

Neighbourhood Planning Group – 8th April 2014 Focus on Arts, Culture and Tourism

Present – Sue Keeping – Hug Cully; Anne Chaplin – painter; Tricia St Clair – reading group and craft group; Jane Campbell – Walronds & Town Council; Andrew Maries – musician and church music consultant; Linda Curtis – Coordinator of Cullompton Celebration July 2014; Susie Tyler – illustrator and coordinator of “Cully loves books” Book Fair; Becky Mead and Syd Gaskin – “Knot Perfect” wood carvers and members of Guild of Crafters. Facilitator – Martin Smith

1. General discussion

Whilst introducing ourselves, the following points were raised:

1.1 This Focus group represented only a small proportion of the activities going on in Cullompton – a large number of people are putting in thousands of volunteer hours to develop their passion – **there is much to communicate and be encouraged about.**

1.2 These active enthusiasts would love to include Cullompton residents who are not yet involved in very much – people living alone and being lonely, disabled people, older people who find it difficult to get out, teenagers and those who are discouraged for any reason.

Communicating more successfully the opportunities to participate and enjoy activities must be a major priority in addition to the current good communication work.

1.3 Potential means to communicate “What’s on in Cullompton” in addition to the current published leaflets, Town Crier, local newspapers, sheep noticeboards and Welcome Folders were discussed – an accessible “What’s on in Cullompton” website with a comprehensive list of activities – something to replace the “Cully Cobbler” that was published monthly many years ago – perhaps a more frequent “Town Crier”? – more support needed?

- Twitter and Facebook

- Large coloured A3 posters such as used by Fairgrounds,

- bookmarks advertising events

1.4 Promoting **Cullompton** as the **“Heart of Devon”**

2. Positive achievements

Lots of really good events have taken place – the Art exhibition at the Tavvy Textile shop, world class entertainers at the Community Centre (Venue) – Martyn Joseph, Jonathan Viera, Classical Café, the Artswave project, the Cloth Trade project, on-going opportunities at 29 High Street.

Paul Weston’s report makes brilliant reading concerning the new facilities and investment in Cullompton – Walronds, Hayridge, College Surgery, Community Centre. We have much to celebrate and to be thankful for.

3. Business rates

Martin reported on the discussions with John Chumley of MDDC. In summary, full business rate relief is available for empty shops

- a) that display a community interest exhibition provided that there is no evident commercial interest (i.e. no prices, telephone numbers regarding sales etc.)
- b) that are notified as being “Pop-Up shops” to encourage new businesses.

John’s department needs prior notice of these proposals so that the proper authorisation is sought and granted before the activity takes place.

Artists, exhibitions, business start-ups may take advantage of these schemes, similar to those already in place in Tiverton.

4. Evidence report additions/omissions

- 4.1 p. 112 “The town lacks a permanent cinema, theatre [add “Art Gallery, Swimming Pool”] and museum”
- 4.2 p. 112 - Under the general heading of “Arts and Cultural Activity” should we include sports activities – Rugby, Soccer, Golf, Cricket, & bowls clubs, with the Sports Centre, and Skateboard park?
- 4.3 P.112 Should we include Cubs, Scouts, St John’s Ambulance, TA/Army cadets?
- 4.4 P.112 Should we also include Kia-Ora gardens, “Woodwarm Stoves” that are unique and bring many visitors to the town?

5. What are we seeking to find out?

We discussed the questions on p. 111 of the Evidence Base report:

Local culture and the arts

- 5.1 Are spaces provided that enable local culture and art events? **A resounding “Yes” to this – as the report states we have facilities that weren’t even dreamed of years ago. Jane Campbell reminded us that this type of detailed evidence gathering several years ago was an essential part of gaining funding for the Walronds renovation. This current Neighbourhood Planning exercise can set the tone for what may be funded in the future in Cullompton.**
- 5.2 Are there any elements that need to be introduced? – See 6.4
- 5.3 What do local artists do? – needs and ambitions? - See 6.4

Tourism

- 5.4 What facilities are on offer and how well used are they? See 6.2 –facilities are reasonably used and there is spare capacity in all venues
- 5.5 Is there a demand for more facilities? Not discussed
- 5.6 What improvements and enhancements are needed? Not discussed
- 5.7 What are the obvious opportunities? Not discussed

6. Creative group exercise “Thought Shower” Arts and Culture – raw data

We began looking at Rudyard Kipling’s “six good men and true” – Who, What, Why, Where, When, How [and How much?] **This is work in progress – ideas gratefully received.**

6.1 Who?

Elderly, younger, singles, teens ,NEET's, pre-teens, readers, writers, poets, alternative fringe [complementary therapy, spirituality], passers by, visitors, multicultural, working people, mothers & toddlers, dads & toddlers, rural community, emerging artists, crafters, sculptors, existing artists, musicians, classical, contemporary, showground people

6.2 Where?

Cullompton Community Centre (the Venue), Hayridge, Walronds, High Street, Bull Ring, Town Hall, pubs, churches – St Andrews, St Boniface, Baptist church, old Methodist Church on New Cut, Hebron Hall, Closed Brethren Hall, Community House, #29 High Street, Shops, over Thorne & Carter, private residences, Conservative Club, John Tallack Centre, steps of the Hayridge & seat by bus stop, Bakehouse, Padbroke, Schools, Café Calm, Sports Centre, Farmers' Market, Kia-Ora, outdoors in parks & playing fields, small meeting places (e.g. New Cut)

6.3 Where have we not got?

Permanent exhibition space, permanent big quiet space (e.g. Bull Ring with no traffic! - Cullompton By-pass!!!) Permanent performing space, swimming pool, museum, art gallery, cinema, 10 pin bowling

6.4 What? (overlaps with How?)

“Living, breathing arty Cully”, “Cullompton - Heart of Devon”, Crafts Group specifically for Cullompton (arm of Guild of Crafters or separate?), Book festival regularly, Art Gallery, Theatre, Choirs, Orchestra, Amateur Dramatics, maximise the Heritage trail – “walk and talk” opportunities, Cooking, creative workshops – sewing, knitting, painting, photography, juggling, performing arts, gardening/allotments, dance, Chinese Dragon/dance, majorettes, “Men in sheds”, Street art, Arts festival, mums & toddlers, dads & toddlers, advertising leaflets made easy, “Life Academy” – life skills and kinaesthetic learning opportunities – “Right brain activities” for all ages

6.5 How? (overlaps with What?)

Website for “What’s on in Cully?”, Events pages on existing websites, Facebook and Twitter accounts for what’s on, Seed money for events, ArtsWave type projects, How does Crediton do it? Sponsors from businesses & national, subsidised arts and craft courses, permanent arts officer/coordinator, Grants officer,

20th May 2014

Focus on Arts and Culture

Present – Alan Boxer, Kentisbeare Arts group; Dave Haslett, journalist; Sue Keeping – Hug Cully; Jane Campbell – Walronds & Town Council; Andrew Maries – musician and church music consultant; Facilitator – Martin Smith

7. General discussion

Whilst introducing ourselves, the following points were raised:

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9. Performing arts

3.1. Alan’s long history of community arts projects became the focus of considerable discussion. His passion for including all members of the community in performing gave the basis of a strategy for performing arts in Cullompton.

- 3.2. Alan would be willing to lead a team of workers focusing on various aspects of performance for all ages – choirs/singing, drama including writing and performing, musical instruments, orchestra, dance. Also bringing in expertise for painting, sculpture, photography etc.
- 3.3. Young people need youth workers with technical ability regarding re-mixing music, making videos etc.

4. Communication

- 4.1. We then discussed the continuing dilemma facing all organisers – how to avoid the “I wish I’d known that was on” conversations after an event.
- 4.2. Young (ish) people use Facebook (possibly reducing popularity)
- 4.3. Registering for texts/emails seems to be a growing and successful communication – used by dentists, doctors and chemists for reminders of appointments
- 4.4. When the circus comes to town!! We never miss that because of fly-posting with big coloured posters everywhere – this must be cost effective because it happens all over the country
- 4.5. Alan reported that “Google calendar” works well for the Kenarts group. A central Google calendar with links to each voluntary group with their own Google calendar has a built-in feature that draws the diary information from each satellite into the centre and then displays it – could be on a live noticeboard at major centres – the Town Hall, doctors’ & dentists’ surgeries, Community Centres, Library, pubs, and anywhere else that people congregate with time on their hands. People can then sign up for text and/or email alerts within certain categories.

5. Evidence base

- 5.1. S. 106/C.I.L proposals to address arts and culture needs
- 5.2. Studies on the benefits of singing to general health and well-being
- 5.3. Benefits of performing arts (e.g. returning war veteran shows in London) – physical, emotional
- 5.4. “Arts breeds arts”
- 5.5. Permanent building required for local artists to display and sell their work
- 5.6. Stimulation of book reading and poetry – across generations
- 5.7. ? John Summers – research? ?Tall valley? (can’t read my own notes on this!!)