State of the Borough Debate:

‘How can we harness Kingston’s creativity, to better connect with our communities?’

Context
This is the third State of the Borough debate held in recent years. Previous debates have covered delivering Growth; and the Role of the Future Council. This debate is focused on how we engage with our communities, utilising our creativity to better connect with residents and businesses, particularly through periods of significant change.

London and the Royal Borough is in the midst of expansion not seen for over a century. The ambition is for the borough to stand out as the best place in London to live, set up a business and to work. This will require a pattern of growth where all parts of the borough share the benefits. Throughout the evening we will explore with our key speakers how we can use creativity and culture to better engage with our communities and develop a shared understanding and vision for the future of Kingston.

Kingston’s creativity
Kingston has a rich history of innovation and creativity. From the first Roman bridge across the lower reaches of the Thames, the birthplace of England, Eadweard Muybridge and the invention of the moving image, to the elimination of cholera and the borough’s role in aviation, cycling and car design, Kingston has an extraordinary creative spirit. Our heritage and cultural offer is an integral part of Kingston’s identity. That creative legacy is still in Kingston today. The Borough has a large proportion of residents who are employed in the Creative Industries and it’s growing; many of those moving to the borough are young and highly skilled. There are world class institutions in creative and cultural education and a rich and diverse mix of cultural scenes - from live music attracting “A” list artists, to shows with award winning performers, carnivals, community choirs, open-mics and hidden galleries. The growing influence of culture and creativity across the borough is palpable, and we hope to capture that creativity, ambition and energy in our application for the London Borough of Culture.

Shonagh Manson is the greater London Authority Assistant Director for Culture and Creative Industries. Shonagh will explore at a national and pan London level how businesses and policymakers alike have grasped the potential of culture and creativity to help deliver change. She will draw upon a rich evidence base to illustrate how creativity in all its varied formats can be used to connect and engage communities and develop a broader understanding of community values.

Robin Hutchinson is Chair of Creative Kingston. Robin will share his experiences of working in communities to release the creativity and potential of local people so they can play an active part in their shaping their future. From Ski Sunday, making the King’s Soup, and creating the Museum of the Future, Robin has a long history of vibrant community engagement that sparks imaginations, captures ideas, and develops approaches to building Community Futurism.