Masks

A Cullercoats Festival 2026 project

Introduction

Add to the Festival fun by creating a mask to wear or display!

Masks have been used in celebrations and festivals for thousands of years and all over the world. Cullercoats Festival this year is joining in. Come and make a mask to wear or display at the Festival at our workshops in local libraries, or pick up a pack to make at home.

The theme for the Festival in 2026 is "Communities Together". Masks have often been used to disguise differences and allow people to mix freely – such as in Venice during Mardi Gras.

Mask workshops and stalls

- **Tuesday 5th May | Whitley Bay Library** | 1.30-5 pm | Drop-in Mask Making Workshop
- **Saturday 9th May | North Shields Library** | 9am-1.00 pm | Information Stall
- **Saturday 16th May | Newcastle Building Society, Whitley Bay** | 9.30-11.30 **|** Mask Making Workshop
- **Saturday 23rd May | North Shields Library** | 9am-1.00pm | Drop-in Mask Making Workshop
- **Saturday 30th May | Cullercoats Library** | 9.30am-12.30pm | Drop-in Mask Making Workshop
  PLUS display at Cullercoats Library from May-June
  Pick up a mask pack to take away at any of these events.

There will also be opportunities on the day – Saturday 13th June – to make masks, then we'll all come together wearing or holding our masks, on the front, **at 2 pm** with prizes for the children. To be eligible for a prize, the mask should be made by the child (help is allowed!).

If you have a group – adults or children – who would like to make masks, please feel free to make more copies of this mask pack or get in touch!

Mask Packs

What's in this pack?

- 1 mask with elastic – this can be used as a template to draw and cut out other masks
- A pack of attachments (e.g., paper, sequins, feathers, fabric)
- Instructions and ideas (this document)
- How to find more information and Mask resources - on our website **cullercoatsfestival.org/2026-masks-project**
- How to contact us (see address below)

Send us a photo of your mask!

cullerfest@gmail.com

About masks

Masks have been used in the past and are still used all over the world for celebrations, ceremonies and festivals, as well as theatre performances.

Masks can be used for disguise – like superheroes - or just as works of art. They can be very simple – just covering the eyes – or realistic so that they look like a real or exaggerated human face, or they could be artistic and abstract and very decorative. Or they could represent an animal.

A mask can be simple across the eyes, or shaped around the eyes, or it can be full face or even bigger. It can be attached to your head by elastic or string, or as a hat, or held in front of you on a stick or straw. It can be flat, made out of paper, card or silk, or three-dimensional and elaborately decorated. You could use layers of card or papier-mache to make a three-dimensional mask, and fabric, feathers or sequins to add texture.

TIP: It's important to be able to see through your mask if you want to wear it close to your face! So use a size and shape that matches where your eyes are.

Masks around the world







1. Kathakali dance in India by Anirudh Phadke

2. BaKongo masks from the Kongo Central Region: Photo by Ndoto ya Afrika, CC BY-SA 3.0 https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Masques_BaKongo.JPG

3. Mardi Gras masks by Mikhail Nilov

Pick a project



Project 1: Make a Festival Mask

Draw a picture of a mask and colour it in.

Select, print or draw a blank mask shape.

Colour it with any paint, pen or materials and decorate it.

Decide whether you need to add elastic or a stick to hold it.

[Example, right, thanks to Rory]

Project 2: Make an Animal Mask



What animal are you?

Think about which of these words might describe you. Pick four or five. Then think about what animal they could also describe. There are links to a couple of online quizzes on our website.

majestic fierce confident bold loyal friendly independent intelligent soaring analytical noisy determined focused playful witty social impulsive cunning social adaptable adventurous curious agile sleek mysterious powerful calm gentle patient slow fast peaceful lively timid brave

Or you could just pick an animal that you are drawn to or that you like – a particular breed of dog, a zebra, a butterfly…

[Photo by Emma Solomon]

Project 3: Writing about the masks we wear

Prompt 1

Does a mask hide something, or reveal – show – something?

Prompt 2



Write a poem about masks and the ways we wear them. Write the poem onto a mask shape – you can even turn it into a wearable mask.

Prompt 3

By the time we have grown up, we have probably learned that sometimes it's necessary to show a particular face to the world around us. That face might change depending on the circumstances, but it often helps us hide what we really feel or think. We do this so that we can get along in the world, with the people we encounter. We mask to fit in to be socially acceptable. Is it the case that we may sometimes lose ourselves behind these masks? Use them so often to hide that we never show our real face? Do we even see the mask ourselves when we look in the mirror?

There are, of course, times when wearing a mask is a good thing. They can be helpful to fit in. For example, I wear a "mother" mask, an "artist" mask, a "friend" mask, and several others.

What masks do you wear? Do the masks you wear reflect who you really are - or some part of who you are? Masks can also hide who we are. Do your masks hide who you are? What is on the **inside** of your mask?

You can make a mask as part of this prompt – draw, decorate or write on both the outside of the mask – what do others see? And the inside of the mask – what is really you?

Project 4: Papier mache

Blow up a round balloon to about the same size as your head. Use glue and strips of paper to make papier mache (see recipe). Use this to cover half of the balloon. Make holes for the mouth and eyes and a nose with papier mache or by cutting a small box such as a matchbox in half.

Leave the mask to dry. Paint and decorate the face as you wish, stick on hair (e.g., wool). Burst the balloon and you should be left with a mask. Add string or elastic to wear, or just hold it or hang it up!

Make your own glue

Making your own glue is quick and easy – and a more sustainable option!

Ingredients:

- 1 cup of flour (either SR or plain will do)
- 1 cup of cold water
- Pinch of table salt

Mix all ingredients together in a clean bowl until thoroughly combined.

And that's it! Add less water if you want glue to be thicker and more like paste. It doesn't matter what size cup you use, the important thing is to use the same amount of water and flour (1:1 ratio).

How to use the glue for papier mache

Make sure you protect your work surface with a cloth, or paper.. Cut some paper strips – used printer paper or newspaper is good for this! Dip the paper strips in the paste, then wipe off the excess (use the side of the bowl). Stick the strips onto the balloon (or other project). A paintbrush is useful to smooth down the paper so you can get rid of any air bubbles or too much paste. Just keep repeating this step until you have built up a reasonable thickness of mask. You probably need to let it dry between layers if it's getting too wet.

Project 5: Up to you

Create a mask or artwork or writing about a mask in any way you like.

For links to more information and more mask pictures go to:

cullercoatsfestival.org/2026-masks-project

See you at 2 pm on Cullercoats Seafront (near the playground)

13th June 2026

With your masks!