

# KEIGHLEY TOWNS FUND

## Shaping our Towns Future

In 2019 the government invited 100 places to develop detailed proposals for a Town Deal, as part of the national £3.6 billion Towns Fund. This funding aims to help increase economic growth with a focus on regeneration, improved transport, better broadband connectivity, skills and culture.

Initially there was an open invite for any individual, group or organisation with an idea about what they would like to see happen to improve life and the economy in Keighley. Then a local Towns Fund Board was formed to manage the process, bringing together business, public and voluntary sectors.

In 2021, thanks to all the fantastic ideas that were contributed and the sustained efforts of the Board, Keighley was awarded £33.6 million in Towns Fund investment.

This has regional significance as Keighley represents the fifth highest Town Deal investment offer nationally. Investments over £25m are limited to the most ambitious Town Investment Plans that promise to deliver transformational impacts not only for towns, but also the wider region and/or the country.

### Keighley Towns Fund Vision

**"To sustainably grow Keighley as a forward-facing, premier manufacturing, engineering and technology hub, celebrating its rich heritage across industry, culture and sport.**

**The town will be known for its wealth of opportunity, delivering access to jobs, skills, training and education to help its residents and businesses thrive, and prepare the next generation for future employment.**

**With its diverse economy, quality infrastructure, thriving town centre heart, and superior digital connectivity it will be the place to invest, live, work, play and shop, where people, young and old, can enjoy a strong sense of community, healthy lives and a prosperous future.**

**A place for all to want to be part and proud of."**



# Towns Fund Benefits for Keighley & how Keighley Creative can help us get there

**1** Building growth in Keighley's key sectors of manufacturing, engineering and technology by supporting small and medium sized enterprises & entrepreneurial opportunities including start-ups, and getting young people into employment.

**Keighley Creative will continue to grow our studio programme, ensuring new creative start-ups have the space and support they need to succeed. Creativity is one of the most desirable skills across all sectors, especially engineering and technology. We will continue to work with local schools and young people, making sure they have opportunities to develop their creativity.**

**2** Providing the high-quality digital infrastructure needed to support continued economic growth, and address digital inclusion to make sure Keighley residents can access training, technology and support to up-skill in these areas.

**We will support other organisations in the town to design innovative and creative approaches to this digital upskilling. Working together to help residents benefit from access to the internet, and digital leisure and learning opportunities.**

**3** Improving physical accessibility in/around Keighley to support business and housing growth including improved access to sustainable travel that addresses congestion and supports Net Zero.

**We will learn about this with the town, and understand how Keighley Creative can move towards Net Zero. We are all discovering how to be more environmentally sustainable, it will be good to learn together.**

**4** Reinvigorating Keighley town centre and delivering stronger streetscapes, corridors and heart, cultural and leisure space, and by overall diversifying the offer to increase footfall and activity throughout the town.

**We currently occupy a redundant retail unit in Keighley, if we weren't there it would be empty, and this wouldn't be good for our town. Instead we are reinventing this space so it can be used again by the public, for leisure and learning activities.**

**We support local businesses and increase footfall into the town through our Creative High Streets work. Whether it's putting up permanent or temporary artwork in disused and underappreciated spaces, or organising events on the streets of Keighley, we recognise the big impact work like this has on our town, both economically and socially.**

**5** Supporting the health and well-being of Keighley through access to a range of sport, leisure, cultural, creative & recreational facilities, services & activities and access to clean, safe & green spaces.

**The wellbeing benefits of arts and cultural activities are well documented, and we will run regular groups that support people's mental and physical health through creativity, as well as putting on a large programme of events that people can get involved with in their free leisure time.**

**6** Utilising the rich heritage and character of Keighley to strengthen its position and make the most of its local economic assets.

**All of our work is about uncovering and showcasing the rich heritage and character of Keighley. And by sharing local stories with different communities in the town, as well as to district-wide and regional audiences, we change the narrative about Keighley, build local interest and create pride in our town. And we have a lot to be proud of!**

**7** Supporting the growth of arts & cultural tourism and Keighley as a destination, maximising the benefits of wider association with nearby attractions.

**Our creative and cultural offer will bring people into Keighley- arts tourism is big business for towns, and we have a lot to offer. We work with lots of our cultural partners, like Cliffe Castle Museum, Keighley Library, and Keighley and Worth Valley Railway, as well as new cultural businesses being set up in the town.**

**We can be a central information point for tourists to find out more about Keighleys' creative and cultural heritage, acting as a springboard to other attractions in the town.**

**8** By providing access and infrastructure to enable training and educational opportunities working in conjunction with Keighley College, its partners and other organisations to address skills gaps and increasing employability associated with continued growth in manufacturing, engineering and technology sectors.

**We will be partnering with Keighley College to help address these employability gaps. Creativity is an essential skill in these growth areas, encouraging innovation, problem solving, and unique solutions for the future- and employers are increasingly asking job applicants to demonstrate their creative abilities.**

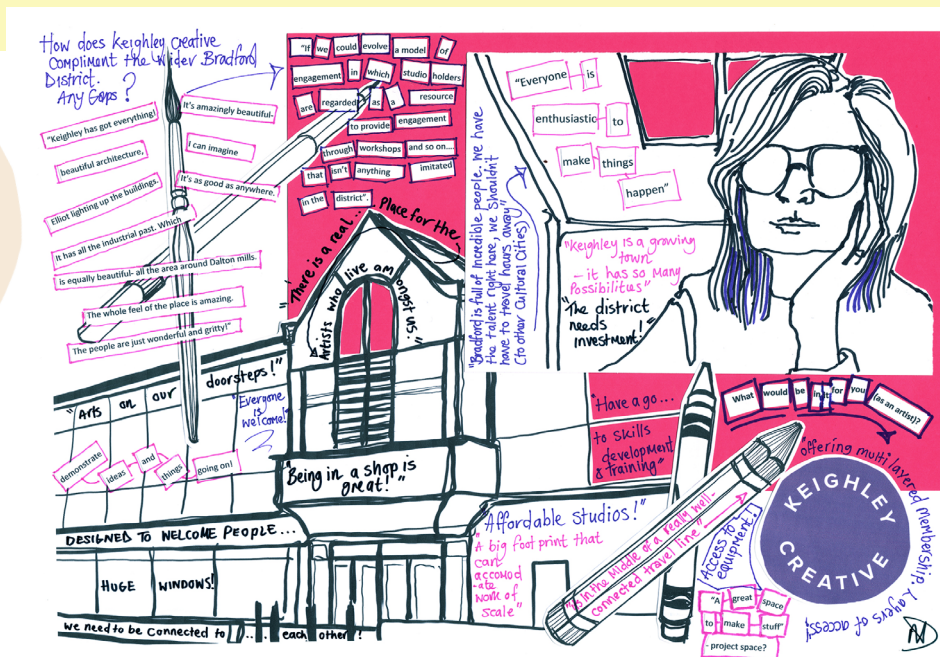
**This isn't about whether you can paint a picture or not, or put on a show, it is about how you *think* creatively, and once learnt these are skills for life.**

# Keighley Creative and the Towns Fund

In 2020, organisations in Keighley were able to make detailed applications to the Towns Fund Board about how their project could benefit the town as a part of the full Towns Fund application.

**We are very proud to say that our project was championed across the town, and was selected on the back of our strong business case and successful contribution to the town since we became a charity in 2019.**

We have secured the capital funding to buy and renovate a permanent Community, Culture and Creativity Hub for Keighley; and we have secured revenue funding to support the Art and Film Festival over the next four years.



Seamus Heaney's poem "Midwinter" is our first contribution.

## What's the difference between capital and revenue funding?

Capital funding is for a one-off large purchase of a fixed asset, that will be used to generate income over a longer period. In our case the fixed asset will be a renovated town centre building.

Revenue funding covers ongoing operating costs, which are short-term expenses used to run the daily business operations. In our case the revenue funding will cover Festival and Events staff and project delivery costs for up to four years, at which point the festival will need to be able to run without financial support from the Towns Fund.

# KEIGHLEY CREATIVE

## Community, Culture and Creativity Hub

Keighley is an inspiring multicultural town, with a rich textile and manufacturing heritage, and heaps of creativity to tap into. As a grass-roots arts charity we are proud to call Keighley home, and our Towns Fund capital investment of 2.6 million will make it possible for us to purchase and refurbish a redundant ex-retail building in the town centre, ready to open its doors in 2025.

This Community, Culture and Creativity Hub will create a cultural destination in Keighley, joining up other creative enterprises and running outreach programmes with schools, communities and businesses across Keighley. We aim to host a public exhibition space, a café, up to 50 studios, mini cinema and a small cluster of boutique retail and food businesses. There will be a year-round programme of creative up-skilling workshops and training, as well as leisure learning.

This is an exciting opportunity to showcase our towns and region's incredible creative talent to wider and national audiences as well as bringing new arts & cultural experiences into the town for people to enjoy.

## How will Keighley Benefit?

### A Permanent Asset for the town

We are creating a central hub that people can use regularly to explore the arts and creativity, come to relax and unwind, or get hands-on experience learning new skills. The hub will connect people and organisations across Keighley and the district, ensuring a lasting and wide-reaching legacy for the town.

### Building on from what we already know!

The team involved with Keighley Creative have been based in the town for many years, learning about the people, organisations and places that make Keighley the unique and inspiring town it is. Our charity, established in 2020, has developed from community and public requests and local aspirations. We know our town's struggles too, and everything we do is about giving people the chances they need to succeed.

### Tourist Attraction

The hub will bring people into the town centre, both from the local region and beyond, to visit one of the best cultural centres in the district. This will have a big impact on the town economically, through increased footfall and spend with other local businesses, and extended trips to other local attractions.

It will help put our town on the tourist trail, shining a light on our unique and multi-cultural heritage, and stunning landscapes. We want to ensure a lasting legacy for Keighley.

### Leisure and Wellbeing Opportunities

The hub will host a regular programme of exhibitions, that will feature artists and makers at all levels of their careers, as well as community focussed exhibitions. Wellbeing and leisure learning groups will take place for all ages and abilities, so you can explore your hobbies and interests and uncover the uniquely positive effects that creative learning can have on your mental health.

The hub will also host a warm and welcoming café to meet up with friends and family, alongside a cluster of specialist retail and food businesses to highlight some local talent and encourage town centre retail spending.

### Upskilling for the Creative Industries

Alongside up to 50 start-up creative studios for artists, makers, and creative entrepreneurs to develop their businesses, we will run regular workshop programmes to develop industry skills.

These will be designed to meet community aspirations, and will be linked to our work with Keighley College and local schools, developing accredited programmes of learning for children, young people and adults interested in future employment in the creative industries.



Photographed at Keighley Creative by Simon Sugden



# KEIGHLEY CREATIVE

## Keighley Art and Film Festival

Keighley Creative will continue to develop the exciting, annual Keighley Art and Film Festival, along with a year-round, high impact programme of engaging events, within the hub and across the whole town. The festival is important as an annual celebration of Keighley. Collaborating with partners we want to create events that share Keighley's unique stories, its history, its people and its future.

We've secured a total of £240,000 over four years (2022-2026) from the Towns Fund to support this, which covers the wages of two full time members of staff (a festival & events director and coordinator), and makes a programme of events possible, culminating in the Arts and Film Festival which happens in October each year.

## How will Keighley Benefit?

### Culture belongs to everyone

All our events are low cost or free, and this fund helps us keep it this way. We will always put on quality events that everyone can get involved in, meaning locals and visitors can try new things, and return to the events they enjoy year on year, like the popular Light-Up events in Cliffe Castle.

### We grow our programme each year to include more of what you want to make happen

We began with 20 festival events in 2019, we are planning 60 this year!

The festival happens all over Keighley town centre; in our streets, shopping centre, parks, local museums and community hubs.

Our programme is fun, accessible and varied, with something for everyone to enjoy. We increasingly use non-arts venues so we can bring the events you want to see, to where you want to see them!

### Audience figures are set to go from 6,000 to 14,000 visitors over the next 4 years, boosting the local economy

The main festival brings a mix of local, district and regional visitors. This has a positive impact on the local economy, bringing in lots of people wanting accommodation, food and other local amenities. That's more visitors spending with local businesses, which benefits our town.

### We design commissions for freelance artists & performers

These are paid opportunities for local people who work in the arts to make new work. This helps us upskill, and uncovers the talent in our town and region which will lead to more paid opportunities. It's a win-win!

### We get stuck in!

As well as putting on shows and performances for you to sit back and enjoy, we always run lots of hands-on workshops to get involved in, so everyone can have a go at arts, music and drama activities that contribute to the main events.

### We run a fun and worthwhile volunteer programme

So local people can join in at lots of different levels, developing confidence and skills in the creative industries, alongside making new friends and connections and giving back to the town we love.



Photographed during the 2019 festival, by Steve Rayner

**Have  
your  
say!**

Get in touch via our website or social media and let us know what you think about our vision for arts, culture and creativity in Keighley, and how you would like to be involved, or what you would like to see happen in the future.

[www.keighleycreative.org](http://www.keighleycreative.org) / Insta & Facebook: @KeighleyCreative / Twitter: @CreativeKly

*If you want to know about the other funded projects that will be a part of the Towns Fund programme, or comment more generally on Keighley town regeneration visit: [www.ourtownkeighley.co.uk](http://www.ourtownkeighley.co.uk)*