

HemingwayDesign

Andover Town Centre Meanwhile Uses & Placemaking

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Town centres can and should feel exciting. Constant positive change, evolution and metamorphosis gives visitors this gift of surprise and entertainment. Temporary placemaking initiatives and activations such as small to large scale events, pop-up shops, markets and generous public realm help achieve this.

The operation of a market can significantly increase footfall by around 25% for town centres. Traditional retail markets have experienced something of a revival in recent years, with a new generation of innovative young traders coming to the fore.

Latest figures indicate the sector has a collective turnover of £2.7 billion a year from around 32,000 market traders – a gradual increase of around £200 million year on year since 2013. [Source](#).

The better the market, the better the performance of the town centre overall. Markets need to be curated to provide the content and product that will draw visitors back week/month after week/month.

Across the UK, vacant buildings and spaces are being used for creative and cultural reasons, for as little as a few weeks, or for as long as several years, whilst long term plans for the buildings are finalised. By allowing disused spaces to be used as ‘meanwhile’ hubs, councils are unlocking space for the benefit of creative and cultural activity, which in turn facilitates community activity, cohesion and enterprise.

As Covid-19 has forced many shopfronts in town centres to close down, councils, with pre-existing relationships with local property developers and landlords, can be instrumental in allowing empty spaces to be used for ‘meanwhile purposes’.

Renting town centre space on flexible arrangements for as little as a month, gives business the opportunity to try something out low risk – a step up from a market stall.

Performances, exhibitions and festivals can arrest decline and help to make town centres attractive places to visit and socialise, whilst helping to foster a sense of community.

The latest report commissioned by Arts Council England, based on independent research, shows that arts and culture are up there with good schools when people make their decisions about where to live. There is not only tangible value in investment in the arts, but also huge public demand for it. Of those surveyed, 44% said the local arts scene is an important factor, compared with 43% saying the same about schools. [Source](#)

GUILDHALL

The Guildhall presents opportunity to highlight impactful long term placemaking for Andover Town Centre. Excitingly it is in the Council's ownership and currently without an occupier, providing an opportunity to explore uses for commercial activity that complement and enhance regeneration plans, and respond to the Town Centre Masterplan.

One such opportunity might be to explore what has become the mainstay of many town centre resurgences, a 'Guildhall Food Hall' containing the pick of the regions forward thinking food and drink operators. This could spill out in the High St and be a feature of Andover's planned purposeful and creative focused events programme. Test Valley Borough Council are currently seeking expressions of interest / exploring opportunities that have synergy with the Town Centre Masterplan and plans for regeneration. The 'food hall' proposal can and will be an option to consider alongside this.



Case Study: Altrincham Market

Altrincham's original Market House has been converted into a permanent foodie hub, home to 6 food kitchens, a coffee shop, a chocolatier, a wine shop and a bar that serves up the best of British craft beers. At weekends The Market House hosts outdoor themed markets covering regional food producers, vintage fashion and furniture, home house & garden and contemporary craft.

Outcomes:

- In 2010, the town had one of the worst shop vacancy rates in the country. The market re-development has helped bring the town centre back from a 25% vacancy rate in 2014 to 10% in 2019.
- 127 permanent jobs created - average age: 23
- 19 new independent business start-ups
- 13 awards including Observer Food and Drink Market of the Year and runner-up in BBC Food and Farming Awards.
- 10,000 people fed and watered each week
- Established Altrincham as the exemplar town in effective regeneration



TOWN CENTRE MARKETS & EVENTS

Andover events should be...

INCLUSIVE – actively drawing in as many communities as possible both in participation and attendance. To assist with this, events should be as ‘free’ as possible whilst being economically viable, and ‘profitable’ for all businesses involved – whether that profit is financial or through exposure, data capture, positive social impact etc. Selected elements (e.g. workshops, certain performances) can be paid entry, but these are positioned as optional upsells as part of a primarily free-to-attend event. The event project team should actively work to eliminate threshold fear at every stage – through careful comms and marketing as well as site layout, programming etc. No-one in Andover should ever think ‘this isn’t for me’.

PLANET POSITIVE – always aware of protecting our surrounding countryside, the river and keeping our town centre a clean and pleasant environment to be in. This means avoiding single use plastic wherever possible, which could require assisting local traders with advice on how to make the switch. Actively search out the local businesses and organisations leading the way in environmentally-friendly endeavours and encourage them to get involved – e.g. small businesses producing biomaterials, vegetarian and vegan food, products (fashion/homewares) made from recycled materials, products as alternatives to single use plastic (keep cups, tote bags, water bottles, plastic-free lifestyle products etc), quality vintage, antique or second-hand clothing and homewares. Look at options for carbon offsetting elements of the event, then use this fact in comms. For example, offset carbon impact of all traders driving on site for the day, or estimated electricity usage of the event. This will likely be an affordable cost in exchange for promoting the event as very forward thinking.

FOR OPPORTUNITY AND GROWTH – the event should provide opportunities for everyone – suppliers, traders, staff and audiences to learn and grow. This can be through small business support, creating new employment opportunities, building in training opportunities and thoughtful and informative programming for audiences.

EXPERIENCE FOCUSED – ‘experience’ is the new retail. It’s what consumers (millennials and Gen Z especially) are most willing to spend on. Focus on the physical experience of the event for audiences at every level – how do you want audiences to come away feeling (e.g. proud of Andover, satisfied recommending the event to others, that they got good content for their social media, that they learned something new, met someone new etc.).

Andover events should be...

BY ANDOVER, FOR ANDOVER – all suppliers, traders, contractors etc. should be local wherever possible. If any service or product – marquees / signage printing / health and safety guidance etc. – is available in Andover, use it. If the local supplier isn't quite as good as a non-local, then let this event be an opportunity for business development for them. Don't be afraid to say to a local supplier 'we wanted to use you, but you fell short on these points so we have used XX instead. If you can meet their standards we'll use you next time'.

SET THE BAR HIGH, THEN ALWAYS MEET IT – standards and quality must be high across the board. Events must be carefully curated and constantly benchmarked against best practice events from across the country. In order to have the best possible impact, standards cannot be allowed to slip –the quality of goods on sale, the quality of food available, quality of physical event infrastructure, the attention to detail in design and visitor experience, the training of staff and volunteers. Every experience a visitor has at the event, they will associate with their experience of Andover as a whole.

WELL DESIGNED AND PRESENTED – in every aspect. Every sign matters, the appearance of every stall matters. The friendliness of staff and volunteers matters. The event should look exciting and appealing from a distance, and carefully considered up close.

PROMOTION, PROMOTION, PROMOTION – great marketing and PR don't only mean more visitors, they mean more opportunities to tell a positive story about Andover. Marketing should focus on communicating the event values above. Talk about actions being taken to ensure the event is environmentally sustainable, supports local businesses, gives back to communities, brings people together and celebrates Andover as a great place to live, work and visit. Marketing strategies should be digital-first and websites should be mobile-first. Out-of-home advertising should be used to access audiences that can't be reached through digital, but avoid printed materials (e.g. leaflets) where possible to minimise environmental impact.

Brand Positioning

Alongside defining the event values, it is essential that the events and cultural programming sits under a uniform 'brand' or platform, to ensure clear messaging is conveyed.

Online (Social Media/Marketing)

A streamlined approach to online/social media presence - There should be one go-to website and social platform for Andover's events which can then link to external curators and events etc.

Physical (Wayfinding/Branding)

As shown with precedents in this report, simple infrastructure can be elevated by well-thought-out site/event dressing and clear wayfinding, which should be consistent with Andovers new placebrand (in development to launch in Spring 2022).

Case Study: The Frome Independent

WHEN:

First Sunday of every month – March to December.

WHAT:

The Frome Independent is a local/regional artisan and designer-maker market located in Frome, Somerset town centre.

CONTENT:

[Click here to see a video of the event](#). The strapline for the event is 'More Than Just a Market' and giving people something to hang around for helps with this. The event is often programmed with live music from local musicians/DJs. There are street performances, workshops, children's activities, and Night School workshops and supper clubs in between markets, making it extremely family friendly and something to engage all ages.

With 80,000 visitors a year, it generates £2.5m in revenue for its traders and Frome's independent retailers and hospitality throughout the year. They have a legacy of working with

local charities including the local food bank and Frome's Big Christmas Get Together - a community Christmas lunch for isolated members of the community. It's a monthly celebration throughout the warmer months to celebrate all of Frome's residents and community.

PROMO/BRAND/MARKETING:

21K followers on [Instagram](#)

Special editions i.e. partnering up with Garden Day - specific content to complement this whether it be floral hat making ([click here](#)).

High-resolution, high quality photography, and good social media presence.

The brand is simple but captures the essence of what the market is all about. A good local illustrator/designer has been involved to create the brand assets.

WHAT CAN ANDOVER LEARN:

Frome independent demonstrates that markets that attract good quality brands do not need to sit in larger cities – if the content, promo, brand, offering all works – people will travel to sell their products and grow their brand.



Case Study: Street pARTy, Morecambe

WHAT:

Produced by Deco Publique, sponsored by Arndale Morecambe Bay, hosted in 2016 and 2018, in association with Victoria Street Press – a street art initiative commissioned by the Portas Pilot Town Team. [Street pARTy](#) is a cultural celebration of positive change in Morecambe with a day of high quality, completely free art experiences in town centre.

CONTENT:

Condensed to one, pedestrianised street, StreetpARTy has a mini festival feel, with engaging, creative workshops, hosted by the local creative community.

The street becomes filled with pavement art, kids learning skills, making, and contributing their stories to a gigantic newspaper – fostering community ownership and creating a sense of place.

Hands on workshops help get the local community engaged, and there is enough content to keep visitors occupied and interested for several hours.

Street PARTy party saw a huge increase in footfall for the area, with three times the predicted number of people taking part in the free workshops and a total attendance of over 3,000 - four times our predicted number.

PROMO/BRAND/MARKETING:

Fun, simple, colourful branding

INFRASTRUCTURE:

Simple navy gazebos that let the content do the talking, but contribute to the sense of uniformity. With bunting, it still has a small town feel to it – it's not trying to be urban, but there is still a focus on quality.

WHAT CAN ANDOVER LEARN:

StreetpARTy is a good example of how bringing an external event organiser/creative team can elevate a dated shopping centre and its surrounding areas. There is a mix of local artists/community groups that take part, but also some more established/experienced event content producers.



Case Study: Summer Screens

CONTENT:

Popular films shown on a pop -up big screen, touring around the country - mostly classics but also some new big releases. Screenings are held throughout the country, turning a variety of venues into fantastic cinematic events. From the lawn of a country house, to the ruins of a medieval cathedral, a town centre rooftop.

A range of hot and cold drinks, as well as sweet treats and hot food is available to purchase at the event.

PROMO/BRAND/MARKETING:

Although the visual brand isn't particularly strong, Summer Screens have a very strong Facebook presence.

The brand and promotional elements feel uniform and have a sense of cohesion which is vital for 1. professionalism / 2. ease of reading, and is included on printed tickets, on social media, and pop up 'Summer Screens' banners. Summer Screens also produce [effective promotional videos](#).

INFRASTRUCTURE:

Cohesion, uniformity i.e. colour coordinated bean bags, deck chairs, director chairs - easily replicable with branded logos/ colours with pop up screen.

WHAT CAN ANDOVER LEARN:

[Summer Screens](#) shows how open-air cinema can be done on a small scale. In Andover, public parks and green spaces such as Town Mills, Virgo Park and St Mary's Church grounds, as well as the high street (South of Guildhall), town centre surface car parks and service yard's provide opportunity to host summer screenings.

There is possibility for these to be free or paid for events, with additional income generated through F&B concessions.



Case Study: The National Festival Of Making

[The National Festival of Making](#) is a unique celebration of the UK manufacturing industry. Deliberately set in the manufacturing heartland of Blackburn, the festival explores and celebrates the present day diversity in the range, scale and skills of UK-based making. Manufacturers large and small collaborate with artists interlacing often traditional techniques and materials with challenging, contemporary ideas, each to be revealed as part of the final two day, town centre festival. Across the UK, an average of 8.1% of people work in the manufacturing sector. In Blackburn with Darwen this figure is 17% - more than double the national average. This means that every morning in Blackburn, almost a fifth of the workforce gets up and goes to work making something. Making, manufacturing and crafts are in the town's blood, making the event truly unique to Blackburn and its heritage. The key to its success has been honing down on Blackburn's USP and focusing on the best of town in its programming.

CONTENT:

A range of music, markets, street food, art, performance, tours, talks and above all, an eclectic mix of making experiences for everyone to enjoy. The event is also supported by its art commissioning programme - Art in Manufacturing, pairing a local artist with a manufacturer for a residency where they use industrial techniques to create a truly unique collection of art, then exhibited at the event.

AMBIENCE:

A fun, family-friendly and affordable weekend - the majority of which is either free or extremely low-cost

PROMO/BRAND/MARKETING:

A strong visual brand and social media presence across the board - Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube - regularly updated with relevant content including good documentation via event/behind-the-scenes photography and well produced promotional videos for the event and especially Art in Manufacturing. Strong brand / brand guidelines means assets can be rolled out on a regular basis across social meaning for a more professional and cohesive online presence.

<https://www.instagram.com/thefestivalofmaking/>

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCIhCFkEydbRgeUNcA9e_U4Q/videos

WHAT CAN ANDOVER LEARN:

Opportunity to develop an event that is distinctively 'Andover'. An event that feels relevant to the town, its residents and businesses.



'Key Date' Event Opportunities

There is opportunity to programme town centre events to coincide with a variety of occasions such as royal occasions, celebrations and sporting competitions such as Olympics, Wimbledon, World Cup etc..

The aim for these events should be to create a fun, celebratory atmosphere - nothing too serious and very family orientated - a way to experience a key day in history or a key date in the annual diary.

EXAMPLES:

HemingwayDesign's [Queen's Diamond Jubilee](#) event in Battersea Park. Activities included a "bad art school" of Queen styled portraits, cardboard cut-outs, live music, and dancing lessons, and a live stream of coverage. [More imagery here.](#)

Deco Publique's ['Highest Point'](#) event celebrated the Royal Wedding in 2018. The event included a fun/playful Vegas chapel, afternoon tea with Harry and Meghan illustrations and a live stream of the event.



Utilising the new Town Mills Park

Town Mills Riverside Park has been designed to be a place where local residents, workers and visitors to the town can rest, socialise and play, whilst enjoying views of the river Anton, as well as being an attractive walking and cycling route through the town centre.

Activations of the park could include:

- Live drawing workshop spotting the local wildlife on the river.
- Alongside any public art projects, there could be a series of engagement/community workshops centred around the theme of the project.
- Pop-ups with local businesses such as a local bike store, to encourage local residents to cycle to and utilise the park.
- Engaging with the Andover ParkRun and local fitness classes to incorporate the park in to their running/fitness routes, showcasing the park as an enjoyable place to exercise.
- Providing opportunities for street food traders and local f&b to ‘pop up’ in the park.
- Forming relationships with local musicians to create low-key, ambient music creating a friendly and welcoming atmosphere.



PUBLIC REALM & ART ACTIVATIONS

Public Art

Examples of how to activate areas such as Andover's service yards, town centre car parks, lanes and using any vacant or unloved shop fronts as a platform/surface for large scale graphic wall murals/art.

ART PARK

Since 2015, Deco Publique have been working on a commission by Lancaster City Council to redevelop the unused former dome site on Morecambe Promenade – regenerating it for future positive use for the community. They delivered a community engagement programme / consultation process which developed into '[Art Park](#)'. The first stage was commissioning 'Bespoke Atelier' to create a large scale public art mural with future plans/projections in place to transform the space further (funded also by Coastal Communities Fund) as a way to elevate vacant spaces and increase civic pride.

#FANTASTICMORECAMBE

Deco Publique collaborated with local artists Shane Johnstone and Kate Drummond to create positive, uplifting messages through [public art](#) with Arts Council funding. The #FantasticMorecambe hashtag was picked up locally and has become a social media byword for what's possible in the town.



PAINTSHOP STUDIO FOR BCP COUNCIL

Paintshop Studio, were tasked with [transforming the underpass](#) in Bournemouth which connects the station to the town centre that has previously become a neglected and rundown space. The freshly decorated pedestrian route merges mural art with wayfinding, leading onto a new pop-up cafe and has become transformed into a place where people feel comfortable to linger.



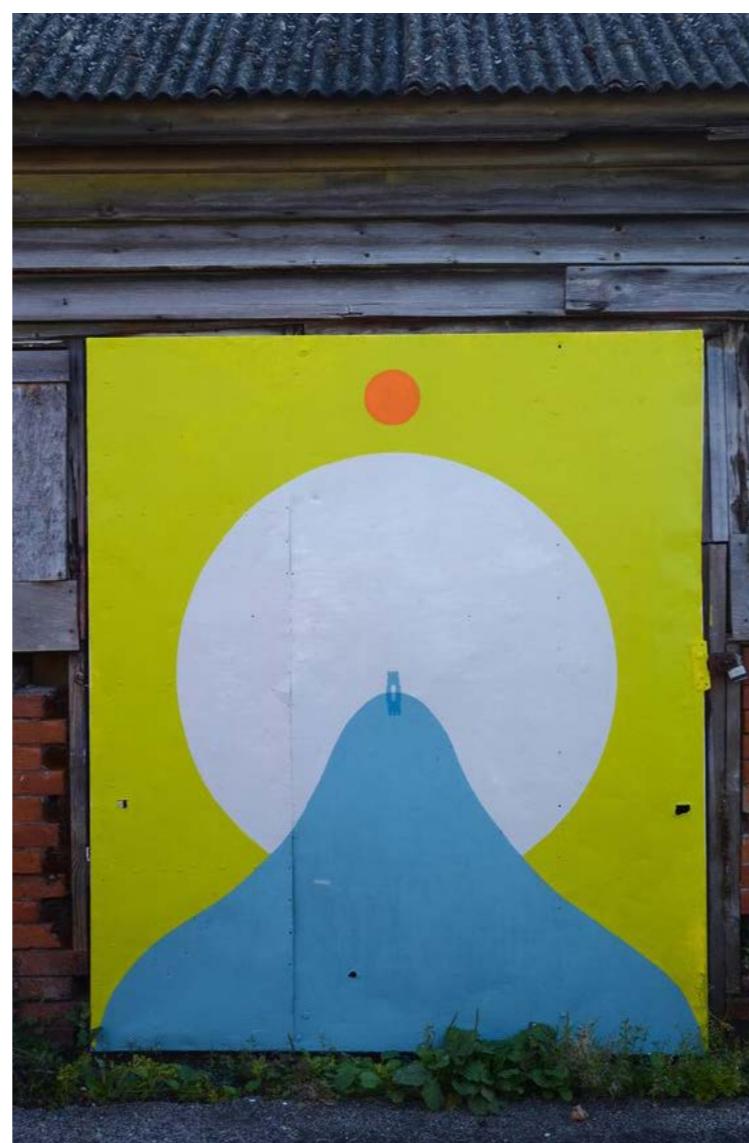
HARINGEY COUNCIL

The Tottenham Shopfront Improvement Project partnered with YOUandME Architecture to work with shop owners to come up with [eye-catching designs](#) to grab the attention of passers-by, while at the same time making the area a more attractive environment. 25 shops got involved in the scheme.



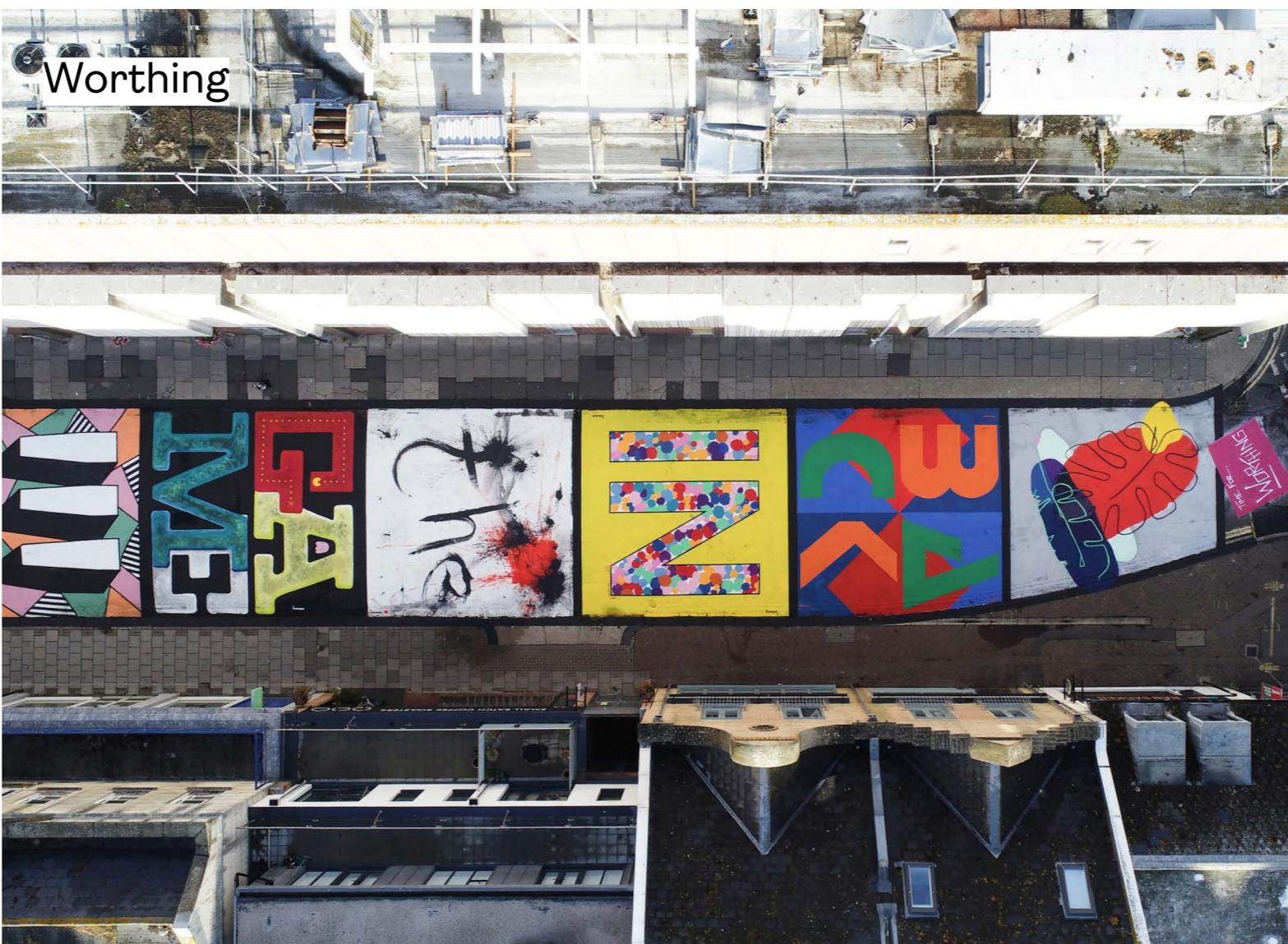
GLASTONBURY MURAL ART TRAIL

A collection of [26 murals](#) around Glastonbury came about when the town council asked what the residents would like to see in their town. Approaching a local artist to lead the project, she involved community members in all aspects of its creation. Local residents photographed existing murals for the leaflet, wrote publicity materials and press releases, organised and coordinated artists and events while sourcing supplies from local businesses. It was a true community project which provided great benefit to the whole town.



WORTHING MURALS

Anonymous artist, Horace, collaborated with the Time for Worthing campaign to create [a street mural](#) within the town entitled 'Back in the Game' as a plan to rejuvenate and promote the seaside town, showing the businesses fighting back against the pandemic and protecting jobs with the use of art and activism.



KINGSTON HIGH STREET

Students from Kingston College of Art collaborated with Kingston First business support group to transform the windows of unoccupied retail units in Kingston town centre [covered in bespoke designs](#) inspired by the past, present and future of town.



Public Realm & Art Activations

The importance of generous public realm

A high-quality public environment can have a significant impact on the economic life of urban centres big or small, and is therefore an essential part of any successful regeneration strategy. As towns increasingly compete with one another to attract investment, the presence of good parks, squares, gardens and other public spaces becomes a vital business and marketing tool: companies are attracted to locations that offer well-designed, well-managed public places and these in turn attract customers, employees and services.

The most successful streets have an indoor-outdoor quality where indoor activity spills onto the street. During the summer 2020, many towns and cities around the world reclaimed streets to facilitate the expansion of restaurants, bars and cafés. Now that guests are allowed inside restaurants, bars and cafés again, many will still prefer the space and air flow of sitting outside. This is an opportunity for small F&B outlets to grow fast if they are permitted to double/triple/quadruple their capacity by spilling into public areas.

By allowing and encouraging existing and new cafés and restaurants to spill out on to the high street dwell time in the town centre can be instantly increased, reaping rewards for retail and services as well as F&B businesses and bringing vibrancy back to high streets - even in the depths of winter.

Further meanwhile public realm improvements (adding greenery and street furniture) will enhance the aesthetic quality of the town centre whilst providing places to stop and rest, encouraging social encounters and increasing dwell time.

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CASE STUDY - COLLEGE SQUARE

Temporary, reconfigurable outdoor furniture for an area of Croydon, which could be used by the public for socialising and recreational activities. The furniture was developed as a 'kit of parts' so that it could be adapted and implemented into different sites as a response to the increasing number of unoccupied spaces within the area.



CASE STUDY - PARKLETS

A parklet is an intervention transforms and activates spaces, turning them in to places for people to meet, interact and socialise, and adding greenery to urban areas.

Whilst they are often associated with the re-purposing of car parking or vacant spaces, they are easily translatable to streets and lanes within Andover town centre.

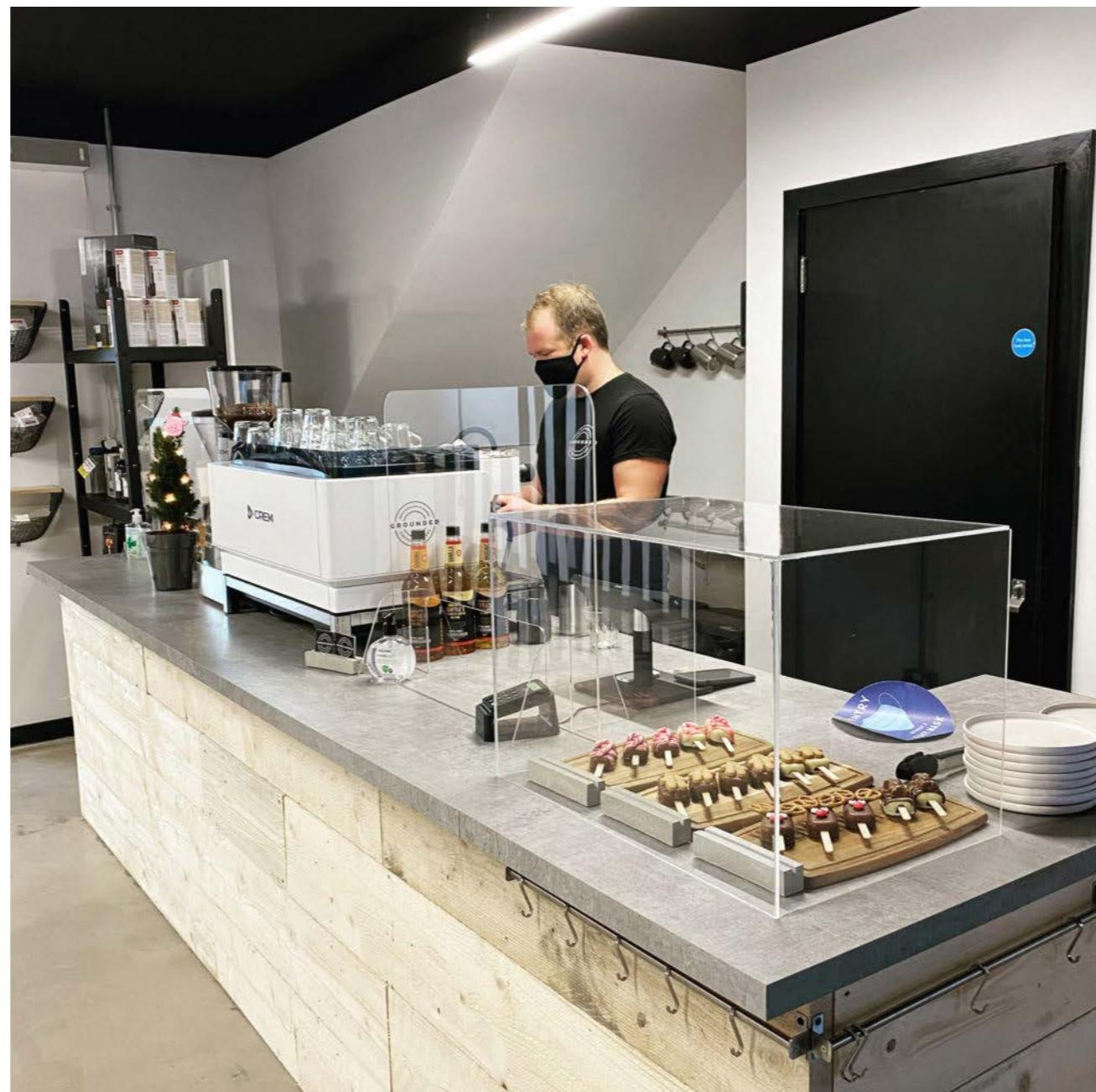




ACTIVATING VACANT TOWN CENTRE SHOPS

Kingland, Poole

The regeneration of Kingland Crescent aimed to offer something new and unique in a town centre format by re-imagining their vacant spaces and providing 10 retail units to start-up and independent businesses with no rent or business rates to be paid for two years. It's a kick-starter like no other, supporting Dorset's most innovative, young, retail entrepreneurs in one exciting environment. The first set of businesses include fishmongers, coffee connoisseurs, surfboard makers, a gallery and a plant shop among others.



Meanwhile in Oxfordshire...

The project 'Meanwhile in Oxfordshire...' will see vacant retail units in high streets across the county transformed into independent shops, cultural venues, creative studios and co-working space.

The aim is to provide affordable premises to accommodate more than 100 organisations, which will create or secure at least 300 jobs across Oxfordshire.

The initiative will reduce the number of vacant units in the county's high streets and enable entrepreneurs to fill them with new and innovative enterprises and organisations'. This will diversify the offer in Oxfordshire's town and city centres, and give people more reasons to visit.



Activating Vacant Shops

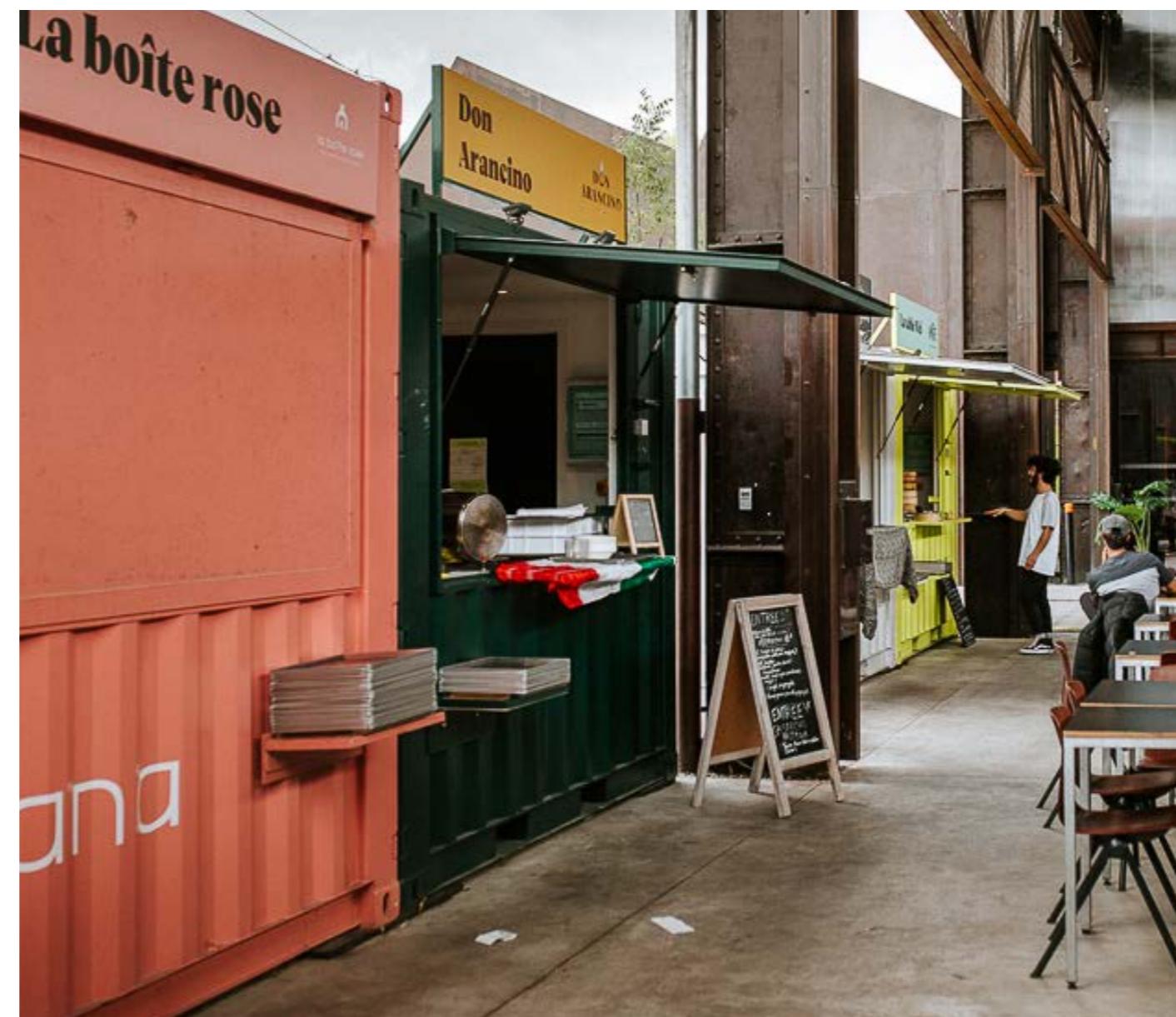
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Activation of empty retail units within the Chantry Centre.

Small units for food vendors and pop-up retail spaces that enable small, independent businesses, makers, and start-ups to test ideas and trade in the town centre.

These could take form in re-purposed shipping containers or bespoke modular units that have ability to be moved alternative locations within the town centre once work begins on the Chantry Centre.

This offer/activity is best placed in vacant units and where possible spilling out on to, and activating the High Street, whilst also drawing people in to the Chantry Centre.





High Street entrance to Chantry Centre

Activating Vacant Shops

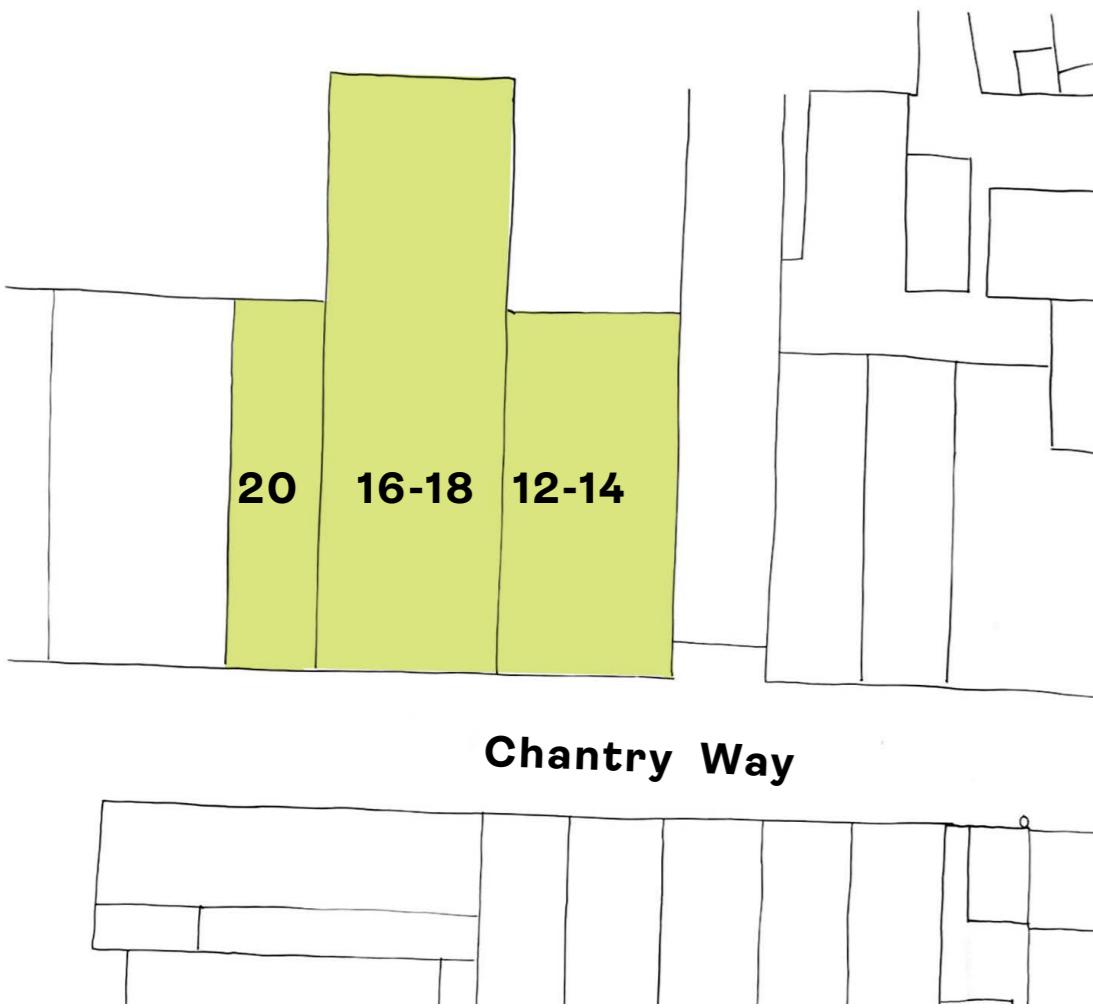
Chantry Centre

Building on the monthly 'Chantry Centre Craft Market' there is possibility for vacant units to be utilised as space for community uses/events/activities/ such as:

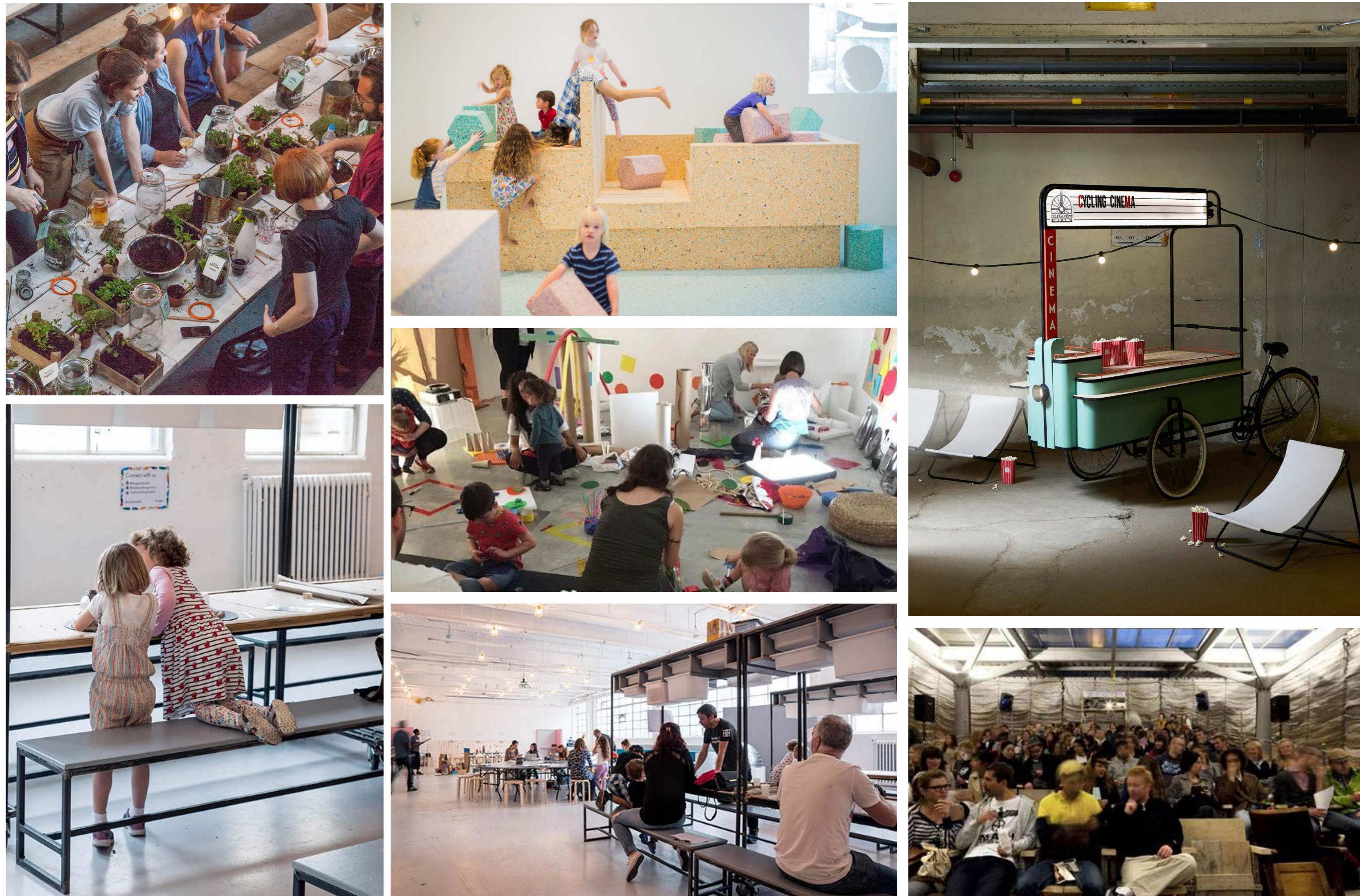
- Exhibitions/ performances
- Pop-up cinema screenings
- Activities for teenagers
- Children's play
- Co-work space
- Workshops
- Markets

There is also further opportunity to spill out on to the service area, as an extension of this offer.

*note unit 20 is currently occupied on a licence.



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Opportunities for spill-out on to the service yard behind units 12-14, 16-18 and 20:

- Raised planters for communal growing
- Large scale wall murals
- Street food traders
- Outdoor cinema screenings - screen projected on to exterior walls
- Events such as car boot sales, flea markets etc..

Some of these suggestions are also suitable for other service yards and car parks within the town centre.

As the 'Andover Town Centre Masterplan' report states, there is also opportunity for interventions such as graphic/art wall murals, community planters/urban gardens, temporary installations and public furniture along many of the 'lanes' connecting the High Street and the wider town centre.



CASE STUDY - KANTEENA

Kanteena is re-purposed warehouse in the centre of Lancaster, which now acts as food court, bar, social space a venue for a variety of events including markets, live music, and exhibitions. Their events calendar includes regular markets such as monthly flea markets, farmers markets, craft markets, and a Christmas Market. In addition to a permanent kitchen, the food offer includes residencies whereby local chefs/street food operators set up shop for a limited amount of time - keeping the offering new & exciting. Live events include open mic nights, small scale music concerts, showcasing local talent.

Kanteena is great example of what can be achieved with minimal budget. Reclaimed materials have been used extensively, shipping pallets clad the walls internally, whilst tables and chairs are made from a mix of recycled pallets, oil cylinders and large cable drums. Colourful and bold graphic painted murals feature internally and externally.



Thank you!

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