

Wac Arts announces National Lottery support as it celebrates its 40th Birthday



Wac Arts has been awarded a £86,400 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to develop its Connecting Communities Project over its 40th birthday celebrations. Wac Arts birthday year begins on the 23rd September with an Open Day for the public.

Made possible by money raised by National Lottery players, the Connecting Communities project is designed to celebrate the rich heritage of participation and performance of Wac Arts as a charity and the Old Town Hall of which they are custodians. The project will work with partners like University of the Third Age London and will engage 500 young people and their families, and 1,000 older Londoners.

Project highlights:

- For the first time, Wac Arts will make previously archived material available to the local community so that they can fully explore the building's history.
- Wac Arts will develop a heritage Skills Development programme for young people and a Volunteer programme, with expert input from Archivist Dr Ellie Pridgeon, Camden Archives, Heritage Specialists Unfinished Histories and Heritage Engagement Consultant Hopkins van Mil.
- The community will be welcomed into the Old Town Hall with a host of events starting with an Open Day on the 23rd September, three day arts festival, showcases, workshops and tours.
- The public will be invited to heritage-inspired performances and tours and an exhibition with dedicated displays and sound recordings throughout the building. The first of the Town Hall Tours will be at the Wac Arts Open Day on Sunday 23rd September 2018 at 10am.

'When I took over as Chief Executive I made a commitment to connect with our wider community - the 42% of Camden who are over 65, the asylum seekers and refugees seeking new homes here and those under 16 who often don't engage with arts organisations. I want us to open up our home. By connecting through our heritage of stories we will make our past relevant to our future as we grow.'
Karen Napier, Wac Arts Chief Executive

'The process of archiving brings a community together from all backgrounds and all ages. It will be a fascinating venture for the organisation, its partners and the community it serves' **Dr Ellie Pridgeon, Project Partner**

To read more about Wac Art's rich heritage go to <https://www.wacarts.co.uk/whats-new>

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Notes to editors

About Wac Arts:

Wac Arts believes in the infinite power of the arts to unleash the extraordinary potential of young people.

The charity offers fully inclusive weekend, evening and holiday programmes that celebrate diversity, with classes significantly subsidised to make them accessible to all young people aged 5-30.

62% of young people that benefit from Wac Arts live within the borough of Camden.

“Wac Arts means an expanded life. A better life” John Gaine, Wac Arts disability and inclusion ambassador



The charity had humble beginnings in a Kentish Town community hall. In 2000, Wac Arts secured the lease for the Old Town Hall from Camden Council which enabled the organisation and programmes to meet the demand from thousands of young people from across London to access the arts.

Wac Arts home, the Old Town Hall is now a creative hub where young people build confidence, artists connect, and other arts and cultural organisations such as University of the Third Age and Akademi South Asian Dance call home.

The Open Day is a free event from 11-5pm on Sunday 23rd September at the Old Town Hall, 213 Haverstock Hill, NW3 4QP. Info at www.wacarts.co.uk/openday

About the Heritage Lottery Fund

Thanks to National Lottery players, we invest money to help people across the UK explore, enjoy and protect the heritage they care about - from the archaeology under our feet to the historic parks and buildings we love, from precious memories and collections to rare wildlife. www.hlf.org.uk. Follow us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) and use #NationalLottery and #HLFsupported.

For further information on Wac Arts, the 40th Birthday Events Schedule or the Old Town Hall please contact hayley.butler@wacarts.co.uk or call 020 7692 5807.