

**AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET**

**Name of Committee** North Warwickshire Area Committee

**Date of Committee** 29<sup>th</sup> November 2006

**Report Title** Arts Provision in North Warwickshire

**Summary** This report details the current levels of provision for the arts in North Warwickshire, including services and support from the County Arts Service.

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**Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework? [please identify relevant plan/budget provision]** No

**Background papers**

Warwickshire County Council Arts Policy  
North Warwickshire Borough Council Arts Plan, 2000 – Jenna Kumiega

**CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:-** Details to be specified

- Other Committees
- Local Member(s)
- Other Elected Members  Councillor R Sweet, Councillor R Grant
- Lead Cabinet Member  Councillor C Hayfield
- Cabinet Member
- Chief Executive
- Legal  Jane Pollard, Alison Hallworth
- Finance
- Other Chief Officers  Graeme Betts, Strategic Director of Adult, Health

and Community Services

- |                          |                                     |   |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| District Councils        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Camille Archer, North Warwickshire Borough Council  |
| Health Authority         | <input type="checkbox"/>            |   |
| Police                   | <input type="checkbox"/>            |   |
| Other Bodies/Individuals | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Alistair Rigby, Community Partnership Officer<br>Alison Williams, North Warwickshire Area Officer |

**FINAL DECISION NO**

**SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS:**

Details to be specified

- |   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| Further consideration by this Committee | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| To Council                              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| To Cabinet                              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| To an O & S Committee                   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| To an Area Committee                    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Further Consultation                    | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**North Warwickshire Area Committee –  
29<sup>th</sup> November 2006**

**Arts Provision in North Warwickshire**

**Report of the Strategic Director of Adult, Health &  
Community Services**

**Recommendation**

That the Committee consider current provision and key challenges for the arts in North Warwickshire including the services and support provided by the County Arts Service.

**1. Background**

**1.1 Arts Provision - General**

- 1.1.1 The arts infrastructure of North Warwickshire is based on a small network of amateur arts groups and organisations, in particular those organisations affiliated to North Warwickshire Arts (including Atherstone Theatre Workshop, Atherstone Dramatic Society, Atherstone Operatic Society, Coleshill Drama Group, Atherstone Chorale, Atherstone Art Circle, Friends of Atherstone Heritage, Atherstone Choral Society). The Borough is also home to a small number of visual artists, arts festivals (particularly linked to Polesworth Abbey and North Warwickshire Arts) and activities taking place in schools and community centres. This sector is largely managed through the goodwill of volunteers and funded through entry fees, subscriptions and ticket prices. The majority of this work is focused on the three main towns in the Borough – Coleshill, Atherstone and Polesworth.
- 1.1.2 The general level of facilities for the arts in the area is poor, with only one dedicated venue (Atherstone Arts Centre – currently in need of significant repair) and no cinema, fully-equipped performing arts venue or exhibition gallery, and a limited arts programme taking place at the multi-purpose Atherstone Memorial Hall. A number of North Warwickshire residents take advantage of arts provision in surrounding areas within a reasonable traveling distance of the Borough.
- 1.1.3 In terms of professional arts product, North Warwickshire Borough Council and WCC work in partnership to bring professional arts companies to the area, in particular the rural touring network *Live & Local* and contemporary dance company *Motionhouse*. In addition to these regularly funded organisations, North Warwickshire Borough Council manage a programme of

arts activities across the Borough involving professional artists working in predominantly community settings.

- 1.1.4 The County Arts Service (WCC) offers a range of advice, support and resources for artists, arts organisations and arts projects across the Borough, as well providing professional arts advice for, and working in partnership with, North Warwickshire Borough Council. This approach is informed by WCC's Arts Policy and takes into account North Warwickshire's Arts Plan. In terms of practical delivery, The County Arts Service focuses its work on providing community groups and organisations the opportunity to develop arts projects and activities. In order to facilitate growth of the arts across the Borough, with little or no infrastructure in place it is necessary to grow from grassroots level. Examples of projects either facilitated or delivered across the Borough by County Arts include;

#### **Piccadilly Youth Club**

Partnership project between Piccadilly Youth Club 7 volunteers, Outreach Youth Worker and County Arts. Three days of arts activities; street dance, graffiti arts and vinyl mural. Additional support was given to the volunteers to develop a short programme of summer arts activities which developed to include mask making and a trip to Compton Verney.

**Bracebridge Court** has received two Social Services Arts grants via the County Arts Service. The first enabled residents and day service users to develop ceramic garden artefacts. The second to develop reminiscence workshops, leading to the creation of a ceramic model of a wartime grocery shop. The home has also been supported by the Community Arts officer to apply for a grant from Home Call Lottery funding, enabling them to develop an exhibition of war time artefacts to which local school children were invited to visit as well as take part.

#### **New Ideas**

The Wacky Forum (a group of young people with disabilities who represent their special schools) received support and funding to develop the 'Bullying Project' - a dance and drama project. The project was run in partnership with NWCVS.

#### **FCH**

A charity which provides services to adults recovering from mental distress have received a Social Services Arts Grant to run a digital photography project with two of their service user groups who meet at The Community Partnership Building in Atherstone. This project will culminate in an exhibition of work in the near future. The groups worked with local professional photographer Dawn Sumner to develop photographic skills and exhibit the work.

#### **Arts Together**

The County Arts Service made a small grant to Art Together – a newly formed community group - to enable them to run two days of arts activities for members (and potential new members) and participate in Warwickshire Arts Week with an exhibition of work over one weekend in Coleshill.

## 1.2 Arts Provision – Physical Infrastructure

A number of studies in recent years have identified limitations in the range of cultural venues available in North Warwickshire.

- 1.2.1 In 1994, the North Warwickshire Leisure Opportunities Audit concluded that the general level of arts facilities in the District was poor, with only one dedicated venue (Atherstone Arts Centre) and a very limited arts programme at the Memorial Hall.
- 1.2.2 In 2000, the North Warwickshire Arts Plan concluded that there had been relatively little progress in this area. It identified “*the low critical mass of activities, facilities, resources and people contributing to the cultural profile of the area*”. The report recommended that there was an “*urgent need to address the lack of adequate arts venues in the Borough*”.
- 1.2.3 The Market Towns Health check in 2001 concluded that both Atherstone and Polesworth are poorly served for cultural facilities, “*Atherstone Memorial Hall suffers from poor acoustics and lack of facilities; the small Atherstone Arts Centre ... is used for rehearsals but again lacks many basic facilities for performances.*”
- 1.2.4 The Atherstone Community Action Plan, 2002, identified the need to investigate the case for a community arts centre for the town, and suggested looking at the scope to upgrade the current arts centre.
- 1.2.5 In September 2002 an independent audit of Arts Facilities in North Warwickshire was carried out, with a recommendation that a small working party be set up to consider options for arts facilities for the area and commission a technical feasibility study of the Memorial Hall – which, at that time, appeared the most appropriate venue to develop for arts use in the long term.
- 1.2.6 A small working party consisting of members and officers from North Warwickshire Borough Council and WCC, local artists and arts groups (including North Warwickshire Arts) was set up to move the issue forward. The working party is led and chaired by Councillor Richard Freer from North Warwickshire Borough Council.
- 1.2.7 An application was submitted to Arts Council England for funding to engage an architect and other specialists to undertake a more detailed assessment of the Memorial Hall. The aim of the assessment was to identify a number of options for the Hall as a potential long term home for arts organisations and activities in the District. This application was successful in June 2005.
- 1.2.8 The funds from Arts Council England, North Warwickshire Borough Council, WCC (Libraries), North Warwickshire Arts and other small arts organisations from across the District were used to appoint marsh:grochowski (arts architects) to undertake a full survey of the Memorial Hall. The architects submitted their report, outlined a number of proposals for the building, to a Committee on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2006.

- 1.2.9 Following the completion of this audit, no decision was made to progress with any of the proposals submitted. North Warwickshire Borough Council wrote to June Maidens of NWArts in June 2006 outlining their position, namely "*The Borough Council has identified a number of circumstances which provide a window of opportunity to look at the possibility of significant re-development within Atherstone to provide new public buildings, including a performance venue, meeting rooms and council offices. We are currently commissioning a feasibility study. If this comes to fruition, it may well include a redevelopment or replacement for the Memorial Hall.*"
- 1.3 Warwickshire County Council is not currently aware of any further decision having been made by North Warwickshire Borough Council regarding the future development of the Memorial Hall or plan to refurbish Atherstone Arts Centre. North Warwickshire Borough Council has, however, identified a short term solution for the provision of space for those companies based at the Arts Centre – an arrangement for the use of space at QE Upper School in Atherstone.

## **2. Arts Development**

- 2.1 The process of arts development in the Borough has been a slow and gradual process, with its beginnings back in the 1995 *Leisure Opportunities Audit* undertaken by NWBC and subsequent rural arts development work which resulted in the *Face to face project*. Many key agencies and organisations played a significant role in this building process, including WCC, Arts Council England and the broad range of local voluntary organisations. This process culminated in the development of the first North Warwickshire Arts Plan in 2000 and the subsequent appointment of a full time Arts Development Officer (ADO). The ADO worked closely with the County Arts Service and developed a programme of participatory arts project, partnership agreements with key professional arts providers, provided support for the voluntary sector's aspirations for capital development within the Borough and provided a voice and network for the arts in the Borough through the publication of *Arden Arts*.
- 2.2 The Borough has recently re-focused their priorities in terms of the arts towards the use of the arts to address wider social inclusion and community development. The existing ADO post has been replaced with a Community Development Officer (social inclusion & art). This re-focus will culminate in the creation of a new Strategy for the Arts & Social Inclusion, due for development and consultation in 2007.

One key question yet to be addressed as part of this re-focus is how NWBC plans to support artists, arts organisations and activities that don't link to their social inclusion agenda. A key part of any arts development package is the recognition of 'art for arts sake' – the pure pleasure, joy and fulfilment an individual gets from taking part in an arts event or activity.

- 2.3 The County Arts Service continues to offer arts development support to the Borough in a number of key areas:
- Advice and support to NWBC in terms of broad arts development objectives
  - Partnership agreements with key arts clients for delivery of professional product across the Borough
  - ‘Underpinning’ Borough resources as part of the Sub Regional Partnership with Arts Council England - with a current focus on the development of dance, visual arts & crafts and public art
  - Support for key policy areas e.g. Youth Arts – through Warwickshire Youth Arts Network
  - Support for the capital development aspirations of the Borough and voluntary sector – including membership of the steering group and attendance at North Warwickshire Arts meetings
  - Support for the community sector - the Community Arts Officer (who has responsibilities for Community Arts Development throughout the county) attends at least one Community Workers Forum per year & keeps in regular contact with NWCVS
  - Facilitating delivery of a range of community arts projects across the Borough
  - Providing funding and professional advice to specific development projects within the Borough – for example the North Arden Trail.

### 3. Conclusion

- 3.1 In conclusion, the partnership between the County and Borough are addressing arts provision in three ways:

- Support for small scale, community and voluntary organisations to engage with the arts and develop arts activities and programmes
- The ‘buying in’ of professional arts product through partnership agreements with companies such as *Live & Local* and *Motionhouse* to provide North Warwickshire with access to high quality arts product within the Borough
- Advice, support and funding from professional arts officers

Despite significant and sustained support from the Borough and County Council in terms of specialist officer time, funding and resources, support for the voluntary & community sector, commission of professional arts programmes and delivery of community arts activity, there still appear to be significant challenges in delivering comprehensive and sustainable arts provision in North Warwickshire. In identifying the challenges, four key issues emerge;

- The lack of adequate arts venues across the Borough
- The lack of professional artists or arts companies living and working in the Borough
- The current imbalance in terms of art forms available within the Borough i.e. a bias towards performing arts such as amateur dramatic and operatic groups.

- How North Warwickshire Borough Council's Arts & Social Inclusion agenda will shape or define the development of the arts across the Borough in the future.

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Shire Hall  
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October 2006



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*NORTH WARWICKSHIRE ARTS PLAN*

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### 1. BACKGROUND

This Arts Plan for North Warwickshire has been commissioned by North Warwickshire Borough Council with the financial support of West Midlands Arts. It is a significant milestone in a slow but gradual process of cultural development which the Borough Council and its partners have been enabling in recent years. A number of other initiatives have contributed to this process - including a *Leisure Opportunities Audit* undertaken in 1995, and the rural arts development work which led in time to the establishment of the **Face to Face** project. Many key agencies have played a significant role alongside North Warwickshire Borough Council in this building process of recent years, including Warwickshire County Council, West Midlands Arts, and a whole range of local voluntary organisations, and they continue to be stakeholders in further cultural development.

There is currently an opportunity to build on these achievements of the past few years, and to begin to redress some of the existing gaps in provision in the area. The Borough Council has decided that the time is right for the development of an arts policy and plan for the area, in order to provide a strategic framework for its own investment and provision, and to strengthen the potential for increased inward investment from external sources into cultural development in the Borough. It has therefore commissioned a review of the arts in North Warwickshire, leading to proposals for a strategic arts plan.

The review process was established to

- ◆ provide an overview of current forms and levels of arts provision in the Borough
- ◆ assess existing partnerships and relationships between the Borough Council and other agencies, and establish a clear focus and role for the Council, and
- ◆ identify recommendations for a strategic arts plan for the area, together with the resource implications and possible sources of funding.

The review took place between the end of April and early July 2000, and the methodology was based on an individually-focused process of consultation, with one-to-one meetings and three Focus Group meetings, monitored by a Steering Group of Members and Officers from North Warwickshire Borough Council, Warwickshire County Council, and West Midlands Arts. The process enabled more than 60 individuals to contribute directly to the review. Prior to the development of this final Plan, a draft Arts Plan was developed and distributed for public consultation after consideration by the Borough Council's Leisure Services Committee in July 2000.

The Borough of North Warwickshire consists of a small, predominantly rural district covering 110 square miles, bordered by urban areas. Its population of

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just over 61,000 is dispersed across the area in a number of small towns, villages and farmland settlements, with the three main towns of Atherstone, Coleshill and Polesworth having less than 10,000 residents each. The Borough lies at the heart of the West Midlands region's communications network, accessible via a number of motorways and main routes, but travel within the Borough is not so easy, particularly if reliant on public transport. Historically, coal-mining, hatting and agriculture were the main industries, but there is currently only one working mine at Daw Mill, and the last remaining hatting factory closed recently. Despite a 14% increase in employment in the area between 1991 and 1997, almost 60% of North Warwickshire households earn below the national average income, and the Borough has poorer health, higher rates of unemployment and crime, and poorer educational attainment levels than the County average.

Support for the arts in the area has to date been channelled through the Borough Council's Leisure Services Division. The Authority's overall spending per head on leisure and cultural services is below the national and regional average, and it is one of very few local authorities in the West Midlands not to have an Arts Development Officer. North Warwickshire Borough Council is currently involved in a number of areas of policy development which are relevant to the development of the Arts Plan, including the development of a local Leisure and Cultural Strategy.

At a national and regional level, there is currently a positive context for the Borough Council's development of its cultural policies, with national support for the process of local democratic renewal leading to an increased emphasis on partnership working, and progress towards a stronger regional focus. In terms of arts funding, this has led to a significant devolution of responsibilities and resources to a regional level, and West Midlands Arts is able to offer support into the area through a range of professional services and new funding schemes (including a new Regional Arts Lottery Programme for arts project grants between £2,000 and £30,000 and small scale capital awards up to £100,000). At a national level, a new Arts Capital Programme of funding has been launched by the Arts Council of England, with a significantly reduced budget to support eligible projects over £100,000.

## 2. MAPPING THE ARTS

In 1994/95 North Warwickshire Borough Council, in partnership with the Sports Council (West Midlands Region) and West Midlands Arts, commissioned a detailed *North Warwickshire Leisure Opportunities Audit*. The research and documentation of arts facilities and activities in that report, and the analysis of the market context within which local arts provision operates, was detailed and extensive.

It concluded that the general level of arts facilities is poor, with only one dedicated venue (**Atherstone Arts Centre**) and no cinema, fully-equipped performing arts studio or exhibition gallery, and a very limited arts programme

taking place at the multi-purpose **Atherstone Memorial Hall**. It noted that a number of North Warwickshire residents take advantage of the wealth of arts provision in the surrounding urban areas within travelling distance of the Borough. The Borough's amateur and voluntary arts sector is described as relatively small, and almost exclusively concerned with the performing arts. The report documents a very low level of professional arts activity in the area, and infrequent opportunities to engage in professionally-led participatory arts activities. The report's concluding recommendation was that, for the arts in North Warwickshire to develop "*the Borough Council will need to play a more active role in arts development and to allocate a greater share of the available resources to arts development*".

The research undertaken for this current review indicates that there has been relatively little overall progression in the picture of arts provision within North Warwickshire. With a few very notable exceptions, the *Leisure Opportunities Audit* report stands as an effective and relevant documentation of the arts in the area. There are still no dedicated performing arts facilities in the Borough, and very little progression in terms of the facilities and activity at either the **Atherstone Arts Centre** or **Atherstone Memorial Hall**. A very small exhibition space has been opened in Atherstone by the **Friends of Atherstone Heritage**, with time-limited funding, as part of the **White Hart Heritage Centre**. Similarly, the **Coleshill Civic Society** has developed an exhibition area in the **Old Market Hall** in Coleshill.

Professional arts activity remains at a low level, with very few opportunities for the involvement of professional artists, despite some investment of time and resources by county-based and regional agencies, such as **Live and Local** or **Ikon Touring**. The profile of the amateur and voluntary arts sector has changed little, if at all, and the existing organisations remain self-sufficient, committed and active. There is still a perception that there is a wealth of high quality cultural facilities within relatively easy reach of the Borough for those who are committed enough to the arts to travel.

The one major development which has made a significant difference over the past five years has been the establishment and operation of the **Face to Face** project in the Borough, which has operated from July 1997 until its impending completion in September 2000. It has offered opportunities for several hundred people in North Warwickshire to be involved as audience or participants in at least 27 community arts projects, and has gained the loyalty, affection and respect of local communities.

### 3. ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The research and consultation undertaken as part of the review identified a number of key issues that will need to be addressed as part of a new Arts Plan for the Borough, as well as a number of current opportunities for development.

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Probably the single most challenging issue facing North Warwickshire Borough Council as it aims to develop the arts in the area is the low "critical mass" of activities, facilities, resources, and people contributing to the cultural profile of the area. This is to some extent a consequence of the lack of proactive and adequate support structures for the arts in the area, and if North Warwickshire Borough Council wishes its communities to experience the benefits of an active and vibrant cultural life, then there is a pressing need for it to address the scale of involvement and participation in the arts. Together with its local and regional partners, the Borough Council will need to look at a gradual, sustained and long-term strategy which addresses a number of key issues, including:

- ◆ Audience development
- ◆ Facilities development
- ◆ Sustainable community arts development, enabling local people to develop their own creative work
- ◆ Supporting local groups to access funding
- ◆ Attracting more external funding into the area.

The other issue that will need to be considered is that of social and cultural inclusion, extending the range and scope of people involved in the arts in the area. There are currently some sectors of the local community which have a tendency to be less involved in the existing arts provision, and will require specific strategies to target their involvement, for example young people, elderly people, disabled people, and people with learning disabilities and mental health problems. All of these groups face particular barriers to participation in the arts in a rural area such as North Warwickshire, as many of them have mobility or transport problems.

In order to begin to make a significant impact on the challenge of cultural access and inclusion, it is essential that sustainable and longer-term strategies can be put in place. It is also essential that the strategies are implemented from within the local authority, in such a way that they can relate to, and benefit from, a corporate approach and corporate ownership.

Within the broad area of "cultural access" there are issues relating also to geography, location, transport, venues and facilities. One of the over-riding challenges for nearly all forms of service provision in North Warwickshire is that of the rural nature of the area, the dispersed and fragmented nature of the communities, and the difficulties of the internal transport networks. It is therefore important to develop an arts plan that addresses the challenge of a rural area and offers opportunities for people to experience the arts within their own localities and communities. There are local schemes which aim to address some of these issues (e.g. the *Rural Transport Brokerage Project*) but they require the input of relevant staff to ensure that they have an impact on cultural access. It will be equally important, in order to develop a Borough-wide strategy, to address the question of the geographic spread of venues and facilities for the arts.

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Partnership working has been identified as a key corporate "cross-cutting theme" within North Warwickshire Borough Council's Corporate Plan 2000 - 2001. The lack, to date, of specialist arts development staffing within North Warwickshire Borough Council has had a negative impact on the Authority's capacity to benefit from effective partnerships in a number of ways. The most obvious and quantifiable of these has been the failure to attract adequate levels of inward investment from the new arts funding sources in recent years. There are, however, less obvious ways in which North Warwickshire Borough Council has missed out in terms of "partnership deals" in recent years. The absence of specialist staff "on the ground" in North Warwickshire has meant that the area has not necessarily been able to get best value out of incoming initiatives (e.g. **Motionhouse Dance Theatre** or **Ikon Touring** projects) which are subsidised by external sources. It has also limited the Authority's ability to benefit from existing partnerships which offer opportunities for cost-effectively addressing key issues (e.g. the newly-formed **Warwickshire Youth Arts Network**), or exploit the potential for new and unexplored partnerships (e.g. the **Rural Community Council's Vital Villages** project).

Just as crucially, the lack of dedicated arts staff at the Borough Council has hindered the development of a more positive working relationship and communication with the independent and voluntary sector working in the arts in the area. As well as providing direct grants, there are a number of low-cost ways in which an arts development officer working at the Borough Council could support the voluntary sector

- ◆ by providing professional advice to enable them to access external funds
- ◆ by supporting a strategic approach to capital development in the area, providing in the long term a range of better-equipped venues for the arts
- ◆ by collating and developing databases, to improve communication and liaison
- ◆ by coordinating the availability and distribution of information through a What's On, a web-site, and other marketing initiatives.

The extent to which an investment in arts development will contribute to the achievement of a range of corporate objectives for North Warwickshire Borough Council has been one of the key themes of the review process. Increasingly, within the context of the central government "Best Value" initiative, it is becoming essential that local authorities take a corporate approach to the provision of all their services. Parallel to this process, there has been a growing body of research and evidence that, far from being an optional luxury, arts and cultural development can have a major impact on a number of key policy aims, particularly social inclusion and community empowerment. In order for such a Council-wide approach to arts development to be truly effective, however, it is crucial that there is corporate recognition and validation of the approach, and corporate ownership of the Arts Plan.

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In conclusion, the research and consultation undertaken as part of the review have identified opportunities for a number of key developments in the arts in North Warwickshire, which inform the proposed Arts Policy, Strategy, and Recommendations:

- ◆ **STAFFING:** the need for an Arts Development Officer to enable the Borough Council to engage effectively in the arts, meet local expectations, and exploit funding and partnership opportunities
- ◆ **BUDGETS:** In order to achieve the development targets identified in the Arts Plan, and fulfil the criteria for a partnership funding agreement with West Midlands Arts, it will be necessary to create an arts development budget of about £10,000 - £12,000.
- ◆ **FUNDING AGREEMENT WITH WEST MIDLANDS ARTS:** North Warwickshire Borough Council will be eligible to apply to West Midlands Arts for a fixed term funding agreement, for match-funding against the arts development programme identified in the arts plan.
- ◆ **CAPITAL AUDIT AND STRATEGY:** there is an urgent need for the Borough Council to address the lack of adequate arts venues in the Borough, through an audit, and the development of a Borough-wide strategy for capital development in the arts.
- ◆ **FACE TO FACE - DOCUMENTATION:** the achievements of the *Face to Face* project in enabling significant levels of community involvement, particularly by groups new to the arts, deserves to be celebrated and recorded.
- ◆ **YOUTH ARTS DEVELOPMENT:** there are a number of opportunities currently within the Borough to enable partnerships and initiatives leading to a sustainable programme of youth arts development.
- ◆ **RURAL ARTS:** particular attention needs to be given within the Arts Plan to ensuring that there are increased opportunities for involvement in the arts in **all** parts of the Borough, and that people can have access to quality arts experiences within their own communities.
- ◆ **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:** strengthening and empowering local communities to play a more active role in improving quality of life in their areas is one of the key corporate aims of North Warwickshire Borough Council. The arts can play a particularly effective role in this process, as they encourage and enable positive involvement, and at the same time provide creative tools for communication and expression
- ◆ **ARTFORM DEVELOPMENT:** there is a need to address directly some aspects of artform development in the area, which tends to have a preponderance of performing arts such as amateur dramatic and operatic groups, or traditional music groups.
- ◆ **ENVIRONMENTAL PUBLIC ART:** there are a number of recent initiatives and schemes relating to the development of environmental public art within or adjacent to the Borough which provide a positive context for North Warwickshire Borough Council to include environmental and rural public art as a strand within its arts plan
- ◆ **SKILLS DEVELOPMENT:** it is important that, in its arts strategy, the Borough Council gives some attention to the issue of developing local resources and local skills in professional arts and public art development so



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that, in time, increasing numbers of local people will have the skills and experience to benefit from employment opportunities in these areas.

- ◆ **AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT:** the North Warwickshire Borough Council Arts Plan should include a number of strategies which address the issue of audience development, including a strategic approach to programming high quality professional arts within the Borough, and the coordination of a strategic approach to arts marketing.
- ◆ **NETWORKS AND COMMUNICATION:** finally, it is important that all aspects of an arts development strategy for the Borough are strengthened by paying attention to local and regional networks and communication, and the coordination of information relating to arts activities and arts development.

If all of these above developments are approached strategically and corporately through an adopted arts plan for North Warwickshire, they will have an impact on the overall level and quality of arts provision within the Borough, the level of involvement of local people in cultural activities, and the overall profile and image of North Warwickshire.

Overall, the findings and analysis contained within the Arts Plan support the conclusion that North Warwickshire Borough Council has a crucial opportunity to benefit from, and build upon its previous investment into community arts development in its area, and the sustained support it has received from its partners at West Midlands Arts and the County Council. In order for the Council to move forward from this point, there are some fundamental processes it must engage in, to begin to construct the local infrastructure which will support sustainable arts development in the area.

The tasks now in front of North Warwickshire Borough Council are to:

- ◆ agree a new arts policy and strategy which recognise the role of the arts in the delivery of its corporate objectives
- ◆ agree an action plan for implementation of the strategy which identifies clear goals and targets, timescale, monitoring mechanisms, and resources
- ◆ identify and allocate the necessary resources to implement the action plan.



## ARTS POLICY STATEMENT

It is recommended that North Warwickshire Borough Council adopts the following Mission Statement, as an expression of its corporate commitment to the importance of the arts:

**North Warwickshire Borough Council recognises that the arts contribute to the development of strong and inclusive communities and locally distinctive environments, and is therefore actively committed to ensuring opportunities for local cultural participation.**

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

### Community Development and Social Inclusion:

- ◆ extending the range and scope of cultural experiences accessible to local communities
- ◆ strengthening cohesion in communities through shared cultural experiences
- ◆ providing opportunities for social inclusion and integration through cultural participation
- ◆ providing opportunities for young people to develop creative skills

### Environmental Development and Sustainability:

- ◆ using creative skills to improve the quality of environment in towns and villages, and provide local distinctiveness
- ◆ encouraging the development of local skills and resources which empower communities
- ◆ ensuring the development of resources and infrastructure to sustain viable town centres and thriving rural areas

### Implementation and Review:

- ◆ Ensuring adequate resources and effective management and partnership arrangements for delivery of the arts plan
- ◆ ensuring best value service delivery of the arts plan through liaison and joint working with external partners
- ◆ establishing procedures for consultation, documentation, evaluation and review of the arts plan

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION:

- ◆ ***extending the range and scope of cultural experiences accessible to local communities***  
**Recommendation 1:** Establish service level agreements with professional arts agencies to increase the range and scale of professional arts programmes in the Borough  
**Recommendation 2:** Address current gaps in artform provision in the area by prioritising the programming of visual arts, multi-media work, literature, dance and film
- ◆ ***strengthening cohesion in communities through shared cultural experiences***  
**Recommendation 3:** Research, initiate and deliver innovative rural arts projects which build on local community celebrations
- ◆ ***providing opportunities for social inclusion and integration through cultural participation***  
**Recommendation 4:** Work with internal and external partners to prioritise participatory arts projects which directly facilitate the inclusion and integration of socially excluded groups, particularly elderly people, disabled people, and people with learning disabilities and mental health problems
- ◆ ***providing opportunities for young people to develop creative skills***  
**Recommendation 5:** Contribute to the support and development of the Warwickshire Youth Arts Network  
**Recommendation 6:** Work with a range of partners to increase arts provision in local schools and youth clubs

### ENVIRONMENTAL DEVELOPMENT & SUSTAINABILITY:

- ◆ ***using creative skills to improve the quality of environment in towns and villages, and provide local distinctiveness***  
**Recommendation 7:** work with Borough Council Officers and local and regional partners, to research and establish opportunities for environmental and rural public art development  
**Recommendation 8:** work with Borough Council officers and external partners to involve local communities in identifying public art projects as part of estate development
- ◆ ***encouraging the development of local skills and resources which empower communities***  
**Recommendation 9:** work where appropriate with local partners, to set up a range of community arts training, skills-sharing, and arts apprentice schemes, working alongside experience professional artists on local arts projects

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**Recommendation 10:** In conjunction with other officers and agencies, provide advice and support to local groups engaged in arts activities on funding and income-generation opportunities

◆ ***ensuring the development of resources and infrastructure to sustain viable town centres and thriving rural areas***

**Recommendation 11:** Commission an audit of arts venues and facilities in the Borough, and a strategy for capital arts development

**Recommendation 12:** Investigate a range of audience development initiatives, to build and sustain audiences for local arts programmes

### **IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW:**

◆ ***Ensuring adequate resources and effective management and partnership arrangements for delivery of the arts plan***

**Recommendation 13:** Establish a post of Arts Development Officer at North Warwickshire Borough Council

**Recommendation 14:** Establish a new Arts Development Budget to enable the implementation of the arts development programme

**Recommendation 15:** Work towards the development of a fixed term funding agreement with West Midlands Arts from April 2001

**Recommendation 16:** Undertake fundraising to attract inward investment into the arts development programme in the Borough

◆ ***ensuring best value service delivery of the arts plan through liaison and joint working with external partners***

**Recommendation 17:** Re-allocate a proportion of the resources used for grant-aiding professional arts agencies from the *Financial Assistance to Outside Organisations* budget into the arts development budget, in order to establish service level agreements and monitoring procedures for use of grant aid

**Recommendation 18:** Ensure active participation in a range of local and regional networks and forums (e.g. Warwickshire Arts Development Officers Forum)

◆ **Recommendation 19:** Work towards the development of updated databases, a coordinated local What's On, and an arts web-site for the area

◆ ***establishing procedures for consultation, documentation, evaluation and review of the arts plan***

**Recommendation 20:** Commission the publication and distribution of documentation of the *Face to Face* project work

**Recommendation 21:** Undertake evaluation and documentation of all project work carried out as part of new arts development programme

**Recommendation 22:** Work towards the establishment of an inclusive local Arts Forum

**Recommendation 23:** Ensure that consultative procedures are implemented in all aspects of initiation, development and delivery of the arts development programme and the Arts Plan

**Recommendation 24:** Establish procedures for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the implementation of the Arts Plan.

## **SECTION 1: BACKGROUND**

1.1. Overview

1.2. Review Process

1.3. Local Context

1.4. Regional and National Context

*"How can you live without art? Imagine a world with no music, no books, or no paintings. It would be barren. Art enriches your life and broadens your outlook."*

# 1. BACKGROUND

## 2.7. OVERVIEW

This Arts Plan for North Warwickshire has been commissioned by North Warwickshire Borough Council with the financial support of West Midlands Arts. It is a significant milestone in a slow but gradual process of cultural development which the Borough Council and its partners have been enabling in recent years. A number of other initiatives have contributed to this process - including a *Leisure Opportunities Audit* undertaken in 1995, and the rural arts development work which led in time to the establishment of the **Face to Face** project.

Many key agencies have played a significant role in this building process of recent years, most of which continue to be stakeholders in further cultural development. Alongside the Leisure Services Division of North Warwickshire Borough Council and a number of departments of Warwickshire County Council (including the Arts Service, the Libraries, Community Development and Community Education), there has been continuing commitment and investment from the Regional Arts Board, West Midlands Arts.

Increasingly, and particularly within the last couple of years, a whole range of local organisations - both voluntary and statutory - have become more aware of the value of cultural development, and the potential for delivering their organisational aims and objectives through the arts. The arts in North Warwickshire have been taking place in schools, youth clubs, day centres, village halls, churches, factory buildings, parks, village streets and canal sides. They have involved drama, dance, song, video, painting, sculpture, printing, poetry, and music of all kinds appealing to every different sector and age-group within the community. Alongside the continuing and valuable input of existing arts organisations and local arts activists, this range of work has contributed to the development of a growing body of local arts activity.

There is currently an opportunity to build on these achievements of the past few years, and to begin to redress some of the existing gaps in provision in the area. The Borough Council has decided that the time is right for the development of an arts policy and plan for the area, in order to provide a strategic framework for its own investment and provision, and to strengthen the potential for increased inward investment from external sources into cultural development in the Borough. It has therefore commissioned a review of the arts in North Warwickshire, leading to proposals for a strategic arts plan.

This report is the outcome of that review process, and the result of a two-month period of research and consultation within the Borough. The purpose of the report is

- ◆ to summarise the findings of the review process,
- ◆ to map out the current range and level of arts provision, activities and facilities,

- ◆ to analyse some of the issues, problems and opportunities that affect arts development in the Borough, and
- ◆ to put forward proposals for a policy and strategy which will ensure best value from the Borough Council's investment into the arts.

## 1.2. REVIEW PROCESS

The brief developed to guide the arts review process identified the following aims:

1. to assess the appropriateness of the current forms and levels of arts provision within the Borough area, and to recommend progress through arts development initiatives; partnership working; and support to local voluntary arts organisations or the commissioning of professional arts work
  2. to examine existing relationships and partnerships between North Warwickshire Borough Council and other agencies and assess their impact on current arts provision
  3. to establish a clear focus and role for North Warwickshire Borough Council in supporting the arts
  4. to make recommendations for a strategic arts plan for the area
  5. to identify resource implications and possible sources of funding.
- (The full text of the Consultants' Brief is included at Appendix A.).

The proposals developed to address this brief identified the need for an assessment not only of levels of arts activity and provision in the Borough, but also the strengths, weaknesses and significant gaps within that provision. It proposed an evaluation of the impact of programmes of provision enabled by key partners and agencies such as the County Council and West Midlands Arts, and an analysis of the economic impact of professional arts in the area (particularly the extent to which the Borough has been successful in attracting external sources of funding into the arts in the area). From the beginning, there was a recognition of the positive, grass-roots approach to arts development implemented through the **Face to Face** project in North Warwickshire, and the need to evaluate the impact of this programme on levels of participation was highlighted.

*"The best thing about **Face to Face** is that it has demonstrated the scope and range of people and activity that can be involved in the arts."*

One of the key factors identified in the proposed research was an analysis of the ways in which the Borough Council might be able to benefit internally from an engagement with arts development - as an extremely cost-effective means of achieving the Authority's corporate objectives in the service of its communities. There is a wealth of evidence from other local authorities that the arts are particularly effective in addressing issues such as:

- ◆ Social inclusion and equal opportunities
- ◆ Community development and community safety
- ◆ Regeneration and environmental enhancement.



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The methodology identified to address all the above requirements was primarily by means of an individually-focused process of consultation, rather than through questionnaires. A questionnaire exercise had already recently been undertaken by the Leisure Services Division of North Warwickshire Borough Council as part of its pilot Best Value Service Review of the arts (see 2.3. below for more detail). This had targeted many of the key contacts with an involvement in the arts in the area, and it was felt that a further questionnaire exercise was unlikely to provide significantly new or different levels of information.

Although relatively time-intensive, individual interviews obviously allow for a more detailed analysis of both issues and opportunities, and are themselves a source of new and relevant contacts. In an area of activity (i.e. the arts) where there has been little previous coordination and networking by the Borough Council, this has been a very useful process in order to expand on existing contact lists, and identify opportunities for new initiatives and partnerships.

In addition to the individual interviews, three Focus Group meetings were held in the early evening, each targeted at a slightly different group of individuals with an interest in arts development in the Borough area:

1. People who had been involved in some way with the **Face to Face** project during the previous couple of years, and had some experience of the new arts projects that had taken place as part of that development
2. People who had in some way a professional interest in the arts in North Warwickshire - either as professional practising artists, or representatives of professional arts organisations which had undertaken arts projects in the area
3. Representatives of amateur and voluntary arts groups active in the area.

The Focus Groups were designed to facilitate

- ◆ an exchange of information about current levels and types of arts activity and provision in the Borough and immediate surroundings
- ◆ a debate about gaps and weaknesses in the map of cultural provision, and
- ◆ a planning process focused on new developments which contribute to North Warwickshire Borough Council's corporate priorities.

There was a combined invitation list of about 60 people to the three Focus Groups. In the event, there were five participants on each occasion, which enabled an informal, but focused and very valuable debate and planning process.

During the course of the review, more than 60 individuals in total have contributed directly to the consultation exercise - either through one-to-one meetings, small focus group meetings, or telephone contact. In addition, a number of site visits took place, to the **Atherstone Memorial Hall**, the **White Hart Heritage Centre**, **Middleton Hall**, and **Polesworth Abbey**. Finally, there has been an ongoing process of desk research based on documentation gathered from a wide range of sources (see Appendices B and C).

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The review process took place between the end of April and early July 2000, with Focus Group meetings held on 18<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> May, and 8<sup>th</sup> June. A Steering Group was set up to monitor and contribute to the review, consisting of Members and Officers from North Warwickshire Borough Council, together with Officers from West Midlands Arts and Warwickshire County Council: meetings were held on 17<sup>th</sup> May and 28<sup>th</sup> June 2000.

The draft Plan emerging from the review was presented to the Leisure Services Committee of North Warwickshire Borough Council on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> July 2000. Following public consultation during August, this final version of the North Warwickshire Arts Plan was completed by September 2000.

### 1.3. LOCAL CONTEXT

The Borough of North Warwickshire consists of a small, predominantly rural district covering 110 square miles, bordered by urban areas of Birmingham, Solihull and Tamworth to the West; Nuneaton, Hinckley and Leicestershire to the East; and Coventry to the South. Its population of just over 61,000 is dispersed across the area in a number of small towns, villages and farmland settlements, with the three main towns of Atherstone, Coleshill and Polesworth having less than 10,000 residents each.

Access to North Warwickshire is facilitated by the fact that it lies at the heart of the region's communications network, with the M6 and M42 crossing within the Borough, and relatively easy access to two airports, a number of main roads (including the A5), and mainline railway stations. Travel within the Borough area, however, is not so easy, particularly if dependent on public transport. This contributes to the perception that communities and settlements within the Borough either tend to remain self-contained and self-reliant, or they relate to surrounding urban areas, rather than identifying themselves with North Warwickshire.

Historically, coal mining, agriculture, and hat-making were the main industries in the area, with a peak of 12,000 jobs in 17 coal pits in the late 1950's. Currently, there is only one working coal pit remaining at Daw Mill near Fillongley, and the last remaining hatting factory closed within the past year, although there is still a relatively healthy agricultural industry. More recently, the Borough's excellent communication and transport links have led to the development of new industrial estates, and the local siting of a number of national manufacturing, servicing and distribution companies.

An *Economic Profile 2000* for the area identifies a 14% increase in employment in the area between 1991 and 1997, including both residents working locally and in-commuters, with a further 8% growth forecast for the period up to 2006. The major growth has been in the service sector (predominantly finance and insurance) which grew by over 120% in the period. Despite these statistics, almost 60% of North Warwickshire households earn below the average national income, with almost 10% on a very low income. The *Economic Profile 2000* concludes that:

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*"Compared to the County average, the Borough has poorer health, higher rates of unemployment and crime and poorer educational attainment levels. The District has a dispersed population, located in small market towns and numerous villages. Lack of public transport is a particular issue for those without cars, exacerbating problems of rural isolation and disadvantage."*

Approximately 60% of the Borough is designated as Green Belt, and many of its perceived visitor attractions are due to its rural nature - with pleasant countryside and a network of leisure opportunities based around its canals, country parks and walks, water sports, golf courses (including the National Golf Centre at the Belfry) and small-scale craft centres and family attractions. A study commissioned earlier this year by a Heritage Interest Group comprising North Warwickshire Borough Council and a number of partners concludes that : "*These products make North Warwickshire a good destination for a day or half day out from the surrounding urban areas*", and the Borough area receives approximately 1 million annual visitors, of which 800,000 are day visitors.

North Warwickshire Borough Council has responsibility for administering a range of statutory and non-statutory services to the local communities of the area, although budget restraints mean that it has not been able to achieve all its aspirations equally, particularly in the field of leisure and cultural provision. At approximately 18% of the total Council budget, the Authority's spending per head on leisure and cultural services is below the regional average for district councils of about 27%. There is an even smaller proportion being spent on the arts, and the Council at present remains one of very few local authorities within the West Midlands not to have appointed an Arts Development Officer, and the only one in Warwickshire.

North Warwickshire Borough Council's overall mission statement, as identified within its *Corporate Plan 2000/2001* and promoted in public documents, is

*"Aiming to improve the quality of life in the Borough by:*

- ◆ *listening to and speaking for the community;*
- ◆ *protecting, conserving and improving the local environment;*
- ◆ *promoting and investing in the area's economy;*
- ◆ *providing high quality services; and*
- ◆ *caring for our workforce.*

Allied to this corporate vision, the Authority has also identified eight "cross-cutting themes" for 2000/2001, which are viewed as priorities which impact on the services of all the different divisions. These are: Social Inclusion; Partnership Working; Sustainability; Staff Care and Development; Community Planning and Involvement; Best Value; Crime and Disorder; Democratic Renewal.

Alongside this review of the arts, North Warwickshire Borough Council's corporate aims, objectives and key "cross-cutting themes" are currently being fine-tuned through a number of other areas of policy development, all of which are relevant to the development of this Arts Plan. These include:

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- ◆ the ongoing development of its Corporate Plan;
- ◆ a process of Best Value Service Reviews of a range of its service provision;
- ◆ the development of a local Leisure and Cultural Strategy;
- ◆ the North Warwickshire Local Plan Review;
- ◆ a Tourism and Economic Development Strategy 2000 - 2002;
- ◆ a Crime and Disorder Strategy; and
- ◆ a strategy for the implementation of Local Agenda 21 objectives.

Throughout this report, reference will be made to the ways in which a proposed Arts Plan for the area will interface with these other areas of policy development within the Authority, and will also be instrumental and effective in delivering a number of North Warwickshire Borough Council's corporate aims and objectives.

To date, the Borough Council's direct engagement with the arts has been enabled almost exclusively through its Leisure Services Division, which has responsibility for indoor and outdoor sports facilities; community sports and recreation development; arts and entertainment and community arts development; outdoor amenity provision and grounds maintenance; play and play leadership; countryside recreation, nature conservation and environmental improvement; and partnership working on leisure service delivery with the voluntary sector.

The overall aim of the Leisure Services Committee is: *"To provide and encourage a broad range of recreational opportunities to enhance the leisure experience of the residents of North Warwickshire, with particular emphasis on identified socially, economically and recreationally deprived target groups."*

The three overall objectives of the Leisure Services Division are:

- ◆ to maintain under regular review a Leisure and Cultural Strategy for North Warwickshire
- ◆ to maintain and enhance the extent and quality of all existing Council owned leisure facilities and services for maximum public benefit, and
- ◆ to extend and enhance community development through working in partnership with other agencies and organisations.

*"From my perspective, North Warwickshire Borough Council needs to redress the balance. The leisure provision is all focused on sport, and therefore you're only providing for one part of the community. Providing opportunities for arts will allow for a wider inclusion in leisure."*

As part of the development of a Leisure and Cultural Strategy for North Warwickshire, the Leisure Services Committee has also identified a number of strategic themes, or "cross-cutting issues", which it judges to be particularly relevant to local leisure and cultural services. These are: Community Development; Partnership Working; Education and Lifelong Learning; Economic Development, Regeneration and Employment; Health Improvement;

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Crime and Disorder and Community Safety; Environmental Conservation, Improvement and Sustainability; Social Inclusion, Equal Opportunities and Anti-Poverty.

North Warwickshire Borough Council has a number of significant partners, both current and potential, which are also committed to arts development in its area. Chief amongst these, at a more local level, is Warwickshire County Council. The County Council plays a significant role in support of the arts in North Warwickshire through its County Arts Service, although a number of other departments (including Community Education and Libraries and Heritage) have been involved in the development and support of projects such as **Face to Face**.

Good practice in the arts in education in Warwickshire has been highlighted by the Warwickshire LEA identifying the county area as an **Arts Zone**. Alongside a range of education-based projects, the **Arts Zone** contributes to the development and support of creativity within education through the **Artists in Warwickshire Education** scheme. This aims to provide curriculum support through the involvement of professional artists within schools, and has played a role in supporting artists in a number of North Warwickshire schools.

In addition to the County Council, there is of course a range of other significant local partners in the Borough area which have a role (either direct or indirect) to play in community arts development - including the Warwickshire Rural Community Council, the Warwickshire Association of Youth Clubs, the Council for Voluntary Services, and the many organisations, venues and individuals involved in the arts. More detail will be given about their activities in the next section, *Mapping the Arts*.

### 1.4. REGIONAL AND NATIONAL CONTEXT

North Warwickshire Borough Council's involvement with the arts is of course set within the context of a constantly evolving regional and national scenario. There have been a number of developments that have taken place within the past five years at a regional and national level, some of them put in place as a consequence of the change of national political administration in 1997.

This has led to the introduction of government policies supporting a process of local democratic renewal, with a strong focus on community consultation and the delivery of "Best Value" in local authority service provision. This in turn has demanded an increased emphasis on partnership working and joint planning at district, county and regional level. The requirement for local authorities to implement Best Value reviews, and develop both Local Cultural Plans and Community Plans for their area, provides a useful planning context for the development of North Warwickshire Borough Council's new Arts Plan.

In a parallel process, there has been progress towards a stronger regional focus within political administration, with the creation of Regional Assemblies, and Regional Development Agencies which have responsibility for the allocation of Single Regeneration Budgets and European funds. The

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strengthening of the role of culture within broader social and economic agendas has been underpinned by representation from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport within each Regional Government Office, and the establishment of Regional Cultural Consortiums to develop and articulate regional cultural strategy. The West Midlands Regional Cultural Consortium was launched on 9 December 1999 by its new Chair, Baroness Crawley, who said: "*Across the sector - the arts, sport, tourism, heritage and many more - I want to see maximum access, maximum participation, maximum affordability and maximum opportunity*".

Some of the above developments have been mirrored within the national and regional Arts Funding System, with a radical overhaul of the Arts Council of England's policies and priorities, and its relationship with the 10 Regional Arts Boards within the country. There has been a significant and welcome devolution of both responsibilities and resources to a regional level.

West Midlands Arts, which is a major partner within the Borough Council's process of arts development, is able to offer support into the area through a range of means:

- ◆ it now administers significant levels of Arts Lottery funding through the newly re-launched Regional Arts Lottery Programme (for arts project grants of between £2,000 and £30,000, and small scale capital awards of less than £100,000)
- ◆ it also operates a very supportive and flexible approach to working with local authorities through a funding agreement which offers an opportunity for fixed-term funding towards a number of shared development priorities over a period of several years
- ◆ it subsidises the work of a number of regional and county-based professional arts organisations, some of which may be able to contribute to the delivery of North Warwickshire Borough Council's Arts Plan in the future
- ◆ it offers professional support and advice through a number of specialist policy and artform officers and specialised services (such as newsletters and artist databases)
- ◆ it also administers or has major input into a number of funding schemes, including its own revenue and project grants, and schemes such as the *Grass Roots* and *Youth Arts Funds* and the recent lottery-funded *Year of the Artist*.

At a national level, major changes have been introduced to the large scale Arts Lottery Capital Programme, which since its establishment in early 1995 has had a major impact on the provision of cultural facilities in Britain. Within the first five years the original Capital Programme distributed 2,021 awards totalling over £1 billion towards the building or renovation of new arts venues, and the purchase of equipment, of which £120 million was awarded in the West Midlands region alone.

That funding programme closed for applications early in 2000, and the Arts Council has launched a new Arts Capital Programme, which will run until March 2006 with a significantly reduced budget of £176 million for the entire

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country over the next five years. As a consequence the funding available will be much less than in the past, fewer projects will be funded, and the average level of the awards will be lower. The minimum that can be applied for is £100,000 and the maximum is likely to be in the region of £5 million, with most awards being significantly lower than this. There will be two bidding rounds up until 2006, each with their own single deadline, and the deadline for applications to the first spending round of £88 million will be in December 2000.

More detailed Programme Guidance information will be available soon from the Arts Council of England, but in the meantime it has distributed details of the following overall priorities for the new Programme which eligible projects will need to address:

**New Approaches:** increasing access to the arts and new ways of reaching audiences and participants

**Cultural Diversity:** £20 million will be reserved in the first spending round for projects from African, Caribbean, Asian and Chinese arts organisations

**Balance of Provision:** areas of the country where capital arts provision has been low in the past, including areas of high deprivation.

To guide potential applicants to the new round, the Arts Council has also outlined five strategic priorities which will help to define the eligibility of capital projects for funding:

- ◆ New work, experimentation and risk and the centrality of the individual artist, creator or maker
- ◆ New art forms and collaborative ways of working, often in or with new technology
- ◆ Diversity and public inclusion with special reference to race, disability and economic class
- ◆ Children, young people and lifelong learning
- ◆ Touring and distribution, including through broadcasting, recording and electronic publishing.

To summarise, therefore, North Warwickshire Borough Council is now at a challenging but optimistic stage in its process of contributing to arts development within the area. A Strategic Arts Plan will provide a necessary basis for demonstrating the effectiveness of the arts in delivering Borough Council priorities for its communities. It will also strengthen the Council's ability to attract increased funding into the Borough from a range of local, regional and national sources. These factors provide the context for North Warwickshire Borough Council to formulate a new and longer-term cultural vision for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

*"Participation in the arts is something that has very wide appeal, from cradle to grave. It feeds the spirit as well as the body, it helps to nurture local talent, and it promotes a sense of community."*

## SECTION 2: MAPPING THE ARTS

2.1. Overview

2.2. Regional Provision

2.3. Local Authority Provision

2.4. The **Face to Face** Project

2.5. The Independent Arts Sector

2.6. Other Partners and Agencies

2.7. Cultural Facilities



## 2. MAPPING THE ARTS

### 2.1. OVERVIEW

In 1994/95 North Warwickshire Borough Council, in partnership with the Sports Council (West Midlands Region) and West Midlands Arts, commissioned a detailed *North Warwickshire Leisure Opportunities Audit*. The scope of the research, which was completed in June 1995 included sports, arts, play, countryside recreation, tourism, heritage and museums, and its purpose was

*"to undertake a comprehensive audit of all public, private and voluntary sector leisure facilities, services and opportunities throughout, and, where appropriate, adjacent to North Warwickshire" and to "make recommendations on the progression of the local leisure service".*

The research and documentation of arts facilities and activities in that report, and the analysis of the market context within which local arts provision operates, was detailed and extensive. It concluded that the general level of arts facilities is poor, with only one dedicated venue (**Atherstone Arts Centre**) and no cinema, fully-equipped performing arts studio or exhibition gallery, and a very limited programme taking place at the multi-purpose **Atherstone Memorial Hall**. It noted that a number of North Warwickshire residents take advantage of the wealth of arts provision in the surrounding urban areas within travelling distance of the Borough. The Borough's amateur and voluntary arts sector is described as relatively small, and almost exclusively concerned with the performing arts. The report documents a very low level of professional arts activity in the area, and infrequent opportunities to engage in professionally-led participatory arts activities:

*"There are two basic problems: first the lack of understanding and appreciation of the range of arts activities which are possible and the benefits of using the arts, particularly in relation to young people; and second, the absence of delivery mechanisms providing access to arts practitioners and opportunities. This is not an uncommon situation in an area with few arts professionals, no professional arts organisations undertaking participatory arts work and no specialist Council Arts Officer..... Only a broader programme of awareness-raising and arts development will have a significant impact on the Borough."*

The Audit report concluded that *"there are considerable gaps in arts provision in the Borough, and, where there is existing provision, it is at a relatively low level"*, and recommended that:

*"If the arts in North Warwickshire are to develop **the Borough Council will need to play a more active role in arts development** and to allocate a greater share of the available resources to arts development"*.

Specific recommendations included

- ◆ the appointment of a Borough Arts Officer,
- ◆ the development of an arts policy,

## NORTH WARWICKSHIRE ARTS PLAN

- ◆ the creation of an Arts Development Budget,
- ◆ the establishment of a Local Funding Agreement with West Midlands Arts,
- ◆ the development of some key facilities for the arts in the Borough, and
- ◆ the establishment of a Borough-wide arts development programme.

The research undertaken for this current review indicates that there has been relatively little overall progression in the picture of arts provision within North Warwickshire. With a few very notable exceptions which will be documented in this section, the *Leisure Opportunities Audit* report stands as an effective and relevant documentation of the arts in the area. There are still no dedicated performing arts facilities in the Borough, and very little progression in terms of the facilities and activity at either the **Atherstone Arts Centre** or **Atherstone Memorial Hall**. A very small exhibition space has been opened in Atherstone by the **Friends of Atherstone Heritage**, with time-limited funding, as part of the **White Hart Heritage Centre**.

Professional arts activity remains at a low level, with very few opportunities for the involvement of professional artists, and the profile of the amateur and voluntary arts sector has changed little, if at all. There is still a perception that there is a wealth of high quality cultural facilities within relatively easy reach of the Borough for those who are committed enough to the arts to travel.

This updated picture of arts provision in the Borough will come as no surprise to the Borough residents with an interest and involvement in the arts, the Borough Council itself, or its many partners such as West Midlands Arts. A *Context* paper accompanying the *Consultants' Brief* for this review acknowledged that the Council was aware in 1995 that future development of the arts within the Borough would depend on it undertaking a proactive approach and committing an increased allocation of funding, but that it felt unable, because of resource constraints, to prioritise the arts-related recommendations of the *Leisure Opportunities Audit* report.

The one major development which has made a significant difference over the past five years has been the establishment and operation of the **Face to Face** project in the Borough, which has operated from July 1997 until its impending completion in September 2000. It has offered opportunities for several hundred people in North Warwickshire to be involved as audience or participants in at least 27 community arts projects. The *Context* paper referred to above concluded of the **Face to Face** project work:

*"Members have increasingly become aware that to fail to build on the considerable achievements of particularly **Face to Face**.....would seriously undermine the benefits derived from this project.....as well as dilute the growing confidence within the community in the Authority's commitment to arts development activity".*

Within this section of the report, entitled *Mapping the Arts*, the findings of the 1995 *Leisure Opportunities Audit* will be updated, based on the research undertaken over the past two months, in particular highlighting the new developments that have taken place within the past five years.

## 2.2. REGIONAL PROVISION

The 1995 *Leisure Opportunities Audit* contained detailed information about the range of major arts venues within approximately 40 minutes travelling time for Borough residents, including a number of facilities in Birmingham, Coventry, Nuneaton, Tamworth and Bedworth. It also provided audience estimates based on national market research and audience data from selected regional venues, to demonstrate that a significant number of Borough residents travel to bordering regional venues to attend their arts programmes. There were variations in such likely attendance across different parts of the Borough (due to a combination of accessibility and the demographic nature of each area).

Although it was not within the scope of the current research to test these conclusions, the anecdotal evidence from consultation is that this situation has changed little within the past five years. This assessment is backed up by findings of the *North Talk People's Panel Survey* (see section 2.3.1 below), and it is highly likely that very similar statistics would result from an updated analysis of the same material.

The 1995 report concluded that, bearing these factors in mind, there is no rationale for attempting to develop facilities at a local level which would aim to compete with the surrounding regional provision on the same terms. However, the evidence of a substantial existing audience for professional arts product resident in the Borough can be viewed as a resource for future local arts programmes, since arts attenders who are prepared to travel will support local work if it is of a high enough quality, well-marketed, and presented in a venue with a reasonable level of customer comfort.

*"The existing audience could provide a solid backbone of support for professional arts promotions on which to build new audiences for the arts. However, the Borough Council will need an appropriate product to sell to these potential audiences before it can hope to win their support, and it will need to be equipped with the skills and expertise to promote and present the arts to a standard which present day audiences expect."*

It is clear that audience development is a fundamental issue that will need to be dealt with imaginatively and holistically within the Borough. On the one hand this is, as the report above points out, a matter of developing, over a period of time, the quantity, quality and marketing of a range of professional arts programmes in the area, in order to retain the loyalty of cultural audiences which are currently travelling to surrounding urban areas.

*"You can go out of the Borough to see things in other places, but then you're talking about a lot of time, a lot of commitment, a lot of money - and an ability to travel. There are people who will not travel at night."*

At the same time, it is unlikely in the foreseeable future that North Warwickshire will be able to offer arts experiences of a range and scale equal

to some of the nearby venues. Therefore, to be effective and inclusive, audience development should also look creatively at ways of providing opportunities for non-attenders and new consumers of the arts to extend their experience of a wider range of arts product, if necessary out of the area, thus raising expectations and demand for programme development within the Borough.

There are some examples of this process already taking place within North Warwickshire. The **Face to Face** project, as part of its programme of support, has enabled participants in a couple of its projects to visit major venues in the region (see 2.4. below). A more sustained programme of development, called

**Arts Express** was carried out in 1998/99 by **Arts Marketing Warwickshire**, thanks to a grant of £20,000 from the New Audiences fund from the Arts Council of England.

**Arts Marketing Warwickshire** is one of only two arts marketing agencies based in the region, and is dedicated to increasing audiences for professional arts events, particularly within groups under-represented amongst existing audiences. Its members, which were part of this project, are **Warwick Arts Centre**, the **Royal Shakespeare Company**, the **Warwick Arts Society**, **The Belgrade Theatre** in Coventry, and **Live and Local**.

Running from October 1998 to March 1999, and marketed as an opportunity for "a night out without the hassle", the **Arts Express** project was about enabling local groups in North Warwickshire to receive free, organised transport to selected arts events in Coventry and Warwickshire, and help and support in selecting the events, contacting the venue and booking tickets. The project operated through a local "animateur" who contacted local groups, particularly groups of older people, youth groups, or parent and toddler groups.

Over the six-month life of the project 207 groups or individuals were contacted, and 433 people attended 21 events at five venues. Although the project was successful in achieving its participation targets, and also in identifying and reducing some of the barriers which prevent people in North Warwickshire attending professional arts events in Coventry and Warwickshire, it was a resource-intensive process which was unsustainable.

Another approach to audience development is through a partnership with appropriate venues on outreach projects, where arts development projects are developed outside the venue in community settings, but sometimes with resulting performances, exhibitions or events taking place at the venue. Both the **Belgrade Theatre** in Coventry, and the **Warwick Arts Centre** are major venues with a commitment to innovative outreach working. **Warwick Arts Centre**, for example, has raised European funding in partnership with Coventry City Council to enable an outreach project in the Hillfields area of Coventry, with the work being exhibited on-line, and in the gallery space at the Arts Centre. Its Director has been liaising with Rex Pogson of Warwickshire LEA's **Art Zone** about outreach development work with families of

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Warwickshire schools, and both are keen to see an emphasis on schools in North Warwickshire. Another approach to audience development being investigated by **Warwick Arts Centre** is a "Buddies" scheme, whereby new attenders to arts events at the Centre are partnered with a frequent attender.

In addition to the professional programmes and audience development offered by these regional venues, there are a number of regional arts agencies which are funded by West Midlands Arts to undertake arts development work across the region, including, for example, **Craftspace Touring**, **Ikon Touring**, the **Rural Media Company**, and **Sampad** (which develops and promotes South Asian performing arts). There is not a great deal of evidence of significant levels of input from regional agencies, although the **Rural Media Company** has worked in the area in the past, and more recently worked with the **Friends of Atherstone Heritage** to produce a video about the felt hat-making industry in the area ("*All Atherstone Felt was Good*").

Within the past couple of years **Ikon Touring** has had an even more effective presence, having targeted the Borough area for its rural development work. It was an **Ikon Touring** exhibition, *Blurred Vision*, which was the first exhibition at the newly-developed **White Hart Heritage Centre** in Atherstone from 9<sup>th</sup> - 28<sup>th</sup> June 1999. The exhibition, together with workshops and other associated events was subsidised by **Ikon Touring** and Warwickshire **County Arts Service**, and attracted 516 visitors.

More recently, **Ikon Touring** has worked with both the **White Hart Heritage Centre** and the **Face to Face** project on the development of a participatory project alongside another **Ikon** exhibition (*Kiss The Sky*) at the **White Hart Heritage Centre** from 9<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> June. The project offered opportunities to students from three schools in the area to work with two professional artists (Simon Webb and Craig Wood) on an installation using a range of different media in a disused hat factory in the town. At an early stage in the workshop process, the students (and other members of the community) were given the opportunity to visit central Birmingham on an *Art Bus*, together with Simon and Craig, to get a preview of the *Kiss The Sky* exhibition and a number of other touring exhibitions, at the **Ikon Gallery** and other exhibition venues.

## 2.3. LOCAL AUTHORITY PROVISION

### 2.3.1. NORTH WARWICKSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL

North Warwickshire Leisure Services includes the provision of arts and entertainment facilities and community arts development within its range of services, alongside sports development, play, and countryside recreation. Within the Authority's Corporate Plan for 2000/2001, there are two arts-related objectives:

- ◆ to maintain and, where possible, enhance existing facilities and promote their use for a wide range of arts and entertainment events and activities, and

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- ◆ to sustain and thereafter enhance the Council's role in community arts development in partnership with West Midlands Arts, the County Arts Service and other appropriate agencies and local organisations.

The Leisure Services Division recognises that its involvement in community arts development has been under-developed to date, despite recommendations within the 1995 *Leisure Opportunities Audit* that it should be given more emphasis and allocated a greater share of resources. Its most significant involvement in arts development has been support for the **Face to Face** project, which was established in July 1997 as the North Warwickshire Mining Project (see 2.4. below).

The **Face to Face** project was developed in partnership with West Midlands Arts and Warwickshire County Council, with a significant level of RECHAR funding (European Community funds aimed at the regeneration of former coalmining communities). **Face to Face** has successfully achieved most of its objectives and targets for community involvement and arts development, and in so doing has more than justified the Leisure Services Committee's investment. The evaluation report on the **Arts Express** audience development project carried out by **Arts Marketing Warwickshire** in 1999 said of **Face to Face**:

*"Its success in raising awareness of the arts is evident by the significant number of groups/individuals contacted that had participated in or had knowledge of the project. The fact that the **Face to Face** project is so well established in the area had a notable effect on contacting/meeting new groups".*

The Leisure Services Division's direct facilities provision for the arts and entertainment is concentrated in Atherstone, through the **Atherstone Arts Centre** and **Atherstone Memorial Hall** (which is programmed as part of the Atherstone Leisure Complex). The **Atherstone Arts Centre** is a disused and re-adapted Victorian primary school, acquired many years ago and used as offices, before its current usage by voluntary arts groups. Cleaning, caretaking and administration are managed by the Leisure Services Division as part of the Atherstone Leisure Complex, but it has no dedicated staffing committed to on-site management and programming.

Currently, the Arts Centre is used primarily by the **Atherstone Theatre Workshop**, which provides a range of drama activities and workshops for young people, and the **Atherstone Dramatic Society** (both of which have invested in facilities in the building). As there is no performance licence for the venue, the occasional presentations of work that take place do so on an "invitations" basis. Issues around the usage and development of the Arts Centre were originally highlighted in the *Leisure Opportunities Audit* of 1995, with a series of prioritised options being presented, namely:

1. development of the site as a base for local arts activities, with relevant specialist staffing and programme budgets
2. establishment of an independent trust to run the facility for the benefit of local groups

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3. handing over the building to an existing group and assisting with capital fundraising
4. selling the building and using the proceeds to invest in enhanced arts facilities elsewhere.

At present, the situation regarding the **Atherstone Arts Centre** appears to be in stalemate. It is still being used by a very small number of arts groups, which are unsatisfied with the standard of facilities on offer and the fact that it is unlicensed for performance, and which would like to see the Borough Council take responsibility for improvements. The Borough Council, meanwhile, is continuing to invest in its maintenance and management (£28,630 in 1999/2000), but remains unconvinced that the level of public usage and access justifies significant additional investment in the facilities (capital or otherwise), at the expense of development elsewhere.

*"The users can't get security of tenure at Atherstone Arts Centre, and they can't get any funding for improvements because they haven't got security of tenure. There's nowhere where the arts groups can call their own, or that they could develop with the help of some funding. We need a dedicated arts studio."*

The other facility provided by Leisure Services for arts and entertainment usage is the **Atherstone Memorial Hall**, which was built in 1962 using funds raised by public subscription, in remembrance of those who fought and died in the two World Wars. The Council took ownership in the mid-80's, and subsequently invested approximately £250,000 in a new roof and other renovations. The Hall is well-used for a wide range of activities from blood donor sessions to physical recreation.

As a performing arts space it has a number of well-documented limitations. Nevertheless, it is the main focus of the Council's direct promotion of arts events in the Borough, and is programmed by Leisure Services staff based in the adjacent swimming pool. As well as bookings and shows by local organisations such as the **Baddesley Amateur Theatrical Society**, the **Atherstone Amateur Operatic Society**, or **Wendy Morton's Academy of Dance**, there is a programme of small-scale professional performing arts. These are promoted with the support and subsidy of the Warwickshire-based **Live and Local** touring scheme, and include such regional and national companies as **New Perspectives Theatre**, **Yes & No Theatre Company**, **Hijinx Theatre Company**, and **North Country Theatre**.

The **Atherstone Memorial Hall** has been a key venue in North Warwickshire for **Live and Local**, which feels that it has invested considerable resources and energy into development of the venue and its audience. The Hall was one of only five venues in Warwickshire which benefited from a special small-scale touring grant which **Live and Local** raised from the Arts Council of England, in order to provide additional technical, marketing and programme development support. The Hall was also one of only four venues in the county benefiting from a National Lottery award raised by **Arts Marketing Warwickshire**, to

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replace out-dated and manual box office systems with a new computerised Databox system.

Despite these investments, there is a perception that the venue only manages to attract a very modest audience to its arts events, although this varies depending on the product.

Leisure Services staff also programme a limited amount of arts-related activity as part of its other recreational activities and its mobile **Leisure Unlimited** provision. These have included art workshops as part of its summer playschemes, and eco-art within its **Green Adventure** outdoor sessions for children. Its **Leisure Zone** project offering leisure opportunities for 11 - 18 year olds has organised drum sessions, and graffiti art with a professional artist.

The Leisure Services Division also supports arts activities in the Borough by allocating grants to a number of amateur, voluntary and arts organisations, from a "Financial Assistance to Outside Organisations" budget of approximately £5,000 per year. Over the past four years, 38 arts-related grants have been awarded, totalling £14,253. Grants from this budget have been allocated to both amateur and professional arts organisations, and have ranged from £128 to the **Coleshill Drama Group** in 1996, to £850 within the past year to **Live and Local** for its 2000/2001 programme of performances in the Borough.

Within the past year, the Borough Council has been evaluating its arts facilities and services, as part of a pilot Best Value Service Review process. It has circulated information about the Council's current level of investment and activity in the arts to a range of consultees, together with a questionnaire inviting comments as to the appropriate level and nature of arts provision people require from the Council.

In the supporting information, it was calculated that the Leisure Services total net expenditure on the Arts in 1999/2000 was £120,247, calculated as follows:

Memorial Hall (50% of total costs)	£48,970
Arts Centre (90% of total costs)	£25,767
Face to Face (100% of costs)	£12,500
Other Costs, including grants (20% of total)	£33,010
<b>Total</b>	<b>£120,247</b>

This expenditure equates to 8.3% of total net Leisure Services Committee expenditure, and 1.6% of total net expenditure of all the Council Committees.

The Borough Council received 32 responses to its questionnaire exercise about the effectiveness of its arts provision. Questions had been asked about the level of the Council's investment in arts and entertainment facilities, and leisure and arts development, and whether the Council should employ Arts Development Staff, grant-aid arts development work by the voluntary sector, and/or hire in professional services to undertake arts development. It also queried whether the Council should support arts and entertainment provision



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by local voluntary groups, and commission professional arts and entertainment provision.

Since the questionnaires were circulated to individuals and groups with a known interest in the arts, it is unsurprising that the significant majority response was that the Council's investment in arts and entertainment facilities and arts development is too little, and that it should support the arts by most of the means identified above. The only strategy that received a negative response was the proposal that "the Council should hire in professional services to undertake Arts Development work on its behalf".

*"We want an arts development officer, someone who would do something about the provision of arts, and support voluntary arts groups, someone you could ring up and know that you've got a voice."*

As part of a wider process of local democratic renewal, and the recruitment of a *North Talk People's Panel*, a survey of 1000 North Warwickshire residents was undertaken in February and March 2000, to provide an initial indication of attitudes and opinions towards the Council and its services. Amongst a range of questions relating to people's awareness of and satisfaction with Borough Council services, they were asked whether they were aware that North Warwickshire Borough Council has responsibility for stimulating and supporting arts activity in the Borough, and also whether they were aware of the **Face to Face** project. Additional questions sought to establish levels of involvement in a range of leisure and entertainment activities, and also where most people went for their leisure activities.

31% of residents were aware of the Council's responsibility for arts development (rising to 36% amongst those aged 45 - 59), and 11% were aware of the **Face to Face** project (rising to 18% of respondents with a disability). People were asked about regular attendance at or participation in a range of leisure and cultural pursuits: 56% attend a cinema; 22% visit the theatre; 15% visit museums and galleries; 14% attend pop music performances and 6% attend classical music performances (compared to only 2% of those questioned who regularly take part in sports). Of those who regularly take part in the entertainment activities listed, most go to Birmingham (49%) or Tamworth (44%), with smaller number attending Nuneaton (15%), Coventry (13%), Atherstone (8%), Coleshill (6%), Lichfield (2%) and Polesworth (1%).

### **2.3.2. WARWICKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

Warwickshire County Council is a key partner in supporting arts development in North Warwickshire, through many strands of its operation, but most directly through the County Arts Service (based in the Libraries & Heritage Department).

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In recent years, Warwickshire County Council has clarified and underpinned its commitment to arts development, with a strengthened County Arts Service, headed by a Principal Arts Officer and a Community Arts Officer. The County Arts Service was a key player in supporting the Borough Council through the establishment of the **Face to Face** project, and is a member of the Steering Group for this arts review. It grant-aids a number of professional arts organisations which operate across the county, and there may be potential for more input from some of these agencies in the Borough Council's Arts Plan. Currently, the County Arts Service is in the first year of a three-year funding agreement with West Midlands Arts, which also offers a number of opportunities for further partnership with the Borough Council.

The work of the County Arts Service is delivered through the following three methods:

- ◆ Advice, information-giving, research and advocacy
- ◆ Grant-aid to organisations for arts projects
- ◆ Initiation of development projects in collaboration with internal and external partners.

Resources for delivery of its programme include £50,000 as a Grants and Development budget, and £50,000 corporate Public Art budget. It has four external Key Clients, all of which are funded to operate across the county area: **Live and Local**, **Warwickshire Youth Dance**, **Motionhouse Dance Theatre**, and **Warwick Arts Society**. It also operates an open-access grants budget, with two streams of funding: *First Step* grants are available up to £500 for new and emerging arts initiatives, and *Moving Forward* grants are available up to £2000 for organisations with a track record in the arts.

The County Arts Service has been working over the past year or more on developing and integrating Best Value practice into service operation, and has devised a set of performance indicators for both the service itself, and its key funded clients.

In addition to grant-aid, services provided by the County Arts Service include

- ◆ production and distribution of a quarterly arts information newsletter (*Cascade*)
- ◆ upkeep and operation of a county-wide database of organisations and individuals involved in the arts (*Contact!*)
- ◆ the organisation of roadshows and surgeries to promote funding information
- ◆ the management of WADOF (Warwickshire Arts Development Officers Forum)
- ◆ the initiation and management of a number of arts development projects designed to meet County Council priorities for young people, older people and disabled people, minority communities, rural areas, and community safety.

Recently, it was the main coordinator of the **Warwickshire Arts and Heritage Week** (27 May - 4 June 2000), where galleries, museums and individual visual artists and craftmakers in the county participated in a major promotion of

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visual arts in Warwickshire, opening galleries, studios and a number of other venues to the public and promoting new work. The **White Hart Heritage Centre** participated in this event, promoting the work of local artist Shiv Ressel.

Another significant area of operation for the County Arts Service is the management of the County Council's corporate public art policy and scheme. The Authority has made a capital commitment of £50,000 per year for three years (1999 - 2002) into a Public Art Fund, which may be used to fund projects outright, or lever in additional funding into developments. Allocations are made by a Public Art Steering Group within the Authority, against a list of specific criteria.

The County Arts Service takes a very active supporting role in the implementation of the scheme, which includes the provision of a programme of advocacy activities for members and officers from the County, District and Borough Councils. A current public art project being managed by the County Council is linked to building developments at a number of Special Schools across Warwickshire. The project will investigate and establish opportunities for the involvement of both artists and the children, thereby enabling them to influence the building developments.

The County Council also has an impact on the arts in the Borough through a number of other departments, some of which were involved in the establishment and support of the **Face to Face** project, including the Area Community Education service, Community Development, and the local libraries.

Atherstone Library has been active in the development and promotion of a project called **BIG WRITING!**, a live literature event which has promoted writers and poets of national standing within the locality. The project started well with a sell-out audience of over 200 for a performance by Benjamin Zephaniah at the **Atherstone Leisure Complex** in 1999, and has subsequently featured the poets Ian McMillan, Wendy Cope and Sophie Hannah, as well as including a storytelling event called *Fancy A Curry* at Kingsbury Water Park with the storyteller Guy Hutchins. The programme is planned to continue throughout 2000/2001 with events every two to three months, and will include the promotion of regional and local writers alongside the "big names". North Warwickshire Borough Council has been a partner in the project, through the provision of venues and facilities, and there have been links established with the LEA's **Art Zone** and the Area Community Education team, as well as local community organisations.

The Warwickshire LEA has a good track record in enabling a programme of arts in schools through its **Artists in Warwickshire Education** scheme, and has established Warwickshire County as an **Arts Action Zone** to enable more effective networking and coordination of resources committed to arts within education provision. The **Artists in Warwickshire Education** team is keen where possible to prioritise North Warwickshire for participation in its projects. For example, it is currently including rural schools in the Borough as part of

*One Voice, Many Places*, which is a major region-wide project to promote the creative use of digital media.

*"Arts are important within education, to explore issues, or as a way for young people to express their thoughts and feelings."*

The Community Education Service is part of the Education Department's Community Division, and it operates by supporting Youth Work, Adult Education, Community Use of Educational Premises, and other Community Education activities such as summer play schemes. Its priority groups include young people 14 - 19, girls and single women, single parent families, disabled people, people from ethnic minority communities, older people, children under eight, people living in rural isolation or urban deprivation, and unemployed people.

The service is split into local areas, co-terminous with District/Borough Councils, each having an Area Community Education Council, with representation from County, District and Parish Councils as well as user representation. The total budget for the Service within the North Warwickshire area in 1998/99 was nearly £295,000, of which over £82,000 was available to the ACEC, for allocation against identified priorities and service areas. The service also

- ◆ maintains five Youth and Community Centres at Polesworth, Kingsbury, Baddesley Ensor, Coleshill and Atherstone
- ◆ manages the use of three mini-buses to assist young people and others access informal educational and leisure opportunities
- ◆ supports North Warwickshire and Hinckley College as a major provider for non-vocational adult education in the area.

The Community Education Service clearly has an important role, which it recognises, in the provision of cultural opportunities for young people and its other priority groups within youth centre and community settings. It also has a role in the professional development and training of youth and community workers, many of whom use arts skills in their work. The Area Community Education Councils also allocate grants against a published set of funding priorities, and are an important source of financial support for both professional and voluntary organisations offering cultural provision.

## **2.4. FACE TO FACE PROJECT**

The **Face to Face** project developed out of a Rural Arts Fieldwork scheme, which was operative in North Warwickshire between September 1994 and May 1996, with funding from North Warwickshire Borough Council (£10,000), West Midlands Arts, and Warwickshire County Council. A Leisure Service Committee report at the end of the project in May 1996, recognised that the scheme had "*made a significant and lasting contribution to the development of community arts in the Borough.....and has enabled innovative activity within many voluntary organisations and across a number of target groups*" (see Appendix D for list of project work).

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At the conclusion of that project, the Leisure Services Division initially planned to carry the community arts development work forward by means of its mobile **Leisure Unlimited** scheme, with some funding from West Midlands Arts. However, a bid for RECHAR funding towards a **North Warwickshire Mining Project** (which emerged from, and built upon, the development work of the Rural Arts Fieldworker), proved successful, and the Council channelled its limited budget support into the Mining Project in view of its potential to deliver more significant community arts benefits.

The project, eventually re-named **Face to Face**, commenced in July 1997 following the appointment of a temporary, part-time fieldworker (Steve Harris), and was officially launched at the **Atherstone Memorial Hall** in November 1997. The central aim of the project was to support community groups and individuals in the initiation, planning, management and delivery of their own cultural initiatives, in order to:

- ◆ celebrate and make visible the mining histories of North Warwickshire
- ◆ give greater access to the participatory arts in areas which have suffered socially and culturally through the demise of the mining industry; and
- ◆ ensure community involvement and development through training initiatives and project delivery.

The first phase of the project (July 1997 - March 1999) had a budget of approximately £48,000, half of which was provided through the RECHAR grant. A total of 12 projects were carried out or planned during that time, involving more than 500 people of all ages and abilities working alongside 25 community artists. The work of the project was monitored by a Partners Group (made up in the main of the funders of the project, including local authorities and West Midlands Arts) and a Steering Group of individuals from local communities.

*"Here was something that was new, that appealed to all ages and attracted all different types of people - and I think that's the very essence of what Face to Face is all about."*

The success of the project in meeting all the funders' objectives led to shared aspirations to continue the project for a further year. It became clear, however, that it would prove very difficult to raise further funds from RECHAR without significantly shifting the orientation of the project towards skills training and employment outcomes.

West Midlands Arts and Warwickshire County Council agreed to continue funding the project, on the basis that North Warwickshire Borough Council would work with them to provide the framework for a longer-term commitment to community arts development beyond the life of the **Face to Face** project. The new funding package had the benefit of lifting the geographic and theme restrictions imposed by RECHAR funding, which meant that **Face to Face** could now operate across the entire Borough, and was not limited to concentrating exclusively on a mining theme.

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A business plan for Phase 2 of **Face to Face** was developed, which clarified the extended scope of the project, identified a range of targets for the project to achieve before its completion in March 2000, and proposed the following Exit Strategy:

*"the assimilation of the project into a broader, sustainable arts strategy for North Warwickshire will be addressed with each partner organisation".*

By January 2000, North Warwickshire Borough Council had made some progress towards the effective achievement of the stated exit strategy, reinforced by a commitment to an arts-specific strategy for the Borough, and a Committee recommendation to prioritise the establishment of a Community Arts Development Officer post, with an arts budget permitting the development of a funding agreement with West Midlands Arts. At the same time, it recognised that there would be a hiatus between the planned conclusion of the **Face to Face** project in March 2000, and the likely establishment of a subsequent new arts plan and programme (and the necessary resources to achieve this) which would not be achievable before Autumn 2000. The Leisure Services Committee therefore resolved to extend the **Face to Face** project for a further six-months until the end of September 2000, at a cost of approximately £10,000.

The committee paper containing this recommendation stated:

*"The project has had an enormous impact in encouraging a 'sense of community' and providing a focal point for community activity. It has been 'inclusive' and has helped to build confidence and strengthen community activity, in many instances in a manner which has been sustainable beyond **Face to Face** involvement in a particular initiative. The project prioritised the need to identify and engage with individuals and communities who suffer from social exclusion; to work with people who feel alienated and disadvantaged; and to create opportunities in those areas of the Borough which are socially and/or culturally disadvantaged. Monitoring and evaluation indicates success in the fulfilment of these objectives."*

Between July 1997 and March 2000, the **Face to Face** initiative supported at least 27 community arts projects to completion, working with a range of community groups - such as parents and toddlers, women's groups, youth groups, ex-miners, young disabled people - and using a very wide variety of art-forms, including tapestry, writing, public art, physical theatre, painting, jazz, sound, dance, storytelling, printmaking and video. A number of original performance pieces were created. Two of them, - the North Warwickshire Community Play "*Hard Men*" and the **Reach for the Sky Music Theatre Group's** "*Starry Messenger*" at Polesworth Abbey - have already become legendary, as examples of challenging and high-quality arts work emerging from, and owned by, the communities who devised and presented them (see list of all project work at Appendix D).

It is clear that the project's achievements have been impressive, and there is unanimous and unequivocal support for the quality of community arts development enabled through its popular fieldworker, Steve Harris. **Face to Face** will be sorely missed in North Warwickshire. It has raised spirits, expectations and aspirations. The Borough Council clearly now considers that it carries a degree of responsibility in ensuring that the strategy and service it delivers in the future for community arts development can honour and support those aspirations.

## 2.5. THE INDEPENDENT ARTS SECTOR

This section aims to provide an update on arts activity and programmes which are independent, in the sense that they are not provided by local authority services, but are organised and delivered by a wide range of professional, amateur and voluntary groups and organisations dedicated to the arts in the area. The over-riding characteristic of this sector in an area, such as North Warwickshire, where there has not been a strong and pro-active local authority strategy is self-sufficiency. This is obviously essential to survival, and the key resources needed are the time and energy of skilled and committed individuals (either subsidised in the case of professional arts work, or voluntary in the case of amateur organisations).

In such a climate, the voluntary arts organisations and groups that survive and thrive are those whose members are able to commit the time and expertise, and bring their own talents to bear in managing the challenging processes needed to enable their creative work to flourish - i.e.:

- ◆ generating income or fund-raising necessary levels of subsidy
- ◆ finding, equipping and managing venues
- ◆ establishing and supporting a strong membership
- ◆ using publicity and marketing
- ◆ attracting and satisfying audiences.

*"Most of what's happened in the arts up till now - it's the community themselves that have got together and done all that. We haven't had the leadership, backup or help until recently with **Face to Face**."*

There are certainly many voluntary arts groups in North Warwickshire which achieve these aims, and although not particularly extensive, inclusive, or wide-ranging in its work, the "amateur arts sector" in the area is on the whole healthy and effective. There has been a degree of networking and skill-sharing through the **Face to Face** project, with more traditional amateur arts organisations becoming partners in new projects, and sharing their expertise and local knowledge to good effect with new participants.

The 1995 *Leisure Opportunities Audit* found that the voluntary arts sector in the Borough represents a significant area of activity, with the 14 groups responding to the questionnaire representing a total of 727 members, organising 162 arts events and 429 meetings or rehearsals with total

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estimated annual attendances of over 40,000. It also found a reasonable level of involvement by young people, mainly through the work of **Atherstone Theatre Workshop**.

The *Audit* also referred to the difficulties of the voluntary sector in the Borough achieving effective coordination because of local geographic factors. **North Warwickshire Arts** is a local umbrella organisation, which seems to achieve its goal of providing coordination and promotion of voluntary arts activity in North Warwickshire, by producing and distributing a regular newsletter, and organising a biennial arts festival in North Warwickshire. There is, nevertheless, some evidence that liaison and networking between **North Warwickshire Arts** and the local authorities is not always effective. Neither does there appear to be effective lines of communication with the Regional Arts Board, which means that **North Warwickshire Arts** may well be missing out on opportunities for regional funding or support which it could publicise to its members.

One of the forms of support that North Warwickshire Borough Council does offer to the voluntary arts sector is through its "*Financial Assistance to Outside Organisations*" budget, administered by the Partnership and Community Officer in the Leisure Services Division. Financial support is available in the form of project grants to voluntary arts or sports groups (e.g. to purchase equipment or revenue costs of running a particular initiative); guarantees against loss (e.g. for shows by performing arts groups); or as a Summer Playscheme grant. The total annual budget is approximately £5,000, and a significant percentage of this is allocated as arts grants. Recipients in recent years have included **North Warwickshire Arts** for a Millennium Festival, **Atherstone Theatre Workshop** and **Atherstone Dramatic Society**, the **Atherstone Chorale**, **Coleshill Drama Group**, **Arley Majorettes**, **Daw Mill Colliery Band**, and **Dordon Youth Activity Group**.

A couple of these grants have contributed towards local match-funding for the only two organisations in North Warwickshire to have been successful in achieving an Arts Lottery Grant since the establishment of the Lottery in 1995. These are the **Daw Mill Colliery Band**, which received nearly £45,000 towards instruments and percussion in 1996, and the **Atherstone Chorale** which recently received £17,502 towards portable staging equipment which will also be available for use by other local groups.

Although the overall low level of investment from regional award schemes into North Warwickshire is an issue which will be dealt with in the next section of this report, there have been a few other grants in recent years to local voluntary arts and community groups. The *Arts For Everyone (A4E) Express* scheme in 1998/99 provided a total of £32,385 as small grants to nine projects, including the **Mancetter Women's Institute** Community Tapestry for the Millennium, a trilogy of plays to be commissioned for performance at **Middleton Hall**, and the establishment of a **North Warwickshire Writers' Forum** in the area. **Friends of Atherstone Heritage** was successful in attracting an *Awards for All* grant of £3,943 towards equipment and a new commissioned logo for the **White Hart Heritage Centre**, and Polesworth



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Abbey was awarded a *Millennium Festival Large Scale Grant* of £20,000 towards its *Polesworth Millennium Play*.

One of the main issues inhibiting the effective working of the independent professional arts sector in North Warwickshire is the lack of adequate support structures on the ground. This usually means equipped venues and professional staff, who are able to

- ◆ provide an effective context for the work of independent organisations
- ◆ provide local knowledge and 'know-how'
- ◆ identify and establish links with local networks, participants and audiences
- ◆ and if necessary promote and market the arts activities.

The overwhelming feedback from professional arts organisations which have attempted to carry out arts development work in North Warwickshire is that the inadequate levels of local support have ultimately limited the effectiveness of their work. A recent evaluation of an *Ikon Touring* project in the area (see section 2.2. above) demonstrates how this has resulted in missed opportunities for North Warwickshire communities.

The other issue is that if these "localised support structures" are lacking or inadequate, the arts development activity will be more people and resource-intensive, and therefore require greater levels of subsidy in order to achieve its aims and provide value for money. If a local authority is aiming to engage in effective community arts development through the involvement of the professional arts sector, it is usually more cost-effective in the long run to develop the localised support structures, and thereby gain better value for money from the process.

The 1995 *Leisure Opportunities Audit* noted that there was "a very low level of professional arts activity taking place in the Borough", and this picture has not significantly altered in the past five years. A number of amateur performing arts societies continue to work with professional and semi-professional input. The operation of the *Face to Face* project has increased opportunities for professional participatory arts involvement - the projects listed in Appendix D refer to a number of professional organisations, including the *Rural Media Company*, *Playtrain*, *Beavers Arts*, *Bostin Arts*, and *Storm Theatre*.

Reference has also been made in section 2.2. above to the input of *Arts Marketing Warwickshire*, the *Rural Media Company* and *Ikon Touring* into the area, some of it in cooperation with the *White Hart Heritage Centre* in Atherstone, and the *Face to Face* project. However, most of the interventions listed above have been in the form of one-off workshops, projects and opportunities. Overall, there has been a lack of sustainable arts development involving professional input. As a consequence, none of this work has made a very significant difference to the critical mass of professional performing or visual arts available for local audiences.

*"My feeling about most of the arts projects that are done in this area is that they are not consistent - they're here for today, but then they're finished. We need consistency."*

One of the main providers of professional theatre and performing arts in the area is the Warwick-based **Live and Local** touring agency, which receives subsidy from West Midlands Arts, Warwickshire County Arts Service, and North Warwickshire Borough Council's Leisure Services Committee to bring small-scale theatre performances into the area. As well as its core services of (1) offering subsidised professional performances and (2) operating a lighting and sound hire scheme, it has also received an Arts for Everyone main scheme grant of £85,000 to implement a **Live and Local - Outside** project over three years (from 1998).

**Live and Local - Outside** aims to introduce and integrate new performing arts work into rural community events (such as fetes or carnivals), and is directed mainly at very rural settlements in areas of the county where people are isolated from the main population centres, and have had little or no previous provision for the arts. Additional elements of the project include the provision of a new baby Big Top tent for the work, the creation of a new outdoor performance piece, and creating a *What's On* diary specifically for outdoor rural events in the county.

**Live and Local's** Coordinator, John Laidlaw, recognises that there is scope for involving a greater range of promoters and venues in North Warwickshire to join the scheme, and thereby benefit from the regional and county grants that subsidise its shows. The level of support given by **Live and Local** to the **Atherstone Memorial Hall** has been outlined in section 2.3.1. above. Currently, the **Atherstone Memorial Hall** and **Corley Village Hall** are regular promoters of **Live and Local** shows, and both **Shuttington** and **Curdworth Village Halls** are occasional promoters. Overall, in the six year period from 1994 to 2000, **Live and Local** has promoted a total of 55 events in venues in North Warwickshire, for which it has received an accumulated total of £3,150 in grants from the Borough Council.

There has been a very limited amount of professional dance intervention in the area in recent years, from the Warwick-based **Motionhouse Dance Company** and **Warwickshire Youth Dance**, although again any work that has taken place has tended to be one-off and unsustainable. Both of these organisations are funded as key agencies by Warwickshire County Arts Service to deliver across the county area, and **Motionhouse Dance Company** also receives funding as a key client of West Midlands Arts. It has expressed an interest in developing dance project work in North Warwickshire, particularly with young people, but has spoken of the difficulties of initiating and managing a sustained development programme, without the support of local professional staffing, and appropriate venues.

Another professional agency that programmes in the area on a regular basis is the **Warwick Arts Society**, which is also funded by Warwickshire County Arts

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Service and West Midlands Arts. The emphasis of its annual programming is on major arts festivals which take place in venues in Warwick and Leamington Spa, and include opera, dance, drama, early and chamber music, jazz, poetry, puppetry, exhibitions and fireworks. It has also recently taken on the coordination of another festival, planned for the autumn in Stratford.

However, it also makes some provision for more rural areas by coordinating a programme of *Concerts in Warwickshire Churches*, and within the past couple of months has programmed the **Contempo String Quartet** at the Church of Our Lady, Merevale, and a performance by **Crispian Steele Perkins** at St. Edith's Church at Orton-on-the-Hill. It has promoted work at Over Whitacre in the past, and would be interested in exploring the use of other venues such as **Polesworth Abbey**, and increasing the level of annual programming, dependent on additional local finance and support. Over the past four years it has received grants from the Borough Council Leisure Services Committee ranging from £150 to £300 to subsidise this programme.

A very recent development which may offer new opportunities, particularly for young people in the area, is the proposed establishment of the **Edwin Starr School for Performing Arts** in a venue near Coleshill. This will offer training in all aspects of the performing arts alongside the maintenance of formal education, and will also include a Business Studies programme geared towards the creative industries. The school proposes to develop a theatre venue, with facilities available for use by the local community, as well as offering workshops and summer school activities.

## 2.6. OTHER PARTNERS AND AGENCIES

There are a number of other agencies which have played an important role in arts provision or community arts involvement in the area, despite not having the arts as a primary focus of their activities. For some of them, such as the **Warwickshire Rural Community Council** or the **North Warwickshire C.V.S.**, they recognise the role that the arts can play in contributing to their brief of community and voluntary sector support. Another example of such an organisation is the **Warwickshire Association of Youth Clubs**, which is based in the Warwick District, but is an association of 117 youth clubs working with over 10,000 young people and 1,000 youth workers across Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull.

The **WAYC** is involved in a range of arts-related projects for young people, and in recent years has benefited from being able to employ an Arts Development Officer with funding from the Rank Organisation (the funding runs out in autumn 2000). Included in the range of arts provision is a **Discovering Arts** programme, which is a form of mobile provision offering craft, painting, sculpture, badge-making and environmental arts. The Association has worked in North Warwickshire in the past, but identifies the same barriers to establishing a sustainable programme as some of the professional arts groups referred to above - i.e. a lack of adequate local support in terms of funding or staffing.

Recently, the **Warwickshire Association of Youth Clubs** has been a partner in establishing a county-wide youth arts development initiative - called **Warwickshire Youth Arts Network**, which also involves the County Arts Service, the LEA **Art Zone**, and several of the other District Councils. The partnership is currently aiming to raise funds from West Midlands Arts' *Regional Arts Lottery Programme* to establish a county-wide youth arts post.

**British Waterways** is one example of a national strategic agency which is aware that the arts can provide an innovative and cost-effective way of delivering its own organisational aims, in this case caring for the environment of Britain's water routes. It is currently one of the partners in the North Warwickshire Millennium Waterways project, called **Totems**. Through this project professional artists (Martin Brockman and Lee and Jill Brewster) have been working with communities to create new pieces of public art which celebrate the use of North Warwickshire canals. Martin, who has been based at **Middleton Hall**, has been working with groups at Curdworth, Middleton and Kingsbury on planning and devising pieces for the Birmingham and Fazeley Canal. Lee and Jill have been working with residents of Polesworth, Grendon, Atherstone and Hartshill along the Coventry Canal. The project culminated on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2000 in a public celebration, as the completed **North Warwickshire Totems** were accompanied to their destinations with songs, stories and boat rides.

## 2.7. CULTURAL FACILITIES

The low level of provision in terms of arts venues and facilities in the Borough has been referred to in 2.1. above, and is a matter of concern for all those involved in cultural development in North Warwickshire. There is, in effect, no venue for either the performing arts or visual arts and media which is perceived as adequate to local needs, and significant problems have been identified with many of the buildings currently used for the arts.

The issues affecting the use and development of the **Atherstone Arts Centre** and the multi-purpose **Atherstone Memorial Hall**, which are both facilities directly provided and managed by the Borough Council, have been dealt with in some detail at section 2.3. above. In addition to these, there are a number of other venues which are used for the arts across the Borough - many of them being multi-use community venues, or buildings (such as churches or schools) with another primary use. For example the **Coleshill Town Hall** has been used for arts events, and was the venue for an **Arts Market** set up by the **Face to Face** project in June 1999 to launch the second phase of its work, with stalls and performances highlighting its previous projects.

**Polesworth Abbey** has been actively promoted as a community resource and focal point in recent years by the Reverend Philip Wells, and it was the venue for the performance of the community play, **Starry Messenger**, earlier this year. Rev. Wells has also been successful in securing a Millennium Festival award of £20,000 towards the **Polesworth Mystery Plays** to be performed there this summer. Polesworth also has its own Memorial Hall which is used

for concerts and exhibitions. As identified at 2.5. above, there are a number of other churches in the Borough, which have been used by the **Warwick Arts Society** for its programme of concerts.

Overall, facilities for the visual arts are particularly limited, although some community venues such as village halls or libraries may put on exhibitions, and a new small exhibition space has been provided in Atherstone within the past year as part of the **White Hart Heritage Centre**. North Warwickshire Borough Council has also adopted a policy of using part of the reception area in the Council House in Atherstone for exhibitions, and the **Coleshill Civic Society** has developed an exhibition area in the **Old Market Hall**.

**Middleton Hall** is a complex of buildings dating from medieval and Georgian times, set in 40 acres of grounds in the north-west of the Borough, which contains a working Craft Centre. It also programmes a number of arts events and activities, and would like to expand this area of its work. There are a number of other craft centres in North Warwickshire, including the **Hoar Park Craft Village**, near Ansley.

Village Halls have always been an absolutely vital part of community provision in rural areas - a national survey updated by **Acre (Action with Communities in Rural England)** in 1998 identified that more than 75% of village halls are the only multi-purpose facility in their town or village, and that more than half serve small villages of less than 1000 inhabitants. There are currently 28 village halls in North Warwickshire, and a number of these are used for arts activities, including amateur dramatics, film shows and band practice at Bodymoor Heath, ballroom dancing at Water Orton and Mancetter, and line dancing at Nether Whitacre, Baddesley Ensor and Fillongley.

Schools and Colleges are another part of the local infrastructure which offer opportunities for joint-use arrangements, and in some cases may act as the basis for more specialised arts provision, with a range of arts-based courses on offer at North Warwickshire College. Currently, there is some discussion about potential developments at the Queen Elizabeth School in Atherstone, to provide alternative performing arts facilities in the town. It is worth noting that part of the Community Education Service Area Plan for North Warwickshire is to encourage community use of educational premises, and to assist community groups in accessing other community buildings such as community centres and village halls.

*"Maybe we should use the buildings that are already there, like the schools and libraries and village halls, but have professional artists-in-residence, and in exchange for having a place to work, they could exhibit and have a couple of workshops."*

Facilities in schools and community colleges have been developed as community arts centres in a number of both rural and urban areas in the West Midlands, sometimes with the support of arts lottery funding, and often with the added benefit of a professional arts coordinator to develop a programme

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of professional performances and participatory arts projects. Examples from Shropshire include the Whitchurch Arts Centre based in the Sir John Talbot School in North Shropshire, the Rhyn Park Arts Centre based in a very rural school in the extreme north-west of the county, and the Bishops Castle Community College in a rural part of the south-west. All of these offer a professional arts programme, and are key venues in the **Arts Alive** touring circuit (a similar agency to **Live and Local** in Warwickshire).

There is, currently, a supportive context within which North Warwickshire Borough Council can consider the issue of developing arts facilities and venues in its area. Warwickshire County Arts Service has been looking at the issue of capital development for the arts in the county, and as part of this process it commissioned a *"Mapping of Capital Arts Facilities and Lottery Successes"* in the county from **Arts Marketing Warwickshire** in 1999 (which confirmed the low level of building provision in the area). Based on consultation with the District and Borough Councils, it also developed *"Guidance on Local Authority Capital Arts Priorities for Warwickshire 99/00"* which gave priority to projects which

*"will refurbish or equip buildings for arts usage providing access in rural areas. North Warwickshire will be a priority area".*

West Midlands Arts has also indicated that, because of the low level of input from the arts lottery into the Borough area in the past, appropriate and well-planned developments in North Warwickshire would be a priority for the small-scale capital awards of up to £100,000 it administers as part of the new Regional Arts Lottery Programme. In addition, a cross-distributor Lottery group, of which West Midlands Arts is a member, has developed a community buildings strategy to support multi-use and community venues, and are currently looking at the possibility of establishing a budget which could prove an additional source of funds for development in North Warwickshire.

## **SECTION 3: ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES**

3.1. Overview

3.2. Access: People & Places

3.3. Partnership and Communication

3.4. A Corporate Approach

3.5. Key Developments

## 3. ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

### 3.1. OVERVIEW

Previous sections of this report have aimed to outline a local and regional context for the development of a new Arts Plan in North Warwickshire, and provide a map of current levels of local authority and voluntary arts provision and activity in the Borough, together with an overview of the venues and facilities for participation in the arts.

Within this section, there will be further consideration and analysis of some of the key issues relating to arts provision and development in North Warwickshire, which have been identified through consultation with many of the individuals and organisations involved in arts activities and development in the Borough. The issues are grouped under a number of key headings: *Access; Partnership; and A Corporate Approach*. The final part of this section, *Development Opportunities*, will provide the context for the recommendations which will follow in the *Arts Policy and Strategy* section of the report.

### 3.2. ACCESS: PEOPLE AND PLACES

Probably the single most challenging issue facing North Warwickshire Borough Council as it aims to develop the arts in the area is the low "critical mass" of activities, facilities, resources, and people contributing to the cultural profile of the area. This is to some extent a consequence of the lack of proactive and adequate support structures for the arts in North Warwickshire, which produces a "survival of the fittest" environment, where individuals, groups and initiatives are left to sink or swim.

In this context, the organisations that will survive are those with the resources of time, money or skills to achieve their aims without local support. However, this is not necessarily the most helpful climate for cultural development, and it is certainly not an appropriate context for developing arts provision that is accessible and socially inclusive.

The other outcome of a low critical mass of activity in the area is that it can too easily become a self-fulfilling process. The lack of overall provision, and the limited range of creative work on offer leads to a low level of expectation or apathy amongst local communities. It becomes easy for people to lose the habit of involvement in active culture, which is in competition for people's time, energy and disposable income with more passive leisure pursuits such as television, or spending time in pubs. This in turn can lead to even lower levels of response to rare opportunities for attendance at arts events when they occur. Low audience levels impact on people's enjoyment of a live art event, which may make them less disposed to attend another time. A focused and structured approach to community arts and audience development is needed to interrupt this cycle.



*"It would be a good idea if there was a leaflet listing arts events and activities, that was kept updated every few months, and distributed around all the villages. I personally think it takes a long time to develop a culture of knowing that there are arts events, and starting to attend."*

Although no national standards exist for the level of arts activities or facilities in an area, an overview of other comparable geographic areas indicates that North Warwickshire has a particularly low level of provision. The 1995 *Leisure Opportunities Audit* provided comparative information on levels of activity in North Norfolk District Council, and the impact of increasing its provision for the arts, including the appointment of an Arts Development Officer.

North Shropshire District Council has some similarities with North Warwickshire, having few centres of population, and a dispersed rural population. Historically, it is acknowledged as being the Shropshire district with the lowest levels of arts provision. Nevertheless, following an audit process and the development of a strategic arts plan for the area in 1998/99, it currently has a range of venues programming professional arts, and has recently developed Wem Town Hall as an enhanced venue with Arts Lottery Funding. It has also developed a Capital Arts Audit and Strategy, and recently appointed an Arts Development Officer.

North West Leicestershire District Council has had an Arts Development Officer since 1995. Although the first three years of the post were joint-funded by East Midlands Arts Board, it is now fully-funded by the District Council as a permanent post. The District experiences a lack of visual arts provision and exhibition space, but has a dedicated community arts venue in Coalville, and theatres in Ashby de la Zouch and Snibston, as well as a theatre in a community college in Coalville which is considering development as a Youth Arts Complex. The District also has a professional community arts organisation (Mantle Community Arts) which is funded by the Council and East Midlands Arts Board to deliver aspects of the Council's arts development programme.

If North Warwickshire Borough Council wishes its communities to experience the benefits of an active and vibrant cultural life, then there is a pressing need for it to address the scale of involvement and participation in the arts - whether in relation to audiences, participants, or professional arts practitioners. Together with its local and regional partners, the Borough Council will need to look at a gradual, sustained and long-term strategy which addresses a number of key issues, including:

- ◆ Audience development
- ◆ Facilities development
- ◆ Sustainable community arts development, enabling local people to develop their own creative work
- ◆ Supporting local groups to access funding
- ◆ Attracting more external funding into the area.

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The other issue that will need to be considered is that of social and cultural inclusion, extending the range and scope of people involved in the arts in the area. There are currently some sectors of the local community which have a tendency to be less involved in the existing arts provision, for a complex variety of reasons, and will require specific strategies to target their involvement. Young people, for example, although they have some opportunities for involvement through **Atherstone Theatre Workshop** and through arts activities at school and in youth centres, still require targeted development opportunities.

Many of the opportunities for involvement in the arts in North Warwickshire are of a type not to appeal to young people, tending to fall within the more traditional artforms. Many young people also have added access problems relating to both cost and transport. Although there are some youth-specific cultural activities available through provision in youth clubs or other projects (such as **Face to Face** or **Leisure Unlimited**), these are very far from being frequent or sustained. The currently developing **Warwickshire Youth Arts Network** provides North Warwickshire Borough Council with an opportunity to address this issue, with other partners, in a strategic way.

There are similar arguments for addressing the needs of other groups, such as elderly people, disabled people, and people with learning disabilities and mental health problems. All these groups face particular barriers to participation in the arts in a rural area such as North Warwickshire, as many of them have mobility or transport problems, or are reluctant to use public transport or go out into the streets at night. North Warwickshire Borough Council's highly developed services for older people (through the Boroughcare and sheltered housing schemes) provide opportunities for effective cross-divisional working to address the issue of older people's cultural needs.

*"If you have arts projects involving, for example, older people and younger people, it helps people to see what other parts of their community can do, and perhaps breaks down some of the barriers between them, and challenges assumptions about each other."*

The arts are particularly effective in providing a context for working towards the integration of different sectors of a community - for example between disabled and non-disabled people, or older people with youth groups - since they provide a creative and positive context for engagement, whilst at the same time offering tools and skills for communication and mutual understanding.

The same arguments apply to questions of cultural diversity. There have been very few examples of the work of non-European cultures being promoted or explored in North Warwickshire. Although only about 1% of North Warwickshire's population belongs to ethnic minority groups, the Borough has its own unique experience around the question of cultural interchange - with the integration of mining and agricultural traditions, and the cultural development that follows. There is the potential for a creative exploration of these issues linked to a wider range of cultural forms and traditions, in much

the same way as **Face to Face** provided opportunities to explore the cultural heritage of the mining industry in North Warwickshire.

Most of the above issues have been addressed at one time or another by the **Face to Face** project over the past two to three years. The fact that they still remain to be addressed does not in any way reflect on the project's effectiveness. There is, however, a limit to how much a temporary project like **Face to Face** can achieve, with a part-time field-worker who, however well-respected, is nevertheless working externally to the administrative and political structures within the local authority. From feedback received during the consultation, people involved in the arts in the area are well aware of the limitations of such an externally-operated, time-limited and part-time project, and the fact that it cannot hope to have the same long-term and incremental impact as a professional Council officer working full-time within the Authority.

*"There are a million frustrations - always having to work in a vacuum, you're always on your own.....there doesn't seem anyone who can help, either financially, or else just recognising that you need support. It's the feeling of isolation."*

In order to begin to make a significant impact on the challenge of cultural access and inclusion, it is essential that sustainable and longer-term strategies can be put in place. It is also essential that the strategies are implemented from within the local authority, in such a way that they can relate to, and benefit from, a corporate approach and corporate ownership. There is an interesting point raised by the response to the Leisure Services' recent Best Value survey. The only option for arts development rejected by a majority of respondents (on a ratio of 2:1) was that "The Council should hire in professional services to undertake Arts development work on its behalf". In contrast, the vast majority were in favour of the Council directly employing its own Arts Development staff (by a ratio of nearly 5:1).

Within the broad area of "cultural access" there are issues relating also to geography, location, transport, venues and facilities. One of the over-riding challenges for nearly all forms of service provision in North Warwickshire is that of the rural nature of the area, the dispersed and fragmented nature of the communities, and the difficulties of the internal transport networks. These factors affect many of the issues already touched on within this section of the report, particularly in relation to the scale of involvement of participants or audiences for the arts. There are barriers - both practical and attitudinal - to people travelling across the Borough to attend events or join in activities, and although there are local schemes which address transport issues (e.g. the *Rural Transport Brokerage Project*) they require the input of relevant staff to ensure that they have an impact on cultural access.

It is therefore important to develop an arts plan that addresses the challenge of a rural area and offers opportunities for people to experience the arts within their own localities and communities. The current **Totems** (or North Warwickshire Millennium Waterways) project is one example of an imaginative way of dealing with this challenge which can be built on for the future. Another

is the **Live and Local - Outside** project, currently funded through an Arts Council *Arts For Everyone* award, which aims to build on existing rural community celebrations (such as village fetes or carnivals) by including opportunities for participatory arts projects, or new performance work.

It will also be important, in order to develop a Borough-wide strategy, to address the question of a geographic spread of venues and facilities for the arts. The question of arts venues within the Borough is complex, and one that tends to provoke strong loyalties. Many people who have been involved with the arts in the Borough for a number of years feel that it is time that the Borough Council made a significant capital investment into a properly-equipped arts venue.

There are, however, major questions that would need to be addressed first, which would require more detailed and specialised analysis than has been possible within this broad review process. The factors that would need considering include:

- ◆ Location (or locations) for any capital cultural developments
- ◆ The nature of the building - whether multi-use (e.g. arts centre) or designed for particular artforms or activities
- ◆ The lack of both adequate performing arts and exhibition spaces within the Borough
- ◆ The market context for such a development, in terms of regional provision, other local provision, potential audiences, and available product
- ◆ Transport links
- ◆ The revenue consequences of developing new venues
- ◆ Available sources of capital and revenue funding.

The most effective way of dealing with this issue would be through a strategic approach. This should start with an updated and detailed audit of venues and facilities for arts use in the Borough (including both those in current use, and potential venues), followed by the development of a Capital Arts Strategy for the area. The strategy would probably need to identify a prioritised and phased approach to a range of capital developments across the entire Borough, aiming to address a range of geographic, artform, and sectoral needs - and taking into account provision of both equipment and mobile facilities.

*"Have there been any mapping exercises done, to see what spaces there are that could be used for arts, for example as exhibition spaces? There must be other spaces where you could have hanging systems installed at low cost."*

The phased approach would allow approaches to a range of potential funding sources, including:

- ◆ the new Regional Arts Lottery Programme administered by West Midlands Arts (which will award grants up to a ceiling of £100,000)

- ◆ a new Lottery development involving cross-distributor allocation of funding for multi-use community buildings, and
- ◆ potentially, in time, the new Arts Capital Programme from the Arts Council, for large-scale development.

Indications at present are that North Warwickshire would benefit from being a high priority for some of these schemes, since it has had little previous funding from the Arts Lottery.

### 3.3. PARTNERSHIP AND COMMUNICATION

Partnership working has been identified as a key corporate "cross-cutting theme" within North Warwickshire Borough Council's Corporate Plan 2000 - 2001, and has also been prioritised within the Leisure Services Committee's policy planning process. It is, similarly, a priority for many if not all agencies working within the public domain, including those which are currently partners in this review process.

Within the under-resourced context of the arts in North Warwickshire, however, the concept of "partnership working" needs to be applied with some caution, because there can be the temptation to exploit it as a strategy to make up for a lack of staff and resources. A meaningful approach to partnership working is one that ensures best value from adequate levels of existing or proposed provision, monitors the risk of duplication in provision, and creates opportunities for enhanced provision through collaborative working.

The lack, to date, of specialist arts development staffing within North Warwickshire Borough Council has had a negative impact on the Authority's capacity to benefit from effective partnerships in a number of ways. The most obvious and quantifiable of these has been the failure to attract adequate levels of inward investment from the new arts funding sources in recent years.

The recent arts lottery award to the **Atherstone Chorale** has brought the total level of capital arts lottery funding in North Warwickshire to about £62,000, and there have been two Millennium Festival Awards (Large Grants) totalling £43,500. There have, however, been no awards to North Warwickshire from a range of other recent schemes administered by West Midlands Arts, including the Arts For Everyone Main Scheme, the Regional Arts Lottery Programme, the Year of the Artist awards, or the latest round of the Grass Roots scheme (for rural arts projects) and the Youth Arts Fund.

The lack of professional arts organisations based in North Warwickshire also means that there is no subsidy going directly into programming in the area from West Midlands Arts (other than as a percentage of the subsidy going to previously-mentioned County and Regional agencies working in the area). And finally, the lack of a professional arts officer has meant that the Authority has not been able to attract development funding through the new West Midlands Arts partnership funding agreements for local authorities, or explore the many avenues for funding the arts from a number of other national sources (e.g. New Opportunities Fund).

There are, however, less obvious ways in which North Warwickshire Borough Council has missed out in terms of "partnership deals" in recent years. Reference has been made before in this report to the way in which an absence of specialist staff "on the ground" in North Warwickshire has meant that the area has not necessarily been able to get best value out of incoming organisations and projects (such as ***Motionhouse Dance Theatre***) which are subsidised by external sources. It has also limited the Authority's ability to benefit from existing partnerships which offer opportunities for cost-effectively addressing key issues (e.g. the ***Warwickshire Youth Arts Network***), or exploit the potential for new and unexplored partnerships (e.g. with ***Warwickshire Association of Youth Clubs***, the ***Area Community Education*** team, or the ***Rural Community Council's Vital Villages*** project).

Just as crucially, the lack of dedicated arts staff at the Borough Council has hindered the development of a more positive working relationship and communication with the independent and voluntary sector working in the arts in the area. As well as providing direct grants, there are a number of low-cost ways in which an arts development officer working at the Borough Council could support the voluntary sector

- ◆ by providing professional advice to enable them to access external funds
- ◆ by supporting a strategic approach to capital development in the area, providing in the long term a range of better-equipped venues for the arts
- ◆ by collating and developing databases, to improve communication and liaison
- ◆ by coordinating the availability and distribution of information through a What's On, a web-site, and other marketing initiatives.

### 3.4. A CORPORATE APPROACH

The extent to which an investment in arts development will contribute to the achievement of a range of corporate objectives for North Warwickshire Borough Council has been one of the key themes of this review process. Increasingly, within the context of the central government "Best Value" initiative, it is becoming essential that local authorities take a corporate approach to the provision of all their services, challenging them through rigorous review to demonstrate how effectively they are able to deliver against key policy priorities. Parallel to this process, there has been a growing body of research and evidence that, far from being an optional luxury, arts and cultural development can have a major impact on a number of key policy aims, particularly social inclusion and community empowerment.

Within the review process, therefore, there has been a commitment to extensive consultation with specialist officers within a number of Borough Council divisions, to assess

- ◆ the extent to which Borough Council services have used arts development activities in the past as part of their provision
- ◆ the level of understanding of, and commitment to the value of arts development as part of the Borough Council's remit, and

## NORTH WARWICKSHIRE ARTS PLAN

- ◆ the potential for future cross-divisional partnerships involving arts development in the future.

As well as liaison with officers within the Leisure Services Division, meetings were held with officers within the Housing Management Section, the Borough Care Service, Forward Planning and Economic Development, Building Services Section, and with the recently appointed Local Agenda 21 Coordinator. In addition, consideration was given to a range of relevant policy and strategy documents, including the Corporate Plan, the Tourism and Economic Development Strategy, and the Borough Council's Crime and Disorder Strategy, *Making North Warwickshire a Safer Place* (see Appendices B and C for a full list of documents and those consulted).

Overall, the consultation demonstrated a high level of understanding of the value of the Borough Council engaging in arts development, and in particular a widespread awareness of the benefits to date of the **Face to Face** project. There was also a significant level of interest in future liaison to identify development projects which could address a range of service-specific issues, although there were also concerns about how such coordination could be achieved effectively without the resource of a specialist arts development officer within the Authority.

Examples of arts projects which could address a number of key priorities within the Authority include:

- ◆ using the arts as a creative tool to engage communities in consultation around issues of housing estate development
- ◆ the value of community involvement in public art to enhance local distinctiveness and ownership in environmental development (for example as part of the regeneration of rural areas and village life)
- ◆ developing creative skills through the arts which contribute to local participation in a range of sustainable development issues as part of Local Agenda 21.

*"Community arts is about people working together in a totally different way than they might normally, and getting an awful lot out of it, in terms of learning new skills."*

The ways in which arts projects such as those outlined above can be developed and implemented as part of the Borough Council's Arts Plan will be further elaborated upon in later sections of the report. In order for such a Council-wide approach to arts development to be truly effective, however, it is crucial that there is corporate recognition and validation of the approach, and corporate ownership of the Arts Plan. The Borough Council will need to ensure that there are mechanisms in place which

- ◆ monitor the extent to which the Arts Plan is seen to deliver against a number of corporate objectives
- ◆ facilitate effective cross-divisional planning and liaison within the Authority.

An effective way of addressing this requirement, which the Authority may wish to consider, is the establishment of a cross-divisional internal working group, with the brief of monitoring effective corporate ownership of the Arts Plan.

### **3.5. DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

In conclusion, the research and consultation undertaken as part of this review process has identified opportunities for a number of potentially key developments in the arts in North Warwickshire. Many of these have already been touched upon in previous sections of this report, and they inform the development of the Arts Policy, Strategy, and Recommendations which follow in the next section. If these developments are approached strategically and corporately through an adopted arts plan for North Warwickshire, they will have an impact on the overall level and quality of arts provision within the Borough, the level of involvement of local people in cultural activities, and the overall profile and image of North Warwickshire.

#### **3.5.1. STAFFING**

The impact that the absence of an Arts Development Officer has had on North Warwickshire Borough Council's ability to engage effectively in the arts, meet local expectations, and exploit funding and partnership opportunities, has already been spelt out at 3.3. above. The limitation this has imposed on effective partnership working and local and regional liaison has been highlighted by the majority of individuals and agencies consulted throughout this review. The most clearly expressed wish arising from all the consultation is for the Borough Council to appoint its own Arts Development Officer. Indeed, it will prove very difficult for the Council to implement any of the recommendations and strategies proposed within this arts plan, without a full-time officer with the necessary level of professional skills, administrative support within the Council, and a development budget.

A related issue that should be considered is the most supportive location for such a new position within the current staffing structure. In the absence of other arts colleagues within the Leisure Services Division, the issue of management of the post by a senior officer with experience of the arts becomes more critical to effective internal working. It should be noted that one of the criteria within the application pack for West Midlands Arts' Local Authority partnership funding relates to the support and professional development of specialist arts staff within an authority, and specifically whether the work of an arts development officer is appraised and managed by a senior officer with knowledge and experience of arts development. The establishment of an internal Arts Working Group will also contribute to a supportive working context for the new appointment.

#### **3.5.2. BUDGETS**

In order to achieve the development targets identified in the Arts Plan, and fulfil the criteria for a partnership funding agreement with West Midlands Arts, it will be necessary to create an arts development budget of about £10,000. There is the opportunity, alongside this, to rationalise the use of the current



*Financial Assistance to Outside Organisations* budget, re-defining its criteria and prioritising its use for amateur and voluntary arts groups. Consideration should be given to transferring an allocation from the *Financial Assistance to Outside Organisations* budget into the development budget, approximately equivalent to the annual levels currently used to subsidise professional agencies (e.g. about £2,000). The enhanced development budget of £12,000 can then be used to enable the engagement of professional arts organisations such as **Live and Local** or **Motionhouse Dance Theatre** as well as a range of other agencies and individual artists, in delivery of development projects identified in the plan. Funding to professional agencies from this budget should be on the basis of service level agreements, negotiated in partnership with other funding agencies such as the County Arts Service and West Midlands Arts, against identified and agreed targets.

*"Part of the problem is stop-gap funding, all the time worrying about where the next funding is coming from. How can you work effectively, when you have no stability?"*

### **3.5.3. FUNDING AGREEMENT WITH WEST MIDLANDS ARTS**

Addressing 3.5.1. and 3.5.2. above will enable North Warwickshire Borough Council to apply to West Midlands Arts for a fixed term funding agreement, for match-funding against the development priorities identified in the arts plan. This will potentially create a significant fund of £22,000 to implement the proposals contained in this plan. Bearing in mind the Borough's current level of development, the most appropriate length of time for a funding agreement would probably be for three years, to enable the assessment of development targets and if necessary modification of the strategy. The terms of the funding agreement would require a process of negotiation with both West Midlands Arts and the County Arts Service, as there is the potential within the proposed North Warwickshire Arts Plan to identify projects for implementation in partnership with the County, which is itself currently (2000 - 2001) in the first year of a three year funding agreement with West Midlands Arts.

### **3.5.4. CAPITAL AUDIT AND STRATEGY**

As identified at 2.7 and 3.2. above, the complexity of the situation in North Warwickshire in relation to arts venues, and the likely scale of long-term development required, means that there are no simple solutions to this question. The second most frequently expressed need within the Borough (after an Arts Development Officer) was for new, renovated or enhanced venues. However, the geographic spread and separation of communities also meant that there was little in the way of a consensus about the ideal location, or the nature of the most appropriate development. The most effective way of dealing with this situation would probably be by means of a Borough-wide audit of buildings and facilities which can be used for the arts. This in turn should inform the development of a Borough-wide strategy for capital development in the arts, looking at geographic and artform issues, as well as new build, renovation, mobile facilities and equipment, which can be used as a

basis for fundraising from a range of sources.

### 3.5.5. FACE TO FACE - DOCUMENTATION

As has been recorded throughout this report, the achievements of the **Face to Face** project in enabling significant levels of community involvement, particularly by groups new to the arts, deserves to be celebrated and recorded. The project has been monitored and evaluated on a regular basis by the funding Partners Group, in order to assess the extent to which it has reached its targets. However, there have to date been no plans for a full evaluation and documentation of the work of the project over the past few years. This is something that North Warwickshire Borough Council may well wish to consider as a valuable project for the first year of its Arts Plan, in order to preserve a record of the work, and establish documentary evidence for a wider audience of exceptional good practice in community arts development. Similarly, in its future arts development programme, it is important that the Borough Council retains a commitment to evaluating and documenting all arts development projects. This will contribute to a "Best Value" process of continuous improvement in the service, and also enable the recording and dissemination of good practice.

### 3.5.6. YOUTH ARTS DEVELOPMENT

The need to prioritise cultural provision for young people has been highlighted continuously within the consultation process, both in individual meetings, and in the discussions of the Focus Group meetings. There are a number of opportunities currently within the Borough to enable partnerships and initiatives leading to a sustainable programme of youth arts development. Once it has the support of its own Arts Development Officer, North Warwickshire Borough Council will be in a position to become an active partner in the developing **Warwickshire Youth Arts Network**, and, in partnership with the County Arts Service, contribute some funding as part of the West Midlands Arts funding agreement. Alongside this strategic development, the Borough Council should explore separate partnerships with a number of agencies designed to increase the amount of youth arts provision on offer in the area in youth centres and schools, including the **Warwickshire Association of Youth Clubs**, the **Area Community Education** team, and the **Artists in Warwickshire Education** team.

*"I'd like to see an open-air venue created, outside the town centre, for the use of young people, for sports, arts or other leisure. It would be important to involve the young people in the development of the ideas, and there should be both an artist and an environmentalist involved in the design, so that it was artistically-designed and environmentally-friendly."*

The Borough's Arts Development Officer could also explore with the **Area Community Education** team the potential for developing a programme of

community arts training, skills-sharing and apprenticeship opportunities for young people in the area, to exploit the resource of professional artists coming into the area for project work (see 3.5.11 below).

### 3.5.7. RURAL ARTS

There has been a clear consensus within the consultation that particular attention needs to be given within the Arts Plan to ensuring

- ◆ that there are increased opportunities for involvement in the arts in **all** parts of the Borough, and
- ◆ that people can have access to quality arts experiences within their own communities.

One aspect of this issue will be dealt with through the proposals for a capital arts strategy for North Warwickshire, particularly if this takes on board the issue of both equipment and mobile facilities.

It is also important that a future arts plan ensures that North Warwickshire is getting best value from its support to professional arts agencies, which can offer a service in programming high quality arts in rural areas, such as **Live and Local** and the **Warwick Arts Society**. There needs to be a pro-active engagement with these agencies, to help target their work as effectively as possible in the area, and financial support offered through the new development budget should be monitored through more formal funding agreements than operate at present.

Alongside these two strategies, there is the potential for the Arts Development Officer to initiate and deliver a programme of innovative rural arts projects, in consultation with rural communities, which build on local community celebrations such as pageants and carnivals, and use residencies by professional artists or arts groups. These developments could initially be programmed in conjunction with the **Live and Local - Outside** project, but should extend the scope of that scheme into more locally-owned programmes of activity. The aim would be for local communities, supported by professional artists, to develop their own celebratory performance events which could be shown and shared with an incoming professional performing arts group as a form of cultural exchange.

### 3.5.8. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Strengthening and empowering local communities to play a more active role in improving quality of life in their areas is one of the key corporate aims of North Warwickshire Borough Council, and is also one of the key priorities identified by the Leisure Services Committee. The North Warwickshire Community Partnership was established by the Borough Council and the County Council, together with a range of other partners, to support this aim, and the process will be further strengthened by the Borough Council's development of a Community Plan. The arts can play a particularly effective role in this process, as they encourage and enable positive involvement, and at the same time provide creative tools for communication and expression. They can also be used directly as an effective tool for consulting with communities.

To this extent, the arts will be able to contribute to the more pro-active involvement of a range of sectors of the community who experience difficulty in getting their voices heard - including young people, disabled people, elderly people, and people with learning disabilities and mental health problems. They also provide a positive context for working to integrate sectors of the community who may have difficulty communicating with each other, or understanding each other's situation.

There are a number of opportunities for cross-divisional working in the Borough Council which will contribute effectively to this process. One is the potential to liaise with the Manager of the BoroughCare scheme in using the arts as part of a developing strategy for older people in North Warwickshire. Recent consultation with older people in the Borough has identified a keen and active group which wants to get involved in a range of activities, including IT, but which needs support and assistance to do so. This opportunity was also highlighted by feedback within the arts review Focus Group meetings.

*"There are an awful lot of older people who are missing out. There's a lot of older people who aren't mobile, or who are out in the countryside and cut off, and you need activities for them."*

Another opportunity is to liaise with the newly appointed Tenant Participation Officer in the Housing Division, who is working to build relationships with communities on the Borough's estates, and to support existing and developing Tenants Associations. As well as using participatory arts to contribute directly to community development in these areas, it may be possible to identify opportunities for participatory public art developments as part of estate improvement schemes, which will enhance local ownership and help to bring local distinctiveness to the areas. There is similar potential for corporate and partnership working within the Council to identify arts projects which address crime prevention, community safety and the sustainability objectives of the recently appointed Local Agenda 21 Coordinator.

### **3.5.9. ARTFORM DEVELOPMENT**

There is a need to address directly some aspects of artform development in the area, which tends to have a preponderance of performing arts such as amateur dramatic and operatic groups, or traditional music groups. Local people consulted as part of the review have expressed a concern at the lack of opportunities for viewing or participating in the creation of the contemporary visual arts, including sculpture and photography, and the low level of provision for experiencing contemporary art forms which appeal to young people -such as video or multi-media work. This is partly an outcome of the lack of facilities, venues and equipment which support this kind of work, and as such are issues that will also need to be addressed through the capital arts strategy. There is also an argument, however, for prioritising their development in future arts development programmes.

*"There are no writing groups, no photography, no dance, no film, and no arts development officer."*

The work of the County Arts Service and the local Library in promoting contemporary literature through the **BIG WRITING!** project provides an opportunity for the Borough Council to address the development of creative writing and literature performance locally. Writing can be a very satisfying and accessible art form for people who otherwise experience barriers in accessing the arts, and libraries are often very accessible cultural venues. The Arts Development Officer should continue to support the County's **BIG WRITING!** project, and could in addition look at ways of adding value to the project by establishing opportunities for participatory project work with targeted groups (e.g. young people, or a group of elderly people in one of the Borough's sheltered housing schemes).

Another artform that has been underdeveloped in the area is dance, and the Borough Council could explore the opportunities that exist for innovative dance projects, appealing particularly to young people, in collaboration with the County-funded **Motionhouse Dance Theatre** and **Warwickshire Youth Dance**. Finally, the absence of a cinema within the Borough means that there is likely to be a positive response to any new opportunities for developing film provision in the area, and the Arts Development Officer could investigate a project set up by the touring agency **Arts Alive in Shropshire and Herefordshire** to tour films in village halls and community centres (called **Flicks in the Sticks**).

### 3.5.10. ENVIRONMENTAL PUBLIC ART

There are a number of recent initiatives and schemes relating to the development of environmental public art within or adjacent to the Borough:

- ◆ the current **Totems** project in North Warwickshire, managed by the Borough Council and funded in the main through a Millennium Festival grant of £23,500, establishes a precedent for an imaginative project using public art in a rural context, and building on a partnership with a national agency, British Waterways;
- ◆ the Forward Planning and Economic Development sections within North Warwickshire Borough Council have been exploring the potential for using public art in the "Gateways" to rural settlements in the area;
- ◆ Staffordshire County Council have commissioned the development of a strategy for the involvement of artists within the A5 Corridor Landscape project;
- ◆ The Groundwork Trust, which has a national arts policy and a track-record in using public art imaginatively in their sustainable environmental development projects, is proposing to extend their Coventry operation to include North Warwickshire.

All of these initiatives provide a positive context for North Warwickshire Borough Council to include environmental and rural public art as a strand within its arts plan. The aim, within the first year or two of the plan, should be to identify and fundraise for potential public art development projects in a rural

context, which could operate as pilot projects to test out and establish good practice.

### 3.5.11. SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

One of the issues that has emerged from the review process, is the apparent low number of professional artists living in the area who are active in the community or in public art. There are undoubtedly far more arts practitioners living in North Warwickshire than are in contact with the local authority, since rural areas often attract artists as residents. However, it may be that they prefer to work in relative isolation, or else the infrequent opportunities for local engagement mean that they concentrate their professional activities outside the Borough. In either case, it is likely that an increased level of arts provision and activity in the Borough will encourage more arts practitioners to make contact.

*"It's about bringing artists in from the cold, and acknowledging that they exist, and making it possible for them to exist - not necessarily financial support, but recognition, to stop them retreating into their studios."*

There are also likely to be an increasing number of young people in the area with an interest in working in the arts, who perhaps have had an opportunity for involvement in arts projects at school, in youth centres, or in community projects. It is important that, in its arts strategy, the Borough Council gives some attention to the issue of developing local resources and local skills in professional arts and public art development so that, in time, increasing numbers of local people will have the skills and experience to benefit from employment opportunities in these areas.

The Borough Council should consider exploring, in partnership with the Area Community Education team, the establishment of an *Arts Apprentice* scheme, for local practising artists, or young people, wishing to develop the necessary skills and experience to work in community arts development or a public art context. A similar scheme has been developed by the Arts Development Officer at Bridgnorth District Council in Shropshire, and it would be valuable to liaise with that Authority to establish good practice.

### 3.5.12. AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT

The North Warwickshire Borough Council Arts Plan should include a number of strategies which address the issue of audience development. These will include a strategic approach to programming high quality professional arts within the Borough, in partnership with professional local and regional agencies such as ***Live and Local, Warwick Arts Society, Motionhouse Dance Theatre, Ikon Touring*** and ***Craftspace Touring***. It should also include the coordination of a strategic approach to arts marketing within the Borough, and it would be useful for the the Arts Development Officer to begin discussions with ***Arts Marketing Warwickshire*** to identify appropriate

developments within the Borough. An additional element of the process could include a longer-term partnership with a nearby regional venue (e.g. **Warwick Arts Centre** or **Belgrade Theatre** in Coventry) directed at the development of appropriate outreach projects in the area.

*"If an area has a reputation for having exciting arts provision, then it's attractive to new businesses coming in, and to people moving into the area to live. People don't want to live in a cultural desert."*

### 3.5.13. NETWORKS AND COMMUNICATION

Finally, it is important that all aspects of an arts development strategy for the Borough are strengthened by paying attention to local and regional networks and communication. A frequent cause of concern amongst those involved in the arts in the Borough is the lack of clear channels for communication, and the lack of coordination of available information relating to arts activities and arts development.

There are a number of networks at a county and regional level, membership of which will benefit the Council, including **Warwickshire Arts Development Officers Forum (WADOF)**. There is also scope for the Arts Development Officer to make an impact by improving local coordination and networking opportunities amongst groups within the Borough, which would help to develop a collaborative approach to local arts development.

*"As an artist in North Warwickshire, I feel very isolated - there's nothing in North Warwickshire in terms of a network. It's important to support local professional practitioners, to enable them to feed back into the community."*

One way to do this would be through the establishment of a new Arts Forum for North Warwickshire - building on the **Face to Face** forum developed within the past year - involving the amateur and voluntary sector, professional arts practitioners active in the area, and representatives of community groups involved in the arts. This would provide a positive working context for a range of other collaborative initiatives, including a joint approach to marketing, the development of a joint What's On for the area, and web-site development.

## **SECTION 4: POLICY & STRATEGY**

- 4.1. Introduction
- 4.2. Arts Policy Statement
- 4.3. Strategic Objectives
- 4.4. Recommendations
- 4.5. Action Plan



## 4. POLICY & STRATEGY

### 4.1. INTRODUCTION

The earlier sections of this report have concluded that North Warwickshire Borough Council has a current opportunity to benefit from, and build upon its previous investment into community arts development in its area, and the sustained support it has received from its partners at West Midlands Arts and the County Council.

The consultation and research that has taken place as part of the review has demonstrated many of the outstanding benefits at community level that have emerged from the Borough's previous engagement with arts development through the **Face to Face** project. It has also shown that there are active and supportive partners keen to continue working with the Borough Council to ensure that these benefits are consolidated and spread more widely.

In order for the Council to move forward from this point, there are some fundamental development processes it must engage in, to begin to construct the local infrastructure which will support sustainable arts development in the area. For these to be truly effective, there will need to be a recognition of this strategy, and an engagement with the opportunities it offers, at the most senior Member and Officer levels within the Council, and a recognition of the potential it offers for addressing the Council's corporate priorities.

If the arts and cultural development are seen as a minority part of a local authority's provision, somehow less relevant than the key concerns of social and economic regeneration, then they will fail to deliver their full potential. However, once they are seen as being part of the key concerns, and enabled by the Council in such a way that they address the main themes, then their capacity to transform and energise all that they touch will become evident. This is one of the fundamental lessons of "Best Value".

The tasks now in front of North Warwickshire Borough Council are to:

- ◆ agree a new arts policy and strategy which recognise the role of the arts in the delivery of its corporate objectives
- ◆ agree an action plan for implementation of the strategy which identifies clear goals and targets, timescale, monitoring mechanisms, and resources
- ◆ identify and allocate the necessary resources to implement the action plan.

As outlined above, in order to be effective and to meet the demands of the Best Value process, it is essential that the arts policy and strategy relate directly to the main corporate themes of North Warwickshire Borough Council. The Council is in a process of ongoing policy development, to meet the requirements of democratic renewal and Best Value, and in relation to the development of both a Leisure and Cultural Strategy and a Community Plan.

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However, there are a number of key themes which have been identified at both a corporate level, and within the Leisure Service Committee, which will need to inform the development of the Arts Policy and Strategy. The themes which have most relevance to a North Warwickshire Arts Plan are:

- ◆ **Community Development:** strengthening cohesion in communities through shared cultural experience, and empowering communities to play an active role in defining and delivering local aspirations
- ◆ **Sustainable Development:** encouraging the local development of skills and resources which support viable town centres and thriving rural areas
- ◆ **Environmental Development:** using creative skills to improve the quality of environment in towns and villages, and provide local distinctiveness
- ◆ **Social Inclusion:** identifying and minimising the barriers to participation in cultural opportunities, and using the arts to address the causes and effects of social exclusion within the Borough
- ◆ **Partnership Working:** ensuring best value service delivery of arts development through liaison and joint working with external partners

As well as ensuring that the North Warwickshire Borough Council Arts Policy and Strategy relate to the Council's own corporate strategy and key themes, it is equally important to identify the ways in which they will complement the strategies of its partners. If the proposed policy and strategy are endorsed, after appropriate consultation, by North Warwickshire Borough Council, it will be in a position to apply for a fixed-term funding partnership with West Midlands Arts. On that basis, it will be important to demonstrate the ways in which the strategy contributes to the following aims and objectives of WMA:

- ◆ **ACCESS:** To extend the audience for and participation in the arts
- ◆ **CREATIVE AMBITION:** To support the creation of new work of the highest possible standard
- ◆ **RESOURCES:** To increase resources available to the arts and the effective management of those resources
- ◆ **PROFILE:** To promote the social, educational and economic value of the arts.

Similarly Warwickshire County Council, with the resources of its Arts Service, LEA Arts team, and Area Community Education team, is a key partner in cultural planning and development in the Borough. The County Arts Service currently has a Service Plan which identifies its key objectives and the ways in which those tie in with County Council corporate objectives, and an Action Plan identifying development proposals:

**MISSION:** To increase the range and quality of opportunities in, and resources for, the arts for the people of Warwickshire

### **OBJECTIVES:**

- ◆ To provide the strategic direction for Warwickshire County Council's support for, and development of, the arts in Warwickshire

## NORTH WARWICKSHIRE ARTS PLAN

- ◆ To contribute to the development and delivery of Departmental and corporate services and policies, both within the Council and with relevant external agencies
- ◆ To enhance the range and quality of the arts, and arts expertise, available among Council staff and others working in the arts
- ◆ To attract, develop and sustain audiences for and participation in the arts
- ◆ To identify and secure financial and other investment into the arts from County Council and external sources

Finally, the proposed strategy has been developed to comply with basic principles of Best Value for North Warwickshire Borough Council. The rationale for North Warwickshire Borough Council investing in cultural development as an effective way of achieving its core aims has been clearly analysed. Consultation with local communities and with other partners has been at the heart of the review process, and continues to play an essential role in the implementation of the strategy. The recommendations within the Strategy and Action Plan identify the most appropriate agency for implementation of elements of the strategy, on the basis of both quality and effectiveness. And finally: monitoring, evaluation and review are identified as a key objective within the overall strategy.

*"It's about bringing the whole community together, involving everyone in the villages. And it's also about taking pride in where we live - revitalising the towns, and making a livelier, more appealing environment for ourselves."*

## 4.2. ARTS POLICY STATEMENT

It is recommended that North Warwickshire Borough Council adopts the following Mission Statement, as an expression of its corporate commitment to the importance of the arts:

**North Warwickshire Borough Council recognises that the arts contribute to the development of strong and inclusive communities and locally distinctive environments, and is therefore actively committed to ensuring opportunities for local cultural participation.**

## 4.3. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

### **Community Development and Social Inclusion:**

- ◆ extending the range and scope of cultural experiences accessible to local communities
- ◆ strengthening cohesion in communities through shared cultural experiences
- ◆ providing opportunities for social inclusion and integration through cultural participation
- ◆ providing opportunities for young people to develop creative skills

### **Environmental Development and Sustainability:**

- ◆ using creative skills to improve the quality of environment in towns and villages, and provide local distinctiveness
- ◆ encouraging the development of local skills and resources which empower communities
- ◆ ensuring the development of resources and infrastructure to sustain viable town centres and thriving rural areas

### **Implementation and Review:**

- ◆ Ensuring adequate resources and effective management and partnership arrangements for delivery of the arts plan
- ◆ ensuring best value service delivery of the arts plan through liaison and joint working with external partners
- ◆ establishing procedures for consultation, documentation, evaluation and review of the arts plan

## 4.4. RECOMMENDATIONS

### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION:

- ◆ ***extending the range and scope of cultural experiences accessible to local communities***

**Recommendation 1:** Establish service level agreements with professional arts agencies to increase the range and scale of professional arts programmes in the Borough

**Recommendation 2:** Address current gaps in artform provision in the area by prioritising the programming of visual arts, multi-media work, literature, dance and film

- ◆ ***strengthening cohesion in communities through shared cultural experiences***

**Recommendation 3:** Research, initiate and deliver innovative rural arts projects which build on local community celebrations

- ◆ ***providing opportunities for social inclusion and integration through cultural participation***

**Recommendation 4:** Work with internal and external partners to prioritise participatory arts projects which directly facilitate the inclusion and integration of socially excluded groups, particularly elderly people, disabled people, and people with learning disabilities and mental health problems

- ◆ ***providing opportunities for young people to develop creative skills***

**Recommendation 5:** Contribute to the support and development of the ***Warwickshire Youth Arts Network***

**Recommendation 6:** Work with a range of partners to increase arts provision in local schools and youth clubs

## ENVIRONMENTAL DEVELOPMENT & SUSTAINABILITY:

- ◆ ***using creative skills to improve the quality of environment in towns and villages, and provide local distinctiveness***

**Recommendation 7:** work with Borough Council Officers and local and regional partners, to research and establish opportunities for environmental and rural public art development

**Recommendation 8:** work with Borough Council officers and external partners to involve local communities in identifying public art projects as part of estate development

- ◆ ***encouraging the development of local skills and resources which empower communities***

**Recommendation 9:** work where appropriate with local partners, to set up a range of community arts training, skills-sharing, and arts apprentice schemes, working alongside experience professional artists on local arts projects

**Recommendation 10:** In conjunction with other officers and agencies, provide advice and support to local groups engaged in arts activities on funding and income-generation opportunities

- ◆ ***ensuring the development of resources and infrastructure to sustain viable town centres and thriving rural areas***

**Recommendation 11:** Commission an audit of arts venues and facilities in the Borough, and a strategy for capital arts development

**Recommendation 12:** Investigate a range of audience development initiatives, to build and sustain audiences for local arts programmes

## IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW:

◆ ***Ensuring adequate resources and effective management and partnership arrangements for delivery of the arts plan***

**Recommendation 13:** Establish a post of Arts Development Officer at North Warwickshire Borough Council

**Recommendation 14:** Establish a new Arts Development Budget to enable the implementation of the arts development programme

**Recommendation 15:** Work towards the development of a fixed term funding agreement with West Midlands Arts from April 2001

**Recommendation 16:** Undertake fundraising to attract inward investment into the arts development programme in the Borough

◆ ***ensuring best value service delivery of the arts plan through liaison and joint working with external partners***

**Recommendation 17:** Re-allocate a proportion of the resources used for grant-aiding professional arts agencies from the *Financial Assistance to Outside Organisations* budget into the arts development budget, in order to establish service level agreements and monitoring procedures for use of grant aid

**Recommendation 18:** Ensure active participation in a range of local and regional networks and forums (e.g. Warwickshire Arts Development Officers Forum)

**Recommendation 19:** Work towards the development of updated databases, a coordinated local What's On, and an arts web-site for the area

◆ ***establishing procedures for consultation, documentation, evaluation and review of the arts plan***

**Recommendation 20:** Commission the publication and distribution of documentation of the *Face to Face* project work

**Recommendation 21:** Undertake evaluation and documentation of all project work carried out as part of new arts development programme

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**Recommendation 22:** Work towards the establishment of an inclusive local Arts Forum

**Recommendation 23:** Ensure that consultative procedures are implemented in all aspects of initiation, development and delivery of the arts development programme and the Arts Plan

**Recommendation 24:** Establish procedures for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the implementation of the Arts Plan.

*"I just love working in the community. It's a very warm, very supportive community."*



## 4.5. ACTION PLAN

TIMESCALE	NWBC Obj	WMA Obj	ACTION/TASK	OUTCOMES/ PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT	RESOURCES
August - Sept 2000	23	10,12	Distribute draft Arts Plan for consultation, develop and adopt final Arts Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> North Warwickshire Arts Plan agreed and adopted</li> </ul>	Officer & Consultant time
Aug - Dec 2000	13	10,11 12	Establish post of Arts Development Officer, and undertake recruitment process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> ADO in post</li> </ul>	Recruitment & salary costs
Aug - Dec 2000	14,17	10,11	Create new Arts Development Budget, including re-allocation from FAOO budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> New budget created to support work of ADO</li> </ul>	£12,000 new budget costs
Sept - Dec 2000	20	4,5,8 9	Commission the publication/distribution of <b>Face to Face</b> documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Documentation completed</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Documentation published &amp; distributed locally &amp; regionally</li> </ul>	Documentation & Distribution costs: £5000
Sept 2000 - Mar 2001	15	10	Negotiate/establish funding agreement with West Midlands Arts to be operative from April 2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Funding Agreement finalised</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Match-funding raised from WMA</li> </ul>	£10,000 of Dev Budget to match WMA funding
Sept 2000 - Mar 2001	11	1,2,3	Commission audit of venues & strategy for capital arts development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Audit/strategy completed</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Development options identified &amp; actioned</li> </ul>	£5 - £6,000 from Development Budget
Dec 2000 - Apr 2001	1,2	1,2,3	Negotiate service level agreements with professional arts agencies to increase arts programmes in Borough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> SLA's agreed</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Number of annual performances/events</li> </ul>	Grants from the Development Budget
Dec 2000 onwards	18	10,11	ADO to establish participation in local & regional networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Membership of networks</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Number of meetings attended</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Enhanced level of networking, and information available locally</li> </ul>	Officer time
Dec 2000 onwards	22	10,11	Work towards establishment and maintenance of local Arts Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Arts Forum established</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Quarterly meetings held</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Attendance levels at Forum</li> </ul>	Officer time
Dec 2000 onwards	19	10,11	Work on development of updated databases & coordinated local What's On	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Databases updated &amp; accessed</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> What's On distributed</li> </ul>	Officer time, publication &

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					distribution costs
Dec 2000 onwards	16	10,11	Ongoing fundraising from external sources towards arts development programme	<input type="checkbox"/> Level of new funds raised	Officer time, matching funds from dev. budget
Dec 2000 - Apr 2001	5	3,4,5	Liaison with other partners in county to establish nature and level of support to <b>Warwickshire Youth Arts Network</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> North Warwickshire Borough Council established as partner in <b>WYAN</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Level/range of arts provision for young people in Borough increased	Funding from Development Budget
Dec 2000 - Apr 2001	8	3,4,5 7,8 13	Liaise with Tenant Participation Officer to establish appropriate arts project as part of estate development	<input type="checkbox"/> Project identified & established <input type="checkbox"/> Successful achievement of project aims	Funding from Development Budget
April 2001 onwards	11	2,10 11	Identify priorities for capital development and establish fundraising strategy	<input type="checkbox"/> Level of capital investment and development achieved	Potential capital expenditure, plus inward investment
April 2001 onwards	10	11	Liaise with other officers & agencies on delivery of funding advice & support to local groups	<input type="checkbox"/> Number of advice sessions & funding roadshows <input type="checkbox"/> Levels of new funds raised	Officer time
April 2001 onwards	21	8,9	Ensure effective evaluation/documentation of all arts development projects	<input type="checkbox"/> Archive of documentation developed	Officer time, some documentation costs
Apr - Dec 2001	3	3,5,6 7,13	Liaise with <b>Live and Local</b> and other agencies on development of appropriate rural arts projects	<input type="checkbox"/> Projects established	Project costs from development budget
Apr - Dec 2001	4	3,4,5 6,7, 13	Liaise with Borough Council officers and external partners on identification and establishment of appropriate projects	<input type="checkbox"/> Projects established	Project costs from development budget
Apr - Dec 2001	6	4,5	Liaise with Community Education and other partners on establishment of projects	<input type="checkbox"/> Projects established	Project costs from development budget
Apr - Dec 2001	7	3,4,5 6,7,	Liaise with Borough Council officers and external partners on identification and	<input type="checkbox"/> Projects established	Project costs from development budget

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		13	establishment of appropriate projects		
Apr - Dec 2001	8	3,4,5 6,7, 13	Liaise with Borough Council officers and external partners on identification and establishment of appropriate projects	<input type="checkbox"/> Projects established	Project costs from development budget
Sept 2001 - Mar 2002	21,23 24	8,9, 10	Consult with partners on evaluation and review of arts development programme	<input type="checkbox"/> Evaluation completed <input type="checkbox"/> New project opportunities identified for April 2002 onwards	Officer time
Dec 2001 - Mar 2002	1,2	1,2,3	Liaise with professional arts agencies to review Service Level Agreements	<input type="checkbox"/> New SLA's agreed <input type="checkbox"/> Numbers of annual performances/events	Officer time, Grants from development budget
Dec 2001 - Mar 2002	15	10	Liaise with West Midlands Arts to review and update funding agreement	<input type="checkbox"/> Funding agreement ratified	Officer time, development budget
Dec 2001 - Mar 2002	3,4,6, 7,8	3,4,5 6,7, 13	Liaise with Borough Council officers and external partners on identification and establishment of appropriate projects	<input type="checkbox"/> Projects established	Project costs from development budget
Apr - Sept 2002	12	1,3,5, 11	Liaise with <b>Arts Marketing Warwickshire</b> and other partners to identify audience development strategies for the area	<input type="checkbox"/> Strategy developed and implemented <input type="checkbox"/> Audience figures	Project costs from development budget
Apr - Sept 2002	9	9,10, 11	Liaise with Community Education and other partners on development and establishment of skills development opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/> Projects established <input type="checkbox"/> Number of trained arts workers available in area	Project costs from development budget
Apr - Sept 2002	19	10,11	Update databases, and work on development of arts website for area	<input type="checkbox"/> Databases updated/accessed <input type="checkbox"/> Website set up/accessed	Officer time + project costs from development budget
Sept 2002 - Mar 2003	21,23 24	8,9, 10	Consult with partners on evaluation and review of arts development programme and Arts Plan	<input type="checkbox"/> Evaluation completed <input type="checkbox"/> New projects identified for April 2003 onwards	Officer time

## **SECTION 5: APPENDICES**

- A. Review Brief
- B. List of People Consulted
- C. Documentation
- D. Arts Project Work 1994 - 2000

**APPENDIX A:  
NORTH WARWICKSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL  
NORTH WARWICKSHIRE ARTS POLICY AND STRATEGY  
CONSULTANTS BRIEF**

**The Client**

The Client will be North Warwickshire Leisure Services. There will, however, be close co-operation and communication with representatives of West Midlands Arts, in recognition of its joint funding and development of this commission.

**Context**

See attached report.

**The Commission**

- a) Having regard to the relevant policies and priorities of the Borough Council, Warwickshire County Council and West Midlands Arts, to assess the appropriateness of current forms and levels of arts service provision and to make recommendations on the progression of this aspect of the Leisure Service, in particular through:
  - i. Direct arts development initiatives;
  - ii. Potential partnerships with other agencies; and,
  - iii. Support for, for example, local voluntary arts organisations and/ or the commissioning of professional arts provision and appropriate forms of assistance for local artists.
- b) To examine the nature of existing relationships between the Borough Council and those other agencies, organisations and groups involved in arts service provision within and, where appropriate, adjacent to North Warwickshire, and to assess their impact on the development of local arts provision.
- c) In view of the foregoing, to establish a clear focus and role for the Borough Council in the development and support of the arts in North Warwickshire over the next five years, and to make recommendations for the production of a strategic arts plan for the area.
- d) To identify the resource implications of any recommendations made in respect of a) to c) above, together with those potential sources of funding which could assist in supporting the implementation of any proposed strategic arts plan.

**The Brief**

- a) The consultant will be expected to identify and develop appropriate market research methodologies and means to undertake the above commission. The techniques employed should be set in the context of anticipated response rates.
- b) The consultant will investigate and identify existing levels of arts facility and community arts service provision, current activity and resource application by all

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appropriate public, private and voluntary sector agencies, including by way of a mapping exercise; benchmark such with relevant county, regional and national organisations, and make comparisons with appropriate standards, guidelines and codes of practice.

- c) The consultant will be expected to ascertain the nature, scale and appropriateness of current arts service provision made by the Borough Council, to identify any potential shortfalls or opportunities to revise the balance of existing provision, and thereafter to make recommendations regarding if, and how, that provision should continue, be amended, expanded or discontinued.
- d) In consideration of the above research findings, to make recommendations to the Borough Council regarding the establishment of an effective, appropriate and coherent approach to the development and support of the arts across North Warwickshire. These recommendations should include the provision of a framework for the production of a strategic arts plan for the Borough, which should complement the policies, priorities and strategies of the County Council, West Midlands Arts and any other significant organisations.
- e) The consultant will be expected to clearly and concisely document all appropriate findings and conclusions, and produce a full report which includes recommendations to the Borough Council on its policies for the future development of the arts, its own role in this process, potential partnerships and funding arrangements.
- f) The Client will make available to the consultant any relevant material concerning leisure and cultural provision in North Warwickshire. In addition, the consultant will have reasonable access for discussion with appropriate officers from the Client organisation.
- g) For the duration of the commission, the lead contact for the Client will be the Borough Council's Leisure Services Officer, or his nominated representative, with whom the consultant will be expected to liaise at all stages of the undertaking, and work closely once the key issues have been established and agreed.

### **The Report**

The consultant's work will include the production of a detailed report, which highlights recommendations for the development of the arts-related policies and priorities of the Borough Council, and incorporates the framework of a strategic arts plan for the area.

A presentation to the Client of the content of the report may be required. The presentation will be made at the discretion of the Borough Council's Leisure Services Officer, following consultation with West Midlands Arts. A further presentation to the Borough Council's Leisure Services Committee may also be required. No additional charge will be payable in respect of any presentation.

The consultant should supply six copies of the completed report (one of which should be unbound and one supplied on disc in Windows '95/ '97 format), together with an "executive summary" of its conclusions and recommendations.

All information collected within the commission process shall become the property of North Warwickshire Borough Council.

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### **Timescale**

The commission will commence as soon as possible. It is expected that the consultant will outline a programme of work and associated timescale during an initial presentation to the Client. An indicative timetable, however, is identified below on which comment is invited. Interested parties should note that the date for reporting to the Borough Council's Leisure Services Committee (24 July 2000) is fixed.

### **Anticipated Timetable**

Send Tenders	10 March 2000
Tenders Returned by	22 March 2000
Shortlist Consultants	23 March 2000
Interview and Appoint Consultants	3 April 2000
Undertake Commission	April/May 2000
Receive Draft Strategic Arts Plan by	9 June 2000
Complete Consultation by	30 June 2000
Report to Leisure Services Committee	24 July 2000

### **The Consultant**

Interested parties who feel that they are able to successfully undertake the commission as outlined should submit a brief written proposal on the methodology (including forms of consultation) to be employed, and provide an indication of their required all-inclusive fee. Up to £6,000 is available to fund this commission. Consultants submitting a proposal should also identify the extent and nature of any particular support they anticipate being required of the Client.

Following receipt of initial proposals, a select list of consultants will be invited to give a more detailed presentation to a Client group. The successful consultant will then be appointed on a fixed fee (including expenses) basis.

Two copies of initial proposals should be submitted to:

Mr A Freeman, Leisure Services Officer, North Warwickshire Borough Council  
The Council House, South Street  
Atherstone, Warwickshire, CV9 1BD  
E-mail: [afreeman@northwarks.gov.uk](mailto:afreeman@northwarks.gov.uk)

Proposals should be received no later than 22 March 2000  
Interviews will be held at the above address on 3 April 2000

All consultants submitting a proposal should provide the relevant details of at least two organisations for which they have worked in the last six months, with the names of representatives of those organisations from whom the Client may seek references.

## APPENDIX B: CONTACTS LIST

NAME	TITLE/ORGANISATION
<b>NORTH WARWICKSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL</b>	
Cllr Les Forsyth	Chairman of Leisure Services Committee
Cllr Roy Robinson	Vice-Chairman of Leisure Services Committee
Cllr Deana Doyle	Vice-Chair of Best Value Sub-Committee
Cllr Peter Fowler	Shadow Chairman of Leisure Services Committee
Cllr Richard Freer	Member of Leisure Services Committee
Cllr Bena Stuart	Member of Planning and Development Committee
Cllr Adrian Edgington	Vice-Chairman of Environment and Health Committee
Jerry Hutchinson	Chief Executive
Peter Oliver	Director of Administration
Alan Freeman	Leisure Services Officer
Simon Powell	Principal Leisure Officer
Gordon Short	Leisure Services Development Services Manager
Barry McLoughlin	Leisure Facilities Manager
Jaki Douglas	Leisure Services Partnership and Community Officer
Clare Jolly	Community Leisure Development Officer
Claire Lodge	Atherstone Leisure Complex Manager
Jan Humble	Boroughcare and Communications Manager
Hilary Goodreid	Principal Economic Development Officer
Judith Etchells-Sturley	Senior Planning and Economic Development Officer
Chris Jones	Building Services Officer
Julie Williams	Local Agenda 21 Coordinator
Angela Banks	Forward Planning Officer
Angela Coates	Principal Housing Management Officer
Amanda Tonks	Committee Administrator
Steve Harris	<b>Face to Face</b> Fieldworker
<b>WARWICKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL</b>	
Clare Hudson	Principal Arts Officer
Don Foster	Head of Social and Community Planning
Biddy Roberts	Manager: Artists in Warwickshire Education
Kim Herring	Reader Development Officer, Atherstone Library
Mohammed Jamil	Area Community Education Officer
<b>WEST MIDLANDS ARTS</b>	
Philippa Cross	Policy & Resources Officer
Emma Hughes	Policy & Resources Officer



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Diana Walton	Policy & Resources Officer: Learning & The Arts
Anouk Perinpanayagam	Performing Arts Officer (Dance)
Stephanie Edmonds	Combined Arts Officer

### **OTHERS CONSULTED**

Vanessa Oakes	Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council: Arts Development Officer
Katy Daniels	North West Leicestershire District Council: Arts Development Officer
Chris Ebberr	North Shropshire District Council
John Hicks	Warwickshire Rural Community Council: Director
Mavis Wilkins	Warwickshire Rural Community Council: Village Halls Advisor
Peter Wakefield	Warwickshire Rural Community Council: Vital Villages Officer
Mavis Bassett	North Warwickshire CVS: Grass Routes Project Officer
Suzanne Robey	North Warwickshire CVS: Grass Routes Information Officer
William Clemmie	Warwickshire Association of Youth Clubs: Director
Rev Philip Wells	Polesworth Abbey
David O'Reilly	Middleton Hall: Business Development Manager
Maria Pawliw	Edwin Starr School of Performing Arts: Executive Director
Denise Lewis	Coleshill Youth Club
Helen Rowley	Grendon Women's Institute
Judy Vero	Atherstone Civic Society
Justin Sanders	Individual Artist
Shiv Ressel	Queen Elizabeth School: Head of Art
Lorna Dirveiks	White Hart Heritage Centre
June Maidens	Atherstone Theatre Workshop
Doreen Parkinson	Atherstone Dramatic Society
Sue Wallace	Coleshill Drama Group
Janet Scales	Atherstone Arts Circle
Eileen Barrs	North Warwickshire Arts
Susan Moore	Individual Artist
June Fox	Ansley Common Over 50's Group
Joyce Jackson	Atherstone Arts Circle
Sam Wilkinson	Freelance Public Art Consultant (A5 Project)
Andrew Tims	Ikon Gallery : Information Officer
Penny Vigurs	Arts Marketing Warwickshire
John Laidlaw	Live and Local: Coordinator
Richard Phillips	Warwick Arts Society: Director
Stella Hall	Warwick Arts Centre: Director
Louise Richards	Motionhouse Dance Theatre: Executive Director

## APPENDIX C: DOCUMENTATION

1. North Warwickshire Borough Council Corporate Plan 2000-2001
2. North Warwickshire Leisure Opportunities Audit: *Artservice/S. Abbot Associates* 1995
3. North Warwickshire Leisure Strategy 1993 - 1998: North Warwickshire Leisure Services
4. North Warwickshire Tourism Strategy 1998 - 2003: Consultation Draft Report: Heart of England Tourist Board Jan 1998
5. North Warwickshire Borough Council Tourism & Economic Development Strategy & Action Plan 2000 - 2002
6. North Warwickshire Borough Council Leisure Services Committee Papers May/Sept 96, July/Sept 98, Jan/Mar/Jun/Nov 99, Jan/March/May 2000
7. *Putting North Warwickshire First*. North Warwickshire Borough Council's Best Value Performance Plan - 2000/2001
8. North Warwickshire Borough Council Equal Opportunities Policy Employment Practices - Personnel June 1998
9. *Making North Warwickshire A Safer Place* - North Warwickshire Borough Council 1999
10. North Warwickshire Borough Council Citizen's Panel Attitudes & Opinions Survey: Draft Summary Report - BMG April 2000
11. North Warwickshire Heritage & Cultural Centre and/or Interpretation Points - Feasibility Study: L & R Consulting May 1999
12. North Warwickshire Borough Council Housing Strategy - 1999
13. North Warwickshire Local Plan Review: Draft Leisure & Culture Issues Paper - Aug 2000
14. North Warwickshire Borough Council: Guide to Services and Divisions
15. North Warwickshire Borough Council Leisure Services Division Staff Structure
16. North Warwickshire Borough Council Directorate & Committee Structure
17. North Warwickshire Borough Council Best Value Pilot Service Review of Arts Facilities & Services: Background Information & Questionnaire Analysis
18. North Warwickshire Borough Council Leisure Services - Financial Assistance to Outside Organisations: Information & Application Form
19. North Talk: North Warwickshire Borough Council Newsletter - Winter 1999
20. *Seeing is Believing* - How the Audit Commission will carry out best value inspections in England: Audit Commission February 2000
21. Atherstone Leisure Complex Programmes
22. *Leisure Unlimited*: Leaflets & Programmes
23. RECHAR: North Warwickshire Mining Project - Rural Artworks March 1966
24. **Face to Face** Phase Two Business Plan
25. **Face to Face** Project Leaflets/Programmes
26. *Totems*: The North Warwickshire Millennium Waterways Project information
27. *Evaluation of Local Authority Arts Policies: A Report by Artservice for the Arts Council of England* - Arts Council of England February 1998
28. *Capital Investment in the West Midlands* - Development Priorities 1998 - 2005: West Midlands Arts Feb 1998
29. Statement of Equal Opportunities - Policy and Intent: West Midlands Arts April 1996
30. Public Art Policy and Strategy - West Midlands Arts June 1999
31. Policy for Learning and the Arts - West Midlands Arts 1999
32. West Midlands Arts Corporate Plan Summary 1998 - 2002
33. *Out in the Open - Arts and Tourism in the West Midlands*: West Midlands Arts /Heart of

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England Tourist Board

34. West Midlands Arts: Annual Report & Accounts 1998- 99
35. West Midlands Arts Regional Arts Lottery Programme Information Pack July 2000
36. Capital Programme Two: Statement of Intent and Invitation to Comment - Arts Council of England December 1999
37. The Arts Capital Programme Information Sheet: West Midlands Arts July 2000
38. *Not Just Shakespeare? The Warwickshire Arts Plan*: Adrian Litvinoff November 1990
39. An Arts Review and Planning Study for Warwickshire - Draft: Systematics Sept 1997
40. Warwickshire County Council - Libraries & Heritage Service Plan 2000 - 2001
41. Warwickshire County Council - Arts Service Plan 2000 - 2001
42. North Warwickshire Area Plan 1998 - 2001: Community Education Service
43. Warwickshire County Council - Mapping of Capital Arts Facilities and Lottery Successes: Arts Marketing Warwickshire Mar 1999
44. Grant Criteria/Application Form 1999/2000: Warwickshire County Council Arts Service
45. Performance Indicators for County Arts Service & its Key Grant Aid Clients
46. Guidance on Local Authority Capital Arts Priorities for Warwickshire 99/00: County Arts Service
47. Warwickshire County Council Public Art Policy & Criteria for Allocation of Funds 1999 - 2002: County Arts Service
48. Cascade Issues 2,3,4,5: Arts Information for Warwickshire: County Arts Service
49. *Our County 1998 - 2001: Building a People's Warwickshire*: Warwickshire C.C.
50. *Economic Profile 2000: North Warwickshire District* - Warwickshire County Council
51. *The Way Forward: A Policy for Young People*: Warwickshire C.C. September 1996
52. *North Warwickshire Mining Villages Regeneration Project*. Final Report for North Warwickshire Community Partnership - MTL December 1999
53. Warwickshire Association of Youth Clubs - Information Pack
54. *Halls Fit For The Millennium?: A snapshot of Warwickshire at the turn of the Century*: Warwickshire Rural Community Council October 1999
55. *Vital Villages Information Pack*: Warwickshire & Worcestershire Rural Partnership 2000
56. Arts Marketing Warwickshire Newsletters
57. Audience Development in Rural Areas: A Review of Best Practice - Arts Marketing Warwickshire Autumn 1995
58. Arts Express - Reaching Audiences in Rural North Warwickshire: Arts Marketing Warwickshire July 1999
59. Live and Local - Outside: A4E Project Summary
60. Live and Local Business Plan 1997 - 2000
61. Motionhouse Dance Theatre - information pack and project reports
62. *Rethinking the Road: A Public Art Strategy for the A5*: Hazel Colquhoun & Samantha Wilkinson
63. North West Leicestershire District Council: Arts Development Strategy 1999/2004
64. North Warwickshire Arts Council Newsletters Sept 96 - April 99
65. Atherstone Bugle April 2000
66. Grapevine - Whats On in and around Atherstone: May 2000
67. Atherstone Town Trail - Atherstone Town Council
68. Disnews: Quarterly Newsletter of North Warwickshire D.I.A.L January 2000
69. Directions: Newsletter for Disabled People - Rowan Organisation Spring 2000

## APPENDIX D: ARTS DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS 1994-2000

### RURAL ARTS FIELDWORK PROJECTS 1994 - 1996:

1. **VIDEO SCREENING:** two such events were organised in conjunction with the Rural Media Company: one with Coleshill Youth Centre and Coleshill Secondary School; the other through Warwickshire Careers Service Limited's Double Take project.
2. **SKYLIGHT CIRCUS:** skills training was provided for local youth workers, whilst workshops were organised for youth groups in Atherstone, Coleshill, Kingsbury and Polesworth.
3. **VIDEO PROJECT TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY:** run in conjunction with the Arley Know How Video Box scheme and North Warwickshire College.
4. **PLAYSCHEME TRAINING:** Arts workshops for Leisure Services playscheme staff, organised by Playtrain.
5. **ATHERSTONE YARDS:** video and photographic documentation of the V.E. day celebrations in North Warwickshire, as well as public performances by Beavers Arts. The Yards project generated considerable community involvement.
6. **BUNTINGS PROJECTS:** the creation of buntings by local schools, youth and community groups organised through workshops and training days led by Bostin Arts. The buntings were a focus of attention in Atherstone over the V.E. weekend, and again at Christmas.
7. **MASK-MAKING WORKSHOPS:** organised in cooperation with Atherstone Theatre Workshop, and culminating in a production of "*Seeing is Believing*". A long-term skills development programme has now been planned within the group.
8. **COLESHILL VIDEO PROJECT:** training for youth workers and video skills workshops for members of the local Youth Club. The project will, over time, address a number of equity and social issues.
9. **IMAGES OF NORTH WARWICKSHIRE - A COMMUNITY CALENDAR:** a celebration of life in North Warwickshire, with images produced by local people/groups. The calendar will be launched at this year's (Visual) Arts Festival to be held in Coleshill this September.
10. **THE MINING PROJECT:** a complex, highly innovative research, reminiscence and arts production to be run throughout North Warwickshire in conjunction with mining communities and professional arts organisations.
11. **COMMUNITY RESOURCE PACK:** the collation of information which will be of relevance to any organisation undertaking an arts project.
12. **BRACEBRIDGE COURT:** advice and guidance was given to the Project Coordinator, who is keen to develop a writing workshops for centre clients.

**FACE TO FACE PROJECTS: PHASE ONE 1997 - 1999**

1. **MANCETTER STAY AND PLAY INSTALLATION:** creation of installation by the parents and toddlers for their meeting space.
2. **STORM THEATRE "FRONT ROOM TOUR":** Work with groups of women in North Warwickshire, which culminated in the "Secret Words" exhibition in local libraries.
3. **THE ATHERSTONE MURAL "WE ARE HERE":** a large mural etched into black tiles in the centre of Atherstone depicting the town's heritage.
4. **POLESWORTH HIGH SCHOOL "MINING FOR ARTS DAY":** 125 young people, ten ex-miners, seven community artists, one day.
5. **RIDGE LANE DROP IN "FACE VALUE":** Installation created by young people depicting themselves for their weekly drop-in meeting space.
6. **THE GRENDON/BADDESLEY TAPESTRY:** Women from Grendon WI creating a large tapestry based on local images, which will include a contribution (at least one stitch!) from all members of the community.
7. **ATHERSTONE THEATRE WORKSHOP "UNDERWORLD":** Physical Theatre piece by young people performed at the North Warwickshire Arts Festival.
8. **ATHERSTONE ARTS CIRCLE "EVIDENCE":** Painting of watercolours depicting local evidence of past mining industry.
9. **TAKE A BREAK "SUMMER ARTS DAYS":** Three days of intensive arts activities in Dordon for young people with special educational needs.
10. **STEVE TAYTON AND THE ROLLS ROYCE (COVENTRY) BAND "JAZZ AND BRASS":** Original music composed by Arley-based saxophonist for jazz quartet and brass band.
11. **THE MENCAP/GATEWAY "ARTS POSSE":** Creation of an integrated arts based club/company initially to create a multi-media arts piece.
12. **"MIXING UP A STORM":** DJ'ing Mixing and Dance Music - one full day of Dex training and related technology for young adults.
13. **THE NORTH WARWICKSHIRE COMMUNITY PLAY "HARD MEN":** A community play for North Warwickshire based on the memories of ex-miners.
14. **ANSLEY COMMON OVER 50'S FRIENDSHIP CLUB "LIKE IT WAS YESTERDAY":** A celebration in sound and pictures of the lives of nine women residents of Ansley Common.
15. **BRONWYN TWIGGER "LUCY":** Professional help for a Baddesley unpublished novelist.
16. **DORDON PRIMARY SCHOOL "WHERE DID YOU COME FROM?":** Music, dance and theatre piece depicting Dordon in the 1950's.

**FACE TO FACE PROJECTS PHASE 2: 1999 - 2000**

1. **COLESHILL ARTS MARKET:** An introductory day into phase two in the West of the Borough.
2. **KINGSBURY WATER PARK "MAHARAJA'S BANQUET":** One day event of Asian cooking and storytelling in partnership with Live and Local.
3. **COLESHILL "TAKE A BREAK":** One-day drama and visual art workshop with young people with special educational needs.
4. **ANSLEY COMMON OVER 50'S FRIENDSHIP CLUB "77 SUNSET STRIP":** An original piece of drama by Vanessa Oakes. Toured five venues in North Warwickshire.
5. **ANSLEY COMMON OVER 50'S FRIENDSHIP CLUB "THE COMMONERS' STRATFORD TRIP":** Visit to performance at The Other Place, Stratford.
6. **ATHERSTONE MEMORIAL HALL "ALISHA'S SPACE":** Managing a public art space and creation of a series of murals with local groups.
7. **COLESHILL YOUTH CLUB "DRAMA GROUP":** Preparation of performance piece for video involving weekend residency in Banbury, Oxon.
8. **REACH FOR THE SKY MUSIC THEATRE GROUP "STARRY MESSENGER" IN POLESWORTH ABBEY :** Preparation, rehearsals, technical assistance for performance of original musical theatre piece by Dordon resident.
9. **ATHERSTONE HERITAGE CENTRE "CHARLES WILLS WORKSHOP":** One-day portrait workshop inspired by paintings of former local artist.
10. **JUSTIN SANDERS PRINTMAKING WORKSHOPS - WHITE HART CENTRE:** Three days of workshops with separate groups in conjunction with Justin's one-man exhibition.
11. **ATHERSTONE CHORALE "SINGING WORKSHOP":** One day singing workshop with music from around the world.



**WARWICKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

# **ARTS POLICY**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Warwickshire County Council produced its first Arts Plan, 'Not just Shakespeare' in 1990. This was reviewed in 1997 by the consultants Systematics. Since then the approach to the delivery of local, regional and national priorities has been increasingly cross-cutting and cross-agency. This is shown through the introduction of Community Plans and the more subject-specific Strategies such as those for Community Safety, Social Inclusion, Race Equality and Culture. This Policy recognises the role arts should and does play in the delivery of these plans and the need to work in partnership. It also recognises and takes advantage of the wealth of consultation already taken place to create many of these strategies.

## **NATIONAL BACKGROUND**

Warwickshire County Council's relationship with Arts Council England West Midlands has been positive and reciprocal. Since 2003, Warwickshire County Council has been a part of the sub-regional partnership (along with Warwickshire's Districts and Boroughs and the unitary authorities of Solihull and Coventry) with the Arts Council.

For the Arts in Education, the development of the National Curriculum since the 1980s has included Art and Music as separate subjects outside the core curriculum, and placed Drama and Dance as parts of English and Physical Education respectively. New Technologies now features as cross-curricular skills across the whole curriculum. This subject-centred approach tended to fragment the role of creativity in the curriculum. Some of the dangers in this trend are being nationally recognised by current initiatives in the funding and profile of Music, the importance attached to Creative Partnerships and the definitions of creativity across the curriculum. Increased governmental commitment to the funding and recognition of Music Services came in 1999 with an increase in the LEA Standards Fund for Music.



## THE WARWICKSHIRE CONTEXT

Staff and systems for delivering arts activity and development in the County Council are:

**\* Arts Zone**

Delivering creative approaches to learning across the school curriculum and beyond

**\* County Arts Service**

Delivering support for professional and community arts activity and strategic arts development projects

**\* County Music Service**

Delivering music making opportunities for young people in schools and in the community

The Arts is used increasingly across Warwickshire County Council as a whole as a vehicle, a tool and end in itself. Regeneration projects use the arts to develop local communities. Libraries and Museums use the Arts in the delivery of their day to day work and outreach activities. Warwickshire Arts Week, led by County Arts and with support from all Districts and Boroughs, helps artists and craftspeople to increase their local profile and income, linking to local and regional Economic Development aims. Grant aid for the support of professional and voluntary arts organisations, however, has not increased in recent years and was reduced significantly in 2002/03 as part of the departmental budget settlement.

The response to the often-threatening background for the status of the Arts in education has been more positive in Warwickshire than many other local authorities. For over 10 years the county has had a specialist unit placing artists in schools; its commitment to music provision in schools is broadening to provide opportunities in the local community; since 1999 the LEA Arts Zone has been set up to raise the level of advocacy for and awareness of the quality and range of arts work in the school curriculum and beyond. The LEA has placed creativity and culture firmly on its agenda for EDP, Strategic Plan and for events with a national profile. In addition the Warwickshire Youth Arts Network seeks to give coherence to the programme of young people's creative work across a wide range of departments and settings.

Nearly all District and Borough Councils in Warwickshire have an Arts Officer post. This recognition of the role of the arts can only support the local infrastructure and increase the need for partnership liaison and activity.

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

***Warwickshire County Council aims to develop access to and quality of the arts for the people of Warwickshire.***

Warwickshire County Council recognises the contribution of the arts and creativity to:

- ❖ community development
- ❖ personal development & enjoyment
- ❖ economic development
- ❖ creative thinking, inspiration & motivation
- ❖ the environment
- ❖ social inclusion
- ❖ health
- ❖ cultural awareness

## **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

Warwickshire County Council will address the following aims in the delivery of arts provision:

### **Resources**

- ensure maximum benefit for the arts from internal and external resources
- work in partnership to ensure efficient spread of resources and activity in the county
- work towards sustainable activity and a secure infrastructure for the arts

### **Access**

- work to narrow the inequalities in access to arts provision in the county
- create and support new opportunities for people to participate in arts activity
- engage with non-arts organisations and voluntary groups to widen access to arts activity
- promote the celebration and understanding of all cultural traditions

### **Quality (fitness for purpose)**

- encourage the use of appropriate professional artists in schools and community settings
- encourage training and promotional initiatives to support arts activity
- promote and learn from the effective evaluation of arts activity including measuring qualitative as well as quantitative outputs
- contribute to the raising of standards of achievement & attainment in the arts and across all learning

## **MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

The delivery of these aims and objectives will be monitored and reviewed through the Service Plans of each of the deliverers (see The Warwickshire Context). All 3 WCC Arts deliverers have set Performance Indicators in both quantity and quality.

## COUNTY ARTS SERVICE PRIORITIES

This section of the Plan is specific to the County Arts Service, based in the Adult, Health & Community Services Directorate. The County Arts Service will prioritise the following areas when allocating staff time and financial resources in the annual Service Plan. These priorities are linked to the themes of the County Strategic Plan.

<b>CORPORATE THEME</b>	<b>COUNTY ARTS SERVICE PRIORITY</b>	<b>PARTNERS</b>
Information & Access to Services	1a) Provision of relevant, up-to-date information electronically and in print	Districts & Boroughs, ACE
	1b) Promotion of information	Libraries, voluntary groups
	1c) Broadening geographical and demographic spread of arts opportunities	Professional and voluntary arts sector
Education and Lifelong Learning	2a) Support for training	HR, ACE, Districts & Boroughs,
	2b) Creation of arts training programmes	Districts & Boroughs, Children, Young People & Family Services
Economy and Employment	3a) Promotion of Creative Industries	Economic Development (E&E), Districts & Boroughs, Artist Groups & professional arts sector, Tourism sector, AWM
	3b) Maximising resources to support Arts Plan aims & objectives	ACE, AWM, Professional and voluntary arts sector, Children, Young People & Family Services
The Environment	4a) Promotion and implementation of the Public Art Programme and Policy	Environment & Economy, Children, Young People & Family Services
Health & Wellbeing	5a) Promotion of the use of arts in Social Services work	Adult, Health & Community Services
	5b) Promotion of the use of arts in improving physical and mental health	NHS Trusts, Adult, Health & Community Services
Community Involvement	6a) Development of local communities and intergenerational connections	Professional & voluntary arts sector, Regeneration Team (E&E)
	6b) A co-ordinated approach to the provision of Youth Arts opportunities (via the Warwickshire Youth Arts Network).	Children, Young People & Family Services (inc. Arts Zone, CMS & Youth Service), WAYC, voluntary sector, Districts & Boroughs

ACE = Arts Council of England (this includes the regional office based in Birmingham)

AWM = Advantage West Midlands (the regional development agency)

HR = Human Resources

CMS = County Music Service