



an
arts
strategy

for Warwick District Council 2009-13

Written by Katie Daniels, 2008

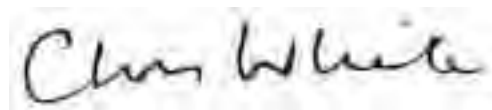
Preface

I am delighted to have the opportunity to write the foreword to the new Arts Strategy for Warwick District Council.

This document is the result of extensive consultation between different organisations and interested groups across the district. The strategy was adopted by the council's Executive in December 2008, and will form the starting point for a way forward for arts within the district until 2013.

Its purpose is to be a flexible and 'live' reference point, and a guide for arts organisations that already work with, or hope to work with, the council. The Action Plan should be seen as a framework within which the council can make effective use of the available resources towards supporting the local arts scene for the benefit of residents, visitors and those active in the sector.

The uncertainty presented by the current economic climate will create both challenges and opportunities for the arts sector throughout the country. However, this strategy highlights how, in Warwick District, we have a thriving and vibrant arts community, and demonstrates the council's continued commitment to such an essential and valued part of our lives.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris White". The signature is written in a cursive style and is contained within a light grey rectangular box.

Councillor Chris White,
Portfolio Holder for Culture at Warwick District Council



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Resource recommendations

Executive Summary

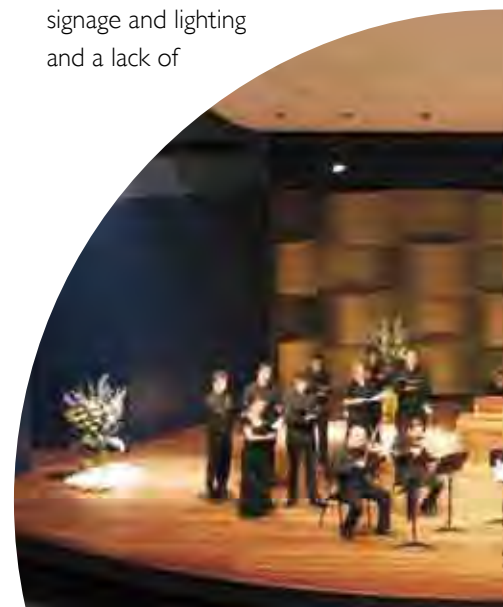
1. The Arts Strategy explores current arts provision within the District and includes an Action Plan. The Action Plan is intended to provide a framework for the delivery of the Council's Arts Development service until 2013.
2. The Arts Development service covers a wide range of artforms including visual arts and photography, crafts, 3D arts and sculpture, film and digital arts, dance, theatre, music and opera, street arts, and creative writing.
3. The Arts Strategy Action Plan also looks at how the Arts Development service might feed in to public art initiatives in partnership with the relevant Warwick District Council Economic Development staff.
4. The Strategy also considers the relationship of the arts to cultural tourism.
5. An intensive consultation process has taken place including one-to-one interviews, public consultation

meetings and online questionnaires. The Themes, Strategic Aims and Objectives of the Arts Strategy Action Plan have been identified through the consultation process.

6. The period covered by the Arts Strategy includes the Cultural Olympiad – a national initiative linked to the London 2012 Olympic Games.
7. The Arts Strategy aims to reflect the key themes of the Warwickshire Local Area Agreement 2008–2011 and the objectives of the Warwick District Council Corporate Strategy 2008–2011.
8. Warwick District is culturally rich and has a vibrant and active local arts community together with a confident and high profile professional arts sector. The District is proud of its cultural heritage and boasts a high level of arts provision. It compares well to other areas. Music and visual arts are particularly strong. There are also a large number of annual cultural festivals. The District Council's commitment to and investment in the arts has been important in maintaining this excellent level of arts provision.

Activity that is currently less well developed includes grass roots community work with hard to reach groups, including black and minority ethnic communities; public art as a strategic area of work; innovation and risk within the arts; and monitoring and evaluation of arts activity.

9. A Cultural Quarter for the area is being developed in south Leamington, with its hub at Spencer Yard. Advantage West Midlands has made an offer of funding for the second phase of the redevelopment works. The Cultural Quarter and the redevelopment of Spencer Yard present exciting arts opportunity and potential for the area. However, the site currently suffers from poor public access, signage and lighting and a lack of



public information/understanding about what the Cultural Quarter is and its potential benefits to the area. The Arts Strategy Action Plan suggests a number of steps that might be taken towards addressing these issues.

10. The Arts Development Service is currently staffed by one part-time Arts Development Officer [ADO] (20.5 hours per week), based within the Cultural Services Unit and reporting to the Heritage & Arts Manager.
11. The consultation process for this Arts Strategy showed that people greatly valued the arts development services provided by Warwick District Council and the one-to-one support provided by the ADO.

However, stakeholders felt that the part-time

role limited the capacity of what the Officer could achieve and was insufficient to fulfil the demands of the role.

12. The role of ADO is a broad one, encompassing all the artforms listed at point 2 above. In order for the role to function in a strategic way, within the limitations of the time and resources available, the direct organisation of events is not the best use of this role. Instead, the role should exist to support and facilitate other arts providers. The Arts Strategy consultation process identified a number of ways in which this could be done. This approach also helps to ensure the sustainability of arts development work, by 'skilling up' local providers.
13. It is important to ensure that the process for obtaining financial support for arts activity from Warwick District Council is transparent, accessible and properly monitored. This Arts Strategy recommends that organisations should access Arts Development funding either through the Key Clients arrangements as part of the Coventry, Solihull & Warwickshire Arts Partnership, or through a

new Arts Development Grants scheme based on the current Cultural Grants scheme. The Strategy recommends an increase in both the Council's Key Clients and Grants budgets to address this, through the reallocation of existing Arts Development resources.

14. If the number of Arts Development Officer hours remains the same, this will limit the ability of the Arts Development Service to achieve all of the proposed actions in the Arts Strategy Action Plan. Some of the proposed actions require either additional Arts Development Officer hours or external funding in order to be achievable. These actions are indicated within the Action Plan and where possible, sources of external funding have been identified.
15. The Arts Strategy Action Plan has three key Themes. Each theme has a Strategic Aim and a number of Objectives. Each Objective has proposed actions associated with it. The Themes, Strategic Aims and Objectives are shown below.





Arts Strategy Action Plan:

Themes, Strategic Aims and Objectives

Vision statement:

We will build on Warwick District's culture of creativity by stimulating accessible, diverse and innovative arts provision to enrich the quality of life.

Theme 1: Arts for everyone

Strategic aim: Increase participation and attendance in the arts

Objectives:

- Raise the profile of the District's arts activity
- Facilitate increased opportunities to participate in and experience the arts
- Advocate using the arts to create stronger, safer, healthier communities
- Facilitate increased engagement with hard to reach groups through the arts
- Engender a culture of creativity for young people
- Celebrate the achievements of local arts organisations and practitioners
- Support local arts activity to celebrate the Cultural Olympiad

Theme 2: A thriving creative economy

Strategic aim: Develop the role of the arts in economic development and enterprise

Objectives:

- Strengthen the District's arts infrastructure so that the arts can thrive
- Enhance the ability of creative businesses to contribute to the local economy
- Facilitate communication and collaboration between organisations and sectors

Theme 3: Unique spaces and places

Strategic aim: Use the arts to help make the District an attractive place to live, work and visit

Objectives:

- Use the arts to revitalise and enhance the District's public spaces
- Develop a vibrant, well-used Cultural Quarter
- Celebrate Warwick as a festival town
- Develop international links
- Increase and enhance cultural tourism in the lead up to 2012

Acknowledgements

This Arts Strategy has been produced with grateful thanks to: Chris Elliott, Councillor Chris White, Rose Winship, Jeff Watkin, Paul Pinkney, Louise Piper and Rosalyn Smith at Warwick District Council; Elaine Pantling of Laurielorry Theatre Company for her excellent creative consultation; Anand Chhabra; Tom Dobedoe; Motionhouse Dance Theatre; Stella Carr and Hybrid Arts; Armonico Consort; John Laidlaw of Live & Local; Peter Nicholson at the Royal Spa Centre; Dutch Van Spall at The Assembly; Kat Fishwick at Warwickshire County Council; Bryan Harrison; Stewart McGill at Playbox Theatre; Helen Meeke; Richard Phillips; Clare Mitchell; and all those who attended consultation meetings, completed questionnaires and sent in their feedback on the draft Arts Strategy. We couldn't have done it without you!

Introduction

Welcome to Warwick District Council's Arts Strategy for 2009–2013.

The Arts Strategy explores current arts provision within the District and includes an Action Plan based on public consultations carried out over summer 2008. The Action Plan is intended to provide a framework for the delivery of the Council's Arts Development service until 2013.

Warwick District Council wants to work with a wide range of partners at local, regional and national level to achieve the objectives set out in the Arts Strategy. We hope that this document will be useful to our partners and potential partners, and to local residents and artists, in understanding our priorities and how we might work together.

What is meant by 'the arts'?

The Arts Development service covers the full range of artforms including visual

arts and photography, crafts, 3D arts and sculpture, film and digital arts, dance, theatre, music and opera, street arts, and creative writing.

Public art is the responsibility of Warwick District Council's Economic Development team. However, the Arts Strategy Action Plan looks at how the Arts Development service might feed in to public art initiatives in partnership with the relevant Warwick District Council staff.

The Strategy also considers the relationship of the arts to cultural tourism.

Our consultation process

We have tried to consult as many people as possible in producing this Strategy to make sure that it reflects local needs, interests and priorities.

We have:

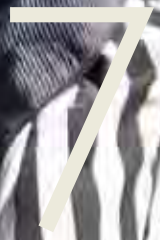
- Carried out one-to-one interviews with some of the Arts Development service's key partners and

stakeholders across the district, county and region;

- Held four open public consultation meetings;
- Held four targeted consultation meetings for organisations and individuals in priority sectors (young people; the third age; creative industries; and strategic agencies);
- Made contact with umbrella groups where this has enabled us to consult a number of organisations and individuals at the same time;
- Invited people to complete an online questionnaire via the Council's website.

The consultation process involved a wide range of user groups and their representatives, including hard to reach groups. The Themes, Strategic Aims and Objectives of the Arts Strategy Action Plan have been identified through the consultation process.

We asked all consultees for their comments on a draft version of the Arts Strategy before it was published.





National context

Arts Council of England

The Arts Council of England [ACE] is the national development agency for the arts and has nine regional offices. The Arts Council's mission for 2008–2011 is Great Art for Everyone. There are four development priorities:

- Digital opportunity;
- Visual arts;
- Children and young people;
- London 2012.

The Arts Council has agreed five national objectives with the Department for Culture, Media & Sport [DCMS], against which outcomes are judged:

- Excellence – high quality arts practice and experience;
- Reach – more people attending and taking part in the arts;
- Engagement – more people feel that there are opportunities to enjoy and get actively involved in, arts activities that are personally relevant to them;
- Diversity – arts that reflect the diversity of contemporary England;
- Innovation – artists have the freedom and are challenged to innovate.

ACE receives central government funding which it distributes through managed funds and regular funding for

key organisations. The level of central government funding for the arts has been affected by the diversion of resources to London 2012. ACE also distributes lottery funding through the Grants for the Arts programme.

Department for Culture, Media and Sport

The DCMS is the government department with responsibility for the arts and creative industries. The Department also has responsibility for the National Lottery and for London 2012, among many other areas.

The Department's aim is:

We aim to improve the quality of life for all through cultural and sporting activities, to support the pursuit of excellence and to champion the tourism, creative and leisure industries.

The Department's specific aims for the arts are:

The aim of our work is to maximise the contribution from the arts sector to our strategic priorities; Children and Young People; Communities; the Economy; and Delivery.

We also aim to:

- Broaden access for all to a rich and varied artistic and cultural life
- Ensure that the artistic activity we

fund aspires to be world class

- Ensure that everyone has the opportunity to develop artistic talent and to achieve excellence in the arts
- Develop the educational potential of all the nation's artistic and cultural resources
- Raise standards of artistic and cultural education and training
- Ensure an adequate skills supply for the arts and cultural sectors
- Reduce the number of those who feel excluded from society, by using the arts

Cultural Offer (Find Your Talent)

The government believes that every child should experience five hours of high quality culture each week, in and out of school.

Ten pilot programmes to test this plan are being run from 2008 to 2011. The pilot programme for the West Midlands is in Telford & Wrekin.

The National Lottery

For every £1 spent on the Lottery, 28 pence is distributed to 'good causes' including arts, sports, heritage, charitable and community projects. A range of national bodies distribute the money:

- The Arts Councils of England, Northern Ireland and Wales, the



UK Film Council, Scottish Arts and Scottish Screen;

- Awards for All (a small grants scheme funded by a number of the other distributors);
- Big Lottery Fund (for charitable and community projects);
- Heritage Lottery Fund;
- Millennium Commission (not open to grant applications);
- NESTA – the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (investing in innovation);
- The Olympic Lottery Distributor for London 2012 (not open to grant applications);
- UK Sport and Sport England, sportscotland, the Sports Councils for Northern Ireland and Wales.

The Arts Council of England distributes its lottery funding mainly through the Grants for the Arts and Awards for All programmes.

- Grants for the Arts:

One-off (project) grants of between £1,000 and £30,000 for individuals or £1,000 to £100,000 for organisations, for arts projects lasting for up to three years.

- Awards for All:

Grants of between £300 and £10,000 to organisations for projects that enable people to take part in art, sport,

heritage and community activities, and projects that promote education, the environment and health in the local community.

The Cultural Olympiad

Although London will be the host city for the 2012 Olympic Games, the Games will benefit the whole of the UK. The Cultural Olympiad aims to create a UK-wide celebration of the UK's diverse culture, starting in September 2008 and running through to London 2012.

The Cultural Olympiad incorporates three strands:

1. Mandatory ceremonies;
2. Major projects (most of these have already been identified);
3. A UK-wide cultural programme.
4. UK cultural programme

The Cultural Olympiad values are to:

- Welcome the world (celebrating the UK's unique internationalism and cultural diversity);
- Inspire and involve young people; and
- Leave a lasting legacy (for example through cultural and sports participation, audience development, cultural skills, capacity building, urban regeneration, tourism and social cohesion and international links).

Non-commercial cultural projects taking

place between September 2008 and September 2012 and reflecting the values of the Cultural Olympiad (above) can apply to use the 'Inspire mark' on publicity materials and websites. The Inspire mark recognises that a project has been inspired by London 2012 and reflects the values of the Olympic and Paralympic Movements.

Projects must address at least 3 of the seven themes of the Cultural Olympiad:

- Bring together culture and sport;
- Encourage audiences to take part;
- Animate and humanise public spaces – through street theatre, public art, circus skills, live big screen sites;
- Use culture and sport to raise issues of environmental sustainability, health and well-being;
- Honour and share the values for the Olympic and Paralympic Games;
- Ignite cutting edge collaborations and innovation between communities and cultural sectors; and
- Enhance the learning, skills and personal development of young people by linking with London 2012 education programmes.

Advice about developing Cultural Olympiad projects is available from a network of Creative Programmers across the UK's regions. The Creative Programmer for the West Midlands is

Paul Kaynes, based at Arts Council England, West Midlands.

Artsmark

Artsmark is a national award scheme managed by Arts Council England that recognises schools with a high level of provision in the arts.

Five schools in Warwick District were awarded Artsmark in 2008:

Artsmark gold:

North Leamington Community School & Arts College, Leamington Spa

Artsmark silver:

Campion School & Community College, Leamington Spa
Kenilworth School & Sports College, Kenilworth
Newburgh Primary School, Warwick

Artsmark:

St. Augustine's Catholic Primary School, Kenilworth

NALGAO

The National Association of Local Government Arts Officers champions the provision and support for local arts, artists & creative industries of all types and kinds, professional, amateur & voluntary. NALGAO works through its members, many of which are local government arts & cultural officers.





Regional Context

Arts Council of England, West Midlands

The Arts Council's office for the West Midlands is in Birmingham. ACE West Midlands provides regular funding to two organisations within the Warwick District: Live & Local and Motionhouse Dance Theatre.

Grants for the Arts awarded to the Warwick District totalled £164,707 in 2007/08. All grants were located within the Warwick and Leamington constituencies, suggesting a need for information and support in other parts of the District about how to access funding from the Arts Council.

Advantage West Midlands

Advantage West Midlands is the regional development agency, and exists to 'lead the economic development of the West Midlands, working alongside a wide range of public, private and voluntary sectors partners to help our region to prosper'.

Coventry, Solihull & Warwickshire Partnership (CSWP)

CSWP is the sub-regional strategic partnership for the area, which 'unites all sectors of the area's economy, and seeks to ensure that they are all working together, and pulling in the same direction.'

Coventry, Solihull & Warwickshire Sub-regional Arts Partnership

The CSW Arts Partnership is a grouping of local authorities that work together to collaborate on partnership initiatives, and share arts knowledge and resources, including funding agreements with 'key clients' working across the sub-region.

Working together has enabled the CSW Arts Partnership to develop a number of strategic arts initiatives benefiting the sub-region. NALGAO and ACE West Midlands have recently applauded the Arts Partnership as a model of good practice. The member authorities, which include Warwick District Council,

have recently signed a new Partnership Agreement for 2009–2012.

CSW 2012

A number of partnerships, including a Cultural sub-group, have been set up to oversee activity in the sub-region in the lead up to London 2012. The Cultural group has issued some seed funding for arts projects in the area.

Warwickshire County Council

The County Arts Service provides a range of arts development resources including an online toolkit for arts projects, an arts contacts database, various Arts in Health initiatives and Social Inclusion & Arts grants, as well as advice, support and signposting to organisations and artists. There is a County Arts Policy in place.

The County Council also provides an Arts in Education team, a Youth Arts worker and the County Music Service.

Local Area Agreement

Local Area Agreements are contracts

between central and local government and their partners to deliver the priorities of local people.

The Warwickshire Local Area Agreement 2008–2011 has the following key Themes or 'blocks':

- Stronger Communities
- Safer Communities
- Children & Young People
- Climate Change & Environment
- Economic Development & Enterprise
- Healthier Communities & Older People

Arts development activity has the potential to contribute to the achievement of targets in most of the Local Area Agreement blocks listed above. It is strategically important that the Arts Strategy supports the delivery of these blocks because they will be a focus for local government activity. They have been taken into account when identifying the Key Themes, Strategic Aims and Objectives for the Arts Strategy Action Plan.

Local Context

Warwick District Council Corporate Strategy

The Corporate Strategy 2008–2011 identifies the following objectives:

- Leadership: Provide clear community leadership and effective management of resources whilst delivering responsive public services in an open and transparent manner
- Housing: Improve housing services efficiency to meet the housing need of the district
- Culture: Increase participation and attendance in the council's cultural offering
- Environment: Provide high standards of environmental services across the district delivering a sustainable and quality environment
- Development: Creative thriving town centres, keep pleasant villages and make the district an attractive place to live and work
- Communities: Promote safe, vibrant and sustainable local communities
- Customers: Improve the efficiency of service delivery to the council's customers.

Whilst the Arts Development service has a clear role in achieving the

Council's objectives under Culture, it also contributes to many of the Council's other objectives, particularly Development and Communities. This Arts Strategy aims to support the delivery of the corporate objectives. Warwick District Council's Chief Executive, Chris Elliott, is supportive of the Arts Development service and has helped to increase the cultural confidence of the District.

Warwick Partnership

The Warwick Partnership is the local strategic partnership (LSP) for the District. It brings together the public, private, community and voluntary sectors to ensure that these services are working in a complementary and supportive way to improve local quality of life. The LSP includes a theme group specific to the cultural sector. The Warwick Partnership published Warwick District 2020, the Community Plan for the District from 2005 to 2020. This will be superseded by the Sustainable Community Strategy to be published at the end of 2008.

Warwick District Arts Consortium

The Arts Consortium includes representatives from a number of arts organisations and groups within the

district, as well as individual artists. The Consortium meets approximately quarterly, providing an opportunity for the arts community to share information and discuss key issues. Consortium members pay an annual fee for their membership. This membership fund is intended to support strategic development and training for the Consortium.

Town Centre Managers

Town Centre Managers are now in place in Warwick, Leamington Spa and Kenilworth. These posts work in partnership with other agencies to take forward initiatives and activities that benefit and promote the District's town centres.

Business Improvement Districts (BID)

Business Improvement Districts seek to deliver improved services in a defined area of a town. This is financed by an increase in business rates for the businesses in that area. The businesses then decide how best to improve their trading environment by agreeing on a range of projects and services that will take place over a specific period of time. A BID is now in place in Leamington Spa and under consideration for Warwick and Kenilworth.

South Warwickshire Tourism (Shakespeare Country)

Shakespeare Country is a not-for-profit business partnership, set up by the private and public sectors in South Warwickshire, to market and develop tourism within the area.

The company provides a range of marketing and visitor services on behalf of its members and runs the Tourist Information Centre at the Royal Pump Rooms in Leamington Spa. Members include attractions, shops, accommodation providers, restaurants and transport services. The aim is to generate more tourism business for the area.

The company offers a free accommodation booking and conference venue finding service, plus a range of free information on what to see and do in South Warwickshire.

Central Warwickshire Villages LEADER programme

LEADER is an EU programme to support grassroots-led rural development, to which multi-sector partnerships can bid for initiatives to be delivered by Local Action Groups. The current LEADER programme is part of the 2007–2013 Rural Development

Programme England, managed in the West Midlands by Advantage West Midlands.

A bid was submitted to Advantage West Midlands in January 2008 from the Central Warwickshire Villages LEADER partnership, fronted by Garden Organic, working with Warwickshire County Council and covering the rural parishes of Rugby Borough and Warwick District. This proposal was invited to progress to full bid stage and a Central Warwickshire Villages bid to secure £1.5m funding is being prepared for submission in December 2008. The programme will be delivered over three to four years and will provide seed funding for local projects that fall into the following broad categories:

- Events and activities that encourage communities to come together to create artworks and performance;
- Support for communities to develop their own local food production through community gardens;
- Developing links between communities and the land based industries in and around them.

At the time of writing the Arts Strategy, innovative ideas for projects falling into the above categories were being sought for inclusion in the bid.



About the district

The district has three main centres of population: Warwick; Royal Leamington Spa and Whitnash; and Kenilworth.

The remainder of the District is largely rural, but the cities of Coventry and Birmingham are within comfortable travelling distance. The M40 and A46 run through the district, providing convenient commuting. The District is bordered by the Borough of Rugby to the east; the city of Coventry and Solihull Metropolitan Borough to the north; and the District of Stratford-upon-Avon to the south and west.

The District's population is expected to expand over the next few years. An estimated 90 hectares of land for employment uses and land for 10,800 new homes is needed before 2026.

The wards of Brunswick, Crown and Willes (all in Leamington Spa) rank

among the 30% most deprived wards in England². Otherwise, there is no significant urban or rural deprivation.

Population Statistics

Warwick District has a population of 134,600³. Residents are aged as follows:

- 63.7% of the District's population are of 'working age'⁴;
- 17.1% are under 16;
- 19.1% are aged 60+ (females) / 65+ (males).

The number of children under 16 is slightly lower than the national average, but the results are otherwise typical of the national age profile.

85.4% of the District's population are White British. Other key ethnic groups include Asian/Asian British people (5.2%) and 'Other White' groups (3.7%)⁵. The District is home

to growing Portuguese and Eastern European communities.

The 2001 Census recorded that the District has a significant Sikh population (3.37% compared to 0.67% nationally) but a significantly lower than average Muslim population (0.5% compared to 3.1% nationally)⁶.

92.65% of residents rated their health as 'good' or 'fairly good'. This was higher than the national average⁷.

The number of economically active residents is higher than average and residents were statistically well educated – in 2001, the number of people qualified to degree level was 29.04% compared to 19.9% nationally. The percentage of households with their own car was also higher than the national average.

² Source: IMD 2004

³ Source: Warwickshire Observatory, mid-2007 estimates

⁴ 16–59 for females, 16–64 for males. Source: Warwickshire Observatory, mid-2007 estimates

⁵ Source: Warwickshire Observatory, mid-2007 estimates

⁶ Source: 2001 Census

⁷ Source: 2001 Census





The local arts scene

Warwick District is culturally rich and has a vibrant and active local arts community together with a confident and high profile professional arts sector. The District is proud of its cultural heritage and boasts a high level of arts provision. It compares well to other areas. Music and visual arts are particularly strong. There are also a large number of annual cultural festivals.

The District Council's commitment to and investment in the arts has been important in maintaining this excellent level of arts provision.

Activity that is currently less well developed includes grass roots community work with hard to reach groups, including black and minority ethnic communities; public art as a strategic area of work; innovation and risk within the arts; and monitoring and evaluation of arts activity.

Key venues

The Royal Spa Centre in Leamington Spa was built in 1972 and seats 794 people. The Centre presents a varied programme of mainstream (middle of

the road) professional entertainment, mainly 'one-nighters'. The Centre also acts as a community facility and is regularly hired by local organisations for exhibitions, annual shows, speech days, meetings and conferences, concerts and musicals, schools productions and so forth. The Royal Spa Centre has a database of 58,000 attenders and draws almost half (49%) of its audiences from outside the District. The Royal Spa Centre is owned and operated by Warwick District Council.

The Assembly opened in Leamington Spa in 2008. It is a contemporary music venue with a capacity of 1,000 standing (500 seated). The art deco building has undergone an exceptional £4million refurbishment with interior design by Laurence Lewellyn Bowen. The Assembly has a youth focus and intends to act as a training facility for young people wishing to work in the music industry. It is an independent, privately owned and run facility.

The Royal Pump Rooms at Leamington Spa incorporates the Leamington Spa Art Gallery & Museum as well as a library, Tourist Information Centre, public assembly rooms available for hire (used for public and private events, including arts activity), and a café. **The**

Art Gallery & Museum in the Royal Pump Rooms are run by Warwick District Council and present professional exhibitions and community/education programmes.

Warwick Arts Centre is situated just outside the boundaries of the District, at (and owned by) the University of Warwick, on the outskirts of Coventry. Warwick Arts Centre incorporates a concert hall, two theatres, a cinema, gallery, and conference room as well as hospitality suites, a restaurant, cafe, shops, and two bars. It is the largest Arts Centre in the Midlands and presents a varied contemporary arts programme.

Warwick Castle, a major tourist attraction, is in the District and is privately managed by Merlin Entertainments Group. Kenilworth Castle, another of the District's key attractions, is managed by English Heritage.

During the consultation process for the Arts Strategy, many stakeholders expressed a desire for a major concert hall locally. However, the district is well situated for access to major venues in Coventry and Birmingham as well as Warwick Arts Centre. The Spa Centre is a large venue and provides a varied

programme of mainstream arts and entertainment as well as the opportunity for community hire. The area is, in fact, well served by large-scale venues and it is extremely unlikely that funding could be justified to support a new major concert hall locally. The Arts Strategy Action Plan does, however, propose an audit of venues and facilities in the District, to increase awareness of what is available. This should include the schools, churches and community halls where much valued arts activity takes place.

Cultural Quarter

A Cultural Quarter for the area is being developed in south Leamington, with its hub at Spencer Yard. Phase 1 of the works has included the creation of a large courtyard area with refurbished buildings housing a number of arts organisations including **Motionhouse Dance Theatre, Hybrid Arts, Leamington Studio Artists, Sez-U** and **Heartbreak Productions**. There is also a large hall (North Hall) available for hire for arts activities, with bookings managed by Heartbreak Productions. Although there were some issues over hire charges, these are now believed to have been resolved. However, the hall is on the upper floor and does present some access issues. The dance studio

within the Motionhouse offices is also available for hire.

Advantage West Midlands has made an offer of funding for Phase 2 of the redevelopment works, although some details were still under negotiation at the time of writing. This will include redeveloping the former church on Spencer Street (at the entrance to Spencer Yard) to house the Loft Theatre and offer space for use by other arts groups. The site currently occupied by the Loft Theatre will be redeveloped for retail, office and creative industry space.

The Cultural Quarter and the redevelopment of Spencer Yard present exciting arts opportunities and potential for the area. However, the site currently suffers from poor public access, signage and lighting, and a lack of public information/understanding about what the Cultural Quarter is and its potential benefits to the area. The Arts Strategy Action Plan suggests a number of steps that might be taken towards addressing these issues.

Phase 2 of the work on the Cultural Quarter is being led by Warwick District Council working in partnership with The Loft Theatre Company and City

Spirit Developments, with funding from Advantage West Midlands.

In nearby Court Street, Warwick District Council is renovating railway arches as part of a Creative Arches business space project, again largely funded by Advantage West Midlands. There is potential for the two projects to complement one another.

Regeneration projects in other parts of the District include the possibility of developing a Civic and Arts Centre in Kenilworth.

Theatre

Playbox Theatre is a professional company providing skills development and participation in the performing arts for children and young people, including the **Dream Factory**, a purpose-built performance centre in Warwick exclusively for young people.

Heartbreak Productions is a professional touring theatre company based at Spencer Yard in Leamington Spa and specialising in open-air performance.

Also based at Spencer Yard, **Sez-U Community Theatre** is a professional participatory arts organisation creating

new work with adults in the community.

Bridge House Theatre is located at Warwick School and presents professional and amateur music and theatre. A theatre is also being built as part of the new North Leamington School, currently under construction.

Both the **Priory Theatre** and the **Talisman Theatre & Arts Centre** in Kenilworth are run by their members and present their own amateur dramatic productions, as does the **Loft Theatre** in Leamington Spa. All these theatres occupy their own premises. The Loft Theatre will be moving to the former United Reform Church building as part of Phase 2 of the Cultural Quarter development in Spencer Yard, Leamington Spa.

Professional theatres are situated nearby in Stratford-upon-Avon (Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Swan Theatre) and Coventry (Belgrade Theatre).

Music

Armonico Consort is a professional choir based in Warwick. Armonico also has its own orchestra, opera company, education programme and the **AC Academy** (a children's choir). The organisation presents 60 concerts a year all over the world.





Warwick Music Live organises the **Warwick International Festival**.

Leamington Music organises performances of international chamber music and early music in Warwick District, North Warwickshire, Rugby and Stratford. It aims to 'maintain Leamington and district as a musical centre dedicated to promoting excellent music.'

The District boasts a significant number of amateur, semi-professional and professional music societies. The Warwick District Music Promoters' Forum has over 80 member groups, and produces the 'Music to Your Ears' events guide three times a year, and an 'anti-clash' diary for promoters.

Dance

The District is home to **Motionhouse Dance Theatre**, a nationally acclaimed contemporary dance company based in Spencer Yard, Leamington Spa. Motionhouse creates innovative work for middle scale touring and for performance in public places and spaces, including street festivals, large-scale dance spectacles and site-specific events. Motionhouse also delivers an extensive education and participation programme for all ages and abilities.

There are a number of dance schools and studios within the District.

Dancescape is the sub-regional dance development programme and has proved extremely successful. It is currently project funded through Grants for the Arts and by the County and District Councils, but is expected to become self-sustaining by 2009, when it may apply for Key Client status through the CSW Arts Partnership.

Visual arts, crafts, & photography

The biennial **Warwickshire Artsweek**, an open studios event, provides an opportunity for artists, makers and art groups within the district to promote their work. The District is well represented within this countywide event, with 67 exhibitors (out of a total 147) in Artsweek 2008.

Professional exhibitions are shown at the Art Gallery & Museum in the Royal Pump Rooms, Leamington Spa and just outside the district at Rugby Art Gallery & Museum, as well as in private (commercial) galleries. Warwick District Council's former Art Gallery on Avenue Road, Leamington Spa, is still in use as a local exhibition space, managed by **Community Arts Workshop**, although this is a

temporary arrangement. There are a number of community venues available for hire by groups wishing to exhibit; the District Council can advise on suitable venues.

There are a number of art societies operating in the District, including **Leamington Studio Artists** and the **Leamington Spa Photographic Society**. **The Elephant Wash** photography project in Leamington Spa has been initiated by the Spencer Yard artist in residence (see below) and is ongoing until 2009.

Film, media and digital arts

Mainstream cinema is available at the **Apollo** in Leamington Spa. Some arthouse film is screened in the Royal Spa Centre's 200-seat **Royal Cinema**, and arthouse cinema is also screened at the Warwick Arts Centre just outside the District.

Leamington Spa Art Gallery & Museum in the Royal Pump Rooms currently hosts a weekly '**Thursday Flickers**' event for local film and video makers to showcase their work.

The area is home to a significant number of digital media and gaming companies with national and

international profile, such as **Blitz Games Studios**.

Hybrid Arts offers vocational education and training programmes for young people (particularly those 'outside the system' or not in education, employment or training) in music technology, filmmaking, digital arts, graphic and web design and animation.

Touch Radio 107.3fm, a new local radio station, was launched in 2008.

The wealth of historic buildings in the area (approximately 1,500 listed buildings) makes it a desirable film location, and TV series including *Pride and Prejudice* and *Moll Flanders* have been filmed in the District.

Artist in residence

The artist in residence at Spencer Yard for 2007-2009 is **Anand Chhabra**. Anand is a photographer and visual artist and has been working with the local community, and particularly minority ethnic groups, to increase engagement with the arts and between Spencer Yard residents and the local community. At the time of writing, no resources had been identified to extend the artist in residence role after 2009.

Literature

The District is home to an annual

festival of literature and the spoken word, **Warwick Words**, each October. Speakers in 2008 included Louis de Bernières, Gerald Scarfe, Brian Patten and Jo Shapcott. A Warwick Poet Laureate is appointed each year. The festival has recently received an Arts Council grant to develop its education programme.

There are a small number of writing groups in the District. Libraries in the main population centres have responsibility for reader development and run various programmes to encourage enjoyment of reading, such as reading groups for adults and story time for children.

Festivals

Warwick District, and especially the town of Warwick, has a particularly rich festival culture with a number of high profile arts festivals taking place each year. These include the **Warwick International Festival**, **Warwick Words literature festival** and **Warwick Folk Festival**. Leamington Music presents an annual **Festival Weekend**, including a **Czech Music Festival** in 2008 and plans to celebrate the Haydn Bicentenary in 2009.

There are also non arts-specific festivals

such as the **Peace Festival** (Leamington Spa) and the **Kenilworth Festival**, as well as cultural festivals such as the **Leamington & Warwick Mela Festival** and **Diwali** celebrations in Leamington Spa and across the District.

Rural touring

Warwick District has been a member of Live & Local, the rural touring scheme for Warwickshire, since 1996. The scheme allows rural and community venues (e.g. village halls) to buy in professional performers at a highly subsidised rate, enabling the local community to experience high quality theatre, dance, music, comedy, live literature and children's entertainment without having to travel to larger centres of population.

In 2007/08 2,024 people in Warwick District enjoyed 23 shows through the Live & Local scheme. The scheme is performing excellently within the District and provides significant benefits for a relatively small investment.

Arts education and participation

Many of the organisations listed above provide education and participatory programmes. This work is important since it builds both audiences and creators for the future.

Community Arts Workshop (CAW) based in Leamington Spa is a participatory arts organisation working particularly with disadvantaged and marginalized people and groups. Warwickshire College offers a range of further education opportunities in the arts.

Artists in Warwickshire Education and the Warwickshire Youth Arts Network are Warwickshire County Council partnership initiatives working with schools and youth services respectively. The County Council also operates the County Music Service.

Creative industries

The significant number of individual artists, creative practitioners and creative businesses based within the District are a vital part of the thriving local arts scene. The creative industries are increasingly being recognised nationally as key contributors to the economy as a whole. The Arts Strategy Action Plan looks at how these creative industries in Warwick District can best be nurtured.