Forest of Dean
DISTRICT COUNCIL

A collaborative

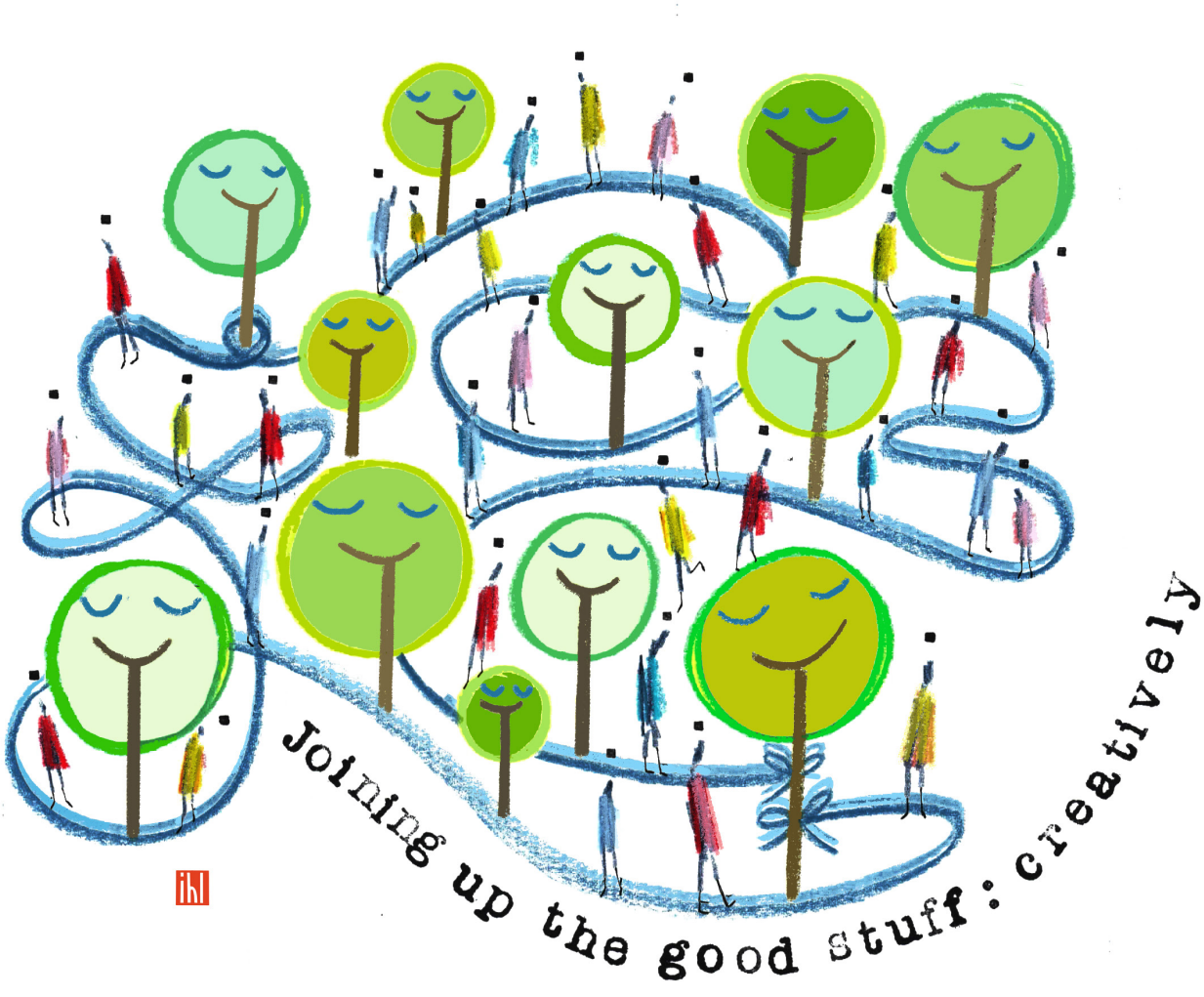
Arts, Culture and Heritage Strategy for the Forest of Dean



Illustrations by Imogen Harvey Lewis

Contents

Introduction	2
Why arts, culture and heritage matter	3
Our arts, culture and heritage landscape	4
How the strategy was developed	6
Consultation conversations	7
Our long-term vision	8
Priorities for the next three years	9
Opportunities and challenges ahead	10
Measuring success	12
Ambition and actions	13
Detailed supporting information and references	17
Contributors / acknowledgements	24





Introduction

This strategy has been collaboratively developed **by and for** the arts, culture and heritage sector of the Forest of Dean.

It was developed, workshopped, and adapted in collaboration and consultation with the arts, culture and heritage steering group and the wider arts, culture and heritage community of the Forest of Dean, in response to the needs and priorities of the sector and our community.

The highly valued knowledge, expertise, insight and experience of over sixty local arts, culture and heritage organisations, artists, practitioners, and producers shaped the content and priorities of this strategy.

All contributors are intended to be custodians of and catalysts for the strategy and its ambitions, with a focus on using the Forest of Dean District Council's arts, culture and heritage officer time and resources to drive action and facilitate collaboration.

Why Arts, Culture and Heritage Matter

As per the Office for National Statistics (ONS), Forest of Dean residents have reported significantly higher levels of anxiety, and lower levels of happiness and life satisfaction than both the UK and South West averages. Whilst factors which inform mental and physical health are complex and varied, we have strong, peer-reviewed, and scientifically backed evidence that arts, culture and heritage can be a positive force in improving health and wellbeing in our communities.

"For some reason, the evidence base around the health benefits of arts engagement is a bizarrely well-kept secret. Despite thousands of studies using neuroimaging, wearable sensors, blood biomarkers, psychiatric assessments and behavioural monitoring showing that the arts are tangibly, measurably good for us. Arts engagement in our everyday lives can reduce our risk of developing depression, dementia, chronic pain, harmful behaviours, physical decline, even premature mortality."
Daisy Fancourt, professor of psychobiology and epidemiology and Head of the Social Biobehavioural Research Group at University College London.

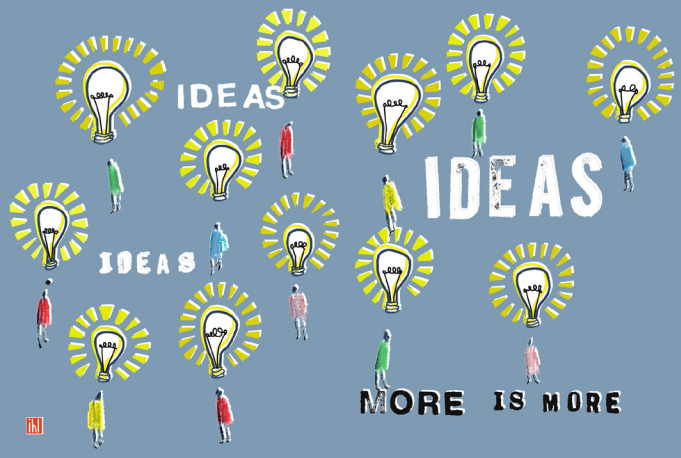
As per the What Works for Wellbeing Centre's definition, "Wellbeing is how we're doing as individuals, communities and as a nation, and how sustainable that is for the future".
Historic England's Heritage and Wellbeing Strategy

A Historic England study (**2024**) found that people living in areas with a higher density of heritage assets such as listed buildings or monuments, reported significantly higher life satisfaction than those in areas with lower heritage asset densities The wellbeing effect was valued at around £515 per person each year, adding up to roughly £29 billion across England.

Art and culture contributes £10.6 billion to the UK economy - the UK has a creative economy worth £27bn and culture brings £850m to UK, through tourism, each year.
Arts Council England

A 2023 extensive community consultation into arts and culture in the Forest of Dean, conducted by Wyldwood Arts and supported by the National Lottery Community Fund, showed three main findings; 1) People want to know what's on, 2) People in the Forest want creative activities they can get involved in, and 3) Access is more difficult in the Forest.

"Art is nature. Art is like gardening. Art is like growing a beautiful garden, having beautiful flowers, having trees, having leaves, having autumn, having all the seasons, everything. But it's made by us [...] it's our nature. Whereas when we plant our garden and our garden grows, its nature doing the work. [Art] is us connecting with our nature. While we are making art, we are making a nicer, better, kinder world."
Dame Tracey Emin

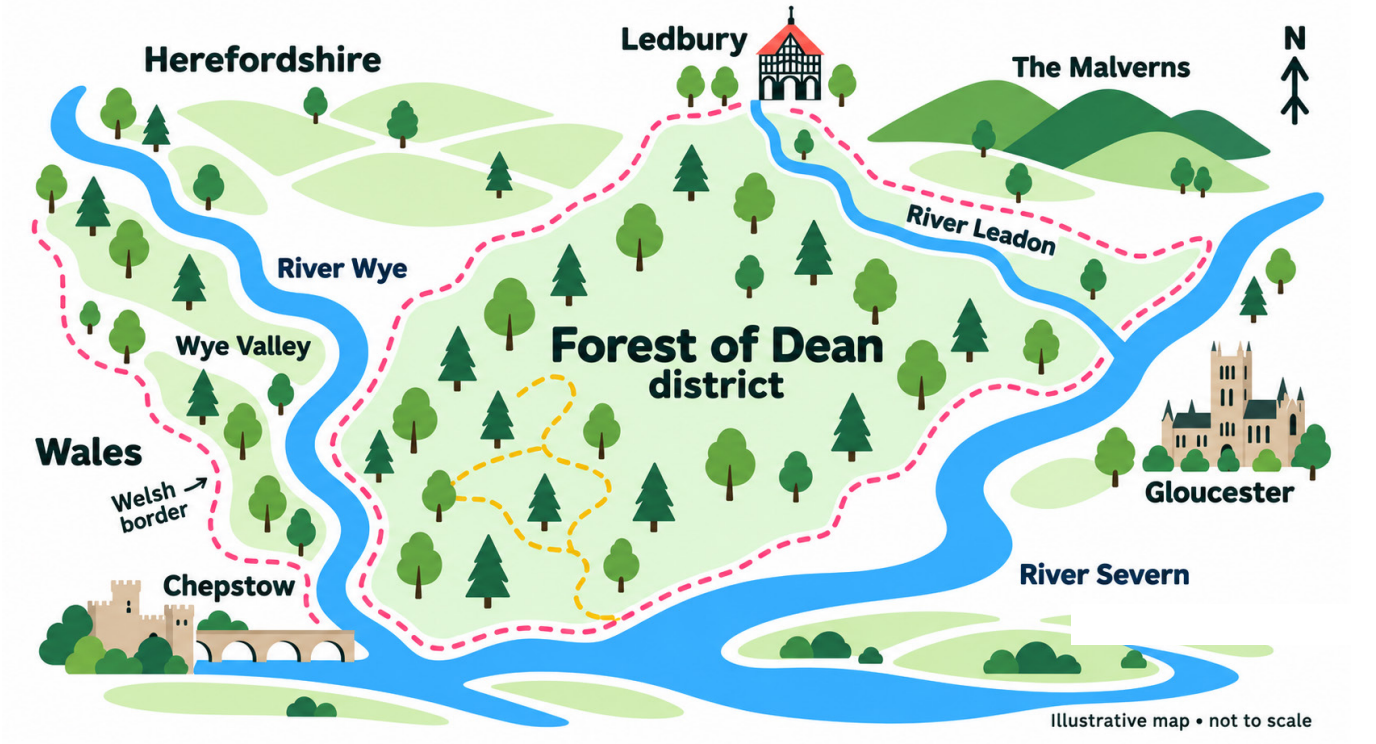


Our Arts, Culture and Heritage Landscape

The Forest of Dean, described by writer Dennis Potter as 'a heart shaped place between two rivers', holds a unique and somewhat isolated geographical character, as well as an idiosyncratic culture and spirit.

Alongside vital place-based creative projects such as **Cinderford ArtSpace, Found in the Forest Youth Theatre and The Music Works,** wider initiatives that reach across the Forest's disparate communities have also played an important role. Projects such as **FarOpen Arts Trail, Forest of Dean Fringe Festival, Canopy Creative Network's arts festivals, and Forester's Forest** have successfully embedded themselves in towns and villages across the district. They have helped attract new audiences, bring visitors to the Forest, celebrate local artists, makers and creators, create income opportunities for artists, and support the development and retention of creative and heritage skills within the local community.

The Forest of Dean district reaches all the way to the Welsh border with Chepstow in the south, the River Wye, Wye Valley and Herefordshire to the west, Ledbury, the river Leadon, and the Malverns in the north, and Gloucester and the River Severn in the east. A broad-reaching district rich with plenty of natural beauty, characterised by market towns and small villages with a variety of personalities and identities.



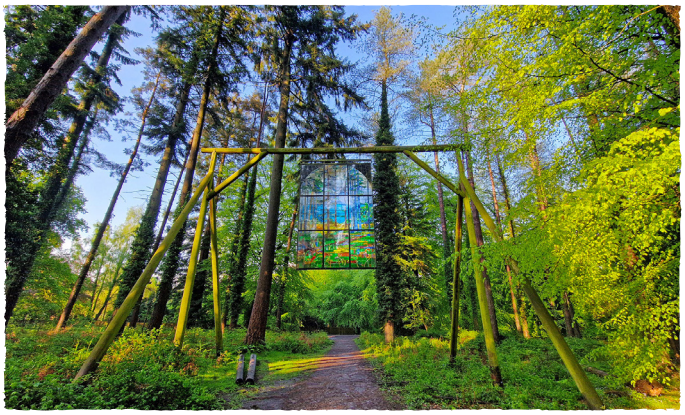


As the Forest of Dean is a collection of disparate towns and villages without a core 'cultural centre' and also lacking a significant larger-sized venue or dedicated arts centre, our cultural eco-system is built around grassroots and community-based activity, mostly not-for-profit, and often volunteer led – with producers, organisers, artists and creative practitioners dedicating a lot of their own time and resources to bringing cultural experiences and events to the Forest; live music, poetry, exhibitions and theatre events, brass band and choir performances, community carnivals, creative walks, workshops, and talks, historical and heritage publications, and much more besides.

Some practitioners note that our lack of a cultural centre can be a 'blessing' as a unique provocation to 'do things differently' by approaching how arts, culture and heritage is offered and delivered in more innovative and unusual ways. There is however also strong support locally for an established built 'arts and culture' centre around which community and activity can grow and thrive.

Alongside vital place-based creative projects such as Cinderford ArtSpace, Found in the Forest Youth Theatre and The Music Works, wider initiatives that reach across the Forest's disparate communities have also played an important role. Projects such as FarOpen Arts Trail, Forest of Dean Fringe Festival, Arts in Rural Gloucestershire and Forester's Forest have successfully embedded themselves in towns and villages across the district. They have helped attract new audiences, bring visitors to the Forest, celebrate local artists, makers and creators, create income opportunities for artists, and support the development and retention of creative and heritage skills within the local community.

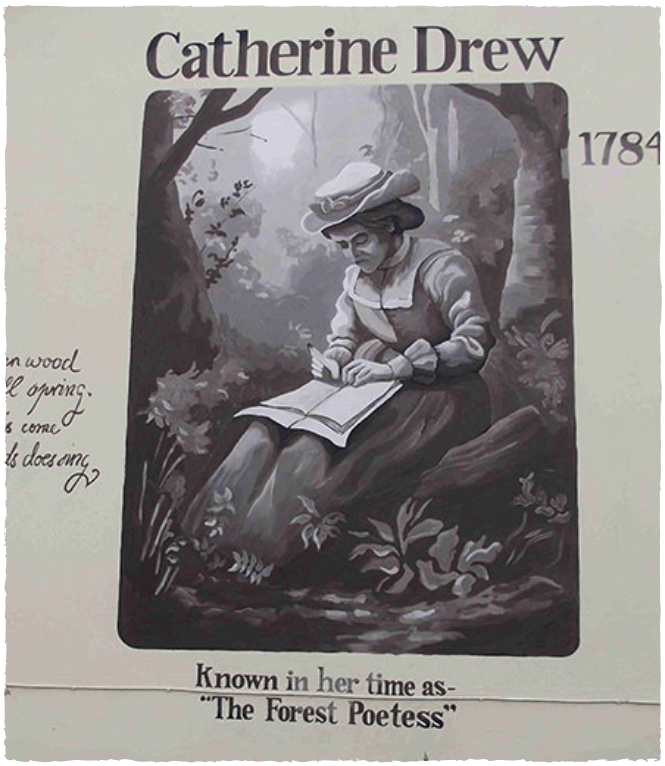
Consultation also showed that residents value arts, culture and heritage assets such as our independent cinemas in Coleford and Cinderford, having a library in each market town (and valuable community libraries in some villages too), as well as hubs of creative activity such as Taurus Crafts, art galleries in Newnham and Newent, Forest of Dean Sculpture Trail, and Cinderford Art Space.



Although arts, culture and heritage in the Forest of Dean means so much more than 'arts and crafts', it is also notable that for residents, arts and crafts are valued very highly as an accessible, enjoyable, multigenerational, and varied activity which is enjoyed across the district both at home and in community settings.

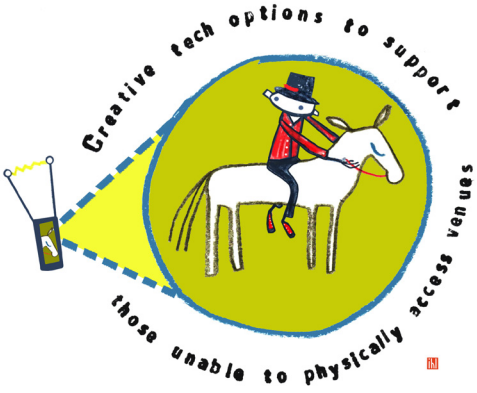
Residents commonly express a desire to have more live entertainment and events on offer locally, but also showed appreciation for the Forest's grassroots but high-quality schedule of regular events such as Coleford's music festival, Cinderford's Cindyfest, the variety of community-organised village festivals and carnivals, the summer series at Scarr Bandstand, Coleford busking festival, Forest raves, Brass Band performances across the district, and the FarOpen Arts Trail.

Murals and public art were also positively received, especially those which reflect unique FoD culture and heritage. Tourist attractions such as Puzzlewood, Clearwell Caves, Dean Forest Railway, Perrygrove Railway Adventure, and Dean Heritage Centre are also highly valued by locals as well as visitors to the area.



Our grassroots arts, culture, and heritage activity is supplemented by a handful of small and highly skilled creative charitable organisations doing meaningful work within the community to nurture and support the arts, culture and heritage landscape, with a focus on community co-production, accessibility, high-quality participation opportunities, durability, and wellbeing. Nurturing, empowering, and resourcing the grassroots creative eco-system of the Forest of Dean is key to ensuring a thriving and sustainable arts, culture and heritage landscape for years to come.

How the Strategy was Developed



Timeline of activity for developing this strategy and action plan

2024

A steering group* (SG) of stakeholders from the Arts, Culture and Heritage (ACH) sector across the Forest of Dean begin working with FODDC in 2024 to develop an ACH strategy.

2025

ACH SG identifies need for recruitment of an arts, culture, and heritage officer (ACHO) to properly undertake this strategic work and subsequent action points.

Feb 2026

ACHO recruited.

Feb - June 2026

ACHO commences work with SG on developing ACH strategy and action plan.

July 2026

ACHO hosts wider stakeholder consultation on the strategy and action plan, undertaken across sector including first 'Creating Community' forum event which brought together over 30 local orgs.

August 2026

ACHO undertakes in-person and on-paper community and residents' consultation via our four market town libraries and at Dean Heritage Centre.

August 2026

ACHO participates in in-depth consultation discussions with FOD artists and musicians.

September 2026

Findings from consultation woven into new draft of ACH strategy and action plan to reflect what was learned. Aiming for completion of strategy & action plan by October, and for work to begin on collaboratively achieving our goals.

*The arts, culture, and heritage steering group comprises local practitioners and stakeholders from local organisations; ArtSpace Cinderford, Wyldwood Arts, Dean Heritage Centre, Jason Griffiths (Reading the Forest, Voices of the Forest, Warren James Day), Arts in Rural Gloucestershire, Canopy Creative Network, Coleford Music Festival, FVAF, Forest of Dean District Council, and The Music Works.

Consultation Conversations

'Let's dream big for the Forest! Let's ask: what if all this could work?'

'With only two buses a day from our village it's very hard to access any activities after school'

'Engage young people in understanding why the Forest is so special, so that they will look after it in future.'

'Arts are a human right'

This strategy is a co-production with local organisations, artists, heritage practitioners, and Forest of Dean residents. Their insights and contributions are woven through the whole strategy. Here are a few quotes from our consultation process.

'Our arts, culture and heritage in the Forest is vibrant but under resourced'

'I'd like to see more performing arts and live music'

'We have lost learners and participants because they lack access to transport'

'Arts, Culture and Heritage can be a curiosity pathway to finding joy'

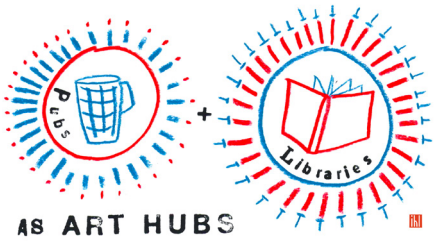
'Keep the Forest's culture alive'

Our Long-Term Vision

- A thriving and welcoming arts, culture and heritage ecosystem that values inclusivity, diversity, and wellbeing alongside high-quality arts, culture and heritage offerings.
- Organisations, artists, and practitioners can collaborate and share data, resources and advice in a constructive manner which is 'reciprocal not exploitative'. Innovative peer-to-peer and inter-organisational support and collaboration supports our sector's longevity.
- Working in arts, culture and heritage locally is a viable option for our next generation of Forest artists and practitioners.
- Increased participation locally, larger and more sustainable audience numbers comprising both residents and tourists, and better networks and systems for promoting events and offerings mean that a wider range of projects is able to succeed. The joy of participating in arts, culture and heritage activities is available widely to our community in a way which is meaningful to them.
- Young people are engaged and represented within arts, culture and heritage, and excited about the cultural future of the Forest of Dean.
- Artists and cultural workers have pathways to develop their practice whilst living and creating locally. Opportunities to engage in our heritage are dynamic and connected to contemporary life.
- The Forest of Dean's cultural heritage and uniqueness is celebrated and shared in a way which is open and welcoming for everyone to share in.
- Our arts, culture and heritage community embraces environmental responsibility and digital technology with a view to improving the accessibility and sustainability of our creative and cultural landscape.
- This work and collaboration continues beyond 2028.



Priorities for the Next Three Years



Community consultation has revealed that residents would like to see more

- live music and live performance around the Forest
- promotion and advertising of what is already happening to increase audience numbers
- events which celebrate and share the history and heritage of the forest *and* events which involve sharing food
- opportunities for young people to learn musical instruments
- opportunities for pre-school age children to engage in arts activity
- more opportunities for young people to be creative and develop as artists
- more pop-up galleries or exhibitions in town centres
- but also more permanent arts, culture, and heritage hubs where people can gather and community can be built.

Actions such as:

Celebration and Connectivity

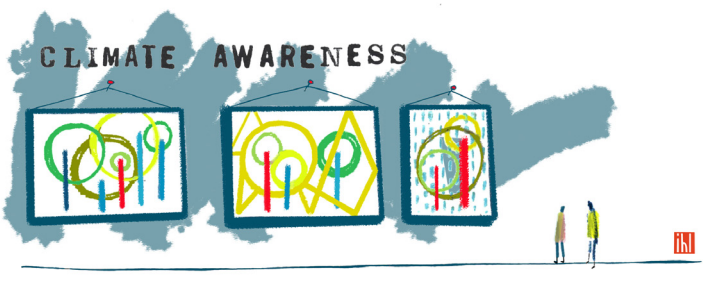
- Celebrating and elevating our arts, culture and heritage landscape and assets. Recognising and raising up the talent and creativity which already exists. Aiming to improve attendance, increase participation, and create more opportunities. Better retention of artists and arts workers.
- Creating better connectivity within the sector: improving communication, building partnerships and encouraging collaboration across the sector to make more ambitious large-scale collaborative events possible. Supporting efforts around collective fundraising efforts and securing of resources for collaborative activities. **Better infrastructure leads to better arts, culture, and heritage output for our communities**.
- Training and skills development for better retention of artists and arts workers locally, and for a richer and more confidently skilled arts, culture and heritage workforce and community.
- Celebrating local historical sites and inviting new visitors and engagement to cultivate a shared understanding the Forest's history

Accessibility and Welcome

- Working together to improve accessibility and inclusion across arts, culture and heritage – more openness and frank discussions, better awareness of barriers to inclusion, listening to and including people with lived experience, making changes to improve accessibility at events, and opportunities, better information and communication around accessibility.
- Learning more about the need for better digital arts and technology initiatives. Working together to provide targeted tech-driven creative opportunities in the Forest of Dean

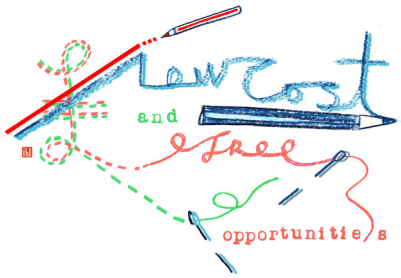
Wellbeing and Sustainability

- Fostering a culture of worker wellbeing for everyone involved in arts, culture and heritage in the district; artists, organisers, volunteers, producers, and associates, which will lead to a culture of it being 'more possible' to bring an idea to life here in the Forest. A healthy and supportive arts, culture and heritage scene is a richer and more active arts, culture and heritage scene.
- Preserving the unique and distinctive heritage in the Forest of Dean district. Working to relate the district's heritage to contemporary life and culture through arts, culture and heritage collaboration. Exploring permanent ways of recording and celebrating heritage for future generations without repeated cost.
- Climate work and collaboration - supporting climate resilience through arts, culture and heritage. Encouraging connection to nature through arts, culture and heritage.



Improving climate communication by sharing best practice around climate + community work in the creative space

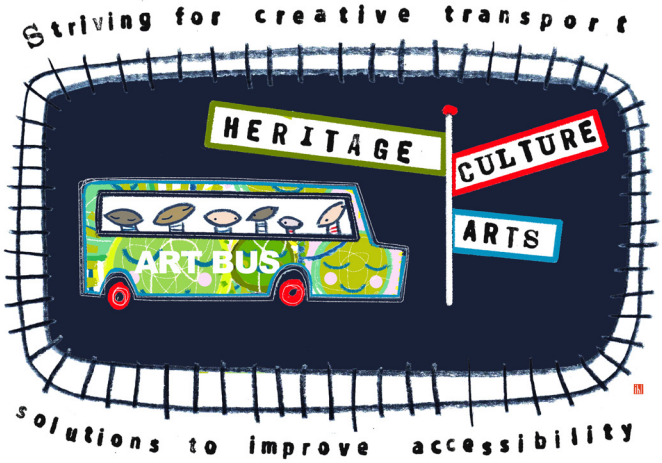
Opportunities and Challenges Ahead



The Forest of Dean is a collection of disparate and separate communities separated by forests and without an identifiable 'cultural centre' such as a city or larger metropolitan area. Each of the four market towns are a similar size. There are also multiple distinct village communities which also host significant cultural events and locations alongside the main towns.

This can make connectivity and communication an issue across the district. Promoting and publicising events or opportunities, which are often being presented by grassroots organisers or not-for-profit organisations, is a challenge when trying to poster and flyer across multiple towns and villages. It is time and resource heavy and can be a burden to the grassroots organisers or not-for-profit organisations who are the bedrock of our cultural community. Online and social media-based promotion poses similar challenges, without one central 'What's On' location to share events for free, online promotion can be extremely time consuming and costly, with varying results.

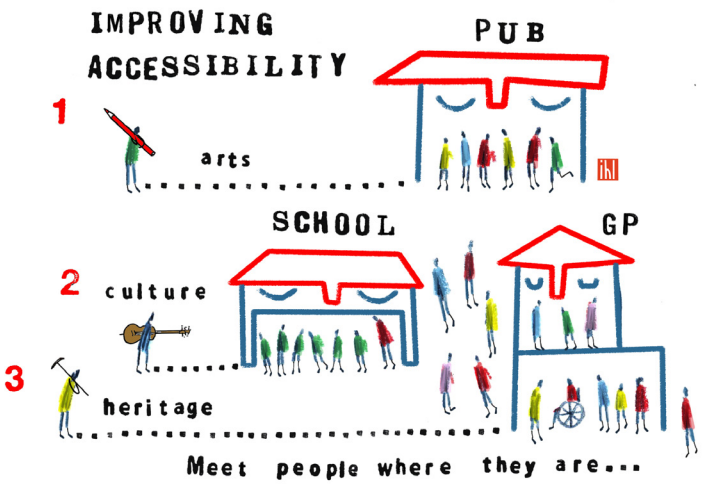
From community consultation, the main barrier



to taking part in or attending arts, culture and heritage activity was overwhelmingly reported as issues around transport and connectivity. Whether it be the impassibility of roads or the lack of usable public transport connecting our towns and villages, 'the transport problem' came up consistently across the whole district.

Similarly, we are lacking a significant larger-sized venue or activity centre dedicated to arts and culture. This means that the Forest of Dean is often missed out as a stop on the national touring circuits of bands, theatre shows, poets, and comedians. It also means that larger-scale creative community efforts have no obvious familiar 'central' venue for these events to take place.

However, we do have a bounty of more than fifty beautiful and well cared for town and village halls and community centres, with active committees and programmes of creative and community activities, and plenty of useable, well cared for outdoor spaces too. Culture happens here, and these spaces are well-located to serve our disparate communities. This is an opportunity to approach arts, culture and heritage differently in our district – to uplift, empower, and resource the grassroots creativity and culture which is already happening, and to devolve agency and authority to the community regarding what our arts, culture and heritage is now, and could be in the future.



Other challenges reported by local delivery organisations, producers, and artists include the rising running costs of presenting creative offerings and cultural events (venue hire, equipment hire, artist fees, promotional costs, refreshments, security and infrastructure, and insurance). This, paired with a lack of investment in culture locally, means that resourcing and personnel is a challenge across the sector and district. Also commonly reported were secondary consequences to this lack of opportunity and investment – for example, due to the lack of music lessons in school and the loss of junior or teaching bands during the Covid-19 pandemic, fewer and fewer young people are entering adulthood playing an instrument, which has impacted the music landscape of the Forest everywhere from our contemporary live music scene to our long-held tradition of brass bands.



The Forest's LGBTQIA+ community is relatively small and has therefore been historically underrepresented in the district's arts, culture and heritage offerings. However, community groups, spaces, and organisations created by and for LGBTQIA+ people are becoming more established across the district. This is a great opportunity for the arts, culture and heritage sector to collaborate with, include and elevate the LBGTQIA+ community via these points of contact – working towards a more inclusive and representative cultural landscape.

Local organisations reported the challenge of reaching and engaging meaningfully with the young people of the Forest – finding out what their arts, culture, and heritage interests and passions are, what it means to them, and how to offer it. Discussion acknowledged that of course young people are not a monolith, but capturing a range of youth voices (and in particular those who are not currently engaging in arts, culture, and heritage much, but would like to) is important.

Some Forest towns are experiencing changes in population culturally, as migrant workers and their families are invited to the area by industry and employment opportunities locally, and by other organic patterns of migration, as well as families seeking asylum from conflict. The Forest also welcomes more tourist trade each year. Creating a warm and open welcome to new community members and visitors alike is an opportunity to broaden and diversify what arts, culture and heritage can look like locally, to create connection and understanding, and to build community and resilience together against the threat of division, exclusion, and prejudice.

Consultation showed that fledgling and emerging artists, as well as potential participants and audience members report being time poor (due to working longer hours or multiple jobs and often needing to travel out of the district for work) and that they may not have access to a car. This means that the times and locations of events and opportunities is significant to who can access them. Consultation shows lack of local investment and viable project funding to be a real challenge for younger and emerging artists locally, resulting in the district losing a lot of its talent to cities and areas with more cultural activity.

We also have an ageing population (as per ONS), so challenges such as accessibility, isolation, and communities being under-recognised creatively are also present. Recognising these (and other) not-historically-included or poorly served parts of our communities, and working on radical and collaborative ways to include, welcome and celebrate the often unseen creative value already present within our communities, is a real opportunity for positive development in our arts, culture and heritage sector.

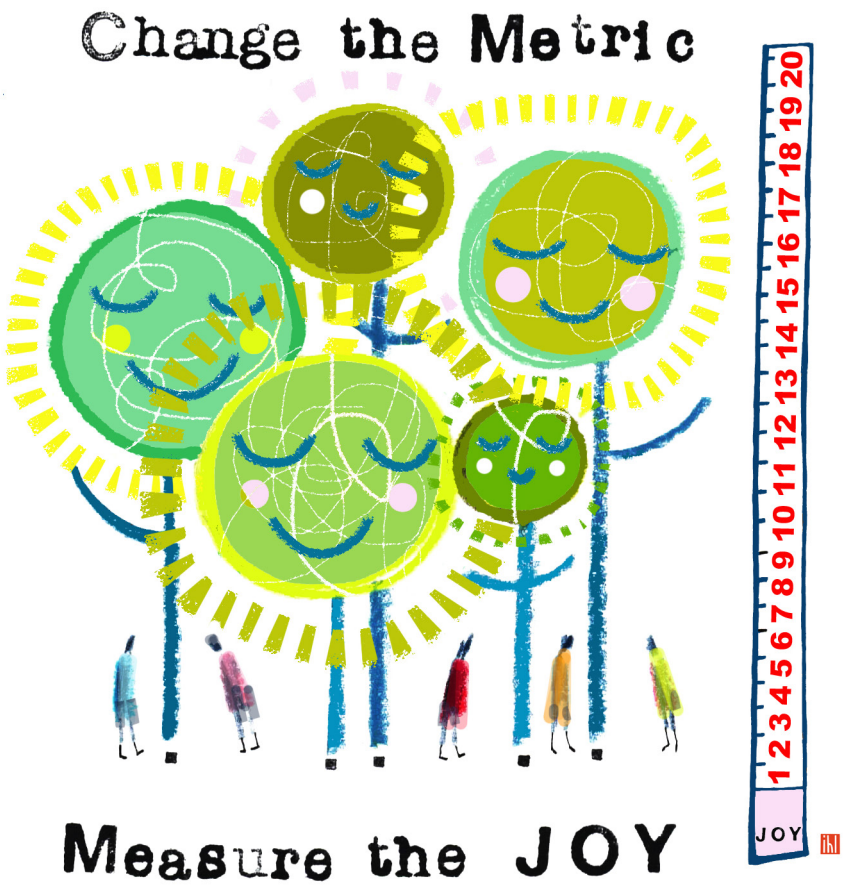


Filling in the gaps

Measuring Success

- The Arts, Culture and Heritage Officer will work closely with the arts, culture, and heritage steering group and wider community, made up of stakeholders and practitioners from across the district with a wealth of local and sector knowledge. A schedule of work which is specific, time-bound, and measurable will be created from the action plan, with regular accountability check-ins between Arts, Culture and Heritage Officer and steering group to track progress.
- Quarterly sector-wide 'Creating Community' events will provide opportunities for learning and evaluating ongoing challenges and opportunities, and lead to updating or altering action points in response to shifts in priority or need.
- To measure improvements in accessibility and inclusion, it will be necessary to include experts by experience in the conversation to learn which improvement efforts are having a tangible positive impact.
- The Arts, Culture and Heritage Officer will undertake an informal 'half-way' review of progress and impact of works in September 2027, consulting with steering group, artists and community groups to establish what changes and updates to the action plan can be implemented in order to improve impact and connectivity.
- Consultation showed that practitioners and participants alike value long-term metrics for success to measure wellbeing, community happiness, cohesion and positive change.
- Milestones, achievements, and wins both big and small in the arts, culture, and heritage community will be shared and celebrated at our regular 'Creating Community' events.





Ambition and Actions

ACH = Arts, Culture and Heritage. ACHO = Arts, Culture and Heritage Officer. SG = Steering Group. FODDC = Forest of Dean District Council.

ACTION PLAN IN BRIEF:

Objective	Action Point	Benefits	Who and when
Celebration and Connectivity			
Celebrating and elevating the ACH landscape	Wider community engagement. (1)	Finding out cultural wants and needs, barriers to participation.	2026 onwards. With ACH stakeholders and community.
	Asset mapping of ACH venues and facilities. (2)	Easier for organisers to find suitable venues, more ACH events locally.	2027. With support from Sustainable Economy team.
	Digital cultural landscape map. (3)	Showcasing venues, assets, events. Promoting ACH to support growth of sector.	2027. With ACH stakeholders. Requires additional funding.
	Database of ACH artists and practitioners. (4)	Showcase of local talent - improved visibility and potential collaborations.	2028.
	Quarterly 'Creating Community' ACH networking events. (5)	Relationship building and better communication, towards more collaboration and ambitious projects.	2026 onwards. In partnership with ACH stakeholders.
	Youth symposium. (6)	Collating and defining young people's voices around ACH.	2026. In partnership with youth groups and organisations.
	Exploring town centre Arts Hubs. (7)	Building ACH community in our market towns. Aligns with Market Towns Regeneration Framework.	2026 onwards. With local partners; R. Adams (Coleford), Create Newent (Newent), potential others. Requires additional funding.
	Internal shared calendar (informal use by stakeholders) (8)	Prevents event clashes. Encourages themed co-production.	2026. In collaboration with ArtSpace, Canopy, and wider partners.
	Free, high-quality event listing website. (9)	Showcasing our grassroots ACH scene, increased attendance and participation, residents and tourists.	2026. Launch 2028. In collaboration with Wyldwood and wider partners. Requires additional funding.
	Creating a working group to explore a collaborative 'Forest of Dean Year of Culture' festival. In 2028. (10)	Being ambitious in celebrating, elevating and connecting the ACH sector and its activities.	2026 onwards. Launch 2028. In collaboration with FODYOC working group and wider partners.
	Keep sector informed regarding developments around LGR (11)	Supporting concerns around service level agreements, funding streams etc.	2026 onwards. In collaboration with FVAF.
	Asking **'What is next?'** together with curiosity and enthusiasm. (12)	Securing future ACH plans, collective ambitions beyond ACHO role.	2027 and 2028 in collaboration with stakeholders and wider community.

Preserving and celebrating our unique, distinctive living heritage.	Celebrating our diverse musical heritage; brass bands, folk scene, live music, rave culture and more(13)	Grow music scene by listening to challenges faced by musicians and building on our musical heritage.	2027 onwards. In collaboration with Brass Band community, Canopy, live music organisers, and musicians.
	Celebrating heritage skills and crafts; freemining, morris dancing, commoning, forest dialect, more (14)	More knowledge of and participation in these practices – preserving these unique aspects of Forest culture.	2027 onwards. In conversation with practitioners; freeminers, commoners association, dialect speakers, Canopy, Jason Griffiths.
	Preserving built and social heritage; oral histories, forest dialect, industrial and literary histories. (15)	Contemporise and explore meaning in this heritage and history with our young people.	2027 onwards. Collaboration with Forest of Dean Local History Society, Dean Heritage Centre, Jason Griffiths
	Linking arts opportunities with historical people, places and events to celebrate significance (16)	More integration across specialists in Arts, Culture & Heritage	2026 onwards, in collaboration Forest of Dean Local History Society, Jason Griffiths. Funding required.

Objective	Action Point	Benefits	Who and when
Accessibility and Welcome			
Improving accessibility and widening participation to ACH	Open, frank discussions around improving EDIB in ACH. (1)	Sharing understanding, improving best practice, improving accessibility.	2026 onwards. Collaboration with 'Our Friendly Forest' and stakeholders
	Continue to provide free / affordable opportunities for participation. (2)	Improved participation. More people can afford to take part.	2026 onwards. Sector-wide collaborative effort. Requires funding.
	'A Warm Welcome' to those who have previously excluded, underserved. (3)	Increased participation, better communication and understanding.	2026 onwards. Sector-wide collaborative effort.
	Translating promotional materials into other locally-spoken languages. (4)	Welcoming a better diversity of artists and participants.	2026 onwards. Sector-wide collaborative effort.
	Explore joint strategic funding bid for large scale access improvements. (5)	Collaborative work for better impact, making ACH more accessible.	2027 onwards. In collaboration with stakeholders. Requires funding.
	A collaborative approach to 'The Transport Challenge' locally. (6)	Making it possible for participants to travel to access ACH.	2026 onwards. Sector-wide effort. Advice from FODCAP. Requires additional funding.
	Identifying clearer social prescribing pathways for organisations to share ACH offerings with prescribers. (7)	Improved wellbeing, tackling isolation and loneliness, better connectivity with available opportunities.	2026 onwards.
Training, upskilling, sharing information and resources	Create package of pre-existing ACH resources and documents for event organising and delivery. (8)	Free upskilling for practitioners and young people joining sector, supports grassroots cultural activity.	2027 onward in collaboration with Canopy and other stakeholders.
	Performance, exhibition opportunities; scheduled busking, exhibits in empty shops, festivals. (9)	Support grassroots Forest-based artists and platforming Forest-grown work.	2027 onward in collaboration with Canopy, live music organisers and musicians. Requires funding.
	ACH work experience opportunities for students and young people. (10)	Improve confidence in joining the ACH sector. Artist retention locally.	2027 onwards in collaboration with Canopy, stakeholders, local schools and colleges.
	Explore creating a full ACH apprenticeship position. Potential multi-org collaboration. (11)	Better career and development opportunities for young artists locally.	2027 onwards in collaboration with stakeholders, local schools and colleges. Requires additional funding.
	Develop joint training action plan responding to local artist needs. (12)	Improve skills, delivery capacity and talent retention.	2026 onwards. In partnership with ACH stakeholders. Requires funding.
Researching digital arts delivery, targeted tech-driven creative initiatives.	Research tech options for of hybrid learning; costs to purchase/loan equipment & tutor time for pilots. (13)	Improve participation for those unable to physically access venues.	2027 onwards. In partnership with ACH stakeholders. Requires additional funding.
	Skills-sharing sessions around digital learning and creation – practitioners, organisations, creatives can attend. (14)	Upskilling and empowering more professionals to offer digital participation opportunities.	2026 onwards. In partnership with ACH stakeholders. Requires additional funding.
	Keeping digital arts on the agenda. Seeking opportunities to learn more, elevate digital art, artists locally. (15)	Tech-driven and contemporary art forms can flourish locally. Relevancy of local ACH landscape.	2027 onwards. In partnership with ACH stakeholders and digital artists and practitioners.

Objective	Action Point	Benefits	Who and when
Wellbeing and sustainability			
Prioritising wellbeing for all involved in ACH.	Collate contemporary research, best practice around worker wellbeing in ACH, share via Creating Community. (1)	Can be used to develop a shared and actionable value system for the sector around wellbeing.	2027
	Collaborative thinking around projects aimed at improving wellbeing for artists and participants. (2)	Raising the profile of improving wellbeing in ACH across organisations.	2027 onwards. In partnership with ACH stakeholders.
	Creating paid / resourced opportunities for freelancers to participate in well-being activities. (3)	Giving freelancers 'breathing space' reflective practice and development to prevent burnout, improve retention.	2027 onwards. In partnership with ACH stakeholders. Requires additional funding.
	Working for 'improved health and wellbeing, tackling isolation, building community' for all participants. (4)	As reflected 'Why' section above, benefits of ACH in supporting wellbeing, tackling isolation, are clear	2026 onwards. Sector-wide collaborative effort.
Supporting climate resilience through ACH engagement and collaboration.	Developing creative collaboration between ACH sector and climate work. (5)	ACH can create key dialogue between climate work and communities affected by climate change.	2026 onwards. In partnership with ACH stakeholders with advice from FODCAP.
	Sharing best practice around climate resilience in ACH activity. Utilise this practice across sector. (6)	Sharing materials, research improves climate resilience in the sector, aids sustainability of ACH work.	2027 onwards. In partnership with ACH stakeholders with advice from FODCAP.
	Engaging with LGBTQIA+ Community Climate Action Plan, identifying where it can inform ACH sector practice. (7)	In depth work and community consultation already done here, saves resources and doubling up.	2027 onwards. In partnership with ACH stakeholders including Field Notes CIC.
	Looking beyond ACHO 3-year post. How can climate resilience work be embedded in the longer term? (8)	Embedded and sustainable cultural changes in ACH work locally ensure a more climate resilient sector.	2027 onwards. In partnership with ACH stakeholders with advice from FODCAP and other climate partners.

Detailed Supporting Information and References

Key	More information	Links & references
Celebration and Connectivity		
(1)	FoDDC to begin community consultation as part of strategy development, and continue throughout time in post via; informal conversation and engagement at cultural events, online outreach and openness to comment and feedback, collaboration with creative partner organisations who work directly with community (ArtSpace, Wyldwood Arts, Dean Heritage Centre, Music Works, Queering The Wye, and more), conversation with local community organisations who have more knowledge of barriers to participation (FVAF, Crossroads, Forest Sensory Services, Dementia Action Alliance, and more) to maintain a contemporary awareness of wider community needs and priorities regarding ACH. Consultation with stakeholders within the sector has asserted the need to recognise this process as an ongoing and, necessarily, widening conversation and collaboration with the ACH community which welcomes and involves more voices and experiences, and, as the work continues, 'reflects and celebrates the uniqueness of the Forest of Dean'.	West of England Citizen's for Culture
(2)	The purpose of this asset mapping exercise would be to build a shareable database of potential venues that can be used for ACH live events and activities, to make it easier for grassroots artists and organisers to bring ideas to life. Akin to GRCC's database of village halls, but the database would cover elements such as if the venue has; lighting, useable stage, parking, accessibility information, PA systems, audience capacity etc. The Forest of Dean has a wealth of potential venue spaces which could be made better use of as hubs of ACH activity. Visual artists also requested that usable display space and hanging systems for exhibitions be included in this asset map. Heritage practitioners requested that outdoors spaces be included as they are key to heritage deliver. In conjunction with this sharing of available local assets, many ACH communities (independently of one another) raised the idea of an available 'library of things' which could be held by FoDDC and shared out (or let out very cheaply) such as; a basic PA, folding tables and chairs, bunting, display boards, gazebos or venue tent to facilitate grassroots organisations to create and offer ACH community events more easily.	Home | GRCC Dene Magna Theatre Hall Onwards Hall Library of Things
(3)	Digital cultural landscape map could be undertaken as part of Forest of Dean Year of Culture. An online interactive database of venues, creative hubs and organisations, significant heritage sites, and cultural attractions.	Mapping Cultural Heritage
(4)	Database of ACH artists and practitioners could be created as part of Forest of Dean Year of Culture. This database would be by self-submission by practitioners (see examples). Making it easier to find and book or engage local practitioners and also to create better pathways to collaboration between artists. Another option discussed for this objective is exploring a collaboration with Create Gloucestershire to create of 'FOD' section of their county-wide artist database.	Community — Create Gloucestershire Apples and Snakes (artist database)
(5)	Quarterly 'Creating Community' ACH networking events will be organised by FoDDC, collaboratively hosted with partners / stakeholders where appropriate. Welcoming ACH organisers, producers, practitioners, artists, facilitators and beyond. Locations and times to vary to be accessible to as many stakeholders as possible. Themed discussions and guest speakers on a variety of topics and concerns. A mixture of structured discussions and opportunities for informal sharing and networking. Improving opportunities for collaboration and co-creation and more ambitious projects for our communities.	

(6)	Youth symposium could be undertaken as part of the lead up to Forest of Dean Year of Culture. Capturing youth voices around the future of ACH in the district is extremely valuable, as these young people will be the artists, participants, and catalysts of this future. After exploring the potential of hosting one large-scale symposium event, consultation with young people and organisations who support young people revealed that it would be more effective and youth-centred to take these conversations to young people where they already meet, so in collaboration with organisations such as Music Works, CANDI, FVAF Youth Team, Forest Pulse, The Gloucestershire Youth Support Team, as well as schools where appropriate.	Youth Support Team The Music Works CANDI YOUTHSPACE FVAF Youth Team Forest Pulse
(7)	Supporting current scoping and consultation activity around exploring potential new ACH hubs in Newent and Coleford in collaboration with local stakeholders. Keeping conversations live around what permanent or pop-up ACH hubs in Cinderford and Lydney might look like. Consultation raised the questions of what the plans were for empty spaces in Lydney such as the old Co-operative building. ACHO to research options and support community activity on this, especially locations which are near main bus routes for increased accessibility. Artists and organisations alike agree that ACH hubs would build valuable community connection and wellbeing, alongside contributing to the regeneration of our town centre, especially spaces which also have the capacity for sharing food and resources too. Research shows that including affordable studio spaces in these hubs creates a natural nexus for artists to create, connect and build community side by side, while also organically creating town centre hubs of cultural activity which contribute to regeneration and develop local interest in local art being produced. There is also support for 'pop-up' exhibition, performance and event spaces in disused buildings, whilst still exploring more permanent options. A key phrase from these consultations was offering 'anything Amazon can't do' to reanimate town centres, such as community connection, opportunities to share food, culture and experiences, and to participate in ACH.	Create Newent Market Town Regeneration Report Jolt — Gloucester
(8)	Internal shared calendar such as a Gcal (for informal use by stakeholders) to support an even spread of events (both time-wise and geographically), encourage collaboration and increased awareness of activity across the Forest, potential for themed co-production.	
(9)	Research shows a rich and active grassroots ACH schedule of events in the Forest of Dean, but stakeholder consultation revealed that there are big challenges around 'getting the word out', promoting and publicizing these events as we are such a disparate collection of communities. There is strong support for a free, high-quality event listing website, which could be developed and launched as part of Forest of Dean Year of Culture. Wyldwood developed a free What's On site in 2022, which is well used but has run into some technical and functionality issues. Explore collaboration to improve this offering and make it work to meet our community needs. Other fantastic listing options do exist locally (see links), but none meet the need of free site to list and promote ACH events organically. Collaboration with partners around developing and relaunching such an asset would be crucial. Consultation also showed an interest in this 'What's On' offering being expanded to showcase key cultural assets and experiences locally as well as week-to-week events, a touch stone example being Weyport and Portland's 'What/When' website, a collaboration between local councils and cultural organisations. Consultation showed that alongside better ways to digitally promote events, there is still a need for analogue promotional methods to ensure that we continue to include and welcome residents who are less digitally engaged. Ideas raised in collaborative discussions so far include; FoDDC to support sector to have better comms with town and pariah councils, to make better use of physical notice boards in our towns and villages and a centralized approach to putting out posters and flyers (which FoDDC could co-ordinate), pooling time and resources to distribute posters and flyers collectively, perhaps on a rota system.	What's On FOD Visit Dean Wye Forest Bee Forest Compass Coleford Town Events Weymouth Portland What/When
(10)	Forest of Dean Year of Culture is a proposed large-scale ambitious celebration project for 2028 which would aim to create a kind of promotional umbrella over all the wonderful ACH activity in the Forest of Dean, highlighting what makes our cultural landscape unique, improving audience and participation numbers by making more 'noise' around all we have to offer, pulling together a programme of events, presenting collaborative projects and engagement opportunities, mentorship, and creating a digital archive of ACH activity across the year which would create a legacy showcase of FoD cultural landscape. Although the focus would be on celebrating Forest-grown arts, culture, and heritage, there is also enthusiasm for bringing in some flagship talent and events from outside the Forest to encourage cultural exchange and enrich the celebration, this would be done is partnerships with organisation who already host and support touring acts and artists. Consultation shows lack of local investment and viable project funding to be a real challenge for younger and emerging artists locally, resulting in the district losing a lot of its talent to cities and areas with more cultural activity. Artist and heritage practitioners locally report the lack of available funding as a real challenge in their practice. FODYOC could include an 'ACH chest' of available funding for new and emerging artists to access, to support grassroots creative activity and new work being produced locally by FoD artists and practitioners.	Super Culture Heart of Blyth Cheltenham Festivals Meanwhile in Glouc Creative Wakefield Right Up Our Street Storying Barnsley Voices Gloucester Swindon Culture Collective

(11)	Keep sector informed regarding developments around LGR. Organisations, stakeholders, practitioners and artists alike are concerned about how changes brought about by LGR might affect their ability to deliver the crucial work they do in our communities. Concerns reported by stakeholders range from how SLAs will be affected, to use of buildings owned by FoDDC, to how the FoD will be recognised and resourced within a county-wide unitary authority. The ACH community asserted that the unique culture of the Forest 'must not get erased within wider Gloucestershire'. FoDDC to keep abreast of changes and decisions made by both local and central government and cascade information to partner and stakeholder to keep everyone informed.	FVAF also doing important work in communicating LGR news to local stakeholders. Collaborate with FVAF to support clear and accurate comms.
(12)	Asking 'What is next?' together with curiosity and enthusiasm. ACHO in post until the end of 2028, but it will be necessary to collaborate on building resilience beyond the roles' end so that projects and initiatives can sustain themselves by working on elements such community and communal ownership, partnership working, and legacy measures. This conversation to remain live throughout the next 3 years at our regular 'Creating Community' events and in the work ACHO undertakes in strengthening collaborative relationships across ACH landscape. Questions raised this conversation so far include; What collaborative infrastructure is needed to sustain this work? What post-2028 responsibilities and actions can be apportioned across the ACH community to support our ACH community to continue to thrive and grow? How do we establish self-sustaining elements of our ACH landscape which do not rely on project funding or volunteer hours? Will the new unitary authority be able to offer any support, resources, or time to catalyse and support the legacy and continuation of this work? Is there support and enthusiasm for the creation of a more formalised Forest of Dean Arts and Culture collective / alliance / CIC to continue this work?	Community Consultation 2023
(13)	Celebrating our diverse musical heritage; brass bands, folk scene, live music, rave culture and more. Brass band culture and its connection to our mining history is an integral part of FoD heritage but is also very much active and alive a culture and community today. The Forest also has a rich cultural history of raves and outdoor musical gatherings. Additionally, an active folk music scene as well as contemporary musicians living and creating in the forest. Organisers in our grassroots live music scene report challenges related to efforts being reliant on volunteers and lacking support. FoDDC to consult with local musicians and bands directly to learn more about how best to support the music scene of the FoD the thrive and continue to grow. Ongoing conversations around how ACH can interact more with tourism to the FoD, and how tourism might benefit and boost grassroots ACH locally. Partnership working with our destination management organization (DMO) 'Visit Dean Wye' as well as local businesses, holiday parks, tourist destinations to create more interaction between grassroots ACH and tourists.	Forest Of Dean Brass colefordmusicfestival.co.uk Lydbrook Band Forest Folk Club Voices from the Forest Visit Dean Wye
(14)	Celebrating heritage skills and crafts such freemining, morris dancing, commoning, forest dialect, charcoal burning and heritage fishing. Collaborating with local organisations and practitioners to offer opportunities for communities to learn more about, try out and participate in heritage crafts and skills in order to keep them alive and thriving. Celebrating these cultures by including them in community events and elevating their profile. Ongoing conversations around how ACH can interact more with tourism to the FOD, and how tourism might benefit and boost grassroots ACH locally. Partnership working with our destination management organization (DMO) 'Visit Dean Wye' as well as local businesses, holiday parks, tourist destinations to create more interaction between grassroots ACH and tourists.	FOREST OF DEAN FREEMINERS Commoners Association FOD Local History Society Traditional Charcoal Burn Visit Dean Wye
(15)	Sharing, celebrating, and working to preserve built and historical heritage such unique industrial heritage sites, oral histories and accounts of forest life, industrial and literary histories. Celebrating these histories and sites by including them in community events and incorporating them into the stories we tell about the Forest. FoDDC to consult with history, heritage and preservation organisations directly to learn more about how best to support their work; collaboratively exploring permanent ways of recording and celebrating heritage for future generations without repeated cost. Consultation showed that local history and heritage engagement in schools is currently low. Multiple organisations are offering or have offered educational materials and schools. There is support for a conversation around adding Forest of Dean history and heritage to our local curriculum, and heritage partners locally have the resources and materials available to support teachers and schools with this. There is an exciting opportunity to better share the Forest's unique heritage and culture with both young people and residents who are new to the area - It is crucial to engage younger people in the process of understanding why the Forest is so special, so that they will look after in future.	Reading The Forest FOD Buildings Preservation Trust Heritage Open Days Forest Dialect Visit Dean Wye FOD Local History Society
(16)	Linking arts opportunities with historical people, places and events (e.g. Warren James Day on 8th June) to celebrate significance, improve accessibility of Forest heritage for younger generation, and to foster more integration across specialists in Arts, Culture & Heritage locally.	Warren James Day Heritage Timeline of FOD

Key	More information	Links & references
Accessibility and Welcome		
(1)	Open, frank discussions around improving EDIB in ACH. FoDDC to continue to collaboration with 'Our Friendly Forest' to support this work and improve understanding and best practice for a more friendly, welcoming ACH landscape for everyone.	Our Friendly Forest
(2)	Continue to provide free / affordable opportunities for participation. Lots of fantastic organisations and artists are already committed to providing high quality free and low-cost opportunities. This must be kept high on the collective agenda as community consultation showed 'cost' as a common barrier to participation for many Forest residents, especially parents and carers who are planning activities with multiple children.	
(3)	'A Warm Welcome' to those who have previously excluded and underserved. The consultation process for this document has shown that creativity abounds in the Forest, but that some communities can feel ignores, undervalued or underserved in terms of what is offered to them in terms of ACH. Examples include; Older people who are highly skilled arts and crafters that are not always included and reached out to. Artforms and creative practices of community members with different cultural backgrounds. Young people looking for more contemporary media of self-expression.	Working-Class Creativity, Ageing & Belonging
(4)	Translating promotional materials into other locally-spoken languages, to improve the reach of our welcome and include everyone in our offers. FoDDC to research commonly spoken languages in the vicinity of the four markets towns and cascade this information to stakeholders via 'Creating Community' events. Also raised in consultation was the importance of using clear, simple language and avoiding jargon where possible to create an approachable, welcoming environment as ACH events and spaces.	
(5)	Explore joint strategic funding bid for large-scale accessibility improvements. Some improvements that have been identified would be more effective if introduced with a multi-agency, collaborative approach, such as; walkover videos to introduce venue spaces, mapping most-used ACH venues to understand common gaps in accessibility and opportunities for improvement, improving understanding and best-practice around supporting neurodiversity and learning disabilities in ACH spaces, engaging people with lived experience as experts or consultants to improve and standardise accessibility improvement efforts. In collectively recognising that making meaningful improvements to accessibility is an ongoing journey and not a 'one stop shop', we can keep pushing the conversation and improvement forwards through shared knowledge and understanding.	Barnwood Trust
(6)	A collaborative approach to 'The Transport Challenge' locally. Community consultation has consistently shown 'transport' to be the most common barrier to participation in ACH in the Forest. Road closures and road quality is often cited, as is poor or non-existent transport links between towns and villages. FoDDC to keep this conversation live via 'Creating Community' events, encouraging collaboration and exploring creative solutions to transport challenges, and inviting guest speakers such as FODCAP. Our consultation began many conversations around community minibuses and how a collaborative, community approach to providing transport might support better participation and engagement in ACH. FoDDC to explore the potentiality of a co-operatively owned minibus for the sector. It also came up in many consultation conversations that the use of hireable electric bikes and scooters would help (especially young) people to access ACH offers within their home towns, although they may not be suitable for travel between towns.	GCC Local Transport Plan Transport — FoDCAP The Robin Lydcare FOD Community Consultation
(7)	Identifying clearer social prescribing pathways for organisations to share ACH offerings with social prescribers at GP's surgeries and beyond. There is some uncertainty in the ACH community regarding how to effectively share their offerings with social prescribers. It has also been identified that better communication and relationships could be built between ACH practitioners and creative health organisations locally. FoDDC to undertake this research and cascade findings via 'Creating Community' events.	Gloucestershire ICB Artlift Create Health Social prescribing GCC NASP

(8)	Create package of pre-existing ACH resources and documents for event organising and delivery. Through consultation with ACH stakeholders and wider community, it has shown that there are already a lot of valuable resources which have been produced by ACH organisations over the years, with information ranging from 'how to' guides to organising grassroots ACH events, to databases of creative practitioners and way to improve accessibility. In the spirit of resources sharing and upskilling, FoDDC to work with local orgs to collate these resources into one easily accessible place, so that they can be made best use of by ACH community.	Building on publicly available locally-produced resources such as these: Event Promotion Guide Data confidence for arts and health
(9)	Consultation with FoD artists, especially new and emerging artists, has shown that better opportunities to share their work such as performance and exhibition opportunities (scheduled busking, exhibits in empty shops, festivals and more) would contribute to a more thriving grassroots ACH scene. FoDDC to collaborate with town and parish councils and local events organisers, and local landlords to explore opportunities for more 'pop-up' performance and exhibition opportunities in our town centres, which is also contribute to the regeneration of our town centres.	Sofar Sounds Gloucestershire
(10)	Working towards better artist retention in the FoD and creating better ACH opportunities and pathways for young people, FoDDC to work with local organisations, charities and venues to create, highlight and promote potential ACH work experience opportunities for students and young people. This will also require building on relationships with schools, colleges and youth groups to create meaningful pathways. Consultation shows a need for film and media work experience opportunities for young people locally. FoDDC to build relationships with film and media companies operating locally to explore the possibility of developing work experience opportunities for local young people. Independent artists have fed back that they do have generally have the resources and capacity to host young people for work experience within their normal working lives, but there is interest in different kinds of collaborations between local artists and further education such as the excellent upcoming artist residency at GlosCol.	Forest of Dean Glouc College Sixth Form - Dene Magna Wyedean Sixth Form Artist Residencies at Gloucestershire College
(11)	Explore creating a full ACH apprenticeship position. Consultation agrees that a full and formal ACH apprenticeship for a local young person would be incredibly positive, but there is concern that no one single organisation would have the capacity to organise, administrate and deliver this. However there is potential for a collaborative multi-organisational approach, with FoDDC to oversee and administrate. FoDDC to explore this potential.	Hiring an apprentice (gov)
(12)	Develop joint training action plan responding to local artist and practitioner needs. Consultation has highlighted that training for ACH facilitators can be inconsistent as it is not standardised across the industry. Training needs identified include; creative facilitation training (especially upskilling new local artists in facilitation so they can work locally), widening understanding of accessibility, facilitation skills, marketing, managing finances as a freelancer, safeguarding, writing grant applications and securing funding, buddying and mentoring, risk assessments, and EDIB. FoDDC to create a potential training framework in consultation with practitioners and seek to secure funding to deliver this locally. Freelancers need paid time to undertake training and skills development as they are not salaried. Peer mentorship can play a key role in building a confident ACH worforce.	Stakeholders willing to collaborate and / or deliver on aspects this training effort: ArtSpace, Wyldwood Arts, Canopy, Dean Heritage Centre, and more.
(13)	Research tech options for of hybrid learning; costs to purchase/loan equipment and tutor time for pilots. Trial use of hybrid learning with partners to better understand the benefits and challenges to participants and increase participation opportunities. FoDDC to undertake this research and cascade information to partners and stakeholders at 'Creating Community' events. Digital media initiatives such as online exhibitions and streaming of live music and theatre events can also improve accessibility for those unable to attend in-person. Stakeholder consultation revealed willingness to explore these options but a lack of resources or capacity from our grassroots creative organisations. Collaborative approach and resource sharing could improve the availability of these offers.	

(14)	The ACH culture of the Forest leans more towards physical and analogue creativity, alongside traditional crafts, music and much more. But digital arts and digital learning are an ever-growing element of ACH both locally and nationally, and the Forest doesn't want to be left behind, FoDDC and stakeholders to keep digital arts and digital learning on the agenda through discussion, research and skills-sharing around digital learning and creation – extending this conversation to practitioners, organisations, and creatives.	
(15)	FoDDC and ACH community and stakeholders also to recognise and celebrate and elevate locally produced digital art and media, and artists, practitioners and educators working in these fields, seeking to learn from them and work towards making digital media a significant part of the ACH landscape in the Forest of Dean. FoDDC and partners committing to engage and invest in local artists and practitioners to create art, design and promotional materials ahead of relying in generative AI.	

Key	More information	Links & references
Wellbeing and sustainability		
(1)	Collate contemporary research and best practice around worker wellbeing in ACH. FoDDC to share the research and findings via Creating Community events. This could be used to develop a shared and actionable value system for the sector around wellbeing. Consultation has shown that maintaining the wellbeing of artists, practitioners and workers would contribute to a more sustainable and robust ACH landscape. It is important to recognise that much of the ACH sector is built on freelance, ad-hoc, voluntary and low paid labour, which can contribute to sector instability, inaccessibility and a lack of growth. Consultation has revealed inconsistencies in artist and facilitator pay locally. Theirs is no local standard or expectation. National guidelines do exist, but do not take into account low arts investment locally. It is not always possible for local organisations to meet these rates. But it is important to nurture an economy where arts workers have viable employment opportunities locally and we do not lose all our creative talent to cities and larger cultural hubs. FoDDC to survey local freelancers and delivery organisation locally to learn more about realistic and sustainable local day rates and establish consistent local expectation. Can an informal shared agreement around rates of pay locally be reached, giving organisations better evidence base for practitioner costs when approaching funders?	Creative Health Sector Survey Rates of Pay - Artists' Union England
(2)	Collaborative thinking around projects aimed at improving wellbeing for artists and participants, which could raise the profile of 'improving wellbeing' as a discussion point in ACH across organisations and in collaborative efforts such as Creating Community events. Raising the profile of interventions such as 'access riders' for creatives and facilitators to ensure more workers are able to practice locally and we don' t lose talents due to inaccessibility and other related causes of burnout a poor worker wellbeing.	Field Notes CIC Access Riders
(3)	Creating paid and resourced opportunities for freelancers to participate in well-being activities. Consultation shows that freelancers need paid time to undertake wellbeing and reflective practice work, as they are not salaried and are often short of free time to undertake this. Informal and no-agenda 'wellbeing get togethers' for artists and practitioners can improve worker resilience and longevity. Consultation with artists and workers that more opportunities to connect with other creatives is in itself a form of support.	
(4)	Working for 'improved health and wellbeing, tackling isolation, and building community' for all participants and audience members. As reflected 'Why ACH?' section on page 9, benefits of ACH in supporting health wellbeing, tackling isolation, and building community are clear and strongly evidenced, in areas are varied as 'fall prevention' in older age to 'supporting infant social development'. Cross-sector consultation revealed a shared core value of ACH as pathway for improved health and wellbeing, tackling isolation, and building community in the Forest of Dean, and a commitment to working towards these outcomes in our ACH offerings.	How Arts Transform Our Health Evidence of the arts in improving health? Historic England Wellbeing and Heritage Strategy DCMS evidence summary ACE Subjective Wellbeing Review

(5)	Developing creative collaboration between ACH sector and climate work. The Forest of Dean is some impactful climate resilience organisations such as FODCAP, Forest Community Energy, DyFRA, and Severn Wye Energy, who can support the ACH community to expand understanding how ACH can support climate resilience and improve community support and understanding around climate change. FoDDC to support and cultivate ongoing working relationships and conversations between ACH and climate work, acting as a vector for contacts, information, and collaboration between the two sectors. Both (national charity) Climate Outreach and The Bristol Nature and Climate Partnership have report and research into the positive role arts organisations can have with climate communications and in promoting community engagements.	Forest Community Energy Dyfra Climate content in culture Climate and Creativity FOD | Resilience Web
(6)	It is also important to keep exploring how ACH practitioners and organisations can implement best practice around climate work to make our own activity and practice more climate resilient. The best way to learn and change is together. FoDDC to earmark one of the quarterly 'Creating Community' events specifically for sharing and exploring better climate practice, inviting along guest speaker and practitioners to hold information sharing and conversation on this. Improved collaboration means improved climate resilience and our community is better empowered to meet the challenges of climate change.	Julie's Bicycle
(7)	The LGBTQIA+ Community Climate Action Plan (CCAP) is a groundbreaking, community-driven strategy developed by LGBTQIA+ individuals for the Forest of Dean in 2025. The plan combines insights from visioning workshops, survey responses, and collaborative discussions to shape a sustainable and inclusive future. This valuable in depth community consultation can be used inform ACH practice, engagement and change work around climate resilience.	LGBTQIA+ Community Climate Action Plan (CCAP)
(8)	Looking beyond ACHO 3-year post. How can climate resilience work be embedded in the longer term? Embedded and sustainable cultural changes in ACH work locally ensure a more climate resilient sector. Cultural and organisational change takes time. FoDDC to pull together research and experience from success stories in other districts and explore how climate resilience work can continue to grow in engagement and support in the ACH sector locally. Towards the end of this project we hope to have built a more connected and collaborative ACH sector in the Forest through our regular quarterly 'Creating Community' events, as well as a more engaged and participatory audience and community through easier and better-used channels of promoting and celebrating what our ACH scene has to offer. This increase in collaboration and participation will hopefully facilitate more open communication and better pathways to change in embedding climate resilience in our collective cultural practices.	Rob Hopkins – Imagination taking power

Contributors / acknowledgements

Air in G

ArtLift

ArtSpace

Canopy Creative Network

Cinderford Town Council

Coleford Baptist Church

Coleford Music Festival

Coleford Town Council

Create Newent

Dean Forest Railway

Dean Heritage Centre

FarOpen Art Trail

Field Notes

Forest of Dean Brass Band

Forest of Dean Local History Society

Forest of Dean Sculpture Trail

Found in the Forest Youth Theatre

Gloucestershire Libraries

Last Thursday

Lydney Town Council

Newent Town Council

Queering The Wye

Reading the Forest

Scarr Bandstand

St Stephen's Church

The Music Works

Visit Dean Wye

Warren James Day

Wyldwood Arts

Plus so many independent artists and practitioners who contributed their precious time and expertise. Thank you!

