



VALE of GLAMORGAN COUNCIL
**Arts and Culture Strategy:
An Aspirational and
Culturally Vibrant Vale**

2017 - 2022



Strong Communities with a Brighter Future

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The Vision

“Art is not what you see but what you make others see”

Degas

This strategy sets out a delivery plan for increasing arts activity in the Vale of Glamorgan and developing new opportunities to create a 21st century arts programme that reinforces a sense of cultural identity and belonging, and to ensure access and engagement opportunities across all arts and culture is accessible to all residents and visitors to the Vale of Glamorgan.

The vision is for an arts offer that creates a lifelong learning pathway that connects with the lives of the citizens in the Vale and provides new and evolving opportunities for artistic expression and appreciation.

It will be achieved by building on current partnerships and forging new ones, to ensure that investment from the Vale of Glamorgan Council is maximised for the widest public benefit, while ensuring that the offer is sustainable for the future reflecting the Vale of Glamorgan Council’s Corporate Plan wellbeing outcome for

“An Aspirational and Culturally Vibrant Vale”



Vale of Glamorgan Council - Art Central Gallery – ‘10’ Open Exhibition 2017
Showcasing over 90 artists and 220 art works

Introduction

“The arts bring enjoyment and inspiration to our everyday lives. Taking part in the arts, whether as an individual or a member of a community, helps bind us together in a celebration of our common humanity. But the arts can also help us to understand what is distinctive and important to protect in the differences that define us all. The arts help us to explore and express the things we have in common and our place in the world. “Ed.

Nick Capaldi, Chief Executive Arts Council of Wales

This document sets out the context and vision for the arts and culture in The Vale of Glamorgan to 2022. The Council is a member of Arts Connect, a partnership of local authority arts services from across the Central South region of Wales.

The strategy is directly related to the Vale of Glamorgan Council’s Corporate Plan, ‘Strong Communities with a Bright Future’, and is influenced by current legislation, with research, strategies and documents produced by significant partners such as the ‘Welsh Government Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015’ and the ‘Light Springs through the Dark: A Vision for Culture in Wales’ report. The strategy is reflective of the recent Arts Council of Wales report, ‘Building a more resilient Arts Council of Wales – New ways of working’.

The Vale of Glamorgan Council believe that the arts have an important role to play in the health, wealth and happiness of the residents of the Vale, and this is linked to the Council’s commitment to the Welsh Government’s The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, 2015.

Culture and the arts can be seen by some as a luxury, however the Vale of Glamorgan firmly believes that they are a fundamental part of everyday life, with the ability to enrich the lives of our citizens, promote our culture and facilitate strong communities, with a bright future.

Some of the benefits include:

- Events attracting local and international engagement in celebrating our regional distinctiveness
- Arts as a contributor to projects embedded in community regeneration programmes
- Shaping our identity through public artworks
- Enabling workshops that foster community cohesion and inclusion, offering a springboard to further lifelong learning
- Arts and culture with a primary or secondary health and well-being focus, integral to the everyday life of the community

According to the ‘Statistical First Release National Survey for Wales’, April – March 2017 by Welsh Government states that: in the last 12 months

60% of people had visited an arts event in Wales

29% had participated in an arts activity

33% of people visited a public library in Wales at least once a year; of those, 95% were satisfied with their experience

As the creative industries are becoming such a vital component of the Welsh economy, it is increasingly important to foster the arts at all levels to ensure that citizens of the Vale of Glamorgan benefit from this growth area.

Background

The Arts Development Service works in partnership with other departments across the Vale of Glamorgan Council, with volunteers and other partners, to deliver a frontline service that includes:

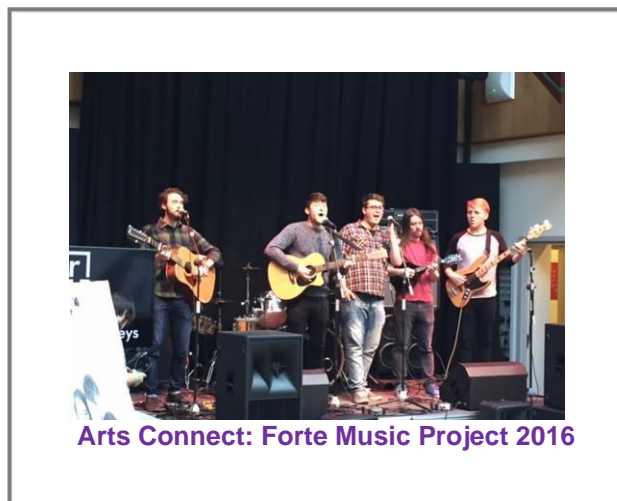
- Supporting the development and implementation of the council's corporate vision in the form of the Corporate Plan
- Providing on-going professional advice, information and advocacy for the arts community in the Vale of Glamorgan
- Facilitating the development of arts and cultural activity locally and regionally.
- Ensuring that arts and cultural opportunities are accessible for all by marketing arts and cultural activities to enable the widest communication of these opportunities, including: exhibitions; theatre performance; cinema; music; dance; arts festivals; talks; workshops and classes etc.
- Providing a bilingual service in both the Welsh and English language and other support as requested according to equalities legislation
- Striving to address barriers to accessing and participating in the arts
- Widening access to the arts through local, regional and national collaborations and project development, including the Arts Council of Wales, local partnerships, Arts Connect, Arts Development UK, and other collaborations with the local authority
- Working closely with the Arts Council of Wales to continue to deliver creative programming such as the Night Out Theatre Scheme and The Creative Learning Through the Arts programmes
- Managing the day-to-day programming and operation of Art Central gallery, including support and training for the gallery volunteers
- Developing arts projects and initiatives with libraries, schools, community groups, arts organisations, other venues and individual artists and other partners
- Sharing information in a variety of media and areas including those working in the creative industries for the support, networking and marketing of arts activities and opportunities through 'Artists Exchange'
- Managing the development of Public Art (public realm arts projects) promoting place-making and community cohesion across the Vale

- Contributing to the local economy by showcasing and supporting local artists and makers i.e. at Art Central and through public art commissions and other opportunities
- Working with the heritage sector to support projects that use contemporary arts practice for interpretation and education programmes

The Council is a member of ArtsConnect, a collaboration between local authorities working in partnership across the region. The first of its kind in Wales, this unique group is bound by a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), with partnership between the Vale of Glamorgan, Rhondda Cynon Taff, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough, Bridgend County Borough/Awen Cultural Trust, Caerphilly and Cardiff Councils. The collaboration strives to increase arts funding opportunities to the communities in these areas.

This initiative extends the reach of opportunities for people of all ages to engage in the arts and connect creatively across the region. The members of Arts Connect share their expertise and resources in order to improve the range and quality of arts experiences on offer to ensure that the arts in Wales contribute to:

- Emotional and physical well being
- Improving literacy and numeracy
- Creating vibrant, safe and sustainable communities
- Reducing the impact of poverty and improving the prosperity of Wales.



The Arts in the Vale

The arts, both visual and performing, are well represented across the Vale of Glamorgan in the form of individual creative practitioners, arts venues, arts organisations, voluntary, independent and amateur groups and partnership projects and collaborations (Appendix 2).

Art forms include: Fine art; applied art/craft; photography; creative writing; drama and theatre; dance; music; cinema and some digital arts.

There are a number of arts organisations and groups that are very active in the Vale, but there are also national (Wales and UK) organisations and non-arts organisations supporting arts projects in the area as well.

A recent consultation with venues across the Vale of Glamorgan identified that in 2016 there were approximately half a million visits to arts venues across the county. The population (2011 census) is 128,000, so this equates to nearly two visits for each resident of the Vale. The venues are included in Appendix 3.

The Arts Development Service (ADS) hosts Artist Exchange, a directory of artists in the Vale of Glamorgan, which actively encourages the promotion and support of, and engagement with, artists of all disciplines. The service is offered via the Council's website.

The ADS also supports: artists through the Arts Council of Wales' Creative learning programme in schools; Arts Connect and the A2Connect partnerships; Forte Music programme; the It's My Shout! initiative – specialising in finding and developing new talent for the film industry; Art Central Gallery Friends; arts; cultural venues and a wide range of groups and organisations.

When it comes to art in the public realm, the Vale of Glamorgan is one of the most active local authorities in Wales. Currently, each new development is required to set aside a minimum one per cent of the overall budget for commissioning artists to contribute to the public realm element of the project. This element is included in special planning guidance, under a Section 106 agreement, and art work proposals are subject to approval by the Vale of Glamorgan Council.

The Arts and the Vale of Glamorgan Council's Corporate Strategy

An Inclusive and Safe Vale

"Citizens of the Vale of Glamorgan have a good quality of life and feel part of the local community"

The arts are intrinsically inclusive. Every artist wants the widest audience for their work, and to have the ability to bring people together to share experiences, either as audiences or active participants.

The Vale of Glamorgan offers a diverse range of arts activities and events. Much of what is on offer is either free or at relatively low cost. This is an important factor for those who have to travel to specific venues or activities in what is a predominantly rural area.

While the Council recognises the value of the arts in their own right, as a means for creative expression, with the ability to transform lives, it is fair to say that the arts can also provide a creative vehicle for engaging people in and delivering against other agendas. Examples include: arts for health; arts in education and lifelong learning; community arts; arts and regeneration; arts for social inclusion; arts for older people; arts and the environment; arts and disability; arts and business; arts and the creative industries; arts and science; arts and technology and cultural tourism.

There has been an encouraging increase in arts activity designed for audiences and participants with disabilities, illnesses or impairments in recent years. From special cinema screenings for people with Dementia, to exhibitions involving people with mental health issues, to the support for a disabled artist to show in a professional gallery (Tu Fewn - Ffotogallery at Turner House), to the establishment of an arts and culture 50+ forum for older people in the Vale, to projects involving the Roma community, the Vale has seen some really interesting and inspiring work, designed

to ensure that all groups and abilities are included. The annual Holocaust Memorial Day exhibition at Art Central engages with schools and invites a large visiting public to engage with a theme of difference and diversity in positive way. The ArtsConnect Forte music project provides professionally led Master classes, skill and career development opportunities in the music industry today.

Actions - An Inclusive and Safe Vale

1. Refresh ADS marketing plan to ensure maximum reach for opportunities and events, including updating social media policy in line with corporate guidelines.
2. Build upon the network with venues to develop arts volunteering opportunities improve on employment prospects, skill development and training, social interaction and communication opportunities.
3. Strengthen links with schools to explore arts opportunities in and after core school times.
4. Continue to work with A2Connect to ensure all schools in the Vale are aware of and have access to the opportunities arising from the ACW - Creative Learning Through the Arts programme, Criw Celf and Night Out Scheme
5. Formulate new strategies and social media campaigns for communicating with children and young people in the Vale to ensure effective reach of arts opportunities.
6. Continue to work with Arts Connect to identify and secure partnership funding to deliver high quality arts projects for the communities in the Vale and South Central region.

An Environmentally Responsible and Prosperous Vale

The Vale of Glamorgan has a strong and sustainable economy and the local environment is safeguarded for present and future generations

The creative industries is acknowledged as being the largest economic growth sector for the UK and is an increasingly important contributor to the Welsh economy, together with tourism, of which cultural tourism is an important sub sector.

As well as offering support and career development advice to arts professionals in the Vale, the ADS supports local artists and makers through exhibitions and the potential to sell their work at the Art Central gallery in Barry, and through events such as the Crafters' Festival in Southerndown. Significant commissioning opportunities, as a result of the public art strategy, together with fees for workshops, performances, readings, adult education teaching, artist in residence projects, demonstrations, talks and other events, also contribute to the financial viability of arts professionals in the Vale. In turn, these small or micro businesses support subsidiary businesses providing, for example, tools, materials, printing, insurance, accountancy and other services, recycling public funds back through the local economy.

The Department of Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) reported that the creative industries are now worth £84.1 billion per year to the UK economy, having grown by 8.9%

The Arts Development Service strives to apply best practice to its dealings with arts professionals. These can be defined as follows:

- Transparent selection processes and constructive feedback
- Appropriate fee scales and remuneration to national standards
- Working with arts professionals for the delivery of public art commissions, creative workshops, training & skills-sharing and design
- Clear and consistent credits on use of images and copyright assignment
- Ongoing commitment to professional development and training opportunities

The ADS has instigated a number of projects to raise awareness of recycling and the environment. The recent major commission for Barry Island – Gordon Young’s Traversing Wall, was made from recycled plastic.

Actions - An Environmentally Responsible and Prosperous Vale

1. Explore training needs of arts professionals in the Vale and identify opportunities with the Vale’s Adult Learning Service
2. Identify commercial partners to develop business and professional skills of creative practitioners in the Vale to make them more economically sustainable as small businesses
3. Create a networking group for designer-makers/craftspeople across the Vale, in partnership with Creative Rural Communities
4. Identify artists working with digital technology in the Vale and establish new skills-based workshops
5. Identify opportunities for establishing affordable artists’ studios and workshops in the Vale
6. Map arts venues in the Vale for arts marketing and cultural tourism purposes
7. Promote cinema equipment loans
8. Work with St Donats Arts Centre towards a new film festival for the Vale

An Aspirational and Culturally Vibrant Vale

All Vale of Glamorgan citizens have opportunities to achieve their full potential

Artworks in the public realm can help to create a distinct local identity, enhancing the environment and creating a sense of place.

The emphasis is on good design, a collaborative, creative approach, problem solving and innovation and, therefore, public artworks are site-specific, unique and are by no means a mass-produced object, or reproduction.

Council departments work closely together to identify opportunities for delivering public art projects, usually commissioned by, or working in collaboration with, developers, architects, landscape designers and other stakeholders. The Vale of Glamorgan’s Public Art Strategy requires the Council will seek to secure a minimum of 1% of the development project costs for the commissioning of public art.

To ensure that opportunities for community engagement are integral to the project, arts professionals, with appropriate knowledge and experience, are employed to manage public art commissions.

The Council's key objectives in developing public art are:

- Achieving high standards of design
- Respecting local distinctiveness
- Enhancing diversity
- Involving local people to encourage an appreciation of the natural and built environment
- Promoting a sense of community pride



Some beneficial outcomes of the public art commissioning process include:

- Encouraging community response and dialogue
- Celebrating community, local history, cultural heritage and traditions
- Providing new opportunities for cultural tourism
- Addressing public safety issues (e.g. through integrated lighting or traffic control elements)
- Strengthening lifelong learning through related workshops
- Providing employment opportunities, skills acquisition or work experience for local artists and the wider community.
- Contributing towards health and well-being, e.g. in hospital or care environments.
- Attracting businesses/inward investment through environmental enhancement.

Professional artists and/or designer makers lead the creative design workshops for the development of a public art work, allowing for engagement and consultation with the community. A key element in developing art works sited in public spaces, this connection and interaction fosters a sense of ownership, recognition and belonging, creating longevity for the project beyond the commissioning process.

As an example, the annual Holocaust Day Memorial (HMD) exhibition at Art Central has proved to be a powerful tool for discussion around issues of difference and diversity, displacement and historical reporting. Each year, artists make responses to the theme of HMD and there are workshops and talks for schools and the general public. The exhibition contributes to cultural tourism providing a programme of community and professional high quality art exhibitions, talks and workshops enabling the local and visiting community to broaden their knowledge and skills.

The arts, as already evidenced in the Donaldson Report *Successful Futures* (2014), can be instrumental in tackling poor performance in literacy, numeracy and use of digital technology. While the Vale already has a number of schools involved in the Lead Creative Schools project, funded by Welsh Government and the Arts Council of Wales, this work could be expanded and continued through a complimentary programme delivered by the ADS, in partnership with the Vale's Learning and Skills directorate. The Vale ADO is already a member of A2 Connect, the arts and education network for South Central Wales, which runs a complimentary programme

of projects and training alongside the Lead Creative Schools Scheme, enabling more teachers to extend their creative skills in the classroom.

To date these partnerships have been developed on a project-by-project basis, but this strategy proposes a smarter way of using the arts to make public funding go further and for Council priorities to be met in ways that are likely to be more sustainable e.g. opportunities for section 106 (financial contributions) can be explored with developers. They currently provide for the advancement of public art projects, this funding could potentially contribute to other projects such as exhibition sponsorship for the arts.

The Vale of Glamorgan currently benefits from a dedicated arts gallery, known as Arts Central. The gallery is currently used to host a number of events linked to the performing arts, as well as talks, seminars, readings, recitals, etc., attracting visitors to view local, national and international exhibitions through a variety of media.

The Council works with organisations that support the recruitment of volunteers and has a cohort of dedicated individuals who receive training to invigilate and assist with supporting the exhibition programme. The development of volunteers is already having a positive impact on individuals, the arts community and cultural businesses in the area.

The gallery also works closely with Art Central Friends, a dedicated group of volunteers who help to support the Council's art gallery. Their main aim is to assist by promoting and encouraging interest in Art Central and the events they host. The Friends host a number of events throughout the year including artist's talks; supporting private views; organise various day trips; book launches and other activities.

In April 2017, an Arts strategy survey was conducted (See Appendix 1). It demonstrated that overall, although events hosted by the Vale were highly regarded, the majority of patrons only engaged with events less than 5 times a year, with the exception of the performing arts.

The survey highlighted that out of the 128,000 residents, only 127 engaged with the arts survey (0.01% of the population). Clearly, more needs to be done to engage more of the community with local artists and cultural events, and to reduce attrition rates amongst service users.

The Vale of Glamorgan Council's arts offer provides a variety of pathways to learning and skills, including volunteering and training to bolster career opportunities. As such, a number of specific outcomes linked to relaunching Arts Central have been identified, aimed at establishing provision for 21st Century artistic expressions with a variety of digital media and new technology, changing the focus of Arts Central into a creative development space. This ethos enables new opportunities for engagement through Adult and Community Learning courses aimed at 21st century arts, widening the exposure, appeal and audience for the arts in the Vale.

To that end, the establishment of a new central community café within Arts Central is a key priority, widening access to local artistic works while providing a relaxing environment for patrons to engage with their surroundings. This is an exciting

opportunity for the community and will create new opportunities for the public to engage with arts, culture, the community, and what's on offer.

Actions - An Aspirational and Culturally Vibrant Vale

1. Update the Vale of Glamorgan Public Art Strategy. *(There is a separate Public art strategy that addresses the legal and procurement protocol for the development of public art)*
2. Map a public art trail for the Vale, including historical and contemporary artworks for public benefit and cultural tourism purposes
3. Refine inter-departmental working arrangements for public art projects to ensure maximum effectiveness and community benefit – (Develop a cross council arts board)
4. Explore commercial opportunities through Art Central gallery and the Hub.
5. Establish a new café within Arts Central
6. Create new digital focused workshops and courses run at Arts Central, through the Adult and Community Learning service
7. Promote delegation of art throughout a number of existing venues within the Vale (i.e. libraries) to increase exposure and generate new interest
8. Investigate better integration of the Arts Hub with Barry Library

An Active and Healthy Vale

Residents of the Vale of Glamorgan lead healthy lives and vulnerable people are protected and supported

“...making and consuming art lifts our spirits and keeps us sane. Art like science and religion helps us make meaning from our lives, and to make meaning is to make us feel better”.

Grayson Perry - Artist

There is a long and respected track record of pioneering work in the field of arts and health in Wales. While the HeARTh gallery, at Llandough hospital is the most visible arts and health project in the Vale, there have been numerous projects designed to promote health and well-being, including:

- Live Music Now (older people with dementia)
- Gordon Young's Traversing Wall, on Barry Island (to encourage people of all ages to be physically active)
- The Gwanwyn Festival (arts festival for older people)
- Dementia-friendly cinema screenings at the Memo, which is also a member of the Hynt accessible theatre scheme.
- The Penarth Learning Community public art programme, which included a major glass commission artist led workshops for all pupils, a series of public art commissions and a six month residency for older people exploring 'Memories' at Golau Caredig in Barry

While dance and movement and drama classes promote a more physical, active lifestyle, many other arts activities have proven to be beneficial for mental health issues and for those who are feeling isolated and alone.

The Public Service Board's survey of local well-being 'Let's Talk' (2016) identified a number of arts and cultural opportunities in the Vale.



'Barry Island Traversing Wall' by Gordon Young – made from recycled plastic and climbing aids that reflect the history, complementing the surrounding environment. This public art work displays an interactive wall contributing to the physical health and wellbeing for all.

Actions - An Active and Healthy Vale

1. Develop an arts and health strategy following the Welsh Government and Arts Council of Wales arts and health initiative which is currently in consultation.
2. Continue to work with Arts Connect to deliver high quality arts and health projects for the communities in the Vale and in the region.
3. Promote good accessibility practice in Vale venues.
4. Work with partners specifically delivering creative cultural arts programmes targeting specific health issues.

Information Links

The Department of Digital, Culture, Media & Sport report on the Creative Industries
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/creative-industries-worth-almost-10-million-an-hour-to-economy>

Professor Donaldson Report, *Successful Futures*
<http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/150225-successful-futures-en.pdf>

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
<http://gov.wales/docs/dsjlg/publications/150623-guide-to-the-fg-act-en.pdf>

Light Springs through the Dark: A Vision for Culture in Wales
<http://gov.wales/docs/drah/publications/161213-a-vision-for-culture-in-wales-en.pdf>

Culture and Poverty – A report by Baroness Kay Andrews
<http://gov.wales/docs/drah/publications/140313-culture-and-poverty-en.pdf>

Inspire - Our Strategy for Creativity and the Arts in Wales
http://www.arts.wales/c_corporate-plans-and-strategies/inspire-strategy