

King's Lynn Culture and Heritage

Initial consultation summary

Telephone interviews

Over June and July 2024 Art Reach conducted telephone interviews with 16 individuals who represented a range of organisations on culture and heritage in King's Lynn. The aim was to further develop an initial SWOT analysis and begin to identify common themes which could then be tested in a wider group consultation.

The following representatives were interviewed:

Chair, King's Lynn Civic Society
Vice Principal, College of West Anglia
Collusion
Chair and Director, Kings Lynn Festival
Conservation Officer, Borough Council of King's Lynn & WN
Senior Tourism Officer, Borough Council of King's Lynn & WN
Elected Member, Borough Council of King's Lynn & WN
Education & Learning Officer, Borough Council of King's Lynn & WN
Corn Exchange Manager and Marketing Manager, Alive West Norfolk
Creative Arts East
BID Manager, Discover KL Business Improvement District
Deputy Head of Museum Service, Norfolk County Council
Chair, National Lottery Heritage Fund and King's Lynn resident
Head of Communities, Norfolk County Council
CreaNorfolk
Festival Too

Results of these interviews have been integrated into the updated SWOT and PESTLE.

Four emerging themes were identified from these interviews:

a. Young people as makers, creators and producers

Young people in King's Lynn face particular challenges as the low skills economy does not offer them opportunities to develop cultural careers and many young people leave the area to pursue these. There do not perceive that there are facilities, support or opportunities to develop creative practices.

b. Animating heritage

Heritage is a huge strength in King's Lynn but is a surprise to many visitors to the town, it is not well projected as an asset. Creative ways to animate the heritage, which encourage people to visit and local people to engage, would support the protection and use of the heritage.

c. Collaborative working for resilience

There are many cultural activities happening in King's Lynn but there could be further collaboration between organisations. Many of them face similar challenges and more collaboration and coordination could support them, share resources and knowledge and avoid splitting audiences.

d. Inclusivity and diverse voices

A wider range of voices need to be engaged in cultural decisions in King's Lynn, with open and transparent dialogue, to connect residents to culture more strongly and for them to see their voice reflected in cultural plans.

Cultural Sector Consultation Workshop, 18th July 2024

Art Reach hosted two workshops with a wide invitation and an open call to people who work or volunteer in the creative, heritage and cultural sectors. The aim of the workshops was to test the SWOT, and develop a vision and suggested actions under four emerging themes.

Attendees

40 people attended across the two workshops. Attendees represented the following disciplines and organisations:

Independent artists / curators / sculptor / designer maker

BCKLWN

King's Lynn Town Guides

Civic Society

Civic Trust

College of West Anglia

Collusion

Conservation

Corn Exchange

King's Lynn Festival

King's Lynn Library NCC

King's Lynn Players

Local Resident

Lynn Museum

Norfolk Libraries

Norfolk Museums (Stories of Lynn)

St George's Guildhall

Teacher

The Arts Society - KL

The King's Lynn Players

The Workshop

Norfolk Board Trust

The Garage

Groundwork Gallery

Vision and Actions

The workshops explored a vision and actions for four key themes that were surfacing from initial interviews and consultation activities in the early stages of the consultation phase.

These were:

- b. Young people as makers, creators and producers
- c. Animating heritage
- d. Collaborative working for resilience
- e. Inclusivity and diverse voices

Young People as Makers, Creators, and Producers

The vision is to create an environment where young people in King's Lynn are inspired and empowered to explore their creative potential, equipped with the skills and opportunities to become makers, creators and producers.

Suggested Actions required:

- Engagement with schools through partnerships, cultural programming and resources for teachers/educational practitioners
- Expand the cultural programme for young people, and by young people
- Use empty buildings / heritage assets for spaces of creativity for young people-led projects
- Develop other performance and production spaces to present young people led-projects across multiple artforms
- Support young artists/freelancers emerging in their discipline/practice
- Promote and celebrate inspirational stories
- Ensure clear progression routes from formal to informal sectors and into the workforce – either as freelancers/entrepreneurs or into existing cultural organisations/projects
- Create the structures to ensure meaningful and ongoing consultation with young people

Animating King's Lynn heritage assets

The vision is to transform King's Lynn into a dynamic and interactive heritage. By animating our rich history through modern storytelling methods, interactive experiences and year

round programming, we aim to make heritage accessible, engaging and relevant to all, especially young people.

Suggested Actions required:

- Develop partnerships that can provide interactive experiences and a year-round cultural programme in heritage assets
- Embrace technology e.g. interactive trails, augmented reality, Heritage App, other content creation (by young people)
- Audience development – with new and different experiences on offer at heritage assets, you will attract a different demographic
- Community involvement and co-creation – e.g. volunteer programmes
- Visitor experience – create a heritage hub, improving signage, parking, etc.
- Collaboration – partnerships and networks for heritage and cultural organisations

Inclusivity and diverse voice embedded in King's Lynn Heritage and Culture

The vision is a vibrant, inclusive cultural scene in King's Lynn that amplifies diverse voices and celebrates the rich cultural contributions of all local communities. We want every resident and visitor to feel represented, valued and inspired to participate in and contribute to King's Lynn's heritage and culture.

Suggested Actions:

- Create dedicated cultural spaces and programmes that brings together a range of community and cultural voices e.g. through a riverfront programme that can act as a hub for all people to make/present, participate in and experience culture
- Continue to invest in accessibility to heritage and culture
- Target grants and funding to diverse-led creative projects / organisations or a programme to support freelancers/ creative practitioners
- Inclusive marketing strategies from traditional print, social media to park and ride services
- Continue community consultation and engagement in heritage and culture development in King's Lynn
- Celebrate the positive contribution of diverse voices to heritage and culture in King's Lynn

Collaborative working for resilience

The vision is that there is a resilient and thriving cultural sector in King's Lynn because of collaboration amongst a range of people and organisations operating in the heritage and culture sector. Under a shared vision and mission, organisations will be better at demonstrating their impact, have more financial stability and be creating a vibrant cultural landscape that benefits all.

Suggested Actions:

- Development of a cohesive brand and identity with consistent messaging for all stakeholders to use – this would have an online presence.
- Establish a network – or forum – to share resources, collaborate on projects and align activities under the overarching heritage and culture strategy
- Facilitate collaborative programming for key events to be held in King's Lynn
- Ensure transparency and clarity on funding initiatives that can be accessed by all partners – individually and in partnership.
- Build on the strengths in the sector – through leadership forums, buddy-systems – and celebrate successes as a result of collaboration

Additional points

Attendees also reviewed a SWOT analysis that had been prepared about culture and heritage in King's Lynn. The following further points were raised in this discussion:

- Volunteers are a huge asset for King's Lynn, but need support and coordination
- King's Lynn has events spaces with more potential
- The feeling that King's Lynn doesn't need new things but needs to make more of what it has through coordinated marketing, shared communications and message
- The perception of the town for visitors needs improving, people don't realise the wealth of culture that is here
- Poor transport links affects accessibility to culture for many
- Heritage Open Day is hugely popular in King's Lynn and proves there is an audience for heritage
- Various cultural forums and groups have emerged but what is needed is resourced task groups
- More collaboration between local groups on cultural programmes with an ambition for these to be community led.
- The cultural workforce needs developing – we need skilled artists and creators to make things happen – increase the quality of skills to deliver creative engagement – this needs spaces for making and facilities to support them.
- The River is a strong asset and should be a feature for culture.

