

NOMINATION FORM TO OUTSIDE BODY

Date ...23/07/21.....

NAME:	Paul Harper
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NAME OF ORGANISATION APPLYING FOR:	Maidstone Area Arts Partnership (MAAP)
ROLE APPLYING FOR:	Borough Council Representative
REASON FOR APPLYING:	<p>I was the chair of MBC's Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee for 3 years from 2018 to 2021.</p> <p>I have previously been a Council Representative to MAAP.</p> <p>During my time as ERL Chair I set up the processes to create the post of Arts and Cultural Officer and also the Maidstone Council Arts and Cultural Policy.</p> <p>I also set in train the process leading to the first meeting of the Cultural Forum</p> <p>I have been interested in the Arts and Cultural Activities all my life and especially since gaining public office in 1986. Prior to living in Maidstone I lived in Merton (London) where I was a councillor from 1986 to 2002. From 1990 to 1999 I was the Chair of Leisure and Libraries Committee which included responsibility for Arts. I was the driving force in the renaissance of Merton's Art's in the 1990's plus the regeneration of Wimbledon Theatre. In Maidstone I use to work at UCA as the Pro Rector Corporate Resources.</p>

WHAT SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE COULD YOU BRING TO THE ORGANISATION?:

The skills I bring are business skills from my professional career, I am a qualified Accountant, and have been a Director of Resources since 2006. More importantly a very in-depth knowledge of the Arts, their funding and management.

I also bring Arts management skills

In addition to my collaborative working skills which have been demonstrated at Maidstone Council in particular since being Chair of ERL, previous relevant experience includes:

In 1990 as Chair of Leisure and Libraries Services (including Arts and Cultural Services) I was a member of the Merton Art Council. I conducted a full review of Arts Provision in the borough and subsequently redirected our budget into an arts regeneration budget. This included appointing an Arts Development Officer, setting up an Arts Development Fund and stabling a yearly Merton Arts Festival to celebrate the boroughs multi-cultural diversity and let everyone experience each other's culture to en-richen their own life experiences.

I was the Chair of Wimbledon Theatre for over 12 years to 2004 overseeing a complete refurbishment of the theatre (1600 seat auditorium + 100 seat studio). Setting up the studio to be able to showcase developing arts and alternative arts. I also helped established the youth theatre group.

I was instrumental at the Theatre is establishing the successful Canizario Park open air summer theatre season which overlapped with the Wimbledon fortnight.

I also established a series of Arts work studios in a disused building to provide incubation space for striving artists.

In Merton we have the Wimbledon School of Arts and I established an annual programme to commission pieces of sculpture to be placed in our parts as a method of encouraging greater access to sculpture. In a community park which I was involved with we sponsored the creation of four pieces of sculpture in wood to bring the park alive.

At UCA Maidstone I again had the opportunity to help promote the arts in Maidstone.

I am clearly a full and committed champion of the arts and have a complete belief that arts and a thriving cultural sector can be a key to help regenerating local economies in a sustainable model and that Maidstone needs to make more of the opportunities and infrastructure that it has.