



Waveney & Blyth Arts
Connecting creative people and places along
the Norfolk/Suffolk border

CONFERENCE REPORT

ARTS IN ADVERSITY - Turning challenges into opportunities

The Cut, Halesworth on 18 January 2018

70 people attended representing 55 organisations from across Norfolk and Suffolk

1. SETTING THE SCENE

The Role of Arts Council England (ACE) - Presentation by Claudia West, Senior Relationship Manager, South East

Mission and goals: Great Art and Culture for Everyone, 'Culture' added as now also has responsibility for Libraries and Museums

Goal 1 - Excellence is thriving and celebrated in the arts, museums and libraries

Goal 2 - Everyone has the opportunity to experience and to be inspired by the arts, museums and libraries

Goal 3 - The arts, museums and libraries are resilient and environmentally sustainable

Goal 4 - The leadership and workforce in the arts, museums and libraries are diverse and appropriately skilled

Goal 5 - Every child and young person has the opportunity to experience the richness of the arts, museums and libraries

ACE's role: It is both funder and a development agency - gives advice and support to artists and organisations; awards funding (including core grants to National Portfolio Organisations and project funding via Grants for the Arts); advocates for the role of arts and culture, and works in partnership - including with local authorities - to help strengthen the cultural infrastructure.

Rural and coastal context:

- Barriers can be similar in Coastal and Rural locations. Isolation is a commonality. Travel infrastructure has a massive influence.
- Might be less opportunities to engage - but actually people living in rural areas make up 17 per cent of England's population, engage more with the arts than people in urban areas, and are just as likely to engage with museums. This bears out at a local level when looking at the recent publication of Active Lives Survey data by DCMS.
- Many leading artists and cultural organisations are based in rural areas, and their work and connections with local communities underpin a high and healthy level of engagement with the arts and museums in particular.

- A further consideration is that people may be prepared to travel from a rural to an urban area in order to engage with culture and the arts
- There is a complex relationship between investment in culture and the arts in rural and urban areas by both the Arts Council and local government. Investment in one location does not mean that it does not bring benefits to people living elsewhere.
- For 2018-22 brought in 22 new organisations nationally, focusing on rurality. Locally, Creative Arts East came in in 2015 - works across Norfolk and Suffolk.
- New investment in museums will strengthen the tourist offer in many rural areas, while new investment in libraries, museums and touring infrastructure will allow more people to access high quality arts and culture no matter where they live.

ACE current investment locally:

- Includes National Portfolio Organisations SeaChange Arts, Creative Arts East, Aldeburgh Music, HighTide, Norfolk Museums Service (new) and Suffolk Libraries (new)
- Also fund Music Education Hubs with funding from DFE
- Last year funded a total of 50 Grants for the Arts applications from across Great Yarmouth, South Norfolk, Mid Suffolk, Suffolk Coastal and Waveney. The majority of these went to organisations and for amounts up to £15,000. 11 applications (22%) were for amounts above that. By art-form the majority were theatre (25 / 50%), followed by Combined and Visual Arts (8 / 16%).

A number of big strategic projects: Start East, Look Sideways East (both New Anglia LEP Cultural Board projects) and Great Places which, led by Great Yarmouth Borough Council, aims to increase the heritage, arts and cultural offer in Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth.

There are opportunities for Arts Council support for those attending this event who find ways of working collaboratively - bringing together a shared perspective and working together to improve the arts and infrastructure.

Links for reference:

Arts Council 10 Year Strategy - <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/about-us/our-mission-and-strategy>

Arts Council Rural positioning paper - <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/community-and-place/rural-positioning>

How to get involved in development of next 10 year strategy - <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/haveyoursay>

Great Places Project - Making Waves Together - <https://www.great-yarmouth.gov.uk/article/3333/Major-national-grant-to-enhance-arts-culture-and-heritage-in-Great-Yarmouth-and-Lowestoft>

Active Lives Survey - <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/participating-and-attending/active-lives-survey#section-2>

New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) : Culture for Growth Strategy - Presentation by Jayne Knight, Suffolk County Council, Arts Development Manager

What are Local Enterprise Partnerships?

- Every region has a Local Enterprise Partnership
- Our region covers Norfolk and Suffolk, it is called New Anglia
- Local Enterprise Partnerships are strategic
- Local Enterprise Partnerships are focussed on growth
- Local Enterprise Partnerships are made up of business, local authority and education leaders
- The majority of LEPs across England do not engage with the cultural sector.

New Anglia LEP

- New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership works with businesses, local authority partners and education institutions to drive growth and enterprise in Norfolk and Suffolk.
- The New Anglia LEP is transforming the economy by securing funds from government to help businesses grow, through the delivery of ambitious programmes to ensure that businesses have the funding, support, skills, and infrastructure needed to flourish and ensuring that the voice of our business community is heard, loud and clear.
- The Economic Strategy for Norfolk and Suffolk sets out New Anglia LEP's ambitions to grow the economy, create 88,000 new jobs and 30,000 successful new businesses.

LEPs do not care about the Arts! LEP's care about: JOBS & GROWTH

None of us are happy about unemployment, low wages, rural isolation, or pockets of intense deprivation, but we are ALL interested in jobs and growth.

The New Anglia LEP have accepted the principle that arts and culture have a big role to play - BUT those who represent arts organisations still have to make the case.

New Anglia LEP has created a Cultural Board as a Case-Maker for Arts and Culture.

The New Anglia Cultural Board: Purpose

The New Anglia LEP Cultural Board advises the New Anglia Local Enterprise Board on all cultural matters and develops strategic initiatives to support the growth agenda.

New Anglia Cultural Board: Resources

It has no budget, no staff, and no formal role BUT we have the opportunity to influence policy and strategy, to compete for national funding and we have a good plan.

How the New Anglia Cultural Board supports Grassroots Arts Organisations

- Ensures an economic strategy that refers to the value of culture & place.
- Recognises that a rich and diverse cultural offer underpins a good place to live.
- Has an absolute understanding that a good place to live is a good place to visit, is a good place to work in and a good place to invest in.

- Initiates projects that attract national funds to Norfolk and Suffolk - like StartEast and Look Sideways - East.
- Promotes learning and training opportunities for those that want to build a career in the cultural sector
- Promotes a culture of social enterprise
- Focuses on Jobs & Growth

Here's a link to an online copy of Culture Drives Growth <https://newanglia.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Culture-Drives-Growth-FINAL-web-version.pdf>

And here's a link to the New Anglia LEP web site <https://newanglia.co.uk/>

Suffolk Arts Service - Information provided by Jayne Knight

Suffolk County Council invests in the arts, develops and manages arts projects across the county and gives advice on arts development and arts funding.

Suffolk supports two key networks:

- The Suffolk Arts and Heritage Group, which collaborates to promote Suffolk's cultural offer.
- The Suffolk Creative Learning Collaborative, which works together to share best practise in cultural work with children and young people.

We are also active in the development and delivery of the Lowestoft Cultural Education Partnership and the Forest Heath and Fenland Market Place Project <http://www.cppmarketplace.co.uk/>

Suffolk County Council is currently delivering three strategic partnership projects:

Screen Suffolk <https://screensuffolk.com/> - Screen Suffolk is building the film sector in Suffolk and is delivered and developed with all local authorities in Suffolk.

Starteast <http://starteast.co.uk/> - Starteast gives advice and support to cultural enterprises across Norfolk and Suffolk. It is a LEP Cultural Board project

Look Sideways East <http://www.visiteastofengland.com/things-to-do/Arts-and-culture.aspx>

Suffolk County Council offers advice and guidance on all aspects of arts development.

For further information contact: Jayne.Knight@suffolk.gov.uk

StartEast - Presentation by Mary Muir, Norfolk County Council, Arts Officer

StartEast is a time-limited business support and grants programme for creative people wishing to develop and grow a cultural business/organisation in Suffolk or Norfolk (runs till September 2019). It provides bespoke one to one business advice and support from a dedicated team of advisors and industry experts, workshops and masterclasses, as well as development grants between £1,000 and 10,000. It focuses primarily (but not exclusively) on the performing arts (theatre, dance, music, outdoor arts, and live art), literature and festivals, and also supports specialist creative enterprises including producers, curators, back stage, technical, costumes, props, and marketing.

Whether organisations/creatives need support to develop an idea or artistic vision, help with business growth and expansion into new markets, securing new contracts, increasing productivity or

turnover, the team can help. Apply on the website for an initial discussion with a team member, email info@starteast.co.uk or call 01473 295938. www.starteast.co.uk

Norfolk Arts Service - Information provided by Mary Muir

The Norfolk Arts Service is part of Community Services at Norfolk County Council – it provides a wide range of services to support and develop the arts and creative industries in Norfolk, including brokering cross-sectoral partnerships, advocating for the arts in the county and the region, assisting organisations and agencies to deliver the arts, and developing policy to guide the development of the arts in Norfolk. Works closely with other council departments, local authority partners, cross-sectoral local, regional and national partners, the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership Cultural Board and Arts Council England.

It administers Norfolk County Council Arts Budget. In 2017/18, a total of £85k awarded to 17 regularly funded organisations ranging in size from Norwich Theatre Royal to Wymondham Music Festival. Instrumental in supporting organisations to lever in additional investment

Also the Arts Project Funds (£23k in 2017-18) to support development of wide range of small-scale community arts projects. Around 70 projects a year supported annually. The maximum award is £500 and it is an important source of match-funding for many other funding sources eg Grants for the Arts. Three deadlines – end Jan, May, Sept. Main areas of support include:

- Projects which demonstrate the wider value and impact of arts and communities e.g: health and wellbeing, social inclusion and community cohesion.
- Arts projects which benefit arts practitioners and which are accessible to people of all ages and backgrounds
- Projects which encourage exploration and awareness of cultural diversity and develop new audiences for the arts
- Projects which are of strategic importance to arts development in Norfolk.

Partnership Brokerage - Broker and facilitate a wide range of strategic partnerships to deliver key initiatives in Norfolk and the region, including Cultural Tourism, Arts Health and Wellbeing Programme, and StartEast (see below)

Advice and Information - NAS plays a key role in providing information, support and guidance to Norfolk-based organisations, groups and practitioners on a wide range of arts/cultural development issues, including funding and supporting development of funding applications eg: Arts Council's Grants for the Arts, Heritage Lottery Fund.

Norfolk Arts Forum - Co-ordinate and manage Norfolk Arts Forum, a membership organisation, open to anyone with an interest in the arts in the county.

- Annual conference and CPD programme
- Weekly bulletin
- Twitter/Facebook

www.norfolk.gov.uk/arts

2. CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Feedback from discussion groups following the keynote speakers:

- Artists/arts organisations need to skill up/become more entrepreneurial and work out how they can access resources through research and planning;
- Arts activities can make a huge contribution to health and wellbeing (physical and mental) and there is a need to get this message across to other sectors, which may involve learning to communicate more effectively with them and for strategic bodies (eg Arts Council and County Councils) to advocate on behalf of the arts – see www.artshandwellbeing.org.uk/appg-inquiry/ for recent progress ;
- Increased efforts should be made and resources provided to enable young people to access arts, culture and creative activities as audiences, artists, producers and promoters;
- Accessing relevant information – services provided by the County Councils need to be promoted more widely;
- Arts Council – seem to be disconnected from activity on the ground and focused on key areas (Norwich, Lowestoft/Great Yarmouth/Aldeburgh) at the expense of the rural/less populated areas. Difficult to secure advice and support, particularly for more ambitious schemes (ie grants over £15K) and long-term growth;
- Waveney & Blyth Arts – potential role in facilitating skill and knowledge sharing, networking, collaborations, further conferences (eg for young people) and as conduit for information;
- Not clear how the Cultural Strategy will help ‘grassroots’ organisations or how strategic bodies gain an insight into real challenges faced by smaller organisations;
- Potential partnerships between private/public/voluntary sectors but need to find ways of talking with and involving the private sector more effectively;
- Working with businesses – learn to talk their language, find the right person, listen to what they need/want to achieve (eg public speaking/presentation skills, team building, raising company profile) and adapt activities to suit;
- Investigate Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) grant programmes as can support a wide range of activities;
- Add weight to applications by getting input from specialists/researchers linked to museums, universities, heritage projects. Make contact one of the relationship managers based in universities in the region who are keen to engage with local initiatives to further their agendas;
- Does ‘rural’ imply parochial or lacking ambition? Do we need to find a better descriptor?
- Should/can we copy cities like Glasgow, Newcastle/Gateshead and Bristol who promote their cultural activities to attract people?
- Challenge of transport/limited public transport in rural areas – investigate and use community transport schemes and dial-a-ride services offered by voluntary organisations such as Bungay Area Community Transport (BACT) and Borderhopper;
- Voluntary Arts provides a voice for the voluntary arts across the UK. It provides information and advice services, undertakes lobbying and advocacy work, and supports the delivery of projects to develop participation in creative cultural activities. It is particularly focused on those creative citizens who give their time to make such activity more available within their communities and improving the quality and range of those opportunities and activities. www.voluntaryarts.org

- Take your place scheme supports young people from under-represented backgrounds to progress into higher education. Not-for-profit organisations can apply for funding (£5K – 20K) to work with parents, families and young people (13-19) living in identified target areas with low HE participation, to aspire to and progress into higher education.
www.takeyourplace.ac.uk/funding/

3. BUILDING BRIDGES/REACHING COMMUNITIES

Notes from the afternoon workshop sessions

Tourism – Promoting the arts as a hook for tourism/encouraging arts festivals

Speakers – Julian Evans, The Suffolk Coast Destination Marketing Organisation (DMO); Genevieve Christie, Flipside and First Light Festivals; Nicky Stainton, Harleston's Future

JE described how the **The Suffolk Coast DMO** is a membership organisation, formed in 2012, with the purpose of promoting the Suffolk Coast as a visitor destination. Membership is open to tourism and other visitor-facing organisations in its patch, eg W&BA has recently joined. It has a comprehensive website with listings of members' activities (www.thesuffolkcoast.co.uk) and runs social media ad campaigns to promote events likely to draw a large audience or put the area on the map. It works closely with VisitNorwich, VisitNorfolk and VisitEastAngia. It has a limited grants programme for members and has helped grow initially small events like the Snape Food & Drink Festival and Felixstowe Book Festival.

GC explained that initially (2013) **FlipSide** was an annual arts festival at Snape Maltings that involved many leading writers and musicians from the UK and Brazil, which also provided Brazilian music workshops in schools and music and dance workshops at the festival. In 2016 it developed a large scale project in Lowestoft for over 1200 school children featuring Paralympians and a performance poet, culminating in a visit from the Brazilian Ambassador. This led on to a brand new arts festival for children and young people in the town during October 2017. FlipSide now sit on the board of the Lowestoft Cultural Education Partnership and the Great Yarmouth Cultural Education Partnership, and are part of a consortium of arts organisations working together to help regenerate Lowestoft's South Pier, including the planned First Light Festival on Lowestoft beach. She emphasised the importance of starting with the resources, knowledge, strengths and enthusiasms of what you have around you and growing from the grassroots to embrace bigger ideas.

NS talked about how a visitor initiative might have a more local focus, using the small market town of Harleston (pop under 5000) as an example. In recent years **Harleston's Future**, a small group of residents and businesses, has been working together to draw people from nearby villages and a wider radius of 20-30 miles to visit the town and help local businesses survive/thrive. By focusing on outdoor events (street markets, street parties, open gardens) and the attractive environment (swift protection campaign, flags and bunting, walks, traffic/parking /signage improvements) it is building a reputation as a place worth visiting. A new and visually attractive website (visitharleston.org.uk) has been developed and social media used regularly. The core group of volunteers has grown and the pool of occasional volunteers/stewards/distributors increased to 70+ people.

The comments from the delegates included:

- Mini-breaks can be an attractive offer for visitors but, given the experience in Great Yarmouth, can be difficult to set up because of legal restrictions and the difficulty of getting local hotels on board;

- Collaboration can be very effective – example of the Diss Heritage Triangle where town council, businesses and the Corn Hall have worked together to make improvements and draw more visitors;
- Festivals are a way of drawing together local groups and enthusiasts to create a more powerful ‘offer’ than one-off events or activities;
- Marketing hugely important, but can be difficult to find people with the right expertise. Social media is free but quite time-demanding.

Heritage – providing arts spaces/encouraging arts activity/arts in the service of heritage

Speakers – David Case, Corn Hall Diss; Rachel Harrison, Great Yarmouth Preservation Trust; Simon Raven, MALT Experience

DC explained the purpose and activities of **The Diss Heritage Triangle Trust** which was a partnership between Diss Corn Hall, the Diss Museum, the Town Council and local businesses from the Triangle area. This strategic partnership had enabled the Trust to obtain a highly significant grant of £3.4 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), something which would not have been possible as an application from a single group. These heritage funds were to be used to enhance and maintain the town’s historic trading centre, spread awareness of the architectural and historic features which make Diss unique, and encourage prosperity for its people.

So far the Trust had completed a thorough renovation of the C19th Corn Hall as an inviting community centre for the town which now included a refurbished theatre, exhibition space/large meeting room and flexible restaurant seating area/meeting room, as well as a striking architect-designed extension which included a /reception/box office, bar and kitchen, concourse, heritage display area and new toilets.

Beyond the Corn Hall the surrounding Triangle area is in the process of being redesigned and refurbished to enhance its heritage features and pedestrian access to local shops and businesses. Several of these businesses are of an arts/crafts nature giving the Triangle the feeling of an artisan quarter. The whole area is currently being linked back into the lower part of the town by the construction of a new pontoon-type walkway along the edge of the attractive mere.

DC was at pains to point out the enormous benefit of local collaboration in both planning the project, applying for substantial funding and overseeing the project’s implementation and subsequent management. However, nobody should underestimate the enormous amount of hard work to see such a project through to completion.

RH gave an outline of the **Great Yarmouth Partnership Trust’s** activities in re-purposing heritage buildings to promote arts and cultural activity in the town:

- A successful application for £1.7 million from HLF and the Big Lottery Fund to refurbish the town’s early C20th ‘Venetian Waterways’ area – this should be completed in 2021.
- Creating a gallery and artists’ studios at 133 King Street - "Skippings Gallery" - open to fine artists to hire for exhibitions and for creative work with community groups.
- Working on the Great Yarmouth Rows project which will encourage artistic interventions in the rows as part of the interpretation of this important mediaeval street pattern.
- St John’s where the former church will be repaired and converted for multi-purpose use including space for creative workshops, exhibitions and dance performances.

- Supporting and enabling artists such as Lee Temple, Daniel Mcgrath and filmmaker Joe Malcolm. Providing opportunities through projects, exhibition and other creative works for GYPT.
- Commissioning artists and film makers – eg. artist in residence on the Townscape Heritage Initiative Scheme and films by a Bulgarian intern for the Trust.
- The St John’s Kneeler Cushion Project 2017 - an HLF funded project combining textile conservation with new creative work. Working with a wider community – a volunteer-led project providing opportunities for expression through creative textiles. Legacies from this have included supporting emerging textile artist Carol Desborough in creating a "Community Textile Collage" and creating opportunities for local artists to provide workshops. It has also led to the formation of a creative group moving forward together in creating ideas and further works collaboratively.

SR explained how the **MALT Experience** - a £65.3K HLF funded project uncovering the largely forgotten malting heritage of Halesworth – involved a close collaboration between the local Museum and Arts Centre. Based on historical research, a few artefacts and other memorabilia, the task was to present this heritage in new and creative ways. This immediately provided roles for local artists, designers and craftspeople. A local artist added drawings of malting-related activities to information panels on a visitor trail. A local craftsman created a symbolic map in steel of the Blyth Navigation to fit on a full-sized wooden outline of a wherry. A local camera club took contemporary photographs of local landmarks as a contribution to a ‘Then & Now’ digital slideshow. A local model-maker produced an animated virtual fly-through of The Cut as it would have been when it was a working maltings. Members of a local youth theatre group enacted significant moments from the history of malting activity in the town, and this was then filmed by a local film-maker for an in situ digital presentation. Even a local garden designer contributed a planting plan to give ‘body’ to the internal space of the wherry. The overall point is that heritage projects – currently a popular source of funding – offered lots of opportunities for creative talent to be employed. Arts organisations needed to be pro-active in offering their services and skills to such projects.

Several people gave examples of other heritage projects involving arts activity. These included Poetry People’s current ‘words, film and music’ project celebrating the lost heritage of The Grit fishing village at the northern end of Lowestoft and focusing on cultural conservation rather than the preservation of buildings.

It was noted that partnership and collaboration were often a necessary feature of such projects. In order to maximise such opportunities, arts organisations need to engage more fully with other local bodies – including local authorities at town and even village levels.

Sense of Place - Creating cultural identity, selling local arts, practical arts in landscape

Speakers – Simon Hooton, The Broads Authority; Sean Antonioli, Spring Agency/Look Sideways East; Melinda Appleby, Waveney & Blyth Arts (W&BA)

SH asked what people thought of when they thought of **The Broads** – water, butterflies, boats etc. He then explained about building a brand for the Broads and understanding its purpose – who was it for – residents, visitors, wildlife etc. He referenced some of the arts activities that were extending

engagement with the Broads and flagged up the new Landscape Partnership scheme launched the day before.

SA described the work of Spring in helping create brand identity and, specifically, the marketing brand of **Look Sideways East** which is designed to raise cultural awareness and can be relevant to large and small arts organisations. He raised the issue of sense of place in relation to belonging – originating in New York, his sense of place is one of an acquired home.

MA described the setting up of **Waveney & Blyth Arts** as being rooted in place – designed to bring attention to the two river valley landscapes as a micro-region that share a subtle and often overlooked landscape while people head for the Broads or the coast. She highlighted the Finding Paradise project and the role of the Celebrate Walks and Workshops in drawing attention to details of place. She also emphasised Sense as well as place and reminded people that a sense of place is not just the visual sense, but includes how it sounds, feels, smells.

The group was invited to share their thoughts or respond to the initial thoughts. Several people discussed whether Halesworth had any sense of place or anyone who cared about its identity - there were strong feelings on either side. Conversely people suggested that Southwold was too closely associated with a sense of place – almost focussing in on itself. First contributions were mostly about the sense of place of the market towns and the perspectives of people whether of the place or incomers to place. A sense of place may differ between long term resident and incomer.

It was generally agreed that the sense of place should come from questions to people about how they feel in a place and not be a top down expression from a large organisation. Artists can, as facilitators, help draw out a sense of place by working with people and using art to point up aspects of place.

One participant suggested we go back to the dawn of history to look at what a sense of place meant and why we now might have these views. He suggested when we go into a space we read it as a series of patterns, we see it in terms of survival, and then have an emotional response to it.

Discussion moved on to scale and participants felt that people are becoming more interested in the local and focussing down on place as a response to globalisation. Artists have a role, in focussing down on detail, to transform how people see a place.

It seemed generally agreed that artists and arts organisations have an important role in facilitating and shaping a sense of place by questioning, drawing attention to detail, using different arts to make people stop and reflect, to go within and encourage local people to look at their place afresh.

The day ended with a very energising speed-dating style Ideas Buzz and a brief plenary session.

Appendix 1

Arts In Adversity Conference, 2018 – What the Feedback Tells Us

Overall

29* feedback returns were received - almost 50% of the participants which is unusually high. The overall success of the conference was scored on a 1=Poor to 5=Great scale as follows:

$$1 = 0 / 2 = 1 / 3 = 2 / 3.5 = 2 / 4 = 14 / 5 = 8$$

This is a very pleasing overall result. Elsewhere in the feedback, words and phrases such as *excellent, brilliant, helpful, useful, good format, good examples, let's have more* - peppered the comments made.

[* 2 out of the 20 feedback forms did not make a response to this particular question]

Keynote Speakers

Generally a positive reception although a few participants claimed to have heard it all before. One person expressed relief that the power-cut meant that there were no power-point presentations and a number commented that they valued the more informal and inclusive 'feel' of using the Concourse rather than an Auditorium setting – it felt more equal as between speakers and audience. However a perceived down-side was the need for public speaking skills to be more crucial for the purpose of getting messages across.

Several participants had not realised that the Arts Council now had responsibility for Museums and Libraries. The highlighting of rural communities was appreciated as well as the diversity of Arts Council funding streams. Quite a number of participants said that they had not heard previously about the LEP and its cultural strategy, nor about StartEast. Both initiatives were broadly welcomed – especially in respect of the linking of “culture with growth” and the importance of business involvement in the arts. Two people claimed not to have known that there was such a person as a local authority arts officer/manager! Information about the Norfolk Forum was viewed as a very positive initiative which could perhaps be replicated in Suffolk. One participant felt that the topic of “austerity and its impact on the arts” was not directly addressed by the speakers.

Morning Workshop

Important words and phrases to emerge from the subsequent discussions were as follows:

interconnectivity; partnership; collaboration; working with young people (this became a particularly strong theme in the discussions); start small; use digital media; attractiveness of festivals; good signposting to relevant literature; issues about language – both the dangers of 'Arts-Speak' and the complexities of 'Business-Language' - but nevertheless the need to engage; importance of identifying outcomes and formulating business plans.

Two people felt that their group was too large to enable everyone to participate - importance of strong chairmanship to avoid dominance by an articulate few. Nevertheless, overall, participants appreciated the opportunity to discuss topics in peer groups.

Market Place

Not everyone took advantage of the Market Place but plenty did and were appreciative of the opportunities for funding and other resources. One person commented on the non-representation of any Norfolk agency but someone else found that one of the 'stalls' was helpful in signposting

appropriate Norfolk contacts. Both the Suffolk East and Suffolk Community Foundation were mentioned as having been specifically helpful and several people mentioned the existence of useful leaflets – eg. Volunteer Action England – and booklets – eg. ‘Culture Drives Growth’. One participant suggested that it might have increased the benefit of the Market Place if all participants had been encouraged to bring their own organisation’s literature for the Market Place.

Afternoon Themed Workshops

There was strong support for this opportunity to discuss an issue with colleagues from other organisations. One participant spotted the fact that whichever theme you took, it naturally led you on to linkages with the other two!

The importance of promoting “pride in local heritage”, the power of the arts to change perceptions of ‘place’, the use of creativity as a means towards greater well-being – were all noted.

Ideas Buzz

Overall this networking activity generated a lot of positive energy – connections were made and several people reported that it had enabled them to identify important issues for their particular organisation or project. Quite a few would have liked this session to have been longer, although a small number found it somewhat overwhelming at the end of an extremely busy day. Several people suggested that it might be a good way of starting a future gathering of this type. One person said that it had been “good fun” and I have the impression that this was a commonly held view among many participants!

Simon Raven

Conference Convener

Appendix 2 – Participant/Organisation Contact Addresses

Alan Bennett	Halesworth Gallery	Via www.halesworthgallery.co.uk or @halesworthgall (Twitter)
Alison Britton	Halesworth Library/Halesworth Tourism Group	alisonjbritton@gmail.com
Alison Cooke	The Friends of Halesworth Library	alisonlouisecooke@gmail.com
Ann Leitch	Starston Village	a_leitch@live.co.uk
Annette Rolston	DesignerMakers21	annetterol@yahoo.com
Ben Cardwell	INK Festival	ben@bencardwell.plus.com
Brian Guthrie	Waveney & Blyth Arts	brian.guthrie45@gmail.com
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Carol Desborough	Great Yarmouth Preservation Trust.	c/o rachel.gypt@gmail.com
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Darren Barker	Great Yarmouth Preservation Trust	Darren.barker@great-yarmouth.gov.uk
Darren France	Fisher Theatre/Youth Theatre Bungay	n/a
David Case	Diss Corn Hall	davidcasefineart@btinternet.com
Dean Parkin	Poetry People	deanparkin@email.com
Erica Summers	Rough Cast Theatre Company	c/o paulbaker_23@yahoo.co.uk
Esther Gibbons	Slate Barn Arts	esther@slatebarnarts.com
Genevieve Christie	Flipside Festival	Genevieve@flipsidefestival.org
Georgette Vale	Wymondham Walks and Talks	tony@valemail.eu
Helen Ball	Slice of Life	spadge.hopkins@gmail.com
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Ian Lomas	Southwold Festival	ian@threshershall.uk
James Aggett	Beccles Public Hall & Theatre	bphmanager@outlook.com
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