

**JULIE'S
BICYCLE**



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

LEADING RESILIENCE PROGRAMMES

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2024-26

CREATIVE.CLIMATE.ACTION

ABOUT JULIE'S BICYCLE

Julie's Bicycle is a non-profit uniting **culture, creativity and climate action** to drive change.

For nearly two decades, we've been at the forefront of the creative climate movement – one of the first to position culture as a powerful force for radical change. Our mission is to mobilise the creative sector, equipping thousands of artists, cultural organisations, and creative leaders with the tools, knowledge, and confidence needed to transform their practice into climate action.

We focus on tackling the root causes of the climate, nature, and justice crises by shaping thinking, informing policy, and scaling practical solutions. Together, we can turn creativity into a powerful force for a just and regenerative future.



INTRODUCTION

Across the arts and cultural sector, a growing movement of organisations and practitioners are already building deep connections with the communities most impacted by climate change, holding space for difficult conversations and helping people **co-create the adaptation strategies** and responses they actually need. As climate risks intensify, the pathway to building resilience is through **centring equity and inclusivity** to respond to what matters locally, both now and for the future.

We designed our **Leading Resilience programme** to support creative organisations and networks to understand the roles they could play in co-creating better futures, and how to take practical steps to adapt, build stronger partnerships, and lead climate resilience efforts in their communities.

In 2026, Julie's Bicycle delivered two place-based programme strands: **Adaptive Futures: Bradford** and the **Creative Climate Accelerator Bradford**, both part of the Environmental Responsibility programme delivered for, and in partnership with, Arts Council England.

Written by Vicky Sword-Daniels and Hannah Graham, Arts Council England Environmental Programme Leads at Julie's Bicycle



OUR BRADFORD PROGRAMMES

Building on our place-based pilot **Resilient Horizons** in 2024-25 – in collaboration with 15 Creative People and Places consortia across England to develop community-led climate adaptation responses – we wanted to deepen our work within a single context.

WHILE WE HAD SEEN EXAMPLES OF CREATIVE PRACTITIONERS AND ORGANISATIONS UNCOVERING DIFFERENTIAL CLIMATE IMPACTS IN COMMUNITIES, RAISING AWARENESS, AND ENVISIONING ALTERNATIVE CLIMATE FUTURES, WE ALSO IDENTIFIED A NEED FOR COORDINATED PARTNERSHIPS TO DRIVE LONG-TERM, COMMUNITY-LED ADAPTATION.

WE DESIGNED OUR BRADFORD PROGRAMMES, ADAPTIVE FUTURES AND CREATIVE CLIMATE ACCELERATOR, TO RESPOND TO THIS NEED.



Image: Karol Wyszynski

CASE STUDY I

ADAPTIVE FUTURES: BRADFORD

In this programme strand, we wanted to work in a **collaborative, connected and locally grounded way**, and we wanted to support practitioners to integrate justice and diversity as a core part of developing local culturally-led climate responses.

Whilst our Resilient Horizons pilot was delivered online, we decided to engage in person in Bradford. This enabled us to better understand and respond to the local context, allowing time for trust and relationships to develop and to create experiential opportunities for participants to explore creative approaches.

To enable greater creative freedom throughout the process, we chose to design spaces to cultivate a sense of safety, relevance, connection, bravery and joy – both in the room and in the work.

CREATIVE CLIMATE ACCELERATOR

The Creative Climate Accelerator is a training programme for underrepresented groups within the cultural sector that aims to support creative and community freelancers and practitioners to step into climate leadership. By running both the Adaptive Futures programme and the Creative Climate Accelerator programme in parallel and in the same location, we aimed to strengthen the outcomes of both, **enhancing connectivity, opportunity and leadership** across the cultural ecosystem.

To select where we would deliver the two programmes, we shared our outcomes-based approach with the Area Leads at Arts Council England. Together, we assessed potential regions against a specific set of criteria, including: alignment with local council climate strategies, the presence of cultural organisations active in community-based environmental work, and existing regional culture-climate networks to boost engagement. Following this process of benchmarking and consulting with local authorities, we selected Bradford as our primary focus area.

UNDERSTANDING CULTURE IN THE CITY

In 2025 Bradford hosted the City of Culture, and legacy is a key focus for the city council. Bradford has a vibrant cultural sector, one that is meaningfully connected with the communities they work with. Bradford has a diverse community with a young population, and like many other UK cities, it is experiencing the challenges of unemployment, food security, lack of secure housing, and connectivity across the city.

Communities most affected by these issues also lack access to green spaces, affecting air pollution levels, urban heat and both access to and connection with nature. Community climate manifestos in Bradford include calls for more green spaces, healthier environments, inclusive activities, prioritising education for children's futures, reliable, clean and safe public transport, community safety, and local food growing.

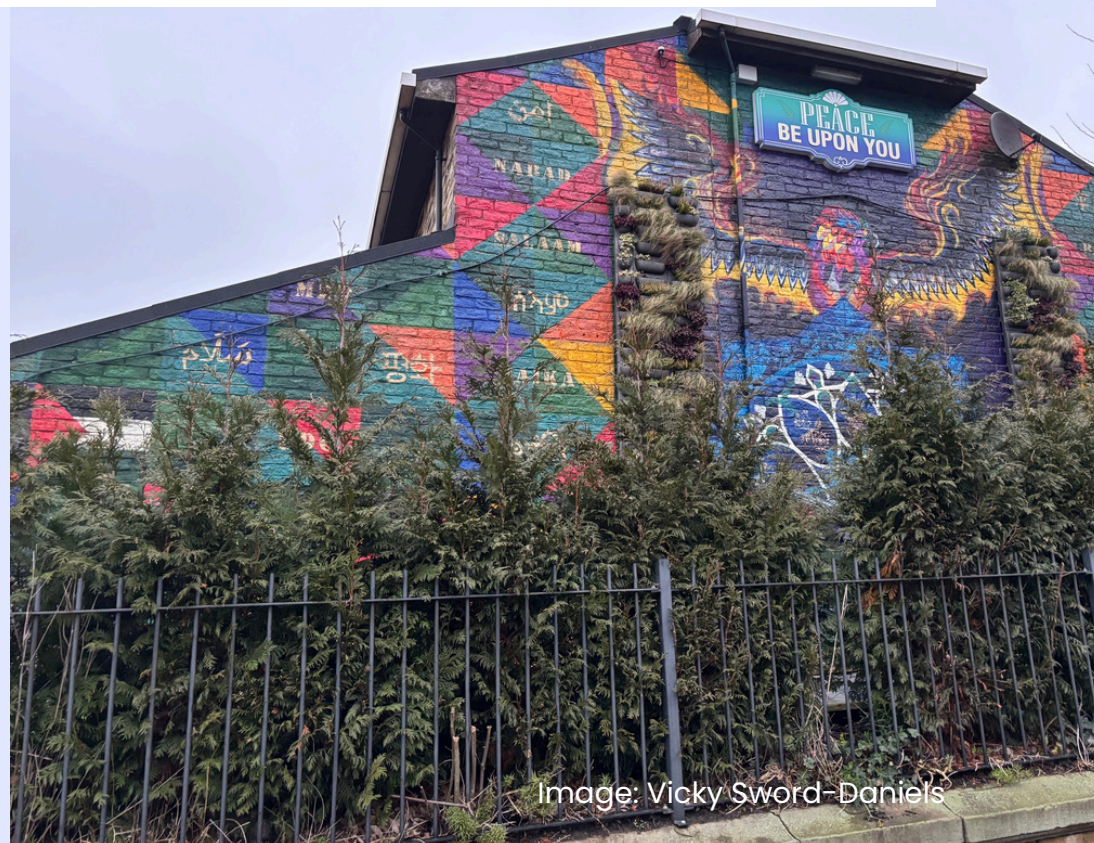


Image: Vicky Sword-Daniels

In the build-up to delivering our programmes, we followed an extensive process of engagement over several months, which was key to the success of the programme.

We actively engaged with local organisations and aligned with ongoing, creatively led climate and cultural networks. We built collaborations through in-person meetings in October and November 2025, digital outreach, and active participation in city-wide initiatives and events. We ran a stand-alone workshop in November 2025 to engage with local organisations and freelancers, to demonstrate our approach and to gauge interests and needs, to be able to tailor our design. We continued to connect with more organisations in the months and weeks before our programmes began.

During this time, we uncovered a familiar truth: organisations engaged in working with various communities with similar core values and intentions had little to no connection with each other.

**PROJECTS THAT COULD HAVE STRENGTHENED ONE ANOTHER
WEREN'T LINKED, AND IN SOME CASES WEREN'T AWARE OF EACH
OTHER'S EXISTENCE. YET THE RICHNESS, AMBITION AND EXPERTISE
IN THE ROOM WAS STRIKING.**

We knew that an outcome of this work would be more connectivity across these organisations and individuals, which is a core need for long-term adaptation work.



Image: Vicky Sword-Daniels

FORGING CONNECTIONS

From the outset, our focus was to engage and upskill cultural workers and their partners to strengthen Bradford's climate resilience. To achieve this, we worked across Bradford's broader cultural ecosystem, uniting creative practitioners, third-sector partners, and community leaders. These included galleries, museums, theatre, art studios, faith and community groups and centres, wildlife restoration and outdoor space groups, freelance artists, and community-led cultural projects.

Leveraging their deep local connections, this collaborative network explored creative ways for engaging with the lived realities of climate change, unlocking culture's unique potential to drive meaningful, transformative possibilities for the city.

We found that a focus on the future can inspire creativity and imagination that can be prototyped and explored through different art forms, opening space for groups to engage with alternative possibilities.

**DRAWING ON HERITAGE, CULTURAL WISDOM, AND
DIFFERENT FORMS OF KNOWLEDGE, AND VALUING THEM
AS A SET OF SHARED STRENGTHS CAN BUILD AGENCY TO
PLAN AHEAD AS A DIVERSE COLLECTIVE.**



We designed both programmes to have whole days of connection between them – both at the start to create connections and shared learning, and at the end, to solidify and surface emerging patterns of alignment and for partnership possibilities to emerge. We designed each programme to meet the needs and interests of the cohorts.

Both programmes ran from January to April 2026 with five sessions each, in a mixture of in-person and online formats.





THE PROGRAMME TEAM – VICKY SWORD-DANIELS, HANNAH GRAHAM AND FARAH AHMED – BROUGHT SPECIALIST EXPERTISE IN CLIMATE ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE, CREATIVE FACILITATION, CULTURAL STRATEGY AND CLIMATE JUSTICE.

WE EXPLORED ADAPTATION THROUGH THE LENS OF CULTURE, AND THE PROGRAMME TEAM CREATED A NEW CREATIVE ADAPTATION FRAMEWORK, TRANSLATING CULTURAL AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE OUTCOMES INTO WORK THAT ALIGNS WITH THE LOCAL OUTCOMES NEEDED FOR EACH PLACE.

WE USED THIS FRAMEWORK TO GUIDE THE ENGAGEMENT PROCESS, REVISITING IT THROUGHOUT THE SESSIONS TO DEEPEN LEARNING.



IN THE ROOM: SHAPING THE SESSIONS

Our approach to delivery was as intentional as the work, without over-designing the space we encouraged co-design and feedback throughout. We mostly used the hall space at Bradford Arts Centre, though we were nowhere near the max 70-person capacity. This work needs space, literally and metaphorically and whilst on the ground work might not always be offered that luxury, we wanted to explore how we, by arranging the room to encourage openness and conversation, broke down any perceived hierarchy between us.

We had a 'bike rack' (a nod to Julie's Bicycle) for parking ideas that need future exploration, a reflections board, and a ritual of reviewing our group contract before in person sessions. Tables were set for doodling, with images and case studies spread around and often covered with biscuit crumbs and empty tea cups by lunchtime. We had catered for dietary needs, however we had forgotten about ordering gluten-free biscuits! This small but important detail was shared back to us anonymously in our feedback board and changed by the next week.

Other reflections and feedback over time followed a similar pattern, ensuring both the work and the conditions for working were iterative and responsive.



Images: Karol Wyszynski

Our first full-day workshop focused on connecting to and understanding place, local knowledge, projects, and the foundations of climate justice and adaptation. We also explored principles for adaptive futures, alongside an immersive audio experience made in Bradford.

Following this, our Creative Climate Accelerator cohort explored biodiversity, material systems and imagination infrastructures.

The Adaptive Futures cohort examined local climate futures and local connection, cultural routes to adapting within place, systemic drivers of inequality and explored creative forms as a force for change.

Throughout the programmes, we kept the sessions flexible to enable us to revisit and solidify content, dive deeper into areas needing further discussion, or allow for more peer discussion on new learning, concepts and ideas.

As a small team, we reflected together on what worked, what landed, what needed scaffolding to land differently next time, what we needed to include in the future. We sought and then included feedback from people in every session, and as trust grew, so did the groups' confidence to share with us how we might adapt delivery next time. We made our focus on learning, and commitment to experimenting with approaches clear. This sense of 'all being in it together' fostered a creative and co-design atmosphere in these spaces.

**READ OUR BLOG TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT OUR
WORKSHOPS IN BRADFORD.**

Our final one-day workshop brought both programmes together again for reconnecting, creative inspiration, project planning, role play exercises, and sharing new and next ideas across programmes.



BECKY ULLAH JOINED OUR FINAL WORKSHOP AND CREATED SKETCH NOTES OF THE THEMES AND PROJECTS EMERGING FROM THE PROGRAMMES.

REFLECTIONS AND NEXT STEPS

In the first and last sessions, participants were asked to rate their understanding of climate adaptation, the roles that arts and culture can play in supporting communities to adapt, and their connection to other people doing this work in Bradford. The group shifted positively on all aspects, and following the final workshop, chose to create a network to continue to share opportunities and support each other in this work.

THE GROUP TOLD US THAT THEY FELT MORE CONNECTED TO ONE ANOTHER, HAD A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORK AND THE POSSIBILITIES FOR IT, PLUS A SENSE OF BEING A PART OF A COMMUNITY WORKING ON SOMETHING DEEPLY IMPORTANT.

Our Creative Adaptation Framework helped translate and guide people's thinking and deepen understanding of this work. The space to engage with this throughout the process, create new ways of encountering it, opportunities for experiential learning and practical project planning, demystified and distilled an already-deep understanding of how to do this work within communities, and brought imagined futures into achievable practice.

We will continue to follow-up with and support Bradford's emerging network of creative and cultural leaders in developing community-focused adaptation projects. We will share more of this work as it emerges and takes shape in the months and years to come.



Images: Karol Wyszynski



CASE STUDY 2

RESILIENT HORIZONS

In 2024-25, Julie's Bicycle delivered a pilot programme, **Resilient Horizons**, as part of the Environmental Responsibility programme delivered for, and in partnership with, Arts Council England.

Throughout 2023-24, we undertook a period of learning about the cultural sector's engagement with climate adaptation and resilience. We spoke to organisations leading creative engagement on adaptation, conducted research to find examples of adaptive responses, engaged with the sector through both webinars and peer-share spaces, and commissioned a literature review of published creative and cultural resilience projects and practices. From this learning, we designed the Resilient Horizons pilot programme in 2024-25.

Creative organisations embedded in their community are uniquely positioned to foster resilience to climate change. For Resilient Horizons, we partnered with 15 Creative People and Places (CPP) consortia projects across England - all were deeply connected and trusted within their place contexts.

Together, we explored how resilience and adaptation could build upon their existing creative programmes, or nature and food growing-focused projects. With our support, they embarked on a journey to explore possible community-led approaches to climate adaptation, both collectively and tailored to their specific local contexts.



Image: Vicky Sword-Daniels

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The Arts Council England's CPP programme prioritises cultural activities that are led and shaped by local people, aiming to boost arts participation in areas where engagement falls well below the national average. These are often the same communities most exposed to climate-related challenges, such as high levels of pollution, flooding and overheating, plus the impacts on health and wellbeing.

We brought together the creative leads of those organisations to explore how future-focused ideas could be introduced in ways that are relevant and accessible to their communities. This approach aimed to foster meaningful conversations about climate adaptation, grounded in local experience, identity and cultural expression.

We delivered our Resilient Horizons programme over six online sessions introducing the key aspects of resilience and adaptation. We also used these sessions to set the context for why 'community' (i.e groups formed through connection to place, identity, culture) input is crucial and must reflect the needs and strengths of local people.

To select our consortia for Resilient Horizons, we delivered an initial workshop during a wider CPP gathering in Barrow-in-Furness, in June 2024. We introduced our focus on local approaches to climate adaptation and resilience, and the role that creativity and culture can play in community resilience building.

We created activities using case studies of national, cultural projects that have successfully delivered this work in varied ways. This allowed us to gauge interest, understand the specific challenges and support needed, and informed the content of the subsequent workshops.

15
ORGANISATIONS
JOINED THE
PILOT



Image: Vicky Sword-Daniels

**AS A PILOT, A CO-CREATION
ELEMENT WAS KEY TO
DESIGNING WORKSHOPS
ALIGNED WITH EXISTING WAYS
OF WORKING, WHILE
INTRODUCING NEW CLIMATE
CONCEPTS.**



Image: Karol Wyszynski

Each week we asked for feedback on how the group was evolving their understanding and their needs for implementing this work. We kept the sessions flexible to enable us to go back over content, dive deeper into areas needing further discussion, or allow for more peer discussion on new learning, concepts and ideas.

The programme team – Vicky Sword-Daniels, Hannah Graham and Farah Ahmed – brought specialist expertise in climate adaptation and resilience, creative facilitation, cultural strategy and climate justice.

We explored adaptation through the lens of culture, and the programme team created a new Creative Adaptation Framework for engaging with adaptation and resilience work. We used this framework to guide the engagement process, revisiting it throughout the sessions to deepen learning.

CONNECTING DIVERSE VOICES ON CLIMATE

What was unique and interesting about this group was their geographical spread, which brought varied experiences and impacts felt from climate change. For example, some organisations were based in seaside towns already experiencing rising sea levels and subsequent flooding. Others were based in rural settings, which brought their own challenges, such as engaging meaningfully with landowners and discussing land use.

Because of this diversity, and because CPPs are community-led by definition, a session on communicating climate was crucial. We focused on understanding the leverage points for connecting with different people in society, from local counsellors to students, to find the right language to resonate, motivate and lead to action.

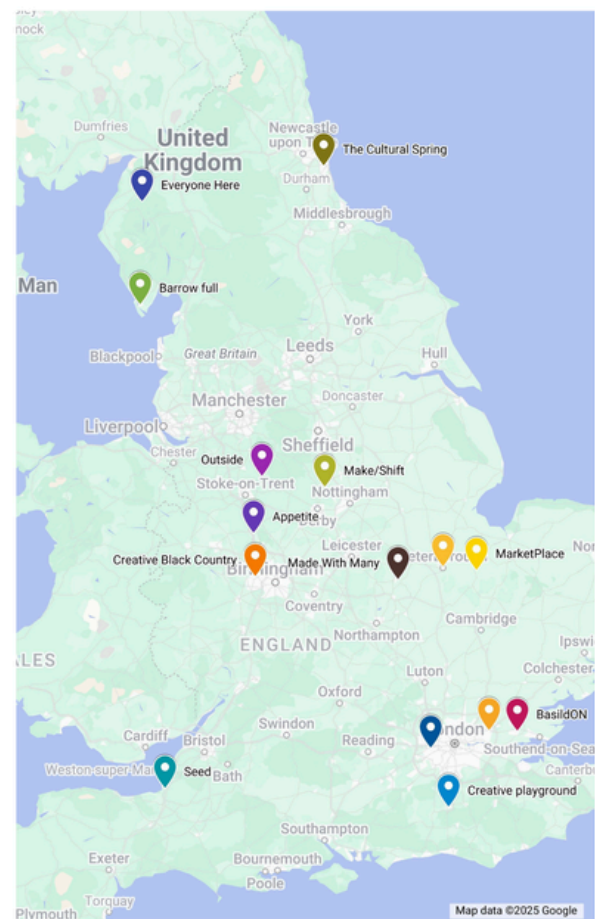
CPP PROJECT LOCATIONS



Image: Karol Wyszynski



- Appetite
- BarrowFull
- BasildON
- Creative Black Country
- Creative People & Places
- Hounslow
- Creative Playground
- Everyone Here
- Havering Changing
- Made With Many
- Make/Shift
- Market Place
- Outside
- Peterborough Presents
- Seed
- The Cultural Spring



We designed some sessions with homework, encouraging the group to go away and explore the website, tools and other resources we had introduced in the workshops. For example, participants learned how to research likely local climate futures and combine this knowledge with knowledge from local experts to gain a holistic understanding of both scientific data and lived experience.

By working together, the CPP consortia identified both similarities and differences between them that sparked valuable discussion in breakout rooms. This dialogue was crucial given that the work took place within an arts-led programme, focused on delivering artistic activities and specific engagement outcomes.

Moving towards long-term, community-led adaptation outcomes takes time, momentum and ongoing resources, which can be more difficult to achieve and measure within these programmes in the short term. It was crucial to create dedicated space for exploring how live projects connect across the geographies, integrate adaptation themes, or retrofit planned cultural activities to inspire future possibilities.



Image: Vicky Sword-Daniels

REFLECTIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Ultimately, both new and pre-developed project ideas evolved from the sessions. All centered on creating awareness of our changing environments, connecting to nature, celebrating heritage as a strength in adaptation, and creative activities to connect and develop community visions for the future.

Towards the end of the programme, we offered the group an opportunity to decide on a final session that could really help them to embed this work into their current or upcoming delivery plans. Some organisations saw direct links and possibilities, others were on the cusp of launching funding and curious about how they could build this into small community funding pots to try out new ideas. The final session then focused on the practicalities of writing this work into exciting artists' or creative briefs, to call for creative responses that engage communities and build climate adaptation into their projects and approaches. One organisation planned to develop a green book for arts projects to inform decision-making on commissioning artists' work and creative projects.



Image: Vicky Sword-Daniels

AFTER THE FINAL SESSION, THE GROUP TOLD US THAT THEY FELT A STRONGER COMMITMENT TO INCORPORATING CLIMATE CHANGE CONSIDERATIONS INTO THEIR WORK, AND FELT MORE CONFIDENT ABOUT TRYING OUT COMMUNITY-LED ADAPTATION RESPONSES.

Around the time the programme took place, the political landscape had become a more challenging context to do the work. Starting this pilot earlier may have improved outcomes. Despite this, CPPs shared that they had gained a new way of framing and communicating climate issues, and conveyed that they would like to continue to meet to share progress on the adaptation work and exchange ideas. They also valued inspiration from case studies and shared spaces to meet and hear from other CPPs.

Together they moved through challenges, made space for imagination and found space to weave this new learning where they could, united by a renewed sense of shared determination to creatively build resilience in the face of a changing climate.





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