



CREATIVE FRAMEWORK

WARWICK DISTRICT
2020-2025

OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE

By 2025 Warwick district will have an established reputation as a thriving creative cluster of national significance and be known for its distinctive blend of rich cultural heritage and cutting edge creative companies.

Residents will feel pride in their local area and be inspired by shared cultural experiences, which celebrate the dynamic, innovative character of the district.

In five years' time Warwick district will be experiencing the positive economic and social benefits of creative regeneration. Our thriving, interconnected creative sector will play a crucial role in the prosperity of the area and support the ambition of Warwick district being the first choice for people to live, work, and visit.

Playbox Theatre's 'Grete!'. Image by David Fawbert Photography



INTRODUCING OUR CREATIVE FRAMEWORK

The Creative Framework is a five-year strategy that aims to accelerate creative sector growth and maximise its impact across Warwick district through partnership and collaborative working.

It provides a collective vision for our creative communities to unite around and outlines how they can shape and influence how the sector is defined in the future.

Developed following consultation with over 400 creative business and organisations, and informed by a creative sector impact study, the framework highlights how the sector already contributes to the identity and prosperity of the district and proposes new ways in which stakeholders might support our creative industries to continue to grow.

We're not starting from scratch, but building on and enhancing the incredible work that has already taken place in the district over recent years.

We cannot do this alone. Every creative person and organisation has a role to play in ensuring that the district reaches its immense potential - where the creative industries can flourish and thrive, ensuring that Warwick district continues to be a great place to live, work and visit.

'Charge' by Motionhouse. Image by Dan Tucker



WHY NOW

Warwick district's creative sector is vibrant, varied and fundamental to the economy of the region. It also supports the wellbeing and ambition of the district's residents.

Our impressive cultural assets and events programmes attract visitors to our towns, and a strong creative infrastructure entices highly skilled people to relocate here to work.

It is home to a significant amount of creative organisations and has many of the necessary elements to become a world class creative cluster, yet this has never been pursued through a dedicated growth strategy.

A refreshed enthusiasm and momentum has been building in the region's creative communities for several years, which is becoming increasingly energised as the opportunities presented by Coventry City of Culture in 2021 and the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games approach.

Given the significant strengths of the district's creative sector, and the range of unique opportunities arising in the West Midlands over the next few years, now is the right time to launch this framework.

Luminate Learnington. Image by Jamie Gray



DEFINING CREATIVITY

The Framework aims to include all of the creative industries as described by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport's definition of creativity, from across the public, private and voluntary sectors.

“ Those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property. ”

These include:

- Crafts
- Film, TV, Video, Radio and Photography
- Museums, Galleries and Libraries
- Music, Performing Arts and Visual Arts
- Advertising and Marketing
- Architecture
- Design: Product, Graphic and Fashion
- IT, Software and Services (including game design)
- Publishing

Spencer Yard, Leamington. Image by Rachel Ghent

STIMULATING CREATIVE SECTOR GROWTH

The framework will be delivered by a Creative Compact and a Forum for the Creative Sector.

CREATIVE COMPACT

A creative sector 'compact' will provide strategic leadership for the district's creative industries. It will bring together local partners with the passion to make things happen and champion the civic role of culture and creativity. With representatives from the creative sector, business, universities, local authorities, voluntary sector, and the Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership, the compact will produce an action plan to deliver the priorities of the framework, with a particular focus on unlocking new resources for projects, encouraging the development of partnerships to attract new forms of public and private investment, ensuring effective coordination with stakeholders, and communicating closely with the sector. It is hoped that over time the compact will become the lead advocate for the cultural and creative industries sector in relation to local, regional, and national policy.

CREATIVE FORUM

The Creative Forum will provide a new platform to connect the sector. Facilitated by Warwick District Council, the forum will steer and inform the Creative Framework by testing ideas and new initiatives, connecting organisations and identifying opportunities - including new clients and work streams, training and professional development, funding, residencies, and new projects. The forum will play an important role in shaping the work of the compact and other strategic partners in its approach to sector support. Anyone or any organisations with an interest in the success of creativity in Warwick district can join.

For the framework to succeed, it is important that the creative community takes ownership of the compact and forum, rather than it being the responsibility of a single body or organisation.

SPARK: IGNITE SESSIONS

Following the success of Spark 2020 symposium, Warwick District Council has developed Ignite sessions, which aim to unpick and further explore some of the topics and themes of the day, present another opportunity for the creative community to come together and network, and visit some of the district's amazing cultural venues, spaces and places.



STRATEGIC THEMES

Five strategic themes emerged following sector-wide consultation and research. These outline the district's priorities to ensure sector growth and provide the focus for Creative Framework activity over the next five years.

They are:

- Engagement
- Voice
- Pathfinding
- Place making
- Innovation



Art in the Park. Image by Theodora Philcox

ENGAGEMENT

It is a priority to improve the quality of life for all residents of Warwick district by diversifying the variety of cultural experiences and artistic programmes; to increase opportunities for people to participate in, and be inspired by, high quality creative activity.

Key Actions:

- Support grass-roots, community-led cultural activity in hard to reach, high priority communities that delivers social and health and wellbeing outcomes.
- Provide opportunities for residents to get involved, participate and create – particularly through volunteering schemes.
- Encourage cultural organisations and venues based in the district to programme ambitious, high quality, inclusive events which are immersive and provide inspiring experiences that exceed expectation and provide escapism and enjoyment.
- Promote the use of the contemporary arts and innovative digital tools to engage with the district's heritage and tell its stories.

VOICE

It is a priority to raise the district's national and regional profile as a high quality 'creative cluster' and articulate the offer locally to residents, visitors, investors and business - advocating how it contributes to health and wellbeing, society and the economy.

Key Actions:

- Create a fresh narrative that showcases, celebrates, and promotes the district's vibrant creative industries.
- Champion the creative industries and promote their social, economic and intrinsic benefits.
- Coordinate marketing resources and collectively promote creative organisations, heritage and cultural assets, activities and events to consumers.
- Create a new online 'portal' which displays content about creative people, businesses and opportunities as well as providing residents with information about events in their area so they might learn more about where they live.
- Better promote the district's offer as a cultural destination and develop new high quality tourism products.

PATHFINDING

It is a priority to improve co-ordination and awareness of opportunities by fostering a culture of collaboration and communication - and to support creative organisations to be sustainable and financially resilient and increase levels of inward investment. It is also a priority to attract and nurture exceptional talent and to become a place where creative practitioners are welcomed and supported to build sustainable careers.

Key Actions:

- Support efforts to draw more investment and funding into the area for creative projects.
- Support existing networking events, such as Creative Mornings (page 49), and facilitate new initiatives to bring together different parts of the cultural and creative industries to share ideas, expertise and build a common vision.
- Better promote the opportunities available to the district's creative sector.
- Investigate the feasibility of developing a creative 'hub' in the district.
- Work with universities to deepen their support for the creative sector in district and increase graduate retention in the area.



PechaKucha Leamington Spa. Image by Nick Holmes



PLACE MAKING

It is a priority to incorporate culture and creativity into the way we design and use our public spaces and use the creative sector to revitalise and enhance our town centres; to protect, preserve and grow our historic architecture, heritage and cultural venues.

Key Actions:

- Support the use of non-traditional settings and accessible outdoor spaces, maximising the use of public spaces for creative activities which bring communities together.
- Celebrate and build upon the concentration of successful cultural and creative-tech industries based in Royal Leamington Spa but ensure that the benefits radiate outwards and impact across the wider district.
- Explore the feasibility of developing a creative industries hub and incubator with shared resources and equipment.
- Investigate the feasibility of using 'meanwhile spaces', pop-up spaces in retail, shop-front venues in town centres as temporary spaces to showcase the work of creatives.
- Harness the benefits of the creative sector for regeneration. Deliver the Leamington Creative Quarter to provide new creative spaces and nurture cross sector interaction.
- Develop a public arts policy which should act as a 'Supplementary Planning Guidance' document to guide the contribution made by new development schemes.



INNOVATION

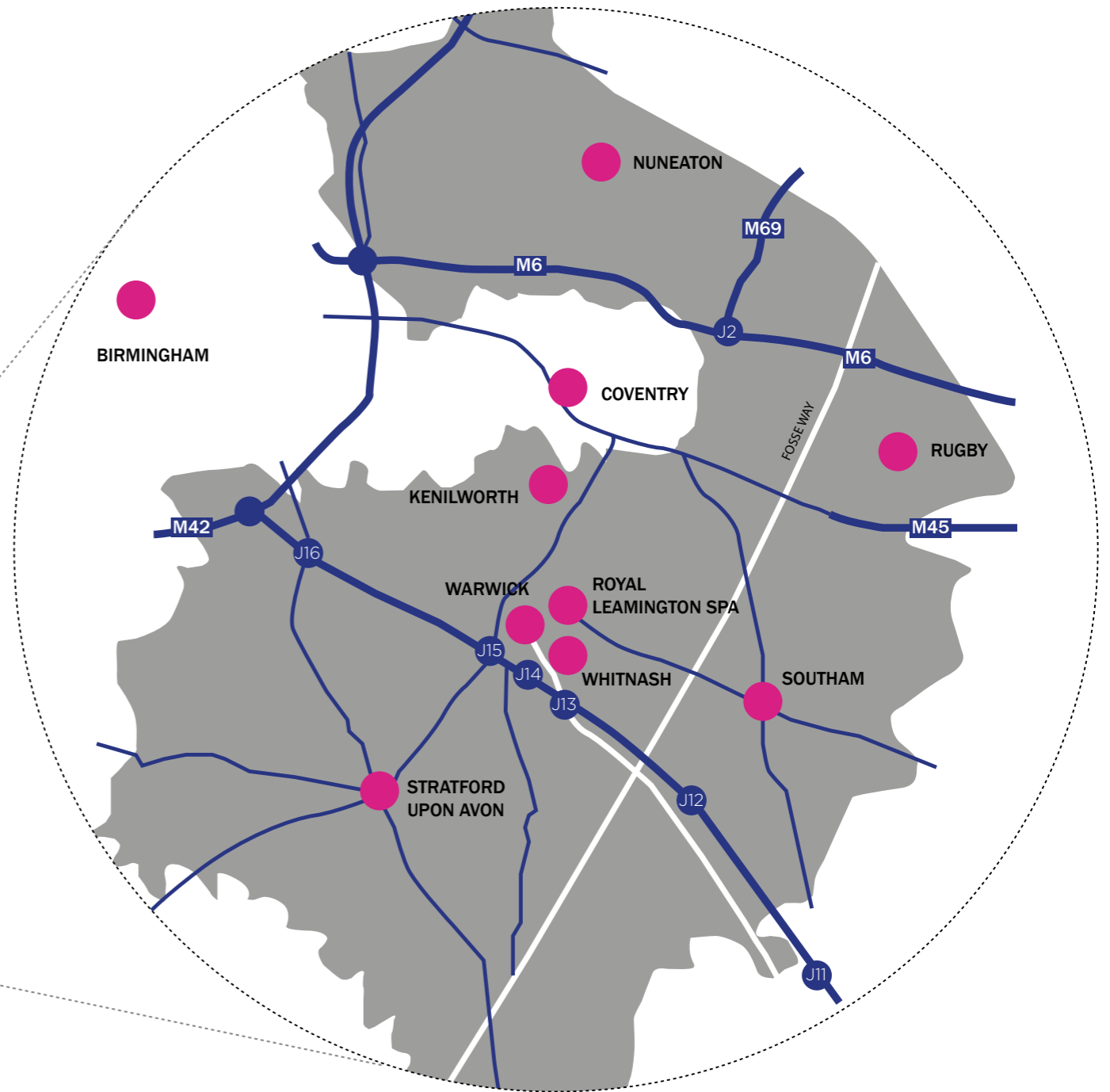
It is a priority to attract innovative companies to the area and encourage existing innovators to use their skills and knowledge to introduce new ways of thinking and address challenges within the sector; to tangibly connect the 'digital' strength of the district with cultural organisations to create original ways of engaging with creativity.

Key Actions:

- Seek to increase the amount of cultural activity that is captured, created, produced, shared and archived through digital technologies and platforms, and support partnerships which will enable more people to access this activity.
- Influence arts and cultural businesses to collaborate across the more commercially driven parts of the sector.
- Work with universities to deepen their support for the creative sector in the district.
- Explore potential funding streams to support the growth in digital creative and cultural partnerships and commission new work from across different art forms, to develop programming and reach audiences.
- Explore how digital technology can transform delivery, experiences and business models of how culture is produced and experienced.
- Encourage inward investment for innovation, entrepreneurial development and fundraising.

THE BIG PICTURE: WARWICK DISTRICT

“ The district has an unusually high proportion of culturally engaged residents - comparable to the typical demographic of a large city ”
The Audience Agency



POPULATION

Current population
140,000



Warwick district has largest population in county

4.9 PEOPLE PER SQUARE HECTARE

above national average

Grew **9%** in 10 years, more than national average in England and Wales

Population will grow to

177,119
in **2029**



A large proportion live in the district's villages and rural areas



DEMOGRAPHIC

Largely affluent area
Well-educated demographic



However, in contrast there are pockets of deprivation in Royal Leamington Spa and Warwick.

Deprivation linked to education and skills is an issue, with three areas ranked within the top 10-20% most nationally deprived, and a further three in the top 20-30%.



Kenilworth and Royal Leamington Spa were recently ranked in the top five of places to live in the Midlands as part of The Sunday Times' 2019 Best Places to Live in Britain list.



HOUSING

House prices higher than the national average



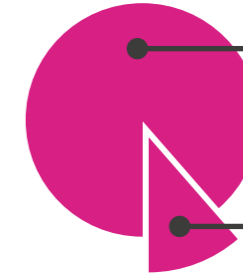
Local Plan has allocated sites for

16,700
new homes



ARTS ATTENDANCE

40% of the district's population are 'highly engaged' with the arts and regularly attend cultural events.



Only **12%** of the population of Warwick district are classified as typically 'hard to engage', who rarely engage in cultural activity - which is well below the national average.

Warwick Castle. Image by Rachel Ghent



THE NATIONAL AND REGIONAL CONTEXT

THE UNITED KINGDOM

The United Kingdom has an international reputation for innovative ideas, flair, talent and imagination which comes from the combination of our rich cultural heritage and cutting edge creative companies. In recent years the creative industries have gained increasing attention from central government as their significance to the UK's wider economy became clearer during the last recession.

Creative services exports increased by **21%** to **£32.7 BILLION** in 2017, faster than any other UK industry



Expected to deliver close to **£130 BILLION** Gross Valued Added (GVA) by **2025**



Creative Industries contributed **£101.5 BILLION** to the UK economy in 2017 - an **INCREASE** of **53.1%** since 2010 (£66.3 billion)

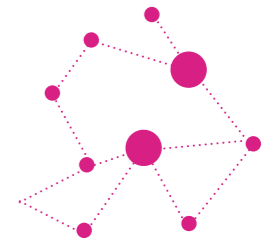


A Government White Paper (2016) highlights the contribution that culture makes to economic growth and job-creation, and the intrinsic, enriching value of culture as well as the social value and culture's ability to improve educational attainment and help people live healthier lives.

It is now universally recognised that investment in culture not only has immense economic value but also a wide range of benefits that touch all our lives every day. There is mounting evidence of the tangible impact that culture and creativity has upon education, community cohesion and health and wellbeing.

9 NEW CREATIVE CLUSTERS across the UK have benefited from **£80 MILLION** in **FUNDING**

to boost innovation by part-funding research partnerships between universities and industry



£20 MILLION expansion of Cultural Development Fund to **ENCOURAGE CREATIVE AND CULTURAL GROWTH** outside London

1 MILLION NEW JOBS could be created by **2030**



COVENTRY & WARWICKSHIRE

Warwick District Council (WDC)

The creative sector is hugely important in fulfilling Warwick District Council's economic and social goals. WDC will play an important role in both lobbying and advocating the framework on the creative sector's behalf and will provide long term oversight to ensure that associated activity stays on track and is delivered during these unusual and challenging times. To do this, it will:

- Increase opportunities for residents and visitors to be inspired by, experience and participate in high quality creative activities and events by continuing to invest in and develop its own cultural facilities, open spaces and events programmes.
- Continue efforts to attract national and regional investment in the district's creative sector and support external fundraising for projects and initiatives.
- Move forward with delivering strategic initiatives such as Leamington's Creative Quarter and the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games.
- Provide a strong evidence base for what works, why and what impact is being achieved.
- Advocate for the creative sector on a local, regional and national level and promote its benefits.
- Continue to support the cultural sector through its grant giving function.
- Identify opportunities and challenges, assist with setting direction and maintaining oversight of progress towards goals by using this framework.

Coventry & Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership (CWLEP)

Culture and tourism is one of seven key priorities for CWLEP. They acknowledge the value of the region's cultural capital in supporting the tourism industry, which generates a significant contribution to the region's economy and create jobs with an estimated 40,000 people in the region's industry. Their investment focuses on connecting public spaces, improving transport links and developing skills in the tourism and culture sector.

“ The Creative Framework is a really interesting and exciting initiative and one that will be really good for the West Midlands Region not just Warwick District in helping with the overall place setting and getting us on the map. ”

Helen Peters,
Chief Executive,
Shakespeare's England

Armonico Consort. Image by Michael Hamilton



Shakespeare's England

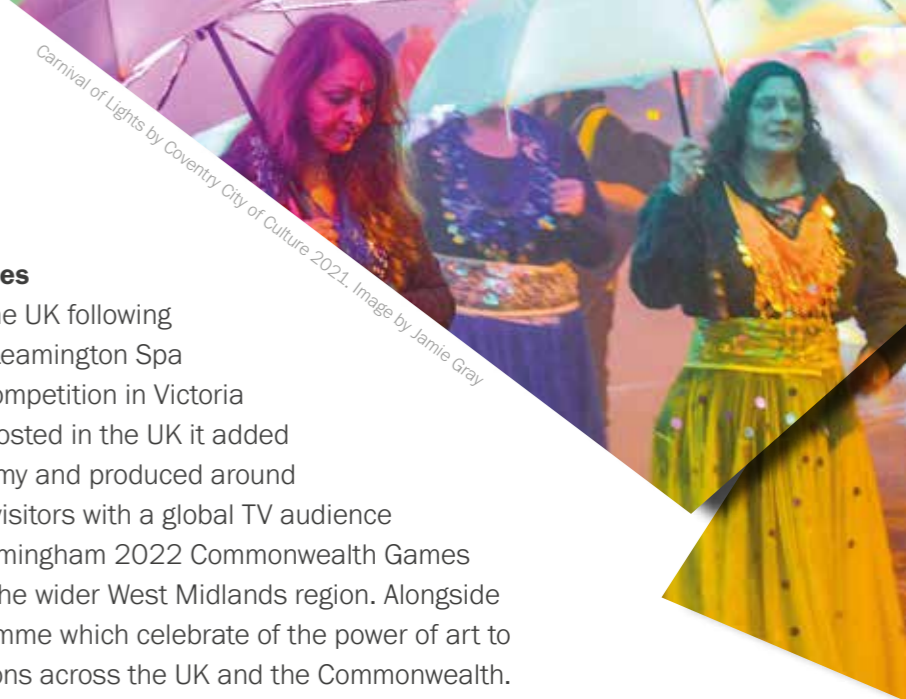
Shakespeare's England is the Destination Management Organisation for South Warwickshire and a leading visitor destination and brand in the UK. The marketing and promotion of the area ensures that it is front of mind for visitors choosing their next day visit, short break or longer holiday. The internationally significant home of William Shakespeare, including the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust and the Royal Shakespeare Company, draws 4.9 million people to Stratford District every year. Warwick has high brand awareness in the West Midlands region (3rd behind Stratford and Birmingham) with Warwick Castle being an attraction with particularly high recognition.

Warwickshire County Council (WCC)

WCC has recently adopted their new Heritage and Culture Strategy 2020 – 2025, which aims to create the conditions to enable a thriving, innovative and creative heritage and culture sector in the county by empowering the sector to support them in transforming the way their services are designed and delivered for the benefit of all who live, work and visit the area. WCC is also preparing to take advantage of the opportunity presented by the City of Culture coming to the region in 2021. It has invested £1 million into the project and has a place on the board of the Coventry City of Culture Trust.

Coventry UK City of Culture 2021

The Coventry City of Culture Trust is developing a programme of activities and events for 2021, which will be announced in late 2020. The City of Culture year will bring large-scale spectacles, music, dance, theatre and poetry as well as more intimate, celebratory cultural and heritage experiences in every area of the city. The impact will be felt across the region as levels of cultural tourism are expected to rise dramatically during the year. Hull, the previous City of Culture, saw an increase of approximately 800 new jobs across the visitor economy and cultural sector, a direct result of investments totalling £219.5 million in the cultural and visitor infrastructure.



BIRMINGHAM

Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games

This will be the largest sporting event in the UK following the London 2012 Olympic Games. Royal Leamington Spa will host the lawn bowls and para bowls competition in Victoria Park. The last time that the games were hosted in the UK it added an extra £390 million to Glasgow's economy and produced around 1,200 jobs annually, attracting 690,000 visitors with a global TV audience of over 1.5 billion viewers. Hosting the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games will have a hugely positive impact across the wider West Midlands region. Alongside the sporting events runs a cultural programme which celebrates the power of art to bring people together and make connections across the UK and the Commonwealth.

Higher Education

Warwick District has very strong links to its two local universities with the number of University of Warwick students living in Royal Leamington Spa tripling in 15 years, from 1,600 to 5,200.

The University of Warwick is home to the largest multi-platform Arts Centre outside of London and Coventry University is a leading provider of applied creative and cultural undergraduate and postgraduate courses.

The Universities of Warwick and Coventry are supporting the local creative economy through their cultural and creative partnerships. They have specific ambitions for graduate retention and gain in Royal Leamington Spa and Coventry. They are also actively pursuing Industrial Strategy and other funding to support growth in digital creative and cultural partnerships.

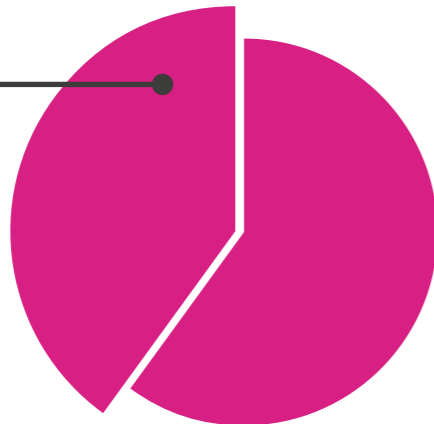
The University of Warwick also has plans for digital and creative incubators and shared workspaces in Royal Leamington Spa, starting with a collaboration with the 1 Mill Street project - a new community focused workspace and venue in 'Old Town' created specifically for the needs of start-ups and fast growing small businesses.

THE DISTRICT'S CREATIVE ECONOMY

Warwick district's creative sector has much to celebrate; it has particular strengths in video game design, performing arts, design, visual arts and cultural festivals – all of which enhance quality of life and attract people to the area to live, work and visit.

Royal Leamington Spa has a high concentration of creative firms and employment, especially the sub-sectors of design, the performing arts, advertising and software design. Royal Leamington Spa has a rich history of design and innovation – be it a leader in automotive design, abstract art or developing camouflage designs in World War II.

Approximately **40%** of Warwickshire's creative businesses are located in Warwick district.



The creative industries contributed a little under **HALF A BILLION POUNDS** of GVA to the economy of Warwick district in 2017.

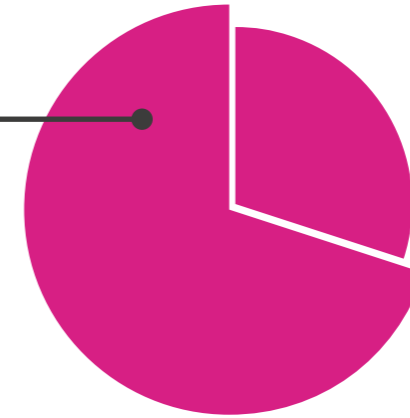


CREATIVE WORKERS

also directly impact upon the wider economy and

70%

of those in creative occupations work outside the creative industries (for example – graphics designers working for Jaguar Land Rover in the car manufacturing industry). This is a much higher proportion than in Coventry (55%) or Coventry and Warwickshire (58%).



TOURISM

brings over **3.8 MILLION PEOPLE** to the district each year with a combined spend of over **£304 MILLION**, sustaining 6.8% of local employment (5,217 jobs).

The success of the creative sector in the district is largely built on microenterprises and freelancers.

94% of creative sector enterprises in the district are **MICRO** (employing nine or less people).



17% of creative sector workers are **FREELANCE**.

At the same time, there are also some substantial organisations within the district's creative sector. Five enterprises in the IT, Software and Computer Services sector employ over 50 people.

The strength of our creative and digital community, combined with excellent transport connections to the capital, makes the district an attractive proposition for investors from outside of the area and for businesses looking to relocate.

DIGITAL CREATIVES

The global video games industry is an economic and cultural success story:

Approximately **130** of the **UK'S BEST GAMES BUSINESSES**

are based in the West Midlands – notably clustered in and around **ROYAL LEAMINGTON SPA.**



ROYAL LEAMINGTON SPA RANKED 17TH

by **NESTA** in The Geography of Creativity in the UK (2016, higher than any other creative cluster in the Midlands.



An established history in game development the local area can call upon a uniquely skilled talent pool drawn here by the presence of key industry names including

CODEMASTERS, PLAYGROUND GAMES, SEGA and UBISOFT.



Over **2,500 EMPLOYEES** across **83 STUDIOS, ROYAL LEAMINGTON SPA HAS THE THIRD LARGEST GAMES CLUSTER IN THE UK,**

This equates to well **OVER 10%** of the total games development employment in the country.

ROYAL LEAMINGTON SPA town centre is home to a high concentration of **WORLD CLASS CREATIVE DIGITAL, MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS AGENCIES**, producing work for the likes of Microsoft, Rolls-Royce and Disney along with media companies such as the BBC and Studio Canal.

120 DESIGN ENTERPRISES based in the district.



Examples of the digital creatives in the district include:

FISH IN A BOTTLE

A creative digital agency that create innovative digital products that engage audiences and create meaningful connections. Their recent projects range from creating an immersive and interactive 360 tour of artist Ai Weiwei's show for the Royal Academy of Arts through to designing mobile app games for Peppa Pig and SpongeBob Squarepants.

MADE BY SONDER

A content and digital experience marketing agency based in Royal Leamington Spa who has a diverse range of clients including Visa, Triumph Motorcycles, Speedo, Berghaus, and the British Heart Foundation.

UBISOFT LEAMINGTON

Ubisoft Leamington is one of Ubisoft's youngest studios, having been acquired in 2017. Ubisoft publishes games for several video game franchises, including Rayman, Raving Rabbids, Prince of Persia, Assassin's Creed, Far Cry, Just Dance, and Tom Clancy.



PERFORMING ARTS

MOTIONHOUSE

Based in Royal Leamington Spa since 1988, Motionhouse is an international dance-circus company, touring full-length productions to major theatres across the UK and internationally, as well as taking its repertoire of outdoor productions to festivals, events and non-theatre spaces around the world. The company offers an inspirational education and training programme at its studio in Spencer Yard and develops its renowned work in its creation, rehearsal and performance space in Leamington Town Hall. Artistic Director Kevin Finnan MBE was Choreographer and Movement Director of the Opening Ceremony of the London 2012 Paralympic Games. Motionhouse is supported by Arts Council England as a National Portfolio Organisation.

LIVE & LOCAL

A not-for-profit, Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation, working with a network of voluntary groups across Derbyshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, Worcestershire, Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire and Leicestershire and Rutland. They provide practical support and advice by helping volunteers to choose shows and films for rural venues, as well as co-ordinating the bookings, subsidising performances and helping them to attract an audience.

“ We are excited to be a part of the first ever Warwick District Creative Framework ... we are proud to work in an area that values the creative sector. ”
Kevin Finnan MBE, Artistic Director, Motionhouse

PLAYBOX THEATRE

Working with thousands of young people aged 3-19 years old every week at their innovative, custom-designed theatre, The Dream Factory; Playbox creates an artistic environment in which all children can flourish. Based in Warwick for over 30 years, Playbox has facilitated the confidence building, self-development and artistic release for young people in the district and, through international collaborations, across the globe.

ARMONICO CONSORT

A critically acclaimed choir and instrumental ensemble, based in Warwick and entertaining audiences across the country with its concerts, recordings and projects. Central to its work is an education programme, AC Academy, which reaches 15,000 children a year across the UK through its in-school Choir Creation Scheme and after-school AC Academy Choirs in partnership with music hubs. Armonico launched its newest initiative, the Voice Squad workplace/ community choir programme in collaboration with Arts Council England, Phillips 66 & JET and Coventry City Council, which rolled out nationwide in 2019.



THE LOFT THEATRE COMPANY

This community-based theatre company, with a strong reputation nationally for the professional quality of productions, has been producing live theatre in Royal Leamington Spa since 1922. The Loft produces around nine shows a year in the main 200 seat auditorium and a smaller number in the 50 seat studio theatre. It has a strong commitment to new work and, in the past three years, has produced nine world premieres, new translations, and newly devised pieces. The theatre is run almost entirely by volunteers, receives no regular funding from any external source, and supports itself almost entirely through ticket sales.

HEARTBREAK PRODUCTIONS

Touring open-air theatre across the UK and Ireland since 1991 from their base in Spencer Yard, Royal Leamington Spa. They create exciting experiences for audiences via collaboration with actors, designers, composers and crew. Their education programme, aimed at 5 to 18 year olds, provides acting training on Saturday mornings during term time at the Heartbreak Hub.

LEAMINGTON MUSIC

Leamington Music, launched in 2006, provides a varied programme of concerts bringing in musicians of international standing, mostly chamber music with an emphasis on string quartets in Royal Leamington Spa, while Warwick is nationally acknowledged for promoting early music. The winter season has some twenty concerts each year with some groups brought in specially for their flourishing Education Programme, which with Warwickshire Music Hub support takes them into schools across the county. With its flagship Leamington Music Festival in May, Leamington Music plays to an audience of some 5,500 in the year and some 4,500 children benefit from the visits to schools.

“ Playbox Theatre broadly welcomes the [creative] framework and accept that the 20-25 strategy is the most effective way forward for arts organisations to evolve, grow and reach all parts of our communities. ”

Stewart McGill, Director

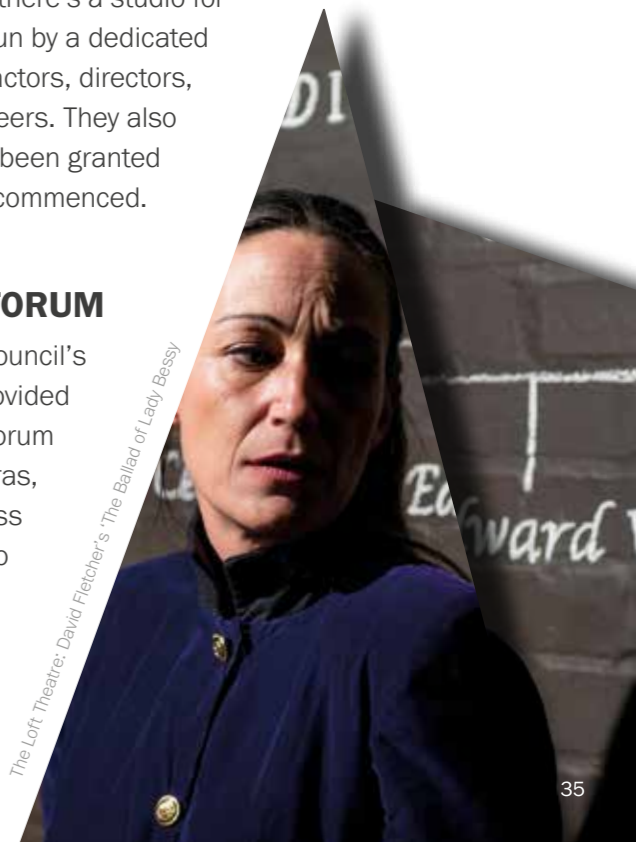
TALISMAN THEATRE AND ARTS CENTRE

The Talisman Theatre Company, Kenilworth, was founded in 1942 as a non-professional amateur company. In 1969 they moved from what is now Talisman Square to their present premises in Barrow Road. Their theatre seats 158 people, the foyer and bar hold regular art exhibitions and there's a studio for rehearsals and small-scale productions. The theatre is run by a dedicated team of volunteers. The company includes and welcomes actors, directors, designers, technicians, backstage and front of house volunteers. They also have a vibrant youth theatre. Planning permission has recently been granted for a £1.3million expansion for which fund raising has commenced.

THE WARWICK DISTRICT MUSIC PROMOTERS FORUM

Established in 1995 by the instigation of Warwick District Council's Heritage and Arts Manager, Jeff Watkin. The council provided full funding support for the first few years and the Forum now has over 90 members representing choirs, orchestras, performers, promoters and festivals, reflecting the richness of the local music scene. The Forum produces the Music to Your Ears guide, listing details of up to a hundred concerts three times a year and operates an anti-clash diary to help organizations to plan their concert dates.

The Loft Theatre: David Fletcher's 'The Ballad of Lady Bessy'



THE ROYAL SPA CENTRE

The Royal Spa Centre is the district's only professional theatre. As a medium size receiving house, it delivers a programme of theatre, drama, comedy, film and community events in its 667-seat main house and 188-seat studio theatre and cinema. It has an annual footfall of 95000.

BRIDGE HOUSE THEATRE (WARWICK SCHOOL)

Opened by Dame Judi Dench in 2000, the theatre has grown into one of the area's most popular venues. A mid-scale venue of 304 seats – it's beautiful interior of wood and brick creates an attractive and intimate space for performance. Their audiences enjoy a wide-ranging repertoire of professional productions, presented alongside local community events and stunning performances from the students of Warwick School and partner schools.

PRIORY THEATRE

A community-run theatre in Kenilworth, opened in 1946, that typically produces nine in-house shows a year. Their Youth Theatre offers younger members of the community a chance to develop their acting skills and build confidence. For over 25 years, the Priory Theatre has helped local charities and organisations use their facilities to raise funds.

Imagine Theatre's Snow White at Royal Spa Centre. Image by Helen Ashbourne



Assembly Leamington. Image by Rachel Ghent

MUSIC VENUES AND RECEIVING HOUSES

Several large venues present music programmes throughout the year. The district also benefits from a range of smaller more intimate spaces, including cafes, bars and pubs – where the local music scene also flourishes. Examples of music venues include:

WARWICK HALL (WARWICK SCHOOL)

Opened in September 2016, replacing The Guy Nelson Hall, Warwick Hall provides a first-class space for a wide range of events. The auditorium seats up to 1000, with enhanced acoustics and audience comfort derived from a flexible telescopic raked seating system and permanent balcony. Two new drama/dance studios offer smaller venues for performances and workshops.

ASSEMBLY LEAMINGTON

Built in 1926 the Assembly is a stunning, art-deco, multi-function venue in the heart of Leamington Spa. With it's phenomenal stage and unparalleled site lines Assembly Leamington offers a truly perfect setting for large scale events, live music, television recordings, private parties and special art events. With a longstanding live music heritage, it is particularly well set up for loading access with a vast back stage area and access to various dressing rooms.

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THE ROYAL PUMP ROOMS (ROYAL LEAMINGTON SPA)

Owned and managed by Warwick District Council, this popular cultural and tourist attraction is home to Leamington Spa Art Gallery & Museum, Leamington Library and various event spaces. The building has an annual footfall of 450,000, 134,000 of which visit the gallery.

LEAMINGTON TOWN HALL

The iconic Town Hall on Leamington's Parade has two main rooms; the Council Chamber and The Assembly Hall, used primarily by the council for committee meetings but also for a wide range of other events from recitals to awards ceremonies. The building is home to Royal Leamington Spa Town Council, the University of Warwick Learning Grid and the Leamington and Warwick's MP's offices. It has an annual footfall of 84,000 people.



VISUAL ARTS

The district has a strong and vibrant visual arts scene. Many of the area's artists are active members of support networks, groups and organisations, and a wealth of art galleries, both public and commercial, exist in our towns. Examples include:

LEAMINGTON SPA ART GALLERY AND MUSEUM

Leamington Spa Art Gallery & Museum is located within the 200 year old Royal Pump Rooms, one of Royal Leamington Spa's original bath houses. It holds in its collections over 13,000 artworks and historic artefacts of local, regional and national significance, for the enjoyment and inspiration of the people of Warwick district and beyond. Four exhibitions are held each year, covering the visual and decorative arts, crafts and local history. These are accompanied by a lively programme of events for all ages and an active schools programme.

LEAMINGTON STUDIO ARTISTS

Leamington Studio Artists (LSA), It is entirely run by volunteers and boasts significant achievements, including instigating Art in the Park, an annual, free, arts festival based in Jephson Gardens, since 2014 and which attracts 40,000 visitors. The LSA have also published and distributed its high quality journal, Art Space, since 1998.

“ Leamington Studio Artists fully supports the Creative Framework as it provides a great roadmap in developing and implementing steps that will promote, foster and improve public education, interest, and appreciation in all forms of the Visual Arts. ”

Charanjit Uppal, Trustee

WARWICKSHIRE OPEN STUDIOS

Since 2000, Warwickshire Open Studios has been helping visual artists and designer makers across Warwickshire connect with art-lovers who enjoy, buy, commission and participate in their work. During the annual Open Studios Summer Event, over 300 artists, many of which are based in Warwick district, open their homes and studios to the public.

Janette George, Warwickshire Open Studios

HERITAGE

Visiting heritage sites and castles is by far the main reason for visiting Warwickshire. Some examples of heritage sites include:

WARWICK CASTLE

Warwick Castle is a medieval castle located in the heart of Warwick. Operated by Merlin Entertainments, it provides a year-round programme of events and activities, accommodation for short breaks, and hosts weddings and corporate events.

KENILWORTH CASTLE

Managed by English Heritage, Kenilworth Castle and Elizabethan Gardens is an impressive historical attraction that provides a programme of events and activities for visitors and schools.

NATIONAL TRUST

The area surrounding the district is home to a number of notable National Trust properties, including Baddesley Clinton, Charlecut Park, Coughton Court, and Packwood House.

STONELEIGH ABBEY AND COUNTRY PARK

Inhabited since 1154 when King Henry II granted the lands to a community of Cistercian monks, Stoneleigh Abbey is a beautiful Stately home set in stunning Warwickshire parkland. It caters for special events and weddings, and welcomes over 25,000 visitors throughout the year.

LORD LEYCESTER HOSPITAL

One of the best preserved examples of medieval courtyard architecture in England can be found in Warwick. Primarily a charity that supports ex-servicemen, it also hosts weddings, parties and dinners, and welcomes visitors to take a guided tour and dine in their 500-year-old café.

MARKET HALL MUSEUM

Warwickshire County Council operates the Market Hall Museum, a 17th century landmark in the heart of Warwick. Recently refurbished with funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the museum tells the story of Warwickshire and attracted 78,977 visitors in 2018/19.

ST JOHN'S HOUSE

A Jacobean mansion located in the town of Warwick, it has a history spanning almost 900 years and attracted 6,279 visitors in 2018/19. These visitors all came via organised school groups, as the museum is not open to the general public. Separately, however, St Johns House is also the home of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment of Fusiliers Museum.

Local people, passionate about the heritage of the district, have formed groups to protect its character and promote the towns historical assets; the Leamington Society, Friends of Leamington Spa Art Gallery, and Leamington History Group, to name but a few.

FESTIVAL, PUBLIC SPACES AND EVENTS

There is a busy events programme in the district, with over 135 planned outdoor events occurring annually in town centres, parks and green spaces. This impressively broad range of high quality arts festivals attracts a great deal of community support, both in terms of attendance and in helping to deliver them. The widespread support for volunteering shown by the creative sector reflects a robust ethic of volunteering within the district and makes a significant social contribution. Examples include:

WARWICK FOLK FESTIVAL

A highlight on the British music calendar, attracting people from across the UK and beyond. Live music and dance are programmed at the Warwick School site and around Warwick town centre, with a free concert and dancing in Market Place. It also features workshops, storytelling, and theatre as well as a real ale & cider festival, wine bar and craft market. The festival runs over 4 days in July and has a daily capacity of 5,000.

LEAMINGTON MUSIC FESTIVAL

The Leamington Music Festival, held over the first weekend in May, was launched in 1990 and has taken place in the Royal Pump Rooms since 2000; an ideal venue for chamber music. Leamington Music's flagship takes a strong theme, often making a Czech connection following the Free Army's time in the area 1940-42 and Radio 3 has several times taken recordings to make a week's lunchtime concerts.

ART IN THE PARK

A free, curated arts festival that showcases, promotes and provides live demonstrations from over 280 visual and performance artists and craftspeople in Warwickshire and the Midlands. The programme includes live music, dance and theatre from the creatives based in district alongside nationally and internationally renowned companies. The festival takes place over the first weekend in August in the beautiful surroundings of Jephson Gardens. The festival has grown exponentially in recent years, becoming a flagship event for the region's creative community. It now attracts approximately 40,000 people over the course of the weekend, generating an estimated £1.58 million of additional economic activity.

KENILWORTH ARTS FESTIVAL

Featuring ten days of events, workshops and exhibitions, held in different venues around the historic town of Kenilworth. The festival brings together award-winning, internationally-acclaimed writers, musicians and visual artists from around the country, transforming everyday spaces into intimate arts venues and offering one-off live experiences to audiences.



WARWICK WORDS HISTORY FESTIVAL

A week-long festival of history, hosting around 50 events which takes place across the historic town of Warwick every October. Celebrating historical writing, fact and fiction and meet the authors, where audiences can discover and discuss their work. Talks, walks, workshops and seminars for both children and adults feature strongly in the festival's programme which attracts over 4,500 to the town.

LEAMINGTON FOOD AND DRINK FESTIVAL

Created and delivered by BID Leamington, the festival attracts around 25,000 people to the town, and involves around 50 town centre businesses and a further 100 traders from the wider region. Now in its thirteenth year, the festival includes cookery demonstrations, kid's cookery school, BBQ masterclasses, Aubrey Allen Home Cook of the Year, Great Leamington Bake-Off competitions, and live music.

LANTERN PARADE

The Lantern Parade, or 'Luminate Leamington', was established in 2010 and is inspired by the illuminations which used to feature in Jephson Gardens in the 1950s. Each year the community are invited to come together and light up Royal Leamington Spa with thousands of unique and beautiful hand-made lanterns of all shapes and sizes. The parade also includes free lantern making workshops. The event is organised by BID Leamington, with funding from town centre businesses and benefits from the help of local artists and many volunteers. This popular event attracts over 1,000 families and brings around 3,000 people to the town each year.

MARKETS

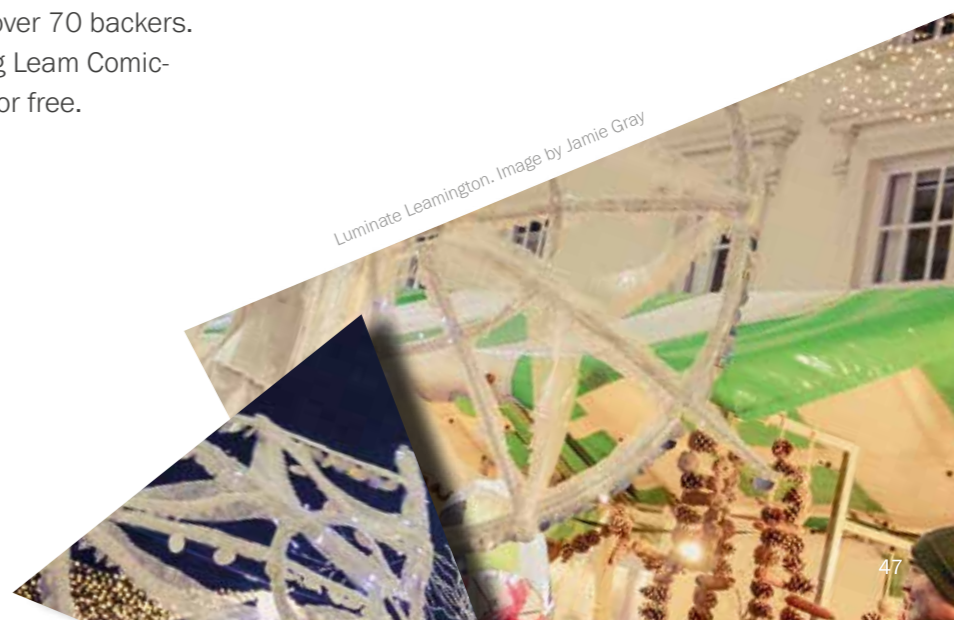
The district hosts a range of weekly and monthly markets, including a Charter Market and Farmers' Market in Warwick, a traditional market in Kenilworth, and a Producers' Market and Eco Market in Royal Leamington Spa. Royal Leamington Spa also hosts festive markets every October to December.

CARNIVALS

Kenilworth Carnival has taken place once a year in the town for over 125 years, and Warwick Mop takes place every October, and has been running since they laid the first stone for the castle 1,100 years ago. The Runaway MOP takes place the following week.

COMIC-CON

Established in 2014, Leam Comic-Con promotes mainstream and indie comic creators during its annual event, which is attended by approximately 4,500 people. The event is crowdfunded by over 70 backers. New comics are often launched during Leam Comic-Con, and over 1,500 children attend for free.



Luminate Leamington. Image by Jamie Gray

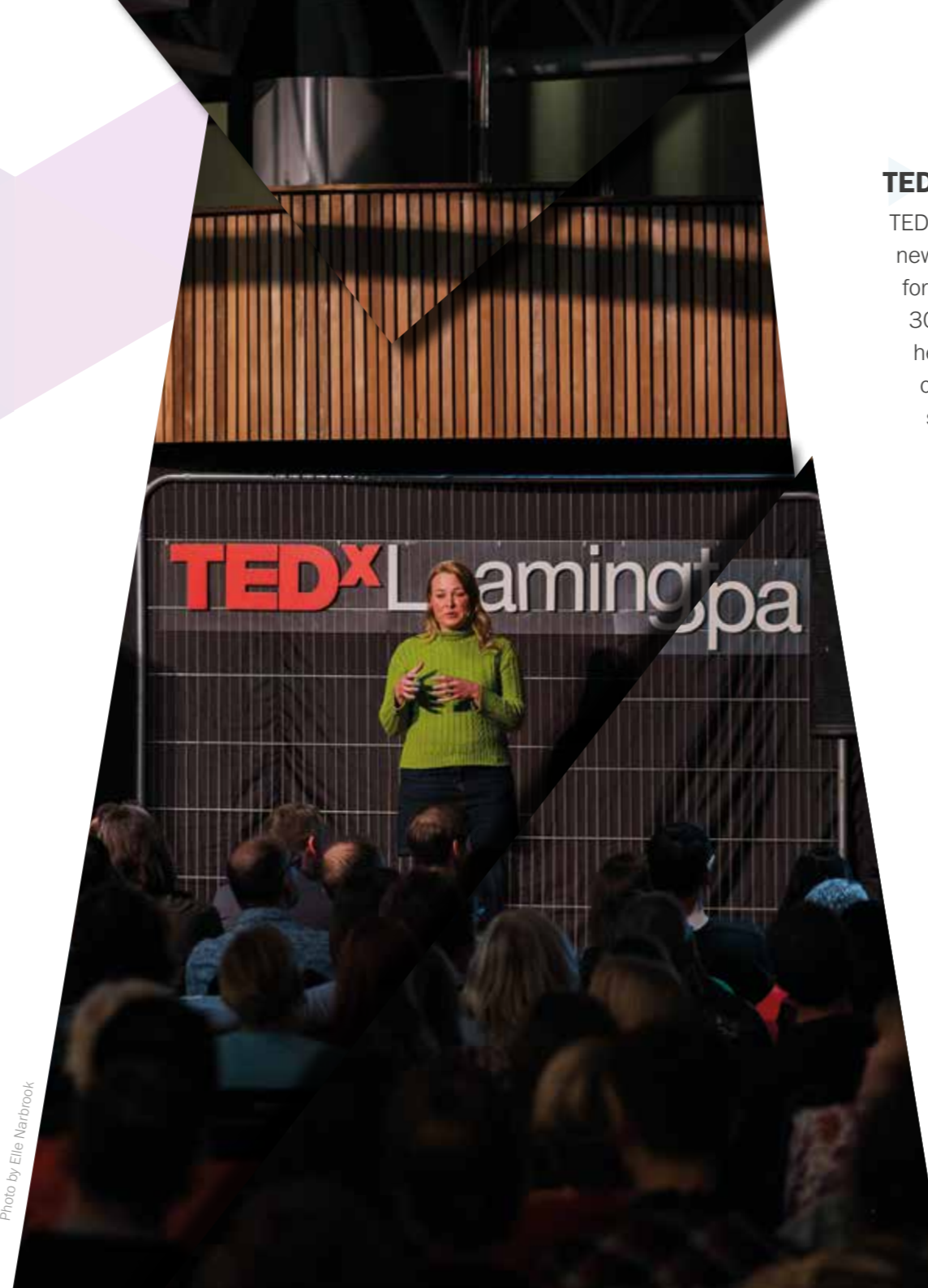
CREATIVE TALKS AND NETWORKING EVENTS

The creative sector comes together in a number of monthly and annual events, which include:

INTERACTIVE FUTURES

Now in its second year, Interactive Futures is a large gaming expo based in the district that showcases the latest developments and opportunities in the gaming industry. It brings together the UK's games community, games enthusiasts, the next generation of games designers, and creative powerhouses. The event highlights key issues facing the industry, shines a light on career opportunities and provides a chance to try out the best of the games created in Royal Leamington Spa – home to industry leaders including Playground Games, Codemasters and SEGA.

Photo by Elle Narbrook



TEDX LEAMINGTON SPA

TEDxLeamingtonSpa hosts regular speaker events with the aim of bringing new thinking into Royal Leamington Spa, while providing a global platform for ideas from our own community. Annual live events play host to around 300 guests, though the talks – curated, coached, staged and filmed here – have been viewed over 5 million times online, making us one of the UK's most watched towns with a volunteer team that is often showcased for its excellence within the global TEDx community.

CREATIVEMORNINGS/LEAMINGTONSPA

CreativeMornings is an international initiative of creative talks and networking events. Each month, early on a Friday morning, attendees gather in cities around the world to enjoy fresh coffee and an array of breakfast foods while they listen to a guest creative speak on a predetermined theme. Volunteer hosts and their team members organize local chapters that celebrate a city's creative talent and connect like-minded, creative individuals. Speakers are selected by each chapter based on a global theme

PECHAKUCHA LEAMINGTON

PechaKucha's 20x20 presentation format restricts speakers to showing 20 chosen images, each for 20 seconds only. In total speakers have just 400 seconds to tell their story, with visuals guiding the way. PechaKucha means "chit chat" in Japanese. Three million people have attended PechaKucha events worldwide. PechaKucha Leamington is incredibly popular and has a loyal following of attendees and speakers.

REGENERATION

Warwick District Council has had long term aspirations to develop a Creative Quarter for Leamington Spa in order to support the thriving creative economy, regenerate the area and support communities in the 'Old Town' area of Royal Leamington Spa.

Old Town, located south of the river Leam, is the site of the original village of Leamington Priors. It was here that the spa resort developed in the late 18th century. As the town grew in the 19th century, investment, and the centre of prosperity, moved north of the river. Areas within Brunswick ward in particular became amongst the most deprived in the district, and across Warwickshire. This led to a number of regeneration initiatives focusing on the Old Town area including a major project with government funding which took place in the early 2000s. The Council has a number of land and building assets in this area, and it is committed to regenerating these to support the Creative Quarter.

Complex Development Projects (CDP) was appointed as the Council's regeneration partner in late 2017. They are a well-established development and regeneration company with a particular knowledge of, and expertise in, working with creative industries. CDP operates nationally but has carried out a number of schemes in Coventry including Electric Wharf and Fargo Village.

Since its appointment CDP has worked on the development of the Creative Quarter resulting in the Big Picture document being formally approved by the Council in March 2019. This document is the 'vision' for the delivery of the Council's long-term aspirations for the Creative Quarter. You can find out more and follow developments at www.leamingtoncreativequarter.co.uk.



GET INVOLVED

To find out more about any of the content in this publication, including registering your interest to take part in the Creative Compact and Forum for the Creative Sector, visit www.warwickdc.gov.uk/wdcreativeframework

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