



Queen's Hall Arts Centre



Historic England



Northumberland  
County Council

PRESS RELEASE

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## Animating Hexham

### Historic town centre to be animated by artists and local families inspired by Hexham's heritage

Hexham Culture Network has announced plans to animate the historic town centre through a series of projections created by artists and local families.

Inspired by Hexham's heritage and funded by Historic England, Animating Hexham aims to discover stories and evoke memories of the town's high streets and buildings, using these to inspire animations and conversations about Hexham's heritage. This pilot project will project the animations across the main shopping streets in the autumn, helping to define why Hexham's heritage is important to the community and what value the town centre will have in the future.

Katy Taylor, Artistic Director/Chief Executive of Queen's Hall Arts and Chair of the Hexham Culture Network said, *"We hope that Animating Hexham will inspire people to share their memories, get creative and feel a sense of ownership of Hexham's rich heritage, as well as thinking about the future of our historic town. By working in partnership to deliver an innovative and accessible programme we hope to connect people of all ages through animation and storytelling to create a lasting legacy for our community."*

Animator and filmmaker Sheryl Jenkins will work with families to create a series of animations to be showcased online and projected in Hexham town centre. Budding animators of all ages can sign up for a series of free online workshops with Sheryl from 19 April to develop their animation skills, and there will also be sessions with a sound artist and a writer to learn about adapting stories, storyboarding and using sound. Sheryl said, *"Animating Hexham is a great opportunity for family groups. The project will take place online, so participants will have the space to develop ideas in their own time. I'll be sharing animation techniques and guiding participants through the filmmaking process. It's going to be exciting to see the finished films."*

Six professional artists will be commissioned through an open call to create animations based on stories and memories about the High Street collected by Northumberland Archives and Hexham Libraries. The panel will be led by Queen's Hall Arts who have extensive experience of commissioning artists, and it will be the first time that the Hexham Culture Network has collaborated on a joint project. By working in partnership, the network will share and develop skills and build confidence for future commissions. The deadline to apply is 15 March, and animations will be projected onto shopfronts and landmarks in Hexham town centre from September 2021. For more information or to apply search [Curatorspace.org](https://www.curatorspace.org)

Animating Hexham is being developed and managed by Hexham Culture Network on behalf of Hexham High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ) and led by Queen's Hall Arts. HSHAZ is an ambitious scheme seeking to deliver major improvements to boost the town centre and enhance the Conservation Area. It aims to revitalise Hexham's historic town centre making it a more attractive, engaging and vibrant place for people to live, work, invest in and visit. It is a partnership

between Historic England, Northumberland County Council, Hexham Town Council and the Hexham Community Partnership, working with the local community.

Jules Brown from Historic England said, *"It's wonderful that we're able to fund such a worthwhile family-focussed project through the Hexham High Street Heritage Action Zone. I hope these projections will bring a bit of life and colour to the town centre as the evenings get darker in the autumn."*

Cllr Richard Wearmouth, cabinet member for business and tourism at Northumberland County Council said: *"It is great to see the first project in the HSHAZ cultural programme getting underway. This will be a fantastic way of enabling people to get involved in celebrating their town."*

Cllr Cath Homer, county councillor for Hexham East said, *"This is a fantastic opportunity to promote the rich history and heritage of our town and to capture the memories and stories we often hear shared. I'd encourage everyone to get involved whether they just want to enjoy the installation or have a story of their own to contribute."*

Cllr Trevor Cessford, county councillor for Hexham Central with Acomb, added, *"It is very exciting to see these diverse ideas helping to promote Hexham as a cultural and tourism destination. The HSHAZ will play a key part in bringing some of these elements together, with Katy Taylor being an integral link in it all."*

For more information or to sign up for the free online animation workshops with Sheryl Jenkins visit [www.queenshall.co.uk/events/animating-hexham](http://www.queenshall.co.uk/events/animating-hexham)

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### **Contact**

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### **Notes to Editors**

#### **Hexham Culture Network**

This consortium was established in 2019 and includes Queen's Hall Arts (lead partner/chair - Katy Taylor), Hexham Abbey, Forum Cinema, Hexham Community Partnership, Core Music, Hexham Book Festival, Museums Northumberland, Northumberland Libraries and Archives. All partners are venue, facility or service operators with substantial capacity, skills and experience and will lead the cultural programme throughout the HSHAZ delivery period. They have developed the pilot together, pulling from recent experience of creating innovative solutions for customer and audience engagement during the pandemic.

#### **Historic England**

We are [Historic England](http://www.historicengland.org.uk) the public body that helps people care for, enjoy and celebrate England's spectacular historic environment, from beaches and battlefields to parks and pie shops. We protect, champion and save the places that define who we are and where we've come from as a nation. We care passionately about the stories these places tell, the ideas they represent and the people who live, work and play among them. Working with communities and specialists we share

our passion, knowledge and skills to inspire interest, care and conservation, so everyone can keep enjoying and looking after the history that surrounds us all.

### **About High Streets Heritage Action Zones**

Historic England is working with local people and partners through grant funding and sharing our skills to help breathe new life into high streets that are rich in heritage and full of promise - unlocking their potential and making them more attractive to residents, businesses, tourists and investors. The High Streets Heritage Action Zones scheme, backed by government funding, aims to help with the recovery of local high streets from regenerating historic buildings to helping to engage local communities through art and cultural projects.

### **Hexham High Street Heritage Action Zone**

Hexham HSHAZ is an ambitious scheme seeking to deliver £2.4 million of improvements to boost the town centre and enhance the Conservation Area. Its aim is to revitalise Hexham's historic town centre making it a more attractive, engaging and vibrant place for people to live, work, invest in and visit. It is a partnership between Historic England, Northumberland County Council, Hexham Town Council and the Hexham Community Partnership, working with the local community.

Objectives:

1. Deliver improvements that lead to the removal of the 'at risk' status of the Conservation Area, including building repairs, increasing custodianship and maintenance of Hexham's heritage assets for future generations
2. Revitalise the HSHAZ area by increasing occupancy, reducing voids & bringing floorspace back into use
3. Enhance the physical condition, distinctiveness and attraction of the town centre through improved quality of streetscape & public realm
4. Support economic recovery post Covid-19 by encouraging footfall, dwell time and spend in the town centre enhancing long-term sustainability & protecting jobs
5. Stimulate and accelerate commercial investment to create economic growth
6. Engage the local community to shape, participate and deliver plans & activities
7. Increase knowledge, interest & appreciation of the town's heritage & culture

### **Sheryl Jenkins**

Sheryl is a freelance animator and filmmaker working mainly in the North East, North West, Cumbria and Yorkshire. Her work includes collaborative projects with artists, schools, community groups and arts organisations, independent film productions, animated work for television, theatre and festivals, arts residencies, and developing online education resources. Sheryl uses drawn, cut out, collage, and model animation techniques. Her independent film work and community art work has been shown and displayed at various galleries, events, festivals and venues including The Sage Gateshead, Northumbria University, Sunderland Air Show, MICE (International Exhibition of Educational Cinema) in Valencia, Skopelos International Film Festival for Youth, Locomotion NRM Shildon, The Royal School of Art, Flip Animation Festival, Northern Print Studios, Carlisle's Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery and Animated Exeter.