

Our Stories

FAQs

HAVERING LONDON

Our Stories is a community heritage programme celebrating the people, places, and memories that make Havering unique. We're funding 20 projects to tell the untold stories of our borough — through oral histories, documentary film, sculpture, poetry, photography, and any creative form you can imagine.

If you're a local artist, community group, or simply a Havering resident passionate about heritage and storytelling, this is for you. Maybe it's your family's story. A place that shaped your childhood. A building that meant everything to your community. We want the stories that aren't in the history books — the cultural heritage that matters to people but isn't officially recognised, the memories that deserve to be remembered.

All we ask is that you work with your community to bring the story to life, and that it can be shared online. In return, you'll receive £4,500 to make it happen, one-to-one support from our team, a heritage plaque at your special place, and a permanent home for your story on Havering's digital heritage map. You'll also celebrate with a launch event, sharing your finished work with the people who matter most.

This document answers some of the most common questions about the programme. If you can't find what you're looking for, we'd love to hear from you at alyssa@haveringlondon.com or nompumelelo@haveringlondon.com.

Our Stories is part of Havering Unearthed, supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Historic England, Arts Council England and London Borough of Havering.

Selection & Funding Decisions

How do you make decisions about what stories to fund?

A:

Our community cohort comprises local practitioners who are advocates for a more representative and inclusive arts and heritage sector in Havering. They select stories to commission with Havering London drawing from their lived experience, professional expertise, and commitment to inclusivity. Our collective goal is to select stories that truly reflect Havering's diverse communities and are untold. You can download our assessment criteria [here](#).

What makes a strong application?

A:

The story has to be untold. A community and location in Havering must be identified in the project, along with a clear approach to how the creative output will be shared online and a feasible launch event.

Can I reapply if I'm not selected?

A:

Yes. We encourage applicants to reapply actioning feedback given to them from the panel and Havering London. We recognise that not everyone has the experience of applying for a grant and in some instances it takes practice; we want to ensure you're equipped for your own professional development. The goal is to see more practitioners and locals apply for local, national and international funding for arts and heritage projects.

Will you be primarily funding work in underserved areas in the borough?

A:

Though our areas of focus are Collier Row, Rush Green, Rainham and Elm Park we welcome stories with locations across Havering.

Will you prioritise applications from people who are underrepresented in the arts?

A:

Yes. Our stories is part of Havering London's initiative to create a cultural ecology for everyone and we welcome intersectional approaches to representing the borough's diverse population. This means you can focus on working with one specific community group.

Eligibility

Do I need to be a professional artist or have experience in heritage work?

A:

Not at all. Our Stories is open to local artists, community groups, and anyone who lives in or has a strong connection to Havering and is passionate about heritage and storytelling. What matters is your connection to the story, not your professional background.

Can I apply as an individual, or does it have to be a group or organisation?

A:

You can apply as an individual, as part of a group, or as a constituted organisation. The key requirement is that you work with your community to bring the story to life, whether that's family, neighbours, a local group, or people who share your connection to a place or memory.

I don't live in Havering but I have a strong connection to it, can I still apply?

A:

Yes. The project is about Havering's stories, not only its current residents. If you have a meaningful connection to a place, community, or heritage in the borough, we'd love to hear from you.

Can schools or youth groups apply?

A:

Yes. Schools, youth groups, and organisations working with young people are all welcome to apply. If your project involves participants under 18, please be aware there are additional safeguarding and consent requirements you would need to have in place before applying.

Can I apply for more than one project?

A:

Each applicant or organisation can apply once per phase. If you have more than one story to tell, get in touch with us to discuss your options.

The Story

What counts as a heritage site or significant place ?

A:

It doesn't need to be officially listed or recognised in fact, we're especially interested in places that aren't. It could be a street corner, a community building, a green space, a market, a building that no longer exists, or anywhere that carries meaning for a community. If it matters to local people, it matters to us.

My story involves living people, is that okay?

A:

Yes, but you'll need to obtain written consent from anyone whose story, voice, image, or personal information features in your creative work. We'll support you with this, guidance and relevant documents will be available from Our Stories team.

The place I want to mark is on private land. Can I still get a plaque there?

A:

Possibly but you'd need to obtain permission from the landowner before a plaque can be installed. Talk to us early in the process and we can help you navigate this.

What if the story is sensitive or involves difficult history?

A:

Some of the most important stories are difficult ones. We welcome projects that tackle complex, painful, or contested history with honesty and care. We'll work closely with you to make sure the story is told responsibly and that everyone involved is protected.

My story spans multiple locations, does it still qualify?

A:

No. Even if your story does not focus on a single site, you will need a specific location to place your heritage plaque. We are aware some stories naturally cross multiple places in Havering but book a 1:1 session with Our Stories team to workshop a possible location.

Format

Does the finished work have to be digital or can it be physical ?

A:

The final work needs to be shareable online so it can live permanently on Havering's digital heritage map, which audiences can access after the project via a QR code on your heritage plaque. That doesn't mean it has to be a digital output, it can be physical artwork that is photographed or filmed or scanned etc. Talk to us if you're unsure.

What if I don't have the technical skills needed, will I get support?

A:

Yes. Part of the grant includes one-to-one support from our team. If you need help with a particular skill, filming, editing, web publishing, we'll connect you with the right people.

What is the digital heritage map?

A:

Havering's digital heritage map is an online, publicly accessible platform of the borough's cultural and community heritage. Your story will be permanently listed there, linked to the place it belongs to, alongside the creative work you've produced. This is why we're asking applicants to think beyond the project itself and consider its legacy: how it will contribute to our understanding of Havering's past and present cultural heritage.

What happens at the launch event and who organises it?

A:

The launch event is a celebration of your finished work with your community. You will be organising the event and are responsible for venue hire, promotion, and logistics. We ask that you reflect these costs in your budget. We anticipate you will spend around £500 towards this. We can support you by connecting you with the right people to help realise your event.

How long do I have to complete the project once I'm awarded a grant?

A:

Timelines vary by applicant, but typically you'll have between four and six months from award to completion and launch. Your grant agreement will confirm your specific deadline but all projects must be completed by March 2027. The earlier you apply, the more time you will have.

Funds

Can the £4500 pay for my own time?

A: Whilst the £4,500 can cover your time working on the project, we need to see how you will spend the money on community engagement.

Can I use the grant alongside other funding?

A: Yes. You can combine your Our Stories grant with other funding sources, as long as you're not double-funding the same costs. Please declare any other funding in your application.

What happens if I underspend, do I have to return the money?

A: It depends on the amount. Small underspends are fine. If you expect a significant underspend, speak to Our Stories team, we may be able to agree a change of scope rather than requiring money to be returned.

What can you not fund?

A: The grant cannot be used for costs unrelated to your project, retrospective spending (costs incurred or goods ordered before the grant is awarded), general overheads such as rent, utilities or insurance, recoverable VAT, cash prizes, or activity that generates a profit. We can fund up to 10% of capital assets. Any changes to your agreed budget require prior written approval. Your grant agreement will set this out clearly.

Ready to Tell Your Story?

If you've read this far and something is stirring: a place, a person, a memory that deserves to be heard, we'd love to hear from you. Our Stories is here for exactly that.

To apply please [click here](#), or get in touch with us directly at alyssa@haveringlondon.com or nompumelelo@haveringlondon.com — we're happy to have a conversation before you apply.

Your story matters. Let's tell it together.