

Culture Team Minutes – Wednesday 12th November 2025

Location: The Lantern Club Room

Time: 5pm



Chair: Mel Turnbull

Minutes: Charmain Lovett

1. Introductions and Apologies

We welcomed two new faces to the group this week – Ben Baker Martin who is a graduate of Brighton in sound art/production and is looking to run workshops locally, and Helen Weedon who has returned to Ilfracombe and is a mosaic artist with a huge amount of experience in arts and culture management and is currently working for the Arts and Humanities Research Council.

2. Responses/Actions from the previous meeting

Action: Neil to request ad space on the big screen approaching the High Street. – Mel ended up taking this on, and successfully secured use of the screen with the company who run it! There will be 3500 showings of the Christmas event slide over a 30 day period and this has been funded by High St Traders chipping in a smaller amount each towards the total. Well done Mel!

Action: Mel T to raise Purple Flag/ Late night economy ideas with High Street traders for next summer and consider tie-in with Paul's proposal. – Ongoing

Action: John to chase Petroc and Ilfracombe Academy re: youth led comms/video projects – Ongoing
- John and Laura E will chase in the new year

Actions from One Ilfracombe Employment and Skills discussion *

- Kelvin to explore a youth role supporting Ilfracombe Museum (web development / social media / vlogging). – Kelvin had to send his apologies for the meeting but we're assuming this is ongoing.
- Mel T may mentor a young person in running workshops – This is currently happening with John supporting Ben 😊
- Culture Club to invite a youth panel to participate and consider a youth-chaired meeting dedicated to youth culture; explore links into Council involvement, democratic processes. Ongoing – there are conversations happening between Charmain, Ilfracombe Futures, Space Youth Services and Barnstaple Town Council around setting up youth voice groups and potentially a youth council and this work will feed into Culture Club too.
- Charmain to hold a promotional event at The Lantern, Thu 6 Nov, 10:00–14:00 This didn't happen as the timeline to create and promote a whole event was too short, but we did tie in with the Art Fair Christmas Market at the North Devon Resort where Marcela from the Employment Hub had a stall, and in return we supplied free transport (funded though DCC) for the weekend working with Ilfracombe Community Transport. We can look at doing something more focussed in the new year when we have some more time to properly plan. **

- Paul Bateman to connect regarding animation and photography skills. Paul had to send his apologies so there is no update for this one at present.

DCC “Places to Go”: One Ilfracombe can apply to support young people aged 18–25 (up to £1,000 per initiative) – Charmain hadn’t received any requests for support, but there could be potential to expand on the cultural workshops that Mel has run and the engagement work through Space Youth Services (supported by Silk Crystal) to deliver more collaborative sessions.

If anyone would like to deliver a youth workshop, please contact Charmain.

* Charmain gave an update that her colleague Sarah Maddocks who was leading on this project has now left to work for DCC, so Charmain is now picking this project up.

If anyone has any capacity to offer apprenticeships, mentoring, workshops on any scale then please let Charmain know.

John also gave an update that he is a part of the LIFT programme for NEETS (16-25yr olds who are Not in Education, Employment or Training). The course started at the beginning of November and will run for a few months every Monday and Thursday from the Lantern. These young people will get to experience a whole range of career and training possibilities across a range of sectors including culture. John is running some workshops with them but they also have a film director involved and they’ll spend time in the studio with the band Reef.

** Fiona from the Art Trail came along and we all shared what a great success the Christmas Market was as a first event for the team. Some suggestions from the room included Will from Making Waves/Fore St Association suggesting working with some younger artists and providing pop up spaces for joint exhibitions, and Laura E said it would be nice to build on the event by incorporating some workshops and talks.

3. Any project area updates?

We had another conversation around community filming, regarding hi vis and lanyards so that anyone filming or photographing public events looks a bit more “official” and doesn’t leave them open to a barrage of questions about what they are up to.

We don’t really have the budget at present, however, Charmain has spoken with Laura D (Town Clerk) and we have some Ilfracombe Town Council hi vis and some volunteer badges on lanyards with the Town Council and One Ilfracombe logo on which can be used in the mean time. We also have some Combe Christmas hi vis which may be more appropriate for the upcoming Lighting of the Lights event. Please contact Charmain if these are required and she can sort that for you. We also discussed pulling together a “best practice” document for filming local events.

Action: Charmain to investigate other best practice examples.

4. Funding Updates/Opportunities including Arts Council CPP Decision & Town of Culture

Unfortunately our application to The Arts Council to become a **Create People and Places** partner was unsuccessful. We are all obviously very disappointed at this as a lot of hard work had gone into creating a strong application. The reasons behind the rejection aren't known at the moment but Louise Adam from North Devon+ has asked for some detailed feedback.

Fortunately we do have a shelf ready project to go, so we're looking at alternate funding sources.

Action: Charmain to speak to North Devon+ to see if we can share the application with the wider Culture Club.

Town of Culture is a new government competition through the Department for Culture, Media and Sport that has been recently announced.

We believe that Ilfracombe has a strong case to apply for this status, and Laura E has already started work on an expression of interest.

So far only the basic details have been released with no clue on when applications will open, but from what we have seen so far, Ilfracombe would be a good candidate for this.

Understandably there will be quite a bit of competition for this status, and from conversations with North Devon Council we understand that they are looking to support Barnstaple in an application, but we don't feel that this should stop Ilfracombe from also applying. We will need to have a further conversation with North Devon Council about this as it could become a bit more complex should the application need to be submitted by the local authority, but we can look at this further as more information is released. For now though we will continue to start to build up a foundational framework and build the case for Ilfracombe.

Dan and Hayley from Silk Crystal updated us that they have received some money from **National Landscapes** to create a street art project around the Hillsborough area, working with local young people on an educational piece around the pre-historic creation of our coastline and geology and developing these into art works at the Hillsborough Hut and hopefully the hut and sidewall at Rapparee.

Dan is also working with a friend of his who is a graduate from the University of Bristol who is writing up the information for a plaque/information board at the Hillsborough Hut about the Devonian period and how our coastline was formed.

Charmain mentioned that the Victorian Committee had kindly donated £520 to Ilfracombe Town Council with the idea that it was spent on a cultural heritage project, so this could go in some way towards helping showcase the much unknown history around Ilfracombe, and especially fossils that be found around our coastline.

Caz from The Landmark mentioned that they have an interactive dinosaur show programmed in and it would be great to tag a fossil workshop onto that somehow.

5. Christmas ideas including "Festival of Lights"

Mel and Caz are steaming ahead with their lantern making workshops which are being held at The Landmark on Sunday 16th and Sunday 23rd November.

All are welcome to join in and then carry their lantern at the Lighting of the Lights event on the 28th November starting at 6pm at The Candar.

6. Ideas from the Table

During conversation we got onto the topic of using recycled/upcycled materials for cultural purposes. Caz Turner talked about previous workshops and events that had happened at the Landmark around this, and Hayley from Silk Crystal mentioned that they have a tonne of empty spray cans that they can't do anything with. Ben said it would be great to see how you could use these materials on a music based project, such as a junk orchestra or interactive sculptures that generate sound.

We all agreed that this would be a great project to look at and would tie in nicely with the Beach of Dreams project, so could be the focus for 2026.

Hayley mentioned that when her and Dan were in Watchet there was a curated shipping container space that was surrounded by benches that had also been designed by local artists, so maybe something to think about when we get the go ahead for finding a space for our telephone box.

[Contains Art at East Quay](#)

Mel mentioned that French Marie has offered the end of her house up as a potential space for some graffiti art so floated it with Dan and Hayley. Dan and Hayley had had some contact about this and said they'd be happy to look at it if there was some funding and scaffolding available

Action: Mel to follow up with French Marie

Will had mentioned earlier on in the meeting before he left, that he is in discussion with Take Thyme to set up a monthly event at their restaurant on Fore St, and the idea would be to have an inclusive bar night, so supporting the LGBT community, neurodiversity, people who are too anxious to access normal nightlife spots.

Laura mentioned the great work that the Museum of Homelessness have been doing in Sterling Park to create a positive, constructive space for rough sleepers through art and performance. They work with actors to tell story of homeless people and they are attracting widescale funding and press attention internationally for their work.

Laura said that the director is happy to do a Q&A on Teams to share their learning.

Action: Charmain to feed this back to the Poverty Truth Commission who have an objective of sharing the story/improving awareness of poverty

Steve Gear shared with us the growing plans for a Photography Festival in 2026.

Their vision is to have an event in October which spans 8-10 venues across town, with workshops in the lead up to the event with some focus on encouraging young people, B&W photography, pin hole cameras etc. They're also looking at photography walks, understanding your DSLR sessions and coastal photographic opportunities.

They have been exploring funding opportunities such as the Arts Council and are looking to set themselves up as a CIC but aren't sure if they have enough time to do that, so Charmain suggested putting the application in via One Ilfracombe as they'd be happy to support this as Culture is one of Charmain's work streams

Action: Charmain to confirm that One Ilfracombe can support the application and then confirm with Steve ASAP.

We briefly discussed again the idea of pulling together all of the wonderful smaller ideas into a bigger project that could culminate in a wider, bigger funding bid to encapsulate everything that was being planned but was reliant on funding.

Action: Charmain to email wider Culture Club members to establish funding needs for specific projects.

1. AOB

David Jones from Hele Cornmill sent through the below poster for an event they are running in collaboration with Ilfracombe Museum:

The poster features a background image of a historic stone mill building with a large wooden wheel, situated in a rural landscape. Several people in period clothing are visible near the mill. At the top, the Ilfracombe Museum logo is displayed, consisting of a stylized 'I' and 'M' inside a circle, with the text 'ILFRACOMBE MUSEUM' to its right.

Our new talk:
**Hele Cornmill – Its Place in
the History and Landscape
of North Devon by current
owner David Jones.**

Thursday 27th November, 7pm

**Tickets £5 or £4 for museum supporters
refreshments included**

**Book at the museum front desk,
we are open Tuesday – Friday 10am – 4pm
for more information email:
info.ilfracombemuseum@gmail.com**