

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Arts and Culture Forum held at Knowle, Sidmouth, on Thursday 25 April 2013

Present: Councillors:
Vivien Duval Steer – Equalities Champion
John O’Leary – Culture Champion
Phil Twiss – Deputy Portfolio Holder Environment

Town representatives:
John Dyson - Sidmouth
Douglas Hull – Axminster
Vernon Whitlock - Honiton
Tom Wright – Budleigh Salterton

Community representative:
Gerri Bennett

Officers: Angela Blackwell, Thelma Hulbert Gallery Curator
Denise Lyon, Deputy Chief Executive
Charlie Plowden, Countryside and Leisure Manager
Alethea Thompson, Democratic Services Officer

Apologies: Town representatives: David Chapman - Exmouth
Stephanie Jones - Seaton
Claire Wright – Ottery St Mary
Community representative:
Nikki Milican

The meeting started at 3.30 pm and ended at 5.25 pm.

***8 Minutes**

The minutes of the inaugural meeting of the Arts and Culture Forum held on 14 March 2013 were confirmed as a true record subject to the table of declarations of interest being updated to reflect the table below.

***9 Declarations of interest**

Forum Member	Minute number	Type of interest	Nature of interest
David Chapman		Personal	He was a member of the Exmouth Pavilion Advisory Forum and the Manor Pavilion Theatre Steering Committee.
John Dyson		Personal	He was on the sub committee of Sidmouth Town Council considering the Manor Pavilion and he was a member of the Manor Pavilion Theatre Steering Committee.
Douglas Hull		Personal	He was a member of the Axminster Drama Club, the Axminster Museum and Axminster Heritage.

*9 **Declarations of interest (cont'd)**

Forum Member	Minute number	Type of interest	Nature of interest
Denise Lyon		Personal	She belonged to Friends of the Thelma Hulbert Gallery (THG).
John O'Leary		Personal	He was a member of the Manor Pavilion Theatre Steering Committee, the Exmouth Pavilion Advisory Forum and he belonged to Friends of the Thelma Hulbert Gallery.
Vivien Duval Steer		Personal	She was a member of the Exmouth Pavilion Advisory Forum.
Vernon Whitlock		Personal	He belonged to Friends of the Thelma Hulbert Gallery and Friends of the Beehive.

10 **Constitution**

Members considered the revised constitution which set out terms of reference of the Forum. Amendments had been recommended by the Forum and these had been agreed by Council.

At the last meeting the Forum had discussed setting up a website which all towns and parishes could publicise events and activities, so that all events in the district were available on one website. Since the meeting members had discovered "The Hub" which was already established, operating, cost free and was used by some of the East Devon Tourist Information Centres (TICs). A demonstration of "The Hub" website was received by the Forum and the following points discussed:

- "The Hub" was advertised in the free glossy Coast and Country magazine which was well distributed across the district in places such as hairdressers, dentists, pubs, libraries.
- It was a self-fulfilment site.
- "The Hub" operated as a landing page.
- There was no delay – events were instantly uploaded.
- There were many links off the webpage to external sites.
- The website was getting good hits.
- The more content that was available on the site the more usage it would generate.
- Events information could also be advertised on the Heart of Devon website.

Subject to further investigation into the magazine and website, and consulting with the publisher, the Forum felt that all towns, parishes and organisations in the area should be informed of "The Hub" and encouraged to advertise their events on the site.

RECOMMENDED: that subject to investigations, an article be placed in The Knowledge bringing "The Hub" website to the attention of town and parishes for use as a community tool.

RESOLVED: that the changes to the constitution of the Arts and Culture Forum be noted.

***11 Thelma Hulbert Gallery business report**

The Countryside and Leisure Manager presented the THG business report, showing figures and performance for the period 1 December 2012 to 19 April 2013. The overall performance was good, with improving footfall and income at the gallery. The shop had increased its takings and donations had significantly increased. The income forecast for the THG was £17,500 from the shop and £210 from catering. The outturn report would be available at the next meeting.

***12 Thelma Hulbert Gallery exhibition programme**

Angela Blackwell, Curator of the Thelma Hulbert Gallery (THG) outlined forthcoming events and exhibitions and circulated an exhibitions programme for 11 May 2013 – 2 November 2013. This included:

- The Beekeeper and the Bee - beekeeping exhibition, demonstration and workshops.
- Evolver prize exhibition.
- intoLace exhibition – working in partnership with The Devon Guild of Craftsmen.

It was noted that there was an exhibitions programme in place until the end of 2014. As well as the exhibitions the THG would continue its community based work with Millwater School, youth groups, MIND (a charity for mental health), St Paul's homework club, East Devon housing tenants, schools and many other local groups. Angela went on to outline the awards that the gallery had recently received.

The Countryside and Leisure Manager reported that Spotlight had recently filmed the Countryside Service building of a bee home event. Bees were very topical at present and Devon Life magazine had picked up on the exhibition at THG. It was thought that this media coverage could be used to raise the profile of the gallery in conjunction with reputation management for EDDC. Good publicity and a lot of press interest were anticipated from the lace exhibition. During this event the artist and local women would cover all the THG windows in 'lace' (although the medium being used was vaseline).

The Chairman thanked Angela Blackwell for attending the meeting and demonstrating the range of activities provided at the THG.

***13 Thelma Hulbert Gallery – local artists offer**

The Forum noted the THG offer to local artists. This included:

- Expanded shop area selling a wider selection of local artists and wider range of affordable items (double the amount of wall space).
- Local artist commissioned (at no cost) to paint an image of the THG for promotional use.
- Beekeeper exhibition (June 2013) – Somerset artist.
- Evolver prize (July 2013) – open to all artists, especially local and Millwater School collaborating and exhibiting in tandem.
- Lace and Devon Guild of Craftsmen (September 2013) – local artists in partnership with national artists and collaboration with another Gallery.
- Presentmakers exhibition (December 2013) – local craftspeople.
- Annual Animated Exeter exhibition (February 2014).

***13 Thelma Hulbert Gallery – local artists offer (cont'd)**

- Honiton Memory Cafe (March 2014) – local artists auction (Honiton Hospital involved).
- Peter Randall Page (May 2014) – internationally renowned local sculptor.
- Open Exhibition (July 2014) – attracts local as well as wider artists.
- Devon Open Studios (September 2014) – collaboration exhibition.

***14 Thelma Hulbert Gallery staffing update and priorities**

The Deputy Chief Executive explained that interviews for the THG fundraising and marketing post had been held the previous week. Two people had been appointed. One would be working throughout May and June 2013 to develop a marketing strategy and deal with grant funding applications. The second person would be employed from July to October 2013 and had a strong corporate sponsorship background. Both people were keen to maximise their skills for the time of their employment, and were very flexible and willing to continue to work with the THG in the future.

The Forum went on to discuss ideas that had been suggested at a small brainstorming meeting held on 21 March 2013. These included:

- Increased visibility of the THG within the town and better connectivity through signage from the High Street.
- Emphasise the arch entrance with permanent signage.
- Internal refit – currently in the process of moving the office upstairs, neatening downstairs and installing security shutters downstairs.
- A new till for the shop.
- External painting, to be completed before the lace exhibition. Suggested putting banners on the scaffolding outside the gallery advertising it.
- Advertise THG on the Town Council board.
- Better signage at the Honiton train station, including directions to the gallery. Contact Network Rail to discuss running in boards.
- Car park –
 - Putting footprints from the short stay car park across to the long stay car park, in bright THG colours. Car park lines were scheduled to be repainted this year so liaise with Environmental Health and Parking Services Manager to do the footprints at the same time.
 - Changing the name of the long stay car park (to be done in accordance with EDDC corporate branding) and reinforce the THG brand.
 - Use the back of the car park signs (currently blank) to advertise exhibitions.
- Communicate the car park changes with an associated press release, but avoid advance notice.
- Explore the possibility of a raffle, for a donated work of art, to raise income

***15 Any other business**

Manor Pavilion Theatre

The Forum agreed that there were exciting times ahead for the Manor Pavilion Theatre, with a new summer season repertory company starting on 1 June 2013. They wanted to meet with the company to discuss their proposals for the summer season and their engagement with EDDC and Sidmouth. The Countryside and Leisure Manager agreed to liaise with the Manor Pavilion Theatre Manager to find a convenient meeting date.

Axminster museum

The Forum noted that Axminster Museum would be holding 'A Summer of Excellence' exhibition on 7 May 2013.

Exmouth Festival

The Forum noted that the Exmouth Festival would be held from 23 – 31 May 2013.

***16 Date of next meeting**

The Chairman thanked all those present for attending the meeting and gave particular thanks to the curator of the Thelma Hulbert Gallery.

RESOLVED: that the next meeting of the Arts and Culture Forum be held at 4.00 pm on Thursday 6 June 2013 at the Manor Pavilion Theatre, Sidmouth.

Chairman Date