

Creative & Cultural Programme 2023-25 Summary Framework - Abridged

Torbay's Cultural Development Fund Paignton Picture House

Introduction

This summary provides an overview of the delivery framework designed by Filament as coordinating partner for the Creative & Cultural Programme - activity that supports the redevelopment of Paignton Picture House. Enabled through a CDF resource grant, it brings together local cultural partners to enhance the wider cultural offer and engagement of residents and visitors.

Between January - March 2023, building on many preparatory conversations over the past year, we met with organisations and individuals including cultural partners, local businesses, artists and community members. We formed the StoryBoard as a collaborative group to inform development of the programme, identify gaps and opportunities locally, and unpack challenges.

The framework proposed will act as the delivery structure for the Creative & Cultural Programme over the following two years. Our intention is to provide a clear and tangible routeway to guide delivery, whilst providing sufficient flexibility to respond to inevitable challenges and opportunities that will arise. With this in mind, this should be viewed as a 'live' document that will be revisited and refined with partners and the steering group over the programme period.



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Context: Torbay's Cultural Development Fund - Paignton Picture House

The Creative & Cultural Programme forms part of a substantial programme of work focused on capital improvements in Paignton. Torbay's Cultural Development - Paignton Picture House focuses on one of Europe's earliest purpose-built cinemas. It will see the successful reopening of a historic landmark site, with activity on the ground engaging local communities and visitors.

It is supported by funding from CDF from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS), managed by Arts Council England. Match funding is in place from the Future High Streets Fund from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities, and other grant giving bodies including Historic England and Architectural Heritage Fund.

The CDF consortium is led by Torbay Council with core partners Paignton Picture House, South Devon College (SDC), the advisory board of Torbay Culture, and the Agatha Christie Festival Limited - also working with other local partner organisations to ensure maximum impact and collaboration.

Torbay's CDF plans focus on:

- Renaissance of a landmark site as a cultural hub for Paignton (film, community use, archive material, local history, income generation, performance)
- Enabling community access to heritage, increased civic pride through culture, and more attractiveness of place
- Residents will have greater engagement with place and public realm through a tangible example of 'levelling up'
- Direct benefits of job creation at the new Paignton Picture House, and with associated partners, service providers, and local businesses
- Skills development including apprenticeships and work place opportunities; and a stronger cultural tourism offer, essential for our visitor economy.

This work contributes to all DCMS CDF outcomes: unlocking growth, improving attractiveness of place, and enabling stronger local leadership.

Supporting the substantial capital works, a CDF resource grant is enabling three strands of work that build on the opportunities of the PPH redevelopment:

- A creative & cultural programme, bringing together local cultural partners to shape activities, enhancing the wider cultural offer and engagement of residents and visitors.
- A digital engagement strand managed by SDC, working closely with partners, in particular Sound Communities, to create digital stories celebrating local culture & heritage, complementing skills opportunities for young people.
- Evaluation, measured against metrics developed in consultation with the national evaluation team led by Steer ED for the Arts Council. Local evaluation is led by Cat Radford working with Mary Schwarz.

A distinctive aspect of Torbay's CDF programme is story-telling: The Picture House itself is all about telling stories on film; partners all have common threads about telling stories and reflecting our heritage – through literature and reading, performance and pictures, sounds and words. Opportunities to strengthen national film and media links are being explored, including via Exeter UNESCO City of Literature with the Bill Douglas Museum (University of Exeter) and the National Science & Media Museum, Bradford. This theme of literature & language is especially relevant for Torbay, linking to the area's rich literary heritage.



Above: a visitor at Paignton Picture House, studying the model of proposed redesign.

Context: Paignton's cultural landscape

Paignton has an established network of cultural and creative organisations, many rooted in the community with deep knowledge of what works here. The sector has a highly evolved understanding of participatory work and co-production. Organisations including Doorstep Arts and Sound Communities provide relevant, aspirational opportunities on an ongoing basis: activities with children and young people, community-wide projects, work with schools. Doorstep Arts is Torbay's only National Portfolio Organisation (Arts Council). Libraries Unlimited have also secured NPO support for activity in Torbay including at Paignton Library.

Events in the town centre are seeing increased support, with initiatives including: Playing in the Streets (Tonic Creatives), Paignton Lantern Procession, promenade performances, Train of Lights (Dartmouth Steam Railway). There is a real need to grow cultural activity in the public realm through events programming and reducing barriers for street-based work to take place. The heritage of the town's diverse subcultures are embedded in the public imagination, providing rich and relevant energy to draw on.

Paignton's architectural heritage includes many significant (if undercelebrated) buildings, including some of Paignton's key cultural venues: Paignton Picture House, Coverdale Tower, Palace Theatre, Paignton Parish Church, Oldway Mansion. There is strong local interest in the town's heritage with Paignton Heritage Society organising regular activities. The town's relationship to the sea is a key part of its identity, all the more important considering the impacts of climate change on Paignton's present and future.

Over recent years, Paignton Picture House has opened its doors to artists and audiences, hosting immersive media works, heritage tours and consultations. Palace Theatre programmes across live theatre, music, dance, pantomime, talks, and social activities. The theatre bridges commercial, subsidised and amateur sectors and is home to Doorstep Arts' regular drama groups with young people.

On Winner Street in particular, new businesses are successfully drawing new audiences, with Local Spark Torbay supporting enterprise development and Sound Communities opening a performance space on Hyde Road. In contrast, several cultural businesses have recently closed due to the economic climate. Cultural organisations sit on the peripheries of business sector conversations and identify that more integration would be mutually beneficial.



Top: Young people at Electric Sound Palace at PPH (Eyeview, 2019); Bottom: Storymaking activities with Doorstep Arts at Playing in the Streets on Torbay Road (Tonic Creatives 2022)

Development Approach

This framework has been developed by Filament Works as the Coordinating Lead for the Creative & Cultural Programme, drawing on discussions with key local partners. Filament grew out of Torbay's Great Place Scheme (2017-20): through delivery of the scheme's cultural programme *Eyeview*, it was identified that creative producing capacity was needed in Torbay to grow the work happening here, acting as a bridge between strategic initiatives and local delivery partners.

Our approach has been to build on Paignton's established strengths, using this as an opportunity to galvanise the energy, passion, knowledge and experience of those living and working in the specific area of Paignton Town Centre.

From this starting point, we set out to shape a programme that would:

- Grow resilience of local creative & cultural assets and organisations
- Meet the needs of under-served communities resident locally
- Meet the gaps in programming in terms of events programming, participatory opportunities and creative skills development
- Join the dots so that local and visiting audiences can find and navigate cultural opportunities.

To support this, we established the StoryBoard, comprising local cultural animators across various sectors and experience. Our intention is that the StoryBoard will also serve as a frame to evolve a leadership group locally, focusing on active problem-solving, and collaborative generation of new work.

Over 3 intensive sessions, this group has:

- mapped the existing and potential cultural activity
- interrogated values & priorities in relation to Paignton's needs & strengths
- explored our 'baggage' - concerns and challenges that feel urgent and difficult to resolve
- identified key needs and strategies to reduce barriers, particularly for those least served by culture and the wider social and economic ecology
- scoped themes & approaches as 'test projects' to stress-test the proposed framework.

In parallel with this collaborative process, Filament worked with the teams leading on other CDF programme elements to ensure alignment with:

- Paignton Picture House capital development
- South Devon College digital stories strand
- Wider programme impact measurement and evaluation framework.

We have collated and analysed the materials collected through this process, integrating views and learnings to shape a programme framework proposed. You can find detail on the StoryBoard process, ideas and data in the supporting documents.

The framework is designed to provide a clear, tangible structure within which to commission work, whilst providing flexibility to respond to opportunity and need over the two years of the programme.



Above: StoryBoard members working on *Balancing Priorities* at a programme development session at Paignton Library.

Rationale

The Creative & Cultural Programme brings together partners to nurture Paignton as **fertile ground** for the opening of a restored Paignton Picture House in 2025. Supporting the substantial capital works at the Picture House, the programme will play a key role building connectivity and galvanising the energy of Paignton's cultural ecology.

Locally-relevant work is needed that addresses the needs of people and businesses - work that will root culture and creativity in the fabric of our communities. It must feel and be relevant to people's wider social, economic and cultural lives. Cultural & creative engagement can enhance the lives of residents and visitors, helping to build **a cultural scene that is 'owned and grown' by those who live and work here.**

At its heart, the programme must provide enjoyment, from the sensory to the intellectual, enhancing wellbeing in the broadest sense. This will benefit all those involved, and in turn, unlock long term cultural engagement. **Experiencing joy, feeling belonging and finding meaning** are the key drivers that will support long term behaviour and attitudinal change.

With this in mind, the framework is designed to balance two distinct emphases:

- embedding creativity, heritage and culture within everyday life, changing habits and perspectives through repeated participation and experiences;
- bringing moments of spectacle and joy into people's lives through work that reaches the awareness of many.

The programme will seek to address gaps in Paignton's cultural offer, for audiences and for resilience of our sector. From a programming perspective, this includes:

- free access participation opportunities across all ages
- high-impact events in public areas as part of the cultural calendar
- use of informal 'third spaces' that host multiple artforms and experiences
- wider cultural representations that invite in diverse identities and voices.

The Picture House will act **as a beacon for Paignton's cultural aspirations** and provides an opportunity to enhance the confidence, quality, diversity and breadth of the area's cultural offer. It will improve how we signpost & storytell what happens here, so that Paignton's culture, heritage and creativity is enjoyed & valued as part of everyday life.

We want to embed routes into **meaningful work and training in the creative and cultural industries.** Internships and entry level roles will support delivery teams, supported by partners to upskill and provide pathways for longer term work. As part of this, Digital Stories (South Devon College and Sound Communities) can feed into opportunities and industry placements for young people.

The thread of story-telling that runs through this programme provides the frame for us to reflect our heritage, identities and dreams, and also to connect with others. Through an emphasis on **connection** and **exchange**, the programme will

- create 'conversations' between venues as cultural beacons in the area
- enable people to meet, explore new perspectives and make new connections
- strengthen our leadership and partnership approaches for the long term.

We need to draw out new connections and bring the hidden into plain sight. The programme needs to help **articulate and signpost cultural opportunities** in ways that are clear, welcoming and relevant. This includes invitations and information both on- and off- line, especially given the extent of digital poverty locally. We want residents and visitors will be able to **see and feel** the spirit of cultural confidence and curiosity growing around them.

The programme must support the engagement of people for whom cultural and creative participation is most difficult. This includes addressing barriers faced by people who are under-served by our cultural sector and wider society. Inviting people to participate on their terms will **enable more equitable access** to cultural participation and co-creation.

If the impact of this work is to endure, it must be rooted in our established cultural landscape. The StoryBoard will act as a mechanism to strengthen local leadership, driving forward new initiatives and guiding activity. This includes opening up conversations with the wider business sector, and with the agencies who are supporting health, educational and social needs of local people.

Practice and innovation towards net zero will be woven throughout. Sitting within the English Riviera UNESCO Global Geopark, Paignton's story is inextricably linked to our unique natural environment, its relationship to the coast and the wellbeing of those who live here.

Values & Principles

The StoryBoard identified key priorities for the programme and from these, Programme Values and Working Principles were evolved. Values were put into tiers by the group to agree the most important messages to carry forward. These will be used to inform the commissioning process across the programme overall. The group also interrogated priorities that might be in contrast to each other and these are shown in the appendices - this informs the balancing that will continue through the programme as each commission is developed.

PROGRAMME VALUES articulate shared priorities & act as guiding principles. They set the tone of the work, with partners, stakeholders and audiences.

- 1. Grows a Sense of Belonging.** People feel welcome and invited. The work helps grow a connection between people and place.
- 2. Earns Trust & Confidence.** Grown from genuine positive experiences, respect, quality & honesty.
- 3. Includes & Represents** different people, identities & cultures. Is open about how people engage & what inspires them. People can relate, seeing themselves in the work.
- 4. Aspires & Inspires.** Widening horizons, growing hope & sense of what is possible. Ensuring excellence and growing real, meaningful opportunities.
- 5. Builds Long-Lasting Change.** Achieving positive impacts through work that can be sustained long-term.
- 6. Is Courageous.** Making necessary decisions/actions to achieve impacts for Paignton and its communities.

WORKING PRINCIPLES guide how we will work with multiple and diverse partners for all involved.

- 1. Strengths-Based.** Building on what we do well, harnessing skills & knowledge of organisations & individuals.
- 2. Collaborative.** Bridging sectors & perspectives, encouraging dialogue & challenge. Enabling with clear language & processes.
- 3. Inclusive & Respectful.** Promoting & respecting different perspectives & identities. Ensuring a breadth of voices & representation.
- 4. Enquiry-led.** Open to learning, reflecting & adapting, leaning into difficulties as shared areas for growth.
- 5. Agile & Responsive.** Flexible to respond & adapt to emerging needs & situations. Opportunity- sensing.
- 6. Risk-enabling.** Support to enable communities, artists and partners to experiment and explore new approaches.
- 7. Resource-effective.** Balancing priorities to maximise impact within available resources. Sharing resources, building on current provision.

Informs **Commissioning Principles**, with work balanced against priorities and engagement checklist.

Vision



The restoration of Paignton Picture House provides us with a unique opportunity to articulate the cultural landscape of Paignton, so that its culture, heritage and creativity is **enjoyed as part of everyday life**.

If we can reveal and connect Paignton's cultural assets, they can be at the heart of our communities regeneration - bringing new opportunities, perspectives, hope and beauty to the fabric of our town.

Through **connection** and **exchange**, the programme will support work that creates 'conversations' between venues as cultural beacons in the area. Venues and creative organisations will work together to reveal connections and grow a spirit of exchange.

Through this, we will bring to life:

- the rich creative practice taking place every day, often behind closed doors
- the fabric of Paignton's cultural & heritage buildings and architecture
- the stories of Paignton past, present and future
- the skills and knowledge in our communities and businesses

Residents and visitors will be able to **see and feel** the cultural landscape around them - they will be able to join-the-dots and **find their way** to activities and events that inspire them to get involved or try something new.

The programme must create **real opportunities for people** to develop skills and find paid work. Exchange of knowledge & skills will generate new creative work, find imaginative solutions to embedded issues and create sustainable pathways into the creative industries, particularly for early career and young people.

Example projects on the following pages illustrate how this could be achieved. These are for illustrative purposes only - through collaborative shaping of briefs, we expect a wide variety of projects to emerge that address the programme objectives.

Programme Activity

Building on the vision and rationale outlined, programme activity will include:

1 | Through each year and building up to Open Season events, participatory **ex:change** projects will invite residents to get involved in Paignton's evolving cultural scene. These will link cultural venues and creative organisations with community-led partners. Each will develop work that builds knowledge and appreciation of Paignton's rich heritage & culture, rooted in the needs & interests of those involved. Each will grow skills and social opportunities, with pathways into further involvement.

2 | **Open Season:** Each year, an autumn 'season' of cultural activity will take place across different venues and public spaces in the heart of Paignton. Over several weeks, a curated programme of events will invite residents and visitors to experience new work and take part. This will bring together activities & events that are part of core partners' delivery, with work commissioned specifically to bridge between venues, helping audiences to discover and appreciate the network of cultural opportunities on their doorstep. Integrating highly visible events with ongoing local programming, Open Season will grow local pride and excitement for people of all ages.

3 | **Seen & Heard:** To increase visibility of culture locally, we want to articulate connections between venues and grow a grapevine of communications to help people find their way to opportunities. This will include: projects that use creative approaches to place work in the high street and public realm; marketing and communications to message the growing cultural offer; and a community-enabled word-of-mouth network to break down barriers to engagement.

4 | As a collaborative model for cultural leadership, the **StoryBoard** will play a key role in driving forward skills development and pathways into paid work. They will be instrumental in shaping a sustainable model for shared marketing and communications. Open Season and ex:change activities will connect with StoryBoard organisations and other key partners, building in sustainability and acting as the stimulus to secure the resources needed to continue work beyond the life of the programme.

The framework overleaf shows how these elements connect, allowing for the programme to develop as we learn, respond to changes and opportunities.

Programme Framework

