

Appendix 2 ‘An Engine For Change’ Arts Strategy

The following are samples of collated feedback from public forums held in relation to the Arts Strategy.

YPF... Art and Culture Consultation...24.09.08

We approached the YPF in a workshop style to find out what they understood about culture, some of their preconceptions and then their aspirations. How did they interact with Culture in Telford?

Some of the key findings were:

1. That young people had a sense of the world in terms of culture and given a choice they would want to go to new places, explore other countries and experience their food and culture, architecture, fashion and Art and cultural buildings and events.

2. The young people were asked ‘What is Art / Culture?’ and they answered

- Is a sunset art?...Does something have to have been influenced by ‘man’ to be art?
- Anything that is visually spectacular and anything in the World that is beautiful
- Anything that has been designed and that shows personality or involves skill
- Art is an ‘expression’ and everything can be included - Fashion, Music, Theatre & Performance, Outdoor events, Books, Architecture and sculpture

3. We asked young people where they can experience Art and Culture in Telford & Wrekin?

Their answers included the countryside, the Wrekin and parks and gardens, Museums and leisure centres, The Place and other theatres, the town centre – art exhibitions, local areas where there is graffiti, schools through performance and art work, the cinema, bars and clubs with live music.

4. We asked the young people to Imagine a World without Art. What would be missing or lost? What would happen as a result?

a. In relation to Your Health?

Mental Health and wellbeing would diminish; people would become paranoid, depressed, and apathetic

Body image issues may decrease as there would be less focus on celebrity

Disabled people would not be able to access art as therapy

Having nothing to do would increase weight gain

There would be no relaxation or entertainment

Topics of conversation would decrease

People would eat plainer more natural food and may be more healthy

Creativity in food production would decrease and we may be left with food that is bad for you

People may begin to have the same levels of confidence and self-esteem this may be a good thing but it could lead to everyone being depressed!

b. In relation to Your Community?

People's houses would be bland

Some areas do not have much art so not much would be lost

A lot of advertising is art so no one would know what was going on

No community events would mean less social interaction, limited experiences and less sharing of ideas

There would be no life on the streets

Loss of common interests

People would leave Telford to go to somewhere where something was going on

Communities wouldn't function, nothing would fit

People wouldn't be able to build relationships

The same ideas would be repeated everywhere nothing new would come forward

Individuality in terms of fashion would be lost, religious clothing wouldn't be worn

Religious festivals would not be celebrated

Life would be about survival not living

T&W would lose money in terms of tourism

Increase in vandalism and damage to the environment

Less fun and lack of sensory stimulation

We would become like America full of large corporate things 'characteristics' would be lost from communities small shops and businesses would disappear

c. In relation to you Your School?

There would be no point in performing well if life wasn't worth living

Individuality would be gone

Display boards would disappear

School trips wouldn't happen

People would not be educated about art and culture

People wouldn't be as open minded

Art departments would vanish

School would be sad and games would be missing

School buildings would be bland

There would be no history to discuss

There would be no talent to foster

Some people **only** enjoy art a lot of people could hate school

There would be no experimentation

People would become more dependant on religion

There would be more aggression and negativity

Some schools/colleges would crumble as their focus is art

Pupils wouldn't think for themselves

School would be stricter

Pupils would be apathetic and performance would go down

There would be nothing to do after school but homework

d. In relation to your Leisure Time?

People would be bored and angry

No communication or relationship building with friends and family, nothing to talk about

There would be nothing to do at all!

Everything would be neutral

People would loose their jobs in the leisure industry

People's emotional range would decrease nothing would impress/depress you!

The young people were asked for their One wish for the Future of art/culture in T&W?

- Create a spontaneous performance space...create an atmosphere where everywhere is a performance space.
- Make sure that T&W has a range of things to cater for all religions and cultures....Asian clothes shops and religious buildings.
- High profile events....Music, fashion, Dance with good quality and well known performers
- An annual Arts and Culture Festival
- A fountain like in Birmingham
- A new Art Gallery
- More Public Art and Culture in Telford

In summary the young people proved to be very knowledgeable about the role of arts & culture in their community and the possible effects of not having arts & culture in their lives. The young peoples aspirations for arts & culture in the borough gave credence to the outcomes of the arts strategy and its priorities for action in relation to young people and the wider community and environment they inhabit.

Senior Citizens Forum Consultation 6.10.08

For the senior citizens forum we examined the main themes for the arts strategy. The questionnaire related to the main themes of the strategy which would have most resonance for our senior community. A summary of the results is as follows.

- ***More than half of the respondents said that they were not aware of the existence of the community arts team within the council but were keen to know more about what we did and how it could offer opportunities for them.***
 - ***When asked when they last engaged with arts & culture and the frequency with which they engaged, more than half of the respondents took part in regular activity and more than three quarters at least bi weekly.***
 - ***The respondents regularly taking part in arts or culture related leisure pastimes listed the a wide range of activities including:***
 - Theatre, gardening, dancing, cinema, walking, painting, photography, flower and veg shows (exhibitor), concerts, art classes, viewing arts work, swimming, puzzles, walking in the park, music, creative writing, digital camera, Bridge.
 - ***Respondents also listed arts or cultural activities they would like to participate in or develop new skills in that were not currently available to them. The list included:***
 - Painting, Tai Chi, Dancing, Internet, Calligraphy, Art Gallery, Interactive Museum, Education Service, Town Centre.
 - ***Barriers to participation were listed as:*** Time, Cost, Work, Lack of transport, Children, Working full time don't have spare time, Health, limited spare time.
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- ***Respondents were asked to express how they saw that arts & culture could benefit their health.***
 - More than three quarters of respondents agreed that there were health benefits and these were expressed as mentally, creatively, physically, relaxation, keeping fit, mental stimulation, keeping your mind and body active, feeling positive and boosting self esteem.
 - ***Respondents were asked how they thought art could play a part in the development of public open spaces?***
 - Responses included design and attractiveness of a space, setting a standard of quality, bringing people and communities together, providing more outdoor space for the community to enjoy and relax in, creating community spirit and making places safe.
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- ***Respondents were asked if they thought that the heritage of Telford & Wrekin is important to the community?***
 - ***All respondents agreed that it was important for the following reasons.*** Tourist value, maintaining interest and history for future generations, Help people take pride in their environment, Gives a sense of place, community spirit, Engenders sense of belonging and history, the Roots of young people and the new town.
 - ***Respondents were asked what else would make Telford & Wrekin a more attractive place to live in? Was there anything missing?***
 - Some of the responses included, Major public events in the town park, a town centre with a creative heart of an gallery and arts centre, Swop shops for

recycling more things, better public transport, a caravan park for tourist caravanners in the town centre, more places for young people to go and get involved, more wild places, more facilities for less able people, play facilities for adults!

In summary the senior citizens forum agreed with the principles that were drawn out in the arts strategy around regeneration, young people, the town centre, public spaces, health, heritage and advocacy for the arts in the community. These principles have been identified from our knowledge and research around the gaps in provision and the areas of influence for the arts service in improving the quality of experience for the community and thereby their quality of life.
