

Culture Team Notes – Monday 3rd August 2026

Location: Lantern Club Room (Upstairs)

Time: 5.30pm



1. Introductions

Charmain Lovett – Project Officer One Ilfracombe/ITC
Laura Donovan – Ilfracombe Town Council Clerk
Neil Ingram – Project Officer One Ilfracombe/ITC
Kara Stevens – Comms & Marketing Officer ITC
Caz Turner – Landmark Theatres
Ben Lyons-Ross – Landmark Theatres
John Sellings – Professional VFX Editor
Helen Pritchard – Owner of Bank
Paul Cooper – Architect
Jamie Russell – Studio Theatre
Cllr Mel Turnbull – Town Council Culture Champion and Hand:Plant Café
Caroline Bramwell – Ilfracombe Shanty Festival
Niki Davis – Ilfracombe Shanty Festival
Will Such – Fore St Association
Kate – Lucia's Pantry
Kelvin Farndell – Ilfracombe Museum
Dan Kehilly-Jones - Silk Crystal Studio
Lindsay Armstrong – Ilfracombe Museum
Paul Bateman – Ilfracombe Business and Tourism Association
Nick Mollart – Ilfracombe Museum
Cllr Malcolm Wilkinson – North Devon Councillor for Coastal Communities
Helen Weedon – Mosaic Artist
Fiona Bates – Local Artist and Co-owner of Aluna Gallery
Alison Mills – North Devon Council Culture Lead
Lee Baxendale – Small Pond Productions
Joanie Baxendale – Social Prescriber and Small Pond Productions
Katy Ashford – Holy Trinity Church
Steve Gear – photographer/videographer – Ilfracombe Photography Festival
Ruth Fuller – Local interested resident
Barbara Clarke – Ilfracombe Business and Tourism Association
Jo Parsons – Researcher and Music Therapist
David Pritchard – Photographer
Caron Hone – Community Arts group
Lauren Booth – Local Interested resident
Lucy Cook – Ilfracombe History & Fashion Festival
Jeanette Cann – Ilfracombe Chocolate Emporium
Martin Cook – Holy Trinity Graveyard Group
Sue Cook – Holy Trinity Graveyard Group
Katheryn Hone – Local interested resident
Karen French – CombeToons and No.43 Gallery
Jennie Cousins – Local Artist
Jayne Peake – Solanda Studio
Cllr David Williams – ITC Youth Champion & Ilfracombe Round Table
Graham Kennedy – Filmmaker

2. Presentation on the UK Town of Culture Bid Overview and – Charmain Lovett

Please see the attached presentation. We have also attached a copy of our UKTOC2028 Expression of Interest – **PLEASE NOTE THAT THESE ARE NOT A PUBLIC DOCUMENTS, SO PLEASE DO NOT SHARE.** We are still very much in the competition phase so details need to be kept a little under wraps at this stage.

Everything is outlined in the powerpoint, but to VERY briefly summarise:

The bid needs to be submitted by the end of November. There will be a site visit in early 2027 and winners will be announced in March 2027.

Our three themes are: Uncovering our History and Coastal Identity, Creative Careers and Young People, and Culture in Unexpected Places.

This HAS to be a very Ilfracombe-centric bid. We intend to utilise local talent to develop this final bid and we want to replicate the genuine, authentic tone that we delivered in the Expression of Interest. The DCMS feedback was very much focussed on Community and that is where we excel as a town so we will build on that.

The bulk of the next 4 months will be spent on Community Engagement, Evaluation of that data, Developing the Programme and then Writing the full bid.

We have £60k to developing our bid and we anticipate that it will be spent on staffing/capacity to pull everything together plus engagement activities.

There will be working groups established – if any one has any areas of expertise (or know someone who does) and wants to support then please contact Charmain via the forms below.

LINKS:

To share ideas about what we could do should we be successful with our bid (or even if we aren't!) then please complete the Google form here - <https://forms.gle/cjmSoW3FA28He9ZVA>

Ilfracombe Culture Audit – Please start filling this in when you get a chance!

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/12EifC_Cv4AKVICW78n51Dmd84DXLMYlofsn1Rmi5ZXs/edit?usp=sharing

(there is a tab at the bottom for 'GENERAL COMMENTS' so anything that you want to say that doesn't quite fit in the form above, then please use this page instead)

If you have kindly offered to volunteer (either general volunteering help, or giving your professional time for free) , then please complete the following form - <https://forms.gle/xwfh9gWXsym4oqPi6>

Arts Council follow up – Following a lovely meeting between Charmain and Arts Council England to discuss who they can support Ilfracombe, Philip Butterworth has offered to come to Ilfracombe and run a session for local creatives/venues to talk through available funding opportunities and advise on eligibility! It's a wonderful offer which we will take up. Details will be circulated via Culture Club once the venue and date have been secured.

3. Ilfracombe Shanty Festival – Event Debrief – Caroline Bramwell & Niki Davis

What a success this first ever Ilfracombe Shanty Festival was!

Attendees couldn't believe that it was the first time they'd don it and they also managed to collect some really handy data/information about the impact of the festival, including:

- 35 bands took part (over 200 individual performers!)
- 13 venues included
- Venues reported a 30% uplift in income compared to the same weekend the previous year – two pubs even ran out of beer!
- The Yacht Club and Dive Club both reported that they took more income over the weekend than ever before
- RNLI took a huge amount of donations (estimated to be around £2500)
- 73.7% of surveyed people travelled to Ilfracombe specifically for the Shanty Festival
- Whilst in Ilfracombe 80.3% spent money in restaurants/eateries, 92.1% in bars/pubs and 68.4% in local shops.
- 82.9% had been to Ilfracombe before, but it was a new experience for 17.1% and 78.9% said they would visit again as a tourism destination and a whacking great 98.7% said that they would return for the Shanty Festival next year!

They received lots of lovely comments from visitors about how it is already better than some established festivals, and that it was a great family-friendly event with lovely fun vibes 😊

They have already set the date for next years festival which will be 10th and 11th July 2027

You can follow them on Facebook here - [\(2\) Facebook](#)

4. Landmark Theatre – Welcome Weekender - Caz Turner

Caz shared with us details about this years Welcome Weekender at The Landmark Theatre.

This year they have over 45 events across the August bank holiday weekend 28th-30th August.

This weekend is all about participation and making culture more accessible to a wider audience, so Under 16s are free and over 16s pay just £10 for a full weekend pass and that means that they can get involved with literally everything on offer including performances, workshops and cinema.

They are also listed as a HAF programme with Devon County Council so that children who are entitled to free school meals can take part for free and be fed.

There are some really great parts of this programme, and some of the highlights from Caz were a Classical Cream Tea, walkabout dragons, Nick Cope (a kids TV favourite) and Gran Halen who'll be putting their OAP spin on rock classics so expect Stairlift to Heaven, Purple Rinse and Hit Me With Your Walking Stick!

This will also be an exciting chance to see some brand new works which have been funded by Landmark Theatres seed funding.

Caz has posters and leaflets printed and ready to go, so if you would like some then please pop her an email on caz.turner@landmarktheatres.co.uk

A link to the Welcome Weekend can be found on their website, here - [Welcome Weekender 2026 - The Landmark, Ilfracombe](#)

5. The Lanes Project – Helen Weedon

Helen shared the brilliant work that herself and Fiona Bates have been undertaking to renew, revitalise and celebrate the mosaics and ceramics in the Lanes that run adjacent to the High Street.

These lanes were historically a highlight of the town and in the late 80s/early 90s the Civic Society led a community-wide cultural participation event to design and create the murals that are in the lanes now, but are in a bit of a sorry state.

Helen has kindly put together a document which I will attach for you to read – it's super interesting so please do have a look!

Helen did also raise that they thought that it would be a nice start point to renovate the archway that comes off Market Street which again has seen better days.

Laura Donovan commented to say that it was already on the Town Councils radar and is in the pipeline for the town's maintenance team.

Off the back of this it has been suggested to set up a working group for this to establish who owns the walls, who is responsible for the clean up of the lanes etc.

6. AOB

Lots of questions, comments and news popped up at this point and I tried to capture as much as I could, but apologies if they are only brief summaries.

We went back to the UKTOC2028 conversation as we established that we needed to start all of the **documentation and research** immediately.

This led on to a conversation about potentially having workshops to support the community and creatives to create their own records, such as video diaries.

Graham Kennedy added that content needs to be fun, watchable and ideally in the right format.

This also sparked a previous conversation that we'd had in previous Culture Club meetings and this time raised by Lee Baxendale about setting up a **central cloud collection point** for everyone's cultural images, videos etc.

Kelvin added that he has a **huge stock of historical images**, including some of the original Lanes project which he will send to Helen.

On a related note Joanie Baxendale asked about a **community calendar** for all the cultural events in Ilfracombe. We do have this with the www.visitilfracombe.com website, but maybe we need to do more to share how to upload events and use the calendar function as not everyone knows they can use this at present.

Barbara made a great point that it would be a worthwhile exercise for everyone to start keeping tabs on how many **volunteering hours** they are giving to all things cultural as this will be extremely handy for future funding applications.

Helen Pritchard from Bank told us about the **window art** that they were doing at Bank and asked about the possibility of doing similar on un-used buildings, but unfortunately there are lots of restrictions around what you can and can't do with empty properties as it affects business rates if windows are wrapped or are covered, even if it is easily removable paint products. Neil Ingram said he would have a chat with Helen about it.

Steve Gear gave a **Photography Festival** Update. [Ilfracombe Photography Festival](#)

This festival, a new one for Ilfracombe, will be on October 10th and 11th and will take place across 12 venues.

At present they have 16 exhibitions and 25 workshops lined up and are working with local schools as well as the museum and library.

One of the highlights of the festival will be the Jack Lowe exhibition which is documentary photographs of the RNLI. We already have one of his images permanently in our lifeboat house, but this will be a full exhibition of his work.

As well as some bigger names, this is very much a grassroots event where people can take photos and then share them. There will also be an open photography competition based on the themes of Place and Vision. They've been working closely with The Art Trail and are looking to create a map similar to the trails.

Unfortunately they weren't successful with their funding application to The Arts Council, but they have managed to raise £6500 and potentially £8500 from local businesses, sponsors and smaller pots of funding!

Paul Bateman added that they are looking to get a Photo booth too. It's been done in other places and is a brilliant way of documenting the community.

We had a plea from Lucy from the **Ilfracombe History and Fashion Festival** to ask people to give their social pages a follow - [Instagram](#)

She also asked if there was anyone who would like to be a volunteer model for Ilfracombe Carnival. She has a huge number of vintage outfits but just needs some models to walk in the procession to promote the event which will take place on the 16th and 17th October at Pip & Jims.

Kate from Lucia's Pantry asked about the potential to **pedestrianise Fore St**, but this is a subject that is at a much higher strategic level as it would involve Devon County Council and transport strategies.

Fore St is already restricted to taxis and loading, so the best option for any events would be to apply for temporary road closures (as they do for the Big Lunch).

It was confirmed that places like Fore St that hold so much history will be included in plans for the UKTOC2028

Neil Ingram had the last word of the meeting to remind everyone that this year's **Sea Ilfracombe Maritime Festival** is Sat 5th and Sunday 6th of September (and also that Charmain's band

www.facebook.com/TheGGmusic is headlining the Saturday evening 😊)

Find out more here - [\(4\) Facebook](#)