

## **EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of a Meeting of the Arts and Culture Forum held at the Beehive, Honiton on 24 June 2016**

#### **Attendance list at end of document**

The meeting started at 2.30pm and ended at 5.00pm.

#### **\*1 Appointment of Vice Chairman**

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

**RESOLVED:** that Councillor Faithfull be appointed Vice Chairman of the Forum for the ensuing year.

#### **\*2 Minutes**

The minutes of the Arts and Culture Forum meeting held on 18 September 2015 were confirmed and signed as a true record.

#### **\*3 Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Douglas Hull: Personal interest – member of the Axminster Museum and Axminster Heritage.

#### **4 Constitution**

Members of the Forum considered an updated constitution which had been circulated with the agenda papers.

It was noted that the original constitution stated that the two community representatives would be appointed for a four year term. Members were asked to agree a second four-year term in order to be able to retain experience and knowledge that would continue to benefit the Forum. Members wished to be able to review the original appointment after four years and the wording of the constitution was amended to reflect this. The new wording would read:

“The two community members will be appointed for an initial four year term by Full Council, which can be extended for a second four year term with a maximum of 8 years in total. Therefore after the first four year term the Forum will have the ability to approve a second four year term so that their experience and knowledge could continue to be used for the benefit of the Forum. They may resign or be removed by the District Council.”

**RECOMMENDED:** that the updated constitution (attached to these minutes) of the Arts and Culture Forum be agreed.

#### **\*5 Recruitment of community representatives**

The Service Lead – Countryside and Leisure advised the Forum that both of the original community representatives had resigned. The Forum discussed where and how to advertise the two vacancies and suggested various options including:

- Arts Council
- Arts News
- EDDC website
- The Knowledge
- Ask Town and Parish Councils to advertise locally
- Ask EDDC Councillors if they knew of any interested candidates.

**RECOMMENDED:** that the Democratic Services Officer send an advert for the community representative positions to members of the Arts and Culture Forum for wider distribution.

**\*6 The Cultural White Paper**

The Service Lead – Countryside and Leisure outlined the Cultural White Paper. This document set out the Government’s vision to embed culture in how we enjoy our lives, how it can transform lives especially through education and reaching socially disadvantaged groups and the economic benefits it could bring to communities. It clearly outlined what it expected publically funded cultural assets and services should be delivering. These expectations and how EDDC were engaging was being delivered primarily through its cultural services, which were the Thelma Hulbert Gallery (THG), the Manor Pavilion Theatre and the Countryside Team.

The White Paper set out specific areas and opportunities for engagement listing funding streams, partnerships and processes for delivering the ambitions of the White Paper. The Service Lead – Countryside and Leisure highlighted some of the areas where the challenges were being successfully met.

EDDC had recognised that some of its key corporate priorities around enabling the delivery of a health & wellbeing role, delivering economic wellbeing across its communities and maintaining and promoting the outstanding natural environment can and was being facilitated by its support of cultural activities. By placing culture at the heart of many aspects of EDDC’s corporate priorities it was already helping to deliver on the Cultural White Paper’s vision and priorities.

Councillor Hull requested that a webpage be set up on the EDDC website to advertise and keep up to date all events taking place across the whole district. The Service Lead – Countryside and Leisure explained that there were resource implications in doing this and that since the Council no longer had an Arts Development Officer there was no Arts Directory. Members were advised to look at ‘the Hub’ website and it was suggested that a link to this should be promoted on the EDDC website.

**RESOLVED:**

1. that the report be noted.
2. that a link to ‘the Hub’ website be included on the ‘what’s on’ page of the EDDC website.

**\*7 EDDC Culture Strategy 2016 - 2020**

The Service Lead – Countryside and Leisure outlined the final draft of the EDDC Culture Strategy 2016 – 2020. This built on the previous culture strategy, supported corporate priorities and included an action plan, with realistic and achievable ambitions . The strategy would be the ‘golden thread’ running through services, which all had a role to play in delivering the strategy. The corporate priority would be keeping the strategy ‘smart’ in terms of objectives. It was noted that the Culture Strategy 2016 – 2020 would be referred to Cabinet for approval.

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

**\*8 Arts Council presentation**

Due to illness the Arts Council presentation would be deferred to a future Forum meeting.

**\*9 Cranbrook in Common cultural master plan**

Alex Murdin of Gingko Consultants gave the Forum a presentation on the Cranbrook in Common cultural development strategy. This had involved a cultural audit, surveying residents and exploring available funding specific options. It was felt that culture makes places individual and special and that developers were starting to recognise this too, therefore engaging the commercial sector in the cultural sector. The added value of culture was that:

- culture adds economic value to housing development;
- culture creates social capital and makes people feel better about their lives;
- culture enhances the environment and means places are better looked after.

It was reported that the people living in Cranbrook today were optimistic and aspirational about the future. They were already demanding their own local sports, social, recreational and arts facilities which were more accessible than, but complementary to, those in the surrounding area.

The people in Cranbrook wanted:

- strong cultural networks and communications,
- community events,
- playing and youth spaces,
- adult social spaces,
- cultural facilities.

The cultural vision for Cranbrook was:

- to create a unique, desirable place to be,
- to celebrate local identity and embrace global opportunity,
- to support cultural innovation and make a sustainable future for all.

To achieve this vision over the next 15 years, the community of Cranbrook, the Town Council and community organisations would need to work collaboratively with developers, local authorities and other cultural partners in the area to create not only buildings and cultural infrastructure appropriate to a town which would grow to up to 20,000 people, but also support people in developing skills, enhancing education and fostering local creative industries. Therefore, a huge amount of public/private partnership working was required to achieve these aims.

During the presentation principles and values were discussed. Standards for Cranbrook were outlined, as well as cultural facilities, culture in the public realm and creative capacity building in the town.

The Forum were invited to visit a pilot website [www.cranbrookculture.net](http://www.cranbrookculture.net). It was noted that the Consultants' role was to produce the cultural strategy, but that the Town Council or EDDC should pursue this in the future. It was suggested that there should be a cultural development post/officer to continue with the work.

On behalf of the Forum the Chairman thanked Alex Murdin for his presentation.

**\*10 Cultural heritage projects/programme in the AONB**

The Forum received a presentation from the East Devon AONB Project Officer on the diverse cultural heritage projects and programme in the East Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). He explained that the AONB management policy plan was 75% funded by DEFRA with the rest of the funding split between EDDC and Devon County

Council (DCC), to support local community engagement in physical, cultural and natural heritage initiatives within the AONB. The purpose was to help develop culture in the AONB, recognising communities living in the landscape.

Examples of projects supported through the AONB Sustainable Development Fund in 2015/16 included:

- Thelma Hulbert Gallery; garden regeneration
- East Devon Museums Group; educational equipment
- Branscombe Project; community mapping
- Axminster Heritage; display equipment

On behalf of the Forum the Chairman thanked the East Devon AONB Project Officer for his presentation.

**\*11 Thelma Hulbert Gallery planned programme of activities**

The THG Curator gave an overview of activities at the gallery so far and those planned for 2016. The Curator quoted from the Cultural White Paper and explained how the gallery was engaging with the community, getting greater participation and tackling social isolation on a daily basis. Culture brought huge benefits by providing better quality of life and wellbeing within local communities.

She reported that £30,000 of funding had been achieved and the garden had been regenerated after community consultation. It was now one of 87 'pocket parks' in the UK. Over 250 people had attended a party to launch the garden in May, with food, bar and activities all on offer.

The THG had partnered with the Exmouth Festival and run free family art activities at the Blackmoor Theatre. This had allowed engagement with an audience in the wider community. Other events included:

- Devon Guild of Craftsmen craft fair at Bovey Tracey.
- THG open 2016 art show
- Hayward Touring exhibition to be held in September 2016 – this would be funded by the Arts Council, including workshops which would be run alongside the exhibition.
- Halloween garden party – museums at night event.
- Present makers exhibition
- Many other workshops, for example Christmas card making.

On behalf of the Forum the Chairman thanked the Curator for her presentation and the positive information.

**\*12 Countryside Service's outdoor theatre programme**

The Countryside Team leader outlined the outdoor theatre offer. He explained the concept of using green spaces in a different way and had partnered with Street Scene to see if they could use their gardens in Exmouth and Sidmouth. Two outdoor theatre performances had taken place last year, with two more planned for Summer 2016. The Forum were shown a video clip of The Pantaloons' "Gulliver's Travels".

Other examples of adding value to the events offer with broader content included the Budleigh Salterton food and drink festival and the Norman Lockyer observatory. It was agreed EDDC should be more innovative with its green spaces by developing and experimenting with different ideas to provide an experience to the public

The Chairman thanked the Countryside Team Leader for his presentation

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

**\*13 Summer of culture**

The Service Lead – Countryside and Leisure advised the Forum that he had met with the Countryside Team Leader, the Manor Pavilion Theatre Manager, the THG Curator, Strata and the Countryside Team to bring together a whole range of events they were working on and join up services into a cultural package approach. It was hoped to utilise social media and overcome the shortfall of the loss of an Arts Development post.

The events would be promoted as a “summer of culture”, with all the events on offer listed in one place. It was hoped to raise awareness in a slow burn type of way by improving how venues, events and activities were marketed and promoted. For example, the Seaton Wetlands could cross promote the THG.

**\*14 Date of next meeting**

The next meeting of the Arts and Culture Forum would be arranged for October 2016. The Arts Council representative would be invited to attend to discuss the current grants programme and how it could help East Devon’s cultural offer.

**Attendance list**

**Present:**

EDDC Councillors:

Cllr John O’Leary – Culture Champion (Chairman)

Cllr Peter Faithfull

Cllr Phil Twiss - Portfolio holder, Corporate Services

Town representatives:

Cllr Douglas Hull - Axminster

Cllr Jo Talbot – Ottery St Mary

Cllr Tom Wright – Budleigh Salterton

Officers:

Angela Blackwell, Thelma Hulbert Gallery Curator

Tim Dafforn, Countryside Team Leader

Charlie Plowden, Service Lead – Countryside and Leisure

Alethea Thompson, Democratic Services Officer

Pete Youngman, East Devon AONB Project Officer

Alex Murdin, Gingko Consultants

**Apologies:**

Cllr Ashley Alder - Honiton

Cllr Maddy Chapman - Exmouth

John Golding, Strategic Lead - Housing, Health and Environment

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