

# Libraries Tool Kit

**WE BELIEVE IN THE GENIUS IN EVERYONE, IN EVERYONE AN ARTIST AND EVERYONE A SCIENTIST,  
AND THAT CREATIVITY IN COMMUNITY CAN CHANGE THE WORLD FOR THE BETTER.**

**WE BELIEVE WE CAN DO THIS TOGETHER, LOCALLY, WITH RADICAL FUN –  
AND THAT ANYONE, ANYWHERE, CAN MAKE A FUN PALACE**

**- THE FUN PALACES MANIFESTO**

# The Background of Fun Palaces



In the early 1960s, theatre director Joan Littlewood and architect Cedric Price imagined the Fun Palace as a 'laboratory of fun', 'a university of the streets'. It was to be a temporary and movable home for arts and sciences, welcoming to all.

For many reasons, their Fun Palace never came to fruition as a building – but the idea of a space that was open to all, a place for **everyone an artist** and **everyone a scientist**, remained a great idea.

In 2013, we began working towards the possibility of anyone, anywhere making a Fun Palace, for, by and with their local community – which, of course, means libraries are ideal spaces for Fun Palaces.





# Fun Palaces Now



Fun Palaces HQ supports and encourages local people to create opportunities for and with their own community to take part in arts, science, craft, tech and digital culture.

Each Fun Palace curates their own programme of free, hands-on, community-led activities, aimed at a variety of ages and abilities – both experts and enthusiasts are welcome.

The number of people taking part in Fun Palaces has grown exponentially since we started, and in 2016 there were 292 Fun Palaces, run by 4800 local people, with 124,000 joining in.



# What Library Fun Palaces Say



“Phew! It was a success!”

**Yatton Library** (who decided to make their Fun Palace only two weeks before the weekend).

“It was a great way of engaging with customers who were very happy to come in and share their skills and our libraries were buzzing.”

**Essex Libraries**

“The feedback was incredibly positive and, having dipped our toes in the water this year, we will be aiming to take part in the Fun Palaces weekend in 2017 with an even bigger and better event!”

**Norfolk & Norwich Millennium Library**

“[Local artists and scientists] amazingly gave their time, knowledge and expertise for free. It was a fantastic two days full of unexpected gems.”

**Lancaster Library**



Manchester Libraries made a short film about their Fun Palaces, which staff described as a “**vibrant experience**”.

Watch it here: [Manchester Libraries' film](#)



# Fun Palaces and Libraries

Fun Palaces offers a unique opportunity for local libraries to show their value as a community's place of engagement with learning and culture.

In demonstrating the ability of library staff and spaces to function as a catalyst, bringing communities together, Fun Palaces underlines the importance of trained library staff who understand their locality.

In 2016 more Fun Palaces took place in libraries than anywhere else. We support libraries to celebrate community action across the UK and worldwide.

In summer 2017, the Society of Chief Librarians (UK) will launch Culture as its sixth Universal Offer – Fun Palaces brings creativity in art, science, craft, tech and digital together as local culture for and by local people.

## Fun Palaces Venues 2016



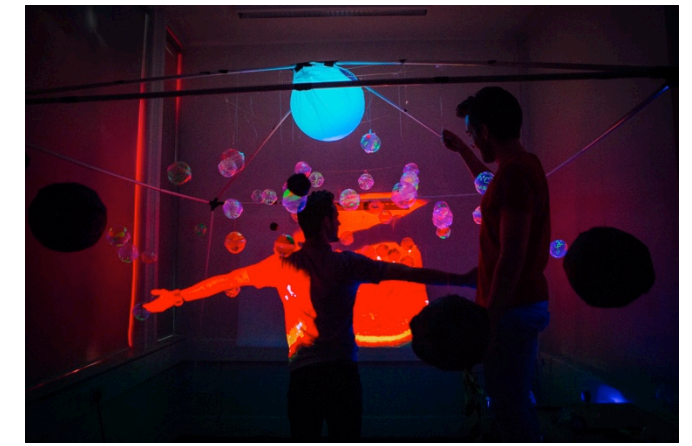


# What People Say About Taking Part



## Participant Response Surveys show:

- **52%** had not visited the library before
- **90%** agree that "Events like this can make a real difference to the local community"
- **75%** agree that "This event makes me feel proud of my community"
- **97%** think it should happen again
- **86%** agree that "This event makes me feel motivated to do more creative things in the future"





# Making a Fun Palace at Your Library



Gather a group of Makers, this means anyone who can lead an activity, share a skill, enthusiasm, or hobby:

- **Your staff:** what secret skills or passions do they possess that they could share with others?
- **Library users:** put up a skills-sharing poster, suggest ways to get involved, ask what people would like to do or learn AND what they can offer.
- **Local groups:** Yatton Library made connections with a bell ringing group who took over the library foyer. Who can you hand over space to in your local community?
- **Local organisations and creatives:** Exeter Library pulled in volunteers from the local Met Office to talk about the science of weather, along with poets and a laughter-yoga teacher. Think about YOUR locals.
- **Be brave:** we know that libraries already do amazing work within local communities, to make a truly open and community-led Fun Palace you might need to be even braver than usual. Go for it!

[Register your Fun Palace](#) on our website and **let everyone know about it.**



# Top Tips From Those Who've Done It!



“Start planning as soon as possible and involve all staff at all levels. You’ll be surprised at what they can do themselves, and who they know. Reach out to communities and makers you’ve never worked with before and those you have! This is a great opportunity to try new things and show everyone what a great place the library is.

And don’t forget, Fun Palaces is not just for kids and families, it’s for EVERYONE!”

**Zoey Dixon, Lambeth Libraries**



“The best way to secure makers and attract the public is to meet face to face with artists and scientists, to convince them of the validity of the project. Reach a large number of visitors by calling school secretaries directly rather than emailing, and follow up the call by sending them information they can put in their newsletter.

I would also suggest big bold advertising on site - you can't do enough!”

**Mhairi Grealis, Streatham Library**



“Give the families something they don’t get to usually do. Our community love the opportunity to make a mess (water, paint), try new things.”

**Shellie Buckle, Parkes Shire Library**



# Fun Palaces Libraries Workshops



Our workshops will help you find out more about our work, explore why and how you can throw open the doors of your buildings and organisations, and welcome the local community to take part in your current plans and future dreams – and theirs.

Our work is as much about the process of making a Fun Palace as it is about what you do on the weekend – we are not about getting better volunteers, but about building communities with our cultural assets at their heart, unearthing brilliant work and people already doing great stuff in your local community.

Our workshops aim to support people to take part in our ongoing campaign for locally-led culture for, by and with all.



# How the Workshops Work



A workshop involves us explaining the basics of Fun Palaces, and running a hands-on session so people can connect with each other, get an idea of what making a Fun Palace entails and how it can work for them. We end with a Q&A to ensure everyone feels comfortable about what they're taking on.

We aim to bring people together who would not otherwise meet, and to start making things happen – this might mean making a local Fun Palace, but also other possibilities that matter to your community.

Our workshops are also useful for training and professional development; we encourage participation as widely as possible from within an organisation, e.g. different levels – managers and assistants, paid staff and volunteers – the wider the range, the better the buy-in and support, the better the Fun Palace.

Fun Palaces workshops take approx 3 hours and work well with 20-40 participants – we can work with more if necessary.



# Get in Touch

If you want to talk to us about making a Fun Palace, our workshops, or anything to do with this year's campaign, please get in touch. We would also love to hear about any community-related projects you might be up to.

- Email our Administrator, Conni, at [conni@funpalaces.co.uk](mailto:conni@funpalaces.co.uk)
- Call us on **0208 692 4446 ext. 203**
- Write to us at **The Albany, Douglas Way, London, SE8 4AG**
- Tweet/Instagram us **@FunPalaces**

We are usually in the office on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

