

## Appendix 1: Cultural Activity updates Jan – July 2021

- 1. Cultural Recovery Funds** - During 2020-21 – the city council and several of the other cultural providers and partners in the city were supported through the Cultural Recovery Fund (round2) which provided much-needed support for Museum of Gloucester and Gloucester Guildhall. In Jan – March the city council received support from the British Film Institute of £40k and £50k from Arts Council England and has used these funds to develop activity and improve services across these cultural sites. St Oswalds Priory also received £25k from Historic England.
- 2. Cultural Venues** - All city-council run venues closed through the period of lockdown re-opened during week commencing 17 May. A significant loss of income was experienced as a result of closure and a slow return of audiences has continued to impact on earned income since May. Guildhall cinema has re-opened with a reduced capacity to enable social distancing, which has impacted on income. Audiences are being to return and confidence is being reflected in initially low visitor numbers to Museum of Gloucester and Guildhall cinema. Live events programme is still very slow to pick up with many of the post-poned events being further postponed to later in the year and those that are planned can only proceed with a much-reduced capacity for indoor and outdoor events.
- 3. Festivals and Events** - the period from January to June has seen further cancellations or postponement of most events and festivals. Some controlled outdoor events were permitted from Step 2 in mid-April such as funfairs. Most other festivals have delayed or postponed until it is clear that social distancing restrictions can be lifted – after Step 4. Gloucester History Festival presented some on-line activity and talks during April 2021 and aims to operate more fully, both digitally and virtually later in the year with the City Voices programme also due to return. Rooftop Festival will return following a successful application to the Arts Council and support from the city council. The festival and events team are in talks with live music and comedy promoters to bring new events to Gloucester Park in future. The Tall Ships Festival will return in 2022 – over the Spring Bank holiday – along with activity to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Plans are in development for Gloucester Goes Retro in August, being delivered by the city council in partnership with Gloucester BID and founder and driving force Cllr Colin Organ. New events and festivals and locations are being explored with partners to provide a varied programme that caters for a wide range of tastes, demographics and interests and meeting the cultural ambitions of the city.
- 4. Film production** – some limited film production took place in the city with outdoor locations being used with social distancing measures in places. The film industry was also impacted seriously by the pandemic and covid restrictions enforcing it to shut down many productions. Gloucester remains committed to being seen as a film-friendly city and the festivals and events team continue to promote the city's locations as an asset. Film production in the city can also boost tourism as an additional benefit to the local economy.

5. **Culture and Visitor Economy Recovery Group (CVERG)** - In response to the covid-19 pandemic, thematic recovery groups were established by the city council in April 2020. The CVERG is a city-wide group which was formed from the Strategic Events Programming Group. The CVERG continues to meet approximately every 2 months to support, share and collaborate on plans for recovery.
  
6. **Tourism and Destination Marketing** – Good progress continues to be made against the recommendations from the *Future Marketing of Gloucester* report written by Steve Brown in March 2020. An independent Marketing Steering Board has been established to ensure that the city council continues to support and represent the needs of the city's visitor economy. A leading company in the area of place branding - *Thinking Place Ltd* - have been appointed to undertake the place branding and positioning contract following an open tender process. There were 152 expressions of interest in the project and over 30 full submissions of a very high standard for this strategic piece of work, which will result in a strong brand proposition and assets to help promote the city for visitors, residents, tourists and investors in Gloucester. The new website continues to be populated with fresh content, blogs and imagery and is continuing to extend its reach, engagement and impressions. Visit numbers to the city are still low, owing the limited number of cultural opportunities available, but are beginning to pick up as more people are vaccinated and confidence grows. The city's covid recovery marketing plan is being delivered to support the safe return of the visitor economy. This has developed in response and support of the Visit Gloucestershire county-wide covid recovery plan and the national recovery strategy that has been developed by Visit Britain and Visit England. This ensures that Gloucester's proposition is in line with county, regional and national programmes, whilst delivering a distinctive proposition relevant to Gloucester.

#### **7. Rebuilding Foundations in partnership with South West Museum Development**

South West Museum Development has received £56,800 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund for 'Rebuilding Foundations: Gloucestershire's Museums', running from June 2021 until March 2022. The project is supporting 10 Gloucestershire Museums to gain skills to involve volunteers and develop audiences. Each Museum will have bespoke development opportunities alongside sector specialists to build resilience after Covid-19 and support will also come from peer to peer networks. The Museum of Gloucester is the only Gloucester based Museum to participate in this project.

#### **8. The Folk of Gloucester museum**

The legal documentation in relation to the transfer of the Folk of Gloucester Museum from the city council to Gloucester Historic Buildings and Gloucester Civic Trust is near completion. The council's museum team will continue to assess/document and relocate objects from the stores at the former Gloucester Life Museum over the next 5 years. Items that remain on site at

the Folk of Gloucester are subject to forming part of a loan agreement, with the items of the collection remaining the property of the city council. The Museum of Gloucester team are working closely with the Gloucester Civic Trust to understand their priorities and plans for the site to ensure that timescales align and that the city's historic collections remain safe and cared-for. The Folk of Gloucester have appointed a consultant to help formulate their ideas for developing the site.

## 9. Gloucester Culture Trust

Despite the setbacks of covid the city council has continued to work closely and positively with Gloucester Culture Trust (GCT) and others to ensure that the delivery of the Cultural Strategy continues to progress. A revised and updated version of the Cultural Strategy for 2021 – 2026 was adopted at the March 2021 council meeting.

10. **Gloucester's Cultural Vision and Strategy** – was updated earlier in the year. The refreshed strategy that describes the period 2021-2026. It identified 23 Actions to deliver against 8 key Objectives. Whilst the responsibility for the delivery of the majority of the actions within the strategy sits with GCT, the city council has a critical role to play in supporting this strategic devolvement, ensuring the right level of support is provided and the conditions are created for culture to thrive. The city council continues to work closely with GCT to ensure that the actions are progressed.

Chief Executive Officer of GCT, Hollie Smith-Charles left at end April. Following a formal recruitment process the new CEO Adam Coleman and will start on August 9<sup>th</sup> and for the interim period James Garrod (Programme Manager: Jolt) is acting CEO. GCT is also recruiting a replacement Strategic Creative producer in partnership with GCC which will include producing the Kings Square cultural programme for 2022 and beyond.

## 11. Great Place

The National Lottery Heritage Fund and Arts Council England funded Great Place scheme wrapped up with a celebration event on 27 May 2021. *Gloucester, Becoming a Great Place for Culture* - was an online event with nearly 50 people attending. The event included a newly commissioned film summarising the Great Place story and its successes, with case studies from partners. Breakout groups explored how the city could build on the legacy of the scheme. It was a successful event that showed how culture in the city has taken - in the words of one key partner - 'giant leaps' over the past 4 years. Most evident was the close partnerships and relationships that have been built in the city and beyond as a result of this investment. Gloucester is clearly in a stronger and a healthier position for culture than at the outset of the scheme. GCT will follow up this event by sharing the learning with the sector and councillors.

## **12. Kings House**

Kings House continues to develop as a hub for creative activity in the centre of the city. Work has progressed to install a lift which is scheduled for completion during the summer. This will ensure that the building is fully accessible to Jolt studios on Level 1 and The Music Works hub on level 2. In addition to providing some of the necessary finance for the lift, the city council has agreed a loan of £30,000 to Gloucester Culture Trust with terms of repayment being finalised. The remainder of the financing has been provided by a combination of the city council, The Music Works and GCT – with funds from Arts Council (Great Place scheme), Paul Hamlyn Foundation and DFG.

## **13. Jolt**

Once the lift and accessible toilet are installed the build and fit-out phase will be complete. Jolt's co-working space is now open for testing and has been very well received. To date Jolt has recruited tenants to 10 of its 13 studios and 9 of its 11 Pod Studios. These were offered through a competitive application process to find suitable residents. The final studios and Pod Studios will be ready to lease in July 2021 with the expectation that these will be fully booked. A launch event comprising of open studios with the Jolt residents, a small programme of entertainment and refreshments is being planned for the second half of July.

## **14. The Music Works**

The Music Works have been awarded the prestigious Queen's Award which is a strong endorsement of the work they do in supporting and promoting young people to access music production, education and more. Their fit-out of the second floor of Kings House is also nearly completed, with state-of-the-art facilities in place to ensure that The Music Works can provide high-quality accessible music provision in the centre of Gloucester. Over £400k of funding has been secured from a variety of sources to complete the impressive transformation of the space, due to open in July 2021 with initial testing and use already underway. This facility will become regionally important and place Gloucester firmly in the premier league for its ability to support music education and access in the county and beyond to all ages and abilities.

## **15. Kings Square**

Due for completion by end of the year Kings Square will be a high-quality city centre site that will be able to be used for concerts, events, festivals and other mixed uses. A process to commission events to mark the launch of the Square and the future cultural programme has been issued for expressions of interest. The city council has allocated budget from the Festivals and Events budget to support a launch event and programme. Further funds will be sought to augment the city council's investment. Work is progressing to establish the governance and management arrangements for the Square and Forum public realm areas.

## **16. Guildhall and Blackfriars**

Restrictions upon the numbers of attendees led to cancellations or postponement of all live gigs and events for the period in the Guildhall. Room hire, weddings and other income-generating activity across sites also ceased and continues to be slow to return. Instead, the team presented socially-distanced live events at Blackfriars as part of the summer social series. The cinema at Guildhall reopened on 17 May with a maximum seated capacity of 22 per screening and a limited choice of cinema releases to drive audiences.