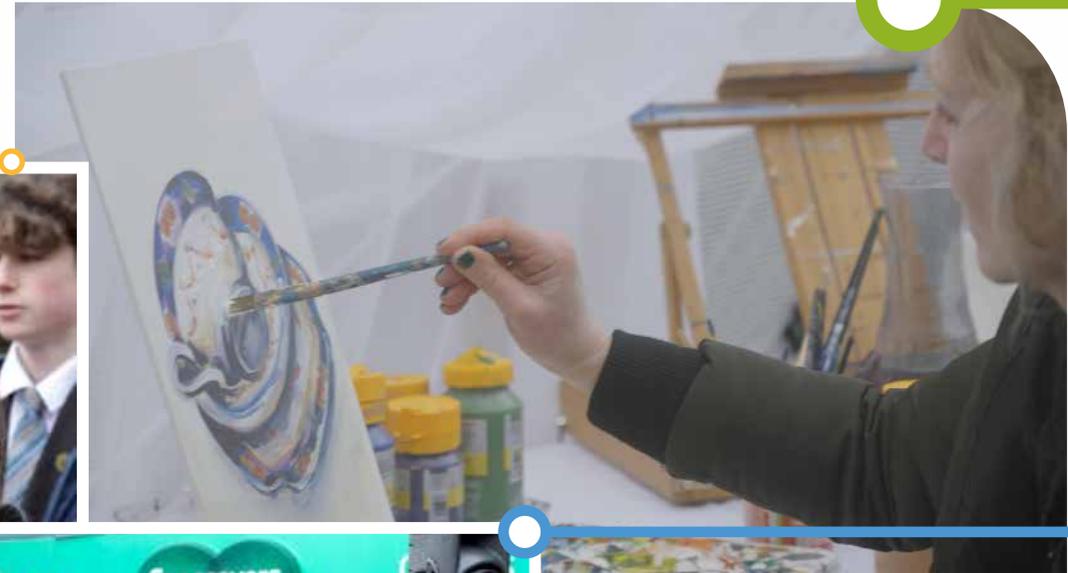




Broxtowe  
Borough  
COUNCIL

# Cultural Strategy

2023-2026



Bennerley Viaduct, known as the Iron Giant of the Erewash Valley, is one of the most iconic structures in Nottinghamshire. As part of Kimberley's successful Levelling Up bid, a new active travel route will be developed to link up the Grade 2\* listed viaduct with nearby towns and travel routes. An accessible Eastern Ramp will also be installed.

# Contents

	page
Foreword	3
Scope	4
Stakeholders	7
Existing cultural richness	8
Context	10
The National Picture	10
The Local Picture	11
Achievements	12
Strategic Objectives	13
Culture is celebrated and protected	14
Culture is part of everyday life	16
Culture helps us prosper	18

# Foreword

Broxtowe Borough is a place which is steeped in heritage. From its associations with people who were independent thinkers, creatives and revolutionaries like Henry Ireton, D.H. Lawrence and Sir Peter Mansfield to the many diverse people, groups and organisations that have made Broxtowe their home today. It is this cultural richness is something the Council wishes to encourage and support.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and cost of living crisis have had a profound effect on us all and have served to highlight the importance of culture in bringing people together and helping people to prosper.

The benefits of having and maintaining a culture programme on the local community are well documented – from education and learning outcomes, to reducing crime and anti-social behaviour, improving wellbeing and supporting regeneration.

This Cultural Strategy sets out how the Council, by working with its partners, can enrich the cultural life of the Borough for the benefit of the whole community.

Culture means something different to everyone so our approach will be very much focused on partnership and collaboration so that we can adapt to suit the changing needs of the communities who make Broxtowe the fantastic place that it is.

We are really looking forward to working with residents and organisations across the Borough to make sure that Broxtowe can embrace the opportunities that culture brings to improve lives.



**Councillor Chris Carr**

Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Health

## Front Cover



*A student choir performs at the annual Holocaust Memorial Event.*



*Local artist Janet Shipton at one of her community art classes.*



*A visitor explores the collection at the D.H. Lawrence Museum.*



*Anteloup perform at Friday18 - image credit: Hugh Miller.*

# Scope

## This strategy takes the Arts Council definition of culture:

'Culture' means many things to many people and is often used to refer to food, religion and other forms of heritage. We use it to mean all those areas of activity associated with: collections, combined arts, dance, libraries, literature, museums, music, theatre and the visual arts. By describing all of this work collectively as 'culture', rather than separately as 'the arts', 'museums' and 'libraries', we aim to be inclusive of the full breadth of activity.

It also recognises the importance of other cultural activities such as sports and film.

## The Council's role is to work with people and organisations to achieve the ambitions of this strategy.

It will facilitate networking and skills sharing across cultural and community organisations within the Borough, as well as support efforts to reduce the barriers to participation by local people.

The strategy will be dynamic, evolving with local people and what culture means to them, as well as allow us to tailor our efforts to the resources available.

## Approach

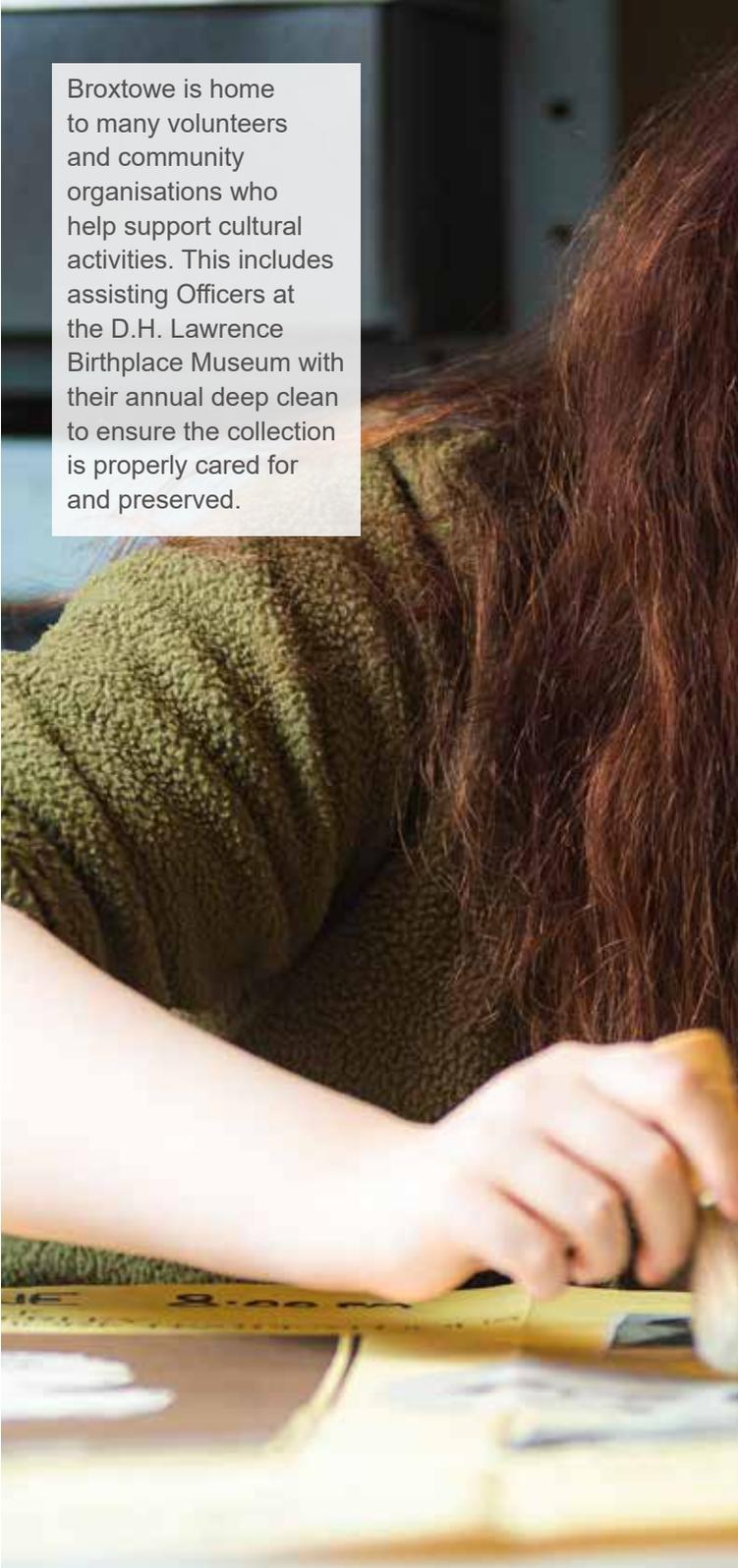
Culture does not belong to a single person or organisation and so our approach will be focused on acting as a champion of culture, building relationships and encouraging collaboration to help everyone share in and celebrate the cultural richness of the Borough.

This will be achieved through:

- A diverse annual Council events programme.
- Development of the D.H. Lawrence Museum and wider heritage legacy.
- Engagement and collaboration with the many local groups and organisations in the Borough, helping to forge connections to enhance the existing cultural offer.

Stakeholder engagement will be key to our success. This will include a Community Committee, made up of local people who are experts in various cultural fields. The Committee will support a programme of projects to showcase the cultural offer in Broxtowe and link in with the international CCity Project, as well as help us to identify where cultural activity can have the greatest impact for the most residents.

We will also ensure that our cultural offering is aligned to the aspirations and guidelines of national bodies in the cultural sector, such as the Arts Council, Museums Development England and the Department for Culture, Media & Sport.



Broxtowe is home to many volunteers and community organisations who help support cultural activities. This includes assisting Officers at the D.H. Lawrence Birthplace Museum with their annual deep clean to ensure the collection is properly cared for and preserved.

## Alignment to the Corporate Plan, Vision and Values

The Council's vision is:

**A greener, safer, healthier Borough where everyone prospers.**

Its priorities are:

- **Housing** – A good quality home for everyone.
- **Business Growth** – Invest in our towns and our people.
- **Environment** – Protect the environment for the future.
- **Health** – Support people to live well.
- **Community Safety** – A safe place for everyone.

It's 'GREAT' values are:

- **G**oing the extra mile - a strong, caring focus on the needs of all communities.
- **R**eady for change - innovation and readiness for change.
- **E**mloyees - valuing employees and enabling the active involvement of everyone.
- **A**lways improving - continuous improvement and delivering value for money.
- **T**ransparent - integrity and professional competence.



**GREAT**

There are a number of well documented benefits for having and maintaining a cultural programme, many of which are directly linked to the Council’s vision and corporate plan objectives.

### Economic growth

Research shows that cultural heritage can increase the attractiveness of a place. The more people choose to visit, work and live in the local area, the more money is brought into the local economy in turn creating new jobs and opportunities.



### Education

Evidence shows that engagement in cultural activities leads to improved engagement with teaching across the curriculum and improved academic attainment, as well as better behaviour and fewer fixed term exclusions.



### Crime and anti-social behaviour

Culture can also be an effective way to reduce re-offending and anti-social behaviour - keeping people positively engaged in their communities, bringing people together to address intergenerational fear and isolation. Research has found that such projects reduced the risk of young people engaging in crime and antisocial behaviour.



### Physical and mental health

Greater participation in the arts increases confidence and wellbeing, and research by Arts Council England has shown that it can improve the physical health of older adults, resulting in lower blood pressure and reduced anxiety in cardiac patients, as well as shorter hospital stays for



# Stakeholders

- Residents
- Town and Parish Councils
- Departments across the Council
- Schools
- Partner bodies and organisations
- Local groups and forums
- Special interest groups e.g. D.H. Lawrence society, Hags Farm Preservation Society
- Business community
- Community groups and organisations
- Potential investors
- The media
- Employees
- Elected Members
- MPs
- Nottingham and Nottingham Trent Universities
- Broxtowe Safety Advisory Group (SAG)
- Arts and cultural bodies e.g. Arts Council England, UNESCO City of Literature, Museums' Development East Midlands
- Colleagues in the Council's twin town Gutersloh and other linked European cities.
- Sports clubs
- Community Committee
- Environmental groups including the Green Umbrella Group
- Health and wellbeing groups
- Community and faith leaders
- Arts practitioners
- Venues



Oxjam Beeston is one of the many cultural events which take place in the Borough each year. Image credit: Christopher Frost.



# Existing cultural richness

## Event programme

The Council organises a programme of over 100 events each year.

These range from large public events such as the Hemlock Happening, Play Days and Christmas Light Switch On events which attract up to 3,000 people, to Green Festivals, civic events like Remembrance Sunday and Holocaust Memorial Day and small community events aimed at specific groups such as housing tenants, businesses and special interest groups.

When developing the annual programme of events, the Council strives to give local community organisations, schools and groups the opportunity to engage with audiences at the events often targeting areas of relative deprivation so that these residents are also able to access high quality event programming that promotes social cohesion and wellbeing.

The events programme also aims to be inclusive, reflecting the diversity of the population of the Borough by taking into account factors such as age, gender, ethnic background, religious beliefs, disabilities and the needs of other groups.



## D.H. Lawrence Birthplace Museum

The D.H. Lawrence Birthplace Museum is where this literary legend was born on 11 September 1885. The Museum is a must see for fans of literature, and for those wanting to delve deeper into Nottingham's literary heritage.

The Museum was founded in 1976 by local enthusiasts and has grown into a high quality tourist destination, attracting visitors from all over the world. Owned and managed by Broxtowe Borough Council, the museum is open to the public via guided and self-guided tours to discover the stories of this not-so-average son of a miner, as well as the wider local history of the area. It also offers a range of wider community events to encourage those who may not normally visit to experience cultural, educational and wellbeing activity.



## C-City Project

Broxtowe has signed a C-City Charter along with Gütersloh (Germany), Falun (Sweden), Châteauroux (France) and Grudziądz (Poland). The C-City concept is focused around the idea that sharing culture is key to European cooperation. The project provides a platform with which to showcase Broxtowe's existing cultural offer and for those in the community to exchange ideas and practices with the other cities involved. So far, the project has seen a new live music event, Friday18, established in Beeston and work continues on the other project themes of cinema, visual arts, music: classic, music: jazz and rock, theatre, sport, food and lifestyle, literature and history and custom.

## Community offering

Broxtowe is rich with voluntary arts, heritage and community organisations covering a wide range of areas of interest. These groups are run by committed volunteers and their activities make a major contribution to the cultural life of the area.

Regular events include everything from Beeston Film Festival, Kimberley Jam and Oxjam to walk and talk programmes and the D.H. Lawrence Music Festival.

## Cultural assets

- Heritage sites – The Canalside Heritage Centre, Bennerley Viaduct, The Breach House, Brinsley Headstocks, Beauvale Priory, Canalside Heritage and Church Cottage
- Museums – D.H. Lawrence Birthplace Museum
- Theatre – Chilwell Arts Theatre
- Environment and nature – 62 parks and open spaces including 15 designated local nature reserves, 17 wildlife corridors including the Erewash Valley Trail and Broxtowe Country Trail.
- Libraries – six libraries managed by Nottinghamshire County Council including Beeston Library's Beeston Gallery and Exhibition Space
- Cinema – Arc cinema in Beeston
- Artist studio space - Canal Side Art Studio and The Parnham Gallery and Attenborough Nature Reserve and Centre
- Town centre – four town centres with their own unique heritage and character
- Erewash Valley Trail and Nottingham Canal
- The Blue Line Trail in Eastwood
- The Southern Broxtowe Plaque Scheme
- Eastwood Hall and Durban House
- Street Art throughout Beeston



Beauvale Priory



Arc Cinema in Beeston

One of the many pieces of street art which can be seen across Beeston



# Context

A number of facts and figures have helped shape the strategy.

## The National Picture

Arts Council research suggests that:

- Culture and the arts is worth **£10.9 billion** to the UK economy.
- Case studies of socially prescribed cultural activities have reported health benefits such as a **37% reduction in GP visits** and a 68% improvement in mental health symptoms.

**The Cornerstones of Culture: Commission on Culture and Local Government report** highlights

that a healthy local cultural ecosystem can delivery against many wider challenges we face as a society, including:

- Building resilient, adaptive, networked communities in place, supporting civic pride and revitalising town centres.
- Promoting local economic growth, supporting levelling up through the development of creative clusters, an experiential offer on high streets and providing a foundation for the wider visitor and night-time economies.
- Developing creative thinking, build cultural capital and provide local economies with high quality jobs that are resistant to automation.

- Promoting better health and wellbeing, particularly addressing challenges of loneliness, isolation and mental ill health arising from the pandemic.
- The Commission also found that local culture is essential to the identity and aspiration of a place and its people.

### Other factors

- Austerity measures introduced by the Government and their impact on local authority services.
- The cost of living crisis.
- The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.



Community Art Groups in Broxtowe include Janet's Monday Afternoon Art Club, Bee Creative, ABC Art Trail, Spotted Dog Art Group, CHC Life Drawing, Beeston Street Art and many more.

## The Local Picture

### The Museum Development England Annual Museum Survey 2022: East Midlands Report found that:

- **44%** visitors had been lost compared to 2019/20.
- **£13,455** was the median value added by volunteers in the region, compared to **£25,567 nationally** and 32% of museums in the region reported a drop in new volunteers. The number of hours volunteers have contributed to museums in the region has reduced by 41% on 2019/20 levels.
- **53%** museums reported an increase in expenditure.
- The number of education providers museums engaged is **48% lower** than the levels of engagement in 2019/20.
- **54%** of museums in the region reported an annual turnover of less than £25k in 2021/22, compared to 31% across England.
- **53%** of museums in the region reported they increase expenditure in 2021/22 and 56% reported a decrease in income levels for the same period. This is compared to 55% and 41% respectively across England.
- There are hundreds of community and voluntary groups in the Borough.

### Council performance data:

- The D.H. Lawrence Birthplace Museum received 3,381 visitors in 2022/23.
- More than 22,000 people attended events in the Council's 2022/23 events programme.
- Engaged with 243 pupils from Broxtowe schools.

### Demographics:

- According to the 2021 census, Broxtowe has a population of 110,990 people, with a predominant age group of 55-64 at 13.3% of the population. This is closely followed by age 45-54 (13.2%) and age 25-34 (13.1%).
- 6.5% of the population are from black and minority ethnic heritage. The largest ethnic group in Broxtowe is 'White: English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British' (78.8%). This is 2.9% lower than the national average. This is followed by 'Asian / Asian British / Asian Welsh' (11.1%), which is 1.8% higher than the national average. 2.9% identified as 'Black', 3.8% identified as 'Mixed' and 3.3% as 'Other'.

### Other factors:

- The Council's Communications and Engagement Strategy.
- The Council's Climate Change and Green Futures Strategy
- The Council's Town Centre Investment programmes

### Consultation

Views from key stakeholders have been sought through meetings and other engagement activities.

It is intended that ongoing consultation will take place as the Council broadens its understanding of the cultural and community groups in the Borough.

# Achievements

Attracted record numbers to the Hemlock Happening event in 2022 in celebration of the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II.

Designed and delivered an annual programme of at least ten civic events including Remembrance Parades, Holocaust Memorial Services and Freedom Parades, as well as smaller community engagement events celebrating the many faiths and cultures in the Borough.

**Adapted existing events and developed new ones to respond to the challenges of the pandemic and its social restrictions, including live streaming ten Council events to allow more people to take part.**

The Museum was also awarded external funding from Museums Development East Midlands and The Mighty Creatives in order to become an Arts Award training site in 2022, which will enable increased school engagement with the museum.

**The D.H. Lawrence Birthplace Museum achieved 'highly commended' status as part of Visit Nottinghamshire's Small Visitor Attraction of the Year 2019.**

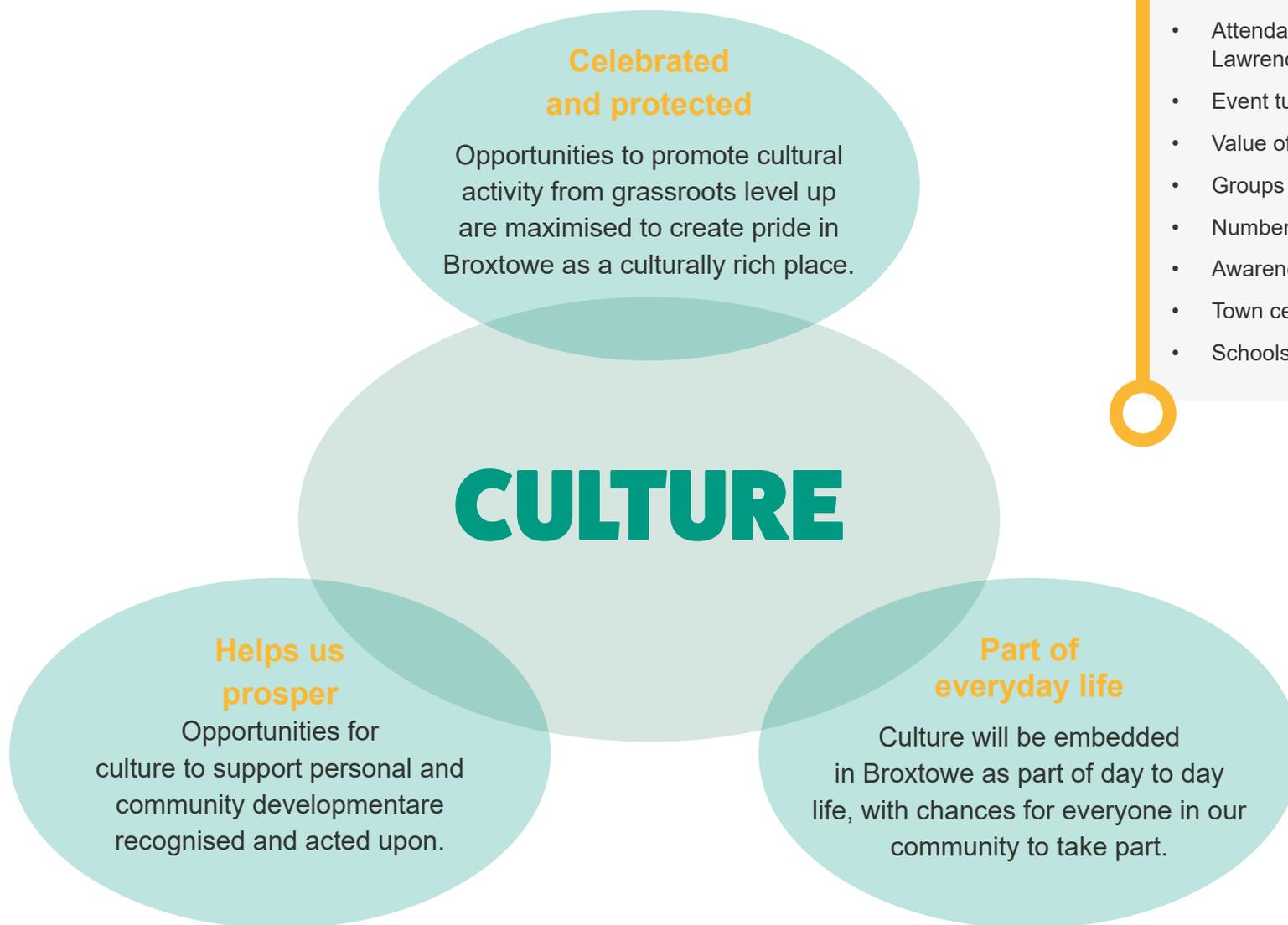
Developed the museum gallery space for a changing programme of exhibitions from community groups to broaden its appeal and attract new audiences.

**Supported Nottingham City Museums to acquire the last known portrait of Lawrence, which will be displayed at both Newstead Abbey and the D.H. Lawrence Birthplace Museum from 2023, as an important visitor attraction.**

**Delivered an annual programme of larger community events including Christmas Light Switch on events, Green Festivals, Play Days, the D.H. Lawrence Festival and the Council's flagship event, the Hemlock Happening. Over 20,000 people attend these events each year.**

Established a Community Committee to made up of local people who are experts in various cultural fields to support a programme of projects to showcase the cultural offer in Broxtowe and link in with the international CCity Project, as well as help us to identify where cultural activity can have the greatest impact for the most residents.

# Strategic Objectives



## How will success be measured?

- Attendance/engagement with the D.H. Lawrence Birthplace Museum
- Event turnout
- Value of volunteer hours worked
- Groups engaged
- Number of cultural activities
- Awareness/perception surveys
- Town centre footfall
- Schools engagement

Local women at a creative writing event which was organised to celebrate International Womens Day.

## Culture is celebrated and protected

Opportunities to promote cultural activity from grassroots level up are maximised to create pride in Broxtowe as a culturally rich place.

It is easy to dismiss culture as a luxury we cannot afford, but the potential benefits it can bring to people and places are vast.

Culture can also help enhance the reputation of the Borough and help people feel connected to it and proud to be part of it.

A more co-ordinated approach to communicating about what is on offer in Broxtowe will be key in reaching more people and in turn, encouraging them to take part in the activities, as well as helping to develop what culture means to people in the Borough.

As with all the Council's communications, this will be a multi-channel approach through both digital and non-digital channels to reach the many and diverse groups who call Broxtowe home.



## Actions:

1. Develop a cultural map to promote Broxtowe's cultural narrative and raise the profile of the Borough as a venue for cultural activities at a regional, national and international level.
2. Conduct an audit of community capacity, including identifying the number of National Portfolio Organisations (resident cultural organisations that are regularly funded by the Arts Council) to understand where partnerships can be made and where there are gaps in cultural access.
3. Utilise the C-City project to showcase and engaging with a wider audience from different backgrounds and interests around cultural activity.
4. Conduct an audit of existing cultural activity in the Borough to help bridge gaps and identify where to work with partners.
5. Develop a new strategic plan for the D.H. Lawrence Birthplace Museum to reach a wider audience to this important heritage site and wider local history.
6. Promote and enhancing existing activity in the Borough to showcase its cultural richness.
7. Identify external funding opportunities to enhance the Borough's existing cultural offer and heritage assets.
8. Continue to strength partnerships with Town and Parish Councils to deliver cultural events across the Borough.

## Outcomes:

- Funding options to protect and enhance the Borough's cultural offer have been explored and accessed where appropriate.
- Plans are in place to manage Broxtowe's heritage assets in a sustainable way.
- Local people value the Borough's cultural landscape to help preserve and develop them for future generations.
- Broxtowe is seen as a centre for culture and creativity both locally, and more widely through its European links with the C-City project.

# Culture is part of everyday life

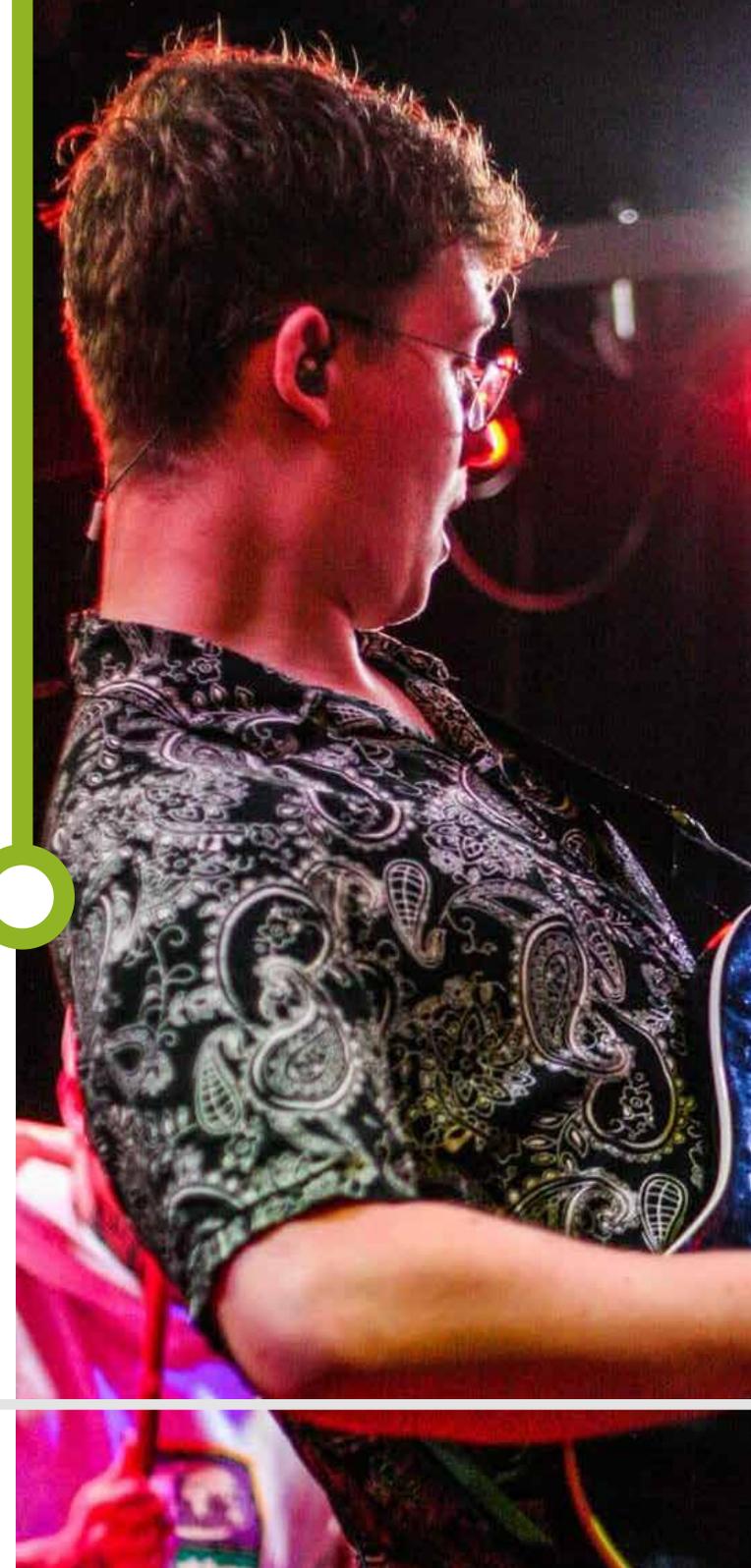
Culture will be embedded in Broxtowe as part of day to day life, with chances for everyone in our community to take part.

By weaving culture into the Borough's places like its outdoor spaces, parks and town centres, as well as its people and its plans for the future, the benefits can be shared and enjoyed by everyone.

Some people simply do not believe that cultural activities are for them and so our focus will be on breaking down these barriers so fewer people feel excluded and can find easy ways to take part.

By supporting the community to connect to help culture reach further, we can help a more diverse range of people see their experiences reflected in the activities happening here.

Activities will also support residents who may be experience loneliness, dementia and other health conditions.



A local musician performs at the annual D.H. Lawrence Music Festival in Eastwood. Image credit: Tim Eastgate.

## Actions:

1. Work with partners or explore opportunities to work with researchers including university students, on overcoming the barriers to engagement with cultural activity, including accessibility considerations.
2. Explore options for digital engagement programmes to bring culture to a wider audience and find new ways to engage people with the Borough's cultural activity.
3. Use case studies and storytelling to showcase Broxtowe's thriving cultural life.
4. Develop a targeted marketing campaign to appeal to the diverse groups and unique characteristics of different areas of the Borough.
5. Look at options for introducing a gastronomy event to bring together the many ethnic groups in the Borough which will recognise the importance of food in celebrating culture and heritage, as well as bringing people together.
6. Annually evaluate and review the Council's events programme to ensure that it reflects the varied backgrounds and experiences of local people and appeals to multiple audiences.
7. Review the ways in which the Council engages with schools on culture and heritage initiatives, working with them to ensure that culture remains an important part of life for the next generation.
8. Work across Council departments and with partners to develop a consistent and co-ordinated approach to promoting and marketing cultural activity and events to increase turnout and participation from people of all backgrounds.
9. Work with partners to use cultural activities as a tool to engage people with dementia, learning and other disabilities and support them to live well.

## Outcomes:

- Increased awareness of the Borough's cultural offer.
- Increased participation and community involvement in cultural activities and their development.
- Engagement with new groups and audiences.

## Culture helps us prosper

Opportunities for culture to support personal and community development are recognised and acted upon.

Put simply, cultural activity can have the potential to change lives and help shape the future of the Borough.

Cultural activity can be a key economic driver, supporting our investment programme and revitalising our town centres with new jobs, visitors and encouraging new investment.

Hand in hand with this is the impact it can have on the personal development of local people by offering new opportunities to learn new skills, connect with others to address mental health issues and loneliness, bringing people from different generations and backgrounds together and general improvements to wellbeing.

Strengthening our cultural offer can help support our investment programmes and revitalise our town centres, creating jobs, attracting visitors and investment and supporting the economic success of the Borough as a whole.

Recognising these values of culture and ensure it is woven into our strategic planning in a sustainable way will be key in maximising its benefits for future generations to come.



## Actions:

1. Look at ways to increase volunteer participation at Council and community led initiatives, promoting the social benefits to the community and the individual. Work with partners to consider how a social prescribing project could support this.
2. Use case studies and storytelling to showcase how cultural projects and partnerships have helped support local people to live well and become part of a thriving cultural life.
3. Consider ways in which cultural activities can be used to engage people with climate change and raise awareness.
4. Identify ways to harness regeneration projects like the Town Deal and Levelling Up to promote and encourage new cultural activity.
5. Work with departments and partners to align the benefits of cultural activity on economic growth and encourage further investment, jobs etc.
6. Consider options for how existing and new public realm space can be used for cultural events such as Friday18 Live Music.
7. Ensure that the right skills exist amongst Council employees, volunteers and partners to foster cultural activity in the future.



The Arc Cinema in Beeston is home of the Beeston Film Festival, an annual British Independent Film Association (BIFA) accredited festival which celebrates film and film makers.

8. Ensure the annual events programme includes events to bring people into the Borough's town centres.
9. Maximise opportunities to promote tourist attractions in the Borough to encourage continued growth, including but not limited to Bennerley Viaduct, Attenborough Nature Reserve and the D.H. Lawrence Birthplace Museum.

## Outcomes:

- Increased volunteering opportunities through cultural activity
- Partnerships which help realise the benefits of culture on health and wellbeing, as well as skills and training
- New commercial opportunities
- Number of new businesses which have cultural links.