

Our Words, Our Century



Our Words, Our Century celebrates Portsmouth's Centenary through creativity, connection, and community voice.

Delivered by Think Big Do Bigger CIC in partnership with Creatful CIC and supported by £3,000 match funding from Portsmouth Creates, the project brings together artists, communities, and volunteers to explore themes related to '100 years of Portsmouth Voices' through word based art, co-created residencies and ongoing creative opportunities.

Three 12-week residency combines mindful art, blackout poetry, and reflection to produce new collective artworks and upskill people through a clear volunteer pathway leading to facilitation opportunities.

Engage - volunteer - practice - lead.

Culminating in three co-created and co-facilitated public pop-up exhibitions across the city, Our Words, Our Century empowers participants to share their stories and celebrate the creativity that lives within Portsmouth's people and places.

A Think Big Do Bigger CIC Project

Co-create. Reflect. Change. Thrive.

Co-Creation, Reflection, and Mindful Making



Our work combines visual art, reflective discussion, and text-based creation to support people in finding their voice through art. Sessions are trauma-informed, inclusive, and shaped through co-production - recognising participants as artists and collaborators.



Each 12-week residency invites a group to experiment with collage, printmaking, and blackout poetry, exploring themes of identity, belonging, and place. Participants work alongside volunteers and guest artists to transform found language and materials into poetic visual artworks that reflect their lived experience.

Participants will be supported to take on volunteering and facilitation roles both at future 12-week residencies and other groups and workshops delivered by Think Big Do Bigger and Creatful. A budget of £900 has been allocated to enable training in areas such as co-production, trauma informed care to develop safe and skilled leaders.

This approach builds creative confidence, wellbeing, and connection - equipping participants with the skills and self-belief to sustain cultural activity in their communities long after the project ends.

Learning from Proven Success



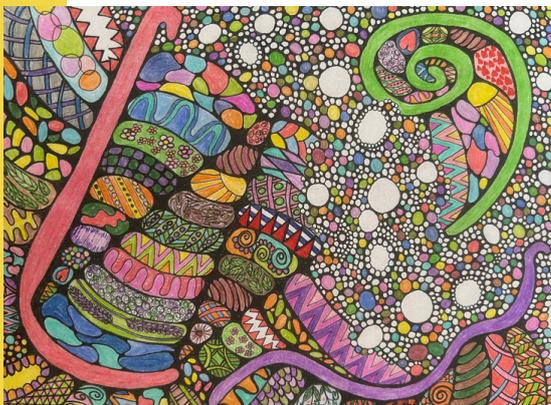
The Black Out Poetry Project (Portsmouth Creates, 2025)

- 8 workshops with 50 participants and 50 visitors.
- 6 community partners across Portsmouth.
- Resulted in a published anthology and park exhibition.

Between the Lines

(National Lottery Heritage Fund, 2025–26)

- 12-week heritage-based creative programme in Gosport.
- 50+ participants to date.
- Combines visual art, poetry, and heritage storytelling.
- Focuses on themes of community, local memory and history.



Mindful Art in the park

- 8 week pilot leading to a co-produced national lottery community project bid for weekly sessions, outreach workshops and a volunteer pathway.

These projects established a model of outreach co-production that delivers both artistic quality and meaningful social impact - creating professional-standard work rooted in community experience and voice.

What Will Happen

Three 12-week creative residencies across Portsmouth's northern wards (Hilsea, Copnor, Cosham, and North End), beginning with our established partners Creatful Buckand and North End Baptist Church to enable learning before delivering a final residency with a new partner.

Each group selects a guest artist for a collaborative session, introducing participants to mid-scale arts practice.

Each group will select and visit an arts/culture space within the city centre.

Partnerships with local libraries and community spaces - each group delivers a public pop-up exhibition and creative workshop.

Existing volunteers from Think Big Do Bigger and Creatful will support delivery and provide peer support for participants as they build skills and confidence towards volunteering and facilitating.

A filmmaker will document the process, creating a short film to showcase the journey, outcomes and learning.



Building Creative Pathways for the Future

Our Words, Our Century is designed to build a long-term, community-led creative ecosystem across Portsmouth.

Based on our prior projects, it is anticipated that Our Words, Our Century will directly engage 60 residents and 300 visitors in the northern wards of Portsmouth as well as exceeding a digital audience of 500 people.

Project funding will directly support groups to continue meeting and creating after the residency, helping regular, neighbourhood-based activity to grow independently. This will be achieved by a £1,500 contribution to Creatful to support 9 months of continuation groups, and £2,100 to resource the start up of new peer led creative groups.

Volunteers and emerging facilitators will be upskilled to lead future sessions, strengthening grassroots networks and empowering local people to deliver their own cultural opportunities where they live.

The collaboration between Creatful and Think Big Do Bigger brings together complementary expertise in mindful, co-created practice and community arts facilitation, creating a strong foundation for sustainable, ward-level creativity. This partnership supports the Centenary vision and provides a replicable model that can spark new projects and collaborations long after the residency ends.

The project produces a short film and legacy toolkit which will be shared with Centenary stakeholders to inform future cultural delivery.

Post-residency, participants will have supported routes into continued creative practice, volunteering, and facilitation through Think Big Do Bigger and Creatful, ensuring the project's legacy is embedded across the city.

