

## **EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of a Meeting of the Arts and Culture Forum held at the Beehive, Honiton on 11 October 2017**

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

The meeting started at 10.00am and ended at 12.40pm.

**\*1 Appointment of vice chairman**

Councillor Peter Faithfull was appointed vice chairman of the forum for the ensuing year.

**\*2 Minutes**

The minutes of the Arts and Culture Forum meeting held on 1 February 2017 were confirmed and signed as a true record.

**\*3 Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Peter Faithfull - Personal interest: He was an LED member for Ottery St Mary.

**\*4 Chairman's welcome**

The Chairman welcomed everybody to the meeting and invited those present to introduce themselves. Particular welcome was given to Sally Twiss, newly co-opted member of the forum. Sally gave a brief resume of her interests, employment and background for the forum's information.

**5 New proposal for delivering the Villages in Action programme**

The Service Lead – Countryside and Leisure introduced and welcomed Tim Smithies, Project Director for Carn to Cove to the meeting. Carn to Cove was Cornwall's performing arts touring scheme similar to Villages in Action (VIA) which operated in East, West and South Devon. It enabled rural communities to bring something 'different' to their village hall and to create a social event to bring the village together. The scheme offered professional acts at competitive prices, reducing the financial risk to the hall and giving it the chance to make some money to contribute to the sustainability of the hall in the community.

The Service Lead – Countryside and Leisure explained that EDDC put £10,000 funding annually into VIA, and it was well supported and appreciated in East Devon. He would like to see the programme continue as commitment to this type of activity was a key feature of the culture strategy. It was noted that a £10,000 grant was in the budget for 2018/19, with an exciting programme, but it was important that the forum understood the proposal

Tim explained that Carn to Cove and VIA had put together a menu of artistic events including dance, theatre, music, puppetry, storytelling, poetry and film. Voluntary promoters from the network of community venues chose which events they would like to host in their local hall. Carn to Cove then administered, underwrites and co-ordinated the tours. The voluntary promoters would run the event, build an audience and look after the artists on the day. This collaboration had come about because VIA was no longer enabling or promoting a community based culture programme.

In 2016-17 Carn to Cove spent £63,000 on artist employment throughout Cornwall. £54,000 tickets were sold, of which £14,000 of income was generated for halls in Cornwall. 118 shows were promoted in village halls and community spaces in Cornwall, with 50 different companies performing.

The forum noted the active communities in East Devon. VIA and Carn to Cove had agreed to work together to retain network and activity. Presentations were being made to local authorities and neighbouring rural schemes. There would be engagement with emerging and established Devon based performing companies. The Spring 2018 had been prepared and presented to villages in September 2017 at Stockland Victory Hall. A Strategic Touring Bid had been submitted to Arts Council England for 2018-2020 support for activity in Devon matched by local authority commitments from East Devon, Teignbridge and West Devon (Locomotor).

It was noted that VIA were very grateful to Carn to Cove. There was now a much greater offer and for a longer period of time which would help to reenergise the offer and the programme. The Strategic Lead – Housing, Health and Environment thanked Tim for his presentation. He felt that it was important that the forum supported the exciting range of cultural activities available for the rural communities and that East Devon had a role in supporting and promoting this. The Chairman also thanked Tim on behalf of the forum for his interesting presentation.

**RECOMMENDED:** that East Devon District Council support Villages in Action working with Carn to Cove in the future.

**\*6 Creating a cultural activities hub on the EDDC website**

The Chairman welcomed David Sercombe, Andy Hollis and Chris Frankum from Strata Service Solutions to the meeting, to discuss options for creating a cultural activities hub on the EDDC website. The forum were asked what their requirements were. It was explained that the EDDC website was maintained by the communications team and had a distinct brand. To avoid fragmenting the brand the hub would need to sit under the main EDDC page. It was noted that the current EDDC website did have event listings through the main page, although there were improvements which could be made, for example providing a map and calendar of events, and adding ‘arts and culture – what’s on’ to the A-Z drop-down menu.

It was suggested that there should be a ‘what’s on’ guide set against the towns in East Devon and their surrounding villages, with a map facility showing all the events in the area. Issues like how such a ‘hub’ would be funded, developed and managed were discussed. The Strata Business Systems Manager explained that the hub would be developed and created by Strata Service Solutions for East Devon. The framework already existed on the EDDC website, but decisions were needed on how to improve/move forward on this. The first stage was to consider how this would be developed and identifying the current requirements. The hub could be a separate stand-alone website or be a sub section under the East Devon brand.

It was acknowledged that promoting and resourcing such a hub was complicated and intensive. It was important not to be too ambitious. The forum could be used to monitor the ‘work in progress’. It was noted that many people still liked to receive printed guides and events listings.

**RESOLVED:** that the Strata Business Systems Manager would liaise with the Service Lead – Countryside and Leisure and report back on creating a cultural activities hub to future meetings. It would become a standing agenda item for the Arts and Culture Forum.

**\*7 LED outreach programme**

The Service Lead - Countryside and Leisure introduced Lottie Edwards, Outreach Officer for Leisure East Devon (LED) and explained that her outreach work crossed a lot EDDC's areas of responsibility, such as the Thelma Hulbert Gallery, the countryside team and the community development workers. This was a good example of cross section working and met the broader agenda of the cultural plan. Lottie gave a presentation on LED in the community. 2017 projects included:

- Sportivate
- Walking for health
- FORCE cancer referrals
- Satellite clubs
- Opportunity club
- Active mums
- Beginners running
- Make your move – walking football
- Active villages legacy projects
- Cranbrook
- Rounders
- Exmouth park run

Lottie also outlined the 'this girl can' project which was a Sport England initiative to get girls age 14+ involved in physical activities. There had been many supporting community events, which included the Cranbrook fun day, the Honiton dementia couch to 5km and the Sidmouth health and well-being festival.

LED worked in partnership with many organisations, including EDDC, Action East Devon, Devon and Cornwall Housing, and Public Health England.

Projects for the future included:

- New five year Sport England funded project – CAN 'connecting actively to nature'. This was currently in the development phase.
- LED innovation group with input from Public Health leads from two East Devon areas looking at joint funding health coaches.
- Bid submitted to Sport England Families Fund for Cranbrook.
- Continued healthy lifestyles and wellbeing promotion through sports and health development projects and initiatives.

On behalf of the forum the Chairman thanked Lottie for her presentation.

**\*8 East Devon AONB cultural heritage programme**

East Devon's AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) Manager gave a presentation on the AONB cultural heritage programme, much of which overlapped with the cultural strategy, and worked in partnership with many organisations:

- Legacy to Landscape was a current project funded through the Heritage Lottery Fund, in its second year of engagement.
- The annual heritage conference had brought many history groups together.
- East Devon Way – devised by EDDC almost 25 years ago and managed by the AONB partnership. It was one of the best marked routes in East Devon and linked in with businesses to help promote the economic benefits the walk provides.

- Supporting communities and the local economy – DEFRA funding allowed for the sustainable development fund. 'Making it local' provided an opportunity for cultural and heritage activities in East Devon.

On behalf of the forum the Chairman thanked the AONB Manager for his presentation.

**\*9 Thelma Hulbert Gallery Grants for Arts programme 2017-2019**

Emma Molony, THG Marketing and Fundraising Officer attend the meeting to present the Arts Council England (ACE) Grants for the Arts 2017-19, which was an 18 month project to develop and diversify the gallery's audiences. £49,900 had been received towards:

- Learning Officer post (3 days per week)
- New partnership projects (East Devon AONB, Exmouth Great Western Railway (GWR))
- Exhibition programme (curated and touring)
- New monthly adult and family workshops (paid and free)
- Exploring new sources of income generation (limited edition prints)
- Being part of ACE's Cultural Education Challenge in the South West

The Great Western Railway CCIF project was a reminiscence project working with Exmouth EDDC housing tenants. It was a project combining heritage, contemporary creative practice, social engagement and community cohesion. The THG was working closely with EDDC's mobile support team to reach socially isolated housing tenants in Exmouth.

The East Devon Way cultural trail project involved working in partnership with East Devon AONB, Natural England, Devon Wildlife Trust, Forestry Commission England, Clinton Devon Estates, Combe Estate, RSPB and EDDC Countryside team. The THG would work beyond the gallery in the rural hinterland of East Devon, to engage with outdoor arts and facilitate new creative approaches for the public to interact with the landscape. This was the start the process of long-term partnership with East Devon Way stakeholders.

Botanical Printing Project was running from June 2017 to January 2018 and was funded by The Northbrook Trust. It was working with *The Project* in Axminster and Honiton Community College and using THG's pigment planting area and artists, printmakers and dye experts.

The Museums at Night national festival events were held twice annually in May and October. Over 600 people attended in 2016. Last year THG won the Best Family Event in the Get Creative Family Arts Festival Awards. The aim was to diversify THG's audience, providing special events for the public to engage with the gallery.

The Tesco Bags of Help fund of £1000 from October 2017 – March 2018 helped to create and install sound sculptures in the THG garden, working with local schools including Millwater and artist Michael Fairfax. The 2016 – 17 Tesco Bags of Help funding provided £8000 to create a mosaic table and benches with two Honiton primary schools based on THG Masterpieces group's research on the life of Thelma Hulbert.

The Arts Council's Cultural Education Challenge 2017 -19 was a call for art, culture, local authority and education sectors to work together to offer a consistent, visible and high quality art and cultural education for all children and young people. The THG would drive a joined up art and culture offer locally, with schools workshops, teacher CPD sessions, Arts Award accreditation, Masterpieces and Heritage Lottery Fund young people-led projects.

Legacy of Elmfield House Project would run from October 2017 - April 2018 researching the history of the THG and to create an automata machine representing THG and the legacy of Elmfield House. It would build on Masterpieces' research of Elmfield House and further engage the community with oral history sessions at THG. It was a means of collecting donations towards THG's learning programme. The project would work with artist Carlos Zapata and Masterpieces group to design the automata. Funding applications had been submitted to Northbrook Trust, Heritage Lottery Fund and Devon County Council Locality Budget.

During the 2017-19 programme there would be three ACE-funded exhibitions at THG:

- Sept – Oct 2017 Frances Hatch, winner of THG Open in 2016.
- March - May 2018 A Curious Turn – Crafts Council exhibition of automata.
- Sept - Oct 2018 exhibition of work by artists with protected characteristics.

The Chairman of the forum commented on how far the THG had come in the last six years and credited it the success to the hard work of the staff. The staff were working across the district, outside of the gallery, developing an outreach programme for the entire district, not just Honiton based. This was very important from a district council perspective. The Service Lead – Countryside and Leisure also congratulated the THG staff on their fantastic work and the massive progress they had made with the gallery.

**\*10 Manor Pavilion programme 2017/2018**

The Manor Pavilion Theatre Manager attended the meeting to explain to the Forum where the theatre was with its current programme, and the future ahead. Five years ago the summer rep season (12 plays in 12 weeks) had gone out to tender and Paul Taylor Mills had been appointed. Every year had become more successful, with 2017 being the most successful summer season ever. This was due to the high standard of the productions and building a returning audience, thus giving the venue a great reputation. There was a small team of employees at the Manor Pavilion theatre, but the customers always came first. The cast met the audience after every performance.

The Theatre Manager circulated the current 'what's on' guide to members of the forum. It was noted that there were very few gaps in the varied programming. The theatre had bookings up to 2020 and tickets were being sold far in advance. A number of shows were already sold out. The catchment area for the theatre was bigger and wider than ever before, with some people booking their holidays around the performances that were on.

The next improvement to be made to the theatre was the provision of an internet ticketing system. The need for this was acknowledged, but the lack of an online system had not yet affected business, with many customers preferring face-to-face sales. There were exciting times ahead and the key to success was being flexible and looking to the future.

On behalf of the forum the Chairman congratulated the Theatre Manager on all his hard work and the success of the theatre. The Strategic Lead – Housing, Health and Environment also thanked the Manager for all his knowledge and the entire team for working so hard to make a trip to the theatre such an enjoyable personal experience for audiences, and for creating such a warm, welcoming culture.

**\*11 East Devon railway line partnership update**

Councillor Jenny Brown had given her apologies so this agenda item would be deferred to a future meeting.

**\*12 Date of next meeting**

The next meeting of the Arts and Culture Forum would be held on Wednesday 14 March 2018, at 10am in the Beehive, Honiton.

**Attendance list**

**Present:**

EDDC Councillors:

Cllr John O’Leary – Culture Champion (Chairman)

Cllr Peter Faithfull

Town representatives:

Sally Twiss

Town representatives:

Cllr Kim Bloxham – Cranbrook

Cllr Bruce de Saram - Exmouth

Cllr John Dyson - Sidmouth

Cllr Douglas Hull – Axminster

Cllr Duncan Sheridan-Shaw - Honiton

Cllr Tom Wright – Budleigh Salterton

Officers:

John Golding, Strategic Lead - Housing, Health and Environment

Charlie Plowden, Service Lead – Countryside and Leisure

Alethea Thompson, Democratic Services Officer

Graham Whitlock, Manor Pavilion Theatre Manager

Chris Woodruff, East Devon AONB Manager

Also present:

Lottie Edwards – Outreach Officer, LED

Chris Frankum - Strata Service Solutions

Cindy Furze - Actiontrack

Carla Hiley – Exmouth Arts Manager

Andy Hollis - Strata Service Solutions

Emma Molony - Marketing & Fundraising Officer, Thelma Hulbert Gallery

Fiona Page-Turner – Marketing & Fundraising Officer, Thelma Hulbert Gallery

David Sercombe – Business Systems Manager, Strata Service Solutions

Tim Smithies – Project Director, Carn to Cove

**Apologies:**

Angela Blackwell, Thelma Hulbert Gallery Curator

Cllr Jenny Brown – Tourism Champion, EDDC

Cllr Richard Webster - Seaton

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