

CRAVEN DISTRICT COUNCIL CULTURAL STRATEGY 2017 TO 2022

INTRODUCTION

Craven District Council recognises the importance of arts, heritage and culture for its own sake and for its community and economic benefits. Craven's culture, heritage and environment are central to its attractiveness as a place to live and work as well as a tourist destination. The Council, whether it is improving the quality of our places, supporting the creative energies of our businesses and communities or the protection of our landscapes and heritage assets, uses culture to drive the fundamental nature of our area forwards.

This Cultural Strategy provides a clear statement showing how Craven District Council will work with partners to protect, enhance and create new cultural strengths. It sets out the role that the development of culture will play in improving the lives of everybody and how it will strengthen our economy. The delivery of the cultural strategy will depend on continuing partnership working and external funding and sponsorship from a variety of sources.

VISION AND OBJECTIVES

Craven has the opportunity to build on the area's strengths to create a cultural environment which supports our communities and individuals' health and well-being; attracts families and businesses to relocate here; and attracts visitor spend.

Therefore our vision is:

To be the best rural location to live, work, and visit underpinned by cultural excellence across the District.

To achieve this vision our objectives are to:

1. Research and define our cultural distinctiveness and its offer to inform future actions
2. Support people and organisations to develop and grow engagement in a diverse cultural and creative offer
3. Improve the infrastructure to support our current and future creative economy
4. Promote and improve our arts, heritage and cultural assets and surroundings.

1. RESEARCH AND DEFINE OUR CULTURAL DISTINCTIVENESS AND ITS OFFER TO INFORM FUTURE ACTIONS

Research to inform the future

What do we want to achieve?

We want to know what we have already that makes our area special, and how best we can use this to improve the lives of our current and future residents, encourage businesses to remain or relocate here, and attract more visitors.

We also want to see what needs to be done to ensure that everyday creativity and our cultural festivals and activities survive and thrive, and what we need to do to make this happen.

Our priority for this cultural strategy's lifetime and for the benefit of Craven as a whole we need to increase the number of 16 – 34 year olds currently living in the district (currently 44% below the national average for that age range) and we believe our cultural distinctiveness can act as a draw to that age group.

Mapping the existing strengths of our creative industries, heritage and cultural assets and the provision/accessibility of superfast broadband across the localities, and identifying how we can best use them to achieve our vision will include

- listening to our 16- 34 year olds about what will make this a Great Place to live and work
- investigating the benefits and barriers of rurality in the retention and attraction of young people to our Great Place and learn from national rural exemplars
- researching what we need to proactively do to enable young people and creative businesses to be entrepreneurial here and which partners we need to work with to make this happen
- identifying top targets for pilots, clusters, partnerships to enable change by working with cultural organisations and initiatives
- identifying key messages and developing a common story about our Great Place which businesses and communities relate to and use to promote it.

What progress has been made so far?

A successful funding application for a Great Place: Crossing the Watersheds programme of activities was made in partnership with South Lakeland District Council, Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority and the Lake District National Park Authority. The funding will enable us to research and celebrate the distinctiveness of

place to retain and attract younger people to our districts to influence, support and create our future economy.

What do we need to do next?

The research relating to Craven Museum & Gallery will inform the future development of the Town Hall and contribute to a Stage 2 Heritage Lottery Fund application which will be submitted in late 2017.

The venues research has highlighted the need for further training for venue managers and opportunities for digital streaming into venues of performances from Skipton Town Hall. Both of these areas of work are outlined in the Action Plan.

Visitor figures for Skipton will be analysed with a view to seeing how best to support the wider economy through cultural activity.

We will commission local research to help us build up analysis and understand what drives younger people to and from our region particularly in terms of the cultural offer and economy through the Great Place project. This body of work is the first piece of work which will benefit Craven and its cultural strategy through the Great Place: Crossing the Watersheds programme.

Broad themes will include:

- Existing strengths and opportunities
- Attracting younger people, benefits and barriers of rurality
- Identifying opportunities for pilots, clusters, partnerships
- Identifying key messages to develop a common story for brand development.

2.SUPPORT PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONS TO DEVELOP AND GROW ENGAGEMENT IN A DIVERSE CULTURAL AND CREATIVE OFFER

Support mechanisms for funding, skills, licensing

What do we want to achieve?

We want our residents, employers and visitors to have access to and engagement with arts, heritage and culture.

We want the provision to be as wide ranging as possible, not just reflecting the ages and races of our district.

Our aims reflect the values of the organisation 64 Million Artists and the recent King's College London report Towards Cultural Democracy.

We want culture and creativity to be genuinely accessible to all including taking into account the nine protected characteristics of age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation.

We want to raise the profile of the creative industries and the importance of their contribution to the local economy across Craven.

We want to maximise opportunities for the cultural sector in mainstream programmes including access to finance, education and skills.

We want to embed arts, heritage and culture in a range of key strategic documents so that cultural provision is accepted as essential to the continued vitality of the region's community life and economy.

What progress has been made so far?

As a significant contribution to these aims we seek to develop Skipton Town Hall as a cultural hub for the district, providing a clear focal point for arts and heritage activities across the district with the aspiration to become a significant cultural destination for the North. This cultural hub will be key in enabling accessible arts engagement as a hireable venue as well as being a venue in its own right.

Craven District Council staff at Skipton Town Hall, as part of its refurbishment process and via a Stage 1 Heritage Lottery Grant, has carried out public consultation about the role of Craven Museum and Gallery and its strengths and weaknesses to inform its future development as a cultural hub and to ensure maximum accessibility.

The Arts Council England funded Museum Resilience project has enabled Craven Museum and Gallery to experiment with engaging different audiences which will in turn inform future development of the venue.

A trial performance and events programme was delivered at Skipton Town hall Autumn/Winter 2016 during which information was gathered on audience preferences to inform future programming.

Visitor figures for Skipton are being collated on an ongoing process which shows the impact of cultural events on visitors to the town.

The Council supports individuals and organisations to develop their own activities rather than taking a top-down approach. Localism and a sense of ownership are particularly important where activities heavily rely on volunteers and the Council endeavours to build skills and capacity at a local level, working with grass roots organisations in the way that they prefer, and at the same time encouraging aspiration and good practice.

The Council already works with the key cultural festivals, organisations and venues within Craven including Grassington Festival, Skipton International Puppet Festival, Yarndale, Settle Stories, Voices of Craven, Pioneer Projects, Glusburn Institute, Settle Victoria Hall and The Folly among others.

The Council has an annual Service Level Agreement with Rural Arts On Tour to provide village venues with the opportunity to programme subsidised high quality live arts activity into their villages.

In addition, Ward Member grants, allowing every Craven District Councillor to respond to local needs by recommending the allocation of small amounts of money to support projects or activities that benefit the communities they represent, are available through Councillors.

What do we need to do next?

A Stage 2 application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for the refurbishment of Craven Museum and the Exhibition Gallery will be made in late 2017.

Further funding applications will be made to deliver the final phase of works at Skipton Town Hall which will include the rebuilding of the back stage rooms to provide more flexible spaces for public use and a completely new Learning Space.

Actions within the Town Hall will include

- Developing expertise to live stream master classes and workshops to the rurally isolated parts of the district through new equipment
- Building on pilot projects working with vulnerable community groups including adults with learning disabilities and people living with dementia.
- Supporting community users to develop creative content for performance and display at the venue.

Increased promotion of the On Tour offer will take place, alongside any other developmental opportunities for festivals and venues.

The Great Place: Crossing the Watersheds programme of activities will be particularly focussed on developing new strands of cultural activity which will be targeted at young people and young families in particular, working with existing cultural organisations to develop new ways of working.

In addition, through the Great Place: Crossing the Watersheds project we will

- Work on integrating culture and heritage into the LEPs' Strategic Economic Plans, working with partners to get agendas aligned at a strategic and tactical level
- Further embed arts, culture and heritage into Local Plans, (public art gain through Section 106 gain and CIL), Economic Development strategies (creative industries and creative jobs in mainstream) and Council/National Park Management Plans showing that Culture clearly delivers on economic and social targets
- Encourage towns and parishes to support culture by facilitating peer-to-peer mentoring/buddying with parishes who already precept for festivals and cultural activities which benefit their communities and economy
- Work with Planning, Licensing and Highways authorities to explore how changes to policies and procedures can make cultural activity simpler and affordable
- Maximise the contribution of culture and heritage to the growth of the tourism economy by working with the DMOs and with Lakes Culture to promote, enhance and strengthen a wider cultural tourism offer that embraces a younger audience and dynamic contemporary offer
- Create profile, recognition and participation opportunities for creativity and add value to our existing cultural programme, promoting it to a new, younger audience
- Capitalise on what we have and proactively develop new partnerships with local universities, FE colleges, and business to retain and create new opportunities for graduates, cultural apprenticeships and internships
- Work with urban cultural organisations to create new audiences and challenging content in a rural context
- Pilot and test with local NPOs and MPMs, Festivals, FE colleges and universities ways to upskill younger people to increase the resilience of cultural, arts and heritage organisations via a new creative pool of talent and new audiences
- Engage younger people in commissioning a more diverse range of exciting new arts and heritage events and product to promote our Great Place and give work experience to young/emerging talent
- Provide seed funding, pop-up opportunities and troubleshooting to enable risk taking and trialling
- Develop support networks for new and emerging cultural businesses to increase work, retail and workshop opportunities via successful initiatives we already have (Art Connections/Chrysalis Arts in Gargrave)

- Explore new opportunities through skills exchange and training around corporate and individual philanthropy, legacy giving, fundraising and marketing via social media
- Work with LEPs to use Growth Deal funding to involve creatives in public realm enhancement schemes, crafting distinctive places which benefit business communities.

3. IMPROVE THE INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT OUR CURRENT AND FUTURE CREATIVE ECONOMY

Capital, broadband

What do we want to achieve?

We want to help shape and create the right environment and conditions for innovative creatives to flourish through creative sector development. This might include work to do with capital development, or the provision of broadband.

We want development that can strengthen and enhance our existing best cultural and heritage assets, our leading cultural organisations and festivals and build on our existing cultural tourism offer, increasing engagement and everyday creativity.

For our existing cultural economy and organisations to survive and thrive, a new pool of creative talent is essential to take organisations forward into the future. We will develop the fundamentals needed for creative businesses and cultural organisations to survive and thrive, identify what creative practitioners as residents need to stay living in the area, seed funding and trialling to develop new product and get it to market, and using digital technology to increase engagement and sales.

What progress has been made so far?

In terms of our own buildings, Craven District Council owns Skipton Town Hall and has significantly invested in it leading to vastly improved access into the building, protecting the fabric of the building including heating and reroofing and also redeveloping redundant areas to attract commercial tenants to secure the long term financial viability of the Hall. Boosted by a £250,000 Arts Council England grant in 2016, a Stage 1 £98,000 Heritage Lottery Grant in 2016 and a further application in 2017/18 for over £1.2million, plus other significant capital fundraising, the Town Hall has already made significant progress towards becoming a 21st century cultural hub for the district.

Skipton Town Hall will provide a first class museum offering a comprehensive history of the district as a whole; a versatile and well equipped learning space for use by school and community groups and others; a white box gallery space enabling ambitious arts exhibitions; a refurbished concert and theatre space with high quality light, sound and projection equipment, and a live streaming facility to enable performances and workshops to be live streamed into the Town Hall as well as streamed out into to the district's rural venues.

The Town Hall will also house the Tourist Information Centre, informing residents and tourists about cultural activities, events, venues and places of historical interest across the district, making a direct link between the Craven story within the museum and collections and in addition delivering an invaluable service as front of house for all of the cultural activity within the venue, including box office, promotion and retail/secondary spend opportunity.

Staff will share their expertise with arts and heritage organisations to enable capacity building and knowledge and skills sharing. Small versatile rooms will be available for hire for Small and Medium Enterprises including sole trader creatives for business meetings and other activities. Opportunities for networking will be built into refurbishment programmes enabling creative business-to-business collaboration and professional development.

The new learning space will be a fully adaptable, flexible space, fit for multi-purpose, multi-age use. Its use will not be restricted to use by school groups; rather it will provide a resource for all age groups across a range of creative activity. Its development will be informed by consultation with potential user groups, Clore Duffield's Space for Learning publication and guidance for dementia friendly buildings.

In addition, redundant parts of the Town Hall have already been allocated for commercial use to tenants who will contribute to the success of the Town Hall both financially and also through complimentary leisure activities.

Other initiatives already complete include:

- Re-branding for Skipton Town Hall using Dementia-friendly guidance from the University of Stirling
- Staff training to deliver accredited Arts Awards in Bronze, Silver and Gold
- Development work to become a Heritage Education Hub for Historic England, and provide a base for Young Archaeologists in Craven
- Taking part or programming to take part in national initiatives including the Big Draw, Festival of Archaeology and National Science Week and other relevant local, national and international engagement and education campaigns.

The successful development of Skipton Town Hall has already contributed to raising the profile of the cultural sector within the district and will continue to do so during the period of refurbishment. Its availability as a hireable venue further supports the creative sector for those wishing to trial their own creative work.

The development of Skipton Town Hall as a cultural hub will be further augmented with live streamed performances and workshops, including from local, national and international performers. The Council's intention is that a number of village halls across the district will be upgraded to enable them to access live streamed performances from Skipton Town Hall, and also live stream their own performances into other venues, including perhaps local residential care homes, to act as a catalyst for a greater sense of community amongst isolated pockets of population.

A comprehensive survey of all community venues in Craven was carried out in late 2016/early 2017. Community venues were asked how well they are used and for what activities and how each venue wishes to develop. The response rate for the survey was 72%. This work will also help determine the delivery of streaming facilities.

The collation of Skipton's visitor figures enables us to make a direct link between cultural activities and tourism. Festivals and event managers are being encouraged to carry out evaluations which include questions about visitor spend.

The Council already works with Chrysalis Arts' Art Connections, the visual artists' and makers' network across North Yorkshire, providing information about business opportunities, training and financing which are relevant to them.

The Council's Economic Development Unit produces the Business News e-newsletter at least four times a year which highlights opportunities for the creative industries sector as well as mainstream businesses.

What do we need to do next?

Some of our future work will be determined as a result of the research work carried out through the Great Place: Crossing the Watersheds project. Our successful application enables us to start the delivery of the programme to help identify and shape the right conditions for innovative creatives and attract a new pool of creative talent.

Mapping the existing strengths of our creative industries, heritage and cultural assets and the provision/accessibility of superfast broadband across the localities will enable us to see the gaps and areas where extra support is needed.

Through the project, the Council will explore new ways of developing incubator units/creative clusters via Venture Capital and/or LEPs investment.

The village venues survey has highlighted areas of access which need improvement, particularly in relation to disabled access into venues and skills development. Village venues will be provided with opportunities for training around accessibility and be linked with North Yorkshire County Council's Stronger Communities Disability Forum.

During the lifetime of this strategy, the Council will work at a strategic level to improve facilities and opportunities for the creative industries.

4.PROMOTE AND IMPROVE OUR ARTS, HERITAGE AND CULTURAL ASSETS AND SURROUNDINGS

Public realm, planning

What do we want to achieve?

We want to maintain and enhance our heritage assets and public realm to support our communities and the wider economy through new initiatives and also through our varied landscapes and heritage buildings.

The quality of Craven's heritage assets, landscapes and public realm is an important factor in the success of our district whether it is in their contribution to residents' quality of life, the attraction of visitors or of businesses. Craven has one of the highest proportions of conservation areas and listed buildings in Yorkshire and this demonstrates how essential it is to Craven.

We want the Craven Museum within Skipton Town Hall to provide unique opportunities to access heritage spanning from Pre-History to Contemporary, using the collections ranging from archaeological to social/oral history. Craven's landscape provides unique clues to its heritage and we want this element to be investigated in the museum and promoted through the Tourist Information Centre.

Craven does not have a significant portfolio of art in the public realm – with the notable exception of the Andy Goldsworthy arch in North Craven near Thornton in Lonsdale, and the Slow Art installation on Gargrave's lock gates. We want to address this through future planning gains and other funding opportunities.

What progress has been made so far?

Craven Museum forms part of the West Yorkshire Museums Association and as such works actively in partnership to share learning, discovery and best practice across the region. The Museum is also committed to skills development for staff and volunteers and takes full advantage of training opportunities offered by the Association. Architects working on the next stage of development for the Craven Museum have been briefed about its important interpretive role for the district and this will be integrated into the new work being carried out.

Craven is beginning to make the most of opportunities to invest in the public realm including heritage significant areas like the Victorian Skipton railway station and the 200 year old Leeds-Liverpool Canal towpath. Wherever possible, artists will be engaged to interpret the heritage aspects of these projects, contributing to civic pride and economic regeneration.

There are a number of existing funding opportunities through Local Enterprise Partnership Growth Deals. Part of the Council's New Homes Bonus has been earmarked for the improvement of towns and villages in the district, including the public realm such as Cross Hills and Ingleton. The development of public art work,

including street furniture, artwork integrated into paving and so on which responds to and enhances local people's perception of their area will provide long term improvements to the settlements.

What do we need to do next?

Liaison with Local Enterprise Partnership Growth Deal projects, and programmes funded via the Council's New Homes Bonus, will take place to investigate opportunities for public realm improvement particularly in the areas around the Skipton's Victorian railway station, the 200 year old Leeds-Liverpool Canal towpath and the North Dales village of Ingleton.

As new funding strands emerge, the Council plans to celebrate its local distinctiveness with interventions of quality – either temporary or permanent – in the public realm.

Following development of Craven Museum, exploration of Craven's varied and interesting heritage will take place within the Museum itself, out in the landscape and within smaller partner museums such as The Museum of North Craven Life at Settle and Grassington Folk Museum. The Craven story will encompass sites of significance, heritage trails, walking tours, venues and other activities/events, curated as part of the development and signposted from the Tourist Information Centre.

Closer links will be made between Craven College and Craven Museum, utilising farming, industry, textile and social history collections to support learning. Secondary school, College and University student placements will be available at Craven Museum and a programme of talks and tours will encourage mature self-directed learners and general interest audiences to access the collections.

Craven Museum plans to become a link organisation for Historic England's CPD (Continuing Professional Development) programme for teaching staff at schools in the area. In addition to involvement in a key initiative to develop skills within history education, this gives Craven Museum the opportunity to cultivate its own networks within the education sector, which will benefit its ongoing development.

Section 106 funding may enable improvements to arts and heritage facilities on the site of substantial development, including improvement to the look of the development via public art work, which would be commissioned with intent to develop civic pride and a sense of local distinctiveness, with real regard to the heritage, culture and scale of the site.

Planning Gain or the Community Infrastructure Levy can serve areas larger than most development sites. This revenue will therefore be allocated to deliver the priorities within this strategic document, including where necessary, refurbishing village halls and other venues to enable them to offer more arts, heritage and cultural opportunities and to become satellites to the cultural hub. With the continuing development of technology and increased speed and range of broadband coverage

it is likely that there will be new demands for technology-related spend to enable access to the arts, heritage, library services and culture via village halls.

New planning documentation in the Council's Local Plan includes provision made for Section 106 funding in relation to specific developments having site specific public art commissioned to promote local distinctiveness and allude to the cultural heritage of the site. Once this has been ratified, the Council will be able to capitalise on this.

The Council will endeavour to work with land owners in addressing the issues involving the properties on the Historic England at Risk register, including exploring additional interpretive signage.

Through the Great Place: Crossing the Watersheds programme of activity we will capitalise on and strengthen our current flagship heritage initiatives and emerging cultural collaborations through Lakes Culture, Windermere Jetty, Re-imagining Wordsworth, and Lakes Alive in South Lakeland; and Stories in Stone and Skipton Town Hall/Craven Museum & Gallery in Craven, and embed culture, arts and heritage into strategic priorities for the future.

Through the project, the Council will explore via Venture Capital and/or LEPs investment for financing public realm improvements which will give opportunities for public art.

A successful World Heritage Site designation for the Lake District brings another scale of learning and opportunity. We will identify the relationships and activities needed to embed this strategic direction. We will promote culture's contribution to growth and build the sector's capacity to deliver it.