

Joint Strategic Assessment for Culture

Warminster Community Area

Introduction

Culture can be defined as the sum total of individual creativity and community heritage. It is embedded in our daily lives and can be experienced within buildings such as libraries, museums, art galleries and theatres as well as within the natural environment and domestic settings. Culture includes the making of things and memories, the sharing of belief and values, and the reflection upon customs and experiences.

Culture and the arts support the wellbeing of both individuals and the whole community. Participating in cultural activities is important for both physical and mental wellbeing.

Culture provides vital opportunities for communities to come together and share unique experiences that build community identity. Culture builds bridges between and within communities and empowers individuals to take a leading role in transforming communities.

Culture and the arts are important parts of the local economy. The cultural sector forms a significant part of the tourism industry; it adds variety to the employment base and it stimulates the local supply chain. The cultural sector also enriches the education of young people, and provides life-long learning opportunities for the whole community.



Figure 1 3rd Battalion, the Yorkshire Regiment (courtesy of Warminster & Villages Community Partnership)

The 2012/13 version of the JSA for Wiltshire identified four key issues in relation to Culture. These were:

- Broadening participation in cultural activities
- Strengthening and protecting the heritage and cultural asset base
- Increasing satisfaction with the cultural offer
- Supporting the growth of the creative economy

The community area of Warminster reflects these countywide issues. Warminster has many areas of protected land, areas of outstanding natural beauty (AONB) and heritage sites. Participation in cultural activities is mixed with strong use of the library but less well developed audiences for the arts and low attendance at heritage sites. There is a need to broaden the cultural offer, which is already supported by the Wylde Valley Art Trail, biennial Warminster Festival, and established cultural venues such as The Athenaeum and Warminster Civic Centre.

Issue One

Cultural asset base

Summary

Warminster is a largely rural community area rich in natural beauty and cultural heritage. The Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs form the southern part of the area and the Salisbury Plain Special Protection Area of Conservation borders the north. In recent history the use of Salisbury Plain by the military has preserved it as the largest single expanse of unaltered chalk downland in Europe, resulting in a significant impact on the culture and asset base of the area.

Table 1: Cultural asset base

Asset Type	Warminster Community Area	Wiltshire
Venues at which cultural programmes take place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 1 library ➤ 1 country house, safari and adventure park (Longleat) ➤ 1 museum ➤ 2 community centres ➤ 2 theatres ➤ 3 cinema venues ➤ 6 art/craft galleries/workshops ➤ 11 village halls ➤ 29 churches ➤ 1 reading room (1892) ➤ 5 live music pubs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 32 libraries ➤ 3 country houses ➤ 52 Museums ➤ X heritage centres ➤ 318 village halls ➤ 328 churches ➤ X Community Centres
Natural Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 1 Area of Outstanding Natural 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 261 Sites of Special Scientific

	Beauty	Interest
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 16 Sites of Specific Scientific Interest ➤ 15 Conservation Areas ➤ 87 ancient woodlands ➤ 101 County Wildlife Sites ➤ 2 Registered parks/gardens ➤ 2 Local Nature Reserves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 243 Conservation Areas ➤ 1,136 Ancient Woodlands ➤ 41 Registered Parks and Gardens ➤ 16 Local Nature Reserves ➤ 1,452 County Wildlife Sites
Archaeological Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 3 iron Age Hill Forts ➤ X barrows ➤ 3 Roman villas ➤ 1 Castle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 45 Iron Age Hill Forts ➤ 1 World Heritage Site ➤ 1 Registered Battlefield ➤ 8 White Horses
Historic Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 159 Scheduled Monuments ➤ 720 Listed Buildings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 1,309 Scheduled Monuments ➤ 12,379 Listed Buildings

Data source: Historic Environment Record

Warminster is an important service centre for the people who live in the town itself and its large rural catchment of villages that sweep from the Deverill Valley to the south, the Wylve Valley to the south east, the Longleat estate to the west and the fringes to Salisbury Plain to the north and east.

History of the community area reveals that the town of Warminster dates from Saxon times, but people were living in the area during prehistoric days as evidenced with the Iron Age hill forts of Cley Hill, Arn Hill, Copheap, Battlesbury Hill and Scratchbury Hill surrounding the town. Also the remains of two Romano-British buildings were discovered near Norton Bavant.

Warminster's former status as 'the greatest corn-market by much in the West' (quote?) is evident in some of its impressive buildings with an aesthetically pleasing mix of Jacobean, Georgian and tasteful Victorian architecture. Most of the buildings in the central area of town are listed and an established Blue Plaque trail takes in the wealth of historic buildings. Over a tenth of the listed buildings and scheduled monuments in the county are found in the Warminster Community Area.

Warminster has looked to its links with the garrison, along with some light industry and tourism as the way forward. There is a continuing awareness by the military authorities of how important it is to be involved in the life of the town generally, and many military personnel tend to make the area their home on retirement. To the west of the town lies the stately home and safari park of Longleat, and together with the holiday village of Center Parcs, are major contributors to the local economy through tourism and employment.

As the single largest settlement within the community area, the town of Warminster contains the leisure centre, library, museum, community centre, Athenaeum Theatre and Civic Centre. Together these venues host film clubs and a host of other cultural activities. There are also galleries and markets and the majority of schools provide extended services with a cultural offer.

Within the wider community area there are many venues which provide regular cultural activities; in addition to those mentioned above there are:

- 29 churches, some of which provide cultural programmes such as musical recitals and bell ringing.
- 12 village halls at Bishopstrow, Chapmanslade, Chitterne, Codford, Corsley, Horningsham, Longbridge Deverill, Maiden Bradley, Norton Bavant, Sutton Veny, Upper Deverills and Upton Lovell. These host a variety of clubs and organisations, e.g. history, art and craft groups.
- 1 country theatre at Codford.

Key Issues

- Conservation and interpretation of both the natural and built environment to encourage sustainable tourism and provide high quality leisure activities for the local community.
- Encourage the use of public art in shaping communities and creating high quality environments that support civilian / military integration.
- The majority of the assets within the community area are managed by volunteers. This reliance upon volunteers raises issues of capacity for growth and development and the sustainability of various organisations.

Issue Two Audience Participation

Summary

Warminster Community Area has a good level of usage of the public libraries. Audiences for heritage focused activities and for traditional arts activities are less well developed.

Warminster Community Area	Wiltshire	England
<p>24% of adults visited a stately home in the last 12 months</p> <p>16% of adults visited a museum in the last 12 months</p> <p>12% of adults visited a gallery or exhibition of art in the last 12 months</p> <p>Data from the Target Group Index</p>	<p>53% of adults visited a museum or art gallery in the last 12 months</p> <p>Data from Active People Survey 4 (October 2009 – October 2010)</p>	<p>52% of adults visited a museum or art gallery in the last 12 months</p> <p>Data from Active People Survey 4 (October 2009 – October 2010)</p>
<p>25% of adults attended one of 8 artforms twice in the last 12 months</p> <p>Data from the Target Group Index</p>	<p>48.1% of adults engaged in the arts three times in the last 12 months</p> <p>Data from Active People Survey 4 (October 2009 – October 2010)</p>	<p>43.8% of adults engaged in the arts three times in the last 12 months</p> <p>Data from Active People Survey 4 (October 2009 – October 2010)</p>
<p>46% of the total population are a member of the Library</p> <p>Data Wiltshire Council Library Service 2013</p>	<p>45.5% of adults who used a public library in the last 12 months</p> <p>Data from Active People Survey 4 (October 2009 – October 2010)</p>	<p>45% of adults who used a public library in the last 12 months</p> <p>Data from Active People Survey 4 (October 2009 – October 2010)</p>

Participation in culture is universal, whether that be the choice of clothes we wear or the television programmes we watch. Robust measures of cultural participation, however, are rare and tend to focus upon a narrow definition of culture and engagement. The Wiltshire JSA presents data for the level of cultural participation in the county drawn from the Taking Part Survey. This survey does not provide data at the community area level and so information from the Target Group Index (TGI) has been used to provide a picture of participation within Warminster community area. The two data-sets are not directly comparable given the differences in sample sizes and the scope of the questions asked. The Taking Part Survey does provide good comparable headline figures and the TGI data presents a more detailed picture of participation.

The level of engagement within Warminster Community Area in the heritage sector is well below the national and the Wiltshire averages reported by the Active People Survey. The TGI data describes 16% of Warminster residents visiting a museum and

12% of Warminster residents visiting an art gallery or exhibition in the previous 12 months. In addition the TGI data reports that 24% of Warminster residents visited a stately home and 12% an archaeology site in the last 12 months.

The level of engagement within Warminster Community Area in the library service is good. The Library service membership for Warminster represents 46% of the total population; though the usership is likely to be higher as many services offered by the library do not require membership.

The level of engagement within Warminster Community Area in the arts is also below the national average and lower than the Wiltshire and South West average. The TGI data shows that 25% of adults engaged with the arts twice or more in the previous 12 months; though the definition of the arts is much narrower within the TGI survey and in particular it does not include carnivals and festivals, rock/pop music and attending the cinema.

The cultural offer within Warminster Community Area is broader than the definition of culture used within the TGI survey and includes a number of community events that present amateur and professional music and performance and participation opportunities.

Key Issues

- Increase engagement in the rich heritage landscape of the community area and continue to develop links with established cultural organisations to increase attendance at arts activities.
- Increase engagement with the military communities to develop cultural programmes that promote integration.
- The cultural organisations need to increase community engagement to reach new audiences. This includes the need to work across the spectrum of groups and organisations within the community area and to develop stronger links across the county.

Issue Three

Groups and events

Summary

Warminster has a strong voluntary sector which supports a range of events, cultural activities and venues.

Table 3. Groups and Events

Heading	Warminster community area	Wiltshire
Cultural Organisations	48	
Organisations which deliver cultural programmes	11	

Cultural community events	19 Festivals and events	
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Data Wiltshire Council Library Service 2013

The quality and quantity of the community area's volunteer base are key indicators of the community cohesion and activity, communities with strong voluntary groups are more likely to contribute time and other resources to supporting the well being and growth of local communities. Warminster and Villages Community Partnership (WVCP) works to support volunteers and the wider community to improve well being and community development.

Currently, there are in excess of 50 community groups and organisations ranging from branches of national organisations (i.e. Lions, Rotary, Royal British Legion) to small groups who formed for a joint cause (i.e. sewing and gardening). Of these, there are approximately 80% that have been formed specifically to deliver cultural activities for the whole community, with the remainder providing a wide range of activities including some cultural opportunities specifically for their members, and occasionally for the wider community.

Warminster community area has a number of festivals and cultural events that engage the community, including Heritage Open Days, Warminster Festival, Warminster Vintage Bus Run, Warminster Wobble and Wylve Valley Arts Trail.

All towns and parishes in the area also offer (either individually or jointly) an annual community get together, e.g. Chapmanslade Village Day & BBQ, Chitterne Flower Festival, Chitterne Village Fete, Codford Food & Beer Festivals, Horningsham Village Fayre, Maiden Bradley Produce Show & Fete, Sutton Veny Flower Show, Upper Deverills Fete & Flower Show, Warminster Garrison Fireworks and Warminster Illuminated Carnival.

There are also annual ticketed events such as the Corsley Show, Stockton Vintage Nostalgia Show and seasonal/festive spectacles at Longleat.



Figure 2 Warminster Wobble event (courtesy of Warminster & Villages Community Partnership)

Key Issues

- Support the growth of key cultural events to support tourism and increase the economic impact of culture within the community.
- Increase the value of networks for cultural organisations within Warminster to support one another to develop and to engage with cultural organisations outside of the community area.

Issue Four

Priorities for the future

Summary

The current cultural offer within Warminster is predominantly reliant upon volunteers which limits the capacity of the community to explore these opportunities and creates risks around the sustainability of the existing offer. The cultural sector needs to be supported to network, share skills and knowledge, and to develop key events and activities to engage local residents, and attract tourists into the area.

The Warminster Community Area is starting to look at the development of a Campus as part of the Wiltshire Council programme. A shadow Campus Operations Board (COB) has just been formed to look at the local needs and undertake community consultations. The campus development may include a new or improved cultural venue for the community area.

Further work is required to fully understand the diverse and rapidly changing audience for culture within Warminster community area. The heritage and archaeology features of the community area along with the natural beauty of the landscape provide significant opportunities to develop a greater range of cultural experience.

Cultural activities provide an environment for lifelong learning that enables all member of the community to take part. Key areas of focus need to be on integration activities which promote community cohesion and provide learning opportunities at all levels as well as supporting young people to be prepared for the world of work.

Key Issues

- The community of Warminster will be impacted by the rebasing of 4,000 troops to Army establishments in and around Salisbury Plain from 2014. The potential situation is unknown and rapidly changing along with investment in community facilities to develop the cultural offer.
- A broader range of cultural activities should be developed, including those which use the natural and historic environment to engage audiences, attract tourists and widen community participation and the integration of military and

civilian communities. A newly formed Tourism Group is looking at ways to further promote the area as a tourist destination.

- The Warminster Community Area Plan states a vision '*To develop an area where opportunities for cultural expression, appreciation and leisure pursuits meet local demand. To realise the artistic potential and talent of the area.*'
- The Town and Parish Councils need to work together to raise the resources required to support cultural activities and develop the tourism offer of the area.
- Develop the engagement of local people with the cultural offer and support volunteers to enhance the cultural provision within the community.

Signposting

- *Links to further information e.g. websites, plans and strategies*

<http://www.westwilts-communityweb.com/site/Warminster-and-Villages-Community-Partnership/>

http://archive.sportengland.org/research/active_people_survey.aspx

<http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/research-and-data/arts-audiences/target-group-index-tgi/>

<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/protection/process/national-heritage-list-for-england/>

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