



**CORPORATE, POLICY &  
RESOURCE COMMITTEE**

**Thursday, 12 December  
2024**

**Subject: Review of Cultural Events 2024 and Provision for 2025/26**

Report by:

Director of Planning, Regeneration &  
Communities

Contact Officer:

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Purpose / Summary:

To set out a review of the cultural events programme delivered during 2024 and to seek approval for use of the Cultural Reserve to support the cultural events programme in line with the Cultural Strategy and Action Plan.

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

1. Members note the delivery of the 2024 cultural events programme.
2. Members approve the draw down of £65,500 from the Cultural Reserve as a contribution to the cultural events programme for 2025/26.

## IMPLICATIONS

**Legal: N/A**

**(N.B.) Where there are legal implications the report MUST be seen by the MO**

**Financial : FIN/109/25/CPR/SSc**

The Cultural Reserve was established during the process of developing an approach to culture in the district.

This paper seeks approval for use of the Cultural Reserve to fund the events programme at a cost of £65.5k.

Description	Scale Point 25/26	Contract extension	Start Date	End Date	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	Total
Opening Balance on Cultural Strategy Reserve								250,900
<b>Already approved</b> Cultural Development Manager	9c	37hrs, FT for 2 years	01/11/2024	30/10/2026	13,000	55,600	43,200	111,800
<b>Already approved</b> Go Festival						25,000		25,000
Cultural Events and Activities (Excl Go Festival)						65,500		65,500
<b>Total £</b>					<b>13,000</b>	<b>146,100</b>	<b>43,200</b>	<b>202,300</b>
Closing Balance on Cultural Strategy Reserve								48,600

This would leave a balance on the Cultural Reserve of £48.6k.

**Staffing : N/A**

**HR REF:**

**Equality and Diversity including Human Rights :**

Cultural delivery is open and accessible to all. Many of the programmed events are free to attend and are promoted to all residents across the district.

**Data Protection Implications : N/A**

**Climate Related Risks and Opportunities: N/A**

**Section 17 Crime and Disorder Considerations:**

Cultural activity will support the delivery of community cultural activity, and this has the potential to offer diversionary activities.

**Health Implications:**

The Council’s Corporate Plan 2023-2027 commits to a strategic aim of “reducing health inequalities, promoting healthy lifestyles and improving wellbeing across the district” which will partially be achieved by the Council increasing opportunities for sport, culture and leisure activities across the district. A key outcome of delivering this aim is the provision of a “co-ordinated cultural events and activity programme that increases participation and meets the needs of our people across the district.”

Retention of the existing officers will increase capacity to deliver this strategic outcome.

**Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report :**

Cultural Strategy  
Cultural Action Plan

**Risk Assessment :**

N/A

**Call in and Urgency:**

**Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?**

*i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)*

**Yes**

**No**

**Key Decision:**

*A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications*

**Yes**

**No**

## **Executive Summary**

The Cultural Strategy was approved in April 2024, the strategy included a clear action plan for delivery with achievable outcomes.

This paper reviews the cultural programme delivered over the last 12 months and the resource required for delivery.

Officers to date have been able to utilise the UK Shared Prosperity Funds to deliver activity but the fund ends in March 2025, with a transition year proposed, however details of funding allocations remain unclear.

This report requests a draw down from the Cultural Reserve to invest in delivery the cultural programme and maintain the current level of cultural programming.

It is imperative that the Council remains consistent to demonstrate strong ambition when applying for long term sustainable grant funding from the Arts Council England and, to avoid a negative reputational impact of withdrawing successful events and activity from the West Lindsey residents, schools, community groups and businesses.

The current balance of the Cultural Reserve is £114,100 the proposal sets out a need for £65,500 to support the delivery of the Cultural Strategy and Action Plan, leaving a balance of £48,600 in the reserve.

# 1 Introduction

- 1.1 This paper reviews the cultural events and activities that have taken place in the last 12 months and recommends the use of the Cultural Reserve to support delivery over the next 12 months.
- 1.2 The link below directs Members to the website page for the Cultural Strategy and provides a video link to a year-round summary of the cultural events delivered throughout the term of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.
- 1.3 <https://www.west-lindsey.gov.uk/transport-visitors-markets-leisure/culture-arts-heritage/culture>
- 1.4 To date the delivery has been achieved using the roles detailed below.
- Commercial, Cultural and Leisure Development Manager
  - Cultural Events and Marketing Officer – fixed term, March 2025
  - Cultural Support Officer – fixed term, March 2025
  - Mayflower 400 Officer – fixed term, March 2025
  - Towns Manager
- 1.5 Operational and programming support has also been provided from the Trinity Arts Centre Manager and Technical Manager.
- 1.6 The recruitment of the Cultural Outreach Officer is now complete and the new post will commence on 01 January 2025. The Cultural Development Manager is currently being undertaken, with interview being held on 11 December 2024.
- 1.7 In the last 12 months the following events have been delivered -

Event	Location	Workshops/ Fringe events	Participants/Attendance main event	Partners
Illuminate	Gainsborough	7	2918	7
Go Festival	Gainsborough	15	Approx. 3050 (adult only**)	12
WordFest	Market Rasen	5	Unknown	8
WordFest	Gainsborough	7	1938 + (*618 New)	10
Trinity on Tour	Market Rasen	-	157	3
Nature Calling	Wolds/Market Rasen	12+ expected	Ends Summer 2025	10
Live & Local	District wide	-	664 (14 shows)	4
Christmas Lights Festival	Gainsborough	-	TBC	11

\*New Impressions – GPS data, not seen in Gainsborough Market Place since May 2024

\*\* Mobile GPS data – estimated at 1 adult per family/group attending the event

## **2. Cultural Outcome Review**

- 2.1 Over the past 12 months there has been an increased number of cultural, heritage and creative programmes running across the district.
- 2.2 There has also been an increase in cultural partners and businesses that are now engaged with the Council's cultural delivery. This includes over 12 schools, 10 heritage sites, 7 voluntary and community sector groups, and 15 business. The ambition is to bring all this enthusiasm and collective work together with the development of the West Lindsey Cultural Board.
- 2.3 Feedback surveys from the legacy events show a strong and positive engagement with all activities provided and delivered. This has been collected through online surveys, social media comments and compliments and through the Customer Experience Manager.
- 2.4 The evaluation data from Go Festival 2024 can be found in Appendix 1.
- 2.5 There has been an increased footfall into the Market Place, with data analysis indicating a spike in visitors on a Farmers' Market weekend regularly reaching over 2000 impressions.
- 2.6 The Council has worked with numerous organisations and businesses to create activity to suit all ages, abilities and interests through place based cultural activity.  
This includes.
  - Lincolnshire Co-Op
  - Lincolnshire YMCA
  - Lincolnshire Heritage
  - Everyone Active
  - The Heritage Centre
  - Connexions

Markets in Gainsborough and Market Rasen have stimulated the local and visitor economy, this has included a Food and Drink Festival in Market Rasen, the Young Trader Market in Gainsborough and supporting Caistor Town Council to adopt the same Young Trader model to diversify their offer.

- 2.7 As set out in the strategy, we aim to build on this community involvement as we develop our networks and working relationships with community cultural organisations.

## **3. Legacy Events Review**

- 3.1 The Illuminate legacy event has been delivered for 8 years, the event hosts a parade, fire garden in grounds of the Parish Church and projections onto the Gainsborough Old Hall.

The event has strong links to schools, with artists and WLDC staff holding lantern making workshops during school time and encouraging students to join the community lantern parade that starts the festival. The total cost for this event was £25,700, with a contribution of £1,000 from the Town Council.

<https://discovergainsborough.com/illuminate2024/>

3.2 The GO Festival (Revive) was born out a strong programming relationship with the Arts Council funded, SO Festival based in East Lindsey.

The GO Festival showcases local professional artists, community groups and international artists. The international artists are programmed as part of an East Midlands tour that promotes cultural learning, growth and gives East Midland residents free access to international cultural talent.

The GO festival provides numerous community workshops including silk painting, choreography lessons, puppet making and the bunting blast which developed bespoke bunting that has been used as decoration around the Gainsborough Town Centre, Marshall's Yard and the WLDC Lincolnshire Show marquee.

The total cost for this event was £40,200 with an Arts Council project grant of £30,000 and a contribution of £3,000 from the Town Council.

For the GO Festival 2025 event, fringe events in the central and eastern areas of the District will be added to the programme and will also include a SO/GO Festival school collaboration.

<https://discovergainsborough.com/go-festival-photo-gallery/>

3.3 The Christmas Lights Festival (Christmas Lights Switch On) The annual event was previously ran by the Town Council, then contracted to Marshall's Yard and now is delivered by WLDC Officers with support from community groups and the Town Council.

The two day event has had very positive feedback from businesses, residents and visitors. The event showcases school choirs, dance groups, local traders and professional artists.

New community groups supporting this event included, RAF Cadets, Queen Elizabeth's High School, Men's Shed and Bearded Fisherman.

This year the Council's aim was to entice new traders to the event and promote the ongoing general and farmers' markets, with a low pitch/stall cost, to create demand for future years.

This has proven successful with increased numbers, positive feedback, and new contacts to support the year-round market offer.

Trader feedback is available in Appendix 3.

The Council can now raise the cost of the pitch/stalls and maintain trader numbers.

The Council faced a challenge on the Friday evening of the event, this challenge was created by the Marshall's Yard switch on at 7pm, this created a surge in footfall at the crossing between the two sites. Whilst Marshall's Yard failed to act, the Council officers and Security, adapted and quickly made the crossing as safe as possible. A follow up report and investigation will be recommended to the Safety Advisory Group by the Event Manager, Cara Markham.

This event seeks sponsorship from local businesses to help with the costs of the event. The contribution from local businesses in 2024 was £1,200 despite over 40 businesses being contacted by the Cultural Support Officer by email and telephone.

In 2024 this event charged a small fee of 50p per ride, this generated £2000 income, 50% of which will be donated the Chairman's chosen charity, the Brain Tumour Charity. The final cost of this event was £31,000 with a contribution of £5,000 from the Town Council and £1,200 in sponsorship.

<https://discovergainsborough.com/christmas-lights-festival-2024-photo-gallery/>

### 3.4 Legacy event budget example

Christmas Lights Festival 2024		
Logistics and Operations	£13,800	Road closure, First aid, security, waste management, traffic management, generators, PRS.
Entertainment	£11,800	Fairground, walkabout theatre, giant snow globe
Stage line up	£2,600	DJ and bands
Marketing	£2,800	Photography, banners, programmes, paid social
Total	£31,000	



#### 4. Gainsborough Farmers' Market Review

4.1 The Towns Manager programmes the monthly Farmers' Market with themes to support traders and businesses to increase footfall and cultural activity in the Gainsborough town centre. The budget per market is £500. The market is delivered by the Towns Manager and Cultural Support Officer.

4.2

<b>2024</b>	
February	New Year, New You with Everyone Active
March	Illuminate
April	Rockabilly band – Spring theme or retro theme
May	Dino theme with shop trail
June	Young Traders Market (Go Festival 15 June)
July	Heritage Skills Festival
August	Olympics - YMCA
September	WordFest – with shop trail
October	Halloween and Dragons with shop trail
November	1940s/Remembrance
December	Christmas Market
February 2025	Pancakes Day/Valentines

4.3 The Wordfest in Market Rasen and Gainsborough was new for 2024. At both towns a selection of free events and activities were organised to support and literature village market. The activities included literature talks, theatre, music and craft. The event was delivered with local literature groups and residents. The heritage venues, libraries and the Old Hall supported the hosting of these activities. The total cost for Wordfest 2024 is £4,500.

<https://www.west-lindsey.gov.uk/council-news/2024/09/wordfest-set-bring-literary-delight-gainsborough>

#### 5. District Wide Support

5.1 As a part of the Cultural Events and Marketing Officer role, support through marketing and promotion is offered to all organisations wishing to reach a bigger audience, sell more tickets or grow their engagement. The Cultural Events and Marketing Officer also regularly attends events hosted by the Voluntary Community Services to assist with marketing support and event delivery.

5.2 The Council does this through the West Lindsey social media channels, inclusion into the monthly events newsletter which has 4197 subscribers.

The digital boards in both Gainsborough and Market Rasen are regularly updated to promote events from across the district.

- 5.3 The Council also offers a web page that lists events for free. There are currently over 25 pages of listings stretching to 2026. The webpage offers a link to an event submission form that can be completed by any organisation wishing to promote their event in the district.

<https://www.west-lindsey.gov.uk/events>

- 5.4 The Council has provided £290,762 in financial support across the district to a range of cultural groups, community organisation, Parish Councils to support the delivery of the cultural strategy.

This financial support has been administered through a range of funding tools.

1. Community Facilities Fund
2. Community Action Fund
3. Large Village Area Fund
4. Councillor Initiative Fund
5. Community Development Fund
6. COVID Management Fund

- 5.6 A full list of the organisations supported since May 2022 has been provided by the Community Engagement Officer and is available in Appendix 2.
- 5.7 An example of the cultural delivery is the award given to Rhubarb Theatre that delivered wide reach across the district to 30 schools, including Cherry Willingham, Caistor, Tealby and Scotter, plus community performances at the Gainsborough Go Festival and the Wildlife In Your Backyard event in Market Rasen. The total engagement reach was over 6500 over a 6 month period.
- 5.8 In addition, this year the West Lindsey Churches Festival and the Live & Local programme have been core funding through the Council.
- 5.9 The Council has also committed to the Nature Calling Rural Arts project working with Lincolnshire Wolds Countryside Service, East Lindsey District Council, Magna Vitae, Arts Council England, Activate Performing Arts and Poetry School. The project will host poetry workshops and writing classes, youth arts development and an exhibition at the GO Festival 2025

## 6. Cost Of Delivery

6.1 In October 2024, The Commercial, Cultural and Leisure Development Manager hosted a Greater Lincolnshire Cultural Network Meeting, this meeting was attended by 25 officers and partners from across the County. The event was extremely successful with new partnerships and strong relationships being formed. As a result, the Lincolnshire County Council has gifted WLDC £10,000 towards the community engagement delivery element of the Illuminate 2025 event. This money will ensure that there will be additional school participations, community workshops and a wider reach for the event next year.

6.2 The forecasted amount from Gainsborough Town Council for the legacy events for the next 12 months is expected as follows -

Go Festival 2025 - £3,000

Christmas Lights Festival 2025 - £8,000

Illuminate 2026 - £1,000

This has been provided by Town Clerk and is an increase of £3,000 from 2024/2025 financial year. These amounts are yet to be approved by the Town Council Committee members.

Further discussions with Leader of the Council and the Town Council are planned to propose what further support the Town Council can provide.

The request from WLDC for Christmas has therefore been reduced to reflect the Town Council increase in contribution.

6.3 On 17 October 2024, Members of the Corporate, Policy and Resource Committee approved the allocation of £25,000 for the delivery of the Go Festival 2025.

6.4 The table below now sets out the required funds to maintain the cultural programme that has been established.

Event/Market	Detail	Required budget
Christmas Lights Festival 2025	3 <sup>rd</sup> weekend in November	£22,000
Illuminate 2026	3 <sup>rd</sup> weekend in February	£25,000
Farmers' Market	11 Markets 2 <sup>nd</sup> Saturday of the month	£5,500 (£500 per market)
Footfall events (includes WordFest)	Gainsborough, Market Rasen and Caistor	£6,000

Marketing and Partnership	Promotion across the district for all activities	£6,000
<b>Budget required</b>		<b>£65,500</b>

## 7. Risks

- 7.1 Failure to recruit and/or under resource will impact on the amount of activity and quality of the activity which will be delivered. To ensure the aims and objectives of the Cultural strategy and the Corporate Plan have the maximum impact, it is imperative to recruit the correct officers with the relevant experience and skills.
- 7.2 Should the Council significantly reduce the cultural activity this will have a negative impact on future funding applications and Arts Council England withdrawing support should the Council fail to demonstrate how they are delivering the strategy.
- 7.3 There is also a risk of withdrawing established and popular events that have become a key part of the district's cultural programme, this will have a negative impact on the Council's reputation in the local community and to the town centre businesses and markets that thrive during the events.

## 8. Next Steps

- 8.1 The Commercial, Cultural and Leisure Development Manager has facilitated a discussion with a Senior Relationship Manager at Arts Council England to highlight WLDC's Cultural Strategy and ambitions to become a regularly funded organisation through National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) status.
- 8.2 The Manager will continue with these strategic discussions which framing and creating the NPO application with a newly appointed Cultural Development Manager.
- 8.3 It has been advised that WLDC look at extending the Cultural Board to a Cultural Compact which will encourage businesses and individuals to join the Compact to develop a sustainable investment channel into culture, allowing businesses to create social value through their investment and community work.
- 8.4 As the UK Shared Prosperity Fund ends on 31 March 2025, consideration needs to be given to resourcing the delivery of the legacy events, Lincolnshire Show organisation and wider district cultural support and promotion as the Cultural Events and Marketing Officer and the Support Officer posts will end.

- 8.5 The work plan for the Outreach post is now being prepared. Key deliverables will include
- Increase in regular cultural activity.
  - Identify groups and communities to participate in the cultural activity.
  - Develop relationship between groups, communities, schools, town and Parish councils.
  - Build a strong database of activity that will become the core programming for the annual legacy events.
- 8.6 The work plan for the Cultural Development Manager will be to lead on the delivery of the Cultural Strategy action plan, developing successful funding applications, and establishing a Cultural Compact.