

Culture Team Agenda – Monday 9th Feb 2026

Location: Lantern Club Room (Upstairs)

Time: 5pm



Welcome and apologies – fantastic to see new members join us, and we had nearly 30 people in attendance this time! NB – We need a bigger table!

Actions from the previous meeting:

Culture Club Branding for Public Events - Action: Charmain to investigate other best practice examples. - ongoing

Failed Arts Council Bid - Action: Charmain to speak to North Devon+ to see if we can share the application with the wider Culture Club – ND+ still haven't had any feedback so this may be as far as we get

Potential Graffiti space behind Spoons - Action: Mel to follow up with French Marie – Done. Dan/Hayley and Mel will continue on this conversation

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

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

Collective Funding application - Action: Charmain to email wider Culture Club members to establish funding needs for specific projects. - Ongoing

Photography Festival - Steve Gear

Steve gave us a fantastic presentation on their plans to run a Photography Festival in Ilfracombe. At the public meeting they held a fortnight ago, nearly 40 people turned up so a fantastic amount of support for this locally.

He shared slides based on their ideas and plans including workshops, walks, talks, exhibitions, networking and much more! They also have had productive conversations with venues around town, so a brilliant start!

One Ilfracombe have agreed to support this project by being the applying body for funding and governance.

At the moment they are looking to source £30k to deliver this project in it's entirety but at present haven't secured that.

Conversations around the table suggested that it may be worth trying to start with something a bit smaller that isn't reliant on funding and then growing it year-on-year (which is how the Art Trail started).

Alison Mills of NDC suggested speaking to Phillip Butterworth if they are planning on applying to The Arts Council.

Coast Week – Paul Bateman from IBTA

Sat 30th May – Sun 7th June – Coast Week will run across 9 days including two family weekends (the first one is end of school holidays) and is a celebration of everything that Ilfracombe and its coastline has to offer.

Weekends are targeted more at families whereas midweek is more for the older or childfree audience.

The whole concept is that they are organising everything themselves, but are asking others to organise their own events and they co-ordinate and promote.

The Waverley have offered free trips for local schools – including an education piece on the history of paddle steamers. There will be talks (and they have some possible venues identified for this), guided walks and potential for coastal based film screenings. Restaurants are being asked to do coastal menus and pubs provide some entertainment. They also have buy in from the RNLI, harbour and coast based community groups to provide potential tasters and demos.

Charmain mentioned that it could also tie in with the Beach of Dreams as that runs throughout May. (We will add Beach of Dreams onto the next agenda).

Museum Update – Nick Mollart shared that they were about 95% certain that they were going to move into the Post Office. They are going through the process of applying to the Heritage Lottery but it is a long process.

The concept is the ground floor being museum/community space/ tourist info type space and the basement would be storage for the museum and community.

They will be engaging with the community to see what the community use could be. He said that they have always been very keen to involve community but also need to make sure that what they do is sustainable.

He added that 85% of admissions have been tourist-based and they hope that moving to the High St could support the High St regeneration plans.

Alison Mills added a timeline around the project. The EoI to Heritage Lottery will go in in May and if successful there will be a potentially 5 year process that follows, explaining that within that there will be a 2 year development programme - talking to people about what they want it to be, and how it will be viable. It doesn't necessarily mean that the museum will be closed during that whole process through the crossover, but the potential re-opening would be in 2030.

Shanty Festival – Caroline Bramwell

Happening across the 27th & 28th June the festival now has 31 bands are registered to perform including one from overseas! 12 venues have been confirmed, all of whom are providing spaces for free.

They've started to get some funding for this and accommodation providers have kindly offering discounts to performers, They are now sharing that accommodation list publicly for people out of area to book.

Caroline shared how people in the pirate community are really looking forward to coming to Ilfracombe for this and they have one act in particular who draw a big pirate crowd which they are very excited about!

She explained how the shanty festival in Brixham only started 6 years ago where they drew a few hundred people to it, but last year they had 65,000 visitors so there is a big trend and audience for this type of festival.

They want an opportunity for the whole town to get involved. They have a map to share the programme and are working with local businesses to offer discounts and also have a stamp map to encourage people to visit various business around town.

If you want to know more, please contact Caroline on –

John Sellings suggested it would be a good idea to look at collaborative marketing opportunities.

The Visit Ilfracombe website has most of the main events in so we should certainly look to using that more to avoid duplication. Lee Baxendale suggested a brochure leaflet and there was conversation around using the Ilfracombe Magazine more.

Helen P suggested a QR to a LinkTree would work well for visitors. Another one to maybe investigate on the next agenda.

UK Town of Culture 2028 Bid

Charmain presenting Ilfracombe's bid to the UK Town of Culture 2028.

This is a new competition from DCMS based on the success of the UK City of Culture in 2009 that has been regenerative for places such as Hull and Bradford.

The whole idea is to give towns the opportunity to share with the world how their town has culturally contributed to the national story. Ilfracombe has an absolute abundance of stories, history and community pride that can be shouted from the rooftops, so we have has a small working group who have been working on the Expression of Interest which needs to be submitted by the end of March.

There are three themes that have emerged which are: Hidden Histories, Youth Creativity and Bold Culture in unexpected places.

The competition will be fierce for this as any town can apply, and out of the potential 1200 towns in the UK that could submit an application, only 10 will be shortlisted!

Our ask to the wider culture club is to have a think about what they could do should there be a humongous pot of funding that would be available to do something amazing in 2028. It can't be capital spend, so revenue/running costs predominantly - but what could you, or your organisation/business do to help share our cultural story on a national scale?

Charmain will send out a separate email to the group with a link to a Google Form for you to fill in, so get your thinking caps on!

Funding Updates/Opportunities

Dan/Hayley gave an update on the Hillsborough Hut project and that plans have had to change as they can't access Rapparee anymore due to the landslip and issues that surround that.

Ideas from the Table

Mel – Mel has met with Lisa O'Connor from Watermouth Castle – The owner is very eco-friendly and is looking at some sort of nature-based event linking in with Earth Repair Shop, Earth Action etc.

They are also offering their space to the community for free for good ideas. If you are interested please email Lisa on lisa@watermouthcastle.com

Lee Baxendale – Lee let us know that although we are in Ilfracombe www.Barnstaple.co.uk could be a helpful resource for Culture Club bods. There is a culture tab on the website and on there it includes around 30 different funding/grants available and there are also resources on there to help people with event set up info, such as how to close roads, apply for licences etc.

Northern Devon Flourishing Cultures Awards – Deadline for applications is Friday 13th Feb, so if you wanted to nominate your local cultural heroes then get them in by Friday.

The link to do so is here - [Flourishing Culture Awards 2026 | North Devon Council](#)