

Vale of Glamorgan Council

Arts Strategy 2014-2017

Introduction

This is the second Arts Strategy developed by the Vale of Glamorgan Council. The first Arts Strategy was developed for 2010-2013. During that time, the council entered into a two-year agreement with three other councils (Rhondda Cynon Taff, Merthyr Tydfil and Bridgend), to form a collaboration that aimed to achieve a closer coordination of art services within the area. It also aimed to enable efficiencies to be realised as well as improving the programming, marketing and development. It provided the possibility of increasing opportunities to draw in funding from the Arts Council of Wales and other professional partners to deliver arts activity locally and regionally. Rhondda Cynon Taff Council is the lead organisation for this initiative. The current Memorandum of Understanding will expire on 31 March 2014.

Since adoption of the first Arts Strategy in 2010, other events have impacted on arts in the Vale:

- The economy continues to suffer, and economic austerity in both the public and third sectors continues.
- A successful Eisteddfod took place in Llandow in the Vale of Glamorgan, celebrating the best of Welsh culture and art. The Arts Council of Wales funded a number of arts projects in the Vale of Glamorgan to coincide with the 2012 National Eisteddfod. The projects took place both on and off the Eisteddfod site.
- Arts Council Wales funded a project to revive the internationally renowned 'Barry Summer School' that took place during the 1960s and 70s. A successful retrospective exhibition of art work and workshops from the summer school by students and tutors was shown in Art Central attracting hundreds of visitors to the venue.
- Barry Arts Festival secured ACW funding to create a local multi-arts community event in 2012 and 2013.
- While the Washington Gallery in Penarth was closed, Penarth Arts & Crafts Limited (PACL), in partnership with the Vale Council, has developed the Penarth Pier Pavilion renovating the building and providing a new home for heritage, environmental and multi-arts activities in the eastern Vale.
- The Memorial Hall and Theatre in Barry has developed cinema facilities and is re-launching as an independent arts centre. Cinemas are also now available in Penarth Pavilion and St Donat's Arts Centre.
- The popularity and use of social media has exploded, making this a valuable communication tool for the arts.

Much of the arts activity taking place in the Vale community is provided by the third sector. This is a healthy state of affairs and is to be encouraged. Partnership working with community, independent organisations and individuals will help to draw in funding from a wide range of sources and to increase the arts programme available to the wider public in the Vale of Glamorgan.

The strategy aims to improve communication within and between the council and the arts community, enabling a sharing and dissemination of information and

opportunities. This Arts Strategy aims to continue a clear direction of travel for development of the arts in the Vale of Glamorgan and for those organisations and individuals involved in the arts locally including: venues, community groups, artists and performers, arts organisations and related agencies. It does not speak in any way for the 'Arts Connect' collaboration, which is not yet in a position to develop a regional arts strategy.

Vision for the Arts

Access and participation

In the Vale we want local people and visitors to the area to have access to the arts, both for a general appreciation and to help to define and communicate our cultural identity. We would like to achieve an increased participation in and enjoyment of arts and cultural activities, with all age groups and sections of the community to be able to take part. We will encourage participation in and appreciation of the creative process across all ages and backgrounds, and in both the urban and rural Vale.

Support for the local economy and environment

Cultural industries form a large sector of the local economy, with many artists living and working locally. We see the arts as a tool for regenerating and supporting the local economy and environment. Arts and cultural activities can play a leading role in promoting tourism by attracting people to visit the Vale and contributing to the economy through secondary spend. The Vale of Glamorgan Council has adopted a policy of 'Percent for Art' to increase art in the public realm. Professional artists are commissioned to undertake community consultation and to develop unique and inspiring works to enhance the local environment.

Excellence

A focus on excellence will help to draw regional and national attention to the extraordinary work already taking place in the Vale. Working with high quality arts professionals, we want to strive for excellence in the experience that people receive when they appreciate or participate in arts activities. Combined with good quality venues and well trained and qualified staff the whole package contributes to creating the best possible cultural experience. We aim to provide popular activities, but also provide challenging experiences with new and innovative possibilities.

Strategic Aims

To achieve this vision, the council will:

- Support a variety of art forms and areas of arts activity, to cater for many tastes and interests.
- Ensure that provision for the arts caters for individuals of differing ages and backgrounds, and reflects the diverse language, culture and interests of Vale residents.
- Better communicate arts activity both within and outside of the Vale through improved branding and marketing and social media.
- Promote active participation in artistic activity through the provision and support of workshops and events.
- Promote the use of community venues for participatory community arts opportunities.
- Identify opportunities to promote tourism and the local arts industries.
- Improve the local environment through the development of professionally designed public art.
- Work in partnership with arts organisations to coordinate activity, share skills and join up marketing in order to make best use of resources and to extend opportunities.
- Promote excellence in existing arts venues by collaborating and by providing support to key venues and organisations.
- Introduce new ventures, events and art forms.
- Raise the profile of the arts in the Vale locally, regionally and nationally through the promotion of the unique arts activity and the creation of new opportunities.

Why Support the Arts?

The term 'arts' encompasses and represents a wide range of activity, including the visual arts, crafts, dance, drama, music, literature, film, theatre, festivals and other events. The council supports the arts and cultural activity because it believes that the arts can:

- enhance the quality of life for residents who live and work in the area;
- encourage community involvement as an audience member, participant or volunteer;
- bring communities together, help break down barriers and bring about better understanding between communities;
- encourage tourism and visitors to the area, having a positive economic impact on local businesses and the area as a whole;
- provide a positive image and identity for the area through public art, theatre and gallery venues and events;
- enable communities to feel a sense of pride and place for the area in which they live;
- provide opportunities to address cross cutting issues for the local area.

Arts and cultural industries are fundamental to developing Wales as a dynamic and forward-looking country. The arts sector is an increasingly important part of the economy, offering a valuable export, and is responsible for a growing number of jobs. Playing a positive role in the economy, the arts attract tourists to the area, creating a positive profile and image and making a lasting contribution to improving the local environment through the provision of art in the public realm. Over 2,500 craftspeople work in the craft industry in rural Wales, twice the proportion in the rest of the UK. The arts and creative industries are important employers; one in every 40 people is earning a living from the arts economy or the work it creates.

The arts contribute to community development, social cohesion and community regeneration, creating a sense of belonging and well being. The arts give us pause to think and reflect; they encourage us to question and challenge our perceptions. The arts help us to appreciate what is unique and valuable about the time and place in which we live. It can lift us beyond our day-to-day existence, engaging our emotions and provoking new ideas. The arts help us to express our different cultures and ideas and enable us to communicate these to others.

The arts contribute to personal development, playing an important part in our education and throughout our lives. Participation in arts activities can:

- develop self confidence and esteem
- increase feelings of self worth
- increase creativity and thinking skills
- improve communication of ideas and information
- creates opportunities for self expression
- enhances mental and physical health and well-being.

More than 90% of adults (76%) in Wales support the view that participation in arts and cultural activity helps to build confidence (Source: Arts in Wales Survey 2010). 82% of the population believe that art and culture make Wales a better place to live. The Arts Council of Wales Omnibus Survey 2013 identified that; three in four adults surveyed in 2013 (75%) said they attend at least one arts event a year.

Delivering our vision

Access and Participation

The council is committed to promoting equality of access to a full range of participatory arts activities and events for people of all ages, abilities, cultures and communities. Many of these activities and events will be delivered by partners and community activists. Because the delivery is spread across many providers, there is an increased importance placed on the coordinated marketing and promotion of arts in order to increase access.

As well as improving communication with our audience, we also need to enhance communications between providers. We must continue to develop systems to ensure contact with relevant groups, venues, individuals and organisations in the region to allow for better coordinated delivery of services. We will also support the local branding of the arts to create a higher profile and more efficient publicity.

It is important to reach out to those who may have less opportunity to take part in artistic activity, including the disadvantaged and socially excluded, disabled, those who are older and frail, young people and those living in rural and isolated communities. We will encourage and promote outreach activities to these groups and individuals.

The arts have long been associated with a positive effect on both health and wellbeing. Research by the Chelsea and Westminster Hospital found that live music helped to diminish the levels of anxiety of patients receiving day chemotherapy; while patients exposed to visual arts and live music during the preoperative process in a day surgery unit had lower levels of anxiety and depression. (Arts Council for Wales, Arts, Health and Wellbeing Strategy).

Access and Participation – what have we achieved so far?

Despite the economic recession and the age of austerity, the council has continued to support and promote the arts. We have:

- Undertaken an audit of existing spaces and identified new spaces, with detailed information about their facilities.
- Developed the Arts Forum to cooperate, develop and share ideas and provide mutual support and assistance.
- Worked with Bro Radio to improve communication about arts and events locally.
- Supported the National Eisteddfod 2012, the largest arts and cultural event in Wales.
- Developed our website and social media to provide information about both council-run and community arts activities and events and to promote our venues and activities.
- Financially supported a number of organisations and events to protect and extend their arts programmes.
- Promoted involvement in arts by children as part of the Children and Young People's Plan and the Community Strategy.
- Supported high quality arts activities for children, including Literature Wales projects and exhibitions in Art Central by local schools and colleges and public realm arts projects working with arts professionals.

- Worked with the Youth Offending Service to provide opportunities to participate in the arts.
- Created a 'What's On!' information website/link for children/young people.
- Worked with community education centres, libraries and community centres to encourage a balanced programme of activities.
- Provided opportunities for local arts organisations to promote and publicise their work through exhibitions in Art Central.
- Diversified the provision of activities such as local cinema and exhibitions, through funding and support to local organisations.
- Promoted the use of community venues for arts activities and events.
- Promoted and financially supported the *Night Out* community touring scheme and other similar programmes offered by the Arts Council for Wales.
- Increased the amount of reporting of the arts through Bro Radio and the local press.
- With our partners, secured funding and grants from the Arts Council of Wales to increase opportunities for the development of participatory arts activity, projects exhibitions and events.

Access and Participation – what will we do next?

In order to increase access and participation, the council will promote participation to the most vulnerable groups of people in the Vale:

- Deliver a participative arts project, in collaboration with Arts Connect, to looked after children and to older people living with dementia.
- Promote the Wales Night Out Theatre scheme to Communities First and other areas in the Vale.
- Work with 'Live Music Now! Wales' to target musical activity residential homes and hospitals.
- Develop a sense of ownership and place by engaging the community in participatory arts activity with artists working in the public realm.
- Promote excellence in dance practice through the Arts Connect Advance Dance initiative.
- Develop opportunities for all ages through literature and critical analysis through the South Wales literature development forum and a young critic's initiative through our libraries and schools services.
- Support and promote opportunities for film viewing and making.
- Support young people wanting to forge careers in the music industry in the development of singing and song writing by providing mentoring and guidance, boot camps, competitions and signposting to further career development opportunities in music and the creative industries.
- Support creative learning in schools following the Arts Council of Wales, Arts and Education Review for the Welsh Government.

In the Art Central Gallery, the council will:

- Increase the visits by children and young people and encourage greater use by schools.
- Increase the availability of volunteers to invigilate, interpret and assist in exhibitions.
- Further develop marketing opportunities and initiatives, including web and social media information for the gallery exhibitions, events, workshops and other arts activities.
- Increase opportunities for talks, workshops and conferences.

- Increase international and national exhibition programming.
- Research and identify opportunities to implement the Arts Council of Wales collector plan scheme.

In the Vale, there are many community organisations that foster creative talent and a large number of venues that accommodate a multiplicity of art forms. The venues range between professional fully equipped theatres and galleries to community halls. The venues are often utilised by local groups or individuals, some are particularly well equipped and others limited in their capacity. If they are to be used to best effect, we need a wide awareness of what is available and promotion of the facilities. With this in mind, we will:

- Provide advice and support wherever possible to assist groups in developing and continuing to thrive.
- Support good quality funding applications that will help to implement this strategy.
- Undertake consultation with the local community, through public opinion and citizens' panel surveys on arts participation and preferences.
- Develop a more coordinated approach to marketing arts activity in the Vale and where possible through our regional collaboration.
- Improve web and social networking marketing information.

Providing opportunities for children and young people to experience high quality arts helps them to develop not only their own artistic skills and cultural understanding, but also encourages the development of their talents in other aspects of their lives. In 2013, the Arts Council of Wales Children's Omnibus Survey identified '84% of children and young people took part in arts activities once a year or more, an increase of four percentage points since 2010. Creativity fosters mental growth by providing opportunities for trying out new ideas, new ways of thinking and problem solving. Creative activities acknowledge and celebrate children's uniqueness and diversity; and offer significant opportunities to personalise learning.

Arts activities for children and young people are delivered during their learning and leisure time by schools, the council's arts development programme, libraries, the youth service and playschemes in parks and open spaces, through community arts workshops and classes and by our partners in the third sector. Opportunities for participation are accessed via local arts venues and community facilities, theatres, festivals and events.

There are many reasons why children and young people, particularly the most disadvantaged, do not engage in artistic activities: poor quality provision; a limited choice of activities; and barriers such as parental influence, cost and availability of transport. By not engaging in these positive activities, young people can miss out on opportunities to improve their health, learning and personal and social development.

There are many arts venues and providers throughout the Vale, offering opportunities for all ages to participate in or attend arts events and activities. One of the main schools activities is the Vale's annual schools evening of dance called 'Best Foot Forward' an initiative operated by the Memorial Hall Theatre. The event provides opportunities for young people to participate in a performance production and engage with other schools in a professional theatre environment. We also engage with schools via Art Central providing opportunities for workshops visiting exhibitions and

engaging with a wide range of arts activity that targets the requirements of the national curriculum.

In order to increase participation by children and young people, the council will:

- Promote taster sessions that sign post children and young people to other continuous or sustainable activities.
- Promote careers in the arts.
- Increase school use of Art Central.
- Develop a sense of ownership and place by engaging schools and youth groups in participatory arts activity with artists working in the public realm.
- Support the Arts Council of Wales Night Out Young Promoters Project, which teaches young people the practical skills needed to arrange a professional theatre show in a venue in their local area.
- Market and promote through the web and social media arts activities specifically for children and young people.

Lifelong learning opportunities and further education establishments offer many courses to encourage adult learners to develop their creative talents. They provide classes and participatory activities to many residents, across both rural and urban areas. We must work closely together in order to avoid duplication of activity and to support adult learners in developing and exhibiting their creative work. In order to achieve this, we will:

- Provide advice and training for local arts organisations in order to sustain their levels of membership and participation.
- Promote and market arts opportunities available through web and social media networking sites.
- Support exhibitions by students and artists of differing levels at Art Central.
- Provide advice and information regarding arts, funding marketing and other support mechanisms.
- Promote arts exchange opportunities where artists can meet each other to exchange ideas and work together.
- Develop, organise, and promote courses, workshops, conferences and training opportunities to the arts community for arts training and continued professional development.

Supporting the local economy and environment

Working with professional arts organisations and individuals provides opportunities for the development of the arts in the Vale to increase investment and tourism.

Support for the local economy and environment – what have we achieved so far?

Following the development of the public art strategy for the Vale of Glamorgan in June 2003 the council adopted a 'percent for art' policy. Through this policy, we have worked towards developing and increasing (public art) art in the public realm by:

- Securing funding for the development of art in the public realm through Section 106 agreements with developers.
- Provided professional arts advice on many of the 106 applications which included a percent for art requirement for art in the public realm.

- Promoted community participation in the development of art in the public realm, through schools and community workshops.
- Encouraged independent organisations, developers and businesses to embrace the council's 'percent for art' scheme.
- Engaged with external public art agencies to incorporate good practice in the development of art in this area.
- Organised one of only two Public Art conferences in Wales in partnership with the Arts Council of Wales, Ixia - Public Art Think Tank and CREW at Art Central Gallery for anyone working or interested in developing arts in the public realm.
- Mapped art work in the public realm and published it online in order to raise the profile of arts in the environment, boosting tourism and supporting the economy.

The Vale plays host to a wide variety of arts events all year round that promote the Vale artistically and musically. The 2012 National Eisteddfod was hosted by the Vale and incorporated the very best of Welsh culture and arts. Other annual highlights include the Vale of Glamorgan Festival, Music in the Vale, the Penarth Summer Festival and the Vale of Glamorgan Agricultural Show. Local attractions such as Dyffryn Gardens and Victorian Fair in Llantwit Major and Beyond the Border Storytelling Festival also provide an entertaining programme of arts events and activities. In order to support events, the council has:

- Worked with the events organisers in developing opportunities for marketing and promoting artistic activities.
- Supported artistic venues and events through deeds of grant agreements.
- Supported and provided opportunities for participation by the local community in events.
- Supported the marketing of arts events.
- Provided financial support to Bro Radio, which has enthusiastically promoted arts events through editorial and outside broadcasts.
- Advised on artistic programmes, operations and funding applications.
- Created an online directory of arts organisations, events and activity taking place.
- Displayed arts marketing materials throughout council venues within the Vale.
- Publicised the arts through publications, website and social media.
- Assisted in promoting local art work through the council's facilities.

Support for the local economy and environment – what will we do next?

In order to support the local economy and environment, we will:

- Create good quality marketing information;
- Jointly promote local facilities that are complementary to the promotion of arts and tourism such as places to eat and accommodation;
- Link with tourism campaigns and partner organisations to promote the Vale as an arts tourism destination;
- Promote the sale of art works on show by local and visiting artists.

Excellence

Sustainability in the arts is encouraged by the opportunity to establish projects that are long lasting for the community and are environmentally sound. Approved revenue funded arts organisations are subject to a 'Deed of Grant'; funding is generally available over three years. Deeds of Grant include agreements about how

performance will be measured. Agreements are regularly monitored. Current schemes can be found on the council's website.

The council operates a number of funding schemes which are available to arts organisations in the area. The application process allows arts organisations to apply to the council on an annual basis for financial assistance.

We also support organisations in funding bids to other agencies. The council's Arts Development Officer assists with providing information and advising on applications to external grants bodies.

Excellence – what have we achieved so far?

To support the growth of the arts in the area, the council has:

- Supported arts providers to achieve funding for large-scale events (Barry Arts Festival, Coed Hills, etc.).
- Supported the Memorial Hall and Theatre through direct funding in purchasing a projector to develop cinema.
- Continued to provide support to Beyond the Borders Storytelling Festival, the Vale of Glamorgan Music Festival and St Donat's Art Centre.
- Hosted national HMD (Holocaust Memorial Day) commemorations.
- Challenged attitudes through exhibitions, such as the Gypsy and Traveller exhibition (as part of the HMD commemoration 2013).
- Supported the renovation of the Penarth Pier Pavilion.
- Financially supported community organisations and young promoters in organising Night Out events in local communities.
- Created an Arts Forum for local providers as a network to exchange ideas and work together.
- Worked with Arts Connect to promote joint programming, marketing and fundraising across the four local authorities.
- Secured Arts Council of Wales funding to research and celebrate Barry Summer School with a retrospective exhibition, workshops and workshops.
- Brought internationally known artists, such as Terry Setch RA and the WWII artist Ray Howard-Jones, to Art Central.
- Celebrated the variety of local, regional and national art work in the Art Central Gallery.
- Financially supported St Donat's Art Centre infrastructure.
- Supported the development of Art in the Public Realm.
- Developed skills through various conferences and courses, delivered locally, such as the Arts Council of Wales, Ixia - Public Art Think Tank, CREW conference, Barry Summer School Seminar and the Learned Society Wales event held in Art Central.

To improve coordination of what we do, providers in the Vale need to work more cooperatively and successfully together, providing activities and events which complement each other rather than competing with each other for audience. In this way we can build audiences and extend provision.

Excellence – what will we do next?

In order to progress this vision, the council will:

- Continue to work with arts providers across the Vale to further develop links and partnerships.
- Progress the development of an exhibition policy for the Art Central Gallery.
- Continue to promote the development of the fabric and infrastructure of local venues.
- Continue to promote more collaborative arrangements between providers, both locally and regionally;
- Work with Arts Connect to improve marketing and programming across the region.
- Work with the Arts Council of Wales and others to promote and support the arts and secure funding local and regional arts organisations.

Measuring Success

The following measures will be monitored to

- Percentage of the population saying that they had attended/participated in art activities in the Vale during the previous year (measured via the biennial public opinion survey).
- Number of hits on the council's arts webpage and number of social media followers.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Arts Strategy and action plan will be reviewed and updated every three years in order to monitor progress and adjust in line with the resources available.

The action plan will be monitored six monthly according to the Council's Performance Management Framework.