

# **Creativity. Community. Culture.**



Creative organisations across Sunderland are using UK Shared Prosperity Fund investment to deliver ambitious, community-led projects that are transforming neighbourhoods and inspiring pride of place.

This quarterly round-up highlights just some of the creative activity supported since April and highlights coming up between July and September 2025.



Since 2014, The Cultural Spring has worked across South Tyneside and Sunderland, working with inspiring local, regional and national artists to bring workshops, performances and subsidised cultural experiences, and leave a lasting legacy of communities interested in the arts.

Thanks to UKSPF funding, they are now delivering A Space to Create - a project supporting community venues across Sunderland to run more creative activities for local people. From hands-on workshops to large-scale outdoor events, this initiative empowers venues to experiment and develop programmes that reflect local interests and needs.

Find out more about A Space to Create in this [short film](#).

## Highlights:

- ICOS (International Community of Sunderland) hosted their first-ever event at the Sunderland Food & Drink Festival—a Polish Mushroom Feast in collaboration with Threads in the Ground and Sabina Sallis.
- The Box Youth & Community Project delivered Go & See visits during May half-term, with trips to Sunderland Empire and National Glass Centre.
- Sunderland Headlight worked with animator Scott Tyrrell and service users to create 'Any One of Us', a short film challenging mental health stigma. Watch the film here: [Any one of us](#).
- Girls from Training & Education Farm's filmmaking group created 'Hoofbeats and Heartbeats', a film exploring wellbeing on a community farm. Watch it here: [Hoofbeats and Heartbeats](#)



## Coming Up:

- A Space to Create venues continue to programme new activity and recruit artists.
- Washington Millennium Centre will host a community consultation event on 17 July to co-design their upcoming creative programme.
- The Box Youth & Community Project has a summer of creative activities including a Go & See visit to Sunderland Empire, sea glass & beach recycling, graffiti, sculpture, bottle art, portraiture and lots more! There will be an end of summer art exhibition of the work created in late August at Doxford Park Community Centre.

Find out more: <https://theculturalspring.org>

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Sunderland  
Heritage  
Partnership

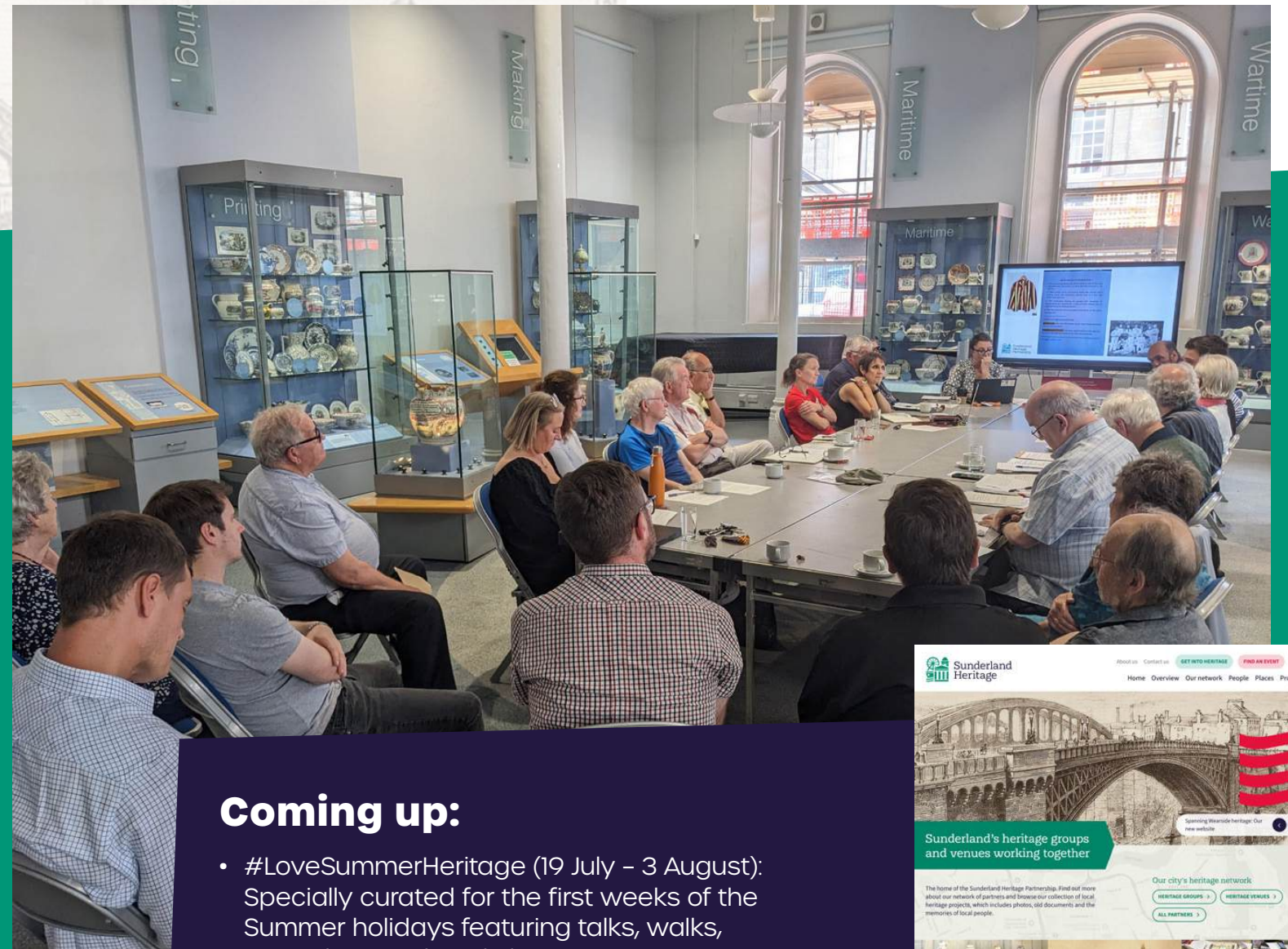
**Creativity. Community. Culture.**

The Sunderland Heritage Partnership brings together more than 30 organisations, venues, societies and individuals to raise the profile of Sunderland as a heritage destination. Through collaborative working, the Partnership aims to engage new and younger audiences with Sunderland's rich history and to protect its heritage assets for future generations. The partnership programs regular meetings, workshops, events and festivals.

## Highlights:

- The Partnership launched a new website created in collaboration with partner organisations. It includes a growing directory of local heritage organisations, events and archive content across Sunderland, Washington and the Coalfields.  
Visit: <https://sunderlandheritage.org>
- Monthly gatherings at Sunderland Museum & Winter Gardens continue to thrive, with record attendance from over 25 local groups, venues and organisations.

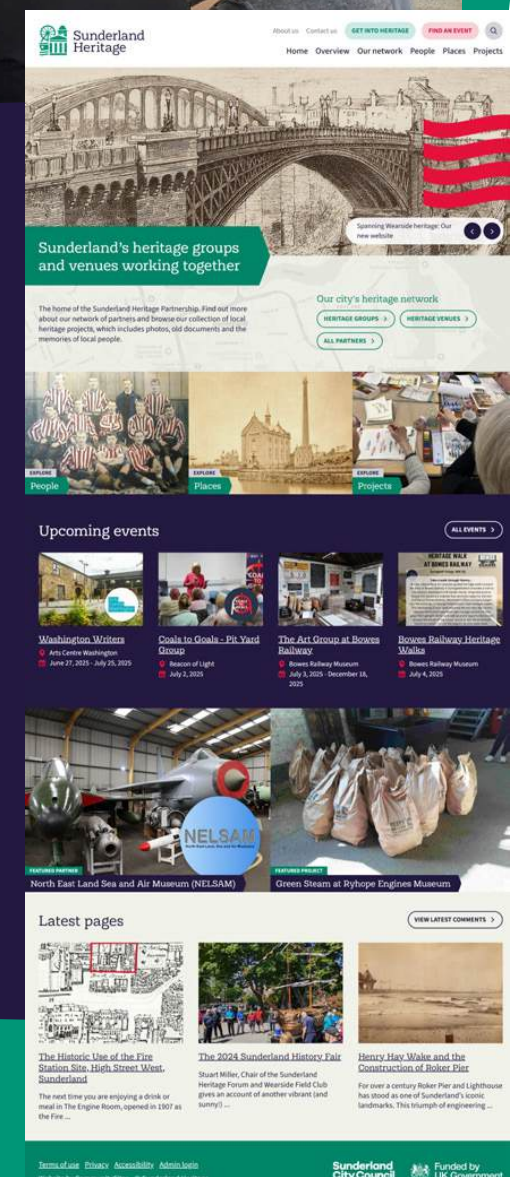
Photo credit: Courtesy of Sunderland Heritage Partnership



## Coming up:

- #LoveSummerHeritage (19 July – 3 August): Specially curated for the first weeks of the Summer holidays featuring talks, walks, open days and workshops at venues across Sunderland.
- Launch of a new series of public heritage 'socials', including workshops on mapping trails and digitising family photos and documents.
- Sunderland's Heritage Open Days programme (12–21 Sept), curated by the Partnership and offering free events and open access across the city.

Find out more and access the full programme:  
<https://sunderlandheritage.org>





Culture House is delivering an exciting programme of exhibitions, events and creative outreach across Sunderland's library network, supported by UKSPF funding. With a focus on early years, older adults and young people, the activity aims to build literacy, reduce isolation and grow community connection through creativity.

## Highlights:

- A vibrant series of exhibitions and events took place at the Expo Pavilion in Keel Square, including Threads in the Ground (Mushroom Sculpt), the Holocaust Memorial Day national exhibition, Migrating Lines, and the Sunderland Shorts Film Festival poster showcase. Local artists and collectives featured include Albert Bennett-Cowell, Six Twenty, Art in the Park and Pink Collar Gallery.
- The 10th edition of Sunderland Shorts Film Festival presented 27 screenings and 12 workshops across city venues including David Puttnam Cinema, Pop Recs and Omniplex, attracting over 600 attendees.
- Across Easter and May half-term, library outreach sessions supported over 65s with social groups, digital creativity and family tree workshops. Bi-monthly visits encouraged wider participation in city-wide cultural activities.
- Early years programmes such as Rhyme and Shine ran weekly across three sites, supported by storytelling sessions and Family Hub outreach to promote literacy from the earliest stages.
- School holiday and weekly activities for children and young people included Lego coding, digital art, crafts, creative writing with King Ink, and gaming sessions at Washington Library.



## Coming up:

- A packed summer programme across City Library and the Creative Smart City Hubs in Houghton and Washington, offering free creative opportunities for children and young people aged 0-18. Activities include VR experiences, music-making, film screenings, stop motion animation, crafts and more.

Find out more and book:  
[culturehousesunderland.co.uk/events](https://culturehousesunderland.co.uk/events)

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MINERVA  
ARTS & WELLBEING

**Creativity. Community. Culture.**

Minerva Arts & Wellbeing is driven by a deep commitment to high-quality, inclusive arts education and supporting wellbeing through creativity. Their projects emphasise skills development, confidence building, and long-term community resilience.

### Highlights:

- With UKSPF support, Minerva delivered two beginner and two intermediate ceramics courses in Sunnyside. These welcoming, hands-on sessions provided a space for creativity, connection and learning—and made a measurable difference to participants' confidence and wellbeing.
- Working in partnership with ICOS, Minerva delivered tailored activities for people experiencing isolation following the 2024 race riots. These included access to advice and guidance, referrals to other services, and support in accessing community-based cultural opportunities.



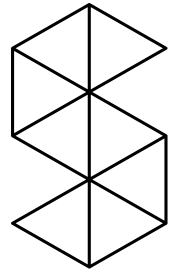
### Coming up:

- Between July and September, Minerva will run a diverse set of creative taster sessions in fused glass, fragrance making, ceramics, batik and textiles, designed to offer participants a chance to explore and try their hand at new creative disciplines in an accessible and welcoming environment.
- Participant feedback from these sessions will help shape the next phase of Minerva's programme, ensuring it remains responsive and relevant to community needs.

Find out more:

<https://www.minervaartsandwellbeing.com>

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# SUNDERLAND CULTURE

**Creativity. Community. Culture.**

Sunderland Culture brings together some of Wearside's most cherished and important cultural venues and activities, and works to realise the ambition of a city brimming with creative potential.

Sunderland Culture delivers a programme of events and participatory activities in communities across Sunderland, including the creative programmes in Arts Centre Washington, National Glass Centre, Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art and Sunderland Museum & Winter Gardens.

## Highlights:

- 2448 children and young people took part in school learning sessions across our venues, exploring collections, glass and contemporary visual art.
- 5727 families and adults took part in a fun and engaging programme of events and activities around venues and in community spaces, from Youth Theatre to Creative Age projects, Mini Science Clubs to Glass Fused Animals
- Over 1400 people watched Public Record – Sunderland Culture's project with National Theatre and Sunderland Empire, and a cast of 100 community performers to lift the roof off The Fire Station with the sound of Sunderland. Featuring music from The Futureheads' Ross Millard, an incredible line up of local legends from Sunderland's music scene, professional dancers and community groups.
- 857 children and young people who face significant barriers to taking part, were able to access free, fun, creative activities through Culture Start.



## Coming up:

Families on Wearside can look forward to a packed programme of events and activities over the summer from Ceramics and Glass Fusing, Wellbeing Wednesdays and Terrific Train Trails to Bright Lights Young Artists Summer School. **Find out more.**

A diverse and welcoming programme for adults to be creative to suit all levels and interests, including singing, dancing, different visual arts classes, glassmaking, jewellery making, ceramics, mindfulness sessions and more. **Find out more.**

Find out more: <https://www.sunderlandculture.org.uk>

Follow us: **Facebook** | **Instagram**





# Celebrating Impact. Shaping Futures.

The Connecting and Catalysing Our Culture, Creativity & Engagement Project is made possible through funding from the UK Government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund via Sunderland City Council.

Over the next year, this programme will support hundreds of creative events and community-led activities that help Sunderland's people and places to thrive.

"Taking part in the project gave me the confidence to try something new - I never thought I'd be able to make something like this."

Workshop participant