

Community skills

"You Make Bristol" is an on-going initiative to celebrate the people who shape the character, the reputation of the city.

To ensure Bristol's diversity was represented in the refresh display we contacted 60 groups across the city and held a public drop-in session for people to find out more and to make their nominations.

We then made another call out for people to come together to short list the 150 nominations to 40. Around ten people came to the session, but before they made their choices the museum talked about the importance of diversity and representation.

Each person voted in turn, occasionally challenging each other in a democratic way.

So although the museum set the parameters, we stepped back into a facilitative role rather than controlling the selections.

We wanted communities to be involved in the interpretation too by writing each of the captions.

Some of the caption writers had skills to share

but others needed more support and guidance.

We therefore gave lots of one-to-one support,
we provided a caption writing workshop and notes
for those who wanted it.

I really enjoyed being involved
in writing the captions for "You Make Bristol" exhibition.

We had a fantastic workshop
which was about 20 minutes
of training followed by giving a go.

And I found it really useful outside the museum context
because the whole message
was really about what are you going to say
in the first four or five words that makes people continue
to read through to the end of the caption?

And that's such a simple message
and so powerful.

And so, I said, I've used the outside work
as in writing the captions.

So I got to write two captions
and I've just written a third one.

We weren't saying that everyone
needed training and then making everybody
do the training indiscriminately.

We were simply giving people
access to the same information
and training that staff have had.

So, for instance, information

about font sizes for access

or training about writing skills.

The participants brought

something new to the initiative.

The captions were fresher, more personal,

they had variety, which made

them more engaging for our visitors.

Tracy has done so much for the community

in Hartcliffe and Withywood.

Since 1993 she has been a play leader, walk leader

and chair of the Community Partnership,

to name but a few.

I am so proud that she is my daughter.

Babyhead are the nicest guys you could meet

and bring music and love to all.

They tear it up on stage

and give back to Bristol

through their music workshops.

Without facilitating "You Make Bristol"

in the way that we did

and up-scaling the participants,

the museum couldn't possibly

produce the wonderful captions

that were in the display.

For instance, the young man who wrote,

"Without Dennis, I wouldn't be

the man I am today."