



DIWYLLIANT  
**CONWY**  
CULTURE

# CREU CONWY - CREATING THE SPARK

A Cultural Strategy for Conwy County Borough  
2021 - 2026



# CREU CONWY CREATING THE SPARK

A Cultural Strategy for Conwy County Borough 2021 - 2026

Welcome to Creu Conwy, a new strategy to put arts, culture and heritage at the heart of community life in Conwy County. Creu Conwy has emerged from conversations held across the region with more than 200 organisations and individuals between 2019 and 2021. We know that the strategy must be delivered in partnership for it to succeed, and we are excited to work together with Conwy's communities to develop projects that really make a difference.

Creu Conwy comes at an important time in the story of Conwy. COVID-19 has impacted our wellbeing and economy and we are facing big challenges from climate change.

As we look to the future, we see culture as a powerful tool that can help us reconnect and work together to rebuild our economy in a sustainable way.

We want culture and creativity to be the common thread running through everything that happens here in Conwy. To achieve this, our cultural sector needs to be properly valued and resourced. So, we are proposing some new ways to fund culture, together with ideas for supporting our cultural sector to build on its outstanding talent and successes.

The action plan for Creu Conwy will grow as we work with communities, creative people and local businesses. We invite you to see it as a work in progress and to continue to share your



ideas over the next five years and beyond.

**Charlie McCoubrey,**  
Leader, Conwy County  
Borough Council

Supported by:



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

## CULTURE IN CONWY

### What is culture?

It can be difficult to define! Culture is our way of life, our language and traditions. It captures everything from arts, music, literature and heritage, to sport, landscape and the natural environment. Culture helps us to capture and define our sense of place and belonging; it gives Conwy its distinctiveness.

Conwy is a place of contrast and variety; our spectacular landscapes have earned us a reputation as the adventure capital of Wales, while our bustling Victorian resorts and miles of sandy beaches are hugely popular with visitors. In some of our rural areas, farming has been an important way of life for hundreds, even thousands, of years.

Welsh is a living language in Conwy; it is the key that unlocks a world of literature, music, poetry, landscape and the traditions of daily life. Village and agricultural shows, festivals, local gigs and eisteddfodau all contribute to our vibrant contemporary Welsh cultural scene. We have an exceptional cultural and creative sector here in Conwy, with many well-known writers, musicians and performers and an internationally renowned art gallery, MOSTYN.

Conwy is an outward-looking, modern and progressive county with a diverse cultural heritage. We understand how important language and culture can be to a sense of identity and belonging. Hidden histories and voices are beginning to see the light of day both in Conwy and across the world, and we are excited to play our part in telling the stories of traditionally marginalised audiences by working with our community in all its diversity.

## CULTURE SNAPSHOT

Welsh is spoken by over **1/4** & more than **1/2** of school children.

**CYMRAEG**



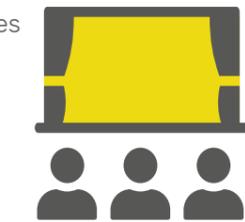
The **UNESCO World Heritage Site of Conwy Castle** and its well-preserved Town Walls surround the pretty town of Conwy with its **working harbour**.



Conwy has a thriving agricultural way of life and some **world-class local food and produce**.



Our exceptional theatres at **Venue Cymru & Theatr Colwyn** welcome over **300,000** visitors every year.



A flourishing network of **art galleries & independent museums** welcome over **100,000** annual visitors.



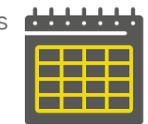
Our **libraries & Culture Centre** are **cultural hubs** with more than **400,000** visits each year.



We have nearly **400** creative businesses employing around **3000** people.



Conwy hosts around **400** **international, national & home grown events** each year.



**Coastal Conwy** has nearly **40 miles** of **beautiful beaches** & several **Victorian promenades**.



Our leisure centres see more than **850,000** visits each year.





Maen y Bardd burial chamber, Rowen.© CCBC

# SETTING THE SCENE

## Who is this strategy for?

Creu Conwy is for everyone who lives in, works in or visits Conwy – our communities and businesses, our youngest and oldest people, and our creative and heritage sectors. In writing this document we have considered acts and strategies relating to culture, economic development and wellbeing, both from Conwy Council and from others at regional and national levels.

### Well-being of Future Generations (Wales)

**Act 2015:** Better use of culture to support health benefits; reaching those who think that culture is 'not for me'.

**Conwy Corporate Plan 2017-2022:** A thriving cultural county; a place where people have a voice; skills, growth, and the environment are core to our future.

**Events Strategy 2018-2022:** Events that celebrate the language and culture of the area and promote what is unique and special about the county. These events are also key in helping to support the community's 'feel-good factor' and can bring communities together.

**Conwy Economic Growth Strategy & Recovery Plan:** Culture and creative industries at the heart of town centre regeneration; developing capacity for Conwy's cultural, creative and tourism industries.

### Conwy's Welsh Promotion Strategy

**2022-2026:** Increasing the use of Welsh within communities and within the family; promoting the use of Welsh amongst children and young people as part of daily life.

**Conwy Library and Information Strategy 2021-2026:** Developing our libraries into community hubs that provide a wide range of services and activities.

**Conwy Destination Management Plan:** Strengthening Conwy's national and international reputation as a cultural hotspot; more joined-up, adventurous programming; transformational tourism, especially beyond the main season; using iconic venues and nature for cultural events and art.



Herding sheep in Penmachno. Undated image, Llandudno Library Collection (Conwy Archive Service).

# 6 VISION: CREATING THE SPARK!



Winter Light © CCBC

## Culture creates the spark for economic growth, wellbeing and connection.

Culture can drive sustainable economic growth and help bring communities closer together. As we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, we are facing key challenges that culture can help to overcome:

- We have an ageing population, with many people living alone. The pandemic has made loneliness and deprivation even greater problems.
- Our economy relies on tourism, and since the pandemic we are seeing dramatic increases to already impressive visitor numbers. How do we make sure that our communities are supported and enhanced but not overwhelmed?
- Culture should be accessible, fun and relevant to everyone, but many still find themselves on the margins and disconnected from cultural life.

To bring about real change, culture needs to be relevant and accessible, and placed firmly in the hands of the community. To make sure this happens, we want to develop projects together with the community that use the principles of being **adventurous**, **playful** and **connected**.

What does **adventurous**, **playful** and **connected** mean?

### ADVENTUROUS

Conwy is the adventure capital of Wales and we believe that culture can be an adventure too! We want people to feel confident and excited about taking cultural adventures, including people who might think that culture is 'not for me'.

Colwyn Bay's downloadable **Imagine Trail app** was launched in September 2021. The app is based on local heritage trails and includes creative and historical content and augmented reality experiences at familiar buildings and landmarks. The trail has made local heritage more appealing for a wider range of people by creating an adventure out of the everyday. Imagine Trail is part of the Imagine Colwyn Bay project, a National Lottery Heritage Fund Great Places Scheme.



Cledwyn, I'm a Celebrity...Get Me Out of Here!! © ITV

### PLAYFUL

Does this make me stop, smile and want to join in? We have already had some great examples of playful cultural activity in Conwy.

A huge white Hollywood-style sign on the hillside above Llanrwst made sure that visitors to the **2019 National Eisteddfod** knew they were in the right place! This playful, and highly visual, piece of public art was a partnership project led by Ffiwsar.

More recently, Oriel Colwyn and local schools used the massive impact of 'I'm a Celebrity ... Get Me Out of Here' as inspiration for a fun history trail around Abergele. Short films with archive images of the castle were projected on to shop windows and pieces of vinyl artwork from the castle's archives were placed in empty shops. More than 100 community members featured in '**Celebrity Town**', a large scale, open-air photography exhibition, which recognised the people who live, trade and work in Abergele.

### CONNECTED

We want Creu Conwy to strengthen partnerships that bring creative people and communities together to deliver really special events. We want young and old people to share cultural adventures together, making connections across generations. And we want to support our creative sector to build on its regional, national and international connections to raise the profile of Conwy's cultural offer.

**Unbind the Wing** was a celebration to mark 100 years since women got the right to vote, through Laura McLaren, Lady Aberconwy's link to the suffrage movement. A series of community workshops led to a final theatrical performance where actors, alongside a community cast, led the audience on a march through history and the beautiful gardens of Bodnant. The project, led by the National Trust, built connections between local (Pigtown Theatre, Embroiderers Guild, Conwy Coastal Voices) and national partners (Welsh National Opera, Amnesty International).



Unbind the Wing © Kristina Banholzer

# STRATEGY OBJECTIVES

We have built the strategy around three pillars: Programme, Places and People.

## PROGRAMME

We want to step outside our comfort zone and be truly adventurous in our cultural programming. We know that a stronger cultural offer can bring better outcomes – both economically and in helping to drive stronger health and wellbeing outcomes.

As we start to rebuild following the COVID-19 pandemic, we want to inject the spark of culture into the county's calendar of events.

Our **aims** for Conwy's cultural programming are:

- Culture is accessible to everyone and is part of everyday life in Conwy
- Visitors to Conwy will be wowed by Conwy's culture
- Conwy's cultural offer is unique and cutting-edge



Northern Eye Photography Festival © Paul Sampson



Ōl Llywelyn, Llanrwst. © Keith Morris

Introducing cultural elements can really strengthen existing events and add vibrancy. We have an already fantastic events calendar in Conwy, which we would like to enhance by developing a strong cultural programme together with our communities and creative sector. Where possible, we will use our iconic cultural sites and landscapes as a stage. Crucial to successful programming is effective marketing, and we will ensure that existing events and festivals are linked up and promoted under a shared culture banner.

During the public consultation on Creu Conwy, we received suggestions for cultural programming covering everything from comedy clubs, literature festivals and Welsh language gigs to street festivals, open-air plays, and arts and crafts fairs. The action plans we co-create will reflect these exciting ideas, making sure that programmes are focussed on young people, families, intergenerational activities and accessibility for everyone.

## PLACES

**Places** is about celebrating the outstanding landscapes and buildings that make Conwy unique.

We want these spaces to become backdrops for playful and inventive cultural activity with a national and international appeal. Places is also about building a stage for life in Conwy; creating inspirational events that get local people really excited and involved, while supporting regeneration and community wellbeing.

Dolwyddelan Castle

© Crown copyright (2021) Cymru Wales



## LAUNCHPADS

We will create a cluster of **Cultural Launchpads** focusing on the county's five largest towns: Abergelge, Colwyn Bay, Conwy, Llandudno, and Llanrwst. Launchpads will bring people, ideas and creativity together to deliver distinctive local projects.

This will use a creative placemaking approach, which simply means we will work alongside local communities to creatively reinvent their local environment.

While these are spotlight areas, Launchpads will see projects and benefits reaching other areas including Kimmel Bay, Llandudno Junction, Penmaenmawr, Llanfairfechan, Betws y Coed and our rural communities.



Male bathers at the Pier Pavilion, Colwyn Bay. Conwy Archive Collection.

For example, we would like to create 'slow culture routes' focusing on themes like food, heritage, landscapes, and wildlife to encourage visitors to venture out of the larger towns and explore the wider county.

Launchpads will make the most of our cultural strengths. The county has clusters of excellent cultural assets including libraries, museums, theatres, and world-class heritage sites. We want to use these places to their fullest potential by using the Launchpad approach, creating local action plans that are sensitive to the special characteristics of each place.

Launchpads will also help to identify practical solutions to local priorities such as accessibility to venues, and appropriate signage and interpretation.

## CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

We want to create vibrant but sustainable public spaces that contribute to carbon reduction and net-zero goals. The meeting point between green infrastructure and culture provides exciting opportunities for innovative projects. We want to support initiatives that use the arts as a tool to transform spaces, change minds and behaviours, and help to tackle the climate crisis.

## CASE STUDY

Golygfa Gwydyr recently hosted Taylor Edmonds, Poet in Residence for the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales. A creative writing community workshop was held to consider the impact of local climate change, such as flooding in the Conwy Valley.

Participants produced a collective poem to contribute to **Inequality in a Future Wales**, a forthcoming report on the effects of climate change on local communities. Golygfa Gwydyr are a social enterprise who also run the Caerdroia theatre in the Gwydyr Forest and forestry-based environmental projects.

## COLWYN BAY: LAUNCHPAD

Building on the Baylife+ regeneration work and, more recently, the **Imagine project**, Colwyn Bay has developed as a hub for creative industries.

A new network, Creative and Digital Colwyn, offers support and development opportunities, and a bursary scheme is offering grants for creatives to access training, mentoring and development opportunities. A cross-sector Town Team has come together to explore how cultural activity, community-led development and use of buildings can reinvent Colwyn Bay's town centre to support wellbeing and economic growth.

In the late summer of 2021, a series of events celebrated a sense of place and showcased work produced together with the community. New community assets were launched including place branding, the **Imagine Trail app** and **Colwyn Bay 2030** – a plan to put vacant buildings into use and bring the town to life.

**Imagine Colwyn Bay** is a National Lottery Heritage Fund Great Places Scheme.



Northern Eye Photography Festival © Paul Sampson

## How can we use our cultural assets to grow our Launchpad model?

### LIBRARIES

In their role as community hubs, libraries can support the Launchpad model by providing a space for people to share ideas, learning, creativity and enterprise

Libraries are also safe spaces where people can easily access basic services and are a lifeline to those who find themselves isolated or excluded from community life. The blending of culture within the library space – literature, film and digital media, heritage and arts – provides a brilliant opportunity as a gateway to culture for those who may not normally have the opportunity to take part.



Area Library at Conwy Culture Centre © CCBC.

## HERITAGE, SITES, MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

Conwy County has an impressive mix of accredited museums, galleries and heritage sites. MOSTYN in Llandudno is an outstanding contemporary gallery with an international reputation.

The Royal Cambrian Academy in Conwy is a centre for artistic excellence founded in 1882. Llandudno and Penmaenmawr Museums, which have recently undergone redevelopment, together with the rural Sir Henry Jones Museum, the wartime Homefront Museum, the Great Orme Copper Mines, and the National Trust's Tŷ Mawr Wybrnant and Aberconwy House, are all popular visitor attractions.

Like libraries, museums and galleries inspire people and generate ideas, build skills and learning, and bring communities together. The success of Creu Conwy and each Launchpad will rely on strengthening the networks between these venues and making sure that joined-up marketing, programming and training provide support where it is needed.



Plas Mawr, Conwy © Bob Farrow

## CASE STUDY

**MOSTYN** is an international contemporary art gallery based in Llandudno. Presenting outstanding and critically engaged contemporary art, MOSTYN inspires and encourages people to form and share new perspectives on the world through their programmes. From April 2019 to March 2020 the gallery exhibited over 60 contemporary artists from around the world, held over 200 community workshops and activities for over 4,000 participants, and supported over 400 independent makers and small businesses in their retail spaces.

## CHURCH, CHAPEL, SCHOOL, PUB

These have been the cultural heart of many small towns and villages over the years and are still anchors for cultural life. We want to support strong links between these and the Launchpad areas.

- Conwy has supported numerous faith tourism projects in recognition of the role played by churches and chapels in identity, cultural participation and supporting the Welsh language. Creu Conwy will extend the faith tourism model so that we can sensitively reimagine the potential of these buildings and the deep roots they have in our communities.
- The new curriculum represents the opportunity for more creative and integrated learning. Conwy's schools could adopt cultural education models such as Norway's Cultural Schoolbag<sup>1</sup> and STEM initiatives, which are moving to STEAM by including arts.
- More than ever, our pubs need support. Can they be celebrated as places for great music and poetry as well as fantastic local food and beer? Thriving pubs are a vital part of a week-round night-time economy and an important cultural draw. We want to link pubs' cultural and food offer with the Launchpad areas, which will require funding, joint programming, improved promotion and a review of current licensing arrangements to explore how we can encourage more music performances.

## CONWY ON THE BIG SCREEN...

A number of locations in Conwy have been used as inspiring backdrops for media, including the recent 'I'm a Celebrity... Get Me Out of Here!', Drew Pritchard's 'Salvage Hunters' and Ch4's 'It's a Sin' which was filmed in Rhos-on-Sea. Creu Conwy will continue to promote the county's extraordinary landscapes, towns and villages as film locations.

<sup>1</sup> [www.denkulturelleskolesekken.no/english-information/this-is-the-cultural-schoolbag/](http://www.denkulturelleskolesekken.no/english-information/this-is-the-cultural-schoolbag/)

## THEATRES

Conwy's theatres in Llandudno and Colwyn Bay together bring almost 350,000 visitors through their doors each year and contribute significantly to our economy and to cultural education and participation for young people – for example, through the **take pART** initiative.

There is potential to expand programming to work with an even broader range of organisations, supporting smaller independent venues and initiatives. Longer term, this could lead to a new theatre festival, possibly using outdoor locations during the summer.



Theatr Colwyn © CCBC



Hafodunos, Llangernyw, along the Pilgrim's Way running from Basingwerk Abbey to Bardsey Island

© Mike Costello, North Wales Pilgrim's Way

# PEOPLE

Developing people is the essential ingredient for delivering a successful Cultural Strategy.

Conwy has a wide community of people who are passionate about the county's culture. We have heard from people and organisations across the region that a more connected cultural sector will have a greater impact. By supporting cultural partnerships and more joined-up planning we can strengthen the county's cultural offer enormously.



Enid and Irene, Straeon Ysgol Bodlondeb Stories © Lisa Heledd Jones

## GOVERNANCE

Creu Conwy will support projects that put culture at the heart of policy and decision-making across a range of sectors. Creu Conwy will use the transformational power of culture to support strategic projects across tourism, education and young people, rural development, and health and wellbeing.

Conwy County Borough Council (CCBC) runs a number of venues such as theatres and conference centres, libraries and the Culture Centre, as well as owning a number of other cultural assets across the county.

It provides grants to independent cultural operators, and employs staff who work closely with cultural organisations and deliver events. This means the Council is well placed in scale and resources to support the growth of the county's cultural sector. However, like most local authorities, the responsibility for culture is spread across a number of services and externally through bodies such as Cadw, the National Trust, MOSTYN and Snowdonia National Park Authority.



Family Dance, LLAWN © Paul Sampson

## CREU CONWY PARTNERSHIP

We want to develop a new cultural model that will bring wide-ranging organisations and agendas together. We wish to:

1. Establish a strategic partnership enterprise as the forum for culture in Conwy to oversee the implementation of Creu Conwy. This will provide a balanced and connected approach to cultural planning where the county's smaller and independent stakeholders can work with – and influence – organisations at a regional or national scale.
2. Re-align culture-related activity within CCBC to embed culture in the delivery of projects across different services. This has already begun in the creation of the new Economy and Culture Service.
3. Establish local cultural partnerships or Town Teams to oversee the five new Launchpads. These creative alliances will feed in to the main strategic partnership.

The structures in 1) and 3) will function as a partnership model designed to support the local cultural sector to contribute to development by connecting with a wider range of sectors and organisations.

The new strategic partnership will maintain close links with the third sector and ensure they are represented.



Abergele Arts Trail © Paul Sampson

It is really important that this new governance model includes effective communication and support for volunteers (represented at groups such as Conwy Heritage Forum) and the creative sector (represented at groups such as 'Beth Nesaf?').



Ruby Gibbens, Twrch Trwyth, LLAWN © Mark McNulty

## CREATIVE CAPACITY BUILDING

To reach our potential as an adventurous cultural county, we must support a **flourishing and effective creative sector**.

Whether that is a community arts group or a digital communications agency, all organisations and businesses have a role to play in creating a vibrant Conwy with sustainable jobs and well-connected communities. The impact of COVID-19 means that arts groups, charities and creative businesses need more support than ever.

To strengthen the resilience and capacity of our creative sector, we will build on the Imagine Colwyn Bay bursary scheme, increase access to funding and space, and develop our young people through creative education projects spanning all years from primary to further education.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, more than 140 freelancers have been supported in Conwy through the Cultural Recovery Fund. To build on this we will link with Creative Wales who are developing a Freelancer Pledge to foster effective working between the public sector and creative freelancers.

## MAKING VOICES HEARD

The purpose of Creu Conwy is to help Conwy County's creative and cultural sector to grow, but what will success look like?

We want to identify, recognise and elevate local talent from every background so that Conwy's creative community is recognised internationally for its originality and inclusivity.

To succeed, Creu Conwy must ensure that young people, creative freelancers and traditionally marginalised groups are represented on any governance model, and that decision-making is handed over when appropriate. Likewise, when working with the next generation of young creatives, Creu Conwy must embrace non-traditional approaches and be prepared to give curatorial control to young people.



Winter Light © CCBC

## HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Loneliness and isolation are ongoing challenges which have been further compounded by COVID-19.

Lone pensioners occupy more than 18% of the county's households and around 13,600 people are receiving unpaid care. Evidence shows that cultural engagement really does make people healthier and happier. We want to encourage people to be more connected with cultural and civic life and with each other, and to measure the effect of cultural activity on their wellbeing.

We will explore a range of culture-for-wellbeing partnership projects, including social prescribing and arts-in-health initiatives, which will be identified through further research and development during the action-planning process.

## CASE STUDY

**Create** is a Conwy Arts Trust project run by Venue Cymru, supported with additional funding from BBC Children in Need. **Create** works with young people experiencing mental health difficulties who are referred by social services and health partners. Through experiencing a wide range of activities, young people are encouraged to find new ways to express themselves and get involved in the arts.

## CASE STUDY

Conwy Libraries have used The Reader's model of Shared Reading sessions to support wellbeing through enjoying and experiencing literature in a community setting. Patients and service users, referred by a range of partners, meet weekly to read classic fiction and poetry together and share responses and experiences.

Some initial ideas around culture and wellbeing include:

- An Adventure Diary built around the **Five Ways to Wellbeing model**<sup>2</sup>. The diary could capture current levels of cultural engagement, incentivise activity and measure participants' sense of wellbeing. The findings could be used to shape other projects that tackle loneliness and isolation.
- A Cultural Passport, which - like the Adventure Diary - could be developed as an app. Encouraging engagement, access and ownership, the passport could include incentives such as special offers and exclusive entry at certain times. It could be tailored to individuals and create itineraries based on their specific interests, and would be free or discounted for groups needing support to participate in cultural activity.



Dancing the Decades Tour to Conwy Care Homes © Dawns I Bawb

<sup>2</sup> <https://bcuhb.nhs.wales/health-advice/five-ways-to-wellbeing/>

## WELSH LANGUAGE AND THE DISTINCTIVE CONWY WELCOME

Studies show that visitors enjoy the 'culture shock' of encountering new words and that this can enhance their experience of a place.

The use of language can give a sense of authenticity and create more meaningful exchanges. We will explore ways of introducing Welsh in playful and unthreatening ways, helping to encourage the use of basic Welsh words. This could be achieved through apps and other digital platforms, events, playful temporary signage, exhibitions and music, working in partnership with organisations such as Menter Iaith.



Tŷ Mawr Wybrnant © National Trust Images Arnhel De Derra

### CASE STUDY

In 2021, Welsh Language Music Day was enhanced by using simple but effective digital outreach. A playlist of five Welsh language songs, easily accessible via a QR code, was shared with schools across Conwy County. This gave pupils the opportunity to immerse themselves in Welsh language and culture and to discuss the music in a classroom setting. The project has evolved to include a Welsh language 'Band of the Month' which is shared with schools alongside a recommended playlist.

## TOURISM SKILLS AND DEVELOPMENT

We need to change perceptions that tourism and hospitality offer limited career prospects and below-average income.

There is a clear link between a strengthened cultural offer and successful tourism. The combination of a strong creative industry and a year-round, cultural tourism model can create jobs and support sustainable tourism growth, especially if linked with a higher value retail sector and a more vibrant night-time economy.

Conwy's new Tourism Ambassador Programme is aimed at community and tourism businesses. It is an excellent tool for upskilling staff working in the sector and supports the wider community to engage more with tourism.

### CASE STUDY

Night Out helps communities across Wales to put on professional shows in their locality. Working in conjunction with local authorities, it takes away the financial risk for a village hall committee or similar group putting on the event.

"This is an excellent scheme which allows us to have shows that would otherwise be beyond our reach. We have no amenities in Cwm Penmachno and without these shows our community would be culturally and socially poorer" (Cwm Community Action Group).



Towards Hiraethog, Rural Conwy © CCBC

It is also a useful way to connect accommodation providers with the cultural offer, as they are the first point of contact for many visitors.

The scheme ties in with Grŵp Llandrillo Menai's Tourism Academy, which promotes tourism as a 'proper job' opening the door to opportunity and progression.

We would like to build on these excellent initiatives to create Cultural Ambassadors who can be champions for culture in Conwy County and bring our heritage to life for visitors.

## YOUNGER AUDIENCES

Middle-aged, educated people, and especially women, tend to make up core cultural audiences.

Our ideas for a more adventurous cultural programme, and more active targeting of younger performers and creatives, will help to engage this group. Key to success here is handing over to our young people to co-produce cultural programmes –supported by partners such as Urdd Gobaith Cymru, Venue Cymru’s Young Creatives programmes and Conwy Youth Service.

We will continue to strengthen the link between culture and schools, including monitoring the potential re-launch of Arts Council of Wales projects such as Lead Creative Schools.

We will also build on schemes like Conwy Culture Centre’s Young Heritage Ambassador Programme and look to broaden the opportunities for accredited learning.



Criw Celf Conwy © CCBC

## FUNDING

The cultural sector has been hard hit by cuts to public sector funding over the last ten years.

For example, CCBC had to find savings of £34.5m between 2015 and 2020, which inevitably reduced funding for culture. Under the new Creu Conwy governance model, we want to create a Cultural Venture Fund that combines sources of income such as:

- Commercial income
- Private sector contributions including Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)/ Sponsorship
- Exploration of giving schemes
- Social prescribing
- Community share/bond issue
- Coordinated funding applications to funds currently inaccessible to local authorities
- Procurement – the development of local supply chains by supporting smaller organisations when tendering and delivering to allow them to expand
- Development of a Property Development Trust to enable alternative uses of assets, to purchase and activate empty buildings and to invest externally

## MAKING IT HAPPEN

Creu Conwy has already started to deliver its vision through wide-ranging conversations with people who are passionate about Conwy’s future.

The opportunity in 2021 to bid for UK City of Culture status has accelerated this process by identifying priorities, creating promising new relationships and raising the profile of culture in Conwy.

Consultation feedback on Creu Conwy has highlighted numerous challenges. For the strategy to succeed, transport to and from cultural events and spaces must be sustainable and fit for purpose; cultural programming must be sensitive to both environment and communities, and the right infrastructure and resources must be put in place.

Our next task is to pick apart these challenges and opportunities and begin the process of action-planning together with our communities and partners.



Gladys Roberts mussel fishing in Conwy © Conwy Archive Service

- New financial markets, e.g. sustainable investment funds
- Public agencies – can Conwy’s creative sector create attractive investment options for external agencies, for example working with housing associations to tackle problems connected with our ageing population?
- Private investment.

## WHAT NEXT?

### A. Apply the Creu Conwy principles in decision-making processes across all sectors:

1. **Adventurous:** does this make an adventure of the everyday?
2. **Playful:** will this make people stop, smile and/or join in?
3. **Connected:** does this bring people and/or places together?

### B. Establish action plans and the resources needed to deliver and fund them:

1. Organisational structures and staffing, including creating Town Teams
2. Asset management
3. Finance.



**LLANRWST**

Please contact:

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