

Minutes of Cultural Consortium Annual General Meeting 2007/8

Tuesday 1 July 2008 6.30pm
Aspex Gallery, Vulcan Building, Gunwharf Quays

Welcome, introduction and apologies

Present: Please see attendees list at the bottom of the minutes.

Apologies: Cllr Eleanor Scott, Alan Sturmeay, Cllr David Stephen Butler, Zenna Atkins, Mandy Lindley, Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson, Cllr Mike Hancock MP and Jonathan Fost.

These apologies were accepted.

Stephen Morgan welcomed everyone and introduced Jo Bushnell, Director of Aspex Gallery, who informed everyone of the housekeeping arrangements and the details of the current exhibition by Nils Norman. Jo was pleased to host the Cultural Consortium's AGM in what she said had been a busy and successful year for the Cultural Consortium. Nils Norman is giving a talk on 16th July if anyone would like to attend they would be welcome details on Aspex website.

Minutes from AGM 2007

The minutes of the AGM 2007 were checked at the Executive meeting following the AGM so the suggestion was to take them as read. These were proposed by Bryony Kelly seconded by John Phillipson.

Chair's Verbal Report

Stephen introduced this item referring to his written report available this evening, Since the re-launch of the Cultural Consortium in the last year we have been trying to increase communication and involvement of local people. He called on a number of Executive Group members to say a few words on the work of the Consortium in the past year.

Steve Pitt – we have been involved in the Vision for Portsmouth consultation, which is a 10-year plan for the City. This included working with the Local Strategic Partnership, (LSP), Paddy May and Matt Gummerson from the Strategy Unit of the city council on the Local Area Agreement and improvements to the Vision document, long term solutions on Education, Police, housing and all aspects of

life in the City. This included the Culture Matters Event at Portsmouth Football Club on April 15th. Lots of ideas and feedback were received and we used facilitators from outside of the city that enabled an impartial facilitation of many aspects of the vision statement, and led us to create a set of aspirations to accompany the vision.

We revisited the work done by the LSP and presented our aspirations document on 6 May this was agreed and adopted. This was then submitted to Full Council in June where it was adopted as a council policy.

Mary Vallely – We have been developing our communication and membership, we have 237 members through Facebook. We have created regular newsletters and developed an on-line discussion forum. We have tried to reach people by these different means and as a result have doubled our membership in the past year.

John Phillipson – Recognition of the Cultural Consortium has been shown by being invited to attend various partnership groups. Peter Wainwright is the representative on the Economic Wellbeing Partnership Board, John Phillipson is the representative on the Community Involvement Partnership Board, Stephen Morgan is the representative on the Portsmouth Festivities group, Steve Pitt is the representative on the City of Festivals group. By attending these groups we have a wider view of what is happening in the city but it can be very time consuming. We have also promoted the Portsmouth Festivities programme through our website and given support to the World Heritage bid by Celia Clark. Involvement in these groups allow us to ensure culture remains on the agenda of strategic groups and forums across the city.

Peter Wainwright – since our last AGM we have continued our Culture Matters series; these are open forums for discussion of various topics. The forum on the Seafront Strategy produced lots of ideas and coupled with the city council's own consultations has led to a £437,000 regeneration programme. The Cultural Blueprint forum also provided us with lots of ideas and was a celebration of the successes that had been achieved since the Cultural Strategy was launched. The Culture in the City Centre forum was held in January at The Haven – this provided lots of ideas from the members on sculpture, art and hoarding design for the new developments in the city centre, whether as part of Northern Quarter or the other planned improvements.

Stephen Morgan thanked all those who have taken part in our series of events, and stated that during the break this evening we will be asking you about your aspirations for the city over the coming year and the things you would like the Consortium to look at for you.

Treasurer's Verbal Report

We are setting up a bank account with the Co-operative Bank, they have experience in helping voluntary organisations and they have a good ethical policy, we hope that you agree with our choice. We received £1,000 funding from the Local Strategic Partnership to offset the costs of the Vision for Portsmouth event,

a lot of people spent a large amount of time working on this event including the costs of hiring Portsmouth Football Club's Victory Suite.

We hope to receive direct funding very soon and a fuller report available at the next AGM once the Consortium's accounts are open.

Election of Members for the Executive Group 2008/09

Cllr Terry Hall, Cabinet member for Culture & Leisure took the chair of the meeting at this point.

The current executive is stood down, and thanks given to Barbara Milligan, Brandon Prince and Sean Bowman for their support over the last year. The nomination closure date was 27th June and 11 nominations have been received.

Standing for re-election are Stephen Morgan, Martin Chalk, Peter Wainwright, John Phillipson and Jonathan Fost, who is currently appearing at the New Theatre Royal. These were re-elected on block, proposed by Brandon Prince and seconded by Steve Bomford.

Co-opted members now standing for election to the Executive are as follows: Steve Pitt, suggested by Stephen Baily to join the Cultural Consortium, Steve has been the proprietor of the Cellars at Eastney for 10 years, director of professional theatre, organiser of the Portsmouth & Southsea Music Festival in October and the Portsmouth Comedy Festival. Proposed by Martin Chalk and seconded by Stephen Morgan.

Mary Vallely, involved from the beginning of the Consortium but took some time out to complete a degree in art. Proposed by John Phillipson and seconded by Peter Wainwright.

Peter Moutray, head of Media, Creative and Visual Arts at Highbury College, was asked to join following a presentation by Peter Wainwright to students at Highbury College. Proposed by Steve Pitt and seconded by Stephen Morgan.

Anna Potten, passionate about art and culture and is keen for all young people to be given the opportunity to be involved in all types of culture. Proposed by Bryony Kelly and seconded by Charles Burns.

A show of hands was requested to accept these people as members of the Cultural Consortium Executive, all those present agreed.

New nominations to the Executive are as follows:

Zene Bray, mature student of fine art, helped set up the arts tents at the recent Oxjam event in Castle Field – she said it is important to support all talents. Proposed by Stephen Morgan and seconded by Anna Potten.

Mary Tunnell, a member of the Museums and Records Society with an interest in textiles, lived in Portsmouth all her life. Proposed by Stephen Morgan and seconded by Steve Pitt.

A show of hands was requested to accept these people as members of the Cultural Consortium Executive, all those present agreed.

Date of the first Executive meeting is Monday 7th July 2008 at 5pm in the King Street Tavern, King Street Southsea.

Any other business

Stephen Morgan - During the coming months the Executive Group will review the constitution, which is now 4 years old and requires updating. This will include exploring the number of places on the Consortium's Executive Group.

There will now be a 20-minute break during which we would like you to give us your ideas and aspirations of the things that you would like us to pursue during the forthcoming year. Blank postcards were handed out for this

We also have Will McNicol an acoustic guitarist who, in his own words, is a 'little bit edgy', a welcome to Will was given.

Stephen Morgan thanked Will for his performance during the break.

Peter Wainwright asked various members to select a postcard and read the suggestion on it. This was to give a flavour of the comments that were written during the break.

- 'Musician on every bus for a day'
- 'Use our shopping centres to showcase art – it's where the crowds are'
- 'Make the South Parade Pier active, it's like a ghost town! Put something new'
- 'More communication with local secondary schools – consultation with students'
- 'The consortium to put together a template for commissioning public art, that is transparent and contributes the notion of challenge and excellence'
- 'Look at why established venues are struggling eg. Hilsea Lido, Pyramids, South Parade Pier, Skatepark. Build on success of 3008 with festivals. The FA Cup parade proved 100,000 people can gather happily with minimal problems. A comprehensive info network ie. 'timeout in Portsmouth' Keep doing what you're doing'
- 'The United Reformed Church on Victoria Road South is empty, how about developing it as a neighbourhood arts & cultural centre.'

Positive reporting in Portsmouth

Stephen Morgan introduced Mark Waldron, the editor of The News.

Mark has been in post since September 2007, he was brought up in Cowplain and has recently returned to the City.

'It's a pleasure to be here, this is a genuine comment, I aim to meet as many people as possible. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to talk about this subject. Promoting things around the City is important.

Portsmouth is in my blood. Whilst working in Swindon I was involved in the Swindon Culture Group. My culture was developed in Portsmouth, I have an interest in theatre, music, and picnics on the seafront. I spent most weekends in my youth playing football on the many pitches in the city, I've frequented many of the pubs too.

I am proud to edit 'my local' paper, it is important to be proud and positive about what you do and where you live, we should be making the city proud of 'us' for promoting the City.

Local people & communities are important, the 'we can do it' campaign is a great scheme.

We are celebrating the City's achievements.

When I first joined The News I met with the local leaders and got a feeling that we are not as positive as we could have been about the City, this will change but it will take time, give us a chance to build this up. We will continue to expose wrong doing, crime etc when it happens as this is our job, but we will also celebrate the positives too.

We will support local events with publicity where possible by encouraging people to attend. We have achieved this recently with the Film Festival and the Ice Show at the Kings Theatre which was fantastic despite it's problems people came away thinking how wonderful that the theatre took this project on. The Portsmouth schools Music Festival and the Portsmouth Festivities, we ran a story every day throughout the program that brought in the biggest numbers since the festival has been running. We will be supporting the Portsmouth & Southsea Music Festival that will be taking place in October. So you can see that actions rather than words will count.

We are trying to raise the profile of the City.

There followed a question and answer session with the panel made up of Mark Waldron (MW), Carl Leroy-Smith (CLS) from the South Coast Design Forum and Steve Pitt from the Cultural Consortium.

David Baynes - Is it likely that you will request a third party response to a letter before printing the letter on its own and the response at a later date, as the letter is often uninformed and the response printed later does not have the same effect.

MW - the letters page seems to stir up a lot of debate and allows a format to respond already, if the letter shows the need for further investigation then often a story will follow.

Martin Chalk – Any plans to ditch the phrase ‘We are you’? also there is a need to include a proper representation of the city in the pictures too as they currently do not show this.

MW – yes I have undertaken a complete review and we are investigating alternatives.

Steve Pitt – As example to the question about letters - Stephen Baily had written a reply to a letter in regarding facilities, Aspex Gallery, the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra but why is there only one gallery and why isn't there a Portsmouth Symphony Orchestra in Portsmouth.

The Guide in The News seemed to concentrate on Chichester and the surrounding areas. Things are changing there is dialogue give every new person in charge a chance, if we don't we will continue to fail.

Peter Wainwright – what is the South Coast Design Forum's, (SCDF) brief in relation to culture - is there synergy or potential linkages with the Cultural Consortium?

Carl Leroy-Smith – The SCDF is a business led group with paid membership about design, for small businesses working together. There will be some working together, CLS has been talking to Stephen Morgan about organising a meeting to discuss a Design Champion role, also including people from Portsmouth Society in this discussion. Also Sharon Watling takes the minutes for our group too, telling us when things have been done before. The SCDF key focus is the Built Environment and Wayne Hemingway is our Director.

Charles Burns – the Core Strategy for Portsmouth City Council should be approved by council soon.

Lisa Wills – Are you looking to change the format of the newspaper? And how are you trying to encourage young people to get involved?

MW – We are trying to engage with young people by supporting young peoples events such as the Year of Literacy. There are many positive views of young people with positive images, pages 1 to 7 tend to be more negative but further in are the positive stories this creates a balance.

CLS – Involving young people is a problem for all groups even the Cultural Consortium.

Zene Bray – Infant and Junior schools are given good promotion but senior schools are often missed, there is some fantastic young people at the skatepark in Southsea. The young adults need some positive feedback about what they are doing.

MW – We need to be proactive and look for stories instead of relying on people to tell us about things happening.

SP – As part of the Portsmouth & Southsea Music Festival I have visited all the schools to encourage them to take part in the music workshops for the internal schools band competition, the winner of which will perform on stage at the festival in October.

MW – Young people need to be able to write information about themselves, send it into the newspaper in a format that can be used by the paper, the young people need to be taught how to do this, we all need to teach young people the best way to communicate.

SP – This Thursday 3/7, there is an article about the young people who have been engaged in the music festival band competition.

Mary Tunnell – The News used to have a Women’s Circle column that offered classes for women to attend, would you be looking at bringing this back?

MW – I don’t know about the column and I’m not sure that this could be done again.

Bryony Kelly – Do you offer apprenticeships or host work experience placements for young people?

MW – We offer work experience placements but not apprenticeships, as we don’t have the capacity. We are looking at other avenues to engage with young people, Guide 2 is a weekly supplement that is more relevant to younger age groups. We are continuing to work on how to reach everyone by using different means, we are updating the website that enables people to comment on different articles when they want to.

David Baynes – What is the percentage of households reached by your distribution?

MW – Across the region 36 – 37%, but we also have regional versions of the daily paper for Havant & Waterlooville, Fareham & Gosport, Isle of Wight, Winchester, Bognor Regis and of course the City version, if you take away the regional distribution the City readership percentage is very much higher.

David Baynes – Did the success of Portsmouth Football Club increase your distribution.

MW – The FA Cup success had a huge effect on the sales of The News, we sold 25,000 more papers on the Monday following the FA Cup final. We also supported the Blue Day and Blue2Day campaign in the build up to the FA Cup semi-final and final, which increased sales across the board. We did receive some criticism of the amount of coverage we gave but we think that this was an important event for the City

Chris Hyson – Should Portsmouth Football Club be part of our culture in the city?

MW – Yes I think that Portsmouth Football Club should be part of the culture and the life of the city.

MW – Part of the enjoyment of the job is being able to meet people and develop the newspaper.

CLS – The Creative Thinker process was interesting quite positive but the comment about the consultants ‘dreaming up the ideas’ was not a good one.

Stephen Morgan thanked the panel and all who had attended and asked every one to think about two things, they are to let us know what you want to help us with and let us know what you thought of this evening.

Meeting closed 8:25pm

Attendees

Carolyn Barber	Jackie Baynes	David Baynes
Ricki Bhatena	Paul Bhatena	Zene Bray
Cllr Cheryl Buggy	Jo Bushnell	Terry Carter
Martin Chalk	Muhammed Darweish	Aysegul Epengin
Steve Fisher	Cllr Terry Hall	Christopher Hyson
Alan Jenkins	Cindy Jones	Bryony Kelly
Carl Leroy-Smith	Duncan Mathewson	Simone McKeon
Stephen Morgan	Sharon Morris	Peter Moutray
Jessica Pemberton-James	John Phillipson	Cllr Darron Phillips
Dylan Pank	Steve Pitt	Anna Potten
Brandon Prince	Maggie Sawkins	Mary Tunnell
Mary Vallely	Peter Wainwright	Mark Waldron
Sharon Watling	Charles Burns	Geoff Catlow
Jenni Catlow	Roberta Spencer	Steve Bomford
Karl March	Val Patterson	Roger Inkpen
Penny Hart	Chas Harman	Lisa Wills
Lorraine Farrelly	Jon Adams	

Appendix 1

Post Card Comments

- 'Musician on every bus for a day'
- 'Use our shopping centres to showcase art – it's where the crowds are'
- 'Make the South Parade Pier active, it's like a ghost town! Put something new'
- 'More communication with local secondary schools – consultation with students'
- 'The consortium to put together a template for commissioning public art, that is transparent and contributes the notion of challenge and excellence'
- 'Look at why established venues are struggling eg. Hilsea Lido, Pyramids, South Parade Pier, Skatepark. Build on success of 3008 with festivals. The FA Cup parade proved 100,000 people can gather happily with minimal problems. A comprehensive info network ie. 'timeout in Portsmouth' Keep doing what you're doing'
- 'The United Reformed Church on Victoria Road South is empty, how about developing it as a neighbourhood arts & cultural centre.'

- ‘Should we / how do we extend the cultural life of the City into the surrounding area – Havant, Fareham & Gosport – in my view this would not only encourage those from outside into the city, but also encourage the city residents out of the city’
- ‘Odd bus shelters all over Portsmouth’
- ‘Real investment in young people’s facilities – under cover, climbing wall, internet, skate ramps etc’
- ‘“Guildhall Plaza’ Guildhall – art gallery, events in the square, Costa coffee kiosk, restaurant quarter’
- ‘What can the consortium suggest to improve the fun fair? This may be privately owned but is a definite eyesore!’
- ‘To increase the stock of good quality public artwork in the City particularly as we are at the gateway to Europe’
- ‘Support with organising an event to coincide with the Poetry Society’s Centenary in 2009. From the Portsmouth Stanza Rep’
- ‘Parking for many venues remains an issue. It was really bad for the New Theatre Royal when parking had to be paid for after 7pm a couple of years ago. PCC still seem to believe that shopping = culture. I should like to see the Rock Gardens turned into a sort of homage to local literature, ie. Statues of Conan Doyle, Dickens, Neville Shute & HG Wells’
- ‘Promote a Portsmouth ‘at home’ arts festival – open house viewings all round the city & lots of venues’
- ‘Number 6 cinema location is not good!’
- ‘Support for a dedicated independent cinema, with wider remit to screening local films / archive work / film education and lectures / talks as well as art films, Number 6 is fine but it’s location in the Historic Dockyard hinders it’
- ‘The Consortium should start to push for a people’s palace for the city, designed by Enrgio Pcanno’
- ‘Could the Consortium redesign the proposed Northern Quarter development and make it more sustainable and maybe even beautiful’
- ‘An artwork ‘called in bed for peace’ a massive picnic – sustainable, supported by individuals/shops/companies – cover the whole common – use it as a fundraiser – lots of fun – recycle, advertise on the bed covers etc’
- ‘Do we need cultural facilities which as yet do not exist in Portsmouth? Eg ice rink’
- ‘Do we know what the plans are for the two cinemas recently closed in Portsmouth at Cosham and North End?’
- ‘Include, integrate and promote Creative Industries as part of the wider Cultural Strategy’
- ‘the ‘Now Show’ recording & visiting RSC productions – packed out’
- ‘The common is the cultural centre of the city’
- ‘Northern Quarter Development – performance spaces etc? Southbank?’
- ‘Move the debate up the city – spaces in North End, Copnor, Drayton’
- ‘There is a lots happening especially in the Summer months, with limited advance notice, eg Portsmouth Festivites, any chance of better co-ordination, equal support to all from Portsmouth City Council’
- ‘Could more literature-based events be held in Portsmouth? Havant is even holding a literary festival in September’

- 'Involvement with development of Seafront Strategy'
- 'Maintain involvement and help consult on 'cultural blueprint' also how 'vision' is moving forward'
- 'provide opportunity for discussion on proposals for new cultural centre'
- 'Identify organisations / groups not involved and target them'
- 'Support plans for the new football stadium'
- 'More sports focus along Eastney end of beach, near swimming pool. Exercise area with steel framed machines, include space for slow physical exercise'
- 'Make the Multi-Cultural festival broader and more vibrant. We have the communities, where are they during this event?'
- 'A city wide shake hands day'
- 'Better provision for people on bikes. How can riding your bike more attractive? By making it easier & more 'cool' than driving.'