

Using Creative Activities To Improve Wellbeing

**26th November, Maidstone Borough Council
Economic Development and Leisure Committee
Kent Arts and Wellbeing**



Introduction

- The case for using creativity to improve wellbeing is established
- It can also be used to develop a sense of community and place
- Practical application does not reflect theoretical acceptance
- There are many valuable initiatives but most are below the radar
- There is a strong case for a Kent wide integrated, comprehensive, and well documented approach
- Looking for non financial support



Background

Kent Arts and Wellbeing founded about 2 years ago - non profit organisation

Aims to improve wellbeing of individuals and communities through the use of creative activities

Initial focus on older people

First major activity – Our Work of Art – voted best Kent Volunteer led arts activity in Kent M Awards

Created the Kent Arts and Wellbeing Network to promote wellbeing through creativity

Network focus is on a strategic project to establish recognition of the the benefits of creative activity on wellbeing.



The Strategic Programme Ambition

Well promoted

Cover multiple creative practices

Kent wide – based in 4 localities following the proposed ICP areas

- Maidstone as one of these representing West Kent
- Local communities , especially those with high levels of social deprivation
- Communities of interest – people living with dementia, homeless people
- Inter generational approach

Volunteer legacy – aim to develop volunteers that can go on to support community development

Cost around £500,000 with £100,000 spent in each locality over 4? years



Why Maidstone?

- Most typical area in Kent
- Largest area in West Kent – also Kent
- Areas of high levels of relative deprivation
- Substantial arts activity to provide volunteer support
- Big gaps, particularly in areas of relatively high deprivation
- Supportive voluntary sector
- Supportive borough council??



Singing and Homelessness/Chaotic Lifestyles

- People with chaotic lifestyles are a community of interest we could address.
- There is a proven model – The Choir With No Name
- Key features - three important elements
 - Weekly rehearsals to provide a constant level of activity and support
 - Hot, freshly cooked meal served in a café environment
 - Performances to raise money to become more self sufficient
- To make these elements happen you need
 - An appropriate venue
 - An MD/deputy MD and /or an accompanist
 - A project manager to support clients.

Your Support

- I think this can integrate well with the new Arts and Culture Strategy
- Not looking for funding – but would be appreciated
- A commitment to
 - Support of funding application
 - Get involved in selecting areas of activity
 - Support area of activity on a non financial basis



Questions

- Is this an approach you could support?
- Any questions?

