



Title and brief description: The Portland Inn Project: Raising the Roof
The Portland Inn Project is a creative arts project for a community in Stoke-on-Trent that aims to achieve community cohesion, economic, social and cultural development by involving the community in the development of a pioneering community space, cultural hub and social enterprise. This is a collaborative delivery led by artists Anna Francis (Community Maker) and Rebecca Davies (The Oasis Social Club) and is supported by AirSpace Gallery, Appetite, My Community Matters, Arts Council England, Aziz Foundation and Stoke City Council.



Type Project

Venue(s) The Portland Inn Raising the Roof temporary building, Portland St, Stoke-on-Trent and 2018.

Additional information:

The Portland inn project is a collaborative creative arts project led by artists Anna Francis and Rebecca Davies which builds on work created in the area of Portland street from 2014 onwards.

The project draws on theory around artist led regeneration projects, from Richard Florida (2002) onwards – considering what happens when artists work where they live, adopting an asset based approach to artist led community development. The process has been to test articulated needs and wants of a community going through a moment of change, first via a temporary arts council funded programme in 2016 (acting as a pilot for the long term project), which led to the writing of a solid business plan, based on findings of the pilot. This has then led to the establishing of an artist led community interest company, to move to the next stage of the project, which involves securing the asset transfer of a community building to the CIC, and then continuing to explore the role of the artist and the arts project in community development.



Questions have included exploring the power and role of the artist as neighbour, in order to raise questions about the value of the artist in society, and the role of an artist project in raising the aspirations of a community, as well as in challenging media portrayal of a community and a city.



The project has been shared via a series of public programmes funded by Arts Council England, the Aziz Foundation, and The Local Trust, via an exhibition at AirSpace gallery Stoke-on-Trent, and via a series of presentations and papers given at conferences. The project also featured within a Guardian Documentary.

In 2018, The Portland Inn Project delivered a public art programme, which first collaborated with Architects Baxendale, to co-build a temporary Community Hub with residents from the local area, and then to run a month long programme of activity, events and performances from that temporary building.

The project was funded by Arts Council England, and shortlisted for a RIBA Macewen Award (an award that recognises architecture for the common good.)