

**MEDIA RELEASE****19 January 2023****New Bexley Culture Network invites other organisations to join forces**

A coalition of Bexley-based cultural organisations seeking to develop a wide-ranging cultural programme for the borough's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2025 is calling for other local creative groups to join them in their mission.

The Bexley Culture Network is made up of local 17 cultural organisations with a strong commitment to making positive change across Bexley's neighbourhoods through arts, crafts and culture. It includes community-led organisations, charities, and cultural groups.

The network has kicked off its work by setting out its cultural manifesto – a pledge to work together, share learning and create diverse and inclusive cultural work. They are now inviting other local cultural groups inspired by the manifesto to join with them and take advantage of the many benefits of collaborative working.

Over the coming months, the Bexley Culture Network will meet quarterly to map out a series of high-quality events and activities for 2025 which will celebrate the heritage of the borough, highlighting each of its six town centres. Championing democracy, the group will be chaired by different member organisations on a yearly basis, and will meet quarterly in different cultural venues throughout Bexley.

Adriana Marques, current Chair of the Bexley Culture Network and Peabody's Head of Thamesmead Cultural Strategy, said: "I'm delighted to be launching the Bexley Culture Network alongside our partners, setting out our approach to working together to benefit communities throughout the borough. Coming together in this way enables us to harness our expertise, share resources and make the most of the fantastic creative spirit across the entire borough. The 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations in 2025 are a wonderful opportunity for us to show residents from the borough and beyond just what a brilliant place Bexley is. We're really looking forward to getting stuck in and welcoming others on board who share our aspirations and ambition."

Julie Stanning from Bexley Music (LSEAT) said: "The Bexley Culture Network is a great way of bringing cultural organisations together, whatever their specialism. By setting out of a manifesto, we hope to inspire groups across the borough to collaborate with us. There are real benefits from working together towards a common purpose – and the network is a great way of helping individuals and organisations feel value, supported and inspired."

The Cultural Manifesto sets out five key principles:

**Arts, Crafts, and Culture to make a positive change** – by boosting personal confidence and wellbeing, creating connections and understanding within communities, the network will transform the places in which we live.

**Creativity in Bexley** – by working with people, communities, artists, and organisations the network will grow and showcase ambitious arts, craft, local creativity and world class culture.

**Community-led culture** – local people will be empowered to decide on and make culture in their communities. Their contributions to the creative and cultural life in Bexley will be valued.

**Working together** – so that the impact the network has through collaboration is so much greater than working alone.

**Diversity of voice and experience** – by supporting a culture that is diverse and inclusive the network will champion and make visible culture in Bexley so that it is representative of the many voices, identities, experiences of people who live here.

To find out more about the Bexley Culture Network and how to join, contact

[ThamesmeadNow@peabody.org.uk](mailto:ThamesmeadNow@peabody.org.uk)

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