

A Cultural Cream Tea

**An Arts and Culture Policy
for Truro**

**Discussion document November 2018
“Culture at the heart of the community and
community at the heart of culture”**

An Arts & Culture Policy for Truro

Towns and cities are changing across the country. Commercial analysts and the public alike generally accept that there is a revolution underway; a shift from traditional retail-based town centres towards the 'online market'. We are undergoing a rapid change and during the next five to ten years this will impact on the way our towns and cities will function. (Appendix A)



Image: The Packet

This shift has been acknowledged by the bigger towns and cities who are already rebranding and marketing themselves as Cultural, Educational or Technology 'centres of excellence'; investing heavily in new sporting venues; expanding colleges, seeding technology businesses and universities. Smaller towns are also waking up to the fact that the 'doughnut' impact of 80's and 90's out-of-town development is now to be compounded by the loss of their high street retail trade. In short, if we want our town centres to retain some identity and remain active community hubs, then clear

policies are needed to drive the transition forwards.

The importance of the Arts for in the coming years cannot be overstressed. Cornwall Council acknowledged this in their support for The Hall for Cornwall refurbishment. That project spearheads the significance of Truro as the cultural centre of the county.

(Appendix D) With continued and leadership you cannot dispute the commercial, social economic impact the new theatre will bring to Truro. However, there also has to be a cultural shift in the town centre whole: if Truro is to capitalise

Hall for Cornwall investment, then we need to encourage and develop the residual local talents and skills. If small retailers and local businesses are to benefit from increased footfall, the local population must to be a part of equation, both as participants, audience and customers. The city's creative potential is now fundamental to its future economic social potential and to our ambition to be the cultural capital of Cornwall.

What is an Arts and Culture policy?

An arts and culture policy is a set of guiding principles which informs, directs and supports decision making in relation to the arts and the heritage of a community. A cultural policy will



Image: flickr

Truro

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determine the pace and direction of a community as it moves through a state of transition from the present into the future whilst taking into account its preceding history, heritage, language and diversity.

A cultural policy will support activities related directly to the Arts and creative sectors, such as theatre, film, music, dance, literature, painting and the fine arts but it will also support the history, traditions and environments of a place and its people.

Why does Truro need an Arts and Culture Policy?

Truro needs a culture policy because it's commercial, retail, administrative and cultural identity are all closely interwoven. The current climate of a shrinking retail sector has direct and indirect consequences for us all. Truro cannot afford to 'hope for the best' and needs to take action to ensure the town retains a lively and vibrant identity.

Truro needs to maintain footfall to find ways to replace that previously created by the 'big shopping experience i.e. to expand and develop the independent traders. The need alternative ways of attracting people into the town becomes urgent by the day. The 'magnet' has to be events and attractions of every kind and where the leisure and creative sectors are key. A vibrant and successful town can be measured by the extent of the engagement and participation



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of its residents. It can also be measured by the quantity and quality of events which entice people to the town, not just once in a while, but every week. The peripheral communities are therefore very important. What brings local communities into town and how the town caters for their needs has to be a priority consideration for the entire spectrum of leisure, commerce and social providers.

Engagement of the local communities is the first step in promoting the town and its creative and commercial identity. The local communities are the potential audience, the potential customer, and in many cases, the workers and providers. The first ingredient for a thriving town centre is the engagement of the people that live and work in the immediate vicinity. Stella Duffy, OBE, creator and Director of Fun Palaces has built her reputation of revitalising town centres on the concept of collaboration, communication and integration between our Arts providers and their communities. "Culture at the heart of the community and community at the heart of culture" (*Appendix F*)

A major contributory group to the 'buzz' of the city are the workers and commuters. They need to be provided for: flexible shop-opening hours, ease of transport and parking, products and services of the highest quality are all key to stimulating both the evening economy and day time economy. They need to be encouraged to use the services, facilities and entertainments in the town as a natural part of their working day.



The consequences of inaction at this critical point in the evolution of Truro may result in an increasingly stagnant economy. It may take one or two more years, but the large store retailers will inevitably shrink their town centre operations to a minimum. *(Appendix B)* Absurdly high rents and business rates will eventually respond to market forces but smaller independent retailers in the meantime are being squeezed out of existence. It is these smaller businesses that must be nurtured and encouraged, they are the future of Truro. The independent retailers need steady, reliable footfall all year round, not just at

high points in the year. The retail sector needs a very large magnet and that magnet is the Arts, Heritage and the creative industries. Without investment in these assets Truro will undoubtedly survive as 'the office for Cornwall' but may lose a significant part of its identity as Cornwall's capital city.

The Importance of infrastructure

The importance of offering a quality product, service or facility is paramount to ensure a customer returns again and again. However, no matter how good or desirable your product might be, without sound and effective and affordable infrastructure, you fall at the first hurdle. It is therefore critical for Truro to bring pressure to bear on providers of key services.

Transport: 'Trains and boats and planes' for those further afield at a reasonable cost. Coherent timetabling. Affordable local bus services. Sufficient and reasonable parking facilities. Good taxi services. All this is essential for independent retailers and larger companies along with the entertainment and cultural providers.

Accommodation: Truro needs quality hotel accommodation for all budgets and B&B provision within walking distance of the city centre. Easy online bookings. Out-of-town visitors need good quality, affordable central or well-connected accommodation if they are to be encouraged to take the time to explore the city and experience events. *(Appendix C)*

Facilities: Truro needs to sustain and improve its offer of quality restaurants. It needs to constantly review aspects of 'added value'. Should we consider our own rated 'Assurance Schemes' to drive up standards? Cycle paths and footpaths are needed with facilities en route. Public toilets, information, signage and good wi-fi are all critical factors in attracting footfall in the town centre.

The Importance of Heritage

Truro has been, and continues to be, a vibrant and dynamic city. Being the administrative hub for Cornwall and being the Cathedral seat of the diocese it's citizens have demonstrated aspiration and energy in countless instances throughout its history. Each of the challenges have left indelible marks on the people and the fabric of the city. This very history needs to be promoted and celebrated in order for Truronians themselves to

take pride in their civic identity. Truro needs to galvanise that focus and determination once again as the city faces the new challenges of the 21st century. Now is not the time for mere sentimental reminiscence: we need to take action and those who can act must do so if the city continue to prosper.

We need to ruthlessly protect, promote and celebrate the history Truro through theatre experiences, heritage tours, film



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events, gallery exhibitions and museum extravaganzas for visitors and the resident population. We need to conserve and value the fabric of the city as the vital resources for our economic, social and civic survival. (*Appendix E*) We need to facilitate and coordinate events large and small that celebrate every aspect of the city's heritage. This means maximising the potential of assets such as the architecture, streets and opes but also assets such as Daubuz Moor, Truro River waterfront, Parks and public facilities. We need to exploit the rich diversity of our locality, promote wildlife and agriculture to demonstrate everything we value about our city, our citizens and the wider environment.

A key instrument in rebuilding Truro's identity is to establish a Truro Hub or 'Kresen Truro'. It would need to have a dual function: a community venue and a 'Truro Museum' where residents can learn about and celebrate the past and the present under one roof.

The importance of Communications, Cooperation and Coordination

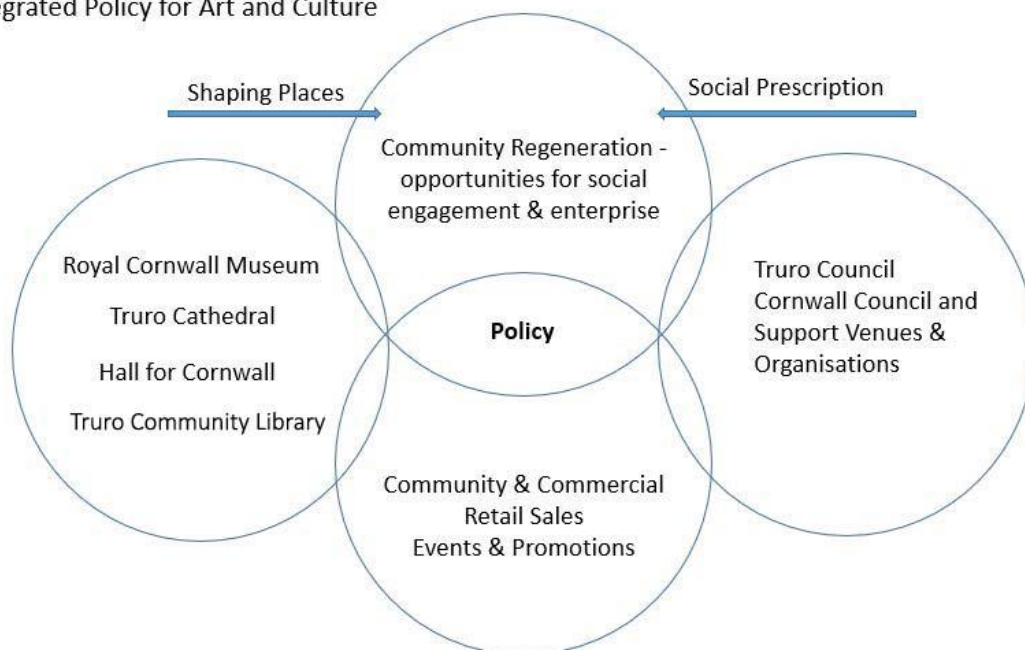
A key feature of the policy has to be communications. A primary objective will be to plan performances, events and regular calendar activities in such a manner that they are mutually supportive. Timing of events in Lemon Quay to coincide with those taking place in the Hall for Cornwall, at the Cathedral, the Royal Cornwall Museum or Truro Community Library is obviously desirable. Similarly, careful scheduling is needed to prevent calendar conflicts with community events. There needs to be a two-way flow of information between organisers, promoters, publicists and media. A clear knowledge and regard for deadline periods for submission, promotion and publicity is integral to presenting a professional event. It can make the difference between success and failure. How this is organised and achieved is a critical aspect of planning an Arts and Culture policy.

Clearly communications will be facilitated through cooperation. BIDS and TIC are doing their level best to raise the profile of "Our Great Little City" with one initiative after another: 'Brand Truro' 'Visit Truro' 'Shop Local' 'Alive After Five' and so forth. However, they can never make the seismic shift necessary to sustain the business community of Truro for one simple reason: they are not sufficiently engaged with the local communities of Truro. It appears that outside of retail there are five 'big players' that are not working together. They are Truro Cathedral, The Hall for Cornwall, The Royal

Cornwall Museum and Truro Community Library. They are effective as ‘stand-alone’ institutions and are key to both the identity of the town and to its commercial success through tourism and marketing. The fourth major player is the Truro Community itself. The indigenous population is disenfranchised as far as the City is concerned. The Communities of Truro are a vital and potent force hitherto disengaged from the marketing of Truro and this appears a major deficiency. As part of the town’s heritage they are integral to the story of Truro and its future sustainability.

Finding new ways of engaging the residents of Truro is a crucial aspect of any future strategy. The devolution of Truro Library needs to be a key feature of this engagement process. The big institutions are as vulnerable to the falling numbers of visitors to the town as the commercial sector. There is a need to further develop and expand the local audience through projects and Arts and Cultural engagement. The visitors to the Cathedral are the same people shopping on Lemon Quay and Pydar Street. Audiences at The Hall for Cornwall are the same customers in the restaurants, bars and cafes on Boscawen Street. The potential of engagement of the local population through the Library Service is enormous. Whilst the current communication situation is effective, a Cultural Policy would clarify and cement key aspects of how these strategically important groups and venues will relate to one another and the people of Truro over the coming decades. Communication also embraces feedback from providers, participants and audiences. BIDS have initiated feedback forums to their various projects, but how this has impacted on ‘progressive thinking’ is uncertain. Progression and purposeful change can only be achieved through communication and cooperation combined with skilful coordination. It also needs bold leadership and a vision of an alternative to the status quo.

An Integrated Policy for Art and Culture



Next steps

How do we create and implement an Arts & Culture Policy?

Create a consultation group and a leadership panel

- Consultation group can be broad and diverse
- The leadership group needs to be small – possibly seven or eight people
- The Chair of the group becomes the ‘Strategic Advisor’ to the City in regard to Arts & Culture and would be integral to shaping, scheduling and promotion of events.

Primary tasks

1. **Identify** how the City of Truro can build on the investment of the HfC and contribute to its continued and growing success.
2. **Consult** with key groups to identify long, medium- and short-term targets (strategic goals) for Truro
3. **Clarify** barriers and opportunities to achieving the goals
4. **Communicate** key policies / strategies to providers
5. **Maintain** a dialogue with providers, participants and customers (feedback)
6. **Monitor** effects and review at regular intervals

Who might be involved?

Hall for Cornwall, Truro Cathedral and associated groups, Royal Cornwall Museum, Truro Community Library, Community Arts groups: theatre, music, drama, dance etc

Truro City Council, TIC & BIDS, Cornwall Council, Creative Commercial / businesses

Plaza Cinema

Groups & individuals: Visual art – drawing, painting, sculpture, crafts, architects. Music, Choirs, Literature & Poetry groups, Film clubs, Dance, Groups/ schools

Groups events: Truro Day, City of Lights, Truro in Bloom, Fat Stock, Farmers markets Parks, Civic Soc, History/heritage groups, Harbour Master, Church Groups, H&S – Compliance, Community Development, Police / security

Set Key benchmarks: (see short and long term targets)

Year 1 - 2 - 3 - 4

How will we ensure it is purposeful and adaptable for the future?

1. *Review policy at regular intervals.*
2. *Accessibility by all groups*
3. *Publicity & promotions networks*

Arts & Culture Policy for Truro – possible Aims

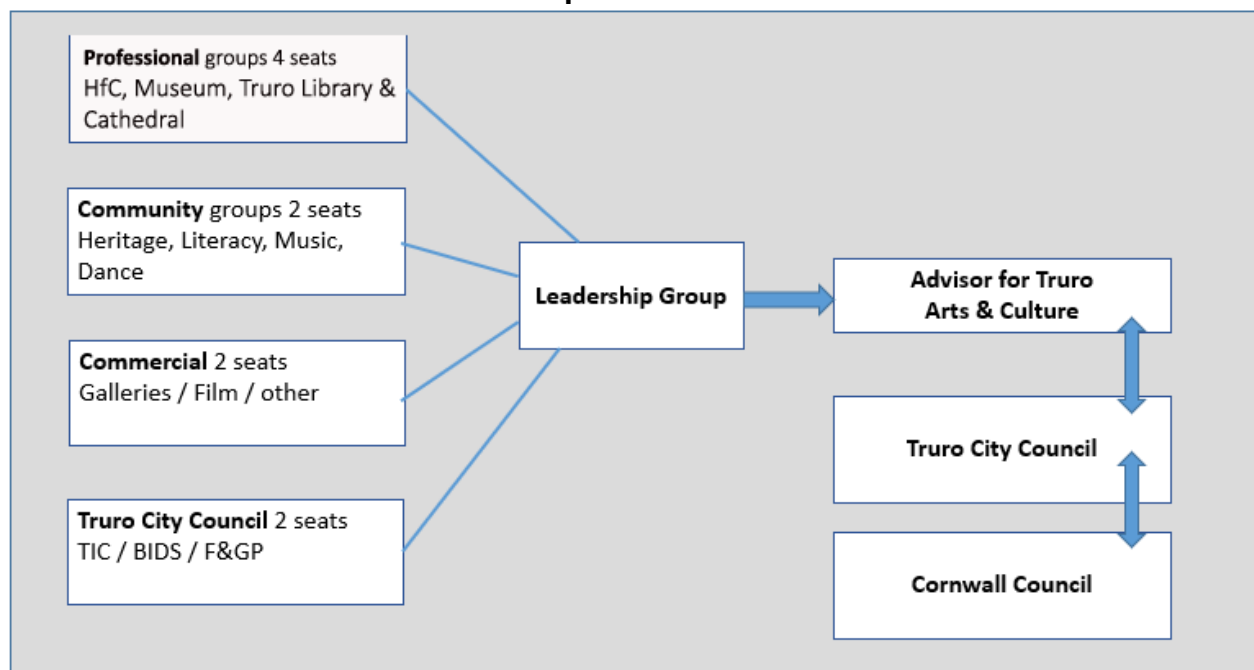
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| Primary and Secondary Aims |
| <i>To create a strong sense of place through a more innovative, ambitious and distinctive cultural engagement with residents and visitors</i> |
| <i>To better exploit and promote the city's existing cultural assets in order to deliver that distinctive offer</i> |
| <i>To make the people of Truro proud participants and architects of the city's cultural life</i> |
| <i>To build a reputation for innovative partnerships involving the cultural, creative, commercial and education sectors</i> |

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| <i>To utilise the Art & Culture to reduce social isolation and create a sense of purpose and ownership for the residents of Truro</i> |
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| <i>To provide communities with real opportunities to build and develop their cultural offer and build an enhanced sense of neighbourhood identity and pride</i> |
| <i>To ensure that culture makes the fullest possible contribution to the health, wealth and cohesion of Truro's communities.</i> |
| <i>To make Truro a cultural destination for the people of Cornwall and the South West</i> |
| <i>To communicate with residents and make Truro an easier cultural city to navigate</i> |
| <i>To deepen the relationships between Truro's creative businesses and other enterprises in the Cornwall economy</i> |
| <i>To enhance broad cultural links and forge networks with other towns and cultural groups to attract creative talent and encourage trade</i> |
| <i>To clarify pathways to employment and careers in the creative arts.</i> |
| <i>To engage the Arts to underpin Environmental improvement strategies</i> |
| <i>To promote the skills and creativity of Truro residents towards education and work opportunities in the cultural and creative sector.</i> |
| <i>To tell a richer, more coherent story about Truro's history</i> |

Possible short & long term objectives

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| Priority Objectives |
| Create a single Truro Arts / Culture / Events Web site that link the calendars of major Arts providers in the city. |
| Appoint a full-time Culture and Events Coordinator / Events Manager for Truro |
| Find a venue for a 'Truro Hub' / People's museum |
| Celebrate architecture and locations with English Heritage Blue plaques and / or digital information on the site. |
| Invite key people in the city with view to creating an Art & Culture Leadership Group |
| Create a forum for interested groups and individuals: eg. Questionnaire / Social Media page? |
| Source and allocate an appropriate budget for developing the Arts Leadership Group |
| Obtain a 300+ seat Community venue for town of Truro |
| An on-line system for coordinating small & large events through the year |
| Provide Arts & events projects designed <i>specifically</i> to engage the young people of the city |
| Expand promotion, advertising and sponsorship of the Arts in Truro. |
| Engage with retailers to promote the Arts |
| |

Possible structure for Arts & Culture panel



Appendices

A.

Bill Grimsey

Bill Grimsey has served as CEO at Wickes, Focus and Iceland. He has now produced The Grimsey



Review, looking at what can be done to reinvigorate the high street. He argues that town centres should be reinvented as community hubs, with housing and public services at the centre. Bill Grimsey talks about how customer habits have changed and the impact of out-of-town developments. The premises of the bigger national chains are becoming showrooms and pick-up points for items seen and purchased on-line.

Grimsey Review 1 & 2

<http://www.vanishinghighstreet.com/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2018/jul/04/high-streets-must-stop-relying-on-retail-says-expert-review>

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2018/jul/06/decline-of-the-british-high-street>

“100,000 shops may stand empty within a decade”, report warns

The report urges planning in town centres to include alternatives to retail, including housing and entertainment. Grimsey urges the creation of community hubs to replace empty shops, which would appear to be a positive step forward. Indeed, planners and entrepreneurs could be missing a trick here – empty shops mean new opportunities for business, but why limit our horizons to merely replacing retail jobs with entertainment? Most towns are saturated with cinemas and restaurants, although young people would benefit from more sports facilities, e.g. skate parks

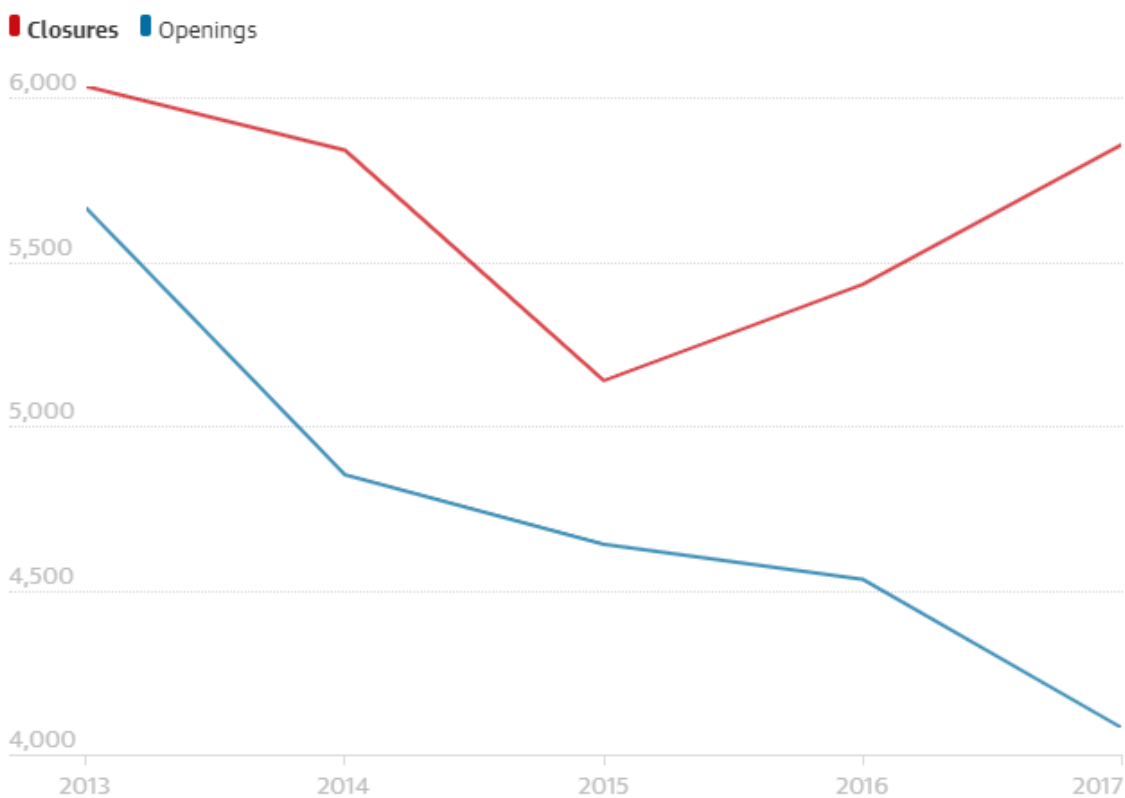
Surely, we need an alternative vision for community regeneration, one that gives opportunities to social enterprises such as day centres for elderly people. The large empty retail premises could be

easily converted into spacious centres perhaps based on the Japanese model of centres for wellbeing and purposeful activity.

The retail assistants mourning their former jobs could embrace a different type of employment. However, as a society **we need to seismically shift our perspectives and attitudes** towards social care from regarding it as a distress purchase to a holistic component of everyday life.

B.

5,855 outlets closed on UK high streets in 2017, at a rate of 16 stores a day



Guardian Graphic | Source: The Local Data Company for PwC. Note: Openings and closures of multiples (national chains with five or more units) across the top 500 largest towns in UK in 2017

C.

Hotelier Magazine

Along with the rise of technology, changing traveller demands may necessitate a rethink of the site-selection checklist. Today, business and leisure travellers alike are looking to experience vibrant neighbourhoods and districts. “Airbnb has taught this through their tagline, ‘live like a local,’” says Darling. “There is absolutely a desire, especially amongst the younger leisure and business travellers, to stay in places where they can walk out and have a coffee and a croissant on the sidewalk and feel like they’re living in the community. It’s very important and it’s going to become increasingly important as we move forward.”

D.

Truro Civic Soc

“... the Hall for Cornwall project emerged, and the City Hall became a key catalyst for crafting the future of the town centre as the internet plays havoc with traditional means of shopping and doing business...”

E.

Malcolm Bell (Visit Cornwall) and **Abi Steel (Visit Truro)** have successfully established Truro as a Heritage City with ‘England Originals’. Truro is now aligned with Bath and Salisbury for promotions in the UK and abroad. <https://www.visitlondon.com/englandoriginals/cities/truro/>

F.

Stella Duffy OBE

Stella Duffy is an award-winning writer with over seventy short stories, fourteen plays and sixteen novels published in fifteen languages. She has also worked in theatre for over 35 years as a writer, performer and director. In 2016 she was awarded the OBE for services to the Arts. In 2013 Stella co-founded the Fun Palaces campaign for culture at the heart of the community and community at the heart of culture – to date there have been 1367 Fun Palaces made by 32,800 local people with 450,000 people taking part.

“By creating Fun Palaces right where we live, we can make a huge shout for culture at the heart of all our communities – benefiting both from an ongoing campaign and the wider impact of simultaneous action.”

<http://funpalaces.co.uk/>

Cllr Bob Smith
Truro City Council

Last edited April 2019

Policy Document below

Truro Arts & Culture Policy

1. Purpose

In 'A Cultural Cream Tea' the case was made that given the changing retail circumstances of Truro City centre, an alternative strategy was needed to maintain footfall for commercial sustainability and to re-engage the citizens of Truro with their heritage and cultural roots. At the same time it would afford an opportunity to promote Truro as a destination for visitors and holidaymakers to further enhance the commercial viability of the city.

2. Definitions

The definition of 'Arts and Culture' are taken to include the performing and visual arts; historical and literary perspectives as well as crafts and leisure activities. It covers both the professional and amateur groups and individuals who are engaged in the provision or receipt of the 'Art and Cultural' experiences. However, whilst it is acknowledged that 'sport and recreation' have a major contribution to make to 'culture' in its widest sense, this aspect requires a policy specifically for this sector and is not included in this policy proposal.

The City of Truro is uniquely placed as both a commercial hub and cultural centre of Cornwall. In particular, the three 'core institutions' within the city; The Hall for Cornwall, Truro Cathedral and The Royal Cornwall Museum have a particular importance and role to play in any provision and implementation of a cultural policy. In addition to the 'Core' group the City Council and representation from Cornwall Council are integral to the policy.

3. Policy Overview

There are four strands to the policy, each is related in some way to the others but has a specific outcome in its own right. They have primary aims, best summarised in the diagram below:



| The Truro Arts and Culture Policy | |
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| Policy Aims | |
| <p>1. To better exploit and promote the city's existing cultural assets in order to support and develop its commercial viability (Strand 1 & 3)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To create an affordable cultural experience for the people of Truro whilst and maximising the commercial and financial benefits for the venues and the city. • Create a single Truro Arts & Culture working calendar for core providers. • Promote Truro as a heritage destination. Develop the history and heritage of the city through affiliation with national organisations and through on-site digital information. |
| <p>2. To utilise the Arts & Culture assets of the city to reduce social isolation and create a sense of purpose and ownership for the residents of Truro (Strand 2)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To enable the people of Truro to be participants and architects of the city's cultural life • To encourage individuals and communities to engage with the Arts • Secure a venue for a 'Community Hub' • To integrate existing arts provision into the 'Social Prescription' initiative. |
| <p>3. To create a strong sense of identity through a more innovative, ambitious and distinctive cultural engagement with residents and visitors (Strand 3)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To tell a richer, more coherent story about Truro's history • Promote Visit Truro web page 'Arts & Culture' to Truro residents • Secure a venue for the Port of Truro Museum • Create an 'Arts Week' for commercial and amateur sectors to showcase their work. • Create an Arts Review magazine that promotes and supports professional and amateur (Community) Arts. |
| <p>4. To build a reputation for innovative partnerships involving the cultural, creative, commercial and education sectors (Strand 1 & 4)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To promote the skills and creativity of Truro residents through education, work opportunities and engagement in the cultural and creative sector. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To employ a city-wide Events Co-ordinator. • To enlist the commercial sector in supporting and promoting Arts events • Utilise the Truro Community Library for promotion and engagement • Instigate a schools programme of tours and visits |
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| Policy Objectives | |
| Strand 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discount ticket scheme for commercial businesses TR1 postcode • Further development of 'Visit Truro' web page: 'What's On - Arts' • History and/or 'Heritage Walks' financed through TCC, BIDS, HfC, Cornwall Museum, Truro Community Library and Cathedral • History and Heritage school programme / visits • Create a coordinator or facilitator post - financed through TCC, BIDS, HfC, Cornwall Museum, Truro Community Library and Cathedral. | |
| Strand 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquisition of premises suitable for a Community Hub and/or the Port of Truro Museum. • Analysis of financial risks and benefits. • Re-acquisition of artefacts, documents and exhibits belonging to Truro City. • Identify potential Trustees. | |
| Strand 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A register of community and amateur organisations involved with all aspects of art and culture. • Develop links with the Social Prescription team. • Promote and advertise opportunities for community engagement in the Arts through social media & other means. • Promote Visit Truro web page to target residents. • Collate and publish an annual Truro Arts & Culture Review magazine | |
| Strand 4: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further integration between Arts practitioners, the commercial and voluntary sectors • Develop / strengthen links with Truro College. • Consultation with heritage groups to assess potential for future projects. | |

Roles and Responsibilities

Roles and responsibilities to be organized by the individual organisations or groups that have a vested interest in maintaining the policy.

The core institutions, Hall for Cornwall, Truro Cathedral, Royal Cornwall Museum and Truro Community Library, with Truro City Council, should meet at least annually to review implementation and progress.

Truro City Council to meet at least twice each year with representatives of the commercial and amateur/community sectors to review progress towards objectives. For example, representatives from any of the following

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| The Old Bakery Studios | St Mary's Singers |
| Miracle Theatre | Tresillian Singers |
| Truro Civic Society | Kneehigh Theatre Trust |
| Truro 3 Arts | Twinning Associations (Morlaix & Boppard) |
| Truro Choral Society | Cornish Film Societies |
| Truro Old Cornwall Society | The Burrell Theatre – Truro Sxhool |
| Plaza Cinema | Truro High School for Girls |
| Truro City Parks & Gardens Committee | Truro Camera Club |
| Truro in Bloom Committee | Lemon Street Gallery |
| City of Lights Committee | LA Studios |
| Truro College | The Guild of Ten |
| Lander Gallery | The Cornwall Dance School |
| Tim Shaw | Jason Thomas Performing Arts |
| Truro Amateur Operatic & Dramatic Society | The Arts Society Truro |
| Truro Day Committee | The Truro Arts Society |
| Truro Community Library | The Truro Arts Company |
| Duchy Opera | The Conservation Society |
| The Three Spires Singers | Volunteer Cornwall (Social Prescribing) |
| Truro Methodist Church | Truro & Penwith College |

Visit Cornwall, the Tourist Information Centre and Business Improvement Districts are key in translating Arts engagement into commercial footfall in the city. They will need to be involved in medium and long-term planning so that the business and commercial sector can be brought into the discussion at an early stage.

Benchmarking

The Truro Arts and Culture Policy embraces specialist areas of activities each within their own circumstances. It is reasonable to accept that each strand will progress at its own pace. However, in order to establish a sense of momentum and direction it is necessary to answer three key questions:

- what is the current provision, situation or range of activity in each strand?
- in what way can the current position be enhanced or improved in order to achieve the objectives?
- how can progress (or changes) can be verified or measured?

- Within each strand it would be desirable for short, medium and long term goals to be negotiated.
- 'smart' measures put in place to verify progression towards them. These would need to be quick and easily executed tests eg numbers of members to join a group; numbers of tickets sold at events or age categories of participants to specific events.
- a succinct annual report or summary of progress to be written and published in an annual Truro Arts Review.