

**PLANNING THE ARTS**  
**IN FLINTSHIRE**

**A STRATEGY**  
**FOR THE ARTS**

APPROVED BY COUNTY COUNCIL  
ON 14 JANUARY, 2003

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Flintshire can boast that it has had strong links with a number of well known artists over a long period of time. These links include artists such as Moses Griffith and Richard Wilson, the novelist Daniel Owen, dramatist Emlyn Williams, the tenor David Lloyd, and actors like Meredith Edwards and Jonathan Pryce. There is evidence to suggest that such links will continue in the future with young talent emerging in, for example, the fields of music, the visual arts and drama.
- 1.2 In its Visions and Values, adopted in 2001, the County Council seeks to: *“conserve and promote the social, artistic, cultural and environmental heritage of Flintshire for the enjoyment of its residents and visitors.”*
- 1.3 The purpose of this updated arts strategy first published in 1999 is to set out a number of strategic objectives that will help develop, sustain and promote the arts in Flintshire. It is hoped that the strategy will help raise the profile of the arts through a coherent and integrated statement of aims and objectives.
- 1.4 It should be stressed at the outset that this is an arts strategy rather than a cultural strategy and as such any references to art forms refer to things like the visual and literacy arts, music, drama and performance, crafts, design and digital arts. This is not a cultural strategy, as that would need to encompass a much greater range of issues, as one recent report described “culture” as being “the aggregate of our actions and aspirations, interests and passions, values and beliefs”. In short, a cultural strategy would need to encompass a much wider range of topics including, for example, sport, heritage and recreation.

## 2. THE ARTS IN FLINTSHIRE - A BRIEF OVERVIEW

- 2.1 Unlike many other services, there is no ready-made template which can be used to compare the “arts” in Flintshire with other counties. However, the current arts provision does compare well with neighbouring counties in that it is a mix of direct and indirect County Council provision, with other activities provided by a range of other bodies including a well developed voluntary sector.
- 2.2 Clwyd Theatr Cymru is the principal centre for the arts in Flintshire. It is a producing theatre of national significance and has been formally designated by the Arts Council of Wales as a Welsh National Performing Arts Company. Although owned and operated by the County Council, the theatre is responsible to its own Board of Governors under a Scheme of Delegation.
- 2.3 Clwyd Theatr Cymru is an important regional centre for the arts in North East Wales and regularly attracts audiences and visitors in excess of 150,000 each year. The theatre’s facilities comprise two main performance spaces, three galleries, a film theatre and a number of multi-purpose spaces which are used for a variety of activities. The theatre’s performance programme combines in-house productions and work by visiting companies and artists. The theatre’s Education programme includes regular Theatre for Young People productions and wide ranging workshop activity. Along side its work in Mold, Clwyd Theatr Cymru regularly tours to different parts of Wales as part of its role as Wales’ premier English language company.

- 2.4 The Arts, Culture and Events (ACE) Team was established in April, 2000, following a wide-ranging review of the County Council's structure. As part of this "Transition to Transformation" process (one of the aims of which was to remove any duplication in terms of service provision) it was decided to bring together a number of Officers from the former Education and Culture, Leisure and Tourism Directorates. ACE now forms part of the Libraries, Culture and Heritage Division within the Directorate of Education and Children's Services and Recreation.
- 2.5 Apart from this dedicated team, various other sections/Officers of the County Council have an important role to play in terms of contributing to the arts scene. Examples include the Library and Information Service, which provides exhibition facilities in many libraries in Flintshire with designated spaces in Mold, Buckley and Flint Libraries; the School Music Service, with its responsibility for the Peripatetic Music Service and the now firmly established Music School covering the Flintshire Youth Choir and various ensembles, and the Countryside Service which seeks to integrate art projects into countryside management schemes. It is important also to remember the contribution made by primary, special and secondary schools not just in terms of teaching of many art forms but in the myriad of exhibitions, musicals and performances staged throughout the school year.
- 2.6 As mentioned above, there is a well developed voluntary sector in the County and there are over 50 such groups, including, for example, 15 Music Groups, 11 Drama Societies/Companies, 7 Arts and Craft Groups, 4 Dance Groups, 2 Camera Clubs etc.
- 2.7 In addition, there are a number of "independent" groups covering a variety of art forms that the County Council supports financially, viz Deeside Community Arts, Flintshire Youth Theatre and North East Wales Dance.
- 2.8 There are also a number of other organisations with an influence in terms of arts provision in the County. These include Broli Cymraeg, a community based charity dedicated to education through the performing arts; the Black Sheep Gallery, Hawarden, a privately owned gallery with 7 exhibition areas, providing over 3000 sq. ft. of exhibition space, and the Afonwen Craft Centre which has exhibition spaces and from time to time offers art and craft demonstrations.
- 2.9 In addition, Deeside College is preparing to resource a Performance Art/Music Technology Programme, and almost 200 places are envisaged on the eventual Programme. The college is also to apply for a Lottery Bid to refurbish their 750 seat theatre in order to create a community arts facility, matching that with their own resources. The overall provision will be an important contribution to the arts in Flintshire.
- 2.10 Finally, it is important to recognise that business sponsorship of and partnership with the arts (and often with the County Council) have been an important element in recent years in helping to develop a thriving cultural environment. This is to be welcomed and we must continue to develop partnerships with local business and commerce.

### 3.0 RECENT DEVELOPMENTS - THE NATIONAL ARTS SCENE

- 3.1 Since the establishment of the National Assembly for Wales In 1999, there have been a number of major developments in the arts scene in Wales. In October, 2000, the Assembly established the post of Minister for Culture, Sport and the Welsh Language, and a corresponding Committee.
- 3.2 The report of the Assembly's Post 16 Education Committee entitled "A Culture in Common" provided a survey of some of the deeper cultural issues and this was followed up by the publication in February, 2002, of a cultural strategy entitled "Creative Future". This paper sets out a cultural vision for Wales to the year 2010 and includes a number of priority action plans, many of which relate to the arts.
- 3.3 "Creative Future" states that Local Authorities will be essential partners in the delivery of the strategy and that the Assembly will give Local Authorities every encouragement to invest in cultural activity. It also draws attention to the requirement for Local Authorities to develop community plans that will provide an opportunity to develop local cultural strategies, which they view as a key component of such plans. The Assembly wishes to see the cultural strategies written in the context of the national priorities adopted by its Assembly Sponsored Public Bodies and states that they could include initiatives which strengthen collaboration between cultural professionals and the community.
- 3.4 Another major change in the Welsh Arts scene has been a further reorganisation of the Arts Council of Wales in February, 2002. ACW intends to improve the services provided to artists and arts organisations by:
  1. setting a national strategic framework for the arts in Wales;
  2. devolving decision making to the Regional Offices thereby enabling local implementation of the national strategic framework and allowing it to be adapted to local imperatives and,
  3. introducing a new set of schemes that provide a route to funding which is intended to be easier to understand and to access.
- 3.5 ACW published their Draft 5 Year Arts Development Strategy in April, 2002, and, following public consultation, it was expected that the final version would be published in September, 2002. The new Strategic Priorities are as follows:
  1. Stabilising the current portfolio of revenue clients
  2. Strengthening the arts infrastructure specifically (but not exclusively) within local authorities and through creating opportunities for individual artists
  3. Equal Opportunities
  4. Young people as participants, artists and audiences
  5. Welsh Language product development
  6. Geographical areas of low participation/high levels of deprivation
  7. Touring product in all art forms

- 3.6 The North Wales Action Plan underpins these priorities and emphasises that a key area of development will be working with local authorities, addressing capital/revenue needs of arts organisations in the area and development of the creative industries. The broad thrust of such an approach is to be welcomed although obviously any detailed proposals will need to be considered in due course.

#### **4. THE STRATEGY**

- 4.1 Given the above developments and in particular the recent publication of the new ACW Strategy, this is an appropriate time to put forward an Arts Strategy for Flintshire and the main elements can be summarised as follows:

- 4.1.1 To raise the profile of the arts in the County to ensure that their value in terms of quality of life are fully recognised and to ensure that arts events are properly publicised.
- 4.1.2. To build and develop partnerships with a wide range of organisations to ensure greater co-ordination of arts services and facilities and to establish a County Arts Forum to consult and involve local providers e.g. Deeside College, Broli Cymraeg, representatives of local industry and commerce.
- 4.1.3. To increase opportunities for participation by continuing with a wide ranging community arts project (Celebration) and seeking to encourage activity in areas without ready access to arts events.
- 4.1.4 Continue to enhance opportunities for the presentation of arts performances throughout the County by development of the annual Flintshire Festival and encouraging take-up of ACW's "Night Out" Scheme.
- 4.1.5. To establish a register of halls etc. that can be used for arts activity, consider gaps in provision and advise groups of potential availability of capital lottery funds.
- 4.1.6. To ensure that full account is taken of best practice in terms of equal opportunity e.g. arts and disability, a wide range of cultural traditions including the Welsh language, and social inclusion.
- 4.1.7. To support and encourage arts activity for young people as participants and audiences with a view to increasing opportunities across a range of art forms including, for example, drama, dance, music and the visual arts/craft.
- 4.1.8. To seek to increase opportunities for professional artists in terms of providing workshops, exhibitions etc; encourage the adoption of a public art policy and seek to develop the cultural tourism product available in the County, through e.g. the Leader + programme.
- 4.1.9. To ensure that arts provision reflects the vision and values of the County Council and to review the strategy in due course as a

contribution towards the cultural element of the County's Community Strategy/Plan.

- 4.1.10 To continually monitor the WAG's Cultural Strategy and ACW's 5 Year Development Strategy to ensure that any opportunities for grant aid from these sources are maximised, whether for the County Council itself or arts organisations in the County.

## PLANNING THE ARTS IN FLINTSHIRE

**MISSION:** To facilitate the provision of quality arts opportunities for the people of, and visitors to, Flintshire, as participants and audiences.

			Time scale		
OBJECTIVE:	ACTIVITY/PROJECT:	INDICATORS/OUTCOMES:	S	M	L
1	To raise the profile of the arts in the County	<p><b>1.1</b> To prepare an Arts strategy and use it to inform and engage the public.</p> <p><b>1.2</b> To take opportunities to advocate the value of the arts both for their own sake and for the contribution they can make to the quality of the County's health, social, educational, environmental and economic life.</p> <p><b>1.3</b> To improve publicity of arts activity through County Council channels.</p>	<p>A). Publication and distribution of Strategy. ✓</p> <p>B). Establishment of additional partners/contacts. ✓</p> <p>C). No. of releases issued/published. ✓</p> <p>D). Number of newsletters/factsheets issued. ✓</p> <p>E). Increased content on website. ✓</p>		
2	To build on and develop partnerships both internally and externally	<p><b>2.1</b> To support and liaise with a wide range of partners, internal and external, such as other Services/ Directorates, voluntary and private arts organisations, Arts Council of Wales/ Regional Offices, local industry/commerce</p> <p><b>2.2.</b> To establish a County Arts Forum as a way of consulting and involving local providers, supporters and participants.</p>	<p>A). Greater co-ordination of arts services/facilities ✓</p> <p>B). Attraction of additional partnership funding for arts services/facilities. ✓</p> <p>C). Establishment of Forum. ✓</p>		
3	To increase opportunities for participation across a range of art forms.	<p><b>3.1.</b> To develop a mechanism for collating and recording participation in arts activity across the County.</p> <p><b>3.2.</b> To continue with a wide-ranging community arts scheme (CELEBRATION) following completion of the current FLAIR Project in July, 2002.</p> <p><b>3.3.</b> To encourage opportunities in areas which do not normally have ready access to arts events (e.g. within</p>	<p>A). Establishment of mechanism. ✓</p> <p>B). To secure matched funding support for CELEBRATION. ✓</p> <p>C). Provision of additional projects. ✓</p>		

		Communities First programme areas).				

Short term (S) = 12 months  
36 months

Medium Term (M)= 12-24 months

Long Term (L) =

	OBJECTIVE:	ACTIVITY/PROJECT:	INDICATORS/OUTCOMES:	S	M	L
4	To enhance opportunities for the presentation of arts performances in locations throughout the County.	<p><b>4.1.</b> To continue to develop the Flintshire Festival as an important arts event in the annual calendar.</p> <p><b>4.2.</b> To encourage local organisations to make use of ACW "Night Out" Community Touring Scheme.</p>	<p>A). Number of events held.</p> <p>B). Number of organisations taking part.</p>	✓		
5	To review existing availability of facilities for arts activities and events.	<p><b>5.1.</b> Develop a register/map of such facilities.</p> <p><b>5.2.</b> Consider implications of any gaps in provision and, if appropriate, advise on potential other sources of funding e.g. Lottery Capital.</p>	<p>A). Production of register/map.</p> <p>B). Number of schemes advised.</p>		✓	✓
6	To ensure that in delivering/advising on arts services, full account is taken of best practice in terms of equal opportunities.	<p><b>6.1.</b> To review guidance available on the arts and disability.</p> <p><b>6.2.</b> In developing programmes of activity, seek to ensure that they reflect a range of cultural traditions including the Welsh Language and culture.</p> <p><b>6.3.</b> Take account of Council's policy in relation to Social Inclusion.</p>	<p>A). Provision of pricing differentials where possible and inclusion of some free events where appropriate.</p>		✓	✓
7	To support and encourage the provision of arts activity/events for young people as participants and audiences.	<p><b>7.1.</b> To continue to work with schools, the Youth and Community Service and other youth arts organisations to increase opportunities across a range of artforms.</p> <p><b>7.2.</b> To monitor the outcome of ACW's planned review of the Arts and Young People Taskforce.</p>	<p>A). Number of events/participants supported/arranged.</p> <p>B). To evaluate any new proposals which emerge.</p>	✓		✓



