

fun palaces

**IDEAS FOR
GETTING
STARTED**

IDEAS FOR GETTING STARTED

We're often asked how people go about making their Fun Palace, how to collaborate with new people and what they can make and do in their Fun Palace.

Here are some ideas we've collected over the years:

- Whitstable Museum of Fun kick-started themselves on Twitter. We've found social media very useful for linking Fun Palaces people and places. Wave to us @funpalaces (on all platforms) and we'll do our best to link you to useful people.
- Lambeth Libraries made 11 Fun Palaces across the borough, all 13 Oldham Libraries made Fun Palaces one year too, they put up posters asking two questions, with room to add answers below: **'What would you like to do or learn?'** and **'What can you offer to share or teach?'** The Fun Palaces were filled with activities that people offered to share. Emphasise that it's about having a passion or enthusiasm for something - experts welcome too!
- Farnham Fun Palace was made by a group of people who work together and wanted to do something in their community – in doing so, they got to know a whole load of new people in their community.
- Brockwell Lido Fun Palace was made by a few artists, some people who go to the gym at the pool, others from a local action group. It started with just one of them and ended up with about 20 people making their Fun Palace as each person brought along a friend to get involved.
- At Liverpool Everyman Fun Palace, Sheffield Theatres and many other arts and science centres and venues, the producers invited local people (artists and not) in to use their spaces and to create the Fun Palace in their local venue. At ARC Stockton in 2016 they asked the young people who used their foyer and café space to run their Fun Palace.
- At Old Bexley School Fun Palace the Head and teachers knock on doors in the streets near the school, inviting people to get involved, not the PTA or parents or grandparents of the children, but ANYONE in the community – real community.
- Gillingham Library in Dorset have made two Fun Palaces and gave each one a different theme. The river Stour runs through the town, it is part of the town's history and culture, the library building sits on a bend in the river so they decided to make their first Fun Palace all about 'liquids'. They included lots of in-house activities – jigsaws of water scenes, liquid-related TED talks on their big screen, a pop-up reading group (books with a liquid such as water or blood in the title). They had watercolour art, CSI with the local police, the community choir sang and they approached the school's science department who agreed to help participants do Newtonian liquid experiments. Even the water board and supermarkets got involved.

Quick wins!

- Local guides/brownies/scouts/cubs groups are great, especially as the older kids need/want to lead events as part of their own skills development.
- Use 'the science of' and 'the art of' to think about how to integrate arts and science e.g. the art/science of cooking, colour, water, gin...etc.!
- Think about unexpected activities to transform a space – e.g. loud activities in a library or museum or carving out quiet spaces at your Fun Palace – people have had a 'lying back and looking listening' activity to give some time out to participants.
- Become a Professor of ... for the day e.g. Professor of ice-cream/pom-poms/ bike repair.
- If local schools are getting involved, think about doing an activity in advance so that they come along during the Fun Palace weekend to see their work and bring their families and friends too.
- Where there are multiple venues, how about creating a treasure trail checklist of skills and activities you need to tick off to help ensure people go to all venues?

Top tips:

- A Fun Palace can take as long as you like - from a couple of hours to all weekend, it's totally up to you.
- Fun Palaces are for everybody and anybody, for all ages. Think about how to make your Fun Palace intergenerational and fully inclusive.
- Start with something simple, it doesn't have to be a huge event, do something that's fun and within your capacity - you can build on it the following year.

Start where you are, with who you are. Invite other people to join you. Don't feel you have to do it all alone, welcome others to make your local Fun Palace with you. They'll have different ideas to you, the more varied and diverse your Fun Palace, the more you'll have to offer those who want to participate.