

# Libraries and Social Prescribing Innovation

**Chaired by Dulcie Alexander**

Thriving Communities Fund  
Programme Manager

Arts Council England and National  
Academy for Social Prescribing

@NASPTweets

@nasp\_insta

#ThrivingCommunities



# Today we will be hearing from

Sue Williamson, Director of Libraries, Arts Council England

Ann Cleeves, author and founder of the 'Reading for Wellbeing' project

Sue Ball MBE, Library Development Manager, Staffordshire County Council

Graham Simpson & Mary Hearne, Active Luton

Rachel Marsden & Lisa Ford, Culture Coventry





**Libraries  
Connected**

## **Public Libraries and Social Prescribing**

**Sue Ball MBE**

**Libraries Development Manager  
Staffordshire County Council**



# **Public Libraries are at the Heart of Social Prescribing**

**Creating healthier, happier and  
connected individuals and communities**



## Creative Learning Opportunities

Free access to books, audio and e-resources

Family reading activities – Baby rhyme times,  
Summer Reading Challenge

Author events and reading promotions – World  
Book Night, World Book Day

Events – theatre productions, poetry workshops

Regular activities – Craft afternoons





## Evidenced Based and Quality Assured Frameworks

The Universal Health and Wellbeing Library Offer  
Reading Well booklists follow NICE clinical guidelines



## Community Connection and Support

Libraries as Community Help Points/Libraries of Sanctuary

Events and activities, social support groups – knit and natter, reading groups, baby rhyme times, Places of Welcome, Reading Friends

Non-stigmatized physical public spaces

Digital access and support

Volunteering





## Impact

On the person:

90% of Reading Well users say it helps them better understand their health needs

Rhyme times have a positive effect on the mood and mental wellbeing of mothers (increased by 18%)

On the health and care system:

Health professionals say Reading Well support people outside consultation time (89% agree) to understand more about their condition (89% agree)

On community groups:

Reading group members feel more connected to other people because of being part of a reading group (84% agree)





**Graham Simpson & Mary Hearne**  
Active Luton



# Active Luton & Luton Libraries

## Thriving Communities in Luton



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# Luton – The town and Library Context



Luton – demographic, deprivation, topography and digital access. The town is a priority investment location for the Arts Council.



Central library, plus four branch libraries open.



Historic core offer from health information points to partnership working.



Previous projects, including Libraries Opportunity Fund: Well and Wise.

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# Reach & Outputs

Promoting through partnerships; Link Workers, wider Total Wellbeing services, other Library and horticultural activities; the wider VCS in Luton including Luton Access.

Leafleting important – through Link workers Libraries and VCS services. Some social media but targeted at VCS supporting our priority communities. No blanket approach in order to protect spaces for target audiences.

The programme is now supporting 66 clients on a weekly basis across 10 different activities.

Key demographics of those attending include: 84% Female; 58% from culturally diverse communities; 55% direct referrals from Link Workers; 14% from promotional material and 31% from other library services.

Numbers engaging are now growing quickly as awareness of the programme has become established and confidence within Social Prescription services has grown.



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# Challenges and Successes



## Challenges include:

- The pandemic.
- Programmes scheduling – Seasonality.
- Awareness amongst link workers and referral agencies.

## Successes include:

- Establishing a structure that educated the referral pathways and provided opportunities for them to feed into the process and content, and also take part.
- Providing a broad, well-designed offer made available across Luton's library portfolio ( access really important given audience and towns topography)
- Adapting the programme content to take into consideration timings around environmental conditions – for example scheduling content between 11am and 3pm during the winter months.
- Focusing our promotion through those services supporting our priority audiences so that the opportunities get to those that need it most.
- Putting in place good people to develop and oversee the various offers.
- Staying together as a strategic and delivery group, supporting each other and remaining resilient and optimistic in response to the challenges we have faced.

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Luton  
Libraries

# What has been valuable?



- A timetable of activities easily accessible online.
- Having a coordinator for the programme who they could introduce clients to, confirm the booking with the service user and provide additional information as required.
- The course deliverers being available to speak directly to service users about the content of the programme.
- The variety of arts and cultural activities that have been made programmed
- The location of activities and linking these in with the PCN that they are serving.
- Many of the smaller groups and organisations that they were referring to prior to the pandemic are no longer running. Thriving Communities has helped to fill in the gaps.

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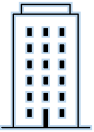


# The Cultural Producer

## About Me



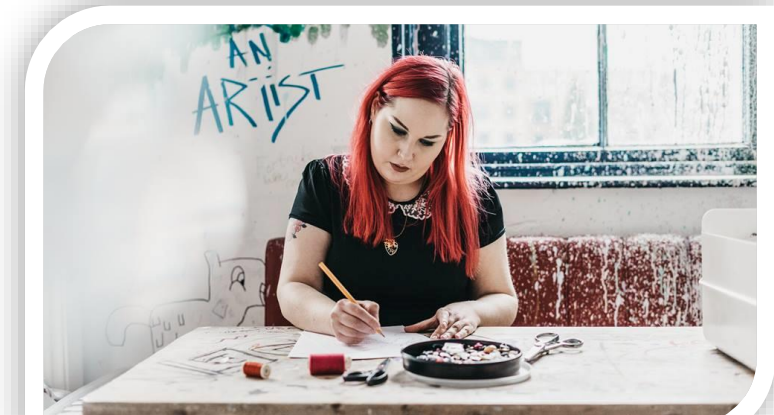
Arts Programme Producer, Textile Artist, and Workshop Facilitator.



Living and working in Luton



Arts in health, social justice, politics.



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## The Role

- Lived experience of the process
- Local creative knowledge
- Lead Artists
- Other projects/initiatives.
- Already a friendly face for some attendees
- People person/Flexibility
- Experience in leading activities

## Benefits to my Practice

- Growth in Disability advocacy
- Informs my own art practice
- Network



# The Cultural Producer

## Our Town

- Strong network of place-based, applied artists in the town
- Past Investment / Place of priority
- Diverse town with lots of cultures and traditions e.g. Carnival, Mela, St. Patrick's day parade etc.
- Being part of libraries means that there is already established trust with low-income communities etc.



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# The Cultural Producer

## Activities

### Fitness

- Yoga
- Pilates
- Ramblers Walk Leaders Training

### Horticulture

- Conservation
- Volunteer Gardeners & More

### Art

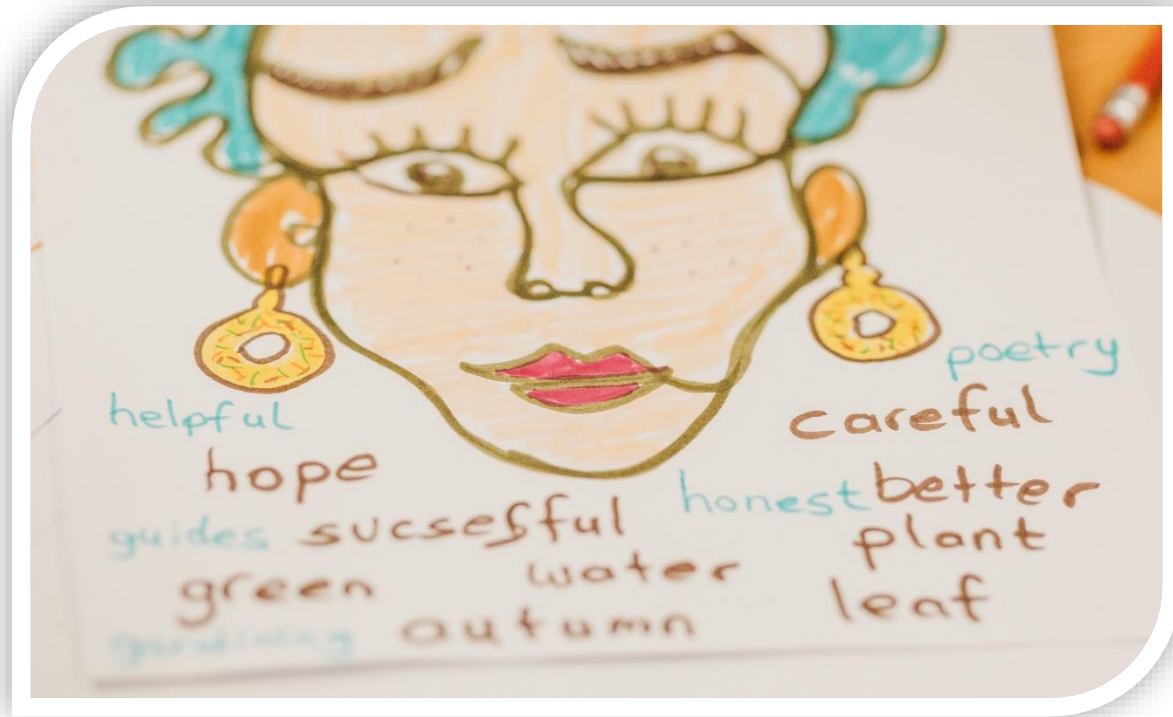
- Mosaic
- Glass Painting
- Crafts Inspired by Nature
- Drawing
- Puppet Making
- Interactive Portraits & More



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# What Our Clients Say?



"To me, all of you have been so supportive, gentle, it was so lovely, I feel like I am being listened to and understood, there is help there, there is hope there"

– Client 1

"I love it, I go to all the classes, this is a creative, healing and safe space"

– Client 2

"Today's workshop was fun, relaxing and therapeutic"

– Janice

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# The Cultural Producer

## Future

- Social Prescribing Week - ACE and NASP visit on 8<sup>th</sup> March
- Planning to sustain the programme beyond the initial funding period. – to build on the momentum
- Legacy of the project and the arts in health model – attendees turned into volunteers.

## Promoting our work ...

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Su3ilbgzLQA>



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# Any Questions ?



## Project Contacts

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Mary Hearne – Cultural Producer  
[mary.hearne@Hotmail.co.uk](mailto:mary.hearne@Hotmail.co.uk)

Anna Simmons – Head of Luton Libraries  
[Anna.simmons@lutonlibraries.co.uk](mailto:Anna.simmons@lutonlibraries.co.uk)



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**Rachel Marsden & Lisa Ford**  
Culture Coventry



# Thriving Communities in Coventry

Tile Hill Library, Coventry Libraries

Lisa Ford - [lisa.ford@culturecoventry.com](mailto:lisa.ford@culturecoventry.com)

Rachel Marsden - [rachel.marsden@culturecoventry.com](mailto:rachel.marsden@culturecoventry.com)



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# Culture Coventry

- Coventry Transport Museum, home to the world's largest collection of British road transport, including the two fastest cars in the world.
- The award-winning Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, which celebrates the city's culture, history and arts.
- The Lunt Roman Fort, a fully excavated and partially reconstructed turf and timber fort, including the only gyrus in the Roman Empire.



COVENTRY  
**Transport**  
MUSEUM

[www.transport-museum.com](http://www.transport-museum.com)



 LUNT  
ROMAN  
FORT

[www.luntromanfort.org](http://www.luntromanfort.org)



**Herbert**  
Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry

[www.theherbert.org](http://www.theherbert.org)

# One Coventry (2016-2024)

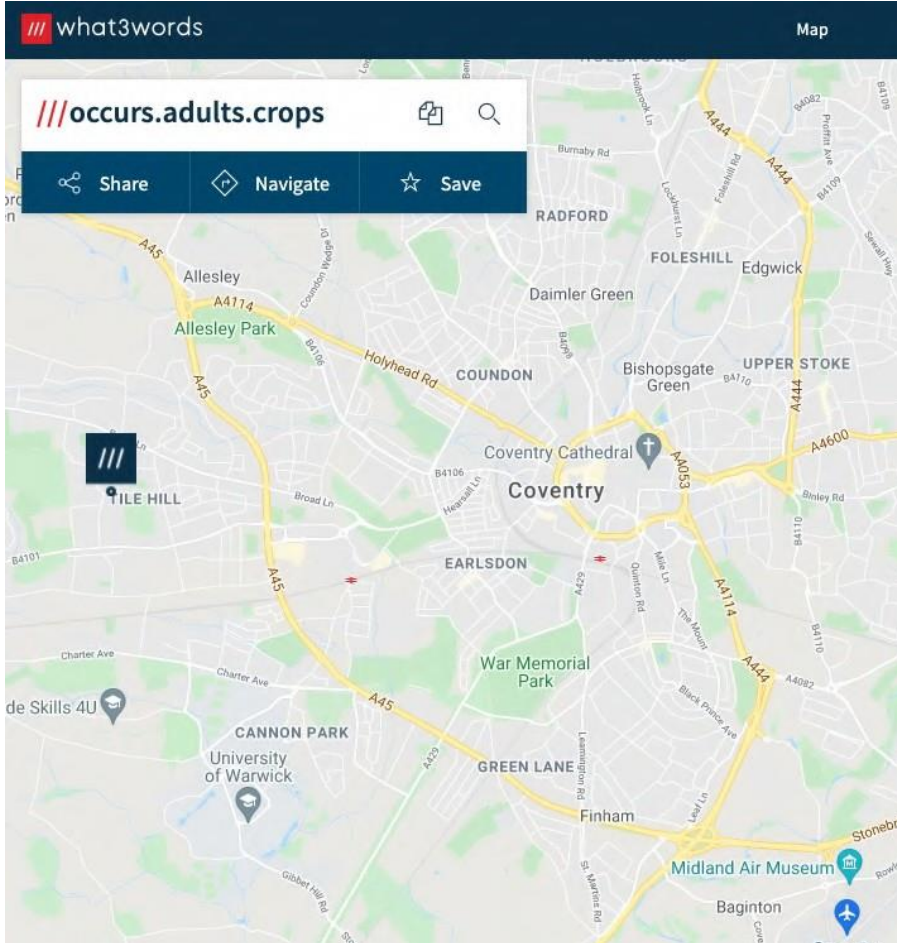
## Locally committed by:

- Creating the infrastructure for the city to grow and thrive;
- Increasing access to arts, sports and cultural opportunities;
- Creating an attractive, cleaner and greener city;
- Improving health and wellbeing;
- Reducing health inequalities;
- Working together with residents, communities and partners, enabling people to do more for themselves.

# ONE COVENTRY Council Plan 2016-24



# Tile Hill Library, Coventry



# Reminiscence sessions, Tile Hill Library



## **Activity: Handling collections from the museum**

Each month exploring a new theme led by participants.  
For example, WW2, the Royal Family,  
seaside holidays, Britain since 1930s...



## **Audience: Age 55+ in Tile Hill area**

Future development of reminiscence resource boxes, for use  
at other venues and organisations.

# Open Call for a Coventry Artist or Collective

## Open Call for a Coventry Artist or Collective

### Commission for Thriving Communities: Tile Hill Library Project



The Tile Hill Library Project is part of the Thriving Communities Fund (Arts Council England), which aims to support local voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise (VCFSE) projects that bring together place-based partnerships to improve and increase social prescribing community activities – especially for those people most impacted by COVID 19 and health inequalities. These partnerships seek to embed long-term collaboration and sharing of practice at a local level, between organisations across the arts and culture; sport, leisure and physical activity; nature and the environment; financial wellbeing, advice, food and practical support; and health and care.

The Tile Hill Library Project is seeking to commission a local artist or collective to work collaboratively with individuals, community groups and library staff to renew the library's outdoor courtyard space.



#### Contract Description:

The Tile Hill Library Project is seeking to commission a local artist or collective to work collaboratively with individuals, community groups and library staff to renew the library's outdoor courtyard space. This will be informed by the delivery of eight half-day, creative, community-focused workshops. The workshops are to give participants a sense of pride and ownership over what will be created for this public space. The eight half-day workshops will take place in April, May and

June 2022, in the outdoor courtyard space behind the library (weather permitting) or inside Tile Hill Library. In these sessions, the artist or collective will work with participants from the local community.

- Renewal of the outdoor courtyard space
- 8 x 1/2 day workshops
- Material, production and installation
- £4,000.00 commission fee
- Deadline 23 February, 5pm



# Social Prescribing Showcase Event, 7 December 2021



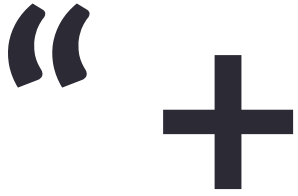
## Coventry Transport Museum

Service providers and organisations to meet social prescribers/link workers/PCN teams.



## Presentations and Workshops

Including Think Active, Hope For the Community, NASP, Try It! programme at City of Culture Trust, and Culture Coventry.



Beneficial conversations with community organisers and link workers/care providers.

A great way to link with cross-sector organisations and discuss common issues.

It has been very useful for networking. A good platform for connecting.

Lots of information about local services, meeting people face-to-face, a chance to network.

It was good to meet new practitioners and makes them aware of our offer.

A fantastic opportunity to connect and find opportunities for our clients.

Made lots of connections we didn't know about.

“ &

Could it be an annual event?

Could it be open to delegates from community organisations who would also signpost to these services?

More coffee and more food. Hashtag for the event and social media presence before.

Time is valuable for delivery so it would need to involve new, fresh people to add value.

I was surprised to not hear about the event via another route, so perhaps wider promotion to providers?

We would like a regular event! Would love more presentations/workshops as well.



# Thank You

Lisa Ford - [lisa.ford@culturecoventry.com](mailto:lisa.ford@culturecoventry.com)

Rachel Marsden - [rachel.marsden@culturecoventry.com](mailto:rachel.marsden@culturecoventry.com)



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Q&A





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# Thank you

Join us at our upcoming webinars and events:

**Health Inequalities** - Monday 7 March as part of Social Prescribing Week

**Addiction and Social Prescribing** - Tuesday 22 March

**Social Prescribing Day** - Friday 4 March either in person at the Southbank Centre or virtually (booking via SB Centre website)

More details and to catch up with previous sessions see our website:  
[socialprescribingacademy.org.uk/thriving-communities-webinars](https://socialprescribingacademy.org.uk/thriving-communities-webinars)



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## Get in touch

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