ART FOR ALL
Inspiring, Learning and Transforming

a report by Dr Helen Bowcock
on the social impact of Watts Gallery - Artists’ Village
We selected this painting by Dena from HMP Send for the cover of this report because it is so striking and conveys messages about journeys, about time and ultimately about hope. During the many interviews conducted during the research for this report, I have observed the role that Watts Gallery - Artists' Village has played in helping different people on their journeys through life and in giving them hope. But it was only after we had selected Dena's painting that its significance as a metaphor for the Artists' Village became apparent.

Dena has painted the beautiful St Pancras Station in ruins but reminds us through the contemporary street scene that it has been restored to its full architectural splendour. Having been bombed during the Second World War, the station building was at risk again during the 1970s when there were plans to demolish it. Similarly, by the late twentieth century, Watts Gallery, housing the collection of paintings by one of the greatest nineteenth-century artists, was decaying and at great risk of closure. With a combination of hope, ambition and determination, the management of Watts Gallery Trust embarked upon a challenging journey to restore the Gallery and to revive the spirit of the Artists' Village.

An underlying theme of this report is time and the way in which the staff at Watts Gallery - Artists' Village skilfully reconcile the requirements of a twenty-first century organisation with the ideals and legacy of nineteenth-century philanthropy. Without the great gift from G F and Mary Watts and the commitment of its Director and staff to upholding their mission of Art for All, many people would miss out on the transformative capacity of art. So for many reasons, Dena's painting seems a most appropriate starting point for the report, and we are grateful to her as the artist for providing it.

‘We all journey, the building was rebuilt after it was hit during World War 2; the bus is on its journey past the recently modernised St Pancras Station. The young couple are also on a journey or returning from a journey; it’s exciting, what journey are you on?’

Dena from HMP Send, The Journey, 2016. Water-based oil on canvas.

Dr Helen Bowcock
April 2017

Helen is cofounder of The Hazelhurst Trust and a donor to Watts Gallery Trust. She completed a PhD in Sociology in 2006 and subsequently authored a report entitled Hidden Surrey to make the case for local giving. In 2013/14 she served as High Sheriff of Surrey, during which time she had the opportunity to observe different aspects of the criminal justice system, including visits to prisons, courts and the police service. She also visited many charities including Watts Gallery Trust and saw first hand the significance of its social impact. During recent years The Hazelhurst Trust has had an increased focus upon research, and in 2016 the Trust provided most of the funding for an evaluation of the economic impact of Watts Gallery - Artists' Village.
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On my first visit to Surrey’s Watts Gallery – Artists’ Village last year I was most taken, as many are, by G F Watts’ so-called ‘social protest’ canvases. Indeed, I tweeted a hurriedly grabbed image of *Under the Dry Arch*. It memorably depicts a homeless woman huddled under a vault on the south bank of the Thames. In silhouette in the background is St Paul’s Cathedral in the heart of the City of London. This hapless figure has clearly been abandoned by both God and Mammon. I also learnt about how Mary Watts shared her husband’s strong commitment to public works and how arts and culture can fuel them. Rolling forward more than a century, we now see the restored Watts Gallery – Artists’ Village once more delivering on that original vision. This revealing report chronicles how.

I have just stepped down from chairing Arts Council England. During my tenure, the arts sector did an excellent job of capturing all the benefits of investing in arts and culture, so it was better understood by government, trusts and private donors. We now talk about ‘the holistic case for investment’: the intrinsic, such as insight and empathy; the social, evidenced every day in prisons and hospitals; the educational (of course) and also the economic, particularly in relation to our important creative industries. The stimulating thing about this report by Helen Bowcock is that it will give you inspiring examples of all the above, delivered by just one institution.

Another important theme of the past four years has been that arts organisations should diversify their revenues, not only to make themselves more robust but also to enable them to bring these holistic benefits to many more people. Watts Gallery - Artists’ Village has succeeded in greatly enhancing its philanthropic revenues, and Dr Bowcock has played a great part in that. This has meant, as you will read, a genuine execution of Mary Watts’ abiding principle and rallying cry: Art for All.

It all starts with great art, but its transformative power is now being demonstrated by Watts Gallery - Artists’ Village with vulnerable young people, youth and adult offenders, the disabled, those with poor mental health and addictions, the homeless, the socially isolated and families on low incomes. Lest you think Surrey is an affluent place, the county has all these challenges on its doorstep. And in our data-led society it’s also important that the value of good works such as these is evidenced. This is what this report sets out to do.

In the early years of the twentieth century, Mary Watts sought out young people she judged to be at risk of falling into a life of crime. She invited them in to her home and gave them craft skills. You could say she invented the ‘social enterprise’. How wonderful that history is repeating itself.

Sir Peter Bazalgette
April 2017
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Watts Gallery - Artists’ Village provides an environment for learning and for transforming lives through art. It honours the values and legacy of its founders G F and Mary Watts, interpreting them in a twenty-first century way to fulfil its mission of Art for All. The organisation delivers considerable economic and social value, and this report identifies and describes the different dimensions of social value and why they matter.

Art is at the heart of everything that the Artists’ Village does to engage a very diverse range of people and bring positive change to their lives. The work of G F and Mary Watts provides a powerful frame of reference to guide and inspire participants in the Learning Programme, as well as members of staff, freelance artists and volunteers. The mission of Art for All is interpreted today to make the collections and other assets accessible and meaningful to visitors.

The Artists’ Village is located in an area of the country which is characterised by profound contrasts, and its staff strive to engage with those who are most marginalised and most in need. Particular investment is made in working with vulnerable young people, young offenders, prisoners, the disabled, those with poor mental health and addictions, the homeless, the socially isolated and families on low incomes. In an area of significant educational contrasts, the Artists’ Village offers the opportunity to visit a gallery and contributes to arts education for those who would otherwise miss out. Considerable value is delivered too through both volunteering and apprenticeship programmes, which, in their own ways, have transformed lives.

Over recent years, members of the Learning Team have learnt a great deal about the most effective way to engage different groups of participants and to optimise the value gained from involvement in the Artists’ Village. They have established a well-rehearsed series of steps for effecting positive change. Principally this involves using the collections and professional artists to inspire, finding an artistic medium that works for the individual, closely collaborating with community groups, prisons and charities and displaying work in the annual Big Issues Exhibition. There are clear cultural values that underpin this approach, in particular entrepreneurship following the Wattses’ example. Participants are encouraged not only to exhibit but also to sell their work in the annual Big Issues Exhibition and, ideally, to donate a small contribution back.

An overriding conclusion of this report is that many people would miss out on participating in the arts were it not for the commitment of the Artists’ Village in its mission of Art for All. As the organisation enters a new phase of its development, it seems essential that it continues to invest in delivering social value, in partnerships and in the development of staff and volunteers who uphold its impressive mission.

- The Artists’ Village reaches communities and individuals who may otherwise miss out on access to the arts; it is located within four miles of an area ranked within the 17% most deprived in England and within the 6% most deprived for Education;
- It serves three prisons located within a twenty-five mile radius; 424 prisoners and young offenders participated in workshops during the year 2015/16; it has provided an artist in residence to HMP Send for over ten years;
- 2,387 primary and secondary school pupils attended workshops during 2015/16 including sixty-two from a special school; so far this year 105 pupils have attended from STAR Project, a collaboration between four local secondary schools for pupils who are struggling with mainstream education;
- 235 pupils have participated this year in an immersive arts experience at the Artists’ Village from one of Surrey’s primary schools with the highest proportion of pupils eligible for Pupil Premium;
- The Artists’ Village generates around £7.76 million per annum of value in the local economy, equating to 124 full-time equivalent jobs, including at least six apprenticeships;
- 336 people volunteer at the Artists’ Village amounting to seventy-two hours worth of effort six days per week;
- Each year approximately 100 people exhibit their work in the Big Issues Exhibition.
INTRODUCTION

In early 2016 Watts Gallery - Artists’ Village published a report which revealed that the value of its total impact on the wider economy in 2015 was £7.76 million, generating 124 full time equivalent jobs [1]. This research was undertaken by the School of Hospitality and Tourism Management, University of Surrey, the top school of its nature in this country and one of the top few internationally. Evidence from such an authoritative source provides strong endorsement of the decision made in 2004 by the Trustees to restore Watts Gallery and to continue to invest in and develop the Artists’ Village. During the last year it attracted 65,000 visitors, of which 37,000 were paid admissions, and its reputation grows as a place of significant economic, cultural and social value.

Over the last twelve years the management of Watts Gallery - Artists’ Village has not only raised over £20 million to restore and develop its physical assets but has also invested in a Learning Programme which upholds G F and Mary Wattses’ vision of Art for All. Many people have benefited over recent years from this programme involving numerous strong partnerships with other charities and with statutory organisations, including schools. The Artists’ Village relies extensively upon its 336 volunteers to run the Gallery and associated assets and they, in turn, benefit from the investment in training and guidance that attracts and retains them. It also offers a number of apprenticeships and, in all aspects of its operation, the organisation delivers considerable social value within the communities that it serves.

This report identifies the different dimensions of the social value that Watts Gallery - Artists’ Village delivers and why they are important. It has taken guidance from Nesta on its Standards of Evidence and aims to conform to the first standard, which is to ‘describe what you do and why it matters, logically, coherently and convincingly’ [2]. It demonstrates that through art, it is contributing to increased participation in employment and education and enhanced quality of life. The report also identifies indicators which show that the Artists’ Village can be confident that it is good at what it does and that it is having a positive impact.

Watts Gallery - Artists’ Village generates around £7.76 MILLION in value to the local economy

336 people volunteer at Watts Gallery - Artists’ Village, amounting to 72 hours of voluntary effort per day

2,966 school pupils participated in activities at Watts Gallery - Artists’ Village in 2016/17

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Before setting out the ways in which Watts Gallery - Artists’ Village delivers social value, it is worth giving some historical and geographical context. In 1890, at the time that G F and Mary Watts moved into their home in Compton, this area of Surrey was being opened up by the train line from London to Portsmouth. A network of artists and writers including Alfred Lord Tennyson, W Graham Robertson and Lewis Carroll settled in the area, bringing ideals of public access to education, culture and the arts.

The Wattses took it for granted that their artistic and cultural assets should be shared and that everyone should have not only the right to see but also to participate in art. The Artists’ Village and its contents are evidence today of a gift to the public. Watts Chapel is an astonishing example of the invitation to the residents of Compton to learn pottery and to develop creative skills. Mary Watts provided accommodation and employment to young men whom she considered at risk of crime, and by working alongside them, gave them sufficient skill to create objects of commercial value. This enterprise, the Compton Potters’ Arts Guild, conforms to the principles of what we know today as a social enterprise. The Artists’ Village represents a model of philanthropy which was as much about action as it was about donating money or other assets.

Today the legacy of G F and Mary Watts provides a powerful frame of reference for the social mission of a twenty-first century Watts Gallery - Artists’ Village. This organisation was, after all, founded upon a philanthropic vision of society and has continued to rely heavily upon philanthropy throughout the twentieth century and to the present day. The values of inclusiveness, the sharing of skills and resources and the belief in the transformative capacity of art are the guiding principles of the Learning Programme. In turn, its activities are funded through gifts from donors who understand these values and wish to help Watts Gallery - Artists’ Village to deliver upon its charitable mission.

An important purpose of this report is to demonstrate that despite — or perhaps because of — profound social and economic changes over the course of the last century, this approach to philanthropy is as important now as it was then. If G F and Mary Watts brought cultural enrichment to the lives of people who otherwise would have no opportunity for involvement in the arts, Watts Gallery - Artists’ Village serves precisely this same purpose today. The train line and Compton’s proximity to London have brought great wealth into this area. Average incomes in Surrey are among the highest outside London and are significantly higher than the national average. But this also means that for those who do not have the means to access the richness of London’s culture, the landscape would be bleak without charities such as the Artists’ Village with its philosophy of Art for All.

Over recent years several reports, including *Hidden Surrey* [3] and *Surrey Uncovered* [4], have drawn attention to pockets of deprivation and aspects of the county that are at odds with its dominant image of high levels of wealth and education. As author of *Hidden Surrey*, my motivation to write the report was that the case is not at all evident for donating to organisations that address deprivation and other social problems in this particular county. In many ways the report identified a paradox. That is, that Surrey is in greater need of philanthropy precisely because of the wealth which distorts statistics and drives public funds to other parts of the country which appear more deserving. Very recently Surrey County Council stated that it receives £450 less per annum in funding per pupil than the average for London boroughs bordering the county, even though they serve very similar communities. [5]

Surrey is frequently characterised by its affluence and its wealthy commuter population. This has resulted in a cultural prejudice which often means that its residents are considered undeserving of public and charitable funding. It is not apparent to many

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people that Watts Gallery - Artists’ Village is located in close proximity to areas of significant urban and rural deprivation. The local health authority, Guildford and Waverley Clinical Commissioning Group, states in a recent report that:

‘There are pockets of significant deprivation and variation across the county... Some of the most deprived areas are the more rural parts of the CCG, notably areas east of Fernhurst where the experience of deprivation will be different to that in the deprived urban areas such as Stoke or Westborough. Some small pockets of relative deprivation such as Shalford sit within larger areas of affluence again posing significant difficulty for residents in those deprived areas.’ [6]

The ward of Westborough is approximately four miles from the Artists’ Village. It includes areas that are in the 17% most income deprived in England according to the most recent statistics. Perhaps most surprisingly, the education score for this area places it in the worst 6% in the country, suggesting significant educational deprivation for children growing up there. Statistics also show that the life expectancy of children born in this particular area of Guildford is up to ten years less than in other areas of the town. Shalford is three miles from the Artists’ Village, and parts of the village rank in the top 4% of the country in terms of income, education and so on. But, as indicated in the CCG report, there is hidden rural deprivation concealed by the surrounding affluence of the area.

Watts Gallery - Artists’ Village is located in an area with a higher than average proportion of older people. The local health authority states that ‘a dominant feature of Guildford and Waverley is the increase in number of people aged over 65’ with an associated increase in depression and loneliness. This report will give examples of people who have become involved in different ways with the Artists’ Village, having experienced considerable social isolation and/or poor mental health, regardless of income or education. Problems of isolation are exacerbated by the high proportion of property that is owned privately, with a consequent lack of public amenities.
Surrey has one of the highest numbers of resident Travellers in England. There are several Traveller sites within ten miles of Watts Gallery - Artists’ Village and local schools include Traveller children. There are six prisons within twenty five miles of the Artists’ Village, including two for young offenders and two for women. Approximately one quarter of all female prisoners in the UK are in custody in Surrey, including a number at HMP Send who are serving life sentences. An important aspect of the work of the Artists’ Village’s Learning Programme is with prisoners and young offenders.

The proximity to London and the impression of affluence mean that Watts Gallery - Artists’ Village is located in an area that receives significantly less public funding per capita than other areas of the UK. This includes arts funding. For example, there are 663 National Portfolio Organisations around the UK that receive fixed recurrent income from the Arts Council and they greatly enrich the places in which they are located. Liverpool alone has twenty NPOs and Newcastle-upon-Tyne has nineteen. Brighton and Hove, with a population of 273,400, has fourteen and Herefordshire, with a population of 55,000, has four. Surrey has a population of just over 1.1 million and has only two NPOs, both of which are based in Farnham. Perhaps an alternative view is that local arts provision here depends to a larger extent upon the charity and community sectors and upon voluntary income than it does elsewhere. In this context, Watts Gallery - Artists’ Village makes its assets work for the widest possible community and strives to achieve the greatest possible social value.

My own motivation to continue to donate to this organisation over the years has been based upon the view that it is an investment not only in local heritage but is also one that delivers a social return. It is not simply about giving access to the arts to people who would otherwise miss out but also about this organisation’s understanding of how the arts can transform lives and what it needs to do to enable this. Over the last five years, as a consequence of conducting due diligence for each successive grant, I have seen the number of staff, volunteers and beneficiaries grow and the number of partner organisations increase. I have also observed incremental improvements as the understanding deepens of what it is that brings people back and motivates and inspires them.

So this report is written from the perspective of a donor to Watts Gallery - Artists’ Village and, as such, a critical friend. It cannot claim to be totally impartial but is informed by a continuous questioning of why this organisation is worth supporting when there are so many other demands upon limited grant funding. It is based upon observations formed from undertaking due diligence for a series of grants to the Learning Programme and from many discussions with staff and volunteers. I have been fortunate to have had the opportunity to observe workshops with various community groups, charities and government agencies and school visits to Watts Gallery and Watts Studios. I have also accompanied staff whose work reaches out into aspects of the criminal justice system.

“I paint ideas, not things. My intention is less to paint works that are pleasing to the eye than to suggest great thoughts which will speak to the imagination and the heart and will arouse all that is noblest and best in man.”

George Frederic Watts

The Big Issues Programme

The Big Issues is a programme delivered by the Watts Gallery - Artists’ Village Learning Team inspired by the ethos of Art for All and the model of entrepreneurship established by G F and Mary Watts. The department’s staff draw upon themes in Watts’s work, including issues such as homelessness, poverty and despair, and identify different groups of people that they seek to help through art. They work with partner organisations, including other charities, inviting them to bring their members to the Artists’ Village and designing art workshops for their particular needs. They use the collections within Watts Gallery and Watts Studios to inspire each individual and to find an artistic medium that works for them. They also take this approach out into prisons. They motivate participants by offering them the opportunity to exhibit and to sell their work in the annual Big Issues Exhibition.

There are three full-time equivalent members of staff in the Learning Team, which is funded through grants from trusts and foundations, most notably from the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Henry Smith Charity. For the last five years the Artists’ Village has participated in the annual Big Give, founded by Sir Alec Reed, and has successfully used the matched funding opportunity it offers to raise over £40,000 in each of these years [7]. This includes many small donations from members of the public. In addition to contributing to the salary costs of the department’s staff, the funds raised also pay for fees for freelance artists and the provision of workshops at no or minimal cost to participants.

Members of the department invest considerable effort into identifying and contacting charities and community groups to discuss how their members could benefit from the Big Issues Programme, and a number of partnerships have been established as a result. This culture of reaching out and collaborating is important because many of the people who attend would, under no other circumstances, find their way into the Artists’ Village.

The success of the Big Issues Programme does justice to the virtuous circle of Art for All set in train so powerfully by Mary Watts and founded upon principles not only of social justice but also of entrepreneurship. Participants are invited to produce work for the annual Big Issues Exhibition, giving it a commercial value, whilst gaining for themselves a vital sense of self worth. They are introduced to the collections and the range of different media including ceramics, photography, paintings and sculptures. They are encouraged to seek inspiration to communicate and share their own stories, in many cases finding an effective means of self expression for the very first time.

The exhibition is staged in the Watts Contemporary Gallery with a catalogue listing prices and details of participants. The opening reception draws members of the Artists’ Village community, including Donors, Patrons and Friends. The displayed works and the income that they generate provide a tangible indicator for families and other supporters that the person who created it is recognised in a positive light. Having produced something of commercial value, they may in turn contribute to funding workshops for others to experience the transformative capacity of art.

In this way, the legacy of Mary Watts is being upheld today in teaching new skills and in enabling their use in a practical and demonstrable way to improve lives. The exhibition serves not only as a great motivator to exhibitors but also draws attention to the hidden problems behind the work, especially as it often serves as a means of self expression. So what are the themes that emerge from this exhibition and the stories behind them? The following case studies give insights into these questions.

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Street Level Art

This is a small community group which was established in Guildford specifically to provide creative arts experiences to people with mental health and substance abuse issues, including the homeless. Its members have been attending workshops at Watts Gallery - Artists’ Village for ten years. The Learning Coordinator explained that, given their vulnerability and isolation, they need predictability to be encouraged to attend. They are offered the same space at the same time each week and, whenever possible, are driven in the community bus by the same person.

During an observation of one of the workshops, the effort made by the Learning Coordinator and the freelance artist to welcome them was striking. Each person had tea and coffee made for them and was offered refills as they worked on their clay models. Some were eager to talk as they worked, others remained silent. If a question to be addressed in this report is ‘why does it matter’, an answer emerged from the conversation during the session. Members talked about their anxiety that their meeting space in Guildford may no longer be available and about the importance of their workshops at Watts Gallery - Artists’ Village as a constant in their lives. It seemed that, for some of them at least, there is little else to divert them and to provide contact with others.

During a subsequent discussion, the Learning Team talked about the way in which G F Watts addresses the themes of hope and despair. They believe that vulnerable people may have a special understanding of his work and of the ideas expressed within it. They suggested too that people value ‘his relentless pursuit of experimentation, wanting the paintings to last forever and his work ethic and disciplines.’ The staff also described the way people who attend the workshops are surprised and gratified that someone takes an interest in them. Often no one has tried before to draw out their ideas and experiences. Staff feel that they are guided in their approach by the founding principles of Art for All.
The Cellar Art Group

Five years ago the Head of Learning from Watts Gallery - Artists’ Village visited The Cellar Art Group to persuade its organisers to visit the Artists’ Village and to consider bringing members to attend art workshops. The Cellar is a café in the centre of Godalming which provides ‘a caring and friendly meeting place for vulnerable and disadvantaged people in the community.’ Mandy, one of the organisers, seized this opportunity, with determination to encourage those who thought that art was not for them to try it. In an interview, she expressed strong conviction about the value of art for people with mental health problems, stating that it ‘takes away the suffering and opens up a new world to experience.’

Mandy values the opportunity that the Artists’ Village gives to try different media and to be inspired by the collections, as well as the woodland landscape where they have taken photographs. She emphasised the importance of having the opportunity to exhibit work and the sense of achievement that she and her members feel in exhibiting and, on occasions, selling in the Big Issues Exhibition. She said that it was beyond their ‘wildest expectations’ for the group to have work displayed in the exhibition when it was taken to London by the KPMG Foundation. She also pointed out how much they value a ‘national gallery standard on our doorstep’ in the form of Watts Gallery - Artists’ Village.

One of the members of The Cellar Art Group, Sue, described the ‘real buzz’ she receives from seeing her name in the Big Issues catalogue. As someone who found herself very isolated in later life she rediscovered art through the workshops she attends and which she could not afford if she had to pay for them. She has succeeded in selling work from the exhibition and, if she succeeds in selling again, would like to give a percentage back to help support the Big Issues Programme from which she has derived so much encouragement and pleasure.

There is a footnote to this insight into the way in which G F Watts may have a particular meaning for people with poor mental health. His work was recommended to a resident of Transform Housing & Support, a charity which accommodates and works with people with very significant mental health problems. This person, who spends most of her time painting, was particularly inspired by his work. She said in a letter, ‘You recognised straight away that I liked using symbolism in my work and recommended that I visited the Watts Gallery. I researched a little about George Frederic Watts and found a painting called Hope in one of my British Art books. I was so inspired that I decided to do you a painting as a gift.’

‘Watts’s viewers were free to apply to his abstractions their own feelings and experiences. No British artist before or since has provoked such a wealth of response from people around the world, who have seen their own lives and struggles in these secular icons.’ [8]

Dr Nicholas Tromans in The Art of G F Watts

For five years, the members of a community group called Opportunities have been visiting Watts Gallery - Artists’ Village and participating in workshops. The purpose of this group is to equip unemployed women with skills to obtain employment and to participate more fully in society to enhance their own and their family’s quality of life. Although the group was established with the practical purpose of teaching IT skills, its founder had conviction that access to the arts was essential to building confidence, motivation and communication. Her challenge was to convince her students that they had the right to participate and to find ways of enabling them to feel included and inspired.

Opportunities operates from a community centre in a housing estate two miles from Farnham town centre and has satellite groups in four other areas of deprivation. The image below demonstrates the extent to which levels of income and education of its residents differ from those in adjacent neighbourhoods [9]. It reveals that levels of unemployment, crime, lack of education and poor health are well above the national average.

Members of the group were extremely apprehensive on their first visit to Watts Gallery - Artists’ Village five years ago. None of them had been to an art gallery before and for some, even making the ten-mile journey was daunting. It is a tribute to the approach taken by the Learning Team that they were made to feel so welcome and willing to come back to participate in a workshop. Perhaps the most striking aspect of their visit was the emotion that their visit to Watts Chapel evoked. One member said that she wanted to cry. They were fascinated by the story of Mary Watts and the way in which she taught people who had been totally unskilled to create a most remarkable example of Arts & Crafts design.

‘Combining her interests, Mary began to run classes for people in the local community in terracotta work, as part of the Home Arts and Industries Association scheme, and invited help from four experienced craftsmen to work with her on the chapel project. Whereas the design was Mary’s, as her sketchbooks show, the extraordinary result, a unique blend of Celtic symbolism and Arts and Crafts vision, was a communal effort, some of it by people who had done nothing creative before they came to the classes at Limnerslease.’ [10]

The 2015 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) confirms the extent of deprivation for the area in which Opportunities is located and how much it differs from neighbouring areas. This illustration represents data from the IMD from the ward of Farnham Upper Hale which is divided into three zones, of which two are well above average for income, employment, health and education. The smallest pile of books represents the estate served by Opportunities. It ranks in the worst 22% in England on the IMD and in the worst 3% for Education, Skills and Training.
The Learning Coordinator said, ‘Mary is a powerful symbol. She represents empowerment through her ambition and engagement with community, in creating the Chapel and encouraging people to reach above themselves.’ If the challenge for this is to encourage students to reach above themselves, she has found the partnership with the Artists’ Village to be a perfect match for her ambitions. Carol, the group’s coordinator, said, ‘The main features, from the students’ point of view, are realising they can achieve and learn something new, building social and communication skills. Until you have worked with the students, it is hard to realise what a big issue it is to come to somewhere like Watts Gallery for the first time. Now there is no stopping them, they are always keen to come and learn something new. It also gives aspirations as well.’

The impact of this partnership upon the Opportunities group is considerable. They have taken skills back to their community, and they make gifts for sale in summer and at Christmas fairs. Carol said, ‘We have been offered regular classes in drawing, lampshade making, clay, jewellery making... and some of their work has in fact been sold at the Big Issues Exhibition. The students have been so inspired by their visits to the Artists’ Village that weekly craft classes now run at one of the centres. The classes at the Artists’ Village have changed the lives of many of our students.’

Some have developed talents in painting and drawing, and this has been particularly valuable for members who have low levels of literacy. Of the fifty students who completed the academic year 2015/16, approximately 70% succeeded in obtaining employment at the end of their training. Both the pleasure and the personal development that the women have gained from their involvement with Watts Gallery - Artists’ Village have been important contributing factors in these impressive results.

‘I love that place. They really care and are always alive to what you want to do. They take you up to the Gallery and I take my pen and paper and draw little patterns which I can use in making something. It gets your brain working and your imagination.’

Delma, member of Opportunities

STAR Project

A federation of four local schools established a programme called STAR Project to address the educational needs of Year 9 students who are struggling in mainstream education due to low ability, confidence or disruption at home. Watts Gallery - Artists’ Village is working with STAR Project to provide artist-led workshops in the Clore Learning Studio. The students come in groups of about ten for one day per week for seven weeks. The sessions are led by a highly experienced artist and special needs teacher, assisted by freelance artists who bring specific skills. A volunteer who has experience in working with young people with special needs also assists.

As the students come from four different schools, they did not know each other at the start of their programme, but this was not apparent during the second of their workshops. The atmosphere was relaxed but focused. They had visited the collections and the lead teacher believes that this made them feel comfortable in a new environment and gave them something to talk to each other about. They liked the colours in the works by G F Watts and were replicating them in the craft workshop back in the Clore Learning Studio. This newly created space seems ideal for the requirements of a group such as this one, providing a safe, light environment, connected to the Watts Studios but also tucked away from public areas.

The Youth Community Coordinator leading the sessions believes that fourteen is a very good age to work with these school students, providing an opportunity to influence them and to try to divert them from potentially harmful behaviour. The series of workshops offers a new social circle and, in her words, ‘the chance to reinvent themselves’. The Big Issues Exhibition is presented as an opportunity both to exhibit and also to sell their work, and they all took away flyers to give to friends and family to invite them to come. A discussion about how much they would charge for their work offered a subtle means of introducing numbers and adding up to students who, in many cases, struggle with numeracy. They will all be entered for a Bronze Arts Award.
Since Watts Gallery reopened in 2011, the Learning Team has developed and promoted programmes for both primary and secondary schools. The opening of Watts Studios and the Clore Learning Studio at the beginning of 2016 has greatly enhanced capacity to accommodate visiting school groups. One of the team said that she loves working and teaching in Watts Studios, and the light and space are conducive to encouraging creativity and to learning. In the 2015/16, academic year thirty-five schools visited the Artists’ Village with 2,015 primary and 372 secondary pupils: a total of 2,387 students. This includes three special needs schools.

Loseley Fields Primary School

Loseley Fields Primary School is less than two miles from Watts Gallery - Artists’ Village, and the working relationship between the two organisations was first established in 2011. It serves a higher than average proportion of children who are disabled or have a Statement of Special Educational Needs and a higher proportion who are eligible for Pupil Premium. This includes Looked After Children. The first project that was undertaken in collaboration with the Artists’ Village was a pottery installation which remains today in pride of place at the entrance to the school. It was created at a time when it had its own working kiln and pottery, but these facilities closed along with the post of Art Coordinator. The school has since participated in workshops, with the Head of Learning delivering sessions back at the school. They were also invited to participate in workshops around the Russian Fairytale exhibition in 2014, including a trip to Pushkin House for a children’s Russian Christmas event. Loseley Fields School will be taking part in the Watts Hall of Fame Bicentenary Project.

The disadvantage to children who do not have adequate opportunity for arts education is made clear by Darren Henley in The Arts Dividend. He states that ‘students from low income families who take part in arts activities at school are three times more likely to get a degree than children from low income families that do not engage in arts activities at school.’ [11]

‘Students from low income families who take part in arts activities at school are three times more likely to get a degree.’ [12]

Delight in Watts

During 2016, a partnership with a new charity, Delight, achieved a successful pilot and has provided the foundation for further work with schools that serve the most deprived areas of Surrey. Its founder, Kathryn Mills, is a professional actor who worked for a number of years in primary education. She has a deep conviction that the arts are essential to the development of literacy and other educational outcomes and that poor parental engagement is directly correlated with poor literacy. She also believes that it should be every child’s right to have access to immersive arts experiences, one that is less likely to be fulfilled for children living in deprived areas. This belief is confirmed by Darren Henley in *The Arts Dividend*. He says that:

> ‘Young people who come from tougher economic backgrounds, where discretionary spend is tight, and where there may be no family experience of engaging with the arts or culture, are immediately at a huge disadvantage.’ [13]

Kathryn’s business model is to provide volunteering experience to secondary school students to raise funds for children from deprived areas to participate in the arts. She identified the ten schools in Surrey with the highest proportion of children on Pupil Premium [14] and selected one of them for the pilot. Having made the decision to focus upon Surrey where she lives, she then faced the challenge of identifying an organisation that could provide both the necessary quality of arts experience and the commitment to public engagement. Cost constraints meant that she could not consider taking the children to London, where she had worked before, to the rich variety that the capital offers. Watts Gallery - Artists’ Village satisfied her requirements, and she began working with the Learning Team on her project, branded Delight in Watts.

Year 4 children from the school selected for the pilot spent a day at the Artists’ Village making links with their classroom topic, Ancient Egypt, before taking part in a sculpture class. They had five sessions back at their school with a freelance artist, and each child produced a piece of work which was transferred to canvas, as shown in the illustration below. An exhibition was organised in The Old Kiln at Watts Gallery - Artists’ Village, and the children made and sent invitations to their parents and friends to attend. Small details such as the provision
of tea, coffee and the wonderful cake from The Tea Shop, as well as hot chocolate for the children, contributed to making the guests feel welcome.

A detailed evaluation of the pilot was undertaken by Delight and produced encouraging results. A teacher from the school reported that ‘the class have been 100% engaged since the start of the project’ with a ‘dramatic increase in home learning’. The attendance by parents at the exhibition far exceeded expectations, and improvements in punctuality, confidence and literacy have been observed in several children with particular challenges. For example, one girl from a Traveller family, who was frequently late for school and lacked confidence, has shown significant improvements in handwriting and attitude as a direct consequence of the project. She is being nominated for a Bronze Arts Award.

‘Vocabulary at age five remains the best predictor of whether children will be able to escape poverty in later life and engagement in the arts is a powerful tool for building vocabulary.’ [15]

This pilot demonstrates the value of Watts Gallery - Artists’ Village as a leading arts organisation outside London, providing experiences and education to children who otherwise would completely miss out. Some important lessons have been learned from it, in particular the mutual understanding and respect between Delight and Watts Gallery - Artists’ Village which must underpin the collaboration. It has shown the value of partnership, providing access to a school and its pupils that staff of the Learning Team might not otherwise have been able to reach.

This partnership was consolidated in the organisation of a ‘Schools Evening’ as a joint event between Delight and Watts Gallery - Artists’ Village for the heads and teachers of the ten schools that Kathryn had targeted. Seventeen members of staff attended, and all but one were first time visitors to the Artists’ Village. The focus of the evening was on how, going forward, this collaboration can also serve the professional development of the teachers involved and also how specific children can be tracked to provide more detailed data on learning outcomes.
‘In Chambers’s Edinburgh Journal in May 1849 Watts read the beautiful story of a factory foreman in Manchester, Thomas Wright, who had established a one-man charity to support newly released prisoners, finding them work and supporting their rehabilitation. Wright’s story was widely written about, generally with the moral that if one middle-aged man with no means could do this then where, reader, was your excuse not to act likewise? What indeed could a painter of delicate constitution do? He could paint a picture inspired by Wright’s story, and give it to the city of Manchester, in an effort to match Wright’s philanthropy. The picture was of the Good Samaritan, that biblical parable that demanded minimal theological buy-in, and was given by the artist in honour of Wright’s work. Seeking ways to memorialize the unofficial hero remained a passion of Watt’s for the rest of his life, and The Good Samaritan itself strongly suggests the potential of artists to be philanthropists.’ [16]

There is evidence throughout Watts Gallery - Artists’ Village of its founders’ concern for people facing adversity and their belief in helping people to ‘get back onto their feet’. Hanging conspicuously in Watts Studios is G F Watt’s portrait of Josephine Butler, a leading prison reformer and the only woman to feature in his Hall of Fame [17]. Today, a significant part of the work of the learning programme is within the criminal justice system, working with prisoners and young offenders to develop imagination, skills and motivation. The work has been recognised in a case study for the 2016 DCMS Culture White Paper. Within twenty five miles of the Artists’ Village are two women’s prisons and two young offenders’ institutions, and for a number of years the Artists’ Village has been providing arts education to people in custody within them. At HMP Send there has been an artist in residence from Watts Gallery - Artists’ Village for the last ten years, funded by the Michael Varah Memorial Fund.

The Learning Team have developed a good understanding of the particular requirements of working with HMP Send, HMP Bronzefield, also a women’s prison which has a young offender unit, and HMP/YOI Feltham. They endeavour to maintain communication with prison staff, including Governors whenever possible, to ensure that there is an understanding of the value of the art workshops and that arrangements will be made, including the provision of space. The freelance artists who deliver the workshops are carefully chosen. Experience has shown that they need to develop a rapport with the prisoners who attend and to be able to cope with the particular constraints of working in this environment.

As explained, under normal circumstances, Watts Gallery Trust’s collections provide inspiration and education for workshops that take place within the Artists’ Village. For the prison workshops, however, the freelance artists need to take in what they can to stimulate the imaginations of people who are limited to the confines of their institution. At the Artists’ Village there is the freedom to use different materials and approaches, but there are of course significant restrictions on what can be taken inside. Nonetheless, the artists succeed in linking the workshops back to the collections and often take in prints of the paintings or photographs of Watts Chapel and the sculptures.

The value of the arts in prisons has been presented in an authoritative evaluation conducted by the Universities of Glasgow, Strathclyde and Edinburgh of ‘Inspiring Change’, a programme of arts interventions in five Scottish prisons. In their final report the researchers state that:

‘Arts-based interventions offer more than “just” the development of the skills of offenders; they may enable offenders to begin to think differently about themselves, their families, their relationships with their peers,

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17. From the 1850s, Watts painted the Hall of Fame portraits of eminent Victorians including Carlyle, Tennyson, Browning and Rossetti.
and their relationships to the prison regime and the opportunities it offers. More generally, they may help offenders to “imagine” different possible futures, different social networks, different identities and different lifestyles. In and of themselves, arts-based interventions are unlikely to deliver the concrete, realisable sentence and resettlement plans which many offenders will need to tackle the full range of issues and challenges that they face; but they may help to foster and to reinforce commitment to such planning processes and to the change processes that they exist to support. They may also play a part in bringing positive social contacts and networks into the prison-based process.’ [18]

Certainly, the Learning Team consider the art produced during their workshops in prisons as clear evidence of both the way prisoners have begun to think of themselves and others differently and also of their commitment to planning a different future. One member explained why she believes that these workshops matter. She said that in an environment where people are stripped of everything including their identity, the workshops are dignifying and give back some sense of control and self worth. One of the prisoners said during a visit to the workshop that she has ADHD and normally finds it impossible to concentrate, but she concentrates for the entire morning on her art. Another said that she lives for this weekly activity.

There is, in addition, a very practical and tangible output to this programme. Prisoners are encouraged to produce work for the annual Big Issues Exhibition and, each year, their contributions provide some of the most dramatic and touching pieces on display. It is an opportunity to connect with the outside world and to inform people on the outside of their circumstances and feelings. It is also an opportunity to sell work in a way which is highly motivating and offers hope for life beyond custody. One person commented that her success in selling work has given her family a reason to be proud of her. The painting in the illustration overleaf is by a young offender and demonstrates that he understands the stark choice that he will face when he is released from custody. Is his painting an invitation to others to help him choose the right path and a demonstration of why this work in prisons matters?

In his book entitled The Empathy Instinct, published earlier this year, Sir Peter Bazalgette, former Chair of the Arts Council, acknowledges the pioneering approach taken by Surrey Youth Support Service. He draws attention to the reduction in youth crime in Surrey and the high satisfaction rate amongst victims as a result of the Youth Restorative Intervention. He acknowledges too the growing recognition of the importance of the arts within the Criminal Justice System:

‘Even though they are not yet core to prisoner education the arts are playing a growing role in rehabilitating prisoners and juvenile offenders and there’s a swelling evidence base about their effectiveness.’ [19]

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‘Getting released from prison you have to make sure you choose the right path to not come back to prison. So I dedicate this to inmates making the choice to be successful rather than to be a failure. Also I was dreaming of good times, holidays, hot ideas and success.’

In a letter from J when his painting was purchased:

‘I give many thanks to not only understanding my message behind the piece of art but to purchase it as well, which made me very happy. I based my work of art on the future because it’s about changing your life around so you don’t fall down the same hole. It’s also aimed at other people in my position, that at the end of every chapter there’s a new beginning and there’s plenty of time to turn your life around if you keep faithful and believe in yourself. So when my family told me that my picture was bought by you at the Gallery I was delighted and full of bright spirits. That someone understands me and where I’m coming from especially from my position.’

‘Young offenders who take part in arts activities are 18% less likely to re-offend.’ [20]
Surrey leads the way in its approach to youth justice. The work of Surrey County Council, in partnership with other organisations, has won praise from Lord Laming in a review of children in care and won the Howard League Community Justice Award. In particular, the local authority has developed an effective approach to keeping young people in care out of the criminal justice system. It needs to find ways of engaging them, helping them to develop practical and life skills and giving them a sense of achievement and hope. For the last five of the seven years that Surrey County Council has been delivering its approach to youth justice, Watts Gallery - Artists’ Village has been one of its partner organisations.

The young people have been coming to the Artists’ Village with staff from Surrey Youth Support Service to attend a ten week course of workshops. Some have learning difficulties, have not been successful in mainstream education and, almost invariably, have never been to an art gallery before. Some will have been in trouble with the police. As is the case with other groups that participate in the learning programme, staff understand the need to make them feel at ease and to find ways of overcoming their anxieties. They work with each young person individually, encouraging them to find an artistic medium and to aspire to obtaining a Bronze Level Art Award at the end of the ten weeks.

One of the students commented that she liked working with clay because ‘you can't make a mistake’. During a workshop, another was drawing an elaborate picture in a cartoon style. When asked what she was doing, she answered that it was a picture of her sister being taken into care that same morning. Several weeks later that same young person was giving visitors a guided tour of the Big Issues Exhibition and showing them, with great pride, her own work.

In his book *The Arts Dividend*, Darren Henley defines the benefits to young people of cultural education in which he includes the opportunity to ‘create new culture for themselves’ and ‘the development of an individual’s personal creativity’. These benefits are perhaps nowhere better illustrated than in the case of the young people from Surrey Youth Support, for whom creating their own culture and creativity may be their first positive educational experience.

Watts Gallery - Artists’ Village is now working with Surrey Youth Support Service to adapt workshops for new needs as a result of a change in policy. Surrey is the first local authority to develop a pilot for Women in the Justice System to support young female offenders with the aim of preventing further offending. The new emphasis is upon developing practical and vocational skills, and the Learning Team at Watts Gallery - Artists’ Village are researching ways of offering work experience within the estate in areas such as catering, gardening and estate management. This is complicated by the fact that if they earn money, they are no longer eligible for benefits. At the time of writing, staff were working on a solution that would provide the valuable experience without causing a financial penalty to the young women.

A new partnership has been established with a local charity, Surrey Care Trust, which provides a programme called STEPS to 16, working with Year 11 students who have been excluded from school. The aim of this programme is to try to accommodate the specific educational and psychological needs of each student. Surrey Care Trust has little in the way of art facilities, and the hope is that the partnership with Watts Gallery - Artists’ Village will introduce the students to art, using it to develop basic numeracy and literacy skills. To enable the students to adjust to a new environment, the Learning Team intend to conduct the first few workshops within the confines of the Clore Learning Studio working with film, photography and mixed media.
THE BIG ISSUES BY LORD BIRD, FOUNDER OF THE BIG ISSUE

The Big Issues Exhibition is shown in what used to be called Surrey’s stockbroker belt. The gallery it’s shown at nestles in the country outside Guildford off the A3; and the show is a dream.

A dream for the many up coming artists. Drawn from the work of local people, it includes the works of inmates from a number of Surrey’s prisons. And it is worth the slow road and the train ride for me to go there and witness social redemption as art.

The Watts Gallery at Compton houses this vital exhibition along with the collection of one of Britain’s greatest Victorian painters. There is also an exhibition of the drawings of social reformer and critic of Victorian industrial excess John Ruskin. You can’t go anywhere in the Victorian century without running into this genius of a man who inspired a view of society that was inclusive and creative.

I was asked to open the two exhibitions largely because of my Big Issue connection. I do feel they were surprised to find out what a nutty lover of Victorian art I was. And prison art and art as a means of socially getting yourself out of the sticky stuff. So I told them my story.

fifty-three years before the exhibition ran I passed the Watts Gallery on the A3 in handcuffs. I was being brought to my reformatory a few miles down the road, but had tried to do a bunk at Brentford when they stopped to fill up the car. So from then on it was restraints for young Tony ‘arsehole’ Bird.

The sign clearly pointed to the Watts Gallery, and the other way onward south to my place of correction. A correction that allowed me to fall in love with art, to begin to change my life because art was better than thieving.

Eighteen years after my incarceration, now a printer, publisher and clever little fellow, I visited the Watts Gallery to interview the venerable curator Wilfrid Blunt. As well as being the brother of the notorious Keeper of the Queen’s Pictures and former Cambridge educated spy for Stalin, Sir Anthony Blunt, Wilfrid was a great historian. I was writing an article for a friend’s magazine on the Watts Gallery and had a great day with the curator.

But the gallery was not a pretty sight. It was full of buckets to catch the leaking roof’s water. It was grim looking, as if the world had realised that Watts was irrelevant.

Now in February 2014, Watts Gallery and its outreach programme, reaching out to prisons and people in serious need of opportunity to show their art, is an oasis of creativity. A brilliant place to visit and to gawk and then wonder at the work and marvel at its renaissance from leaks to perfection.

When I was asked to talk at this event last week, on a winterous night, I did not know that the Watts Gallery had brought together so many things I had come to see as important in life: art, social mobility and creative responses to social problems.

The renaissance of this gallery, under the inspired leadership of Perdita Hunt, sounding decidedly Victorian in name but toughly modern in delivery, is itself a work of art. You will not be disappointed with what she and her team have done to this magnificent collection of George Frederic Watts’s work out there in the Surrey hills.

Watts’s work looks fresh and beautiful in the new gallery, and it does stand up to close inspection. I particularly like Watts when he is describing nature, a wounded heron, fallen from the sky, is my favourite. Though there is also some Victorian sentiment for those with a taste for it. And some incredibly moving paintings of the destitute of a world that was bursting with wealth and its concomitant poverty.

I stayed for soup and fortunately missed going on a TV show where everyone shouted at each other about benefits; the angry mixed with the unwise it would seem.

Make a trip to Guildford specially to see this. And also visit the great newish cathedral where, as a locked up boy, I contributed nine pence for one of its bricks. But no prizes if you spot my brick.

Transcript of an article written by Lord Bird following his visit to Watts Gallery - Artists’ Village to open The Big Issues Exhibition 2014


Dena from HMP Send, Purple Haze, 2015. Acrylic on canvas.
Apprenticeship is an important aspect of the learning culture at Watts Gallery - Artists’ Village, and all of the management team play their role in passing on their skills and knowledge, working alongside younger people to enable them to learn as they work. This follows the example set by Mary Watts with the Compton Potters’ Arts Guild in which fourteen young men were accommodated and trained at any one time.

G F Watts took on an apprentice, Thomas Wren, who succeeded in sculpting a small version of Physical Energy, as well as the monument to G F Watts in the Watts Chapel Cloister. The Compton Potters’ Arts Guild is a remarkable example of a successful apprentice programme first established in 1899, providing training and vocational employment until its demise in 1955. Mary Watts recruited fourteen apprentices at any one time and taught them to design and make terracotta garden ornaments of sufficient quality to be sold in London shops, including Liberty and Co.

Today apprenticeships are provided in almost every department of Watts Gallery - Artists’ Village, specifically in Catering, Estate Management, Marketing and within the Curatorial Team. There are also apprentices working with the painting Conservator in the David Pike Conservation Studio. The Curatorial Fellowship is one of only two opportunities throughout the Museums sector to offer a two-year apprenticeship to a museum graduate or to a Masters student. It offers hands on experience of conducting research and mounting exhibitions, managing volunteers and contributing to publications, collections management and public speaking. Since 2011 three fellows have completed their two-year appointment, and all have gone on to obtain significant roles in national institutions. The following case studies explain different routes that have been taken into working at Watts Gallery - Artists’ Village and what the experience means to the people concerned.
Naomi said that at the age of ten she was described as the ‘Artful Dodger’ and she describes herself as a ‘rough diamond’. She has moved home frequently and now lives with her foster mother in the village of Compton. She applied for a job working as an Assistant Chef in The Tea Shop kitchen and, although she did not think she would fit in, was offered the opportunity to train in front of house, a role which she now relishes. The experienced staff, including the Catering Manager, have trained her in how to communicate with customers and to take orders, however demanding.

She says that the catering team ‘works together as a family’ and, during the interview, emphasised how different she feels to other employees and yet how kind and accepting they have been of her and how much they have helped her to learn. She feels respected and, in turn, expressed a touching degree of loyalty and respect for the Director and other members of the management team. She believes that the individual attention and encouragement that she has been given has changed her life. In turn, she wants other young people who have faced adversity to be given the opportunities that Watts Gallery - Artists’ Village has given her.

Steve was unemployed and does not own a car. He was directed to Watts Gallery - Artists’ Village by EmployAbility/Surrey Choices and was offered an apprenticeship within the Estates Department. He has become an important member of the team, travelling to work each day by bus from his home in Farncombe. He has taken a particular interest in the garden machinery and takes responsibility for its maintenance. He has also formed an affinity with the young people who visit Watts Gallery - Artists’ Village from Halow, a Guildford-based charity for young disabled adolescents and adults.

When studying photography at the University of Creative Arts in Farnham, Lucy was required to find some work experience as part of her course. She approached Watts Gallery - Artists’ Village and was offered the opportunity to shadow the Director for one week. This was extended to three months, during which time she attended Trustee meetings and spent time in the Accounts Department, the Visitor Centre, The Tea Shop and in the Marketing Department. She continued to work as a volunteer for the remainder of her degree and, on graduation, was offered a Marketing Apprenticeship.

She described her appreciation for the way in which her design skills have been drawn out and how, early on, they were commended. As someone who is very dyslexic and who does not do well in traditional exams, she feels that her strengths are being encouraged and areas that would have seemed inaccessible, such as accounts, have been opened up to her. During her apprenticeship, she was encouraged and supported in doing a Certificate in Marketing and has since been promoted to Marketing Assistant. She too describes a nurturing environment in which, in her first proper job, she has gained way beyond expectation in confidence and experience. She feels motivated to work hard because everyone around her ‘is so passionate and committed’ and the small significant kindnesses, such as the arrival of cake on her first day at work, which also happened to be her birthday.
VOLUNTEERS

Watts Gallery - Artists' Village could not operate in the way that it does today without the involvement of its 336 volunteers. The organisation actively advertises in the local community and has a continuous stream of people who apply to join its voluntary workforce. A member of staff is dedicated to their recruitment, training and coordination, a role which they describe as highly fulfilling and rewarding. Most recruits become stewards and, as such, are the public face of Watts Gallery and Watts Studios. Volunteering is often described as a 'virtuous circle', and certainly the investment that Watts Gallery - Artists' Village makes in its volunteers reaps considerable return in both economic and social value.

Each volunteer is given a written statement of their role and thorough induction and training. Many of them train as stewards and are offered considerable flexibility — they may commit to regular shifts each week or each month or simply choose to remain on standby. If they would like to become a tour guide, they receive special training and give a practice tour. Some guides prefer to specialise in a particular aspect of the Artists' Village, so for example one has become an expert on the Watts Chapel. Volunteers also work in the gardens, an opportunity much valued by people who do not have their own property. They also help out at exhibition openings and other events.

Significantly, several members of staff who have managed this programme began as volunteers themselves, having studied History of Art. They were seeking employment in the arts sector but had decided against going on to do a Masters degree. Given their own positive experiences, they care deeply about creating a nurturing environment in which volunteers are made to feel part of the organisation or in their words, 'part of a warm community'.

One of the coordinators described a 'pastoral' element to her role and said that 'it is no understatement to say that (volunteering) has transformed some people's lives.' She is well aware that for some it is a way of dealing with a difficult transition following a bereavement or divorce or moving to a new area. On occasions, it is a chance for people who do not feel sufficiently confident to apply for mainstream work to develop new skills and experience, which has resulted in a return to paid work. One volunteer is a relatively recent migrant to this country who values the opportunity to speak English in a structured environment.

The opening of Watts Studios in early 2016 has provided a context in which younger people can be supervised, also giving Watts Gallery - Artists' Village the chance to further diversify its volunteer workforce. For several years, it has recruited students from the University of Surrey and, more recently, from the University of Creative Arts in Farnham and from Farnborough College. Older volunteers appreciate their involvement and enjoy giving advice and guidance. From the students' point of view, having access to a well organised volunteering experience and potential references from Watts Gallery - Artists' Village is of great value when applying for paid employment.

This virtuous circle provides the Artists' Village with approximately seventy-two hours of service per day, and volunteers are highly rated in feedback questionnaires, frequently receiving approval ratings of ten out of ten. As many of them are members of the local community, they themselves feed back comments on the organisation, often giving constructive criticism and suggestions for improvement. Each quarter, a two hour briefing is held for them with updates from the different departments at Watts Gallery - Artists' Village, at which they are invited to give their views, and an annual celebration acknowledges and thanks them. The following case studies give an insight into the meaning of volunteering to people in very different circumstances.
When Mei moved to Guildford, she was keen to find a way of getting involved in the local community and, having attended an induction day at Watts Gallery - Artists’ Village, she became a volunteer. She migrated to the UK from Hong Kong six years ago and greatly values the opportunity that volunteering provides to learn about local culture and to speak English. She works as a steward in Watts Gallery and also helps in Events Management. She values the flexible online system of choosing her shifts, as she has a child and also a part-time job.

The experience is proving to be entirely positive, and she feels both respected and valued in her volunteer role. In turn, she says that it gives her great pleasure to introduce visitors to this ‘gem’ near her new home of Guildford and it gives her a sense of achievement to represent the place in this way. Having studied Hospitality Management both in Hong Kong and the UK, she is very well disposed to greeting visitors and being part of the public face of Watts Gallery - Artists’ Village. She suggested during the interview that service could be improved by translating materials into other languages in anticipation of increasing numbers of overseas visitors.

Mandy grew up locally and, as a child, was brought to Watts Gallery - Artists’ Village by her parents. Back then she found it a cold and dark place, but she now speaks glowingly of the transformation that has taken place over recent years. She volunteered first as a steward but enjoys being outside and, as an experienced gardener, has been given responsibility for part of the garden at Limnerslease which she shares with her daughter. She also volunteers in the Walled Garden at Loseley Park and can bring ideas from elsewhere to her work at Watts Gallery - Artists’ Village.

James also lives locally and attended a breakfast briefing on the future plans for Watts Gallery - Artists’ Village. He decided immediately that he would like to help and now volunteers in the Pottery Studio, keeping the materials in order and firing items produced in the workshops. With a significant illness, he cannot do more than three hours a day and therefore very much values the flexibility offered by volunteering. In fact, he describes his role as ‘a lifesaver’ and describes it as one of the most friendly places he has experienced in which people are ‘kind, helpful and thoughtful’.

His account of his volunteering role provided an unexpected insight into the transformative capacity of art and the strong link with the Arts & Crafts Movement. He described what his art meant to him and how, at school, he did not fit in or do well in conventional education but he loved pottery. Decades later, he was given a weekend pottery course and has since devoted himself to it, learning from books and YouTube and creating his own stoneware, as well as volunteering at Watts Gallery - Artists’ Village. He is developing the use of clay dug from the same seam used by Mary Watts and loves the fact that her story is being told through the revitalisation of Watts Studios and Limnerslease. Having worked in banking, he marvels at a culture which, in his words, could not be more different and in which people are motivated by a sense of mission and make him feel welcome and appreciated.
HOW AND WHY DOES WATTS GALLERY - ARTISTS’ VILLAGE HAVE A POSITIVE IMPACT?

There are several key indicators that demonstrate that the Artists’ Village is good at delivering economic and social value and understands how and why it is effective in the work that it does. Partnerships have endured over the years, in particular with the Cellar Art Group since 2006, Surrey Youth Support Service since 2012, with Opportunities since 2011 and with Street Level Art since 2010. There has been an Artist in Residence at HMP Send for ten years, and the Artists’ Village has worked with HMP Bronzefield and HMP/YOI Feltham since 2010. A new partner, Delight Charity, is extending the scope of its work based upon the successful pilot this year.

In the academic year 2016/17, the Artists’ Village worked with fifty schools, including three that serve students with special needs. Eleven young people achieved an Arts Award.

Of over three hundred volunteers, none has been required to leave, and the vast majority stay unless their own circumstances change. Visitors to the Artists’ Village are asked to rate various aspects of their visit, and volunteers almost invariably receive ten out of ten. Twelve trained as volunteers and then, as a consequence of their new expertise, have moved into paid employment within the Artists’ Village. Of these, three have furthered their careers in the arts, moving to other organisations including Tate and Brooklands Museum.

Four have begun as apprentices within the Artists’ Village, and three continue working there, with one person in The Tea Shop, one in Estate Management and one in Marketing. Each year the organisation employs a postdoctorate Curatorial Fellow who also gains extensive curatorial experience as well as an introduction to managing an arts organisation. The Director, Curator and Head of Learning provide advice and mentoring to many different organisations including, amongst others, Hestercombe Gardens, Waddesdon Manor, the National Army Museum, Pallant House Gallery, Charleston, Orleans House Gallery and Royal Holloway.

In the many interviews with staff, volunteers, apprentices and visitors to the Artists’ Village during the research for this report, there was a consistency in what people had to say about its culture and values. Great importance was accorded to the legacy of G F and Mary Watts in their deep-rooted commitment to Art for All and to the skilful way in which this is being upheld and interpreted in a twenty-first century context. The strong leadership of the Director and the way in which she exemplifies core values were cited again and again as fundamental to its success in delivering upon its social mission. The following observations identify how and why the Artists’ Village achieves social impact, potentially forming the basis of a theory of change.

• The collections and the themes within the work provide a frame of reference that guides the Learning Team in the way they reach out to other organisations and individuals. Consequently, they engage with people with mental illness, the homeless, the socially isolated, those with learning difficulties, prisoners and young offenders and people on very low incomes.

• In turn, staff and freelance artists use the collections to inspire the different groups who attend workshops, demonstrating to them that they and their experiences are valued and encouraging them to express themselves through art.

• They animate the workshops by telling stories about the Wattses’ art and their lives, giving insights into social history but also raising levels of ambition through accounts of, for example, the Compton Potters’ Arts Guild and the creation of Watts Chapel.

• They use the full range of media and art forms to find something that will appeal to the individual, allowing them to experiment and to reach beyond themselves.
• They invest time and effort in developing constructive relationships with the representatives of the visiting organisations in order to understand the particular requirements of their members or students.

• They use the opportunity to exhibit in the Big Issues Exhibition to motivate and to provide a tangible goal, as well as the chance to communicate with others.

• They also use the Big Issues Exhibition to invoke the entrepreneurial spirit of G F and Mary Watts and the opportunity it provides to produce something of commercial value, giving a sense of self worth and an opportunity to give back to the Artists’ Village.

• They use the Arts Council Arts Award programme to motivate and reward students, especially those who struggle with mainstream education.

• They develop strong links within the local community, appreciating that it is far more diverse than is apparent, with hidden deprivation and considerable social isolation and associated poor mental health.

• They work hard to appreciate and understand the particular circumstances of volunteers and apprentices, providing them with the opportunity to work alongside others, to learn from them and to develop confidence in their work.

• They understand that small kindnesses and a welcoming attitude can make a world of difference to someone’s experience of the Artists’ Village and the likelihood that they will benefit from the visit and come back again.

• They select freelance artists carefully, to ensure that they too represent the cultural values of the Artists’ Village.

As Watts Gallery Trust enters a new phase of development with the prospect of new leadership, some suggestions and recommendations have emerged from discussions with the diverse stakeholders who have contributed to this report:

• The work targeted at groups and individuals with particular social needs is a vital and, at times, under-acknowledged aspect of the organisation’s service. It is shown to require strong leadership and will continue to need dedicated fundraising to serve people who would have limited or no access to the arts.

• Art for All is an integral part of its mission, founded upon the values of G F and Mary Watts, placing art at the centre of all of its work but also using it to drive social change, self-development and empowerment. It is important that recruitment and induction of staff recognise this aspect of the mission and that everyone, including staff and volunteers, upholds these values.

• The investment by the Learning Team in recognising the different strengths and cultures of partner organisations, giving them full credit for the work, has been and will continue to be essential.

• This report has revealed that visitors to Watts Gallery - Artists’ Village include people who may be extremely isolated, depressed and may be intimidated by what appears to them as a prestigious place. This includes people who have never been to an art gallery before. The way they are welcomed may make a significant difference to how they feel and whether they will return. This includes members of the public who visit in their own right.
Following on from this last point, it has been suggested that more could be done to make the collections accessible to all visitors, including translating materials and using digital technology to make visitors welcome. Further work in implementing augmented reality and in understanding the way personal devices such as iPhones are used could be of great benefit.

At exactly the time that this report was being finalised a new book was published by John Nickson, a distinguished fundraiser and philanthropist in his own right. John’s book, *Our Common Good*, includes an account of his visit to Watts Gallery - Artists’ Village and his interview with Perdita Hunt. It provides a fitting reminder of the legacy that guides the organisation today.

‘In 16/17 there were 17,936 engagements in learning activities, up from 1,740 in 12/13.’

‘The Wattses’ legacy is extraordinary. There is no other Artists’ Village in Britain as you have seen here. It was Watts’s money that built the chapel, the pottery and the gallery. He was an extraordinary philanthropist who supported thirty four charities ... This is what real heritage should be, to recreate the energy and the power of time. The reason why ours is a genuine revival is that it comes from a real heritage bequeathed by the Wattses.’ [21]
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>WHAT IT DOES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Big Issues Outreach Programme</td>
<td>A social enterprise programme. Participants explore the big issues in Watts's work, then make art to sell.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STREET LEVEL ART</td>
<td>Weekly workshop for people who are homeless or suffering from addiction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE CELLAR ART GROUP</td>
<td>Weekly workshops for disadvantaged and vulnerable adults with poor mental health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPPORTUNITIES</td>
<td>Ad hoc workshops for women who are seeking training/employment and for their children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SURREY YOUTH SUPPORT SERVICE</td>
<td>Ten week artist-led workshops for young people in care/at risk of offending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALTERNATIVE LEARNING PROGRAMME</td>
<td>Six week Bronze Arts Award course for young people. Artists led workshops one day a week for the six weeks. Inclusion in the Big Issues Exhibition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAR PROJECT</td>
<td>Six week Bronze Arts Award course for young people. Artists led workshops one day a week for the six weeks. Inclusion in the Big Issues Exhibition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SURREY CARE TRUST</td>
<td>Six week Bronze Arts Award course for young people. Artists led workshops one day a week for the six weeks. Inclusion in the Big Issues Exhibition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMP SEND</td>
<td>Weekly artist-facilitated studio for up to twelve women who apply to join the programme. Women are guided in making work and supported with submitting art to exhibitions and other enterprise projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMP/YOI FELTHAM</td>
<td>Artist-led workshops and projects with opportunity to do Bronze Level Arts Awards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMP Bronzefield &amp; HMP/YOI Bronzefield</td>
<td>Four days of artist-led workshops a year for up to forty women per day. Women are invited to submit their work to the Big Issues exhibition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHY IT MATTERS</td>
<td>NO. OF PARTICIPANTS 2016/17</td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reducing social isolation, giving sense of purpose, new skills and opportunity for self expression</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reducing social isolation, giving opportunity for new skills and self expression, reducing suffering</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing motivation to persevere; giving discipline, sense of achievement and new skills; providing relief from challenging lives and opportunity to bring children to art activities</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing individual attention in nurturing environment for particularly vulnerable young people; giving confidence, discipline and diversion from challenging lives. Some have discovered artistic abilities and a love of art as a direct consequence. Many complete Arts Awards</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing individual attention in nurturing environment for particularly vulnerable young people who are school excluded; giving confidence, discipline and diversion from challenging lives</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing individual attention in nurturing environment for particularly vulnerable young people; giving confidence, discipline and diversion from challenging lives</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing individual attention in nurturing environment for particularly vulnerable young people who are excluded from school; giving confidence, discipline and diversion from challenging lives</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing an opportunity to express themselves and communicate through art. Developing skills, discipline and opportunity to create items of commercial value. Contributing to preparing prisoners for life beyond prison and for employment</td>
<td>327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As above, with more emphasis on the therapeutic potential of making art</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing an opportunity to express themselves and communicate through art. Developing skills, discipline and opportunity to create items of commercial value. Contributing to preparing prisoners for life beyond prison and for employment</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTIVITY</td>
<td>WHAT IT DOES</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Formal Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>PRIMARY SCHOOLS</td>
<td>Experience of visiting a gallery/museum. A focus on cross curricular learning through art with interactive gallery talks and artist-led workshops. Support and mentoring for teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SECONDARY SCHOOLS</td>
<td>Experience of visiting a gallery/museum. A focus on learning through art and design with interactive gallery talks, artist-led workshops and projects. Support and mentoring for teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPECIAL NEEDS SCHOOLS</td>
<td>Multi-sensory interpretation and activities for children with MLD and PMLD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCHOOL PROJECTS: DELIGHT</td>
<td>Immersive arts experience for children in school with high % Pupil Premium, including children from migrant and Traveller families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNIVERSITIES</td>
<td>Activities range from guided tours to university projects e.g. giving students site-specific briefs, such as Kingston University Illustration students creating maps for the Artists’ Village; UCA Architecture students creating proposals for outdoor pavilions; Institute of Education students proposing interpretation schemes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Work Experience, Placements, Apprenticeships, Volunteers</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HALOW GROUP</td>
<td>Visits to provide opportunity for disabled young people to volunteer on the estate, help with Big Issues Exhibition installation and participate in workshops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VOLUNTEERS</td>
<td>A multifaceted volunteer programme which gives vital support to the everyday running of the Artists’ Village. Roles include stewarding, guiding, gardening, assisting with events and workshops and minibus driving. All volunteers are given ongoing training on the collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPRENTICESHIPS</td>
<td>Opportunities to gain skills in museums, galleries and heritage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHY IT MATTERS</td>
<td>NO. OF PARTICIPANTS 2016/17</td>
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<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Complementing art education: many schools with little art and no specialist teacher. Developing appreciation of art, history, local heritage; stimulating imagination and helping literacy and language skills, especially for children who struggle with formal education</td>
<td>1784</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complementing art/history syllabus; providing opportunities for students to engage with a gallery without cost of going to London. Particular value to students doing arts subjects</td>
<td>1182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing an accessible and adaptable gallery with carefully differentiated learning opportunities for children and young people</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing much greater opportunity for arts experience than school can afford; providing individual attention for children who struggle with formal learning; improving literacy and language skills</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnering with universities that widen students’ knowledge and experience of heritage through field trips and providing opportunities for students to work on client briefs, helping them with employability</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing skills and confidence and providing life experiences for young people who have difficulty in obtaining employment</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing individuals from all backgrounds with opportunity to acquire new skills, meet like minded people and gain work experience, whilst giving something back to the community</td>
<td>339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing skills and experience that apprentices might not otherwise have opportunities to gain. All have gone on to further higher education and employment</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTIVITY</td>
<td>WHAT IT DOES</td>
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<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WORK PLACEMENTS</td>
<td>University partnership placement programmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARTIST IN RESIDENCE</td>
<td>Watts was supported as a young contemporary artist. This partnership with UCA, provides a new or mid-career artist with a studio to develop their work, with an opportunity for mentoring and an exhibition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXPLORE, MAKE, PLAY! FAMILY PROGRAMME</td>
<td>A programme of creative family learning including free self-guided activities and activities for toddlers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WATTS ACADEMY</td>
<td>Regular workshops, Summer School and Youth Forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For 11 to 19 year olds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADULT LEARNING</td>
<td>History of Art, creative courses, quarterly evening courses and study days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Practical Art &amp; Art History Courses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EVENING EVENTS</td>
<td>Quarterly talks and music, literature, theatre and film events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEASONAL EVENTS</td>
<td>Seasonal multi-arts events for all audiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodland Fairy Fair, Victorian Christmas Fair, Watts at Dusk and Museums at Night</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHY IT MATTERS</td>
<td>NO. OF PARTICIPANTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Offering supported work experience to History, Heritage, Art History and Museums Studies students alongside opportunities to conduct research</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often an artist who would otherwise not be able to develop their practice because of financial adversity, creates a new body of work and engages the public with contemporary art during open studio sessions</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing a low cost day out and a chance to engage with a museum collection and professional artists/makers without the expense of going to London, with the added advantage of outdoor play</td>
<td>2682</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing local young people the opportunity to develop creative and heritage skills and an introduction to the creative industries. They take part in the Arts Award Scheme and self-directed projects</td>
<td>351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing adult learners access to creative industries and scholars and new knowledge and creative skills at a relevantly low cost, often gaining new friends and going on to become volunteers</td>
<td>348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local people benefiting from interpretations of the collections by household names and accessing new work in the arts, not readily available outside of London. The programme also supports the work of new and emerging visual and performing artists</td>
<td>549</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing affordable and creative experiences for families and young creative industries not ordinarily available outside of London</td>
<td>4481</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE BIG ISSUES PROGRAMME IS SUPPORTED BY

The Big Give
The Borrows Charitable Trust
Community Foundation for Surrey
The David Williamson Trust
Geoff Herrington Foundation
The Hazelhurst Trust
The Henry Smith Charity
The Ironmongers’ Company
The Lake House Charitable Foundation
Mary Watts Guild
Michael Varah Memorial Fund
Mr and Mrs John Siebert

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Back cover: Susanna from HMP Send, Night Falls over El Borne, 2016. Acrylic on canvas.