

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Arts and Culture Forum held at Blackdown House, Honiton on 26 February 2020

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 10.05 am and ended at 12.40 pm

1 Appointment of vice chairman

Sally Twiss was appointed vice chairman of the Forum for the ensuing year.

2 Public speaking

There were no members of the public wishing to speak.

The Chairman welcomed all those present to the meeting. He introduced himself and his background and invited everyone to introduce themselves.

3 Minutes

The minutes of the Arts and Culture Forum meeting held on 27 March 2020 were confirmed and signed as a true record.

The Service Lead – Countryside and Leisure gave those present a brief recap on the background and purpose of the Arts and Culture Forum. He explained how it linked with the Council's [cultural plan](#), and also gave an overview of key partners and partnership working. It was hoped that all members would champion the value of arts and culture in the district and help retain their benefits.

4 Declarations of interest

Councillor Andrew Moulding: Personal interest – president of Cloakham Lawn Sports Centre, trustee of Axminster skate park, trustee of Axminster Heritage, Development Officer for Axminster Town Cricket Club, member of Seaton and Axe Vale Bridge Club.

Councillor Louise Cole: Personal interest – director of Sidmouth Coastal Community Hub.

5 Carn to Cove - Villages in Action review 2019/20 and plans for 2020/21

Tim Smithies and Mair George from Villages in Action were welcomed to the meeting and introduced themselves. The Forum then received a presentation and update on the work of Villages in Action. Some of the highlights included:

- Recruitment of a Devon based worker.
- Secured funding for Jaw Jaw project. This project involved working with social provider networks to identify clients to whom to provide an Alexa to as a tool to talk to clients. The client would be given a series of online workshops and would then be invited to a performance.
- Expansion of international programming content.
- Hub and Spoke – Paddleboat tour.

- Made in Devon – Hefted. This was a very popular event, attracting a different audience that would not normally be engaged.

Villages in Action provided the possibility of leveraging much greater investment in Devon. It underwrote the risk to communities wishing to put on events and gave a huge amount of confidence to them, as well as providing networking opportunities.

'Menu parties' gave local people the opportunity to access the greatest art. The next one was being held on 30 April 2020 and members of the Forum were invited to attend.

It was noted that the main source of income was box offices sales. Arts Council England was the second biggest funder. Arts and culture was a discretionary service and many local authorities had cut funding. However, it delivered on health and wellbeing agendas. It helped to address rural isolation and loneliness and had begun using online workshops, via Alexa to extend the reach (Jaw Jaw project).

The Villages in Action (VIA) network had 65 venues promoting events, 20 of these were in East Devon. VIA earned £20,618, £3598 of which was in East Devon. There had been 2525 audiences, 517 in East Devon, and of the 50 events hosted, 21 of these had been held in East Devon. Although VIA made money on box office sales, raffles and refreshments were provided by the villages, therefore providing additional funds for the village hall.

The Forum noted events held in 2019 as well as those planned for spring 2020 in East Devon. Longer term goals for VIA included:

- From Devon with Love.
- Young promoters.
- International touring.
- FLIGHT – environmentally inspired project.

VIA were looking for partners to work with on environmental issues and members of the Forum suggested broader opportunities with the Countryside Team and with Sidmouth Coastal Community and Sidmouth Seafest. It was noted that EDDC had just appointed a new events officer for Streetscene, which would provide a good opportunity for VIA to link up with as EDDC had fantastic parks and green spaces in the area. Cranbrook country park was also discussed and how VIA wanted to engage with new towns, particularly where young children were being brought up. VIA welcomed any new partnerships.

On behalf of the Forum the Chairman thanked Tim Smithies and Mair George for their presentation.

6 **South West Museums Partnership - 2019/20 review and plans for 2020/21**

The Forum received a presentation from Victoria Harding, Programme Manager on the South West Museum Development Programme. It was noted that there were around 217 museums in the region, which represented 16.9% of England. They engaged nearly 9 million visitors a year and there was a significant variation in audience and size of museums across the region. The majority of museums in the South West were small, independent charities (65%), which was quite unique to many other English regions. The average number of museum visitors in Devon was 33,000. There was a huge disparity between the levels of funding for urban areas compared to rural communities. There were many resources 'on the ground' but these required support.

The key strength of museums was the volunteer workforce. 34% of all accredited museums were led and operated by volunteers. The average number of volunteers in Devon was high, at 64 per museum, averaging 109 volunteer hours. There were four volunteer museums operating in East Devon:

- Allhallows
- Fairlynch
- Axminster
- Sidmouth

These had 249 volunteers contributing over 19,430 hours. The economic impact of local and day museum visitors to the area was £681,759 from 35,197 visits. The economic impact of volunteering was £129,540 million. There were many other 'value added' things that were hard to measure and therefore quantify.

Victoria went on to explain the background to the museum development programme. It was established during 2004-2006 and was funded by the Arts Council. It was currently funded 2018-22 and the next bidding would begin in 2020. Each year South West Museum Development received 16.9%, £530,444, which was a little over £2400 per accredited museum. This was quite a small level of investment and did not include the broader cohort of unaccredited museums. There was a team of approximately 20 officers, including local museum development officers, a regional thematic team and a central team.

The vision of the museum development programme was 'to work with museums and partners to drive ambition, excellence and resilience to support a thriving sector to deliver valued and inspirational engagement with audiences and communities'. Its mission was 'to effectively deliver the regional museum development programme and maximise the impact of this funding for museums across the region'. There were a number of aims which ranged across the diversity of the museums themselves and included the following themes:

- Care of and access to collections.
- Participation.
- Improve the quality of experience.
- Sustainability and financial resilience.
- Skilled and diverse workforce.
- Effective governance.
- Social and economic value.
- Work with national providers.

The Forum noted a support map which outlined how South West Museum Development could help organisations. It was for accredited museums as well as being designed to give confidence to other museums to move into accreditation.

The impact of the South West Museums Partnership (SWMP) in 2018-19 was reported. It had an incredible reach and £114,616 funding went specifically to Devon, with £31,766 in East Devon. A 21 times return was generated on investment for EDDC. It was noted that SWMP had retained 22 out of the 24 memorandums of funding from the local councils in Devon, which was encouraging considering the economic pressures on local authorities. There was a dedicated museums development officer for southern Devon which was extremely valuable.

Investment from rural proofing resilience was required. The majority of museums were small rural coastal museums, which were predominately seasonal. Online learning, workshops and webinars would be provided, as well as bespoke business audit process,

skills and capacity building, site meeting with some SME business experts and a plan of action and budget for implementation.

On behalf of the Forum the Chairman thanked Victoria Harding for her presentation.

7 **Sport England LDP programme - programme objectives for Cranbrook and 2020/21 plans**

Louise Cole, Programme Manager (Cranbrook), Active and Healthy People Team, Exeter City Council introduced herself to the Forum and explained the Exeter and Cranbrook Sport England Local Delivery Pilot, which was nationally funded by Sport England and being run in 12 areas (Local Delivery Pilots) across the country. It was the only project with two separate, geographically connected locations (Exeter and Cranbrook). There was a change in Sports England rationale. Through their investment in the 12 Local Delivery Pilots, Sport England want to understand how to use local identities and structures to deliver sustainable increases in activity levels. The idea was to test whether taking a behaviour change approach in a place could really unlock something ground breaking for the whole country.

The health benefits of an active lifestyle were well researched and documented. The social benefits were also proven to:

- Improve educational attainment.
- Reduce anti-social behaviour.
- Build self-esteem throughout life.
- Contribute to urban regeneration.
- Increase work productivity.
- Improve quality of life.

An active society reduces:

- Depression and poor psychological health.
- Loneliness and social isolation.
- CO2 emissions and reduce congestion.

Inactivity in Cranbrook and certain parts of Exeter was almost three times higher than Exeter as a whole. The key target of the pilot was to achieve population change by encouraging 10,000 of the least active residents to lead regular active lifestyles. The vision was that Exeter and Cranbrook were pioneering places for leading an active lifestyle, with Exeter the most active city in England and Cranbrook a model of best practice for families being active together. To achieve this focus was needed on those most in need. A 'whole system' approach would be taken, which was based on the starting point that no one lived in a vacuum. People were connected to a place and its community, each with its own unique structure, relationships and geography.

Louise explained the Exeter and Cranbrook local delivery pilot programme which involved people and place, and whole systems. It was a both a bottom up and top down approach. The aim was to work together to create enabling environments. Relationships would need to be developed to sustain the approach. Louise outlined the programme's aim to deliver a number of demonstration projects that if successful could be scaled up and replicated in new and adapted environmental designs across the city.

Cranbrook currently had a population of around 4,500, with four times the national average of 0-4 year olds

The Cranbrook Theory of Change was that:

- If we... develop a community led strategy with children, young people and families at the heart of designing and creating activities,
- And we... bring together a supportive network of organisations in Cranbrook for joint working, resourcing and innovating,
- Then we... will create a sense of belonging in the community and have significant positive impact on families' physical and mental wellbeing.

The Cranbrook community assets network (CAN) involved developing a community led strategy and was underpinned by:

- Confidence.
- Collaboration.
- Communication.
- Resilience.

It was important to meet the community aspirations. There was a Cranbrook steering group to aid local decision making and give the community a voice. It would also:

- Provide local direction for the aspects of the programme that were being delivered in Cranbrook.
- Co-ordinate the effective delivery of programme objectives and create the right conditions for the achievement of agreed outcomes.
- Ensure that residents, the community and key partners were engaged in the design and delivery of projects.
- Ensure clear two way communication with the Move More Cranbrook network.

Move More Cranbrook had received a community grant of £60,000 to:

- Improve or enhance the health and wellbeing of people in Cranbrook.
- Increase a sense of belonging and grow inclusive community connectivity.
- Increase physical activity in the town which could be through everyday walking and cycling right through to joining or starting a sports club.

The communications strategy was in development with an organisation called Grow and involved developing community story tellers to inspire others to become more active. Identity, art and culture would help to build a community together.

On behalf of the Forum the Chairman thanked Louise for her presentation.

8 **Thelma Hulbert Gallery - Culture and climate change programme 2020**

The Chairman welcomed Ruth Gooding, Thelma Hulbert Gallery (THG) Manager/Curator to the meeting, who then gave the Forum a presentation on the strategic vision, values and programme of the THG for 2020.

The gallery had a new strategic vision. In 2019 the strategic mission of THG was redefined as operating as a 'cultural hub' supporting communities in their health, environment and well-being through an annually changing programme of exhibitions, events and workshops, which inspire, challenge and excite. The gallery was driven to support innovation in rural cultural production and operate as a resilient rural arts organisation, strengthened through working in partnership and collaboration.

The value of arts and culture to EDDC was in:

- Health and well-being.

- Enhancing the environment.
- Promoting economic vitality.
- Lifelong learning and personal development.
- Strengthening local identity.

There was a year-long programme of Culture + Climate for 2020 with the themes:

- Reuse, repair, recycle – how we live.
- Climate emergency – our relationship with the planet.
- Walking and health.
- The natural environment and conservation.

The programme had been developed against the context of East Devon District Council's commitment to Devon's Climate Change Emergency declaration, and the University of Exeter's declaration of an environment and climate emergency. Exhibitions, projects, workshops, talks and walks would be taking place across a range of locations in East Devon and at the University of Exeter.

Ruth highlighted the gallery's exhibitions programme, which included some high profile artists. She explained that THG Out and About worked in the outdoors to engage diverse audiences through participatory, interactive and unusual creative processes. It employed a range of creative practitioners from poets to artists, sculptors to designers, sharing ideas on our heritage and natural environment, inspiring and exciting communities locally, nationally and globally. Ruth outlined the Out and About Abode of Love – Exmouth project which was the THG's way of bringing the benefits of cultural activities direct to the residents of East Devon and shine a spotlight on the district's outstanding natural environment for all to enjoy. Its aim was to make cultural activities accessible and a 'way of life where everyone can enjoy culture in the outdoors, benefiting health and well-being'. The first year would involve working collaboratively with local schools and colleges to deliver a temporary public art work and a series of interventions and event. The second year aim was to produce a high quality, permanent work of art that related to the wider context of climate change and place (Exmouth).

The THG wanted to increase its engagement, learning and participation. It worked with:

- Families from low socio-economic backgrounds in East Devon.
- Rurally isolated older people.
- New audiences with little experience of cultural engagement.
- Young people.
- Young people with additional needs.

The audience development target was to increase visitors by 35% in 2020 with total visitor numbers of 19,356.

The THG Manager/Curator was thanked by the Chairman, on behalf of the Forum for her presentation.

9 **EDDC Countryside - Wild Exmouth review 2019/20 and plans for 2020/21**

EDDC's Countryside Team Leader, Tim Dafforn was welcomed to the meeting and began by explaining that contact with nature was not the same as connecting with nature. It was believed that connecting with nature was more beneficial to well-being than just having access to it. He then presented the Wild Exmouth project to the Forum.

This was a £100,000, three-year project mainly Heritage Lottery funded and also funded by EDDC, Exmouth Town Council and Devon County Council.

The project was at the end of its first year and involved:

- Conservation volunteering.
- Outdoor events.
- Mapping and access.
- Nature campaigns.

The themes were:

- Wild and active.
- Wild at home.
- Wild around town.
- Wild learning

First year successes included:

- Engaging 1200 people.
- 465 trees planted.
- 3 new orchards.
- 12 new events.
- A tree weekend.
- Launch of 'my patch of nature'.
- 16 volunteer days.
- Over 20 newsletters.

Many of the projects targets were already being met. The aim was to engage 300,000 people over three years. There was an artist in residence (Anne-Marie Culhane) and work was being done to engage the community in cultural activities of the local heritage. For example, a constellation orchard was being created to link people through planting trees.

'My patch for nature' aimed to encourage people to do things in their own homes such as:

- Hedgehog highways.
- Plant wildflower seeds.
- Tree planting.
- Meadow creation.
- Bird feeders and boxes.

All of these things would be logged on a google map and a nature map of the town would be created. The ambition was to map over 2000square metres at the end of three years.

New volunteering opportunities were being explored in order to establish volunteering groups. There were also new outdoor events such as:

- Bat walks.
- Fun in the stream.
- Additional rock pool rambles.
- Community tree planting.
- Additional estuary mud walks.
- Toddler walks.

Partnerships were being developed with:

- Exmouth in Bloom.
- Men's Shed.
- National Trust.

- Point in View chapel.
- Community development.
- Exmouth tree project.

The Countryside Team Leader went on to outline the second year plan, with special emphasis on the green space plan. It was noted that Phear Park was a great asset and further work would be done on encouraging public events there. Tim clarified that the three year project was a pilot, but the aim was to acquire funding to continue the legacy building beyond the initial period. Exmouth would be used as a template to consider ideas for other towns and it was hoped that a 'winning formula' would be extended across the district over time.

On behalf of the Forum the Chairman thanked Tim for his presentation.

Attendance List

EDDC Councillors present:

J Whibley (Chairman)

J Bailey (ex officio)

Community representatives:

S Twiss, Community Representative

Town Representatives

S Twiss, Community Representative

C Buchan, Cranbrook Town Council

L Cole, Sidmouth Town Council

A Moulding, Axminster Town Council

Officers in attendance:

Alethea Thompson, Democratic Services Officer

Tim Dafforn, Countryside Team Leader

John Golding, Strategic Lead Housing, Health and Environment

Ruth Gooding, Manager/Curator THG

Charles Plowden, Service Lead Countryside and Leisure

Also Present

P Faithfull

P Millar

T Wright

W Van der Plank, Beehive Centre

T Smithies, Villages in Action

M George, Villages in Action

V Harding, Programme Manager, South West Museum Development Programme

L Cole, Programme Manager (Cranbrook), Active and Healthy People Team, Exeter City Council

Apologies:

B De Saram

C Wright
B Norris, Community Representative
P Lewis, Budleigh Salterton Town Council
J Loudoun, Sidmouth Town Council

Chairman

Date: