

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Executive Director of Educational Services

Corporate Culture Sub Committee: Date: 28th April 2009

Subject: Exhibitions / Visuals Arts Programme 2009/10

1. Purpose

- 1.1** To advise the Culture Sub Group of the proposed Exhibitions and Visuals Arts Programme for financial year 2009/10.

2. Background

- 2.1** WDC's Exhibition Service forms part of the Culture Section within the Department of Educational Services. This service promotes a varied programme of public exhibitions throughout the year. Venues utilised are determined by available resources and limited to suitable exhibition space. The two main exhibition venues in West Dunbartonshire are currently the Backdoor Gallery Dalmuir and Clydebank Museum.
- 2.2** Programmes include National Touring exhibitions, local artists' exhibitions, and works from the WDC Fine Art Collection, museums displays and touring exhibitions in libraries. Professional exhibitions last year included national touring exhibitions from The Hayward Gallery London and Graphicus including **'Drawing With Scissors'** -Henri Matisse, and **'Heart & Matter'**- Geoff Grandfield.
- 2.3** Access to 32 exhibitions was promoted in 2008/9 all exhibitions were free of charge. The total number of visitors attending exhibitions in museums, libraries and the Backdoor Gallery was 17,721 during 2008. The exhibitions service promotes public participation through its support for local artists, societies and its Open Art Show each year.
- 2.4** The service employs one member of staff, with an annual working budget of £10,000 including all marketing and promotions. Where appropriate, exhibitions have associated education programmes to facilitate schools' visits. These are linked to the Curriculum for Excellence and are supported in the museum by the Culture Section's Learning Development Officer.
- 2.5** Recent exhibitions at Clydebank museum have gained the support of the National Museum of Scotland, East Dunbartonshire Council, and Scottish

artists including John Lowrie Morrison, Mary Batchelor, and J P McLaughlin amongst others.

3. Main Issues

- 3.1 This paper advises the Culture Sub Group of the planned exhibitions programme for financial year 2009/10. The programme aims to promote public access to visual arts programmes, local history and events. The programme includes professional touring exhibitions, exhibitions by local artists' works, exhibits from the Council's fine art collection and major exhibitions relating to West Dunbartonshire's heritage.
- 3.2 Working in partnership with other West Dunbartonshire Council services including Libraries, Public Relations the Culture Section is promoting '**Dave McKean A Retrospective**' as part of 'Booked' (West Dunbartonshire's Festival of Words). The exhibition includes seminal works by this respected graphic artist.
- 3.3 The programme includes three major exhibitions at Clydebank Museum: '**Singer**' provides a pictorial history of Singer sewing machine manufacturers in Clydebank. Singer was one of the two major employers in the town its factory in Kilbowie was at the time the largest in the world. This exhibition is of great relevance to the community and its heritage. All museums exhibitions are supported by an extensive education programme for schools including tours, teaching resources and workshops.
- 3.4 '**WWII**' launched on V-J Day is part funded by the Big Lottery and forms part of WDC's Their Past Your Future 2 (TPYF2) programme of events. This large scale exhibition will include artefacts, reconstructions, and audio visual displays including a series of recorded memories of survivors of the Clydebank Blitz. It will be supported by 'Silent Heroes' a photographic exhibition at The Backdoor Gallery commemorating the heroism and sacrifice of those involved in the rescue squads involved in the Clydebank Blitz.
- 3.5 '**A History of Clydebank**' is a major exhibition providing an over view of the history of the town. The exhibition will explore the development of the town from its rural beginnings as Barns o' Clyde, through its industrial development to a major industrial town world-famous for the construction of mammoth liners such as the *Queen Mary*, *Queen Elizabeth* and *Queen Elizabeth 2*.
- 3.6 The work of special needs groups is represented via an exhibition by the Key Unit which supports adults who are learning to live independently in West Dunbartonshire. Having work professionally hung and exhibited in a purpose built gallery provides a valuable positive input into the lives of these amateur artists.
- 3.7 Marking Mental Health week and as part of the **Scottish Mental Health Arts and Film Festival** this year's programme includes an exhibition of works by

local people experiencing/who have experienced mental health issues. This exhibition is produced in partnership with WDC Social Work and NHS Scotland.

- 3.8 Following the success of last year's **Open Art Show** the exhibition will return this year to Clydebank Museum. Last year's exhibition attracted an increased number of visits and included double the number of artists involved in 2007. The exhibition has been moved to take place during the summer months tapping into the tourist season.
- 3.9 As part of our Continuous Improvement Programme 2009/10 we will establish a customer consultation panel comprising local gallery users. The panel will gather customer comments, suggestions and positively engage the public in service delivery.
- 3.10 In addition qualitative questionnaires have been developed for exhibition visitors to Clydebank Museum and the Backdoor Gallery. These questionnaires will be recorded and feedback assimilated, recorded and will form the basis of improvements to services.
- 3.11 All exhibitions promoted are fully accessible and where available are supported by either large print or audio guides.
- 3.12 All exhibitions are promoted in our 'What's On' guide and circulated via the council's libraries and mailing lists; online on the council's web site; through posters flyers, marketing materials, press adverts and editorials.
- 3.13 A full list of the exhibitions planned for 2009/10 is attached to this report as Appendix 1.

4. Personnel Issues

- 4.1 There are no personnel issues in relation to this report

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 There are no financial implications within this report. All exhibitions proposed will be produced within existing exhibition budgets.

6. Risk Analysis

- 6.1 There is no increased risk to the Council associated with the contents of this report. Risk assessments are undertaken as required for specific exhibitions.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 This paper proposes a varied, relevant and attractive programme of exhibitions linked to the strategic aims of the WDC Cultural Strategy including:

- a) To increase access and participation in cultural activity for all citizens.
- b) To recognise and promote the role of culture to cross-cutting agendas including Economic Development, Social Inclusion, Regeneration, Lifelong Learning and Health among others.
- c) To develop high quality safe venues and programming
- d) To develop handling/loans collections of artefacts for school and community use and establish cultural links with other Councils to share information and "buy into" touring productions and exhibitions.

8. Recommendations

8.1 The Culture Sub Committee is invited to note the proposed exhibitions programme for 2009/10 detailed in this paper and outlined in Appendix 1.

Terry Lanagan
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Wards Affected: All

Appendix 1: Exhibitions Programme 2009/10

Background Papers: West Dunbartonshire Council Cultural Strategy 2005

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