



**Community Libraries and Arts
Arts, Culture and Events Section**

Arts Strategy 2014 - 2017 Flintshire County Council

The Arts in Flintshire

Within Flintshire County Council many sections have an important role to play in terms of contributing to the arts scene. The Arts, Culture and Events (ACE) Team comprises of experienced arts professionals including the Arts, Culture and Events Manager, the Arts Development Officer and the Community Events Officer, all of which work to ensure arts provision and experiences of the highest standard for Flintshire's schools and communities.

Since the creation of the Arts Strategy 2008-2013 the section has developed many successful projects for the people of Flintshire including a programme of artist residencies in schools, devised and managed by the Arts Development Officer, which has been highlighted by the Arts Council of Wales as an example of best practice. Regionally two high profile projects have been delivered by the section, Criw Celf, a visual arts project for more able and talented young people and Helfa Gelf, an open studios event for professional artists, both are run in partnership with all North Wales Authorities. The Community Events Officer has developed a programme of artistic experiences for older people as part of The Gwanwyn Festival, an annual national festival for older people. These are only a taste of what has been delivered within Flintshire over the past five years with many more educational activities, public art, festivals and events having been offered to all of the county's communities. Further information is available from the Arts, Culture and Events section upon request.

Other sections who develop artistic activities are the Library Service, which provides exhibition facilities at Broughton, Buckley, Holywell and Flint Libraries and works closely with the ACE section on developing artistic events and opportunities for Flintshire's communities; 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. The Economic Development section of the Council works with Town centre managers and Community Councils to develop festivals, events and public art projects as part of the county's regeneration agenda.

The principal provider of arts experience within Flintshire, other than the ACE team, is Clwyd Theatr Cymru, an internationally known theatre and production company that regularly attracts audiences and visitors in excess of 150,000 each year. The theatre's facilities comprise of two main performance spaces, a film theatre and a number of multi purpose spaces which are used for a variety of activities. The performance programme combines in-house productions and work by visiting companies and artists with an education programme including Theatre for Young People and wide ranging workshop activity.

Schools and the Youth Service also make an important contribution to the arts in Flintshire through the myriad of exhibitions, musicals and performances staged each year. Sponsorship from local businesses has been an important element in developing a thriving artistic environment, and the ACE Team will endeavour to attract new sponsorship to ensure further development.

Communities First provide artistic opportunities for some of the county's harder to reach communities, including the running of the Holywell Art and Craft Mill. The Arts, Culture and Events section work with all those mentioned above to advise on artistic projects and activities and to assist in any way needed.

In addition there are a number of independent groups covering a variety of art forms which the County Council supports financially through Service Level Agreements (SLA's) with the Arts, Culture and Events Section. North East Wales Dance is a cross county dance provider that offers provision to all ages from toddlers to senior citizens. They promote inclusion for all abilities and for those with specific needs whilst embracing a range of styles from contemporary to ballet, jazz, street dance, jive and salsa. Deeside Community Arts is an organisation that aims to stimulate and encourage creative expression as a relevant and meaningful activity in the lives of the people of Deeside.

There is also a well developed voluntary arts sector within the county with over one hundred and thirty community arts groups identified as operating within Flintshire, including brass bands, craft and painting groups, drama groups, choirs and youth dance troupes amongst others. Networking groups also exist to provide a supporting platform for various arts groups. An example is the Flintshire Visual Arts and Crafts Network which currently represents hundreds of individual artists and many of Flintshire's arts and crafts groups and aims to facilitate the development of the Visual Arts and Crafts for the community of Flintshire by means of the provision of information, skill sharing and mutual support.

Why have an Arts Strategy?

1. The arts encompass many genres and activities such as:
 - Dance: including contemporary, ballet and street dancing
 - Performance: including circus performers and theatre
 - Music: including acoustic, rock and opera
 - Literature: including poetry, prose and fiction
 - Visual Arts: including painting, new media, sculpture and public art
 - Crafts: including ceramics, textiles and jewellery

Other more familiar forms of art exist also in our daily lives, such as television and radio, graphic art including those seen on apps, websites

and games consoles, cinema, DJing and digital music production, and fashion.

2. The arts have an intrinsic value and contribute towards improving the quality of life by enriching our lives, providing rewarding activities; they give us opportunities to learn new skills, improve our knowledge and explore our feelings. This Arts Strategy will **develop opportunities** for all Flintshire's residents to be able to experience the arts.

3. The arts have a key role to play in **enabling the Community and the Council to meet its priorities**. The Arts Strategy's aims are designed to ensure that the arts make a substantial and growing contribution to Flintshire's Community Strategy 2009-2019's five priorities:
 - economic prosperity
 - health improvement
 - learning and skills for life
 - living sustainably
 - safe and supportive communities

Each year the Council reviews how to achieve these priorities within its Annual Improvement Plan.

4. One of the Arts Strategy's **priorities must be to support** and develop the arts infrastructure, networks and partnerships within Flintshire and encourage enjoyment, participation and equal access to the arts by embracing the county's uniqueness and celebrating its diversity. It needs to respect and nourish individual artistic endeavour and support its creative professionals by recognising the time and work involved in producing high quality art, and their contribution to our society.

5. The **purpose** of this updated Arts Strategy is to give the ACE team and the arts in Flintshire a clear vision and a focused path to inform decisions and development. It is intended that the strategy will raise the profile of the arts through a coherent and integrated statement of aims and objectives for the next three years, and to nurture innovation and creativity amongst the artists and residents of Flintshire.

6. The arts strategy **aims** to ensure that the priorities of the Welsh Government and Arts Council of Wales Strategies are considered throughout.

7. An effective Arts Strategy **encourages creative vitality** and raises pride and confidence within the community by showing recognition for imagination and innovation within its people. It celebrates diversity by highlighting the contribution which all groups and individuals make to the life of this community. It encourages regeneration and economic growth by attracting inward investment. There are thousands of people in Flintshire involved in artistic activity; this strategy aims to enable many more to participate.

Clwyd Theatr Cymru is an independent body operating within Flintshire and as such has its own policy and strategy, direction and governance.

Arts Council Quotes – ‘Inspire...Our Creative Strategy for the Arts’

At the Arts Council, (<http://www.artswales.org/about-us>) our vision is of a creative Wales where the arts are central to the life of the nation. Together in Wales, we are embarked on an extraordinary journey. The destination is a Wales that is a creative country through and through. We see the arts as fundamental to the future of Wales - not a “nice to have” luxury, more a cornerstone in Wales’s 21st century renewal.

Our strategy is about creative ambition and endeavour in the arts; the need for the arts to connect and engage; and the skill needed to ensure that the impact of what the arts achieve renews itself and lasts.

Art does not teach conformity, it questions, challenges and surprises. And we look to our artists to see beyond the obvious and the superficial – to use their insight and intuition, their most inquisitive curiosity, and to express through their talents and skills, the perceptions that will lead us to a deeper and more rooted understanding of the world around us or move us onto a different plane of experience.

The Vision and Aims of the Arts Strategy

The Vision

‘The vision of the Arts Strategy is to support and develop the arts infrastructure, networks and partnerships within Flintshire and encourage enjoyment, participation and equal access to the arts while considering the priorities of the Council as a whole. And to facilitate the provision of quality arts opportunities for artists, the people of Flintshire and visitors to Flintshire to ensure that the arts are an integral part of Flintshire’s cultural identity.’

The Aims

1. Advocacy

- To raise the value, profile and appreciation of the arts in Flintshire, to increase opportunities for artists, and support the development of proposals that offer benefits to the creative economy. (Priority economic prosperity, living sustainably)

2. Participation

- To support and encourage the provision of arts activity/events for young people as participants and audiences, and to increase opportunities for participation for all ages and abilities, including the elderly and socially excluded, across a range of art forms. (Priority: learning and skills for life, health improvement, safe and supportive communities)

3. Presentation

- To ensure that Flintshire has suitable locations for arts presentation and performance, and to enhance opportunities for performances and experiences in locations throughout the County. (Priority: economic prosperity, learning and skills for life)

4. Partnerships

- To build on and develop useful partnerships both internally and externally to ensure quality provision on a local, cross county and national level. (Priority: health improvement, learning and skills for life, economic prosperity)

5. Policies

- To ensure that all policies and procedures are adhered to at all times, to ensure that arts provision reflects the vision and values of the County Council, and to monitor developments in relation to WG's (Welsh Government) Cultural Strategy and ACW's (Arts Council of Wales) 'Inspire...Our Creative Strategy for the Arts' (Priority: All)

Aim 1 Advocacy

To raise the value, profile and appreciation of the arts in the County.

1.1 To prepare an Arts Strategy, in consultation with the public, and use it to inform and engage the public and arts professionals.

1.2 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.

1.3 To ensure that people are aware of the artistic opportunities provided by Flintshire County Council and other arts providers within the county.

To increase opportunities for artists and support the development of proposals that offer benefits to the creative economy.

1.4 To maintain and update a database of existing professional artists resident in the County.

1.5 To liaise with internal and external partners to develop opportunities for artist employment and economic benefit for the county through exhibitions, festivals, events, performances and public art projects within our communities.

1.6 To develop training opportunities for artists from Flintshire and to encourage artists to visit Flintshire.

Aim 2 Participation

To support and encourage the provision of arts activity/events for young people as participants and audiences.

2.1 To continue to work with schools, the Youth and Community Service, the Young People's Partnership and other youth arts organisations to increase opportunities across a range of art forms.

2.2 To monitor the outcome of Welsh Government and ACW's 'A Review of Art in Education in Wales' lead by Dai Smith and ACW's Young Creators Strategy and ensure that projects directed at young people are relevant to the local and national agenda.

Arts Council – Young Creators Quotes

The arts can nurture a young person's ability to question and make connections, to develop the capacity for independent, critical thought. They can inspire young people with new ambition and confidence, challenging poverty of aspiration and breaking the cycle of deprivation caused by low educational achievement. The arts can be the key that unlocks the door to further and higher education, and in time to employment.

We want to create a climate within which talent, confidence and ambition can be nurtured and developed. We want to invest in clear, progressive strategies that help produce the next generation of creative and performing artists as well as the arts literate audiences of the future.

To increase opportunities for participation across a range of art forms.

2.3 To work with professional arts practitioners to develop the quality of participatory experiences.

2.4 To work with other North Wales authorities to provide a variety of projects and opportunities.

2.5 To advise on and encourage opportunities offered by individuals, groups and organisations within the communities of Flintshire.

'We thoroughly enjoyed having Cefyn Burgess in school. The Children haven't stopped talking about the project.

The children were thrilled they had also composed a poem in Welsh and that it would be on display in Denbigh, Mold and the Eisteddfod.

From a learning perspective this arts project has reinforced the excellence of the arts as a teaching tool. Thank you Trefor for coordinating and bringing us this fantastic experience.'

**Mrs Margaret Madoc Jones
Headteacher
Ysgol Telogan**

Aim 3 Presentation

To ensure that Flintshire County has suitable locations for Arts presentation and performance.

3.1 To review and advise on the development of the spaces already available within the county.

3.2 To consider implications of any gaps in provision and, if appropriate, advise on potential other sources of funding.

3.3 To utilise outside and unusual spaces for presenting and performing art in partnership with **Libraries** Town Centre Managers, Artists, internal and external partners and Landowners.

To enhance opportunities for the presentation of arts performances and experiences in locations throughout the County.

3.4 To evaluate the Flintshire Arts Fest to ensure it provides innovative and quality artistic experiences for participants and audiences.

3.5 To encourage local organisations to make use of ACW's 'Night Out' Community Touring Scheme.

3.6 To ensure opportunities for arts performances and experiences to be delivered in Welsh.

Aim 4 Partnerships

To build on and develop useful partnerships both internally and externally to ensure quality provision on a local, cross county and national level.

4.1 To support and liaise with a wide range of partners, internal and external, to ensure that the county attracts the best practitioners and delivers an innovative programme of arts.

4.2 To work with other Authorities and national organisations to deliver research projects looking at how the arts can benefit people and communities.

"The arts can provide benefits across the wide range of people's everyday lives, from the creative education of our young people to the economic development that can come from cultural tourism. Creu Argraff is an excellent example of how taking part in the arts can promote health and well-being. The opportunity to share experiences and engage in meaningful creative activity has been demonstrated to have positive health outcomes. I congratulate Flintshire Council and the other partners for this imaginative and innovative collaboration."

Nick Calpaldi
Chief Executive of Arts Council of Wales

'This project was excellent and effective in its process and outcomes for patients and staff.

Key goals achieved were:

- Arts events and projects that contribute to a lively and stimulating atmosphere for services users, visitors and staff*
- Partnership projects that engage our wider community with the work and values of the health board, including components of improving the Service User Experience.*
- Use of the arts to create healthcare environments that are welcoming, reassuring, stimulating and personal that reflect the needs and values of the local community. Arts in health projects are seen as effective and value for money means of creating impact and ensuring appropriateness.'*

Elizabeth Aylett
Head of Arts Therapies & Clinical Operational Lead

'Personally it was wonderful to see the enthusiasm from the patients taking part. The men really were enthusiastic; they were all engaged in this work, not discussing their illnesses!'

Mold Community Hospital

Aim 5 Policies

To ensure that all policies and procedures are adhered to at all times e.g. equal opportunities, health and safety etc.

5.1. To review guidance available on the arts and disability.

5.2. In developing programmes of activity, to seek to ensure that they reflect a range of cultural traditions including the Welsh Language and culture.

5.3. Take account of Council's Social Inclusion policy when devising artistic opportunities.

To ensure that arts provision reflects the vision and values of the County Council.

5.4 To monitor, on an ongoing basis, that the policies and practices of the ACE Team reflect the Priorities of the Council.

5.5 To review and re-visit the strategy annually to assess progress and ensure that targets are being met.

To monitor developments in relation to Welsh Government's Cultural Strategy and Arts Council of Wales's 'Inspire...Our Creative Strategy for the Arts'

5.6 To advocate the value of the arts both within and outside the county council by collating evidence to prove the benefits and the need for creative artistic experiences.

5.7 To ensure that Flintshire's Arts Strategy is relevant to both Welsh Government's and Arts Council of Wales's strategies and that the county is seen as an advocate of quality arts provision within Wales.

Welsh Government Quotes – The Culture and Heritage of Wales

*We want to maximise participation in the **arts** and sport, and widen access to our museums, libraries and heritage sites, particularly by targeting low income families and children to access our services.*