

Good evening all,

Big thank you to everyone who managed to make it last night. Once again we had a brilliant turnout and there were lots of good conversations happening as well as some great project ideas that are now underway. Thank you also to Carol Turner and The Landmark Theatre for hosting us!

Before I start with the notes from the meeting, I am skipping down the agenda a bit to talk about GDPR and sharing of email addresses. It was rightly raised to me by one of the group via email that I'd sent a group email previously that showed everyone in the group.

I have always found that it is helpful with these types of groups that its helpful to be able to grab someone's email as there will be a lot of collaborative working, but this should have been agreed before I sent the email, so I do apologise for that slip up. We had a brief discussion last night and everyone was happy for their email addresses to be shared. As not everyone on this list were in attendance last night I have BCC'd this email, but ask that if anyone doesn't want their email address to be shared then please email me and I will blind copy you in for future emails.

Notes from last night:

Update on "hubs"

Laura Donovan (ITC Town Clerk) and Steve Seatherton (ITC and One Ilfracombe Programme Manager) are visiting the Minehead Eye today to understand their business model and how they generate revenue whilst being a 'hub' for the community.

The Emmanuel Church – NDC have had a survey done to establish the cost to fix the issues (such as the broken spire and structural/damp issues). Ilfracombe Town Council are applying for funding to undertake a feasibility study to establish what the need would be and whether there is potential for a revenue model that could support it. We don't know as yet how much the owners (the Methodist Church) are looking to sell the space for but they have shown a preference for it to go to community use. It was suggested that the church would be a good space for the museum, but Nick Mollart from the museum updated us to say that they have been to look at the old post office building with NDC and they are currently awaiting an update on that from NDC.

Funding Updates

The application for the Arts Council Creative People and Places (CPP) is being submitted by North Devon Plus this week. For a bit more context around the bid I explained how it was different to your usual funding bids in that you would usually be expected to outline your costs based on what you are delivering, but this is a bit backwards as all of the cultural activities will be decided by the community so no-one actually knows yet how much it will cost as we don't know what they will ask for, so the amount that is being applied for (c. £750,000 plus 15% match funding) is being based on staff costs, the initial engagement project and then a guesstimation for on what the rest would theoretically be spent on. It will be a few months until we hear whether the bid has been successful with an approximate start date of spring 2026.

Street Art Update.

Unfortunately Neil Ingram was poorly so couldn't make it but luckily Collette Hall who is the Conservation Officer for North Devon Council was in attendance and she had been on a walk around Ilfracombe with Neil and Matt Brown who is the Head of Planning for NDC.

Colette explained how NDC were really supportive of street art and general improvements to local buildings, but it is important that NDC are consulted on such things as there are often planning or conservation issues that need to be addressed first, but they do want to work pro-actively with the community on any future projects. Neil had asked me to say that if anyone is planning any street art or aesthetic changes to their business fronts that they email him as he can act as a go-between with NDC and also ensure there's no duplication – neil.ingram@northdevon.gov.uk

Ideas from the Table

We started by looking at two emails I had received about two potential projects.

The first was from Lindsay Armstrong from Ilfracombe Museum who was keen to take on Jon Roles suggestion to revisit the Blue Plaque Scheme that the civic society had tried to launch a decade or so ago. Lindsay said that she'd like to hear from anyone who would be interested in working with her on this. If you are keen, please contact Lindsay on – info.ilfracombemuseum@gmail.com

The second was from Natalia Price-Cabrera who had seen a city-wide/town-wide escape room style booklet that is for people to use local attractions, history etc. to solve clues. The version she saw was reasonably massed produced but she feels that with her skills in publishing and the abundance of local artists there could be a potential to create an Ilfracombe-centric version.

I could remember there being something a bit similar that the Tourist Information used to sell and Barbara Clarke confirmed this. Barbara also raised that there are published walking trails as well as other tours such as the Devon Ghost Tours so it is probably worth bringing everything together to avoid duplication but reinforce what is available. Barbara is going to find some copies that I can share with Natalia.

This led on to a wider discussion about trails as Steve Gear raised that where he previously lived there was a window display trail called Window Wonderland and thought it could tie in possibly with the Art Trail.

Steve Trebble from Ilfracombe in Bloom also said that they had been considering a floral trail with floral displays around town and the Jennie Cousins suggested linking in with the museum as they have an Ilfracombe Herbarium.

Paul Bateman from the IDBTA said that they had quotes from the company who run the High St Safaris which are QR code/virtual reality based trails so he is going to find that information.

Katy Ashford raised that some friends of hers were working on a 'Coastal Pilgrimage' which is a coastal trail of historic buildings (more specifically churches).

Lucy Perrin mentioned that in the past Studio Theatre had worked on a project called Dead Famous where local performers were assigned the grave of someone buried in the Holy Trinity church yard and they would be keen to maybe work with the Blue

Plaque project to create a new performance project that ties in with the blue plaque locations.

It's clear that there is a lot to build on and some great ideas to develop around local trails.

In the room we had some more great suggestions for projects:

Mel Turnbull from Hand:Plant asked about the potential for a large recycling project similar to the large metal fish that other coastal towns have. She knows some people who may be able to create something for a cheaper price than buying it commercially and potentially tying it in with a schools art competition for the design. She is going to find out some more information including potential costs.

Cllr Trevor Huggins said that with his background in journalism he would like to work on a project around digitising the newspaper archive at the museum as it's a vital part of the town's history and could be utilised far more if there was a digital version available. He is going to link up with the museum team to establish which companies undertake this kind of work and any associated costs. Steve Gear also raised as part of digitising historical artefacts the Know Your Place project which overlays maps across the eras so you can compare historical maps with present day ones - [Know Your Place - Bristol](#)

Cllr Malcolm Wilkinson raised the Beach of Dreams which is a UK-wide arts project and how we should probably be working to create something to be a part of this nationwide festival which takes place throughout the month of May. We had attended an online workshop by the Beach of Dreams team and although it was only brought forward reasonably last minute and doesn't come with any funding attached, it is a really nice idea to tie the arts in with our stunning coastline, not just in Ilfracombe but across the whole North Devon coastline, especially as we now have a World Surfing Reserve (only 1 of 12 in the world) right on our doorstep.

We have agreed that we will put the Beach of Dreams project on the agenda going forward but really encourage everyone to have a look at the website and have a think about how they or their organisation can put on an event or create something (which can be promoted via the Beach of Dreams website as well as our own local promotion methods).

[Beach of Dreams | UK-wide Coastal Arts Festival | 1 May – 1 June 2025](#)

Cultural Action Plan

It was suggested at the previous meeting that we have a look at the Action Plan in the Cultural Plan to see where we are at in terms of progress.

In order to have a live document that the group can access and I have set up a Google Spreadsheet which can be found here -

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/16DLStyTYmahTpX7-YWCgYgY6WpvLUmIMbabpsVsl7ow/edit?usp=sharing>

This also ties in to a wider conversation which was had about how cultural events and activities are promoted.

We are lucky to have the Visit Ilfracombe website as an established platform but Barbara and Paul both mentioned that they tend to have to rake through social media to find out what is on and rarely receive notification directly asking for things to be added to the diary so we will need to look collectively at how we promote what they do more widely. The website is about to be rebuilt (no date set yet) but Paul did raise a good point that they do need to try and keep a strong visitor aspect in order to keep them up the Google ranks, but there can certainly be space for additional community activities.

As well as having digital ways of accessing what is on, it was recognised that there are quite a few people who don't really use social media or websites and Niki from Happy Wholefoods suggested looking into community noticeboards which are kept up to date.

One idea which came through Dan and Hayley at Silk Crystal was they'd been to Bristol and found a small shed-type space where you'd walk in and there were flyers and posters about upcoming cultural events. Steph Charles from the Art Trail mentioned that they'd been asked by the council to look at uses for the old phonebox that used to live at the bottom of Northfield Road, so this may be a good solution.

It was also suggested by Jo Parsons that we engage younger people as they also absorb information in a much different way to adults so there may be something that can be done (possibly with the Academy's media students) around TikTok and Snapchat.

Going back to having a place to collate all event information, I have created a tab on the above Google Spreadsheet where people can add their events and activities. There are also tabs on community assets and also community cultural practitioners. I have added a couple of examples on each so you can see what to do 😊

This is a job for everyone to do when they get a chance!

AOB

Hayley from Silk Crystal said that she'd like to develop the idea of an Art Fair to coincide with the Art Trail so she is going to link in with Steph from the Art Trail.

Just to summarise we now have the following projects:

1. Blue Plaques
2. Trails
3. Recycling Sculpture
4. Digitising the Museums Newspaper Archive
5. The Beach of Dreams
6. Telephone Box Info Point
7. Art Fair to tie in with the Art Trail

If you have made it this far – congratulations! If I have missed anything vitally important let me know!

The next meeting is provisionally pencilled in for 5.30pm on Monday 17th February

(location TBC). I will send out an invite email as soon as I've confirmed the location.

Thanks everyone,

Charmain

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