

## **EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the meeting of the Arts and Culture Forum held at THG, Honiton on Friday 18 September 2015**

**Present:**

EDDC Councillors:

John O'Leary – Culture Champion  
Peter Faithfull  
Phil Twiss

Town representatives:

Ashley Alder - Honiton  
David Chapman – Exmouth  
Maddy Chapman - Exmouth  
John Dyson - Sidmouth  
Douglas Hull – Axminster  
Richard Webster - Seaton

Victoria Harding – Programme manager, South West Museum  
Development Programme  
Mary Schwarz - Arts & cultural sector consultant  
Roger Werner - Villages in Action

**Officers:**

Angela Blackwell, Thelma Hulbert Gallery Curator  
Charlie Plowden, Service Lead - Countryside and Leisure  
John Golding, Strategic Lead – Housing, Health and Environment  
Alethea Thompson, Democratic Services Officer

**Apologies:**

Gerri Bennett – Community representative  
Cllr Alison Greenhalgh – East Devon District Council rep  
Cllr Geoff Pook  
Cllr Andrew Moulding – Axminster representative  
Cllr Jo Talbot – Ottery St Mary representative  
Cllr Tom Wright – Budleigh Salterton representative  
Graham Whitlock – Manor Pavilion Theatre Manager

The meeting started at 3.00pm and ended at 5.25pm

**\*1 Election of chairman**

**RESOLVED:** that Councillor John O'Leary be elected Chairman of the Arts and Culture Forum for the ensuing year.

The Chairman welcomed all those present to the meeting and invited everyone to introduce themselves.

**\*2 Appointment of vice chairman**

**RESOLVED:** that Councillor Douglas Hull be appointed Vice Chairman of the Arts and Culture Forum for the ensuing year.

**\*3 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Arts and Culture Forum held on 13 February 2015 were confirmed as a true record.

**\*4 Declarations of interest**

Forum Member	Minute number	Type of interest	Nature of interest
Douglas Hull		Personal	Member of the Axminster Museum and Axminster Heritage.
Phil Twiss		Personal	His wife was on the board of Villages in Action.

**\*5 South West Museums presentation**

The Forum received a presentation from Victoria Harding, programme manager, South West Museum Development (SWMD) Programme 2015/18. The presentation included:

- Museums data nationally
- East Devon museums data 2013/14
- South West Museum Development – key facts, governance, purpose and development role
- SWMD in East Devon – investment, breakdown of investment, staffing, grants and training.

Following the presentation the SWMD programme manager was thanked for her invaluable information and presentation. The SWMD programme 2015/18 and the SWMD annual report 2013/14 were circulated at the meeting.

**RESOLVED:** that the presentation be noted.

**\*6 Villages in Action (VIA) update**

Roger Werner VIA Director, updated the Forum with VIA's plans for 2015/16. VIA had been awarded £47,600 by Arts Council England to develop its programme and research more sustainable business models. District council funding was crucial in leveraging this money. Mr Werner reported that for every £1 invested in VIA by EDDC, a further £2 was generated from other sources to support activity in the district. In addition £2,000 had been raised by VIA towards the upkeep of village halls in East Devon. It was noted that DCC funding would continue through 2015/16 and new funding had been made available to explore opportunities for future commissioning.

During 2014/15 there were 17 villages involved in promoting events and 34 performances had taken place. Plans for 2015/16 and beyond included:

- Continuing to develop a programme of afternoon shows in care homes for the elderly.
- 39 performances to take place in 19 communities between September 2015 and April 2016.
- In partnership with The Bike Shed Theatre Exeter, VIA would be co-commissioning a new theatre piece aimed at older people during 2016.
- Working with an arts consultant to reassess the operating model and look at ways of making VIA more resilient. They would evaluate social impact and organisational development.
- Setting up a pilot project to support theatre performances in market town venues.
- On 11 September 2015 VIA patron Michael Morpurgo performed at The Beehive in Honiton to raise money for VIA and launch the donations appeal.

The VIA autumn performance programme was circulated at the meeting. On behalf of the Forum the Chairman thanked Roger Werner for his update report.

**RESOLVED:** that the update be noted

**\*7 Cranbrook culture strategy**

The Forum welcomed Mary Schwartz, arts & cultural sector consultant to the meeting to discuss the Cranbrook culture strategy. Culture was defined as “the good bits in life” – who we are as individuals, the environment, our values and our relationships. The many positive outcomes of culture were also described.

Mary explained that she was one of a team of three consultants working on a culture strategy for Cranbrook and outlined the context for the strategy, the brief and how it was being undertaken. It was noted that the team were working strategically across local boundaries, doing a mixture of research and consultation. Now was critical for planning and ensuring place and space for the future. The challenge was dealing with the development consortium.

On behalf of the Forum the Chairman thanked Mary and offered the Forum’s help if required.

**RESOLVED:** that the update be noted.

**\*8 Thelma Hulbert Gallery income review presentation**

Angela Blackwell, THG curator gave a presentation on the THG business strategy 2014/15-17/18, which was funded by the Arts Council. The mission statement was that “the Thelma Hulbert Gallery is an ambitious organisation which supports and promotes modern and contemporary art and craft. We develop audiences through engagement with a wide range of communities in East Devon and beyond. We aim to be welcoming, accessible, engaging and inspiring to all our visitors”. With a vision “that by 2018, the Thelma Hulbert Gallery will be nationally recognised as one of the key independent contemporary art galleries in the South West. Its innovative programme of exhibitions and ground breaking work with young people, communities and volunteers alike will bring it media attention, awards and visitors from afar”.

The gallery had received a number of awards this year, which was a credit to the team and all their hard work. They had also received great media attention, including BBC Spotlight. The gallery had won the ‘Museums at Night’ competition, which would allow for a PR campaign and national press coverage.

The curator outlined workshops, outreach projects, exhibitions and events that had been held at the gallery, as well as forthcoming activities.

The Arts Council had funded the new THG website. There was free wifi at the gallery. Income from shop sales was improving and friends’ membership was increasing. The improved signage to the gallery had been noticeable over the summer.

On behalf of the Forum the Chairman thanked the gallery curator and her team for all their hard work and impressive results.

**RESOLVED:** that the presentation be noted.

**\*9 Manor Pavilion theatre financial report**

The Service Lead, Countryside and Leisure circulated updated financial figures to the end of August 2015. These were very positive, with a £37,000 income above budget for the year to date. This was attributed to the success of the Paul Taylor Mills summer season. The Service Lead, Countryside and Leisure was happy to report that the theatre had just secured the impressive company for another three years.

The Forum gave special thanks to and congratulated Graham Whitlock, Manor Pavilion Theatre manager and his team for all their hard work.

**RESOLVED:** that the report be noted and that thanks be given to the Manor Pavilion Theatre manager and his team for all their hard work.

**\*10 EDDC culture strategy review**

The Service Lead, Countryside and Leisure outlined a draft culture strategy review. The current East Devon culture strategy 2008 – 2012 was out of date and needed reviewing, although a lot of it was still relevant. The new document would be relatively brief.

The Service Lead, Countryside and Leisure welcomed feedback from the Forum and invited comments to be made to him.

**\*11 Any other business**

The Forum discussed information being made available on pages of the EDDC website to advertise community cultural activities as at present this information was not available in one central location. This would be explored further at a future forum meeting.

The Forum also felt that future meetings should be held in public.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and gave special thanks to the Service Lead, Countryside and Leisure and his team.

Chairman ..... Date .....