

The recipients of Essex County Council's Arts and Cultural Fund for 2023 include:

Age Well East Ltd will develop a new Veterans' Choir formed of attendees from Colchester and Harwich Veterans' Friendship Groups, providing vital regular social connection for local ex-service personnel.

Chelmsford Community Radio CIC will run a new Radio Drama Festival with local schools, providing workshops on radio broadcasting, listening sessions and the recording of a new radio play broadcast online and on Chelmsford Community Radio.

Elevator Arts CIC will deliver 'Hidden Voices', a creative project in partnership with young carers' charity Kool Carers, working with young people aged 12 to 15 in Basildon to amplify voices of young carers and improve their mental health and wellbeing.

Essex Book Festival are leading a dedicated family and young people's mini festival under the banner of Midsummer Madness to be hosted at Cressing Temple Barns in Braintree.

Estuary Festival will host an artist residency on Canvey Island. Working closely with local communities, RSPB, Buglife and local community partners to develop a new public realm artwork in response to diverse local people's ideas and perspectives about the environment, nature, and ecology.

Fresh Air Festival will bring leading outdoor artists to perform at a series of community events in Tendring including Brightlingsea Free Music Festival, Brightlingsea Food and Drink Festival, Brightlingsea Regatta, Back to School Fun Day, and Brightlingsea Carnival.

Harlow Art Trust will deliver a high-quality programme of exciting and inspiring arts and cultural experiences in partnership with Harlow Creates to mark its 70th anniversary.

Laura Jean Healey will produce a new short film, 'After Ophelia', which will be used as a vehicle to promote filmmaking as a career in Essex. The project will also offer trainee roles to emerging female, non-binary, and/or trans creatives. An inaugural presentation of the film will take place at Wat Tyler Country Park with a series of events exploring the portrayal of women in art and film.

Maldon Festival will launch a new 'Get Going with Art and Music' initiative. This will provide new opportunities for children, young people, families, and schools in Essex to enjoy and appreciate art and music and to enable them to access new performance and exhibition opportunities in the county.

Matt Gurr will deliver a community engagement project to platform the voices and experiences of young people in Essex who identify as LGBTQI+. Developed in partnership with OutHouse East, the programme will run concurrently alongside 'Cowboy', a new play by Gurr based on his experience of growing up gay in Essex which will be performed at the Mercury Theatre and Harlow Playhouse.

Orchestras Live will launch 'Good Company', a radical new creative day-care programme which harnesses the power of the arts to engage and support vulnerable people living with dementia and other age-related illnesses/disabilities in Brentwood and south Essex, alongside their carers.

Shephali Frost will develop a new refugee world music project that will incorporate poetry and music from the refugee communities across Essex to capture their cultures and languages.

Thaxted Festival will launch a new Developing Artists Programme to provide a platform for professional musicians and composers at the earlier stages of their careers, both within their main summer season and through concerts and outreach programmes.

The Paper Birds Theatre Co. are leading a new project 'The School of Hope', which will give voice and opportunity to young people in Maldon aged 14 to 18 with multi-art workshops to explore the theme of empathy.

Wild Arts will deliver early years concerts, primary school opera and singing projects, as well as recitals in secondary schools, young talent showcases and a young talent apprentice scheme in Colchester.

For further information, please contact culture@essex.gov.uk