



NEWS RELEASE

Wednesday 27 November 2024

Southend craftsperson wins inaugural Heritage Crafts Community Catalyst of the Year Award supported by the Marsh Charitable Trust

Dee Curtis has won the inaugural Community Catalyst of the Year Award, supported by the Marsh Charitable Trust, including a £1,000 prize awarded at a special presentation at Eltham Palace on Tuesday 26 November 2024.

Heritage Crafts was set up 14 years ago as a national charity to support and safeguard heritage crafts skills, and has become well known for its *Red List of Endangered Crafts*, the first research of its kind to rank traditional crafts in the UK by the likelihood they will survive the next generation.



The award, supported by the **Marsh Charitable Trust**, celebrates someone who goes above-and-beyond to promote the benefits of heritage crafts within their community, whether that be a local community or a community of interest. Typically, they will be committed to widening participation, and their way of working will create a groundswell of enthusiasm that brings others along with them.

Dee Curtis' journey into community activism, and the founding of Urban Cure CIC, began with a career in the garment trade in the 1980s. Despite being told she lacked qualifications for fashion design, her resilience led her to various roles in the industry, including garment presser, pattern cutter and designer.

The work of Urban Cure in Southend-on-Sea provides hands-on skills to local young people and valuable respite activity for carers. The success of

the project is paving the way for further initiatives, demonstrating the practical and therapeutic benefits of engaging with heritage crafts.

The **Marsh Charitable Trust** runs a portfolio of awards with a number of nationally and internationally recognised partners to celebrate the outstanding contributions of people who are committed to social, cultural and environmental causes.

ENDS

Contacts:

- For press information and photographs, contact **Tess Osman**, Grants and Awards Officer – tess@heritagecrafts.org.uk.

Photo captions:

- **Dee Curtis**, winner of the 2024 *Community Catalyst of the Year Award*, and **Nick Carter** from the Marsh Charitable Trust. Photo by Robert Wade.

About Heritage Crafts

Founded in 2009, the Heritage Crafts is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) registered as the 'Heritage Crafts Association', the advocacy body for traditional heritage crafts. Working in partnership with government and key agencies, it provides a focus for craftspeople, groups, societies and guilds, as well as individuals who care about the loss of traditional crafts skills, and works towards a healthy and sustainable framework for the future. Its aim is to support and promote heritage crafts as a fundamental part of our living heritage.

www.heritagecrafts.org.uk

About the *Red List of Endangered Crafts*

The Red List of Endangered Crafts, created by Heritage Crafts, was the first to rank traditional crafts in the UK by the likelihood they would survive the next generation. The 2023 edition of the Red List, funded by the Pilgrim Trust, assessed 259 crafts to identify those which are at greatest risk of disappearing, of which 62 have been classified as critically endangered, 84 as endangered and 112 as currently viable.

The Red List shows that the craft knowledge, skills and practices that form an important part of our shared cultural heritage are – for a number of reasons – at risk of being lost. Heritage Crafts believes that these cultural assets are as important as unique heritage buildings and ancient beautiful landscapes and could provide future generations with fantastic opportunities to enrich their lives and the lives of others.

<http://redlist.heritagecrafts.org.uk>