

BBWCVS ARTS AND CULTURE FORUM



Minutes of the meeting on 4th October 2005 at Timberlog Youth Centre

Present:

Fiona Cheek (minutes)	BBWCVS
Stephanie Parry	Cherry Tree Primary
Vin Harrop	Commission for an Essex Gallery
Mike Beecher	Essex Youth Roadshow / Bandtrain
Celia Ebrahimi	Hilltop Infants School
Gina Stickings	Essex Youth Service
Barbara Bowhill	Essex Youth Service
Denise Gannon (Chair)	Basildon Stitching Club
Tony Guyon	Interlock!

Apologies:

Paul Nagle	BDAA
Alan Morgan	Woodlands School
Mike Harrington	START
Sue Chapman	Basildon Stitching Club
Ann Coltman	Basildon Stitching Club
Debbie Rogan	Wickford C of E Infants School
Fran Wilde	Artist
Pauline McMillan	Oakfield Primary School
Peter Patterson	Basildon Arts Trust

Minutes of the Last Meeting (7th September)

Arts and Culture Season: first bullet point should read 'it was agreed to include philately as well as needle arts'.

Towngate Theatre Update

A letter expressing concerns about the Council's plans for the Towngate Theatre was sent out to Bala Mahendran, Chief Executive of Basildon District Council on 26th September (a copy of the letter was included in the pre-meeting mailout). The letter was copied in to a number of key politicians and senior managers at Basildon District Council. A reply was received dated 30th September 2005 from Councillor Malcolm Buckley, who is the Leader of Basildon District Council. Denise read out the letter, and the Forum felt that the contents were reiterating the position of the Leader of the Council that had previously been publicised. The letter is attached as Appendix 1.

ACTION: Denise to wait for further replies and to comment at next meeting

Kick up the Arts!

Paul Nagle wished to let members of the Forum know that a budget for Kick up the Arts! had yet to be finalised and would be included with the minutes as Appendix 2.

Vin said that he is looking for a well-known writer to write about Basildon and its architecture and heritage for his Our Town, Our Heritage project. He is also looking for a competent architecture photographer. Vin also

proposed integrating the project into the Kick up the Arts! season. Information about Our Town, Our Heritage can be found in Appendix 3.
ACTION: if anyone has suggestions, please contact Fiona at the CVS office who will pass on details to Vin

A discussion took place around the venues for Kick up the Arts! Schools seemed to be quite a useful option. Two schools in Wickford (Hilltop Infants and Wickford C of E Infants) and one in Basildon (Woodlands) had already volunteered. Tony Guyon had suggested possible venues at Northlands Park (see minutes 7/9/05). Gina and Barbara said that the Youth Services premises could also be used. They would like to incorporate sculpture, acetate and porcelain painting workshops as part of 'Kick up the Arts!' and showed examples of work created by young people, the Forum agreed that this could be included.
ACTION: Fiona to approach Brenda Neadley to find out who the Extended Schools Co-ordinators are for Billericay and also Basildon.

Fiona spoke of a contemporary operatic group, Boheme, in Basildon town centre near MVC on 29th September. She said that the group seemed to go down quite well with shoppers, although some did look a bit bemused and surprised at the reality of amplified street performance in Basildon! Boheme were on a national 'street tour' and are due to come back to Basildon to perform in the Eastgate shopping centre around the 21st December. The Forum discussed the best approach at looking into how to get authority to put on street performances in Basildon town centre.
ACTION: Fiona to contact the Town Centre Manager, Jim Furnival, via BDC

Comments were also made at the Forum about the lack of publicity for the street performance and also about the NHS Trust art exhibition that was open to the public in the Towngate Theatre on 22nd September. Concerns were also raised about the general lack of publicity for events. The District Diary no longer does a 'dairy dates' page and there is no longer a Club File or a published District events leaflet. At a previous meeting, Cllr Headley had said the reinstatement of the events leaflet would be considered.

Mike Beecher raised an issue regarding the Towngate Theatre and how many people that can perform onstage at the Theatre at any one time. Mike thought a new restriction of a maximum of 50 people had been brought in. Mike expressed concern that this would not allow for things like Christmas variety shows.

ACTION: To be raised with other concerns regarding the Towngate Theatre

Towngate Charges

At the recent Compact Development Group, Dave Wharnsby from Basildon District Council had presented proposed changes in hire charges for the Towngate Theatre and Basildon Centre. This was supposed to be part of a consultation process. Fiona went through the proposed rate increases for the Towngate and it was found that many of the proposed rates were an increase of 50-100%. BDC say that the increased charges are partly due to a health and safety requirement to have a duty manager on site when

the Theatre is in use. Members of the Forum expressed dismay at the proposed increases and felt that it also demonstrated the desire of certain people within the Council to close the Towngate. Fiona had been reassured by the Council that bids to the Towngate Development Fund would match the rate increases, if they were to go ahead. The Forum also felt that this was not so much of a consultation by the Council than a warning of the proposed rate increases.

Forum Funding

As Paul was not present, this item was deferred until the next meeting

Funding Workshops

Fiona had not yet contacted Pam McCarthy about CVS training specifically for arts funding bid applications. General bid writing workshops had recently put on by Connect 2 Basildon.

ACTION: Fiona to contact Pam McCarthy at BBWCVS

Gloucester Park update

There has been no specific news about Gloucester Park, although rumours and stories continue to circulating in the press.

Any Other Business

- Ceilidh to be held on 14th October to celebrate national apple day. Local band 'Garlic Spread' to be appearing with Sibby at the Hockley Community Centre. Please see enclosed flyer.
- The Young at 'Art exhibition is to be held at Towngate Theatre on 2nd November. Planning is going well. Entries should be submitted before half-term. The Youth Service would like to know of anyone who could produce a DVD of the day. If anyone knows of anyone who could do it, please contact Gina or Barbara.
- Stef gave details about the Stars of the Future variety show at the Towngate on the 19th November. Please see enclosed flyer.
- Fiona announced that she would shortly be leaving. As her working hours would shortly have been restricted, she would have been unable to continue with Forum work anyway. Fiona starts her new job with BTCV as a community conservation project officer on 31st October. The Forum wished her well. A meeting would shortly take place between Lorna Wallace, Denise Gannon and Paul Nagle to discuss future administration of the Forum.

Date of Next Meetings

Weds 9 th November	7.30pm	Wickford C of E Infants
Tues 13 th December	7.30pm	The Fold, Billericay

Meetings for 2006 would be arranged on 9th November.