

Good afternoon all,

Many thanks to everyone who made it along last night! What a fab turnout again!

Just before I start with the notes from last night, here is a link again to the Cultural Plan if you need it -

https://www.northdevon.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2024-06/Ilfracombe%20Cultural%20Plan_2024.pdf

As a reminder, although this is also a lovely, printed brochure too, it is a living document and as a team it will be our job to use it as a guide but also have the freedom to adapt it where we see fit to fit our communities need and make changes and updates as we work through the action plan. We are also aware that some organisations were unable to make the initial stakeholder meetings in 2023 that informed a lot of the content of the plan so they may not feature as heavily as they'd like, but please be assured that everyone contribution to the towns cultural status is very much valued and should still be involved moving forwards.

I didn't take any extensive notes (mainly as whilst this is still it's embryonic stage they don't need to be) but just to summarise what happened and some of the points raised:

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- I raised an email that had been sent by Fr John Roles from the Holy Trinity Church. He has mentioned in the first meeting that the Civic Society had tried back in 2005 to get a blue plaque scheme started in Ilfracombe but it didn't come to fruition, so he has kindly shared the information they gathered with the potential for it to be a project that this group looks at. He also shared a document with some fantastic history on the Holy Trinity Church. I've attached both to this email.
- I gave an update on the Arts Council Creative People and Places funding application. North Devon Council have appointed North Devon Plus to be the lead applicant (which is a great choice as they have a good track record of receiving and distributing large pots of funding). We are working with them closely to provide the Ilfracombe perspective ready for the application submission in mid-January. If anyone has any case studies of how culture has had a positive impact on someone (it could be improved health outcomes, better working relationships, new opportunities etc.) then please send them through as it's good to show that cultural activities in Ilfracombe are already benefiting the people who live here.
- At the previous meeting we had agreed to break the group down into smaller sub-groups that could concentrate on more focussed topics/areas, but after much discussion we decided that there were too many overlaps and it would be a struggle to have so many sub-groups as people would want to be in multiple so it would take up far too much time, so instead we are going to do a full meeting (as we have done last night and last month) and pick up projects that are highlighted in discussions, or pulled from the Action Plan, and create smaller working groups based off that projects, so far more ad hoc (which is definitely the way us creatives work better I think!). We also agreed that we would also add on to the agenda time for different

groups/organisations/individuals to have the floor so that they can share with us what it is that they do, and how the other groups can engage with them and learn. This came off the back of a comment from Barbara from Events4Ilfracombe who described how they have a lot in expertise in things such as road closures and applying for licences but rarely have engagement from groups wanting to put on an event in the town, so we agreed that 'Networking' will be an important part of these meetings whether that's hearing a presentation or just having a chat at the end with someone new.

- We had a brief discussion about the Visit Ilfracombe website as it came up in conversation in the last meeting, and we were joined by Eliot Wren from the Ilfracombe District Business & Tourism Association who run the website. He said that they are currently applying for funding for an upgrade to the website. Barnstaple have recently launched a new website for the town that is similar to the Visit Ilfracombe website in that it has a directory and a whats on guide, but it is a bit more populated and also has the function for people to be able to upload their own events, so this may be something that could be considered with the website upgrade.
- We were joined by Lee Baxendale who many may know from producing shows in Ilfracombe for the last 25 years, but he also came along with his work hat on which is as Cultural Producer for North Devon Council. Lee is heading up the Cultural Development Fund (government funding) programming in Barnstaple and he kindly explained to the group the great work that they are doing over that way in terms of engaging more people in cultural activities as well as the more structural projects in Boutport Street and Bridge Chambers, both of which will provide new cultural 'hubs' in the town. You can read more about the fund and what the spend has been outlined on here - [Accessible Report Template](#)
- Lee also mentioned that there were some free courses for cultural businesses which anyone is free to access. You can find out more about that here - [Business Support for Creative Industries | North Devon+](#)
- A conversation started following a lovely idea from Netti Pearson around having somewhere that could be cultural hub for the community. She mentioned a methodology called Participatory Cities which are around generating ideas and fostering connections. Mel Turnbull than shared her experience of visiting Spit & Sawdust in Cardiff with her kids. Spit & Sawdust is a youth hub based around skating culture. Ilfracombe Town Council Town Clerk, Laura Donovan mentioned that there were conversations happening at the moment based on an issue that had been raised by Dr Sarah Williams from Combe Coastal GP practice as she was seeing families with children struggling to find activities to do, particularly in poor weather and she had found inspiration in the Minehead Eye. This also ties in with conversations happening within the Ilfracombe Futures forum about having a youth hub for a youth club and also a learning space. We also heard from Ben Lyons-Ross from Landmark Theatres about how they are wanting to engage more with the community and use the Landmark more, so Laura Donovan is going to follow up with him on this. We will add 'hubs' to the next agenda to see if there have been any updates on any of these ideas and if there are any new opportunities locally.
- Colette Hall from North Devon Council also suggested that at the next meeting it may be worth us going through the cultural action plan and

establishing what we already have happening in Ilfracombe, so we will add that to the agenda too.

I have suggested that in preparation for the next meeting that we all have a think about projects that we'd like to do or be involved with. Also, if anyone wants to be on the agenda to share with us information about their organisation then let me know!

I think that sums it all up but please let me know if I have missed anything of great importance off and I will be sure to amend it 😊

I will send out the date for the next meeting, but it will be in the new year (provisionally the 13th Jan), so if I don't see you all before, I hope you all have a lovely Christmas and new year!

Many thanks,

Charmain