

THE BENEFITS THAT THE ARTS BRING TO BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET

Presentation to B&NES Council 12 9 13, by Belinda Kidd, Chief Executive, Bath Festivals

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to the full Council. I am Belinda Kidd, CEO of Bath Festivals. We produce the International Music Festival, the Literature Festival and the Children's Literature Festival. We also run a busy year round education programme, and manage the Bath Box Office selling tickets for over 100 organisations.

I want to follow up on David's presentation by adding a few further points about the benefits of the arts to B&NES, and the importance of having a fully rounded strategic approach to make the most of what the arts can offer to our local area and to our communities:-

Importance of the arts to the economy:

- The economic value of cultural activity in B&NES is estimated to be at least £157 million
- Cultural activity generates at least 6,079 jobs in the local economy

From University of Bath study, 2010

The arts brings visitors in from across the UK and beyond

Cultural visitors stay overnight and spend more than other visitors, which supports the tourism strategy, which aims to bring in more higher spending visitors.

The arts raises the profile of Bath & NE Somerset nationally through the good press coverage we get, so people see Bath as a lively, contemporary city, as well as a beautiful heritage attraction

Social benefits of the arts:

Engagement with creative activities has been proved to increase children's communication skills, their confidence and their overall engagement in learning. I have seen a particularly dramatic effect amongst children who are disengaged with education, or at risk of offending behaviour, when they've been involved in drama, music or other arts projects. Arts organisations are very good at working with schools, youth centres and others to provide wider creative opportunities for children, and inspiring teachers to work more regularly with professional artists within schools.

Arts festivals and events bring communities together enhancing a sense of pride and belonging. Free events have a particular role to play in this, such as Party in the City, as it's so easy to join in – thousands of local people join in, and thousands of performers get a chance to shine.

The way forward

We hope B&NES will adopt an imaginative and inspiring approach to working with cultural organisations and outside partners to get us all working together to realise all the opportunities that the arts offer. There are still significant resources out there we can bring in but only if we are working together strategically and showing clear leadership and imagination. With the right approach, we can set up partnerships and consortia of organisations to work together in large-scale education projects, to set up rural touring initiatives, and to work with disaffected young people, - and to collaborate on marketing and promotion so that we attract more audiences, both bringing more people in from across the UK and abroad, and widening the audience so that more local people benefit from the lively cultural offer of Bath & NE Somerset. To achieve all this, we need B&NES to adopt a collaborative leadership approach, to help act as a catalyst to make the most of the creativity and enterprise that is inherent within the cultural sector.