

## **EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the meeting of Arts and Culture Forum held at Online via the Zoom app on 6 November 2024**

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

The meeting started at 10.05 am and ended at 1.10 pm

#### **10 Public speaking**

There were no members of the public registered to speak.

#### **11 Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2024 were agreed.

#### **12 Declarations of interest**

9. Exmouth Festival - decarbonisation pilot.

Councillor Nick Hookway, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Exmouth Town Councillor.

9. Exmouth Festival - decarbonisation pilot.

Councillor Olly Davey, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Exmouth Town Councillor.

10. UK Shared Prosperity Fund Year 2 Cultural Programme.

Councillor Ian Barlow, Affects and prejudicial Non-registerable Interest, Director of Sidmouth School of Art who had a UK SPF grant.

#### **13 Villages in Action**

Mair George, Creative Director, Villages in Action explained that Villages in Action (VIA) had been in existence for over 30 years. It was an arts charity working across rural Devon. There was a small team of four part time workers – the Creative Director, two producers and a finance manager. Since 2021 VIA had embarked on a new journey to shift the way that rural touring in Devon was thought about, with a network of volunteer promoters and co-curators, re-imagining how and why towns and villages engaged with culture, and opening up the way that rural communities enjoyed and grew new creative opportunities. The aim was to strengthen the voice of towns and villages in both hosting and creating work that reflected changing communities in the wider world. This was done by growing a network of locally rooted co-curators who imagined and shaped new creative projects with VIA, inspired by what their community wanted and needed. The aim was that over time this culturally driven action network would grow meaningful. Agriculture was a way of thinking about rural touring differently.

The Creative Director highlighted four main points of VIA work between June to October 2024 and the positive audience and promoter feedback received:

- Love Riot, by Miracle Theatre at Goran Farm, near Stockland, 28 June 2024.
- Those in Glass Houses, by Matt Pang and Owen Reynolds at the Strand, Exmouth, 16 August 2024.
- The Goat Show, by Running Dog Theatre at Farway Village Hall, 6 July 2024.
- Blind Spot, by Alright Mate? At Awliscombe, Axminster and Exmouth during June 2024.

VIA were most known for their community touring. Box office income in East Devon had increased, along with the number of performances and attendees. Overall there was a range of work for all ages across a number of different community spaces with positive feedback received.

The VIA Creative Director explained that a proposal had been submitted to EDDC for an uplift of £5,000 to support the recruitment of a (Agri) Culture Network Lead (current EDDC funding was £10,000). The aim was to galvanise the East Devon network - to act as a local support for new promoters and members of the network, offering on the ground support for first-time events, risk assessment and other event management training. The Network Lead would represent Villages in Action at co-creation meetings with partners, wider networking events, meeting representatives from other organisations to better collaborate, plan and co-design shared projects with a focus on community-based asset development. It would offer paid employment opportunities, and a chance to grow the team in line with the longer-term ambitions to grow the East Devon hub of Villages in Action.

Members of the Forum questioned the Creative Director over whether there would be key performance indicators (KPIs) in place to measure the difference made within the East Devon specifically for the role of a (Agri) Culture Network Lead. A request was made for more specific details on what value would be added to East Devon from the investment. The Forum acknowledged the need to measure risk against the impact of health and well being. The Creative Director replied that she would investigate metrics around audience attendance and who was going to the events, and that she would present annually to the Arts and Culture Forum.

The Creative Director was thanked for an interesting presentation and the great work that was being carried out.

## 14 **Screen Devon**

David Salas, Screen Devon delivered a presentation on the advantages of establishing a regional screen agency for Devon. Screen Devon emerged out of a two year research project at Exeter University to promote the region's capabilities and develop the local screen industry. It's goals were to improve Devon's prosperity potential, raise the profile of Devon's talent, culture and landscapes, and to ensure that growth was equitably distributed and fair. Screen agencies were ordinarily governmental organisations, but this was difficult in Devon due to the number of local authorities in the region and the scale that a screen agency needed to work to. Screen Devon was independent and able to work easily across boundaries to the benefit of all.

Discussion points included:

- The estimated market capture of UK productions.
- The South West was the largest English region but only had one film and TV studio, located in Bristol.
- Public service broadcasters were required to base more TV productions in the regions.
- East Devon would benefit from productions based in other Devon local authorities and vice versa, based on the average travel time radius of an hour, which is what was looked at for locations to shoot around a base.
- There was a lot of talent in film making in Devon.
- Eight areas of action:
  - Profile building.
  - Economy.
  - Jobs.

- Education.
- Champion screen culture.
- Sustainability and equality.
- Research.
- Future facing.
- Potential income streams.
- Initial funding would be from other Devon district councils, Devon County Council, Exeter Culture, Plymouth Culture and the University of Exeter.

A request was made for £10,000 contribution from EDDC towards £72,000 core funding for 2025/26. Screen Devon was a five to ten year project that would take time to build capacity, profile and reputation. It would help to make sure that East Devon benefitted from the national growth of the film and TV sector. It was reported that medium budget feature film would spend £66,000 per day in a local region. The Forum noted that Screen Cornwall figures revealed that film and TV production was worth £5m to the local economy.

The Forum agreed that Screen Devon was an excellent idea and a fantastic opportunity for the area. It would help to keep creative people in Devon. Tourism in the area would also benefit as well as local employment and arts education.

Members asked at what point money invested from EDDC would start returning, what the value for money was, what success looked like and how success would be measured. Initially the funding was being put in place to hire staff in order to be able to achieve outcomes. Any additional 'in kind' benefits would also be welcomed.

David Salas was thanked for his comprehensive report and all the opportunities that it presented.

## 15 **Funding requests from Villages in Action and Screen Devon**

The Arts and Culture Forum were asked to consider two grant requests from Villages in Action and Screen Devon. Villages in Action were seeking an uplift of £5,000 to their annual contribution from EDDC (currently £10,000) to support the recruitment of a new Network Lead in East Devon. Screen Devon were seeking £10,000 from EDDC. The current year's £10,000 had been contributed via the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) Cultural Programme budget and the Sustainable Tourism budget. Presentations from Villages in Action and Screen Devon had been received earlier in the meeting. The report outlined eight ways in which the two organisations would help EDDC reach its Cultural Strategy goals.

The Forum acknowledged the need to ensure the monitoring of outcomes from any funding granted and discussed how key performance indicators (KPIs) would be put in place with the two organisations requesting funding. It was agreed that Villages in Action and Screen Devon needed to work with EDDC officers to define the details of the data and the proposal, and that officers would monitor these and report back to the Forum on how success would be measured. The Cultural Producer reassured the Forum that the initial funding had specific SPF metrics in place. Where future funding was coming from was a key decision and the specific metrics involved.

**RECOMMENDED:** that subject to further information being provided on KPIs, that Cabinet approve the following funding requests:

1. Villages in Action - an uplift of £5,000 to their annual contribution from EDDC (currently £10,000) to support the recruitment of a new Network Lead in East Devon.
2. Screen Devon - £10,000.

## 16 **South West Museum Development**

Jo Cairns, Museum Development Officer for Museum Development South West (MDSW) gave the Forum some background to MDSW. They were a team of museum and heritage development specialists working with the museum and heritage sector in the South West to effect positive, lasting change and deliver public value. MDSW was an Arts Council England funded Investment Principles Support Organisation and was one of five museum development providers across England supporting accredited museums.

In the South West 78% of museums were independent charities, compared to 65% nationally. 47% of museums were 'micro', with fewer than 10,000 visitors annually. Visitor numbers were down by 2% in the South West in 2023/24 on 2019/20. 39% of the museums in the South West were wholly volunteer run, with 7 volunteers to every one paid member of staff in the South West (compared to five volunteers to one paid member of staff nationally). 32% of South West museums reported an annual turnover of less than £25,000 in 2022/23 (national average was 28%). These regional statistics highlighted the need for professional support from MDSW.

The key services of MDSW were:

- Local, place based Museum Development Officers.
- Small grants programmes and funding support.
- Skills and training networks.
- Specialist support in collections and volunteering.
- Organisational development and technical accreditation.
- Communications, advocacy and resources.
- Secure funding for projects.

MDSW worked in partnership with EDDC with funding provided through the Shared Prosperity Fund. There were four accredited museums receiving support (Allhallows Museum, Sidmouth Museum, Fairlynch Museum and Arts Centre, Axminster Heritage Centre) and there were five others not yet accredited, but still receiving support due to funding from EDDC (Exmouth Museum, Seaton Museum, Ottery St Mary Heritage Museum, Whimble Heritage Centre, South West Airfield Heritage Trust). Projects delivered in 2024/25 included:

- Photographic collections project.
- Caring for and displaying costume training session.
- Accreditation training session.
- Development support for the National Lottery project grant application for the Our Wild and Changing Estuaries Project.

The Museum Development Officer explained that in 2023/24 EDDC received a 300% return on its investment from MDSW. It received:

- £4,685 in Museum Development Officer support.
- Technical accreditation support to two museums.
- Accreditation advice to submit eligibility for Whimble Heritage, Exmouth Museum and Seaton Museum.
- £1,264 specialist officer support in collections and digital.
- One participant in Volunteering Fit for the Future at £1,400 (Exmouth Museum – dedicated volunteer management consultancy).
- 18 training attendances at 13 training sessions from 3 museums at £986.

- One On Display! grant awarded at £1,000 (Axminster Heritage Centre – Thomas Whitty Rug) which enabled a total project valued at £5,735.

During the first two quarters of 2024/25 EDDC had invested £1,500 and generated £2,342 in Museum Development Officer support and £330 in museum skills.

It was noted that Arts Council funding was received by MDSW for accredited museums. The accreditation scheme run by Arts Council England ensured that museums were adhering to a certain standard. A return had to be submitted every five years to the Arts Council to demonstrate the museum was still adhering to the particular criteria. Being accredited showed that a museum was working to a particular standard and opened up opportunities for grants as a lot of funding was only open to accredited museums.

On behalf of the Forum the Chair thanked the Museum Development Officer for her presentation.

## 17 **Exmouth Festival - decarbonisation pilot**

Jess Magill and Zoey Cooper gave the Forum a presentation on the 2024 Exmouth Festival decarbonisation pilot.

The actions were to:

- reduce travel carbon by booking local acts and infrastructure,
- promote sustainable travel to the event,
- programme acts and activities that reflected the ethos of the event,
- reduce waste through use of reusable cups and no single-use plastics,
- buy new bin toppers & recycled food,
- bring in compost loos,
- encourage traders to take action on carbon, waste reduction & plant-based foods.

The presentation outlined engagement before and during the festival, which included:

- Pre-event participation.
- Volunteers – Green Team!
- Coordinated stalls and activities to engage people in the sustainability messages and opportunities.
- Involving people in environmental themes in participatory performances.
- Multiple activities around earth and marine science and protecting the natural world. Arts and crafts with recycled materials or messaging.

A sustainability message was incorporated through all press releases and PR so that it became a consistent thread in the event. Communications included:

- Customised graphics for sharing on social media, with general messages 'tread lightly at Exmouth Festival' and specific messages 'travel green', 'bring a water bottle'.
- The app and the website contained information on what was being done to make the festival greener and a section on what participants could do.
- Press release to local media.
- Newsletter emails used to communicate actions.

The approach to messaging was:

- To work with traders in advance of the event to produce a checklist to display on their stall, detailing what carbon-reduction actions they are taking.
- To work with artists to consider their travel footprint, record and send the data, and the chance to offset it.
- To encourage both of these groups to share the results on their social media to amplify the message.

- Put notices in each of the compost loos about why they were better for the environment.
- Wrote announcements for the compere about actions and activities around sustainability.

Surveys were commissioned to gather data on audiences and what they experienced. Travel, energy and waste data were recorded in a spreadsheet to calculate the event's carbon footprint and as a way of monitoring improvement. Feedback from the festival was that 42% of those asked said that they had experienced an 'environment of sustainability'. Overall travel footprint reduced from 14.7 to 13.1 tCO<sub>2</sub>. Overall carbon footprint was reduced by 5% from 2023 to 2024. During the 2024 festival car use went up and walking down, but seven times more people travelled by train.

The festival organisers outlined the toolkit during their presentation. The toolkit was an excellent resource for event planning and contained:

- Exmouth festival case-study.
- Carbon calculator spreadsheet.
- Sample survey.
- Event planning document; pre, during and post event actions.
- Templates for signage and bin toppers.
- Examples of sustainability messaging.
- Resources and links.

On behalf of the Forum the festival organisers were congratulated on a fantastic piece of work. Their work on sustainability was inspirational and provided a good example of how data driven things needed to be. It was critical to create awareness of decarbonisation and to be mindful of carbon footprints.

## 18 **UK Shared Prosperity Fund Year 2 Cultural Programme**

The Cultural Producer's report provided a summary of the second year of outputs of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UK SPF) cultural programme, from April 2023 – April 2024. This was a three year funded programme which helped to both support the delivery of East Devon's Cultural Strategy 2022-2031 as well as deliver funding into the district's diverse and distinctive creative communities and help to support their activities and events. The three year Cultural Programme was due to be complete in March 2025.

In year two the Cultural Programme predominately focussed on two activities:

- The continued development of the Arts and Culture East Devon (ACED) network, including increased membership, training and the launch of an ACED website.
- The launch of the Creative East Devon Fund (CEDF) grant scheme (£25,000) – to provide small grants of up to £3,000 to cultural projects and events that aligned with the EDDC Cultural Strategy. The launch of the CEDF provided a formal framework through which to consider future requests and ensure parity and transparency in the decision-making process and has created a robust mechanism to process funding requests from cultural organisations, with involvement from elected members.

The outputs and outcomes in year two were contained in the report and it was noted that all but two had been exceeded. Overall, the CEDF grants had a hugely positive impact that was widespread in both the aims achieved and the location and types of beneficiaries reached. It proved an effective and low-cost way of supporting cultural organisations and delivering on both UKSPF outputs and outcomes and the themes of the Cultural Strategy. This funding had acted as crucial seed funding for organisations to submit larger bids using CEDF as match funding.

On behalf of the Forum the Assistant Director – Countryside and Leisure thanked the Cultural Producer for all the work that she had undertaken.

**RESOLVED:** that the Arts and Culture Form endorse the report and the successful delivery of the year two outputs of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund culture programme.

## 19 **Thelma Hulbert Gallery**

Gemma Girvan, Thelma Hulbert Gallery Manager and Curator updated the Forum on some of the activities happening at the Thelma Hulbert Gallery (THG).

The Create our Space (COS) Arts Council funded project encouraged young people between the ages of seven and 25 into gallery spaces and to engage with visual arts. Some of the highlights of the project were:

- Employed the first Student Intern.
- Delivered over 30 school's workshops engaging more than 1000 young people.
- Reached over 5000 people directly engaging in the project and over 10,000 more widely.
- Welcomed Visitors to THG from 26 of the 33 EX postcodes.
- Delivered over 75 workshops, events and festival events.
- Successfully hosted 2 Summer Art Weeks.

Further Arts Council funding (£29,000) had been secured to continue the positives from the COS project and continue working with young people. The highlights of the extensive Arts Council application for the new COS project were:

- Continue to work with young people to build our Youth Network.
- Establish student intern opportunity.
- Work with community groups to build a long-term relationship, including East Devon Tenant's and Youth Groups.
- Continue to take artists into secondary schools to build community confidence in the gallery and creative arts.
- Find a more portable solution to the Creative Cabin. 'The Creative Cabinet'.
- Build awareness of hidden disabilities through programming and training.

The following exhibitions had successfully been delivered:

- Seam - an visible thread. Textile collective that received Arts Council funding to exhibit a touring exhibition.
- Philippa Lawrence – a space between.
- Anne Jackson – the Witchcraft series.

The next exhibition was Telling our Stories Finding our Roots, from 23 November – 21 December 2024, celebrating Devon's multicultural history. Funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund the project continued on from similar projects in Exeter, Tiverton, Bideford and Okehampton. Further funding from the Creative East Devon Fund had enabled the commission of British-Mexican artist Ione Maria Rojas, to create an artist commission and engage children from a local primary school to contribute artwork to the exhibition. The annual Christmas selling exhibition Present Makers would also be held.

The Gallery Manager and Curator Thelma Hulbert Gallery outlined the 2025 programme, which had the theme Community and Place. The aim was to strengthen ties with both local and artistic communities through the following initiatives:

- Encouraging emerging artists: Providing opportunities and support for new talent.

- Collaborating with local artists and photographers: Showcasing the unique perspectives of the community's creative voices.
- Bringing renowned artists to a rural setting: Creating a platform for the local audience to engage with established artists.
- Continuing climate-focused exhibitions: Highlighting the interconnectedness of climate and racial justice through impactful programming.
- Embedding Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) and accessibility into programming and delivery.

The programme included:

- Ashish Ghadiali
- James Ravilious
- THG Open 2025
- CAMP

Members of the Forum thanked the THG Manager and Curator and the Cultural Producer for the excellent work being undertaken. The ability to secure the highly competitive Arts Council funding was a real testament to the work of the THG team. On behalf of the Forum the Chair thanked the THG Manager and Curator for her presentation.

## 20 **Local Visitor Economy Partnership**

The Senior Economic Development Officer gave a presentation to the Forum on the Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP). She explained that an LVEP was a strategic, high performing organisation representing the destination at local and national levels, working with VisitEngland and the Government on a set of growth ambitions and visitor economy policy and strategy. It involved leading, marketing and managing the destinations in its geography, working in partnership with other destination organisations, local government and businesses.

The benefits of the LVEP were:

- Synergy and co-ordination.
- Greater profile positioning.
- A strategic partner.
- Increased productivity.
- Devon on the world stage.

The priorities of the LVEP were:

- Advocacy and leadership.
- Better data.
- Higher quality.
- Position and profile.
- Boosting skills.
- Sustainable tourism.
- Transport solutions.

The vision of the LVEP was creating prosperity for people and places with a high quality, high spend and productive visitor economy. The mission was helping its partners on their path to making a better Devon. The objectives of the LVEP were:

- Grow visitor spend.
- Spread the benefits.
- Create a year-round economic driver.



The Senior Economic Development Officer explained the structure of the LVEP and that EDDC were part of the wider representation on the Devon and Partners LVEP Advisory Board. She was the EDDC representative on the LVEP Advisory Board and regularly updated the Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism. There was no financial commitment from EDDC, other than officer time. Devon was one of the last areas in the country to form an LVEP. The current focus for the Devon and Partners LVEP was:

- Growth plan.
- South West visitor economy hub.
- AccessAble project.
- Promotional activities with VisitEngland.
- Feeding into national priorities and opportunities.

The vision and mission of the LVEP and the work of the Advisory Board linked closely with the tourism priorities outlined in EDDC's Council Plan, Economic Development Strategy, Tourism Strategy and Cultural Strategy.

The Senior Economic Development Officer was thanked for her helpful presentation. Members were pleased to see the clear link between culture, the economy and tourism.

### **Attendance List**

#### **EDDC Councillors present:**

O Davey  
P Fernley  
N Hookway  
P Faithfull

#### **Town Representatives**

I Barlow, Sidmouth Town Council  
R Doorbar, Budleigh Salterton Town Council

#### **Officers in attendance:**

Charles Plowden, Assistant Director Countryside and Leisure  
Gemma Girvan, Gallery Manager and Curator  
Sarah James, Democratic Services Officer  
Alethea Thompson, Democratic Services Officer  
Caitlin Davey, Events Officer  
Sarah Elghady, Cultural Producer  
Tracy Hendren, Chief Executive  
Geri Panteva, Senior Economic Development Officer  
Andrew Wood, Director of Place

#### **Also Present**

Jo Cairns, South West Museum Development  
Mair George, Villages in Action  
Zoey Cooper, Exmouth Festival  
Jess Magill, Exmouth Festival  
David Salas, University of Exeter

#### **Apologies:**

J Bull, Axminster Town Council

V Johns  
J Whibley  
J Brown, Honiton Town Coucil  
C Buchan, Cranbrook Town Council  
A Singh, Seaton Town Council

Chair .....

Date: .....