

MINUTES OF THE ARTS AND INFORMATION COMMITTEE HELD ON 19th JUNE, 2018

Present: Councillor Mrs J A Bell (Chair) and Councillors Mrs B E Allen, E Bell, Mrs K Brace, S P Colborn, S Cudlip, Mrs S Forster, G N Hepworth, Mrs L Kennedy, D McKenna, K Shaw, T Shepherd, B Taylor, R Whitehead, Miss L Willis.

Apologies: Councillors R Arthur, Mrs G Bleasdale, D Cummings, Mrs V Cummings, Ms R M Gratton, Mrs S Pratt.

Prior to commencement of the meeting the Chair advised members of this Committee and members of the public that in line with the amendment to 'the public bodies (admission to meetings) act 1960', which came into force in August, 2014, parts of this meeting may be recorded by photographic, video and audio means.

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. PRESENTATION

Mr Malcolm Fallow from East Durham Creates was in attendance at the meeting to update Members on the East Durham Creates programme.

East Durham Creates is a national project with 21 areas designated across the country. Following a survey the 21 places were chosen as being low in artistic engagement. The project started in 2013 and was initially managed by Beamish and has since been handed over to East Durham Trust from 2017-2020 and there is a possibility of funding after 2020. The funding was £1m over the course of the project.

The current activities include Stop Poverty in East Durham (SPIED) project, which there is a project at Dawdon Community Centre which hands out food parcels and there is also a project at Eastlea Community Centre for children during school holidays which ensures children receive a free meal. There is also debt advice, a job club, social inclusion for older people and benefit advice which is funded under the project. Food parcels are delivered to people's houses to take away any stigma attached to this and cooked pizzas have been delivered on a Friday night to approximately 10 homes in Seaham.

There is also physical activities and mental health support being delivered via the project. There is a telephone service (Chit Chat) for people with mental health issues to stay in contact and these are the types of services that East Durham Trust offers which Seaham residents can benefit from.

Councillor Mrs Forster is a panel member for East Durham Creates and there are things which the organisation is expected to do.

In August 2015 there was a performance held at St Johns Church with a group of percussion artists from New York and performed its first night in Seaham and has since gone around the world. Money has also been given to EDAN at the Artblock to support them. A mosaic has been done recently at Eastlea and £4,500 was given. Funding has also been given to the local community centres in Seaham to offer support.

Let's Create has pots of funding of around £2,000 which community groups can apply for and as long as groups increase the numbers of people involved in Art and a panel decides if organisations will be successful in their applications.

Over the 6 years the programme has been running the aim was to engage 40,000 people.

Go and See projects enables people to be taken to places such as the Sage, the Baltic, Bowes Museum, and scores of other places to expose people to art.

There are major commissions which Seaham Town Council may want to think about. A major commission can be up to £50k. This could be by bringing in a major artist to do something that the Town Council wants. The projects tend to work with different groups at different times such as the elderly, them families, and finally young people.

The project Strikes of Brilliance is small scale artistic projects. In July silk painting will be held in Tonia's café. There is also a photography exhibition in June at Eastlea Community Centre. These small projects are cheap to run but are happening just to get people out and involved.

Mr Farrow stated that the project has 2 years left to run and hopefully 5 years if the funding is extended.

The meeting was then opened up for a question and answer session.

- (i) A Member questioned where the funding was being drawn down from.

Mr Fallow stated that from this week it is Arts Council Government funding. The funding was £1m and there was £35m earmarked nationally over that period of time for the 21 areas. The 21 areas will grow to 25 areas and it maybe that East Durham Trust will be asked to extend their boundaries. The group are also asked to raise money locally. The AAP have given funding to take people on coaches to Luminaire.

- (ii) A Member stated that there are some good ideas but the trouble is there have been events happening in Seaham that people didn't know about. The lack of communication was a big failure.

Mr Fallow agreed and stated that he made a case to the Arts Council and criticised how things had been done in previous years. There was questions

to be answered around the marketing of events previously and this will be addressed for any future events. Mr Fallow noted that this was a fair criticism. The organisation wants new people to engage in events and not just people who would take part anyway.

- (iii) A Member stated that he was interested in the major commissions which Mr Fallow mentioned in particular £50k being spent in Crimdon Dene. In Seaham there is a large catchment area and Crimdon Dene doesn't have the popularity or the footfall that a major centre like Seaham has and doesn't have the population such as Seaham does. Seaham has a large number of visitors from throughout the whole of the district and you would have the opportunity of your event being seen and participated and engaged in. The Member stated that he believes that the organisation should move around the larger places of population to get people engaged. Seaham also has a good reputation for good advertising and publicity and getting this out to people that these events are taking place. Crimdon Dene do not have that kind of infrastructure to get people to Crimdon Dene.

Mr Fallow agreed with the Members statement and agreed that the transport infrastructure to Seaham is better for getting people involved. The idea is to get the footfall raised at Crimdon Dene. Artists are only paid if a significant amount of people attend the event.

- (iv) A Member stated that Mr Fallow mentioned groups such as the elderly. The Member suggested it would be good in this area to target the elderly and the ex-mining community to bring an artist to do something around those areas. This would draw the elderly's minds back to a time when they were active and could contribute towards the community.

Mr Fallow agreed with this and stated this goes back to choirs and miners banners. Mr Fallow noted that the Arts Council are criticising him already about mixing heritage and art.

- (v) A Member stated that the Trust is about getting people to enjoy arts from different perspectives. However, most people here are more traditionalists and some of the events are more obtuse which people wouldn't go and see regardless so therefore a lot of money is wasted where a more populist show of the arts would have enhanced the procedures.

Mr Fallow stated that he is in a constant battle almost with the Arts Council because what they want to see and fund and what Mr Fallow can get is sometimes different. Often people say they want to see Little Mix which the Arts Council would not fund as its commercial. The Trust will take some risks on what they provide as events. The Trust has to get the balance right on what people enjoy which is somewhere between populist and commercial.

The Chair thanked Mr Fallow for attending the meeting.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 22nd MAY, 2018

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 that the Committee note the information.

5. **PRESS OPPORTUNITIES**

RECOMMENDED the Council note that some press opportunities could be gained from events that East Durham Creates may have in the future.