

Minutes for West Sussex Creatives Meeting 4

Mon 8 Dec 2025

2.15pm Intro and recap (5m)

- What are we working towards?
 - Create a document that shows what West Sussex Creative Professionals have to offer.
- What have we done so far?
 - 4th Meeting- online, Chichester, Crawley, Worthing
 - Rachel from Shake it Up Creative is designing the document for free.
 - Louise B & CFT is part of a pan-Sussex group. ACE have designated funds towards making a document for the whole of Sussex. University of Sussex is the neutral organisation that will co-ordinate that document . Regrouping with Cultural leaders from each area to see where everyone is.
 - Last Thursday the decision was made to postpone the Mayoral elections from May 2026 to May 2028 to give time to establish the unitary authorities first before installing a new Mayor. Gives more time, but some people are quite frustrated with the last minute change.
 - Local government organisation is still happening so will still carry on with the plan to produce the prospectus.

2.20pm The group got into smaller groups to discuss the first draft of the cultural prospectus followed by group feedback

- Responses;
 - Needs more thoughts about personal experiences and quotes. Particularly in the young person section.

- Imagery- using local artists to design part of it. Make it more personal and artistic rather than just facts and figures
- Should not be afraid of individualisation- the famous people from the area. Get a picture and quote from them
- From the meetings the content has broadened outside of the arts eg. Knepp. Go back to the first initial thoughts and brief to make sure that it is not too broad and diluted
- Actions on back- apprenticeships is a bit weak and done- more like skills enhancement to include all ages, getting people back to work etc
- Space made available when they are not being used for people to book to work in. A way to bring together the arts in WS
- Climate and Environment- needs to be linked to arts. The layout is confusing.
- Cannot use the word 'culture' unless we have asked lots of people. Should just focus on Arts.
- Mission statement is missing. Something that applies to everyone from grassroots to big organisations
- Key organisations there, but very Crawley and Chichester focussed.
- Good that it hits the mayoral priorities. Need to make sure there are facts on each bit to make it easy to understand
- There is a general perception that WS is wealthy- need to make sure that it is realistic.
- Needs to be feistier and talk about the risk of not including arts in funding. Needs to be bolder and braver. Needs to include examples of arts powering communities- early skills work that turns into people leading organisations etc.

- Needs to convey the message that without arts there will be disengaged communities, feral youth and adults, increased loneliness etc
- Being humble is also okay- say we know that we are not connected enough across West Sussex
- Say what is being done, but point out that it is nowhere near enough
- Making it clear where our place is in this new framework.
- WS is not cohesive linked by the organisations that are the framework
- Be clear that it is just a highlight- not comprehensive
- Suggestion to create a simple and direct pitch document
- Very organisation heavy- trying to get a sense of individual artists and organisations.
- Early years, children, schools - how does that come across- needs more representation of this.
- Is the intention to present a strong case but also to show an invitation to supercharge? Snapshot of amount of investment from LA, snapshot of arts employment then imagine what it might be like if we had more funding.
- Design- breaking the map down into sectors to colour code what is going on.
- Using the map from the first meeting
- Link to an interactive map
- Will there be links to a website for more info?
- LB wants to emphasize that the point of the doc is for the mayor and people making decisions, not for us, not a cultural strategy.
- Give ideas to supercharge- giving them very focussed examples
- Concern that a pitch document is not a document that supports creative integrity.

- Communicating that if you don't fund WS then all this could be lost. This could be a problem as it is negative. Would it work to be positive and ask for money?
- Can we get both positive and negative messages in?
- Needs to be in language that politicians can understand
- This document is a starting point, not an end point.
- Importance of the integrity of the arts, not a pitch document.
- Value of the arts in economic growth
- Arts is currently not a priority. We need to have a strong case to convince of our importance.

ACTIONS

- Yemisi and Richard to put together an outline to make it more like a pitch doc and more persuasive. More dynamic language
- Amanda and Kevin will look at the map and see if there is some way to make it interactive
- Emma to put together some headline stats and case study stats
- Jasmine and Zoe to send over quotes with a focus on Youth.
- All - to send images and case studies
- LB to follow up with Richard and Yemisi + WTM team
- Aim to get document finished by end of January 2026