

Tangwen Roberts



Serena Korda
Black Diamond
launch event

**ART AND REGENERATION
IN HAVERFORDWEST 2014-17**
YEAR 1 REPORT CARD ♦ ENGLISH
1 NOVEMBER 2014 – 31 OCTOBER 2015



c^onfluence



Freshwest
construction
workshop from
the Lab's launch
week programme

Confluence is a creative collaboration between [PLANED](#), [spacetocreate](#), [iDeA Architects](#), [Pembrokeshire County Council](#) and [Transition Haverfordwest](#), which aims to devise and test new and imaginative ways of working in Haverfordwest that will bring the community together to inspire and shape the process of urban planning, design and regeneration.

One of seven projects across Wales, supported through the Arts Council of Wales strategic initiative [Ideas: People: Places](#), Confluence aims to **develop a model for arts-led regeneration in market towns in Wales.**

To follow the story so far, view the project [timeline](#), which documents the project from the announcement of *Ideas: People: Places*, through to the present day.

Four performance measures are being used to measure progress:

- 1 Changing perceptions of Haverfordwest
- 2 Numbers of people engaging with the programme and giving positive feedback
- 3 Increasing understanding of what art can be
- 4 Support and commitment from key decision-makers for arts and regeneration



Skeleton by
Toby Downing
for the River of
Lights lantern
procession 2015

During the pilot phase and throughout the first year people were invited to contribute their views and opinions to create a baseline study from which change could be measured over time.

The baseline indicates that, whilst there are lots of things that people value about the town, in common with many towns across the UK, Haverfordwest is perceived as having suffered from a long-term decline because of:

- Changing shopping habits – move to online and out-of-town shopping
- High business rates leading to an over reliance on charity shops
- Lack of investment, understanding of and interest in the arts
- Poor planning decisions and a lack of a coherent vision for the future
- A lack of engagement opportunities leading to people feeling disempowered
- Changes in the rural economy having a negative effect on the town

In year 1 there was a strong and shared recognition that ‘Haverfordwest needs something’ and ‘there is a job of work to be done here’.

An early priority for the partnership was the repurposing of an empty town centre shop as a base for an experimental programme called the Lab, linked to a programme of artist commissions, both aiming to **change perceptions** of the county town.



The Big Map workshop programme

In the first year, with total attendances of over 1400 at more than thirty events, the project succeeded in **engaging people in the programme**. Mailing lists and membership of facebook groups steadily grew, and by the end of the year, more than 500 people had signed up to be part of the network. Feedback gathered at events was overwhelmingly positive and comments on social media were encouraging.

The Big Map, a series of community workshops mapping out a new vision for the future of Haverfordwest, provided a timely opportunity to **influence key decision-makers** and opened up a space for collaborative working between professionals and the public. The valuable ideas and consultation material gathered was used to inform the Haverfordwest

master plan, created by Pembrokeshire County Council's planning consultants, Nathaniel Lichfield Partnership and published in 2016.

Black Diamond, a first major commission put Haverfordwest on the map as a location for contemporary art practice, succeeding in attracting core support amongst the arts community whilst challenging the wider community's **understanding of what art can be**.

Other bite-sized commissions and community events such as River of Lights proved to be more accessible, resulting in a widening of participation beyond core supporters and provided a means of combatting feelings that the arts can be elitist and are irrelevant to most people's lives.