

MINUTES OF THE ARTS AND INFORMATION COMMITTEE HELD ON 1ST APRIL, 2014

Present: Councillor C Snowball (Chair) and Councillors B Allen, Mrs B E Allen, R Arthur, E Bell, Mrs J A Bell, Mrs G Bleasdale, B Burn snr, B Burn Jnr, S Cudlip, R Meir, Miss S Morrison, N R Page, I Paul, R Whitehead, K Younger

Apologies: Councillors Mrs H Cahill, Mrs S Forster, G A Shepherd, K Shaw,

1. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

Members were reminded prior to the start of the meeting of the need to disclose any interests, prejudicial or personal, in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

2. EAST DURHAM CREATES

The Chair welcomed to the meeting Ms Caroline Smith, the artistic producer of East Durham Creates, who was in attendance to provide Members with an overview on the project and how local people could get involved.

Ms Smith thanked the Council for the opportunity to provide greater in-depth information in relation to what is being planned and the intention to have as many people as possible involved from the community. She explained that the project was backed by the Arts Council England and Creative People and Places funding and would be launched during May 2014 and run to the summer of 2016. £500k of funding was being invested each year by Arts Council England for East Durham.

This programme of excellent art is in response to input and feedback from local people and will deliver a programme of great art to communities during two seasons of activity per year. It is imperative that this programme is developed by and for the local community. At the heart of the programme is the concept that art can take many forms, it can be exceptional, inspirational, engaging, intimate or spectacular. Great art should be thought provoking and should also be fun. The core of the work to be undertaken is trying to develop the experiences of local communities. Ms Smith stated that art does not necessarily have to mean monuments, sculptures, paintings – it should be moments experienced by people whether it be by watching things, doing things, or participation.

With the aid of a powerpoint presentation Members were shown how the strands of the programme would be delivered. These included new commissions by artists, touring projects, an engagement programme, community commissioning, 'inspired by' and skills development and Ms Smith elaborated on what each strand would consist of.

The range of art-forms covered theatre, visual art, performance, music, writing, model making, cake decorating, woodworking, audio recording etc. With the aim of getting communities involved there would be three community consultation sessions in April and comments and suggestions would be invited both online and in person. The 'inspired by' programme would offer mentoring and support. There will be funding for workshops and surgeries and financial support for local projects. Cultural champions will be in place with volunteers and advocates.

The new commissioning will be very much related to Seaham and will involve an Artist from Gateshead called Ed Carter. She explained that he had made a film for Channel 4 in relation to the many shipwrecks which had occurred during the 1860's and had been asked if he would do something appropriate to Seaham and in particular the George Elmy disaster. He was currently in the process of researching this project with the aim of making a music and light project. As part of this, however, he needs to communicate with people from the local area who are knowledgeable about the George Elmy.

She stated that whenever a touring project was brought in they would only bring in work that was utterly specific or appropriate to the area or that they could adapt or adjust to make it suitable to East Durham. The Council was asked to suggest locations or venues where works could be delivered and any ideas as to how to involve local people. Contact details were provided at this stage and comments invited and the following is a brief summary of the views expressed:

- Ms Smith confirmed she had already given a presentation about this project to the Destination Seaham group and a Member asked what she had learned from this. She replied that she had learned that it was imperative that Seaham be included as there was concern that more focus would be on Peterlee and other areas of East Durham. She learned that there was a tourism agenda for Seaham and felt that this project could be linked into that.
- Ms Smith was asked what she meant by work being brought in as part of the touring project being utterly specific to this area and she explained that it was not the intention to take a piece of work or a theatre production and show it just for the sake of showing it. When asked why she replied that the funding streams who created people and places promoted the idea of creating a piece of art and culture which was specific to the place and the people of the designated area that had been identified by the Arts Council.
- A Member stated that by being specific this could exclude certain things and added that Seaham had been excluded from other possibilities by being specific to this area and commented that if people didn't know, they would be unaware. She accepted the comment and recognised that such a scenario could happen but stressed that they would try very hard to provide a programme of art and culture that was driven by and demanded by the local community. She added that the best they could do was take as many 'go and see' opportunities and speak to as many people as possible to broaden the horizons as much as they feasibly could.

At this point the Chair thanked Ms Smith for her informative address and she then left the meeting.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 4TH MARCH, 2014

RECOMMENDED the Minutes of this meeting, a copy of which had been previously printed and circulated to each Member, be approved and signed as a correct record by the Chairman.

4. CONFERENCE APPOINTMENTS

RECOMMENDED the list of conference appointments a copy of which had been previously circulated, be approved.

5. CONFERENCES, COURSES AND SEMINARS

a) SLCC Northern Regional Conference

RECOMMENDED authority be granted for the Town Clerk to attend the Northern Regional Conference of the Society of Local Council Clerks on Thursday, 19th June, 2014 in York and such attendance rank as an approved duty for payment of appropriate allowances.

6. NALC/CDALC ISSUES

a) E-Bulletins for County Associations and National Council

RECOMMENDED the Council note the E-Bulletin dated 14th March and issued by NALC.

b) NALC Chief Executive

RECOMMENDED the appointment of Mr Jonathan Owen as the NALC Chief Executive, be noted.

c) NALC Larger Local Councils Committee

The Committee discussed a communication from CDALC which requested the submission of any issues to be raised at the next meeting of the NALC Larger Local Councils Committee to be held on 29th April, 2014.

RECOMMENDED the Council note the information now reported.

6. NAC EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY NEWSLETTER

RECOMMENDED the Equality and Diversity Newsletter published by the National Association of Councillors on 17th March, 2014 be noted.

7. DESTINATION SEAHAM

RECOMMENDED the minutes of the February meeting of the Destination Seaham Group, be noted.

8. VISIT COUNTY DURHAM PUBLICATIONS

a) Wednesday Grapevine

RECOMMENDED the recent editions of this publication dated 5th and 19th March, 2014 be noted.

9. MAKING SMOKING HISTORY IN COUNTY DURHAM

The Committee considered a publication endorsed by the Health Improvement Partnership and agreed by Durham County Council Cabinet on 30th November, 2013.

RECOMMENDED the Council note the Durham County Council publication recently received.

10. PRESS OPPORTUNITIES

RECOMMENDED the Council note that no press opportunities existed from this meeting.

11. TEMPORARY ROAD CLOSURE – SIDE AND REAR KNARESBOROUGH ROAD, MURTON

RECOMMENDED the Council note for information purposes that the above road in Murton would be temporarily closed from 1st April, 2014 by means of a Notice under Section 14(2) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act, 1984 for a period of 21 days due to the possibility of danger to the public and to enable manhole repair works to be undertaken.

12. EAST DURHAM AAP BOARD MEETING AND AGM

The Committee considered a communication from the East Durham AAP which detailed the date, time and venue for the next meeting which would incorporate their Annual General Meeting.

RECOMMENDED the Council note the information now reported.