

# Driving Impact A Cultural Strategy for West Lindsey



## Executive Summary

This Cultural Strategy for West Lindsey positions culture as a foundation for a thriving, healthy, dynamic and sustainable district. This is where people of all backgrounds have access to culture – whether this be amateur activities at home, in village halls, schools and care settings; or access to professional cultural programming as part of an increasingly vibrant festival and events offer.

This is to ensure culture can enhance the quality of life for residents, contribute to economic vitality, and support community wellbeing. The strategy is informed by consultation with the district's cultural and community sector, Councillors and Council staff and strategic funders for culture. It is inspired by innovation and good practice across the UK and internationally.

Ambitious West Lindsey, partners are committed to working together to ensure culture and heritage organisations, artists and creative enterprises, have the capacity, skills and resources to drive impact and make a positive and sustainable difference.

However, this ambition sits within a challenging financial environment, where budgets are tight and access to dedicated funding to build capacity in culture is limited.

This strategy seeks to a modest uplift in the core budget for culture as a way of unlocking external investment from Government and Arts Council England through improved partnership and the gradual development of a joined-up cultural offer. It is also clear that West Lindsey has some incredible cultural assets to build from.

This includes historic houses, churches and industrial heritage; aviation heritage; the iron age archaeology of the Lower Witham Valley; and industrial and natural heritage of the Trent Valley.

This includes an active volunteer community which, given the right enabling environment, can spring to life in exciting ways. This includes key facilities and hubs for culture, such as village halls, libraries, markets, and vital infrastructure such as Trinity Arts Centre and Caistor Arts and Heritage Centre.

And this includes the talent and resourcefulness of artists, creative enterprises and festival producers who see the opportunity to make West Lindsey their home.

## Our Vision

In West Lindsey, culture is central to our economy, wellbeing and distinctiveness.

*It drives positive impact, with thriving, sustainable cultural activities improving the lives of our communities and attracting investment and visitors.*

Through collaboration with the cultural sector, supporting and investing in culture across the Council and with a wider partnership that has a shared ambition for West Lindsey.

With a district-wide approach that focuses on the distinctive needs and opportunities of different communities while forging shared activities.

By embracing change: supporting people to fulfil their potential, giving hope and enhancing quality of life, providing routes into employment in an inclusive economy, committed to tackling the climate emergency. For everyone, with everyone.



Culture is like a tapestry - there are many different threads that help us to shape traditions, promote understanding and, preserves our heritage. Each thread when woven together in partnership with our communities will help us to create a vibrant and thriving cultural masterpiece.

However, we must acknowledge there has been a lack of significant investment in the sector for some time and this is an opportunity for us to build on this.

We will invest in our people so that we can leverage in opportunities and external funding to build an enthusiastic network, deliver a cultural program, and foster partnerships for impactful outreach.

Our goal is to support community engagement, learn from successful community initiatives, and establishing a coordinated outreach program, including a young theatre which reflects a passionate and proactive approach to cultural enrichment.



# Themes

There are four themes for culture in West Lindsey

## Theme 1 - Grassroots Culture

Develop the 'West Lindsey Way' for community led cultural development by building on existing assets and practices in order to develop a strong sustainable network of community led cultural provision.

## Theme 2 - Great Places

Culture as a foundation to sustainable place-making: vibrant, inclusive and distinctive town centres and villages, including new developments. Access to cultural infrastructure and programming across the District.

## Theme 3 - Community Wellbeing

Culture as a foundation to a healthier, happier district, enhancing quality of life and boosting pride and confidence. Access to culture as part of wellbeing provision and rise in everyday cultural activities.

## Theme 4 - Dynamic Talent and Practice

Local talent championed to create, make and experience culture across all art forms. Innovative programming and touring provides opportunities for talent to work in the District and build sustainable organisations and enterprises.



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# An action plan for culture in West Lindsey

The development process described in the Action Plan for this Strategy includes priority actions for Year 1 and Years 2-3. It is recommended that a new Cultural Development Manager post be introduced, that cultural partnership is supported through a new Cultural Providers Network, that marketing and programming are more effectively coordinated, that capacity and skills support is offered to key organisations.

This process will involve renewed engagement with Arts Council England, National Lottery Heritage Fund, University of Lincoln and partners across the County.

There is an opportunity to build shared approaches with providers in different parts of Lincolnshire, including those in East Lindsey where there has been such a significant recent uplift in capacity and investment, and with the University of Lincoln, especially with regard to a re-modelled Trinity as a dynamic cultural production and impact hub.

By Year 3, the ambition is for West Lindsey to be viewed as 'investment ready' by Arts Council England in terms of establishing a National Portfolio Organisation in the District. Based in Trinity and working to drive sector development across the District, this will present the step-change opportunity which West Lindsey needs and by this point will deserve.

In West Lindsey, the opportunity over the next 5-10 years is to position culture as a foundation to the district's long-term, sustainable renewal. This Cultural Strategy sets out priority themes, actions and partnership considerations to deliver on this opportunity.

# Culture

## So, what do we mean by culture?

### Culture is our lives, community and environment

It is the way we see ourselves and our place in the world. It is where we live, who we are and how we learn. It is how we live our lives. It is how we dress, communicate, eat and drink. It is how we build and decorate our homes. It is how we express ourselves – from music to sport. It is how we design and inhabit our streets and open spaces. It is what we do and why we do it.

### Culture is heritage

It is our memories and stories, lived through our friends and relatives here and elsewhere. It is what we imagine ourselves to be. It is our possessions and artefacts. It is the built and natural landscape. It is our story and how we re-tell it. It is who we were and who we are becoming.

### Culture is museums, galleries, cinemas, music venues, theatres, libraries, festivals and events

It is how we record, collect, curate and present our identities and how we understand others' identities. It is how we preserve and bring to life our stories. It is how we express our world to others. It is about the conscious experience of culture.

### Culture is practice

It is the applied imagination of artists, writers and performers. It is the act of making – ideas, text, code, objects, paintings, sound and vision. It is performance. It is active participation. It is innovation and renewal.

### Culture is industry, it is the economic value generated by culture

It is the jobs and revenue. It is the added value – to innovation, productivity and brand. It is the creative and digital businesses.

### Culture is our shared future(s). It is how we connect and exchange

It is what we have in common and how we differ. It is our neighbourhood, ethnicity, gender, age, sexuality, religion, values and politics.

### Grassroots Culture

Our ethos for grassroots culture will drive forward the connecting of people and practices in shared spaces that make sense to our communities and enable the championing of the intergenerational transfer of cultural and artistic knowledge and skills.

