.

Having a number of networks already established through HYOC2020 meant that partnerships could respond quickly to changes and challenges and the majority of events were still able to take place in some form. Where online delivery was impossible, many events were postponed into 2021. Organisations spoke of the nervousness that many feel about returning to live events across staff and volunteers as well as consumers and recognised that this would need to be carefully managed.

Financial challenges were also mentioned with the plethora of applications and funds available at times intimidating and confusing.

Partners highlighted the following support needs:

- A way to network on a local and countywide basis, to share experiences and provide support would be valuable as many will be facing similar challenges.
- A shared space or hub to find others to collaborate with to increase success in funding bids.
- Promotional campaign to support live venues and build audience confidence
- Channel to build relationships with the local authority as a gateway to support and funding
- Improved access to funding, possibly through a central point
- Training and resources focused particularly on digital skills and online promotion – opportunity use Creative Hertfordshire to promote courses already provided by LEP or county CVS support
- Training and support for those groups and individuals currently unable to access digital delivery.



Thank you! Here is the graphic that local artist Dan the Scribbler produced to illustrate the Celebration Event but also covers nicely some of the experiences of the year! Nice thing to leave you with!