

Future of the Arts in Gwynedd

education, enterprise
and enjoyment

www.gwynedd.gov.uk



GWYNEDD COUNCIL'S AIMS

- Create opportunities to enable people to fulfil their full potential in work and in personal and social life
- Contribute towards creating a competitive, venturesome and sustainable economy with a variety of working opportunities
- Promote better health, care and well-being for individuals, families and communities
- Promote active, safe and sustainable communities with the provision of suitable houses, facilities and services
- Protect the heritage, promote the culture of the area and promote the use of the Welsh language
- Protect and improve the built environment of the County and contribute towards safeguarding the world wide environment

COMMUNITY STRATEGY THEMES

- Promote lifelong learning
- Promote a prosperous economy
- Improve health, care and well-being
- Promote live and safe communities
- Support inclusive, bilingual and active communities
- Protect and care for the environment

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Foreword to the Strategy

“The arts are thriving in Gwynedd. All kinds of activities are taking place in our communities and in theatres and other centres. This is a long tradition and some of the most famous names of Welsh culture are from the county – going back many centuries. The energy is endless as contemporary artists, musicians and literary figures are constantly attracting the attention of the whole of Wales and beyond.

In Gwynedd, theatres, centres and galleries provide a home for the arts. At the same time, there is a growing emphasis on working with communities, taking the arts to the people. Some may come into contact with the arts for the first time. This is an important step and one to build upon in the future.

At the same time, artists (and I use the term “artists” in the broadest possible sense) are working diligently

Councillors Roy Owen and Dafydd Iwan with children from Gwynedd and the mosaic they created whilst learning about Europe.



Foreword to the Strategy

across the county and in all sorts of media. They are an important part of the economy and are helping to rejuvenate our communities.

The time has come to draw up a clear direction for the future within the limited resources available. That's the purpose of this Strategy. It gives me great pleasure to present it to everyone who works in the arts – or who is interested in the arts in Gwynedd.

I hope that the Strategy will be widely used throughout the county to promote and develop artistic activity. I also urge arts institutions and artists to use this document to support grant applications.

There has been widespread consultation and I would like to thank everyone for their valuable comments. Special thanks to the Improving the Arts Working Group, chaired by Councillor Dyfed Edwards, who led the way.

After completing the Strategy, the Stephens Commission report was published. It looked at future funding for the arts and the role of the Arts Council of Wales. Four main strategies will also steer our lives in the future. We look forward to working with everyone who is involved in the arts so as to contribute to the process of improving lives in Gwynedd and making sure that all individuals realise their full potential."

Councillor W. Roy Owen
(who leads on Lifelong Learning matters on Gwynedd Council's Board)

the four main strategies

- The Community Strategy
- The Gwynedd Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Strategy
- The Children and Young Peoples' Plan
- The Local Development Plan

Why we need a Strategy?

We have prepared this document to give the arts in Gwynedd a clear direction and definite focus. This Strategy will inform decisions and, in the long run, will determine where money is spent.

So, the Strategy sets out a clear Aim and practical Objectives that we will be working towards in an ordered manner over the next years.

The document is mainly aimed at all the people involved with the arts in Gwynedd. Gwynedd Council led the work and the Strategy conforms to the Council's general aims of social justice and empowering communities.

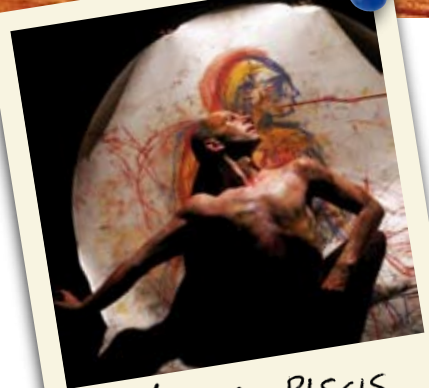
The main themes of Gwynedd Together – Gwynedd's Community Strategy also forms part of the context.

Whilst preparing the Strategy, we had to take into account some of Gwynedd's unique characteristics – its geography, economy and demography. For example, the trend towards an older population and young people moving out of the area; the large percentage of Welsh speakers; low income levels and the underprivileged nature of some communities; the importance of the tourism industry; the percentage of people from ethnic groups.

This Strategy will provide a firm basis for arts activities in Gwynedd.

A performance work entitled "Vesica Piscis" created by two North Wales based independent artists, Maria Hayes (Visual) and Paul Davies (Dance) has stimulated debate on the mergence of a new combined art in Wales. The project was funded by the Arts Council of Wales.

Image by Maria Hayes



VESICA PISCIS

What are “the arts”?

All sorts of arts activities are happening in Gwynedd today – from opera to rap and rock; from poetry competitions to novel writing; from a village eisteddfod, cerdd dant and choirs to ceramics or theatrical performances. The term “arts” includes popular culture and high-brow art, professional and community activities, Welsh-medium and English cultures.

The arts include performing mime and ballet. The arts include photography

and embroidery and jewellery. The arts mean country music and video work, architecture and costume design. The arts include poetry and salsa dancing. The arts are for enjoying. They enrich our lives. They are good for our health and improve the quality of our lives.

Arts for everyone

The arts should be available for everyone to enjoy and should enrich the lives of all the people of Gwynedd. Already 39% of the



When the Bangor Samba Band visited a festival in Barmouth, they received a warm welcome. On the same day, a conversation took place between a representative of the Bangor Band, some residents of Barmouth and the Communities First officer for the town. The seeds were sown for Gwynedd's second Samba band with the Communities First project paying for the instruments and lessons for the new players.



BARMOUTH SAMBA

people of Gwynedd take part in artistic activity, compared to 22% throughout Wales. But we can improve on this again. The arts need to infiltrate every part of the community so that everyone benefits – as a member of an audience or in a more direct way.

Quality arts

We must aim at maintaining high and consistent quality. We embrace excellence and encourage the best possible standards.

Regeneration

The arts are an important part of the area's economy. Developing the arts is an integral part of the process of regenerating our communities in Gwynedd. This in turn will improve the quality of the lives of all our residents and contribute significantly to making the area a good place in which to live and do business.

For 30 years, Theatr Bara Caws have been taking professional theatre to communities across Gwynedd with their lively and provocative shows. The co-operative company works with local people to organise visits to village halls, schools, clubs and pubs. The "Jac yn y Bocs" show toured during the summer of 2006.



THEATR BARA CAWS

Picture: Gerallt Llywelyn


The arts in Gwynedd now

The landscape and people of Gwynedd inspire creativity and there is a strong base for developing the arts further.

A number of professional companies and artists work here and there is plenty of amateur and voluntary activity with the strong local culture and the Welsh language being central to much of what is taking place.

We also have a successful television industry. Nearly 7% of the county's workforce, or 1,400 people, work in industries involving culture, media or sports. According to one survey, this makes Gwynedd third amongst all Welsh councils for the number of people employed in the "creative industries".

In education, an agency has been set up to pay artists to visit schools. In the colleges and the university, a cross section of courses is available – on every level, part time and full time.

 The picture is vibrant but sometimes it's hard to get people from outside the area to see and recognise this. We need to alert the rest of the world to the excellence of the arts in Gwynedd, through efficient promotion and by creating a contemporary and exciting image.

When some of our arts buildings were opened, they were amongst the best in Wales, but some have seen better days. They can't meet present day needs. The rural nature of the county makes it difficult for some people to reach these centres. Taking the arts into communities and encouraging communities to organise their own activities can help us to overcome this problem. We can use village halls and all sorts of "new" and "different" places for the arts – shops, doctors' surgeries and open-air venues.

Digital communication also brings new opportunities that can lessen the problems arising from Gwynedd's rural character.

The national and regional organisations recognise the value of the arts in promoting social inclusion, a growing economy and improving health. In its economic strategy, “Wales: A Vibrant Economy,” the Welsh Assembly Government recognises the creative industries as an important growth sector for the Welsh economy. We are confident that this will be a priority in the European Union’s new Convergence Programme.

The Welsh Assembly Government and regional organisations recognise the value of the arts in promoting

social inclusion, a growing economy and improving health. The European Community’s convergence programmes will recognise the important role of the creative arts in improving the quality of life in West Wales.

It’s possible to use the money from these schemes for the benefit of the arts and to improve the lives of people in Gwynedd. There are also new opportunities for developing more co-operation – in the Council itself and with outside organisations. We face an exciting future and this document leads the way.

Historic Neuadd Idris in the centre of Dolgellau will become home to a modern multi-media centre for Welsh folk music and dance. Tŷ Siamas will contribute to the economic, social and cultural life of the area. The Sesiwn Fawr festival, which attracts thousands of people from all over the world, is also held in the town.



Tŷ SIAMAS

Aim and objectives

We have formed clear and concise aims and objectives for the Strategy. The Aim is what we will try to do over the next few years. The Objectives set out the steps that need to be taken to achieve the Aim.

The Aim

To improve the lives of everyone in Gwynedd through the arts and to encourage high standards in every sector.

The Objectives

OBJECTIVE 1


Making sure that **everyone** in Gwynedd has the chance to enjoy the arts – REACHING EVERYONE.

OBJECTIVE 2

Making sure that the arts are of the highest possible **standard**, embracing **excellence** and offering a wide **choice** of different art forms – GOOD QUALITY AND CHOICE

OBJECTIVE 3

Making the arts an integral part of the process of **regenerating** communities and thus **improving** the quality of life in Gwynedd – IMPROVING LIVES



Hundreds gathered in Caernarfon for a 'Stomp' poetic

competition during the Snowdonia National Eisteddfod 2005. It was arranged by Academi with the support of the Arts Council of Wales and Cadw. In a Stomp, the prize is a stool and the audience chooses the best poems. The winner in the castle was the poet, singer and author from Eifionydd, Gwyneth Glyn.

Picture: Owain Lŷr



“STOMP”

Objective 1 : Reaching everyone

Who is “everyone”?

People in all parts of Gwynedd – in towns across the county, in rural communities and on housing estates.

People from the different economic groups – the poor as well as the rich, from the unemployed to retired people.

People from specific groups – offenders, disabled people, sick people.

People from ethnic minorities.

People of all ages – the young and old, as well as the middle-aged.



For three months, Nancy Evans worked with patients and staff at Ysbyty Gwynedd, Bangor, as the hospital's first artist-in-residence. The aim was to improve the lives of the children and adults who were ill or injured, by creating work to adorn the hospital buildings and to raise awareness of the visual arts. It was a joint project between Gwynedd Council, the North West Wales Health Trust and Cywaith Cymru (Artworks Wales).





NANCY EVANS







How to reach more people?


Promotion – places – targeting

Effective promotion

-  Making sure that people know what's happening through effective promotion and marketing.
-  Encouraging cooperation amongst artists on promotional and marketing projects.

All sorts of places

-  Taking the arts to people in communities across Gwynedd and targeting areas where there is a lack of artistic activity at present.
-  Supporting a network of main performing and exhibiting centres that serve people throughout the whole of Gwynedd.
-  Making it easier for people to visit the arts centres.
-  Promoting the use of community centres as places for artistic activity.
-  Encouraging the arts in new and different places.
-  Encouraging private developers to include the arts in new buildings and developments.




The workshops helped young bands in Llŷn to develop their talents with advice from well-known tutors from the Welsh-language rock scene. It involved co-operation between agencies including North Wales Police, the Welsh Language Board, Language Initiatives, Gwynedd Council, Communities First, and Gwallgofiaid Cyf, a company that grew out of a similar project at Blaenau Ffestiniog.



How to reach more people?

🎯 Targeting special groups

- 🎯 Targeting people from underprivileged areas that traditionally don't take an interest in the arts.
- 🎯 Working with users and providers to ensure access for disabled people to arts activities.
- 🎯 Encouraging artists to increase the number of people that attend workshops.
- 🎯 Encouraging artists to work with providers to organise workshops aimed at special groups.
- 🎯 Supporting the use of the arts to improve people's health, working closely with the health sector to educate about health issues or to help people to come to terms with health problems.
- 🎯 Encouraging the provision of arts experiences for young people, to nurture talent, expand horizons and to foster rounded attitudes.
- 🎯 Drawing the attention of young people, and their educational and career advisors, to work opportunities in the arts.

 *The Jas-min project was funded by the Gwynedd and Môn Arts Agency. The aim was to develop an interest in jazz through listening, performing and composing through concerts and workshops. During 2005-06, more than 60 schools took part in various arts projects sponsored by the Arts Agency*




JAS-MIN

Objective 2



GWENAN GIBBARD

 *Live Music Now is a national scheme that gives young musicians an opportunity to perform before audiences. Harpist Gwenan Gibbard presented traditional folk songs to a group of older people who don't usually have a chance to hear live music.*






Quality and choice:


- Establish schemes of excellence that teach and train people with special talents so that they reach the highest possible standards.
- Encourage cooperation between individual artists so that they benefit in an artistic way.
- Develop contact between professional companies and amateurs for artistic gain.
- Encourage arts festivals as a way of developing artistic activity.
- Improve standards in schools.

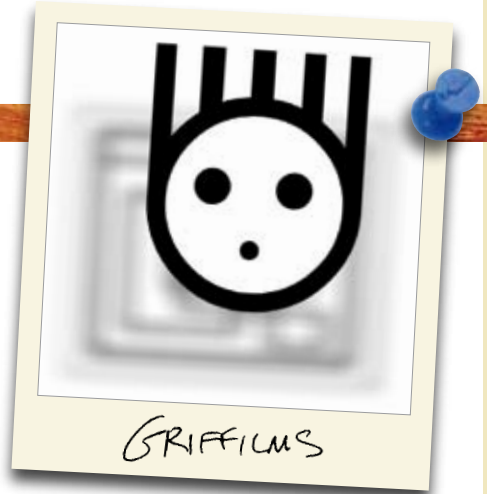


Objective 3

Improve lives:

-  Work with the creative industries to maintain and create quality jobs.
-  Work with the creative industries to create suitable quality training.
-  Encourage young people to start and develop small businesses in the arts, by working with schemes such as Llwyddo'n Lleol.
-  Promote cultural tourism as one of the pillars of the tourism industry.
-  Encourage arts festivals to contribute more to the local economy.
-  Develop and nurture community arts initiatives as part of the process of rejuvenating the communities of Gwynedd.
-  Encourage communities to organise their own arts activities.
-  Develop contacts with the arts sector in other parts of north Wales, Wales, Britain, Europe and beyond.

 Gwynedd is famous for its successful animation and television industry. Griffilms was established in Caernarfon in 1992 and by now the animation company has an office in Cardiff and employs 15 people. This company creates the animation for the award-winning satirical show "Cnex" for S4C. The series is produced by another local television company, Cwmni Da, which employs 35 people.



Realising the aim

In order to realise the Aim and Objectives of this Strategy, Gwynedd Council believes that working with other organisations involved with the arts is of paramount importance.

The Council will also provide financial aid and advice.

Cooperation:

- Working with schools, colleges and universities to make sure that students can receive education and training in the arts.
- Developing strong partnerships with national and regional arts organisations.
- Working with local communities to encourage arts activity.
- Supporting Gwynedd Arts Forum to strengthen contacts across the arts in Gwynedd.
- Making sure that the key Strategies for Gwynedd pay appropriate attention to the arts.
- Working with schools, colleges, universities and career advice agencies to make sure that students from Gwynedd receive clear professional advice about job opportunities or setting up businesses.

- Taking advantage of opportunities to work with economic development officers to make the most of the opportunities offered by the arts.

Aid and advice:

- Provide financial backing to support a base for the arts and to hold events according to the Aim and Objectives of this Strategy.
- Provide advice through a network of arts officers employed and coordinated by the Council.
- Collate information about the financial aid that's available to the arts in Gwynedd.



What next?

To make sure that all of this happens, Gwynedd Council will create a detailed plan of action based on the Aim and Objectives.

We will compare statistics about various aspects of the work from year to year to monitor progress.

This document sets out a way forward for the arts in Gwynedd and of course it will be possible to develop this over the coming years with the cooperation of all who work in the arts or show an interest in them.

To reach the Aim, we will depend heavily on artists and companies, on community ventures and voluntary groups and on organisations like Gwynedd Arts Forum and the Arts Council of Wales.

Together let's move towards making the arts part of everybody's lives, embracing excellence and improving the quality of lives in Gwynedd through the arts.

We welcome your comments. Contact details are on the front cover of this booklet.

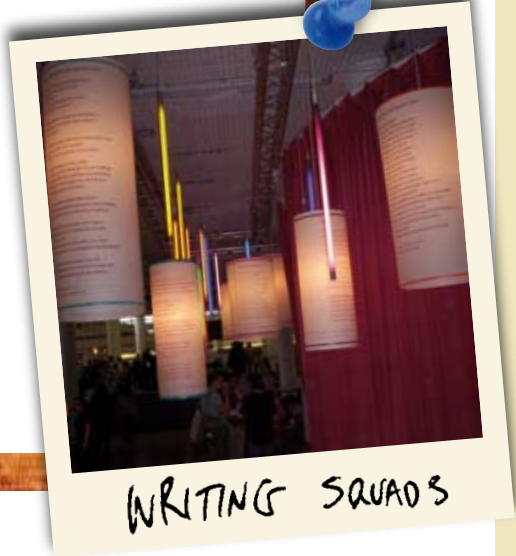


JEREMY STRONG

The Council arranges for Welsh and English authors to visit libraries and schools all over Gwynedd to talk about their work and inspire the children. Jeremy Strong was a teacher before becoming an author and he talked to children at Tudweiliog about his work. He has published more than 50 English books for children and has won many awards.



Gwynedd Writing Squads is one of the most important projects organised by the Literature Promotion scheme in Gwynedd. It gives the most talented young writers of Gwynedd a chance to improve their skills. Some of the members worked with national award-winning poet Iwan Llwyd on poems for the 'Poetry International' festival in London. These were displayed on lanterns on the South Bank. The enormous lamps can now be seen at Glaslyn Leisure Centre, Porthmadog.



WRITING SQUADS