**Cranbrook Town Council Agenda Item No.**

**22 January 2024**

# ARTS AND CULTURE FORUM

## Meeting held 12th June 2024(ZOOM)

Agenda for Arts and Culture Forum Wednesday, 12th June, 2024,

Members of Arts and Culture Forum Councillors: J Bull, A Mendham, R Doorbar, O Davey, P Fernley, N Hookway, V Johns, J Whibley, Sneller, I Barlow, S Gazzard, T Olive, J Brown and C Buchan

1) Counc Nick Hookway was appointed Vice Chair

2) Minutes of the previous meeting were approved, Apologies and declarations of interest were noted

3) **Museum Development South West** - report on progress of the East Devon Culture Strategy Presentation by Jo Cairns.

South West Museum Development (SWMD) is a business-to-business sector support programme providing development services to the museum and heritage sector in the south west of England. The following museums in East Devon benefit from Museum Development services provided by SWMD:

• Allhallows Museum • Axminster Heritage Centre • Exmouth Museum • Fairlynch Museum and Arts Centre • Sidmouth Museum • Ottery St Mary Heritage Museum • Whimple Heritage Centre

All museums except for Sidmouth Museum are classed as Micro Museums receiving less than 10,000 visitors per annum.

When we get a museum in Cranbrook it is likely to fall into this category. When I asked Jo if she supported new museums from the new towns that were coming onstream, such as Cranbrook, she was positive about that and would help get it accreditated, meaning it could apply for more funding than one which isn’t.

Most important point here is that Chair Counc Nick Hookway thanked me for bringing this to his attention as EDDC had forgotten about such a provision for Cranbrook and he would bring it up at council for provision perhaps in the Cranbrook new town centre.

In 2023/24 the following services were provided to museums: Museum Development Officer support • Specialist services: digital, conservation and collections • Technical Accreditation advice to support Accreditation Returns and applications to the scheme • 14 training attendances to the SW Museum Skills training programme • Small Grants programmes • SW Museum Skills training programme

Just examples of the resources that could be accessed via this avenue. Especially small funding stream. Contact Jo Cairns at SWMD .

**4) Villages in Action** - report on progress of the East Devon Cultural Strategy

Presentation by Mair George.

The main thrust was rural communities do not fit into a one size fits all policy, and Cranbrook’s unique demographics would bear this out.

Having said that her argument that the artists they promoted should be suitably recompensed doesn’t sit with the ability of that localities to pay, which may have impacted on our experience as far as our own Moomin Valley production.

Mair outlined some of the VIA’s positive projects, such as the ZEST groups ventures into care homes dealing with dementia in residents. Men’s mental health workshops such as ‘Alright Mate?’ touring East Devon have been a source of comfort to a neglected group in society.

As dementia rates rise and mental health issues impact more, in Cranbrook as much as anywhere, this is something that may be helpful to our residents and perhaps kept in mind. As a general point the VIA site will flag up shows and activities available here in Devon which may be of interest to culturally starved Cranberries.

I did question Mair about the fact that 60 percent of audiences are 35 years old plus. Being more solvent, available and motivated might explain the skew in the audience figures. She accepted this but said that traditionally this had always been the case but that they were looking to the next generation to engage with. Noble but our experience here in Cranbrook is that even when younger audiences are targeted that audience may not respond in the same way as older audiences, or be as eager to take up art opportunities and be willing to pay for them.

One interesting point was made by a representative for Tithe Barn, who commented that there was a dearth of cultural activities where she lives, and asked whether the VIA responded to invitation rather than outreaching independently. Mair responded by saying that they were usually volunteer led, whereby a local volunteer would initiate contact and then be active in promotion, organisation and running the event. With the death of the Village Hall committees they had been a noticable decline in such interactions with the VIA.

**5) Arts and Culture East Devon update and Arts Council bid**

ACED had introduced a 18-30 mentoring scheme, whereby young people interested in pursuing a career, not just in the Arts and Culture itself, but in the facilitation and fostering of the arts, could be mentored by a member of the network. This network is now 174 members strong (a member being an individual or organisation linked to the Forum) Possible information resource to our residents, and mentoring opportunity may be of interest to like minded young Cranberries, if they should contact us re advice in this field.

Creative Fund East Devon update. After the first round of bids for arts projects of bids up to £3000(at least one from Cranbrook) out of 17 bids, 10 were successful. Good hit rate. The next round of bids is now open, until Nov 2024, which may be of interest to Cranberries needing funding for a specific arts project.

Sarah Elghady talked about the bids EDDC were making to the Arts Council. One for THG regarding updating the Creative cabin outreach programme. The creative cabin is proving an awkward beast and not very green, so a more manageable, foldable replacement is being bid for which can be transported in the back of a car/van. The other bid is by the EDDC cultural on behalf of the ED museums to help ED museums refine their exhibitions and displays so that the climate change message is clarified and focused.(I had to ask Sarah to explain this as it wasn’t exactly clear from the bid!)

**6) Thelma Hulbert Gallery update and Arts Council bid Verbal update.** Presentation from Gemma Girvan, THG officer.

From Nov23rd, there will be a new exhibition of 60 new and established artists, many local. Opportunity for talented Cranberries to have their work exhibited, if not now in the future?

Gemma described about how they have been working with local schools(Honiton) and showcased the results at the THG. Opportunity for schools in Cranbrook to work with a prominent local gallery? Flag up with CEC? These events feature in most of the local press so would highlight our town.

There has been live theatre put on at the gallery recently. Opportunity for Cranberries to see avant garde theatre?

A prominent artist (can’t read my writing John D...something)gives talks to local artists, giving advice and encouragement to aspirationals. Opportunity for local artists

Creative cabin is out and about. Coming to near us, Whimple. Opportunity for engaging with local culture.

**7) Cultural tourism update**

Presentation by Gerri Panteva.

Apart from the East Devon Tourist Network which can be used to flag up our local events, such as Cranbrook Festival to tourists in the area, which we are already using, Gerri talked about the new Cultural Tourism Map. This is an interactive map which identifies local tourist spots, then allows the user/tourist to click onto the site which then further directs them. This is not the sole property of EDDC who are developing it, but would be free to be used on other sites, an example of which she gave as Visit Sidmouth. It is due to be available from September this year.

This means we would be allowed to take this map and use it on our own site. There probably wouldn’t be many sites here in Cranbrook at present, but certainly our greatest asset, the country park. It could, however, show Cranberries local cultural opportunities on their doorstep. Just a thought, and something which wouldn’t cost us anything in development.

## **Recommendation(s)**

To note this report.