

Over 25 years experience in cultural management. James is an experienced cultural strategist with a mix of organisational leadership, marketing and audience development, producing, public engagement, facilitation, research and financial management experience gained working in the subsidised arts, commercial, and local authority sectors. He specialises in strategic planning, organisational change and public engagement projects delivering work at both a regional and national level.

RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS

Freelance Consultant, GJG Consultancy

May 2019 to Present

Using practical experience, strategic thinking and organisational development tools to support the development of creativity at the heart of your city, organisation or practice.

- Led the review of the **Sheffield Culture** Consortium's structure and future role; facilitated strategic consultation with senior leaders and authored a report recommending a pause, legacy documentation, and a shift to a peer-led leadership model aligned with the new Sheffield Culture Strategy.
- Part of the team delivering a region-wide learning programme across **West Yorkshire's 'Years of Culture'**—including LEEDS 2023 and Bradford 2025—facilitating action learning sets and peer sessions, and co-producing a Knowledge Sharing Guide to support future large-scale cultural delivery.
- **Barking and Dagenham Cultural Partnership Group** Strategic Development Facilitator providing strategic guidance and mentorship to over 175 creatives, helping to develop a sustainable governance and business model, enhancing the group's capacity, securing long-term funding, and fostering collaboration across the local cultural sector.
- Public Consultation for **Intra High Street Heritage Action Zone** and setting up of structures to support community engagement during delivery.
- Theatre management reviews and governance consultation and recommendations for **Wyre Council, Burnham on Sea & Highbridge Council**, and **Theatres Trust** (Derby Hippodrome Restoration Trust).
- Lead consultant working with the **Medway Cultural Partnership** and **Medway Council** to co-develop a new Medway Cultural Strategy for 2020-2030 supported by evaluation and research specialists Ruth Melville Research and The Audience Agency.
- Business Planning advice and board away days for for small scale organisations including **ArtfulScribe, London Artists Projects, Audacious CIC, Woking Dance, Displace Yourself Theatre, Buglight Theatre, Zoie Logic Dance Theatre, Portsmouth Creates, People Express.**

Executive Director, Southampton Cultural Development Trust

November 2015 - July 2019

Appointed as the first Executive Director of Culture Southampton, taking a strategic lead for culture across the city. Integrating the various strategies and work programmes for cultural, heritage, tourism and place-making; finding ways to maximise existing capacity within the culture sector to build a long-term sustainable and independent sector. Directly brought in just over £1m or revenue investment in to Southampton's cultural sector over 4 years.

- Working alongside the University of Southampton, the John Hansard Gallery, the Southampton City Art Gallery and Art at the Heart partners, obtained funding from Arts Council England to develop and deliver a fringe festival to compliment and act as a local counterpoint to the Hayward Gallery's national touring British Art Show 8.

- Strategic lead for Mayflower 400, Southampton and Chair of the National Mayflower 400 art and cultural programme working group.
- Developed the partnership between Southampton City Council, University of Southampton and Solent University alongside commercial strategic partners including ABP and Southampton Football Club co-investing in the development of a Place Management Strategy for Southampton.

Administrative Director & Deputy CEO, Nuffield, Southampton

October 2013 - October 2015

Relaunched the 500 seat campus-based producing theatre under the new creative leadership of Sam Hodges, securing Arts Council National Portfolio funding until 2018, and £400k capital investment for the renovation of backstage and restaurant areas.

- Line management responsibility for all Production, Front of House, Community and Learning & Education departments.
- Development of new staffing structure and performance review to best support the organisation during this key period of transformation and change.
- Successfully bid for Nuffield to take on the management and programming of a new performance venue being built in Southampton due to open late 2016, increased National Portfolio and local authority funding.

General Manager, Corn Exchange Newbury & New Greenham Arts

November 2011 - October 2013

Charitable Trust running the 400 seat Corn Exchange with 40 seat cinema, and the 120 seat New Greenham Arts with its 1000 square foot gallery and 10 resident artists' studios. Also managing a successful outdoor arts programme with a build and development space on Greenham Common.

- Overall financial responsibility for this £2 million turnover organisation. Writing funding applications to major trusts and other funders. Preparing all finance reports for board and major funders.
- Responsible for New Greenham Arts and the rejuvenation of its visual arts programme as well as the introduction of a contemporary folk programme.
- Introduced alternative content cinema through the investment of new projector and satellite equipment to enhance and maximise revenue opportunities for film programme.
- Developed of a 5 year business plan that consolidated recent successes for the multi-site organisation whilst expanding opportunities for audiences to engage more often and in more diverse ways.

Producer, Parrabbola (p/t)

January 2011 – October 2012

Non-profit making cultural organisation specialising in community development through participatory creative activities. Working in partnership with local authorities, community and cultural organisations it engages communities in creative expression of their own lives and histories.

- Lead Producer for Margate Hosts The Boat Project working with cultural partners, local authorities and Arts Council England to deliver a four day celebration of the visit of The Lone Twin Boat Project to Margate.
- Developer and Producer, providing programming and producing support for projects with Hastings Borough Council including; "eight foot square" a community engagement project in Hastings and St Leonards and Stade Saturdays, a series of free outdoor concerts and performances throughout the summer on Hastings' new open space.

Director, Audiences South

October 2005 to August 2011

One of the UK's regional audience development agencies, connecting people and cultural activity through comprehensive understanding of the cultural context and of the public's reasons for engagement.

- Director with overall financial responsibility for this not-for-profit business unit and its strategic direction. Led nine staff plus freelancers, developed business plan, set and managed budgets and ensured community aims were met with achievement of income targets.
- Led PUSH, government growth area, cultural infrastructure audit seeking to formalise evidence for new housing developers to provide cultural contributions worth up to £27,000,000 by 2030.
- Led and managed 'South East 21' programme for Audience Development South East, devising a cultural organisational change diagnostic, and applying this to 20 ACE, SE regularly funded organisations.

Head of Audience Development, Audiences South	2003 to 2005
Marketing Manager, Audiences South	2001 to 2003
Internet Sales Consultant, Tickets.com Ltd.	2000 to 2001
Marketing Manager, Salisbury Playhouse	1999 to 2000
Marketing Officer, Watermill Theatre	1997 to 1999
Administration Assistant, Watermill Theatre	1996 to 1997

EDUCATION

Southampton University	BA in Philosophy	1992 to 1996
------------------------	------------------	--------------

OTHER INFORMATION

- Co-Chair Floaty Boat, Board Member Children's BookFest, CIC Director for ArtfulScribe