

Tuesday, 14 November 2023

Report of the Assistant Director - Growth & Regeneration

Appointment of a temporary Heritage Engagement Officer post

EXEMPT INFORMATION

None.

PURPOSE

This report is to request permission from the Committee to create a temporary Heritage Engagement Coordinator post (up to two years) which will provide the skills and capacity to directly increase opportunities for participation in local arts, cultural and heritage activities, by establishing an activity plan to be delivered by the officer. The plan will create new activity streams linked to traditional skills and crafts designed to engage new and existing audiences, particularly young people, and those at risk of social isolation. Such activities will be linked to the town's social and cultural heritage for example pottery, textiles, blacksmithing and woodwork.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee consider the content of this report and agree to appoint a fixed term Heritage Engagement Coordinator (up to two years).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Tamworth is identified as a Priority Place (Arts Council England) with low cultural engagement but has within its recent history strong links with the clay industry as well as more historical links with traditional crafts such as textiles (Castle Mill) and blacksmithing. Heritage crafts have contemporary relevance through the connection with skills development, conservation, sustainability, and ethical use of natural resources. These activities currently fall outside the scope of our existing cultural and heritage offer but play a vital role in the wellbeing and enjoyment of local communities, bringing people together to collaborate and celebrate the local place. The phenomenal response to a recent community textile project connected with community archaeology is evidence of the public appetite and furthermore the ability of creative activities to cross age boundaries.

The creation of a two year role will enable an activity and engagement plan to be developed, delivered and embedded as a model for future participation; increasing the number of activities and thereby also providing opportunities for individuals and groups to establish themselves as artists, demonstrators and facilitators as well as for local people to take part in more activities which link to the town's social and cultural heritage (eg pottery, textiles, blacksmithing, woodwork).

The new role will also be responsible for developing new, sustainable income streams to secure the legacy of the project and for creating robust partnerships with community groups, arts and education organisations to take forward activity.

An important feature of the role will be to bring together members of the community who already have an interest or skill with young people to provide intergenerational learning and opportunities to reduce social isolation. In 2022 Tamworth Castle conducted a 'familiarisation day' with local potters and artists to explore creative opportunities linked to heritage crafts. The process identified the need for 'grassroots' opportunities in Tamworth as a priority to engage young people with skills that are becoming 'endangered', as well as

the need for local artists to access more spaces to work collaboratively, profile their work and access retail and exhibition space.

Opportunities will be created to support (financially and non-financially) the work of local creative practitioners, education providers and community groups through regular and accessible workshops, exhibitions, demonstrations, co-created installations and mini projects targeting a range of audiences. New and exciting volunteer opportunities will be created.

We expect the project activity to create following outcomes: increased footfall and participation in local activities including the establishment of new and sustainable activity streams. Diversification of income sources to fund future heritage and cultural activities.

Following a Job Evaluation the post was graded a D.

The total cost of delivering the post for 2 years is when appointed at the bottom of the scale is £64k including employer's on-costs. The project funding was secured for a grade E post prior to evaluation and so the budget available exceeds the total post cost.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The proposed post will be funded entirely by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

LEGAL/RISK IMPLICATIONS

The project has already been approved and the money allocated to the Borough Council to deliver the role and subsequent programme of work. If not approved the money is likely to be unspent within the Government timeframe and ultimately the money returned to Government.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

None.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

None.

REPORT AUTHOR

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LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

APPENDICES

Role profile.