

#COMMUNITYCONNECTION

#CREATIVETHERAPY

#YOUTHENPOWERMENT

#AUTISMAWARENESS

**UNDERDOG
CREW
STUDIOS**
puppetry division



AUTISM & NEURODIVERSITY

What happens when you mix puppets with passion, creativity & community?

A year-long project of: **imagination confidence building & hands-on creative learning.**

Statistics so far...

*(our 2025/26 project **Phase #1**)*

300+ Hours of creative learning

150+ Hours of puppet making

50+ Hours of prop and set building

50+ Young people involved in the project

30+ Puppets designed and made

1 Studio cinema built by the community

1 Pilot episode filmed and completed

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Together, our young people have not just made puppets.
They have built characters, worlds, **confidence, friendships**, stories...
and **a place where difference belongs.**




Puppets



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A young creative community already being recognised

In just a few years, Underdog Crew Studios has built a platform where **marginalised, neuro diverse and at-risk young people** can create work that is seen, valued and celebrated.

Our studio projects are being recognised through international film festival success. These achievements show that our model works: when young people are given the right support, space, tools and belief, they produce work that is powerful, meaningful and worthy of public recognition. **These awards are not just trophies.** They are proof that young people who are often underestimated can create extraordinary work when they are surrounded by trust, creativity and community.

Creative project recognition — The Slip

Finalist — Children Cinema Awards 2024

Winner — Best Social Film, LuminaFlicks International Short Fest 2024

Winner — Best TV Pilot, Hercules Independent Film Festival 2024

Finalist — Stockholm City Film Festival 2024

Official Selection — International Short Cinema Festival 2024

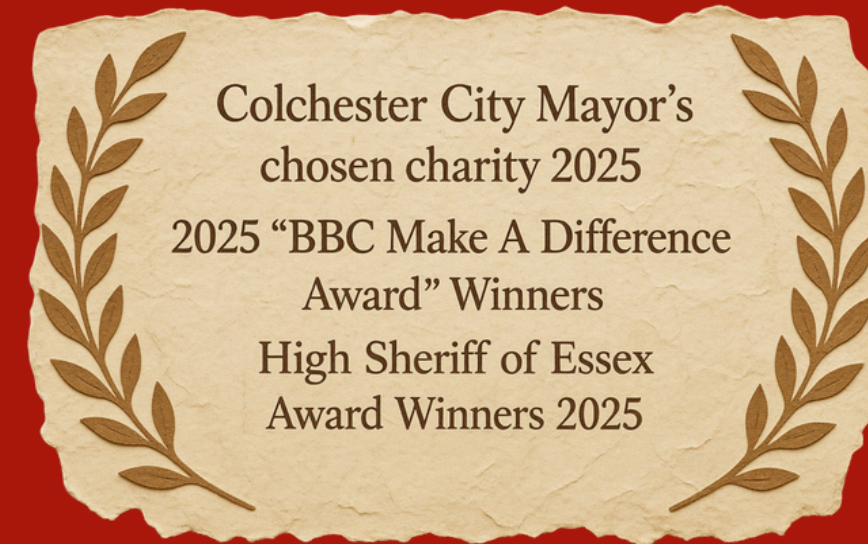


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And we've been invited to this year's
Buckingham Palace
Royal Garden Party!

Underdog Crew is proof that real change does not happen from the sidelines. Our life-changing, award-winning projects meet people where they are, lift them with purpose, and show what community action can truly achieve.



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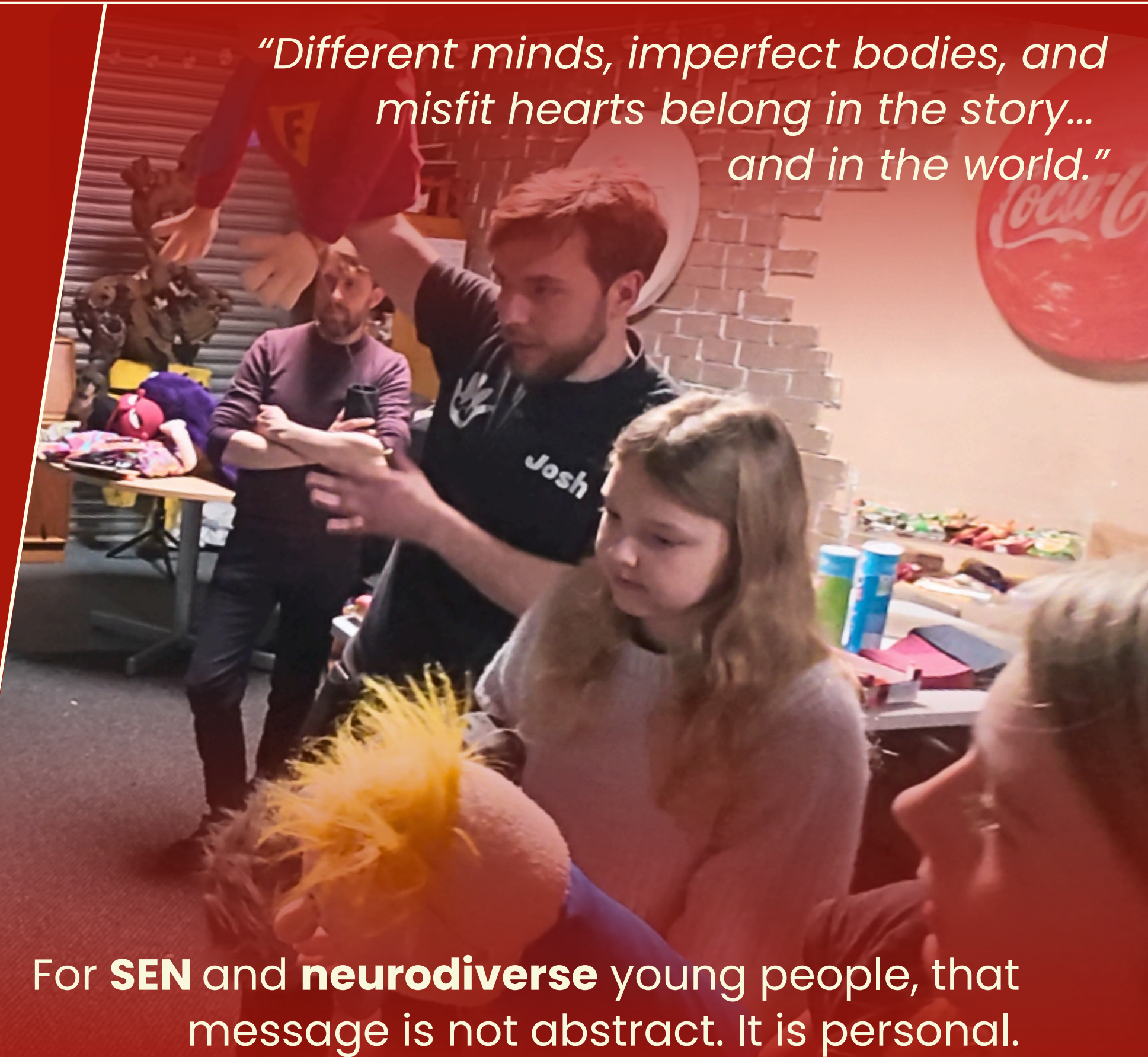
A puppet world where difference belongs

Woody's World is a darkly whimsical, surreal puppet series set inside a forgotten shop of oddities: a place where the unwanted, imperfect and unfinished come alive.

At its heart, the story is about belonging. The puppets are misfits. They carry wounds, fears, quirks and longings. Their world reflects the real experiences of many of the young people UCS supports: feeling different, misunderstood, overlooked, anxious, isolated or unsure where they fit.



"Different minds, imperfect bodies, and misfit hearts belong in the story... and in the world."



For **SEN** and **neurodiverse** young people, that message is not abstract. It is personal.

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'JAKE':

Day #1 Underdog Crew Studios member. NOW lead actor and music studio manager

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Woody's World

2

Coming 2026

Why now?

'ON THE 'WOODY'S WORLD' SET
PHOTO BY UCS MEMBER, LUKE FISHER

This is the right moment to invest. **"Underdog Crew Puppetry Division"** is no longer an idea. It is a **proven creative platform** ready to scale.

Episode 1 proved that our young people could build a world.
Episode 2 gives them the chance to step inside it.

Woody's World has reached the point where the concept is proven, the audience is forming, the partners are engaged, the young people are invested, and the creative universe is ready to grow.

The first phase built the foundations: puppets, characters, sets, studio cinema, pilot episode, public event, community buy-in and award credibility.

The next phase turns that foundation into a structured year-long creative programme with wider participation, professional mentorship, festival ambition and potential future income generation.



Coming 2026

Who Is This For?

This project is designed for SEND, neurodiverse, marginalised and at-risk young people across Essex, including Colchester, Chelmsford, Halstead, Southend and Thurrock.

Many of the young people we support experience anxiety, isolation, low confidence, social exclusion, disrupted education, poverty, caring responsibilities or a lack of accessible creative opportunities.

Through puppetry, filmmaking, character creation and storytelling, they are given a safe, playful and non-judgemental way to express themselves, connect with others and discover that their voice matters.



The Audience We've Started Building

The first phase culminated in a community cinema event with Mike Fielding, where UCS showcased both his work and the studio's collaborative project work to a packed audience of around 25 people.

The event gave young people a rare chance to speak publicly about what the project meant to them: how much they had enjoyed being part of it, how it had helped them, and how they now wanted to stay involved in the creative process.

For many young people, that moment is the outcome: not simply watching a film, but standing in a room full of people and realising: "I helped make this."

Woody's World gives young people a role, a voice, a creative identity and a reason to believe they belong.



Every participant becomes part of the story

Stage 1

Welcomed in

A safe, SEN-aware creative space where young people can arrive as themselves.

Stage 3

Learn the craft

Puppetry, movement, voice, non-verbal expression, camera, sound, lighting and set etiquette.

Stage 5

See it shared

The completed work is screened, celebrated and entered into festivals, giving young people visible proof of achievement.

Make something

Puppet making, props, sets, textures, costumes, character objects and practical design.

Stage 2

Join the production

Participants take real roles on a live film set, supported by trusted adults and professionals.

Stage 4

Belong to what comes next

Young people are invited to keep developing as makers, mentors, crew members and creative collaborators.

Stage 6



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WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE GAIN?



Creative skills

Puppet making, puppeteering, filmmaking, set building, prop design, animatronics and storytelling.



Confidence

Young people experience themselves as capable, creative and valued.



Communication

Puppetry gives participants a playful, indirect way to express feelings, ideas and identity.



Belonging

The project creates a shared world where difference, awkwardness and individuality are part of the magic.



Industry exposure

Participants work around real actors, filmmakers, puppeteers and production standards.



Aspiration

Young people see a route from local community creativity into festivals, screenings and future creative pathways.

The finished episode matters.
The journey changes lives.



Coming 2026

Funding will support

Funding will facilitate:

Delivery of the next project phase of Underdog Crew Studios' Woody's World:

PART 2: Rise of the fluff

a structured year-long puppetry and filmmaking programme culminating in the production of a new episode. This phase will include four puppet workshop weekends, ongoing weekly preparation and rehearsal, puppet and prop development, animatronics progression, professional mentorship, filming days, post-production, community screening and festival submission.

<p>Festival-ready creative output</p> <p>A completed Episode 2 with the ambition and quality to continue UCS's award-recognised creative journey.</p>	<p>Four major puppet workshop weekends</p> <p>Each combining puppet making, puppetry training, character work and filming on a real production set.</p>	<p>Professional puppetry mentorship</p> <p>Training and guidance with support from leading UK puppeteer Josh Macrow.</p>
<p>Community screening and celebration</p> <p>A final showcase event where young people and families can see their work valued by an audience.</p>	<p>Weekly creative development</p> <p>Ongoing work with specialist school students, UCS studio members and the Mums Connection Club to build the puppets, props, costumes, sets and wider film universe.</p>	<p>Mentorship and Counselling</p> <p>Ongoing one-to-one mentorship, guidance and signposting to critical support services.</p>
<p>Animatronics development</p> <p>Advancing the project's technical ambition through new puppet mechanisms, movement and practical effects.</p>	<p>Family and parent participation</p> <p>The Mums Connection Club contributing sewing, costume, prop and craft work while receiving connection, purpose and peer support.</p>	<p>Film production experience</p> <p>Young people gaining hands-on roles in puppeteering, camera, sound, lighting, set work, art department, performance and production support.</p>



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Built with trusted SEN education and community partners

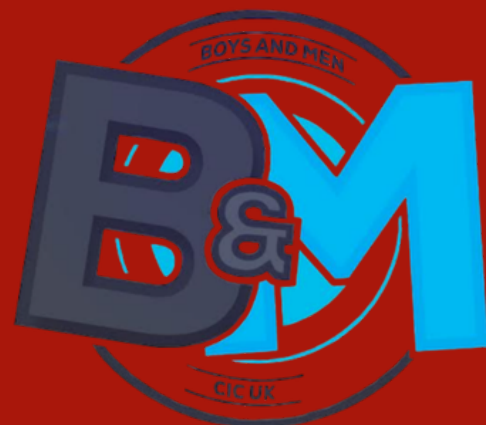
The first phase of Woody's World has been shaped through deep involvement from specialist education providers, SEN-focused organisations, colleges and community partners across Essex. These partnerships have helped us reach young people who face barriers to mainstream creative opportunities, **whilst ensuring the project is grounded in real SEN experience, trusted relationships and practical support.**

OMNIA
FOUNDATION

Doucecroft
School



Community
College
Initiative
CCI Ltd



The Belsteads School



This is not a project looking for an audience. It already has a network of young people, families, educators and community partners ready to help it grow.

Our first year has shown that the demand is real, the partnerships are active, and the young people are ready for the next chapter.



Coming 2026

“MUMS CONNECTION CLUB”

Supporting the young people means supporting the families around them

Over the past few months, UCS has established “Mum’s Connection Club” – a growing weekly group for **parents of SEN young people** who have faced significant barriers, stress and isolation while trying to secure the right support for their children.

At present, the group regularly brings together around six to ten mums, many of whom **have experienced complex personal challenges, including mental health pressures,** family stress, social isolation and difficult home circumstances.

Through UCS, they **have found a safe, welcoming and purposeful space** where they are not only supported emotionally, but are also becoming active creative contributors to the Woody’s World project.

The **mums are being trained and supported** in sewing, costume making, prop making and practical studio craft. Their work now forms part of the puppetry and film set universe, helping create costumes, textures, characters and handmade details that bring Woody’s World to life.

The Mums Connection Club shows that the project’s impact reaches beyond the screen – into families, confidence, friendship and belonging.



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Help us continue our journey to put Colchester city front and centre of the 'puppetverse'

Woody's World has already shown what can happen when young people are trusted with imagination, tools, time and belief. With your support, the next phase will help **SEND, neurodiverse, marginalised and at-risk young people step into a professional creative world where their ideas matter, their differences belong, and their work can be seen by real audiences.**

A story where the young people who often feel left out finally get to belong. This is more than a puppet series. It is a creative home. A confidence-building journey. A family support network. A route into the arts. **A catalyst for empowerment!**



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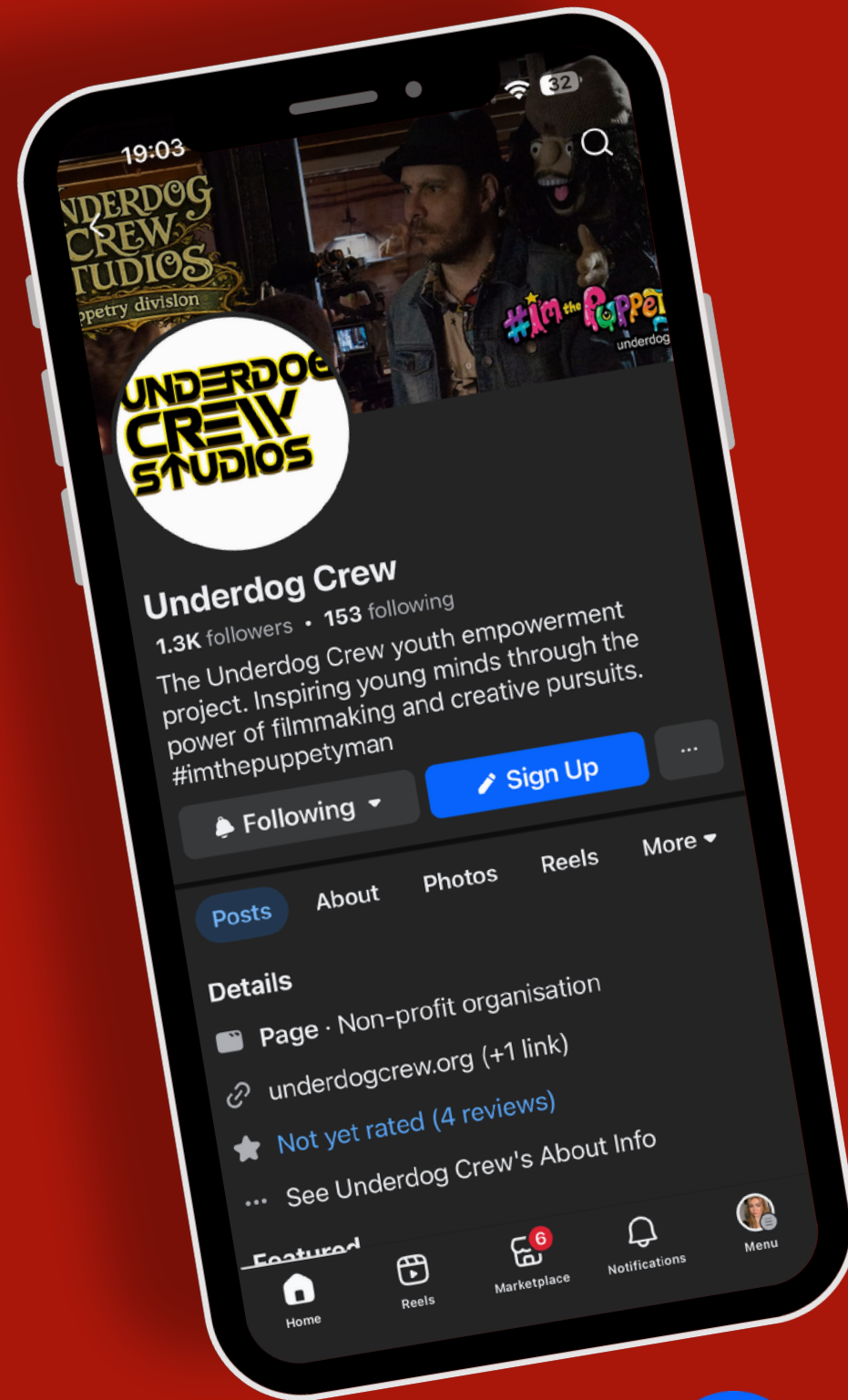
A project with a growing audience already waiting

Woody's World is not being developed in isolation. It is growing inside an existing creative community with a strong public platform, active social media reach and an emerging audience of people who already understand the tone, humour and heart of the project.

Underdog Crew Studios currently has around **2,000 followers through its social media** community hub, with further growth planned through TikTok, the newly launched '**Beyond the Breakdown podcast**', and ongoing public engagement around the Woody's World universe.

Because the project has a **clear creative relationship to British cult comedy**, surreal humour and puppet-led storytelling; alongside the **involvement of Mike Fielding from The Mighty Boosh**, UCS has also begun building visibility within large Mighty Boosh fan communities online.

These communities give the project **access to a potential audience far beyond Essex**, creating opportunities for engagement, future screenings, festival interest, online release and long-term income generation back into the CIC.



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Our proposed annual celebration of puppetry, to be staged at 'The Minorities' gallery in Colchester city.

A family showcase event: with puppet making workshops, a live action puppet arena, tutorials, workshops and screenings of 'UCS Puppetry Division' projects. Colchester City's own World Puppetry Day.

** SCHEDULED FOR SUMMER 2026



A SEN-friendly creative inclusion and empowerment project for marginalised, neurodiverse and at-risk young people across Essex.



UNDERDOG CREW STUDIOS

The Underdog Crew CIC

underdogcrew.org/woodysworld

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Our #UCSbeatz performance drumming collective