

**Culture Team Notes – Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June 2026**

**Location: Lantern Club Room (Upstairs)**

**Time: 5.30pm**



1. **Introductions and Apologies.**

We started by congratulating The Art Trail team on the huge success of their 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

2. **Responses/Actions from the previous meeting - None**

3. **Telephone Box – Laura Donovan (Ilfracombe Town Council)**

Planning permission has now been granted for the town council to position the disused telephone box (which is currently at the bottom of Northfield Road) on the plinth next to the green on the seafront where the bouncy castles are. There is a semi-circular seating area to the west of that green with an established plinth which is where it has been approved for.

Although there is no electrical supply there Laura shared that ITC would love for the telephone box to be a real focal point and an 'Instagrammable' attraction for Ilfracombe.

The ITC team will refurbish the telephone box itself, but she is looking for the creative minds within Culture Club to come up with some ideas as to how this could be a rotational art installation (and if anyone knows how to create a massive octopus on top of it then Laura will be your new best friend.

Realistically this wouldn't start until 2027.

If you have any ideas then please send them to us on [laura.donovan@northdevon.gov.uk](mailto:laura.donovan@northdevon.gov.uk) and [Charmain.lovett@northdevon.gov.uk](mailto:Charmain.lovett@northdevon.gov.uk)

4. **Positive Communications from Ilfracombe – Group Discussion  
(including Verity Press Release)**

Following the recent negative press from Devon Live we had a really productive discussion around how we collectively mitigate the negativity.

There are a few factors to consider when talking about this, and Laura raised that as a town council there is certain information that has to be shared publicly and unfortunately that does mean that media outlets can pick up stories and inflame them for clickbait purposes.

She also said that despite the negativity of the articles it has been really positive to see the communities response in standing up for the town and combatting the stories with all of the great stuff that happens in Ilfracombe.

We had some great insites from those who have experience in town branding (particularly Alison Saunders from IBTA and Natalie Price – Cabrera) and it seemed like there were two themes for us (and partners) to look at:

1. A shared common language and response, including how we promote the town and the content surrounding it, and
2. Developing a cohesive town brand that isn't your usual 'tacky' traditional seaside theme and actually represents us as a town.

Natalie came up with an idea of "Wildly Independent" which went down really well.

John Sellings then shared a project idea that he has been developing around using workshops to develop responses to negative press via video/fil/manga/animation. This could be a great one to work with the youth club (or young people in general) on.

## 5. Vintage Ilfracombe Event – Lucy Cook

Lucy, Alli and their beautifully dressed mannequin came along to share their plans for their "Ilfracombe History and Fashion" event which is planned for the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> October.

The plan is to hold an annual exhibition that delves into the history of Ilfracombe and gives you a chance to reminisce over the extravagance of mid-century fashion.

They have a number of events planned including history and fashion exhibitions, a fashion show, an afternoon cream tea and a market place where people can buy and sell their vintage fashion pieces.

The exhibition has come to life due to Lucy's own vintage clothing collection and honouring the lovely Ann Mitchell who we sadly lost following a cancer battle earlier this year. Ann had donated a 1970s wedding dress from J.Modes in Plymouth and came with the original packaging that then sparked the idea of tying in the history side of things. The ultimate aim is to celebrate all that is Ilfracombe and embrace its diverse history.

At present Lucy and Alli are working to secure funding for the project and have been in contact with One Ilfracombe on how they can support them to do this. We also had a good conversation about equipment (such as display boards and stanchions) and how rather than buying new stuff, we have a think collectively as a community how we can pool resources.

If anyone would like to talk to Lucy further about their event or how you can support it, her email address is – [no28thecookery@yahoo.com](mailto:no28thecookery@yahoo.com)

## 6. Festival/Events Updates

**Sea Ilfracombe** – Neil Ingram shared that this year is the 17<sup>th</sup> year – Sat 5<sup>th</sup> & Sun 6<sup>th</sup> Sept.

They are looking for more volunteers for the event to help with bucket collections and also supporting the set up and break down of the event as they only have a core committee of 6, so

more volunteers would be welcomed.

If you can help please pop Neil an email on [neil.ingram@northdevon.gov.uk](mailto:neil.ingram@northdevon.gov.uk)

Barbara shared that **All Things Morris** will be taking place on 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> July – This is their 12<sup>th</sup> event.

Steve Gear shared that they were unfortunately unsuccessful in their application to The Arts Council for the **Photography Festival**, but they have identified another funding opportunity that they are pursuing. They have had a small amount of funding from Fullabrook and they will be using this to deliver workshops in schools, and have also recently delivered workshops as part of the Art Trail.

They are looking to use the Lantern as the main venue for an event this year.

The event will be 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> October.

We raised that the first **Shanty Festival** was due to start on the 27<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup> June and wished the crew luck.

Paul shared an update about the Coast Week event that was happening the week of this meeting. They did have a trip planned on the Waverely for 500 school kids, but the weather was looking like they would need to cancel.

They did manage to do a successful swimming session with Coastal Swim Coaching though and Paul shared that like the other festivals it is one that is starting off small, but can grow as it goes on.

## 7. Funding Updates/Opportunities

Charmain gave an update on the UK Town of Culture application.

They had emailed to say that due to the huge number of applications, they have extended the shortlisting deadline from “Spring” to the end of July.

They have sent an additional email to give all applicants the opportunity to expand on their response to the question regarding who is the accountable body and the processes that they have in place, so that has been updated and returned.

## 8. AOB

It was asked about whether there was a single page for all events.

We reminded everyone that the Visit Ilfracombe website is the main place to upload any events, but its only successful if a) people upload their events, and b)share that it is a tool that everyone can use.

[Visit Ilfracombe - Your Guide to the Perfect North Devon Holiday](#)

There was a more detailed discussion about other methods of communication including a printed poster of the main festivals in the town for a year, designating a space for pasting posters and

using mechanisms such as the Ilfracombe Guide (but also recognising that the early deadlines can be an issue).

Barbara asked if we had heard when the fair was coming, but collectively none of us knew.

Neil and Laura will chase

Neil updated that there is a street art project in process at the top of Fore Street but it is currently going through planning which is a bit of a nightmare but he's cracking on with that.

Helen Weedon raised the mosaics in The Lanes. They were created in 1996 by the civic society but they could do with a bit of love to bring them back to life and would love to do a community project around it.

Barbara told us that Margaret Sutcliffe was behind it originally so she will get her contact details for Helen.

Helen is a mosaic artist and she is going to meet with ceramicist Fiona Bates as there are also pottery inlays – they will do a recce!