LGBTQ+ heritage organisations share their advice



Pride celebrations on the Isle of Wight. Photo: Héctor Manchego.

We're proud to be supporting projects that are saving the heritage of the LGBTQ+ community and sharing these stories to build understanding and inclusion.

We spoke to two organisations running very different community heritage projects about their advice for delivering a successful project.

Meet the organisations

StoneCrabs Theatre are collecting and sharing the heritage of the Isle of Wight's queer community. Out on an Island created the first oral history archive of the island's LGBTQ+ community. Their second project, Pride in Self, Pride in Place, is uncovering the role of the NHS in the island's LGBTQ+ culture between 1980 and 2000.

The Wild Mind Project are delivering a programme for LGBTQ+ young people aged 11-25 to restore a green space in Brighton, helping them strengthen their wellbeing and form friendships through caring for nature.

What they've learned along the way

Collaboration takes time

Building partnerships with other organisations can create greater impact for your community, but don't underestimate how long it will take to build your network.

Franko Figueiredo, StoneCrabs Artistic Director, says: "It's important that early on you get a clear idea of the partnerships that you want to form. Make a start on building those conversations with local heritage and community organisations, schools and museums well in advance of submitting your application for funding."

Caroline Diamond, Out on an Island Project Manager, says: "Building connections has taken a lot of time and effort. We're now in the position where people know our work and come to us wanting to be part of it – but it's taken five years to reach this point."

Berny
health
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The Out on an Island project led to an exhibition of LGBTQ+ islanders' stories. Photo: Héctor Manchego.

Prioritise participants' wellbeing

Considering the wellbeing of people involved in the projects is paramount, particularly given that LGBTQ+ people feel less satisfied and face more challenges than the general population, meaning they're more likely to face mental health issues.

Franko: "We recommend having a counsellor attached to your project. Particularly with the oral histories we are collecting, we're aware that being involved can be tough on people's mental health. It's important to have support

available.”

Berny: “For some people our programmes are a big deal, some haven’t left the house in months. But the encouraging thing is that once they’ve come to a session, they tend to return for more. I see the difference that being in nature makes to young people’s confidence, self-esteem and happiness.”

Build a safe environment for self-expression and support

Franko: “When our Out on an Island project started, creating a supportive place where LGBTQ+ people could talk, the community was really drawn to it. We were worried about finding enough volunteers, but we ended up with more than we could cope with!”

Berny: “When we bring young LGBTQ+ people together, they’re great at supporting each other. They need to be with other y e. I’ve seen t y the third s



Getting stuck into restoring an overgrown pond. Photo: The Wild Mind Project.

Understand your audiences and their different needs

Franko: “We have two audiences, the LGBTQ+ community and the wider community, folk who may not understand what the acronym LGBT means. So you need to be aware that there are different levels of how you present information. Lots of people thought Pride is just a carnival, and so we wanted to teach them about the history of Pride as a protest.”

Berny: “We run monthly drop-in sessions for young people who cannot commit to the programmes, or who have finished a programme and want to keep in contact. We introduce them to different organisations, so it’s not so daunting to start

volunteering elsewhere. For the older young people, we have a monitored WhatsApp group as a safe space for them to stay connected and share information."

Volunteering isn't one-size-fits-all

Caroline: "Some people will be happy to commit one day a week for three years and make long-lasting friendships along the way. Others might only want to be involved in specific parts of your project like oral history work. It's important to understand how different people want to contribute and what their needs and expectations are."

Berny: "We couldn't run our programmes without the help of volunteers. But the hard truth is that looking after volunteers can be challenging when you're a small organisation. Consider carefully which types of volunteering best suits your project and your resources."

How to apply for funding

Head to our funding pages for information on how to apply for a grant for your heritage project.



Restoring a green space in Brighton. Photo: The Wild Mind Project.



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Isle of Wight Pride. Photo: Héctor Manchego.



BTQ+ culture on the Isle of Wight

StoneCrabs Theatre held an exhibition of LGBTQ+ stories.

Out On An Island: 100 years of Isle of Wight LGBTQ+ oral histories