

## **EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the meeting of Arts and Culture Forum held online via Zoom on 12 October 2022**

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

The meeting started at 2.30 pm and ended at 4.40 pm

#### **9 Public speaking**

There were no members of the public registered to speak.

#### **10 Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 15 June 2022 were agreed.

#### **11 Declarations of interest**

Minute 12 Villages in Action 2022/23 programme and updates.

Councillor Andrew Moulding, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Trustee Axminster Heritage Centre and Trustee of Axminster Musical Theatre.

Minute 13 South West Museums Partnership programme 2022/23 programme and updates.

Councillor Andrew Moulding, Other Registerable Interest, Trustee of Axminster Heritage Centre.

Minute 17 Culture strategy and UK SPF culture programme implementation programme 2022/23.

Councillor Andrew Moulding, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Trustee of Axminster Heritage Centre and Trustee of Axminster Musical Theatre.

#### **12 Villages in Action 2022/23 programme and updates**

Mair George, Programme Manager for Villages in Action, provided an update on activity for 2020 – 2021, including outdoor theatre, music and circus. Headline updates included:

- A substantial grant from Arts Council England to re-invigorate Villages in Action.
- A new business plan will be launched in December 2022 which will set out the organisation's mission.
- Facts and figures for 2022.
- Performances so far during 2022, including the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, The Goat Show by Running Dog Theatre, From Devon With Love programme event called Make Room and Do What Your Mama Told Yah! By Just More Productions.
- Feedback from participants was very positive and appreciative.
- Upcoming events.

It was noted that it had been a very difficult few years due to the pandemic, however, Villages in Action is looking positively to the future and thanked EDDC for its ongoing support for the arts.

Mair George outlined the process for venues to express their interest in working with Villages in Action and encouraged anyone interested to email her. The Chair thanked Mair for her presentation and for attending the meeting.

### 13 **South West Museums Partnership programme 2022/23 programme and updates**

Victoria Harding, Programme Manager for South West Museum Development, outlined the organisation's support for museums in the region. The presentation highlighted that 44% of the museums in the region are micro museums, with fewer than 10,000 visitors per year and 42% are volunteer run, with both figures lower than national figures.

The presentation also outlined SW Museum Development's direct work with the museum and heritage sector, including distributing a small grants programme. The organisation also provides a Technical Accreditation Service and delivers projects as the beneficiary of grant funding.

It was noted that a new Museum Development Officer had just been recruited for Devon.

The Programme Manager also outlined the following:

- The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on Devon's museums.
- Investment in East Devon's museums.
- The forthcoming The Great Escape project which would offer opportunities for collaborative working, culminating in an event on Earth Day, 22 April 2023.
- Further information was available in The Annual Review.

It was also noted that Exmouth's museum is not part of the accreditation scheme, however, SWMD support and services can still be accessed in part and re-accreditation is always open to the museum.

The Forum recognised the challenges of re-engaging and encouraging volunteers to return post pandemic.

The Chair thanked Victoria Harding for her presentation and participation.

### 14 **Libraries Unlimited presentation and East Devon**

Rae Hoole, Creative Communities Producer for Libraries Unlimited, outlined her role of bringing cultural programming to libraries across Devon. Steve Turner, Head of Commercial, provided an overview of the other aspects of the organisation. The presentation gave an overview of Libraries Unlimited and included the following points:

- An outline of work to date.
- An overview of the coming seasons, with themed seasons for a programme of events.
- The network offer in East Devon.
- Current priorities and the range of services, programmes and events, including support for businesses.
- The importance of libraries as a space for people to keep warm and meet others.

In response to a question regarding the hiring out of library buildings for musicians to rehearse, Steve Turner confirmed that library space was available for hire and welcomed enquiries. Anyone interested was welcome to contact him for information.

Regarding developing initiatives in libraries in East Devon, Rae Hoole advised that there is a pilot for the cultural credit scheme in January in Axminster, Colyton and Seaton libraries. All libraries are different and unique and discussions on programming are welcome to ensure that the best and most appropriate use is made of each library. Investment in buildings and services is ongoing.

With regard to the mobile libraries and planning for net-zero, Steve Turner advised that this has been raised with Devon County Council as to how the service can be re-shaped for the future. There are a number of ways for people to access books in addition to mobile libraries, including e-books and the home delivery service.

A question was raised as to progress with the refurbishment of Axminster library. It was confirmed that a new roof is awaited so that internal improvements can then be made. It was hoped that this work would be undertaken during the current financial year.

It was noted that the EDDC Cultural Strategy includes developing the relationship with Libraries Unlimited and ensuring that new communities such as Cranbrook benefit from a high quality offering.

The Chair thanked Rae Hoole and Steve Turner for attending and for their presentation.

## 15 **Thelma Hulbert Gallery 2022/23 review and 2023/24 forward plan**

Ruth Gooding, Arts Development Manager / Curator provided an Autumn update and plans for 2023 for the Thelma Hulbert Gallery.

The presentation included the following:

- Highlights from the years 2020-22.
- Schools and colleges are once again accessing the Gallery.
- The transformation of the secret garden space.
- Key performance indicators showing that numbers have returned to pre-covid levels.
- Benefits of partnership working.
- There was a waiting list for every event during the summer 2022.
- Eleven new volunteers have joined to work in the Gallery, with 10 new volunteers for the garden.
- The new programme *Landscapes in Time* will be launched in 2023 with a variety of events and a specific audience engagement plan has been developed for this programme.
- The Young People Inclusivity, Arts and Environment programme 2023-24 has been specifically designed to engage young people and to enable them to access quality culture and creativity where they live. The programme should be launched in March 2023.
- The Gallery is also developing its Business Plan 2023-27 and should hopefully be presented at the Forum by the end of this year.

Cllr Paul Arnott expressed his appreciation for all the cultural activity and engagement with young people which is taking place across East Devon.

The Chair thanked Ruth Gooding for her presentation and for attending the meeting.

## 16 **ACED updates**

Anna Fitzgerald provided an update on the Arts and Culture East Devon network which included the following:

- The opening of a new gallery in Exmouth called *Sea Dog Art*, with further galleries planned for next year.
- All the money generated is going back into the community into events such as children's art classes.
- The *Abode of Love* on the seafront has been active for about four months as a response to the hate graffiti in that part of Exmouth and most of the participants are not artists.
- A wide variety of people are participating in the *Abode of Love* for differing reasons.

Cllr Millar congratulated Anna Fitzgerald for her work which was transformative in many ways. Anna advised that the impact was not limited to Exmouth as people were starting to come from further afield.

Ruth Gooding noted that this was a unique method of commissioning art and this work is breaking new ground. It was also noted that the Ocean building is being used by Anna as an exhibition space and it was hoped that this could be developed in the future.

Cllr Elli Pang noted the strong links between art and culture and health and general well-being and expressed hope that this could be developed further in the future.

John Golding advised that good progress has been made with outreach work in East Devon and agreed that there was more to do.

John Astley, Education Champion for the ACED forum, emphasised the need for education and for all types of communication around making art as accessible as possible.

The Chair thanked Anna Fitzgerald for her contribution to the meeting.

## 17 **Culture strategy and UK SPF culture programme implementation programme 2022/23**

Charlie Plowden, Service Lead Countryside and Leisure, provided a summary of progress and action since the Culture Strategy was adopted in July:

- UK Shared Prosperity Fund (£95k) over 3 years with year 1 targets by March 2023 – various programmes, events and organisations will be assisted through this funding.
- Rural England Prosperity Fund (£427,149) to develop a rural grant scheme for local not-for-profit and community organisations including a cultural and leisure focus.
- The appointment of the Cultural Producer role to enable delivery of the Strategy, action plan and unlock funding – recruitment is underway and the appointment is expected to be made around December 2022.

Regular updates of the work of the Cultural Producer and the ACED forum will be brought back to this meeting.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and for their participation.

**Attendance List**

**EDDC Councillors present:**

J Whibley (Chair)  
B De Saram  
E Rylance  
O Davey  
A Moulding  
N Hookway (Vice-Chair)

**Community representatives:**

**Town Representatives**

Cllr Joy Whipps, Exmouth Town Council  
Cllr Dave Tate, Budleigh Salterton Town Council  
Cllr Jenny Brown, Honiton Town Council  
Cllr Elli Pang, Ottery St Mary Town Council  
Cllr Jill Farrow, Axminster Town Council

**Officers in attendance:**

Ruth Gooding, Arts Development Manager/Curator THG  
Charles Plowden, Service Lead Countryside and Leisure  
John Golding, Strategic Lead Housing, Health and Environment  
Sarah James, Democratic Services Officer  
Sarah Jenkins, Democratic Services Officer

**Also Present**

Cllr Paul Arnott, EDDC  
Cllr Paul Millar, EDDC  
Cllr Marianne Rixson, EDDC  
Rae Hoole, Libraries Unlimited  
Steve Turner, Libraries Unlimited  
Victoria Harding, South West Museum Development  
Anna Fitzgerald, Arts and Culture East Devon Network  
John Astley, Arts and Culture East Devon Network  
Charlie Tapp, Arts Manager, Exmouth Town Council  
Mair George, Villages in Action

**Apologies:**

Cllr Marek Steven, Seaton Town Council  
Cllr Kara Burrough, Axminster Town Council  
Cllr Colin Buchan, Cranbrook Town Council  
Cllr John Loudoun, Sidmouth Town Council  
Cllr Vicky Johns, Ottery St Mary Town Council

Chair .....

Date: .....