



DIWYLLIANT
CONWY
CULTURE

CREU CONWY - CREATING THE SPARK

A Cultural Strategy for Conwy County Borough
2021 - 2026



CREU CONWY

Draft Culture Strategy for Conwy County Borough, 2021-2026

This is a draft culture strategy for Conwy County which we would like you to develop with us. The ideas in the strategy have emerged from conversations held with organisations and individuals across the region. They also connect with and reinforce a number of national and county plans and strategies. We know this strategy can only succeed if we work together and Conwy's communities can make it their own.

We want culture to drive economic growth and improve wellbeing in the aftermath of COVID-19. To achieve this we want culture and creativity to be a common thread running through everything that happens here in Conwy. So this document is both a vision of a new way of doing things and a practical roadmap that will help this and other strategic plans to really make a difference.

Supported by:



The strategy comes at an unprecedented time in the story of Conwy, where COVID-19 has severely impacted our wellbeing and economy and we are facing significant challenges due to climate change. We now have an opportunity to reset our goals and work towards a more inclusive and sustainable model of cultural delivery that helps us to renew and reconnect our communities.

As we look to the future we see culture as a powerful tool that can help us renew our way of life. We will bid for the UK City of Culture 2025, representing our region and Wales. From the smallest house in Britain to one of Wales' most imposing castles; from the great mountains of the Carneddau to miles and miles of endless sandy beaches, we are a place of contrasts, even extremes. Our landscape is dramatic and spectacular; our heritage is both imposing and subtle, obvious and hidden. We may be small, but we are mighty. Our bid will use the spirit of playfulness and adventure to connect everyone who lives, works and visits here with the transformational power of culture and will celebrate Conwy on the world stage.

If we are to use culture as a driver for more connected, inclusive and resilient communities our cultural sector will need to be properly resourced. With that in mind we have suggested some new ways to fund culture, together with programming, governance and capacity building ideas to deliver success.



We invite you to join us in developing the vision and ideas set out in this draft.

Charlie McCoubrey,
Leader,
Conwy County Borough Council

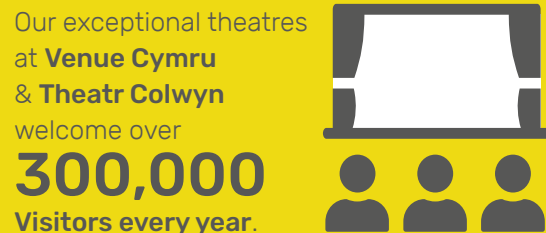
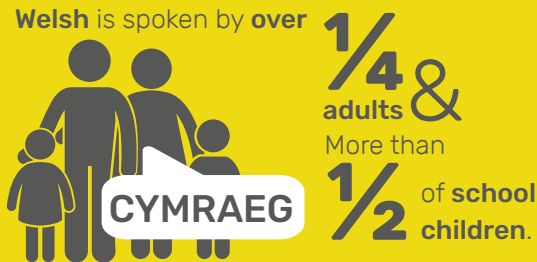
CULTURE IN CONWY

What is culture?

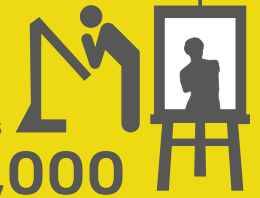
It can be difficult to define! Culture is our way of life, our language and traditions. It captures everything from arts and music to our shared literature, heritage and unique landscapes.

Conwy is a county of beauty and contrast; from bustling coastal resorts to rural communities steeped in the farming tradition. Welsh is a living language here; it's the key that unlocks a world of literature, music, poetry, and the traditions of our daily life. Village and agricultural shows and festivals, eisteddfodau, and groups such as Young Farmers and Merched y Wawr all contribute to a vibrant contemporary Welsh cultural scene that underpins daily community life. Many well-known writers, musicians and other performers have originated here, and there is enormous potential to grow the audience for local talent and to enhance our distinctive Welsh welcome.

CULTURE SNAPSHOT



A flourishing network of **art galleries & independent museums** welcome over **100,000** annual visitors.



Our **libraries & Culture Centre** are **cultural hubs** with more than **400,000** Visits each year.



We have nearly **400** creative businesses employing around **3000** people.



Conwy hosts around **400** **international, national & home grown events** each year.



Coastal Conwy has nearly **40 miles** of **beautiful beaches** & several **Victorian promenades**.





Maen y Bardd burial chamber, Rowen.© CCBC

SETTING THE SCENE

In writing this strategy we have taken into consideration linked acts, strategies and documents relating to culture, economic development and wellbeing, both from Conwy Council and from a number of other major stakeholders at national and regional levels.

Key points that connect to this strategy include:

Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2014:

Better use of culture to support health benefits; reaching those who think that Culture is 'Not for Us'.

Conwy Corporate Plan 2017-2022:

A thriving cultural county; a place where people have a voice; skills, growth, and the environment are core to our future.

Conwy Economic Growth Strategy & Recovery Plan:

Culture and creative industries at the heart of town centre regeneration; developing capacity of Conwy's cultural, creative and tourism industries.

Conwy's Welsh Language Strategy 2017-2022:

Increasing the use of Welsh within communities and within the family; promoting use of Welsh amongst children and young people as part of daily life.

Conwy Library and Information Strategy 2021-2026:

Developing our libraries into Community Hubs that provide a wide range of services and activities.

Conwy Destination Management Plan:

Strengthening Conwy's national and international reputation as a cultural hotspot; more joined up adventurous programming; transformational tourism, especially beyond the main season; using iconic venues and nature for cultural events and art.



Herding sheep in Penmachno. Undated image, Llandudno Library Collection (Conwy Archive Service).

6 VISION: CREATING THE SPARK!



Winter Light © CCBC

Culture creates the spark for economic growth, wellbeing and connection.

Culture can enrich our lives, support our wellbeing and grow our economy.

This is more important than ever given the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the growing challenges presented by climate change. This is a chance to reset our priorities and look forward to how culture can support a more sustainable and inclusive future for the county. To drive positive change we want to put meaningful cultural experiences at the heart of post-COVID regeneration.

We advocate an inclusive and welcoming approach to culture and the Welsh language in Conwy, one which both respects and celebrates the strengths and diversities of the area. Culture should be accessible, fun and relevant to everyone, including those who have traditionally found themselves on the margins of mainstream culture. To make sure the strategy reflects these principles we have based our ideas around the principles of being **adventurous**, **playful** and **connected**.

What does, **adventurous**, **playful** and **connected** cultural activity look like?

ADVENTUROUS

Conwy is the adventure capital of Wales and we believe that culture can be an adventure too! We want people to feel confident and excited about taking cultural adventures, including people who might think culture is 'not for us.'

Imagine Trail, an ambitious Augmented Reality App is being developed as part of the National Lottery Heritage Fund Great Place Scheme, Imagine Colwyn Bay.

Scheduled to launch in summer 2021 the app is based on established local heritage trails and will layer creative and historic content over familiar buildings and landmarks, creating an adventure out of the everyday. Co-produced by the community, the app will broaden the appeal of local history to a wider audience.



Cledwyn, I'm a Celebrity...Get me out of here! © ITV

PLAYFUL

We have already shown here in Conwy some great examples of playful and adventurous cultural thinking and programming.

A huge white 'Hollywood-style' painted sign on the hillside above Llanrwst made sure that visitors to the 2019 National Eisteddfod knew they were in the right place! This playful, and highly visual piece of public art was a partnership project led by Ffiwsar. More recently, we used the massive impact of 'I'm a Celebrity ... Get Me Out of Here' as inspiration for Oriel Colwyn to create a trail around Abergele.

This fun and exciting trail was rooted in the town's history, the surrounding area and Gwrych Castle in particular. Primary school children were involved, short films with archive imagery of the castle were projected on to shop windows and vinyl artwork from the castle's archives was placed in empty shops. More than 100 members of the community featured in 'Celebrity Town', a large scale, open-air photography exhibition, which recognised the people who live, trade and work in Abergele.

CONNECTED

When people, creatives and groups come together some really special events can take place.

Unbind the Wing was a celebration to mark 100 years since women got the right to vote, highlighting the historic link to the suffragette movement through Laura McLaren, Lady Aberconwy. A series of community workshops culminated in theatrical performance. Actors, alongside a community cast, led the audience on a march through history and the beautiful gardens of Bodnant. The project, led by the National Trust, involved collaboration and built connections between local (Pigtown Theatre, Embroiderers Guild, Conwy Coastal Voices) and national partners (Welsh National Opera, Amnesty International).



Unbind the Wing © Kristina Banholzer

STRATEGY OBJECTIVES

We have built the strategy around three areas: Programme, Places and People.

The right combination of **Places** (buildings, space and facilities) and a great **Programme** of events and activities can inspire **People**, building capacity, and creating opportunities and learning. Nothing written here is finalised. We want to work with **you** to refine these ideas.

PROGRAMME

We want to encourage everyone in Conwy to take their own cultural adventures and develop a more innovative cultural sector. We want to step outside our comfort zone and be truly adventurous in our cultural programming.

We know that a stronger cultural offer can bring better outcomes – both economically and in helping to drive stronger health and wellbeing outcomes. As we start to rebuild following the COVID-19 pandemic, we want to ignite the spark of culture into the county's calendar of events and work towards thorough integration of culture into planning and delivery.

Our **aims** for Conwy's cultural programming are:

- Culture is accessible to everyone and is a big part of everyday life in Conwy
- Visitors to Conwy will be wowed by Conwy's culture
- Conwy's cultural offer is unique and cutting edge



Northern Eye Photography Festival © Paul Sampson



Ôl Llywelyn, Llanrwst. © Keith Morris

We would like to support the development of a strong cultural programme to add value to the county's already fantastic events offer. Introducing cultural elements can really strengthen existing events and inject added vibrancy. Some events could be up-scaled and extended to link with others, though the success and timing of this will depend upon the rate of post-pandemic recovery. New cultural programming would be developed with local artists, creative people and organisations and where possible could make use of our many iconic cultural assets as a backdrop.

Table 1 (appendix) outlines some suggestions for developing our cultural calendar in Conwy as we recover from COVID-19. With sufficient community buy-in these could be developed via a collaborative partnership across public, private and community sectors (see People section, below).

Key to successful programming is effective marketing and communication. Significant impact can be achieved by making sure that existing events and festivals are linked-up and promoted under a shared culture banner (see action plan).



PLACES

Place is about making even more use of the outstanding landscapes, places and buildings that make Conwy unique.

We want these spaces to become backdrops for cultural activity with a national and international appeal that gets local people really excited and involved. Place is also about playful development and building a stage for life in Conwy, from town centre regeneration to education. There is a place for the serious and the practical which we will balance with the playful and inventive.



LAUNCHPADS

We will create a cluster of **cultural Launchpads** focused upon the county's five largest towns, Abergele, Colwyn Bay, Conwy, Llandudno, and Llanrwst.

In Launchpad areas we will concentrate upon bringing people, ideas, and creativity together to deliver distinctive local projects. The emphasis here will be a creative placemaking approach, which simply means we will work alongside local communities to creatively reinvent their local environment. We want to support each community to reclaim the magic of their cultural assets and reinvigorate their public spaces.

While they are spotlight areas, these Launchpads are the key to regeneration throughout the wider county and will see associated projects and benefits reaching into other areas including Kimmel Bay, Llandudno Junction, Penmaenmawr and our rural communities. For example, we may see the creation of 'slow culture routes' focusing on areas such as food and heritage that encourage visitors to explore the rest of the county and stay longer, reminiscent of the once popular Scenic Routes. Some Launchpads may develop a specific focus or theme depending upon the ideas and projects favoured by the community.

For example, recent work in Colwyn Bay has seen an emergent focus upon the creative industries, which is explored in the case study below.

The Launchpads will help us to make the most of our cultural capital. The county has clusters of excellent cultural assets including libraries, theatres, the new Culture Centre and world-class heritage in Conwy's castles.

We want to see these assets used to their fullest potential and believe that the Launchpad approach will support placemaking at a local scale that is sensitive to the special characteristics of each place.

The local scale will also facilitate the effective delivery of radical solutions that provide the infrastructure needed for successful cultural development such as signage schemes, accessibility to venues, and availability of printed media and interpretation.



Male bathers at the Pier Pavilion, Colwyn Bay. Conwy Archive Collection.

COLWYN BAY: LAUNCHPAD

Building on the Baylife regeneration work and more recently the **Imagine Colwyn Bay** National Lottery Heritage Fund Great Place Scheme, Colwyn Bay is positioned as an emerging hub for creative industries.

Imagine has established Creative and Digital Colwyn, a network to offer support and provide development opportunities. This includes a pilot bursary scheme which offers a grant to enable creatives to identify the bespoke training, mentoring or development they need in order to grow their business.

A cross sector Town Team has come together to support collaborative partnerships and to explore how cultural activity, community-led development and use of buildings can reinvent our town centre to support well-being and economic growth.

During late summer 2021 a series of happenings and screenings will showcase community co-produced work, celebrate sense of place, launch new community assets such as new place branding, the Imagine Trail App and incorporate other ideas from this strategy, including a plan for Colwyn Bay 2030 - how through Programme, Places and People, and locally-driven cultural activity, we can bring vacant buildings into use and bring the town to life.



Northern Eye Photography Festival © Paul Sampson

What role can our key cultural assets play in developing the Launchpads?



Area Library at Conwy Culture Centre © CCBC.

LIBRARIES

Conwy County Borough Council's draft Library and Information Strategy 2021-2026 focuses upon creating innovative and inclusive library spaces that offer a range of cultural activities.

Libraries can support our growing Launchpad areas in their role as community hubs. They provide a space for sharing ideas, learning, creativity and enterprise, which fosters community-driven change. Libraries are safe spaces where people can easily access a range of basic services and are a lifeline to those who find themselves isolated or excluded from community life. The blending of culture within the library space – literature, film and digital media, heritage and arts – provides a brilliant opportunity as a cultural gateway to participation from those who may not normally have the opportunity to engage.

HERITAGE SITES, MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

The County boasts a number of museums, galleries and heritage venues, including six accredited museums.

Llandudno and Penmaenmawr Museums have benefitted from significant National Lottery Heritage Fund investment over the last five years. As with libraries these venues are spaces that inspire people and generate ideas, build skills and employability and promote community cohesion. The success of this strategy and each Launchpad area will rely on building stronger networks between these venues and fostering joined-up projects, programming and training to provide the support the independent heritage sector needs to flourish.



Plas Mawr, Conwy © Bob Farrow

THEATRES

Conwy's theatres in Llandudno and Colwyn Bay are important assets, between them bringing almost 350,000 visitors through their doors and contributing significantly to the economy and to cultural education and participation for young people, for example through the take pART initiative.

There is scope to develop more complementary programming, which would allow an even broader reach as well as supporting smaller independent venues and initiatives. In the longer term, collaboration could lead to a new theatre festival, possibly using outdoor locations during the summer.



Theatr Colwyn © CCBC

CHURCH, CHAPEL, SCHOOL, PUB

These have been the cultural heart of many small towns and villages over the years and are still anchors for cultural life. We want to foster a strong link between these and the Launchpad areas.

Conwy has supported numerous faith tourism initiatives in recognition of the role played by church and chapel in identity, cultural participation and supporting the Welsh language. The strategy will build on this work to ensure that churches and chapels are linked in to Launchpad programming.

The new curriculum represents the opportunity for more creative and integrated learning. Conwy's schools could adopt cultural education models such as Norway's cultural schoolbag¹ and STEM initiatives which are moving to STEAM by including arts. To help both children and creative practitioners rebuild after COVID we would like to consider a model called **Creative Catch-Up** that would work with the County's creatives to run catch-up projects and sessions.

More than ever our pubs are in need of support. Can they be celebrated as places for great music and poetry as well as fantastic local food and beer? Thriving pubs are a vital component of a week-round night-time economy and an important cultural draw. We want to link pubs' cultural and food offer with the Launchpad areas, which will require funding, joint programming and improved promotion.

CONWY ON THE BIG SCREEN....

A number of locations in Conwy have already been used as inspiring backdrops for media, including the recent 'I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here' and others including Drew Pritchard's Salvage Hunters and Ch4's 'It's a Sin' which was filmed in Rhos-on-Sea.

The strategy action plan will include a commitment to continuing promotion of Conwy county's extraordinary landscapes, towns and villages as film locations.

¹ www.denkulturelleskolesekken.no/english-information/this-is-the-cultural-schoolbag/

Hafodunos, Llangernyw,
along the Pilgrim's Way
running from Basingwerk
Abbey to Bardsey Island

© Mike Costello
North Wales
Pilgrim's Way



PEOPLE

Developing people is the essential ingredient for delivering a successful strategy.

Conwy has a wide community of people passionate about the county's culture. We have heard from people and organisations across the county that a more connected cultural sector will have a greater impact. What do we mean by this? We can achieve more meaningful benefits by strengthening and creating new cultural partnerships and supporting more joined-up planning and delivery of projects. How can we better organise ourselves to develop a strong cultural offer across the County?



Enid and Irene, Straeon Ysgol Bodlondeb Stories
© Lisa Heledd Jones

GOVERNANCE

Culture can be an innovative tool to deliver on the wider agendas of the council and its partners across the county and the strategy will support projects that put culture at the heart of policy and decision-making across a range of sectors. The soft power of culture can support strategic objectives for tourism, rural development, education and young people. In this strategic approach, the second strategy model of cultural development² recognises the power of culture to find new solutions to major challenges as well as providing the shared story which binds a region together.

The local authority provides grants to independent cultural operators, also directing resources at running venues (theatres and conference centres, libraries and the Culture Centre) and to staff who facilitate relationships with cultural organisations and deliver events. It also owns many of the county's flagship cultural assets. The Council is therefore uniquely placed in scale and resources to grow the county's cultural sector. However, like most authorities, the responsibility for culture is spread across a number of services and externally through bodies such as Cadw and the National Trust.



Family Dance, LLAWN © Paul Sampson

CULTURE CONWY

We want to develop a new cultural model for Conwy that will bring wide-ranging organisations and agendas together. We wish to:

1. Establish a strategic partnership enterprise – as the forum for culture in Conwy to oversee the implementation of this strategy. This will foster a balanced and connected approach to cultural planning where the county's smaller and independent stakeholders can work collaboratively with – and influence – organisations working at a regional or national scale, ensuring that projects and initiatives are organic and needs-based.
2. Undertake some realignment of the council's culture-related activity to improve synergy in the delivery of the council's culture related functions (this is already in progress).
3. Establish local cultural partnerships or Town Teams to oversee and deliver the 5 Launchpads. These creative alliances will feed in to the larger strategic 'Culture Conwy' body.

The structures in 1) and 3) could function similarly to a cultural compact³, an innovative partnership model designed to support the local cultural sector and enhance its contribution to development, with a special emphasis on cross-sector engagement beyond the cultural sector and local authority.

It is also critical that any governance model includes effective communication and development support for the volunteers, who are represented at the Conwy Heritage Forum, and the creative freelancer sector represented at groups such as Beth Nesaf? The new 'Culture Conwy' group will maintain close links with the Heritage Forum and ensure adequate representation at both.



Abergele Arts Trail © Paul Sampson

² The World Cities Report 2012. London.

³ The Cultural Cities Enquiry, Core Cities UK.



Dancing the Decades Tour to Conwy Care Homes © Dawns I Bawb

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Loneliness and isolation are ongoing challenges which have been further compounded by COVID-19.

Lone pensioners occupy more than 18% of the county's households and around 13,600 people are receiving unpaid care. Evidence shows that cultural engagement really does make people healthier and happier. We want to encourage people to be more connected with cultural and civic life and with each other, and to measure the effect of cultural activity upon their wellbeing.

We will explore the feasibility of a range of culture-for-wellbeing partnership projects including social prescribing and arts-in-health initiatives, which will be identified through further research and development during the action planning process.

CASE STUDY

Create is a Conwy Arts Trust project run by Venue Cymru, supported with additional funding from BBC Children in Need.

Create targets young people experiencing mental health difficulties who are referred to the project by social services and health partners. Young people have opportunities to experience a wide range of arts genres, which encourages them to find new ways to express themselves and get involved in the arts.

Some initial ideas around culture and wellbeing include:

- Invite people to develop their own **Adventure Diary** built around the Five Ways to Wellbeing model⁴. The diary will capture current levels of cultural engagement, incentivise activity and measure participants' sense of wellbeing. The findings will help us to plan programmes that alleviate the effects of loneliness and isolation, which may be particularly pronounced following the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Develop a **Cultural Passport** available to both local people and visitors, which could be introduced alongside the adventure diary, with an app being developed for both. Encouraging engagement, access and ownership, the passport could include financial or other incentives, such as offers and exclusive entry at certain times. It could track participant data to enable tailored pop-ups alerting the user to relevant events. It could also be used to generate bespoke itineraries based on an individual's specific interests. It could tie in with existing apps such as the **Imagine** Trail App in Colwyn Bay. The passport could be free or discounted for groups who need more support to engage with culture.

CASE STUDY

Conwy Libraries have used The Reader's model of **Shared Reading** sessions to help improve emotional and mental wellbeing through enjoying and experiencing literature.

It uses the power of creative literature to support wellbeing in a community setting. Patients and service users referred by a range of partners meet weekly to read classic fiction and poetry together and share responses and experiences.

⁴ <https://bcuhb.nhs.wales/health-advice/five-ways-to-wellbeing/>

WELSH LANGUAGE AND THE DISTINCTIVE CONWY WELCOME

Apps like the two above and the Culture Trail introduced earlier are perfect vehicles for promoting, enjoying and embedding Welsh language and music into cultural experiences.

Studies show that visitors enjoy the 'culture shock' of encountering new words and that this can enhance their cultural experience of a place. The use of the language can contribute to a sense of authenticity and can create more meaningful exchanges between (for example) host and guest. We will explore a range of different methods for introducing Welsh in playful and accessible ways as part of the app user experience, ideally helping to prepare people for basic Welsh exchanges that are joyful and unthreatening. Digital platforms are just the beginning, and we can explore ideas around themed events, printed media, playful temporary signage and exhibitions all focused around introducing Welsh language and music in different locations, working in partnership with organisations such as Menter Iaith.



Tŷ Mawr Wybrnant © National Trust Images Arnhel De Derra

CASE STUDY

In 2021, Welsh Language Music Day was enhanced using simple but effective digital outreach from CCBC's Welsh Language and Development Officer.

A playlist of five Welsh language songs, easily accessible via a QR code, was shared with schools across Conwy County. This gave pupils the opportunity to immerse themselves in Welsh language and culture and to discuss the music in a classroom setting. The project has evolved to include a Welsh language 'Band of the Month' which is shared with schools alongside a recommended playlist.



Ruby Gibbens, Twrch Twrch, LLAWN © Mark McNulty

CREATIVE CAPACITY BUILDING

To deliver its potential as an adventurous cultural county, there must be a **flourishing and effective creative sector** in Conwy.

Whether that is a local community arts group or a digital communications agency, all organisations and businesses have a role to play in creating a vibrant Conwy with sustainable jobs and well-connected communities. The impact of COVID-19 means that arts groups, charities and creative businesses need more funding support than ever to deliver the vital services they provide.

To strengthen the resilience capacity of the arts sector we will **build on the bursary scheme** initiated by Imagine Colwyn Bay, **increase access to funding and space through our finance and asset strategy** and **develop our people through a creative education strategy** spanning all years from primary to further education.

During the COVID-19 pandemic more than 140 Freelancers have been supported in Conwy through the Cultural Recovery Fund. There is a need to build upon this support and link with the work of Creative Wales who are developing a Freelancer Pledge to foster effective working between the public sector and creative freelancers.



Towards Hiraethog, Rural Conwy © CCBC

TOURISM SKILLS AND DEVELOPMENT

We need to change perceptions of the tourism and hospitality sector as offering limited career prospects and below average incomes.

There is a clear link between a strengthened cultural offer and successful tourism. The combination of a strong creative industry base and a year-round, cultural tourism model can deliver against the key priority of creating more sustainable jobs. It can also ensure that the targets Conwy is setting for tourism growth are achieved, especially if allied to a higher value retail sector and a more vibrant night-time economy.

Conwy has developed a Tourism Ambassador Programme, aimed at community and tourism businesses, which includes modules on local attractions, heritage and arts. This will play a crucial role in upskilling staff working in the sector and support the wider community to engage more with tourism. The scheme is intended to tie-in with Grŵp Llandrillo Menai's Tourism Academy which is working to promote tourism as a 'proper job' that opens the door to opportunity and progression.

There is also scope to build on initiatives, which emerged during COVID-19 to encourage long term connections with people who are isolated or lonely.

Volunteering and similar programmes to train up culture champions or mentors will provide an important route to skills and capacity building within the wider community.

CASE STUDY

Night Out helps communities across Wales put on professional shows in their locality.

Working in conjunction with local authorities it takes away the financial risk for a village hall committee or similar group putting on the event.

" This is an excellent scheme which allows us to have shows that would otherwise be beyond our reach. We have no amenities in Cwm Penmachno and without these shows our community would be culturally and socially poorer"

(Cwm Community Action Group).

YOUNGER AUDIENCES

Middle-aged, educated people and especially women tend to make up core cultural audiences. Young adults in the 18-29 age group are much less likely to be part of that audience.

Our ideas for a more adventurous cultural programme and more active targeting of younger performers and creatives will help to engage this group.

We will continue to work to **strengthen the link between culture and schools**, including monitoring the potential re-launch of Arts Council of Wales projects such as Lead Creative Schools and developing the **Creative Catch-up** programme introduced earlier on. We will also build on the success of schemes such as the young heritage ambassador programme developed through the new Conwy Culture Centre, and look to broaden the opportunities for Agored and other forms of accreditation. The strategy can look to explore the possibilities of working with partners such as the Urdd and Conwy County Borough Council's Youth Service.



Criw Celf Conwy © CCBC

FUNDING

The need to develop new funding models is an inevitable requirement for future cultural funding.

Significant cuts have impacted the largely public sector-driven funding model. Funding to Arts Council of Wales fell by 18% between 2012 and 2018. Conwy Council has had to find savings of £34.5m between 2015 and 2020, which has inevitably reduced the availability of funding for culture.

Through the Culture Conwy governance structure it would be possible to create a Cultural Venture Fund that combines sources of income to fund activity, such as:



Gladys Roberts mussel fishing in Conwy © Conwy Archive Service

- Commercial income
- Private sector contributions including Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)/ Sponsorship
- Exploration of alternatives to a bed tax such as voluntary schemes
- Social prescribing
- Community share/bond issue
- Co-ordinated funding applications to funds currently inaccessible to local authorities
- Procurement - development of local supply chain by support to smaller organisations when tendering and delivering to allow them to expand
- Development of a Property Development Trust to enable alternative use of assets, to purchase and activate empty buildings and to invest externally
- New financial markets e.g. sustainable investment funds
- Public agencies: e.g. can Conwy's creative sector create attractive investment options for external agencies - can it help Welsh Water solve its challenges with regards to flood prevention or help housing associations tackle problems connected with our ageing population?
- Private investment.

MAKING IT HAPPEN

The process of implementation has already begun through wide-ranging engagement with people who are passionate about Conwy's future.

This has helped to generate interest in the potential of this strategy, which will build momentum as we move to the delivery phase. What next?

A. Adopt the new narrative and embed it in decision-making processes at all levels across all sectors. This would be in the form of a simple set of questions:

1. **Adventurous:** does this make an adventure of the everyday?
2. **Playful:** will this make people stop, smile and/or join in?
3. **Connected:** does this bring people and/or places together?

B. Establish, commit, and put in place the resources required to deliver and fund it:

1. Organisational structures and staffing including creating Town Teams and co-producing Launchpad action plans
2. Asset management
3. Finance.

APPENDIX

IDEAS FOR CULTURAL PROGRAMMING TABLE 1

Spring	Festival of Conwy	Showcasing the best our county has to offer across heritage, local industries, food, arts, and music. With sustainable living and tourism as its focus, the festival would promote the County's world class producers, makers and diverse businesses, bringing existing activities such as Conwy Seed Fair and Conwy River Festival under its promotional banner.
	Gogs Film Festival	A major new film festival with a particular focus on Welsh-produced films, run in partnership with Mad as Birds Films.
Summer		Existing festivals could be strengthened by adding in a stronger cultural connection, for example, linking our coastal events in Llandudno (Pier to Pier) and Conwy (River Festival) with a parallel programme of cultural events.
	Slow Routes	Abergele – Llanrwst could become one of a series of slow routes where people are encouraged to hop off their mode of transport and appreciate the world around them, connecting with rural Welsh culture from traditional buildings, historic chapels and ancient trees to popular walking routes, shops and eateries.
Autumn	Culture Trail	Combining new and existing content and places, building on current events including Open Doors, Northern Eye Photography Festival, Imagine Trail and picking up elements from the county's former Helfa Gelf open studios festival. This would fit with the Adventure theme, encouraging locals and visitors to follow the trail around the county.
Winter		Enhance and strengthen existing events between October and February and actively attract new events during the winter 2022/2023 period and extend the season.
	Winterlight Chapter 3	Building on the Winterlight story of the mermaid captured by the ringmaster. Working with Walk the Plank and Illuminos to produce a touring spectacle.

2020		2021	2022	2023
FEASIBILITY	DEVELOPMENT		DELIVERY	DELIVERY
Where we are now	Strategic focus	Develop and resource	Regularly monitor, review and refresh	Regularly monitor, review and refresh
Identifying local stakeholders, making links, stakeholder engagement (workshops and consultation). Strategic review of documentation and data	People	Establish governance and skills	Formation and launch of Conwy Culture group	Pilot culture for Well-being projects
			Skills audits and training	Business support programmes for creative industry businesses
			Complete Creative Tourism Audit	Develop and pilot culture-for-Well-being projects
			Build 3rd sector capacity/skills	Build 3rd sector capacity/skills
	Programme	Action planning	Produce marketing and communications strategy	Deliver marketing and communications strategy
			Develop seasons-based cultural programme	Deliver seasons-based cultural programme
			Work up City of Culture Bid with partners	Work up City of Culture Bid with partners
	Places	Develop Launchpad plans	Create Town Teams & establish cultural Launchpads	Produce vacant commercial space strategy for creative/cultural industries
			Create Launchpad action plans	Revisit existing asset reviews
			Event planning in and around cultural assets	Event delivery in and around cultural assets
	Funding	Creation of new funding model	Create Cultural Venture Fund and establish income streams	Continue to identify funding opportunities



LLANRWST

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Customers with hearing or speech impairments can contact any Council service by dialling 18001 before the number they require.