

STROUD TOWN COUNCIL - CULTURAL STRATEGY

Following the town council's approval of an outline Cultural Strategy and discussions with a number of people and organisations involved in the issue - four issues became clear:

1. There is already a wealth of cultural activities going on in and around the town, there are a range of venues and a number of established organisations with expertise and experience in delivering cultural activities. The problem is that these are poorly co-ordinated and marketed. One of the main priorities of any cultural strategy is to make far better use of what is already in existence.
2. The town council's ability to continue its current level of funding of cultural activities can not continue beyond the current financial year without a significant increase in its precept. It therefore needs to decide its priorities for cultural development as a priority.
3. With limited resources and from a marketing point of view, there is need to develop a number of key selling points (USP's) for Stroud. While more work needs to be done on deciding these, one is almost certain to be the town as a centre for culture and the arts. Other possibilities (history, canals, walking, food, good location for the Cotswolds etc) have close links in many respects.
4. The need for at least one other body to have given a serious funding commitment to develop the town as a cultural centre and to work in genuine partnership with the town council to develop Stroud's reputation as a cultural centre can not be understated. If no partner organisation is forthcoming and willing to work in genuine partnership, then the viability of expanding the town's cultural facilities does not exist. If this is the final outcome Stroud Town Council should consider directing future resources into another area that will bring social and economic regeneration to the town.

Therefore the town council cultural strategy will have three criteria which any future applications must meet.

1. **Enabling** - Initiatives which provide facilities, expertise or other services which will enable a wide range of new and existing cultural activities to become established, reach wider audiences and become self-funding.
2. **Unique Selling Points** - Initiatives which develop Stroud main selling points. To develop a series of festivals and events throughout the year which fit in with Stroud's three/four unique selling points as identified by the town centre management steering committee
3. **Seed Funding** - New **EVENTS** will only receive support (other than youth and community grants) if they produce a clear business plan to show how they can become self-funding within three years. The town council will consider three-year funding agreements in such situations.

Applications may receive more favourable consideration if they also:

4. **Employment** - Generate new or enhance existing employment prospects in the parish.