



PEOPLE PLACE BELONGING

**A Cultural Strategy for
Totnes 2017-2027**

**Commissioned by Totnes Town Council
funded by Paige Adams Trust**



"In calling for a 'Year of Arts' our Mayor called for attention to the role that the Arts can play in promoting both prosperity - and social cohesion through participation in creative community activities.

According to the association of chief constables, community arts projects have been cited as the most effective tool in combating the negative effects of de-industrialization."

» Councillor Benedict Piper

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Eleanor Cohen
Mayor

"We want to support year-round events, so cultural activity grows and develops."

The desire to initiate and create this strategy came from myself and others and together, we sought funds to make it happen.

There is much artistic activity in Totnes, and getting people to acknowledge this is important. There is a lot happening, but with little cohesion, so the requirement for linking this up has now been acknowledged and clearer ideas can be started.

I felt what was important was to join up different groups: the professionals, the amateurs, in fact everybody – where they all get to experience good quality work.

Some of the things that I hope to see as a result of this include year-round activity, so cultural activity grows and develops, public spaces can be used creatively and everybody gets a chance to be involved.

BE PROUD AND GET INVOLVED

"Prosperity - and social cohesion through participation in creative community activities."

» Councillor Benedict Piper



Benedict Piper
Councillor

We hope that this document will represent the first step in a strategic approach to addressing both the problems as well as the possibilities. Building on work that the Town Council has done in bringing its assets into use – the re-establishing of the Civic Hall as a 500 capacity venue and the Guildhall for a music venue as well as a wedding venue, the appointment of an 'Arts officer' for the town of Totnes, was for me the realisation of a long-held dream for my home town.

The close proximity between the town and Dartington, has meant that the closure of the Arts College has clearly left something of a gap. My view is that this affords both an opportunity as well as a loss - we have the opportunity to develop a more 'grass roots' culture - with input from a lot of people who have continued the progressive work of the Dartington experiment – whilst supported by a relatively prosperous local economy, that in turn supports people who are perhaps not so concerned with progressive ideas or even the arts - particularly when they are considered by some as an elite activity!

This presents a real challenge for the Town Council who sit in the middle and are faced with shrinking support from District and County.

We have a growing Arts sector – above and beyond gallery based work – that is helping to move Totnes on towards being the regional cultural hub that it really needs to be.



Tiffany Strawson
Arts Officer

As the first ever Arts Officer for Totnes, it has been a privilege creating this document as the initial task. I have had input from the Arts Network Group made up of artists, organisations, and members of the public, all with an interest to get culture officially on the Totnes map!

I have also listened to the Town Council Arts working Group and particularly from the Cultural Steering Group, who are an independent group selected specifically for their professional expertise and/or local knowledge. These members include Amy Bere, Becca Gill, Frances Northrop, Kathy Alexander, Robin Lacey, Ruth Ben-Tovim and Sara Downham-Lotto. I would sincerely like to thank these members for their valuable contributions. As this job evolves and the potential possibilities of this strategy unfold, I am delighted to have had a small part in it. Thank you.



PEOPLE

Involvement and participation creates a sense of well-being and purpose, offering people the chance for personal development, socialisation, enjoyment as well as education. Simply taking part and meeting new people breaks down invisible barriers, fosters a sense of community, belonging and pride in place-making that is individually nurturing as a citizen.

WHAT IS CULTURE?

What do we mean by culture? What is a definition of culture that is relevant for us today here in Totnes?

We are using a definition of contemporary culture that is inclusive and non-elitist, that honours and engages everybody in a wide variety of different values, beliefs and activities. All of which contributes to a sense of identity, belonging and wellbeing for our community; the locality of Totnes.

Although 'culture' can manifest in a variety of ways, for the purposes of this strategy, 'art' and 'heritage' are principally the different ways of channeling the focus.

By 'Art' we are considering the widest possible sense of the arts as experienced within and produced for the public realm. This includes work that is for the collector and the community, both permanent, temporary and ephemeral and encompasses a multitude of disciplines, practices and means/processes of creation.

"Totnes is said to have more listed buildings per head than any other UK town."

» 'Participant of the Public Consultation Process.'



ART & HERITAGE

'Heritage' is everything that has been bestowed to us from the past; not just in terms of our historical, physical and natural assets, like Totnes Castle or the River Dart, but also taking into account ways of doing, being and thinking about things.

As well as the conventional 'history' definition, we are taking into consideration local knowledge that adds particular nuance and definition to Totnes and the area, and charts the changes, for example in shop usage, so that history becomes the contemporary; so that notions of heritage come alive, are inclusive and accessible in everyday, real life.



THE MAY DAY DAWN

» Welcomed in by Dartington Morris Men
courtesy of Left-Bridge.co.uk

ELIZABETH HADLEY

» Elizabeth Hadley working on a bronze sculpture
courtesy of the bowie gallery.
www.thebowiegallery.co.uk

"We have a growing Arts sector that is helping to move Totnes towards being the regional cultural hub."

» Councillor Benedict Piper

CULTURE IN TOTNES

TOTNES CIVIC HALL

» Performance in the Civic Hall during the Sea Change festival 2016
courtesy of Left-Bridge.co.uk



"We have a diverse, cosmopolitan population whose demographics are changing."

» 'Participant of the Public Consultation Process.'

OUTDOOR THEATRE

» Outdoor performance at the Rotherfold
courtesy of Left-Bridge.co.uk



Totnes is an individual town, which has a long history of being culturally pioneering and experimental. It has a reputation as being creative, artistic and linked to alternative therapies where the arts often take on an important role.

Totnes has some undeniable key qualities and assets that make it a very distinctive market town and it is internationally acknowledged as being unique.

This is based in history and the geographic location, as well as more recently being internationally recognised as a centre for environmental awareness and action. Totnes is culturally distinctive as a town; however, it is not unique in its challenges.

- Comments made during the public consultation process:

"Totnes is a town of 'hidden gems', an 'alternative', 'bohemian' town fictionally twinned with 'Narnia'."

"We have a diverse, cosmopolitan population whose demographics are changing."

"Totnes is home of the 'Transition' Movement, which has become adopted as a world-wide phenomenon."

"In a time of economic austerity, when money for the Arts and funding work is a challenge, Totnes has resources that whilst often overlooked, are intrinsic to the empowerment of the town; and that is 'people power'. What we need is guidance and support to realise it."

Here is a list of some of the things that were identified as cultural activities through the public consultation process. They include, but are certainly not limited to a variety of ideas; all of which relate to how we enjoy culture in Totnes.

- Bands, music groups, drumming circles, choirs and venues that host quality live, professional music.
- Independent brewery and a host of places to enjoy local food.
- Visiting Totnes Castle.
- Walking along the river Dart.
- The Skate Park.
- Enjoying the activities of the market, including having a cup of coffee.
- Participating in festivals, those hosted at or organised by the Dartington Hall Trust or locally for example, 'Sea-Change'.



DARTINGTON HALL

» Leonard & Dorothy Elmhirst

"There is the long legacy of Dorothy Elmhirst and Dartington College of Arts; who at different times over the last century pioneered innovative and experimental artistic approaches. This idea is coupled with an acknowledged social feeling of 'loss' that DCA relocated and a noticeable difference in the atmosphere of the town now that it has lost so many young aspiring artistic students. There is no

longer a large and obvious cohort of young, artistic talent looking for creative outlets within the town."

» 'Participant of the Public Consultation Process.'



An aerial photograph of the town of Totnes, Devon, showing a mix of residential buildings, green spaces, and a prominent church spire. The town is nestled in a valley, surrounded by rolling hills and forests. A large, stylized rainbow graphic is overlaid on the left side of the image, with the red and green bands being particularly prominent.

PLACE

I'm proud to have Totnes as a home town – The town's reputation for tolerance and open-mindedness-qualities that I associate with both the indigenous people of the town as well as those who were originally drawn to the orbit of the Elmhirst experiment that is now The Dartington Hall Trust- has made Totnes so much more than just another rural market town. And this continues to evolve as change continues to shape the town.

» Councillor Benedict Piper

TOTNES

» Courtesy of Left-Bridge.co.uk.

WHAT IS A CULTURAL STRATEGY?



WAYS WITH WORDS

» Vince Cable at Dartington Hall 2016
courtesy of Left-Bridge.co.uk

"Make the best of what Totnes has to offer, what it wants and what it needs, and not compromise or undermine it."



LIVE MUSIC EVENTS

» Courtesy of Left-Bridge.co.uk

A cultural strategy is not a plan in the sense that it will 'deliver' certain outcomes; more it is a set of criteria or guidelines as to how projects and ideas may be activated and achieved. It gives a framework to objectively define how projects may 'fit' within the needs and desires of a community.

A cultural strategy means that planning decisions can be based on better informed and more detailed suggestions and policies, articulated through evidence based need, rather than if decisions were being based on all the variety of choices and options available.

A cultural strategy for Totnes means that there is an open invitation for future arts, heritage and cultural decisions to respect the consultation and collaborative thinking behind it, and make the best of what Totnes has to offer, what it wants and what it needs, and not compromise or undermine it.

ARTIST LUCIANNE LASSALLE

» with work in progress
courtesy of the bowie gallery.
www.thebowiegallery.co.uk



WHY DOES TOTNES NEED A CULTURAL STRATEGY?

By looking at what Totnes already has culturally and by asking difficult questions and seeking honest answers as to how to improve it, we hope that this document will celebrate and enrich the cultural life of Totnes for future generations and in a small way, improve Totnes as a place to live and work. Together these ideas fuse and give us the opportunity to recreate our cultural landscape and re-imagine our sense of place.

A strategy can support and promote how culture enriches our lives and communities. We believe that artists are charismatic agents of change and leaders in not just economic growth, but in systems and ecologies of work.

Cultural consultants Morris Hargreaves McIntyre suggest that 'The Arts can offer people authenticity... We provide experiences with an entirely new worldview, emotionally cathartic moments, intellectual stimulations or just a really good laugh. We stimulate social interaction: we can offer people the chance to join communities of interest, to engage in shared experiences, a sense of belonging, affirmation and endorsement'

"We have a dated and reductive Elizabethan branding. I hope that a cultural strategy might enable the town to facilitate a change."

» 'Participant of the Public Consultation Process.'



The purpose of this plan is for Totnes to define its relationship with Arts, Heritage and Culture and position these ideas in ways that fit comfortably with where we are now, taking into account the town's past, present and future. Regarding austerity for example, and in view of funding limitations and shortage, it is vital to channel available funds whatever their size/economic value specifically into discreet and targeted projects; the underlying aims and motivations of which could be reflected in this document.

"The environment we live, work and play in profoundly affects how we are as human beings and how we relate to each other...when we are careful about the way we create a physical environment, when we pay attention to every detail of it, people start to think about themselves and each other differently"

» Mawson A. The Social Entrepreneur: Making Communities Work.



PARTY IN THE TOWN

» Performance in the Civic Hall
courtesy of Left-Bridge.co.uk
www.dartington.org/whats-on

WORKSHOP REHEARSAL

» Totnes Young People's Theatre
in collaboration with Devon
Youth Theatre.
www.dartington.org/whats-on/typt/

"We'll be able to make clear choices as a town and have a vision which can be communicated to a wider world."

» 'Participant of the consultation process'



ARTS LAB

» Sarah Downham-Lotto at work
www.saradownhamlotto.net

WHERE ARE THE GAPS?

As a town, we have a rich and diverse programme of cultural activity. Totnes benefits from a variety of arts projects, performances, classes and things to do. Culture is a strong part of Totnes's USP, not just for tourists, but also for residents. However, many do not feel included.

There is a disequilibrium and split in engagement and participation; it creates a 'bubble' for the privileged few, leaving many excluded from joining in these opportunities.

"We want diversity, inclusivity and connecting beyond the small selection of groups that attend."

» 'Participant of the Public Consultation Process.'

"We need an arts officer, a 'creative connector', somebody to pull it all together and weave it into the thread of communal life."

» 'Participant of the Public Consultation Process.'

Totnes has a 'campus' of spaces for community activity, but no infrastructure to connect anything.

There is no regional arts-officer and no facility to disseminate information. There is no central framework, or public funding, to situate enterprise. As a result, there have been no council led short term initiatives, or longer term plans. A lack of joined-up-thinking leads to a) spaces and venues not being used to their potential and b) a lack of groups collaborating and opportunities that promote this.

The outcomes for the public and beneficiaries of these activities, is confusion and ignorance; they just don't know what is happening where; Or apathy, because despite the abundance of activities, it's difficult to access information. Activities remain the knowledge of those 'in-the-know'. For the organisers, this leads to professional isolation and conflict. Combined these concerns incrementally create tension, division and disconnect the community from what is happening and available.

"I feel let down as an artist, as there is so much art, but nothing to support it".

» 'Participant of the Public Consultation Process.'



FAMILY ACTIVITIES.

» Facilitated by the Guild of Craftsmen
crafts.org.uk

More general gaps in Totnes provision include a lack of activities and provision for teenagers; limited transport to take advantage of activities resulting in poor access; a lack of public art; issues of affordability (most classes/performances start at an average minimum of £6 and whilst they may reflect good value, it is still beyond the means of many); affordable studio spaces for artists and craftspeople; a lack of embedded cultural activity within other sectors.

"There is potential to link up health, arts, well-being and nature and support a holistic approach to 'living well'".

» 'Participant of the Public Consultation Process.'

There is the potential to engage Arts, Culture & Heritage as a way of bringing about social cohesion and create a step-change in how we share with 'hard-to-reach' groups: - And there is potential to build and grow our infrastructure of support by galvanising interest and harnessing the artistic energy of the whole town (and communities) for the benefit of all.



TOTNES

» Courtesy of Left-Bridge.co.uk

In order to maximise the cultural offer locally, this document aims to think beyond the 'local' remit and look outwards. As much as we need to weave a 'golden thread' of cultural activity through the actual town, so too is it important to connect to the other places including many of the rural communities that surround Totnes; many of which follow the River Dart, reach out towards Dartmoor National Park or stretch in the opposite direction towards the sea.

"Totnes is not just Fore Street and the market. People need to stop navel gazing and lift their head up."

» 'Participant of the Public Consultation Process.'

WORKSHOPS

» Shadow puppet workshops,
www.lightbulbfantastic.com



"Isolation will not serve us and we need to work with what is happening in our area and wider community, not against it."



DEFINING THE AREA

"Totnes is a place with two local institutes with international reputations for the arts; Sharpham and Dartington. We need to establish marketing and creative bonds with both."

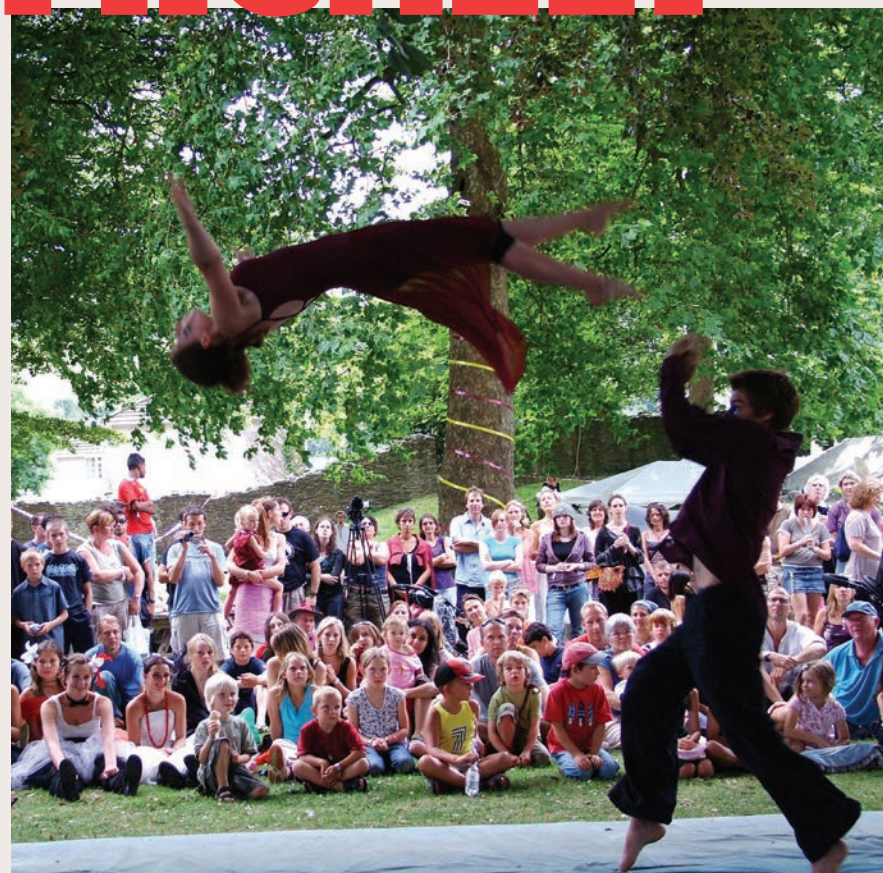
» 'Participant of the Public Consultation Process.'

Each village or parish has its own unique identity; indeed, the surrounding villages have their own councils who do things differently and specific to their community's needs. However, for the purposes of a shared, strengthened local culture for the benefit and improvement of Totnes town; rather than seeing division between places, this strategy proposes that we bridge geographical gaps and work together, whether that is through larger arts organisations interconnecting or village societies sharing resources to create a web of outreach that is anchored in Totnes as the larger town.

Geographically therefore, we need to be inclusive and create a strong foundation by linking places, and the assets that are pre-existent there, so that we can seek out collaborations, partnerships and opportunities that promote more strongly achievable goals.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CULTURE ECONOMICALLY

"The creative industries have been growing three times as fast as the national economy... As the creative sector grows in importance, the role of arts and culture as an incubator of talent will be better understood."



TALES FROM THE KEEP

» Totnes Young People's Theatre
www.dartington.org/whats-on/typt/

DANCE WORLD CUP

» Courtesy of www.totnesschoolofdance.com

An alternative way of answering why Totnes needs a cultural strategy is to think about the income generated by the cultural and creative industries, which commonly are combined under the same meaning. Broadly speaking, these industries refer to a range of economic activities that are concerned with the generation and commercialisation of creativity, ideas, knowledge and information.

For example, within these industries are included organisations such as galleries, museums and theatre spaces, of which Totnes has all three. The term 'cultural industries' also describes businesses and individual practitioners with creativity at their heart – for example design, music, publishing, architecture, film and video, crafts, visual arts, fashion, TV and radio, advertising, literature, computer games and the performing arts. The creative industries definition from the UK Government's Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) is: 'those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property.'

In an era of post-recession austerity, it is useful on a commercial level, to recognize the economical potential of how the town's cultural industries may create employment, wealth, tourism, and sustainability for those involved as practitioners and workers within these industries.

Creative businesses are inherently innovative; pioneering advancements in products, services and developing new business models that promote flexibility for our rapidly changing world of work. Over the period of a year, it is estimated that in the UK 20% of creative companies are developing and producing new products, compared to 9% of businesses in other sectors.



TOTNES SHOW

» Courtesy of Left-Bridge.co.uk

The creative and cultural industries are a recognised growth sector both in the UK and globally. From 1997-2013 there has been greater employment in this sector, an increase of 83.5% compared to 10.6% within UK employment generally.

Creative Economy jobs across the UK have increased from 2.8 million in 2014 to 2.9 million in 2015, a 5.1 per cent increase, compared to a 2.0 per cent increase in the total number of jobs in the wider UK economy over the same period.

Latest figures evidence that exports of services by the UK creative industries increased by 34.2% between 2009 and 2013, and accounted for 8.7% of total exports of services for the UK in 2013

In the South West, jobs in creative industries total 156,000; this represents 5.6% of all jobs in region. The proportion of jobs in the UK which are part of the Creative Economy has also increased between 2014 and 2015, from 8.8 per cent to 9.2 per cent. This had increased from 8.0 per cent of total jobs in 2011.



ARTS LAB
» www.saradown-hamlotto.net

WHO IS 'PEOPLE, PLACE, BELONGING' FOR?

At heart, this strategy is for the benefit of everybody, not just those involved in the cultural industries. This cultural strategy has been commissioned by the town council, devised by the Arts Network Group and members of the Cultural Steering Group as well as town councillors, but it belongs to everybody and is for community use. In this sense, it holds a set of collectively owned values, that can be taken up by individuals, organisations and practitioners of/contributors to culture.

It is anticipated that users of this document are those living and working locally endeavouring to create cultural works, or in some way to contribute to the cultural offer of Totnes and communities. This list may include but is not limited to individual, professional, amateur, emergent or enthusiast artists, arts organisations and producers, schools, the health sector, community groups, heritage and tourism sectors, planners, developers and businesses. We hope that a wide diversity of stakeholders, all of whom are in some way working in the Arts and Heritage sector, may use this document for their own gain and for the benefit of the public.

We hope that it can be used as a resource for invested stakeholders to design their own projects in accordance with their passions, alongside the needs that have been widely identified through public consultation and feedback. As a result, we hope that Totnesians, and by extent those communities and parishes that surround Totnes, can:

- Enable residents to have a 'voice' and feel included.
- Experience high quality cultural activities, that they have been a part of as makers, participants, audiences and cultural leaders in their own ways.
- Experience and see a broad number of changes and improvements that can strategically assist in the realising a vision for cultural activity in Totnes.
- Work in closer contact with the cultural sector and those engaged in Arts and Heritage activities so that ideas can be developed with, by and through a town council that has a robust commitment to the cultural sector.

PERFORMANCE

» Participatory Performance
Grandmother's Project.
www.encounters-arts.org.uk



This strategy celebrates art and heritage for its intrinsic cultural value, as well as its capacity to work alongside and integrate into, other town initiatives and non-art agendas supported by the Town Council.



**ARTIST
SUSAN ELLIOTT**

» Courtesy of the bowie gallery
www.thebowiegallery.co.uk

This strategy is designed to evolve, as local and governmental policies change and the national political as well as economic landscape shifts; all of which reflects on the town. It is a modest framework which will quietly gather momentum as it is used and referred to over the following years. It is a specific set of defined possibilities, rather than a detailed plan of actions. In this way, it is a point of departure, not an end destination.

Therefore whilst this strategy has been commissioned to launch in 2017 by a mayor very much pioneering culture in Totnes, the delivery plan will be reviewed and updated as each mayor takes seat. This provides the opportunity for the overarching aims to remain relevant, even if the delivery partners change over time.

PROUD TO BE.

» www.proud2be.co.uk

Because this is a 'work-in-progress' document, with no fixed or defined ways of interpreting it in terms of the delivery of specific, targeted projects, it is intended that various strategic recommendations are in place to see its implementation within the Town Council. Over the next twelve months, to improve the integration of the cultural sector within town council processes, we intend to explore 'What needs to change? What cultural policies need to improve?'



PARZIVAL

» Written by Martin Shaw,
performed in Sharpham
House and Garden.
Image courtesy of
Sharpham Trust.
www.sharphamtrust.org
www.drmartinshaw.com.

HOW IS IT TO BE USED?

It is recommended that the following cultural policies are set in place.

- Any funding made available by Totnes Town Council should include Arts and Heritage.
- We should continue seeking advice, feedback and critical responses from the Arts Network Group and to consult the Cultural Steering Group in terms of long term vision and strategy.
- The principles of this plan are embedded into all decisions and implemented in all actions made by the Arts Working Group (which is a new sub-committee of the council starting in April 2017 and made up of selected councillors).
- The principles of this plan and cultural opportunities are embedded into all council priorities, local services and community plans, in the same way that sustainability is.
- The council should continue to explore how existing organisational partnerships can collaborate with the town council in pioneering the principles of this strategy.
- To devise an opportunity for a small-scale, achievable yet ambitious pilot project that responds to some of the arising 'key opportunities' identified and that this project establishes the type of cultural commissioning that allows artists to respond to a clearly defined, open brief.



BELONGING

Through the consultation process, it is understood that cultural activity expands horizons directly through learning new skills and techniques, or simply through new experience.

The arts can offer people authenticity emotionally cathartic moments, intellectual stimulations or even just a really good laugh.

VISION FOR THE CULTURAL PLAN

1.

Growing the creative and cultural industries.

Through the consultation process, it is understood that cultural activity expands horizons directly through learning new skills and techniques, or simply through new experience. Involvement and participation creates a sense of well-being and purpose, offering people the chance for personal development, socialisation, enjoyment as well as education. Simply taking part and meeting new people breaks down invisible barriers, fosters a sense of community, belonging and pride in place-making that is individually nurturing as a citizen.

2.

Developing and animating the distinctive natural and built assets of Totnes.

Celebrate
Celebrate is how we promote our unique selling points; both our tourist offer, and equally important if not more so, enable local enjoyment of our cultural activity and assets. Celebrate is how we maximise the potential to have a more visible and celebrated cultural identity both locally, nationally and internationally.

Facilitate
Facilitate is how we enable, nurture and support those individuals, organisations and societies to grow in their capacity and provision and how together, we can create opportunity for a thriving, connected and co-ordinated cultural offer.

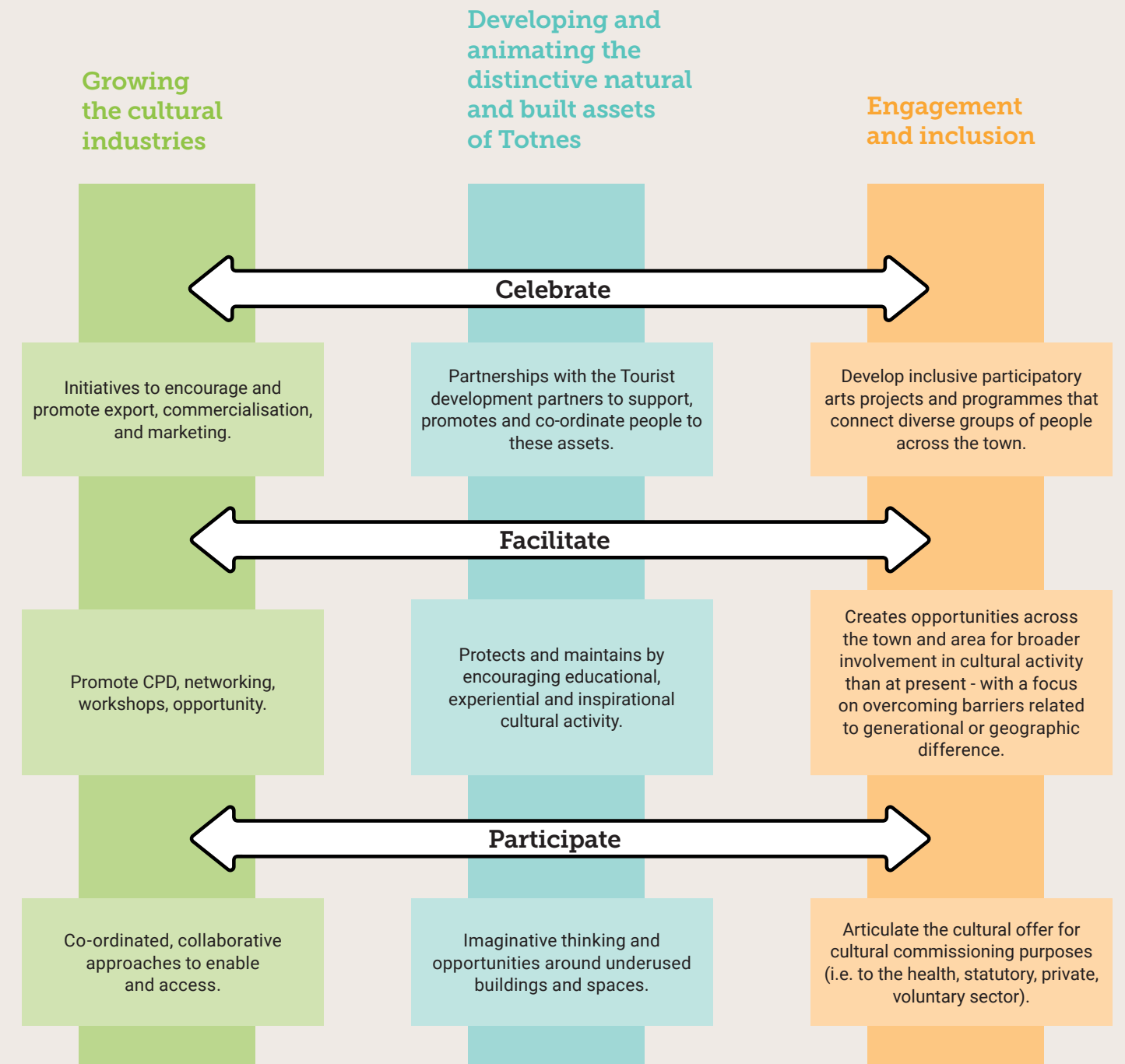
3.

Engagement and inclusion.

Participate
Participate is how we reach out into all sectors of society, how we engage, encourage and embed arts and cultural activity into everyday life.

"There are some brilliant pieces of work happening; but somehow it never quite gets 'lift-off'"

- 'Participant of the Public Consultation Process.'



GROWING THE CULTURAL INDUSTRIES



VIVA
COMMUNITY
CHOIR
www.rozwalker.com

"We want to create high calibre, aspirational arts that speak to others in and beyond Totnes; to 'reach out' to a wider public."

- 'Participant of the Public Consultation Process.'

The strategy:

- Recognises the diversity of groups who make up organisations, companies and individual professional, emerging, amateur and enthusiast providers that host/create cultural activity.
- Supports practitioners from all the above groups to evolve their work and where appropriate develop their professional practice, through networking opportunities, gatherings and workshops.
- Supports practitioners from all the above groups and encourages initiatives to encourage and promote export, commercialisation, and marketing; both physical and on line.
- Supports practitioners from all the above groups with fund raising initiatives, awareness and training achieved through co-ordinated approaches and on-line information.
- Enables and makes more easily available / accessible physical spaces for cultural practitioners to work, show and share - studios, workshops, exhibitions, work hubs.
- Provides co-ordinated approaches for organisations to work together and develop partnerships and collaborative approaches.
- Encourages, supports and provides co-ordinated approaches for emergent practitioner training, apprenticeship and peer supported learning and CPD for established professionals.
- Develops a vision for a cross art form community arts centre in the heart of Totnes.

DEVELOPING AND ANIMATING THE DISTINCTIVE NATURAL AND BUILT ASSETS OF TOTNES



TALES FROM THE KEEP

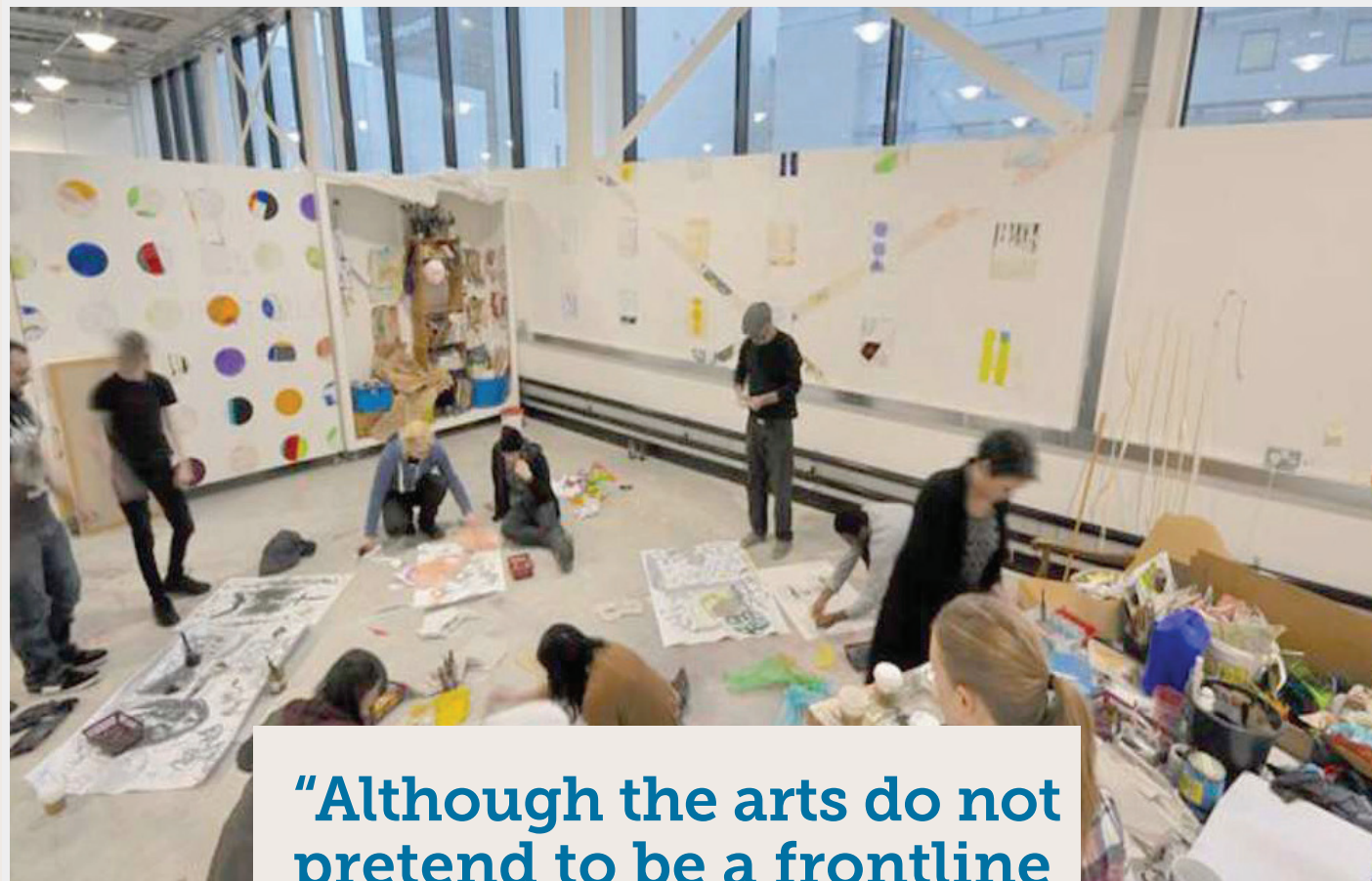
» Totnes Young
People's Theatre
[www.dartington.org/
whats-on/typt/](http://www.dartington.org/whats-on/typt/)

"Using Commissioned Public Art as a way of celebrating open space, drawing our attention to its importance within our landscape."

The strategy:

- Defines and articulates guidelines, principles and approaches for the commissioning of public art in Totnes - to include permanent public art in the built and natural environment, temporary public art that animates and activates built and natural public spaces.
- Encourages imaginative thinking and opportunities around underused buildings and spaces.
- Works in partnership with the Tourist development partners to support a system that navigates, promotes and co-ordinates people to these assets.
- Enables arts and cultural providers and local groups to open up local assets and make them more accessible and affordable through co-ordinated, collaborative approaches.
- Promotes through co-ordinated approaches the effective networking / linking between organisations and venues that host cultural activity and the cultural sector, leading towards more co-ordinated programme of year-round cultural activity.
- Protects and maintains natural and built assets by encouraging educational, experiential and inspirational cultural activity.

ENGAGEMENT AND INCLUSION



ARTS LAB
» www.saradownham-lotto.net

“Although the arts do not pretend to be a frontline health service, we’re coming to understand how they can function very effectively in a complementary role.”

Sir Peter Bazalgette; Chair, Arts Council England.

The strategy:

- Creates opportunities across the town and area for broader involvement in cultural activity than at present - with a focus on overcoming barriers related to generational or geographic difference.
- Promotes and develops inclusive participatory arts projects and programmes that connect diverse groups of people across the town and area.
- Encourages principles and guidelines about how groups are to be invited in participating in cultural activity. These guidelines may include engagement on a level that is comfortable, welcoming, non-threatening and relevant to their lives and experiences.
- Supports opportunities to volunteer, and expand creative and professional horizons.
- Develops ways to make participation in cultural activity more affordable and create co-ordinated approaches for audiences/ users to physically get to the spread or ‘campus’ of venues across town.
- Articulates the cultural offer for cultural commissioning purposes (i.e. to the health, statutory, private, voluntary sector).
- Supports amateur and creative /cultural groups develop and evolve.

WHAT WE HAVE / ASSETS:

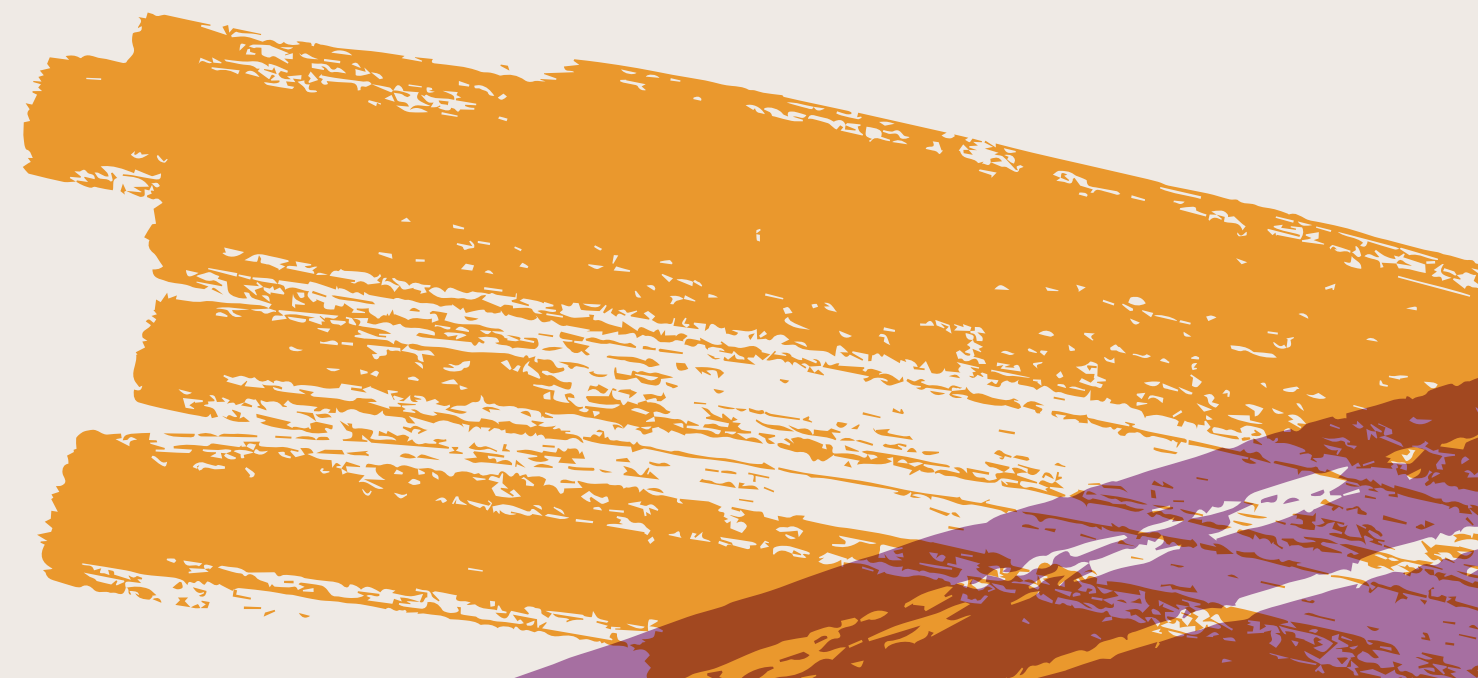
These were some of the many and different responses from members of the community during the public consultation process. They are, of course, just a small reflection of the many, varied and different 'assets' we have as a town, and do not include the wider location.

- Totnes Castle, Berry Pomeroy Castle.
- The river and various ways of enjoying the 'Dart'; walks, ferries, canoe and boat trips.
- The beauty of the Natural landscape; everything from locally listed 'trees' to Dartmoor National Park.
- Local Green Spaces including the Arboretum, Long Marsh, Vire Island and Leechwell Gardens; just to mention a few within Totnes.
- Town spaces and historic market squares, including the Rotherfold.
- Variety of historic villages and towns with their own heritage assets and cultural offer.
- Proximity to 'Sharpham House' with its Capability Brown Gardens, green spaces, heritage trails and variety of courses.
- Proximity to the 'Dartington Hall Trust', a cultural venue with a rich Live and Visual Art programme and many annual festivals (for example Ways With Words literature festival), courses (International Summer School & Festival, Craft Revolution), organisations (for example; Schumacher College and SoundArt Radio) and their rolling programme of activities, venues and support they offer to the Arts both locally, regionally and internationally.

- Arts, culture and heritage related societies, clubs and short courses including a range of activities from, but in no way limited to, still life painting, local amateur dramatics, to tango or Five Rhythms dancing.
- Interesting architectural buildings; those being of historical interest, contemporary design and also pioneering 'eco' homes within the town vicinity.
- 438 historical listed buildings and landmarks such as the 'Brutus Stone'; 412 are located in designated conservation areas. 'Totnes is said to have more listed buildings per head than any other UK town.
- A Rare Breeds town farm, activities for pre-school children within and beyond facilities provided by nurseries.
- Professional community arts organisations for young people; 'Dance in Devon', 'Totnes School of Dance', 'Totnes Young People's Theatre' and the 'Jamming Station'.

- Pubs; many of which host music, band nights, poetry jams and comedy clubs.
- A "vibrant" cafe culture and tea shops.
- The 'Food Project'
- Independent Cinema
- An Image Bank
- 'Encounters'; a participatory arts organisation working directly on issues that affect the local community, throughout the South West region and nationally.
- Elizabethan Museum and a costume Museum with rare collections.
- Art Galleries; both commercial and held in community trust for example 'Bowden House' and 'Birdwood House'.
- Graffiti
- Professional, amateur and enthusiast Artists from a variety of diverse disciplines, and the expertise, knowledge and contribution they offer the town.
- Totnes and village carnivals.
- Street Performers in the form of 'buskers' and occasionally flash mob style performances by local groups.

- Performance venues and activity centres including The Mansion, The 'Ariel Centre, Bogan House, Chapel House Studios, the Civic Hall and a host of village halls.
- Professional local theatre companies.
- Book clubs, literary events including local author's book launches and the annual children's 'Turn the Page' festival.
- A recently refurbished library
- St. Mary's Church, its churchyard and 'space' for community activity
- St John's Church as a venue
- Weekly, monthly and annual town markets (The Friday town market, 'Food Sunday' and the Christmas Market respectively).
- Voluntary groups, eg. active WI groups (Women's Institute)
- The Guildhall
- Independent sports, leisure and adventuring clubs; from bowling to parkour.
- A range of annual festivals including Sea Change, Totnes Open Studios, Proud2Be, Totnes Film Festival, Party in the Town, After Dark, The West Country Story Telling Festival





TOTNES YOUNG PEOPLE'S THEATRE

in collaboration with Circomedia, Bristol.
www.dartington.org/whats-on/

Lots of people have contributed to this plan, over two hundred, and they were recruited through a broad variety of channels and portals of communication be that social media, a specially created 'Artists Network' email group, through the local newspaper and radio station, plus word of mouth and fliers around public notice boards.

However, we appreciate that this consultation was only partial and many who have an opinion were not included. Everyone who did participate realized that it was a chance to contribute and have their voice heard. There were several

public meetings/workshops that used participatory techniques to generate written material, stimulate debate and create a forum for discussion; and these were lively, generative and provocative.

The consultation process lasted four months, after which the strategy was written. Out of these public consultation workshops, a steering group was created.



OPEN STUDIOS

» Courtesy of
Left-Bridge.co.uk

They were made up of local people selected because of their professional experience in the cultural sector, and/or because of their local knowledge, experience and wisdom on local cultural matters. They met up to feed into this strategy as it evolved as a written document and to devise plans for how the small remaining budget from the public fund could be best spent, based on the evidence suggested in this strategy.

HOW WAS 'PEOPLE, PLACE, BELONGING' CREATED?

FIRE CIRCLE CEREMONY

» Courtesy of the Sharpham Estate.
www.sharphamtrust.org






BLOCK

DANCE

WORLD



Commissioned by TTC, funded by Paige Adams Trust.

Elected Mayor & leader of
2016-2017 Town Council:

Eleanor Cohen

Councillor for Arts & Heritage:

Benedict Piper

Totnes Arts Officer:

Tiffany Strawson

Steering Group Members

Amy Bere, Becca Gill,
Frances Northrop,
Kathy Alexander, Robin
Lacey, Ruth Ben-Tovim,
Sara Downham-Lotto