

# LEISURE AND YOUTH POLICY AND REVIEW PANEL

Meeting held on Monday, 4 April 2016 at the West End Centre, Aldershot at 7.00 pm.

## **Voting Members**

Cllr Liz Corps (Chairman)  
Cllr Mrs. D.B. Bedford (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr T.D. Bridgeman  
Cllr P.I.C. Crerar  
Cllr K. Dibble  
Cllr J.H. Marsh  
Cllr A.R. Newell  
Cllr M. Staplehurst  
Cllr B.A. Thomas

## **19. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 1st February 2016 were agreed as a correct record.

## **20. WEST END CENTRE/HAMPSHIRE CULTURAL TRUST**

The Panel welcomed Mr. Barney Jeavons, Arts Centre Director at the West End Centre, who had been invited to give a presentation on the working arrangements and activities of the Centre and the wider Hampshire Cultural Trust.

Mr. Jeavons introduced the presentation with an overview of the Cultural Trust set up by Hampshire County Council and Winchester City Council in 2014. The Trust supported 26 arts and museum attractions across the county and delivered county wide outreach programmes that brought culture to local communities. The Trust worked with young people and targeted audiences from diverse backgrounds in all areas including visual arts, literature and local history.

The Panel noted that the West End Centre had celebrated its 40th birthday in September 2015 and still attracted many up and coming and established musicians and comedians, showcased contemporary theatre groups similar to those seen at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and hosted monthly exhibitions of both local and national artists and a special open exhibition at Christmas. The Centre also ran a number of classes and workshops including stained glass, drama, sewing, beginners Nepali and ukulele; through these classes and workshops the Centre engaged with the community and became a hub for local people. In addition, special events were held such as the Summer Westival, a beer festival and Parent Action Group (PAG) days. During the Westival large parts of the Centre were grassed, a beer tent erected indoors and artificial fires set up to create ambience to complement the live

music, acts and activities which took place over the weekend. The PAG days were standalone events open only to families with children with special needs.

The West End Centre had a very strong culture ensuring that all customers were friends and that everyone was treated equally. The Panel were shown a number of testimonials from volunteers, artists and customers who showed their appreciation for the welcome/help/opportunities given to them by the staff and volunteers at the West End Centre. Mr. Jeavons stated that, ingrained in the Centre's ethos and its staff and volunteers was the need to "want to help everyone that walked through the door".

The Centre also had an outreach programme, working with community groups in the local area. Crafty Culture was a group of white and Nepali women who came together to create craft items and a local scout group had created a willow war horse to commemorate World War 1. The Centre was always willing to get involved with outreach projects and would find artists to fulfil the requirement of any project.

The Panel noted that core funding had remained consistent over recent years at around £150,000. Income and expenditure, however, were increasing, partly due to the appointment of an Arts Development Officer. It was also advised that a number of improvements had been made to the facility, which included the resurfacing of the car park, new theatre chairs and the redevelopment of storage rooms to creative studios. It was noted however, that some more work needed to be done in relation to updating the ladies toilets, bar furniture and lighting, the office area and storage facilities. The Centre was also committed to increasing funding streams alongside the Trust and planned to work on creating more sponsorship and commissioning opportunities going forward.

In response to a query on budgets, it was advised that Rushmoor's contribution had reduced from £20,000 to £15,000 when the Trust had been established, due to the new charitable status and no longer having to pay business rates. In respect of any works or improvements to the facility carried out by Hampshire County Council, Mr. Jeavons had found that contributing toward the cost had ensured quicker turn around and, in some cases, higher standards of work.

In answer to a question regarding threats, Mr. Jeavons advised that the staff and volunteers were what made the venue a success, when for example, a good volunteer moved on the gap left could be hard to fill. The relationship with the Princes Hall was positive and the two venues kept in regular contact.

The Panel discussed the ticket pricing and the contract arrangements with artists. Mr. Jeavons advised that the Centre tried to keep the prices affordable and ran some children's events free to allow access for all. The most expensive ticket recently had been for a musician at £26.00; this event had sold out and comedy acts also tended to sell out. It was also reported that the artist could receive up to 70% of the ticket income for an event.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Jeavons for his presentation.

## 21. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Panel **NOTED** the current work programme, and were advised that the next meeting would be a tour of the Army sports facilities.

The meeting closed at 8.01 pm.

CLLR LIZ CORPS (CHAIRMAN)

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