



Hi! CULTURE

HSM_53: GRANTHAM 'ARTS AND EXPLORATION': HIGH STREET HERITAGE ACTION ZONE CULTURAL PROGRAMME NARRATIVE EVALUATION REPORT

Introduction

The High Street Heritage Action Zone cultural programme provided a fantastic opportunity to bring together a number of creatives and cultural organisations within Grantham and bring art and culture to the town centre, to celebrate the town's heritage and explore hopes for the future.

Grantham benefits from a vibrant arts community, encompassing many disciplines, and many of our local artists, creatives, and cultural organisations expressed an interest informing the Cultural Consortium during the initial bidding process for the High Street Heritage Action Zone programme in 2019.

These groups formed the basis of the Grantham Cultural Consortium going forward and were responsible for the development and implementation of the cultural programme. The Grantham Cultural Consortium was made up of:

- **Grantham Dramatic Society**
- **Grantham Community Heritage Association (Grantham Museum)**
- **Grantham Arts**
- **Chantry Dance Company**
- **St Wulfram's Church**
- **National Trust**

The 'Grantham: Arts and Exploration' programme was designed to engage residents and visitors to the town centre with arts and heritage in a new way, and to provide opportunities for people to develop skills, and enjoy creative activity both for the duration of the scheme and beyond.

The programme set out six aims, and through this evaluation document the extent to which they were successful will be explored and determined.

The aims and intended outcomes outlined during programme development were as follows:

- **Aim 1: Explore, highlight and celebrate the heritage of Grantham, in support of the main HSHAZ programme**

Intended outcome: The Grantham community will have a greater understanding and appreciation of the town's heritage, and of the economic and social benefits of retaining, restoring, and preserving heritage assets.

- **Aim 2: Deliver an exciting programme of cultural activity within the Heritage Action Zone.**

Intended outcome: Between January 2021 and December 2023 members of the Cultural Consortium will curate and deliver an integrated programme of varied cultural activity, inspired by the built and social heritage of Grantham. The programme will bring vibrancy to the town centre and create memorable experiences.

- **Aim 3: Engage all those who live, visit and work in Grantham thorough opportunities to participate.**

Intended outcome: The Grantham community will have opportunity to participate in the creation and delivery of the cultural programme and will have multiple opportunities to take part. A range of activities will be developed to engage people with different interests and levels of experience.

- **Aim 4: Create dedicated, accessible spaces for cultural activity**

Intended outcome: Dedicated spaces for creative activity in the town centre will be created, allowing groups and individuals within and beyond the cultural consortium access to equipment, rehearsal and performance space etc. These spaces will support the delivery of activity within the programme and provide continuing legacy beyond 2024, supporting the diversification of the town centre.

- **Aim 5: Increase the capacity and sustainability of cultural organisations and community groups**

Intended outcome: Members of the cultural consortium, along with other cultural organisations in the community will benefit from increased capacity through the creation of a cultural network. New delivery and commercial models will have been tested to support long term sustainability. The programme will also provide opportunity for professionals in the cultural and creative industries to benefit from paid commissions.

- **Aim 6: Increase the diversity of volunteers, participants and audiences.**

Intended outcome: A wide and diverse audience will be supported through the range and variation of activity available. Performances and activity will be provided free of charge, reducing barriers to participation. The delivery of cultural activity in town centre spaces will encourage participation from individuals and groups who may not usually engage in creative activity in more traditional settings such as theatres and museums. Opportunities for individuals to translate new or existing interests into volunteering or wider participation will be highlighted throughout, supporting an increase in capacity.

Project Overviews

The programme secured funding for nine projects which were developed and delivered by the members of the consortium. Each organisation (except for the National Trust, who remained a member of the Consortium in an advisory capacity) submitted project proposals as part of the project development process, which would align with one or more of the overarching aims. The

proposals were then assessed by the consortium using a scoring matrix and the highest scoring proposals were selected and put forward as part of the funding bid in December 2020.

Each of the proposals which secured funding through the process was then delivered directly by the relevant group or groups within the consortium.

- **Festival of Angels (St Wulfram's Church)**

The Festival of Angels was the first of the Grantham Cultural projects to be delivered. Local artists worked with the community to create large, dramatic angel sculptures which were displayed in St Wulfram's church.

The project was a reflection of the town through Covid 19, and peoples hopes and aspirations for the future.

It opened in November 2021 and ran through to February.

- **Westgate Hub (Grantham Dramatic Society)**

In 2019 Grantham Dramatic Society (GDS) took a lease on an extensive, long term vacant property to the rear of a café in Grantham town centre (84 Westgate), with the aim of bringing back into use as a community performing arts hub and exhibition space.

Through the cultural programme, GDS were able to complete works to install a kitchen, renovate toilets including the addition of an accessible toilet. In addition, the project supported the digitisation of the GDS archive which will be made available to the public.

- **Heritage Walks (Grantham Dramatic Society)**

Heritage Walks was a programme of guided heritage walks with volunteers portraying historical figures from Grantham's past to explore the town's history.

- **Heritage Touring (Grantham Dramatic Society)**

The heritage touring project was originally included within the project bid. The ambition was for the society to tour a performance linked to Grantham's heritage in local venues other than traditional theatre spaces. The ambition was to be able to connect with audiences who would not normally attend theatre performances.

Unfortunately, due to a significant lack of volunteers following the Covid pandemic, GDS were not able to deliver this element of the project work, and the project was removed from the programme.

- **Community Print (Grantham Arts)**

The Community Print project, delivered by Grantham Arts gave local residents the opportunity to develop new skills and explore Grantham's built heritage through the medium of Lino Cut prints. Participants took part in four sessions, learning lino cut and printing techniques which culminated in them creating artworks featuring Grantham's historic and buildings and landmarks.

The process was adapted to deliver workshops which were accessible to adults with learning disabilities.

The resulting artworks were exhibited at Grantham Museum.

- **Community Ceramics (Grantham Arts)**

Within the original funding bid, the community ceramics project, delivered by Grantham Arts was due to create 12 large vessels which would be decorated by local community groups to depict

Grantham's heritage and their hopes for the town's future.

However, the project suffered from a number of delays, which will be discussed later in this report, and as a result was reshaped to allow works to complete in a shorter timeframe.

Ultimately the group delivered the 'My Grantham Family' project, which encouraged members of the public to create ceramic representations of their families, which were displayed in shop windows within the HSAZ.

Ultimately, this allowed for a greater level of engagement with people who would not ordinarily take part in cultural activities, and attract a wider demographic generally, as people were able to take part in drop-in sessions, rather than being required to commit to multiple sessions over several weeks to create a finished piece.

- **Community Exhibition Program (Grantham Community Heritage Association)**

The original programme plan was for the cultural programme to fund a programme of exhibitions which would be co-curated by the Grantham Community. However, the museum team suffered from a significant loss of capacity following the pandemic as volunteers did not return to the museum following its reopening. Despite best efforts of the museum team, they have not been able as yet to rebuild the number of volunteers and therefore did not have the capacity to deliver the exhibition programme.

With the agreement of Historic England, the project was reconfigured to focus on less people intensive activities – the creation of a Grantham Timeline, which will be on permanent display in the museum, and the creation of a community cabinet, where local individuals, groups and societies will be welcome to create their own exhibitions about elements of Grantham's history which are important to them.

These elements were delivered late in the programme, and have yet to reach their full impact, however as permanent elements of the museum's offer, they will serve as a legacy to the project.

- **Ghost Dances (Chantry Dance)**

Chantry dance is a multi-award-winning dance company based in Grantham. As part of the cultural programme, they were inspired by the music of Grantham born composer Nicholas Maw, and in particular the Ghost Dances suite.

Through the project they created and performed a new piece based on the themes of dreams and memory.

They also delivered workshops exploring the same themes through movement and dance.

- **Capacity Building (All)**

The final element included within the Cultural Programme budget was an annual budget which the consortium members could self-direct to support their development and build organisational resilience, for example, to facilitate training of fund membership to professional organisations. Unfortunately, this was the area of the project which was least successful. Despite regular prompting and encouragement to take up this opportunity, only one of the groups – Chantry Dance – utilised the training budget. The failure of this element of the project resulted in an underspend across the scheme.

Programme achievements

The Grantham Arts and Exploration Programme delivered some significant achievements, and a programme of activities which encouraged residents and visitors to learn about the town's heritage and look at the place in a new light.

The **Festival of Angels** at St Wulfram's church was the first event delivered through the programme. Three local professional artists were commissioned to create 10 angel sculptures which were then exhibited within the church. 180 volunteers supported their creation over 11 community workshops. Community groups which took part included Positive Futures, a group which supports children from deprived communities in Grantham; South Lincolnshire Blind Society, and the Daybreak Centre, which supports young adults with disabilities. Nine students from Grantham College chose to work on the project as part of their work experience requirements.

For many of the participants, the project was a period of reflection and coming together marking a new beginning following the impacts of the Covid 19 Pandemic. Participants were given the opportunity to record and share their hopes and wishes for the future, which were displayed during the festival.

100 people attended the launch event for the festival, and although the church was not able to record exact visitor numbers over the period that the sculptures were displayed (as the church is open access) St Wulfram's Christmas Tree Festival and winter ice rink took place during the period the angels were displayed, which was visited by over 2000 people.

Visitors feedback was exceptionally positive. While St Wulfram's church has a reputation for hosting art exhibitions, many of these are professional pieces, such as Luke Jerram's 'Museum of the Moon', large scale community projects are much less likely to take place – largely due to the cost implications.

The project was very successful in encouraging residents who might not ordinarily have visited St Wulfram's, and even those who were regular visitors to experience the place in a new way.

Feedback received from visitors included:

- "The angels are breath-taking."
- "The angels are amazing!"
- "The angels are so very moving. It provoked a very emotional response. Well done to those who made this beautiful festival of Angels happen."
- "Festival a delight – thank you."

There was mixed success for the projects led by Grantham Dramatic Society were, overall, they did achieve many of the aims of the project as a whole, but there are areas where they were not able to achieve the full scope of their ambitions for the project.

Across both the **Westgate Hub and Heritage Walks projects**, the Society recorded over 800 volunteer hours. The Westgate Hub project was particularly successful and supported the creation of a permanent base for the GDS in the town centre, as well as creating accessible facilities which will be made available to other groups and organisations.

The project supported the installation of level flooring, refurbished toilets, including the addition of

an accessible toilet and the installation of a kitchen. This has allowed the GDS hub, at the rear of 84 Westgate to host social events and coffee mornings both for members of the society and the wider community.

The creation of community spaces for art and culture within the town centre was a key aim on the project overall, and the creation of the Westgate Hub.

The Heritage Walk programme delivered seven walks which were attended by 67 people. Another 50 people were engaged in conversations about the town's heritage but were not formally participating in the tour themselves.

Feedback received was very positive and included:

- I had no idea there were so many historical figures associated with Grantham.”
- “Found the walk really fascinating.”
- “Learned so much on the walk.”
- “The walk was amazing, thank you. I loved seeing you all dressed up.”

This feedback highlights what is often found in Grantham. Members of the public -especially long-term residents - are quick to write the town off as being uninteresting and unimportant, but when provided with accessible and fun opportunities to learn about the town's heritage, begin to see it in a new light.

The heritage walk programme had a considerable underspend as GDS were not able to deliver all of the walk elements as originally planned. As a result the total grant expenditure on this element of the project was only £233. The remainder of the budget for this project – totalling £1603 was transferred to the delivery of the Westgate Hub project to ensure that it remained deliverable following the impact of inflation on project costs.

Ghost Dances provided opportunity to explore the works of Nicholas Maw, a Grantham born composer who, despite being considered among the country's pre-eminent post – war composers, is not well known in his hometown of Grantham.

Maw was born on Finkin Street, which is within the Grantham HSHAZ. Chantry Dance chose to utilise his Ghost Dances suite which deals with the theme of dreams and memories.

Chantry Dance choreographed a new piece based on his music, which was performed at the Guildhall Arts Centre on the 25 -26th April 2023.

As with all of the activities delivered through the cultural programme, performances were free, however there was disappointingly low attendance - in total 139 people saw the performances.

It is recognised that contemporary music, such as that composed by Maw, and contemporary dance, can be challenging to audiences, and is not something which is regularly performed in the town centre, as it is often not commercially viable to do so.

The Cultural programme provide the opportunity to stage a performance that otherwise would not have taken place and introduce residents of the town to new cultural experiences on the High Street.

By bringing a performance like this to the town centre gave people an opportunity to experience it 'risk free' as audience members did not have the barrier of cost to attend – or the risk of expending their entertainment budget on something they might not enjoy.

Those who did attend gave very positive feedback - both of the performance itself, but also expressed surprise at discovering the composer and his links to Grantham.

Alongside the performances, Chantry Dance ran three community workshops, aimed at those with no previous dance experience, to explore memory, music and movement. Two workshops were open to the general public, while the third was delivered for elderly residents at Maple Leaf Care Home in Grantham. These workshops engaged an additional 30 participants.

People attending the workshops expressed their delight at the opportunity to do something different in the town centre, and one participant even hugged the workshop facilitators as they had found the experience liberating. Once again, by removing the cost barrier to participate gave the opportunity to take part to people who would not otherwise have done so.

Grantham Arts delivered two projects within the programme: **Community Print and Community Ceramics.**

Community Print encouraged participants to explore the architecture and landmarks of Grantham and express them through lino cut art.

They ran four workshops, each made up of four once weekly sessions where participants were taught techniques of lino cutting and printing and explored the town's built heritage, eventually producing their own artworks featuring Grantham's buildings which were exhibited in Grantham Museum.

In addition, a further single day session was run which was adapted to be suitable for adults with learning disabilities to take part.

In total 30 people took part in the workshops. The exhibition of works at the Grantham Museum opened in early March 2024, and will continue to run beyond the end of the HSHAZ scheme, to take advantage of the Easter Holiday which begins immediately after the end of the programme.

The Community Ceramics project faced significant challenges (discussed in full later in this report), which resulted in the original planned project not being deliverable. Initially Grantham Arts had planned to create 12 large vessels which would be decorated by community groups.

However, as it became apparent that it would not be possible to deliver this project as originally planned, a simplified project – 'My Grantham Family' was developed.

This project encouraged residents to produce models of their families, which were later displayed in shop windows around the town.

Ultimately the smaller scale of the pieces produced through this project led to a greater level of engagement. Participants were able to attend drop-in sessions, rather than having to commit to multiple sessions, or lengthy workshops. As the items were more portable, it was possible for sessions to be run in schools, and in the George Shopping Centre during Christmas activities.

This approach in particular, allowed people who chanced upon the activities while visiting the town for other reasons to take part - and they were then encouraged back to find their pieces on display.

173 people took part over six sessions, the majority of whom were children. Out of all the activities held, this was by far the most accessible for children, and their parents were also encouraged to take part.

As with the print exhibition, the models will remain on display over the Easter school holiday period to encourage visits to the town centre.

Grantham Community Heritage Association (Grantham Museum) faced the greatest challenges when it came to delivering their programme of activity. Ultimately, they were not able to deliver the programme of exhibitions which had formed the original proposal, and as a result the level of

community engagement with their programme was limited.

With the support and agreement of the Historic England team, the project was scaled back to something which was more achievable.

The Museum team worked with five volunteers over 90 hours (total) to research and produce a timeline of Grantham's history, which will be permanently displayed in the museum.

In addition, they were able to purchase and install a new display unit to be used as a community cabinet – this will also become a permanent feature of the museum, and community groups, businesses or individuals will be able to use this space to produce small exhibitions focused on the elements of Grantham's history which are important to them.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

There were a number of challenges which affected the Consortium as a whole, along with issues which affected individual projects. All of the challenges were opportunities for learning for the consortium and its individual members and overcoming them has supported not only the delivery of this programme, but shaping the future direction and ambition of the project's legacy.

For the majority of the Cultural Consortium members, this was the first time that they had taken part in the development of an externally funded project. It proved a learning experience for all of the members.

Ensuring that the projects put forward as part of the bid would meet the requirements of the HSHAZ cultural programme was a challenge but by developing an initial internal bid process, during which each of the groups submitted their projects, and an internal scoring process, during which all of the Consortium Members had the opportunity to score all of the proposals utilising a scoring matrix, gave the groups some insight into how funding bids need to be developed and presented.

This increased the confidence of those groups in seeking other external funding.

A major challenge which affected all of the projects delivered through the programme was volunteer capacity, particularly following Covid-19.

All of the volunteers run or supported consortium members found that their volunteer numbers had significantly reduced, and despite efforts to promote opportunities and recruit new volunteers, numbers have still not returned to pre-pandemic levels.

This was a particular issue for Grantham Dramatic Society, who found that they were unable to deliver the community touring element of the scheme because of lack of volunteers to do so. It also limited the number of heritage walks that they were able to deliver over timeframe of the programme.

However, by taking part in the scheme they have been able to determine methods of delivery with fewer people, and at the same time raised their profile, and will potentially interest people in taking part as costumed guides for the heritage walks, who might not have been interested in joining the society's more typical programme of Amateur Dramatic productions.

Likewise, loss of volunteers was a significant problem for the Grantham Community Heritage Association (GCHA) in the delivery of their original programme. In this instance the issue was

exacerbated as the Museum's part time manager left in 2020 and was not replaced. Throughout the programme the reduced GCHA board and volunteers struggled to develop and deliver an exhibition programme.

A proposed project between the National Trust and the Museum which would have explored the impact of the use of nearby Belton House during the first world war as a base for the Machine Gun Corps, and specifically the impact the sudden appearance of 20,000 soldiers had on the town centre, was approved by Historic England, but was not able to proceed due to insufficient volunteer capacity.

SKDC underwent several staff restructures in 2020, which resulted in a reduction in the number of staff available to support the delivery of the project, particularly within the Council's Arts team. These restructures resulted in the HSHAZ project officer becoming the only member of staff supporting the cultural consortium programme.

This exacerbated the challenges faced with volunteers, as it was not possible to maintain the level of support originally indicated during the project development and bid process and put more emphasis on the Consortium members to deliver all aspects of the project.

Had the Council's arts team been in a position to be more involved, or even to lead some aspects of the project delivery, it likely would have had a more successful outcome.

This has highlighted the need for a different approach to be taken, and should opportunity be created to carry out a similar project in the future, it would benefit from budget being identified to contract a dedicated programme facilitator to ensure that delivery partners were adequately supported throughout.

Similarly, increased costs driven by inflation and high energy costs proved a challenge across the board for the delivery of projects.

Ghost Dances was originally envisaged to be performed outside of traditional theatre spaces, to encourage engagement from a wider audience, including those who may have been put off by a dance performance at a theatre.

Unfortunately, as the project was scheduled for delivery in 2023, the costs associated with staging, lights, power, PA systems etc, had increased to the extent that made an outdoor performance - or a performance in an alternative venue unfeasible. Therefore, Chantry Dance ultimately delivered their performances within Grantham Arts Centre.

While this resulted in a successful delivery of the Ghost Dances project, it limited the potential of the project to engage with people who would not choose to visit a theatre.

Similarly, higher than anticipated costs also impacted the Festival of Angels project, albeit in a lesser way. The project was able to deliver all of its original objectives but did have to shorten its proposed run, due to the cost of the rigging for the angel sculptures. The decision to hold the festival over the same period as the Christmas Tree festival however, ensured high numbers of visitors got to experience both events and engage with St Wulfram's as a community venue, and as a historic site.

The structure of the programme, which each Cultural Consortium member group taking responsibility for one project or group of projects proved challenging. While each group delivered their own projects, there was a tendency for groups to become less engaged with the programme overall when their project was completed.

This made it difficult to rapidly address any areas of underspend, or to effectively explore alternative delivery methods.

Ultimately, this was a flaw in how the HSHAZ Project Manager established the funding structure for the consortium members. Should a similar project be repeated in the future, a more centralised approach should be taken, with the group taking responsibility for the delivery of all of the projects throughout the programme. More consideration should have been given to the role of the Cultural Consortium as a body to commission works, rather than deliver all of the projects directly.

While we all wished to see a quality outcome in the work that was created, the priority for the project was engagement. Working directly with artists as the Consortium Members did sometimes create a conflict between a desire for high quality artistic output vs this priority for engagement, and it was necessary at times to encourage the artists to step away from their preconceived notion of specific outputs and be guided by the wider community.

Ultimately, this was overcome as the first projects delivered with the community took place and demonstrated the opportunities for both high quality output.

As has previously been mentioned, the most significant area of failure within the programme was within the internal capacity building project.

Within this element of the programme, an annual budget was ringfenced for each of the groups to support each member group in accessing training or professional memberships which would assist in their development.

Despite regular prompting for the Consortium members to make use of this budget, only one of the member groups – Chantry Dance – accessed funding for training.

This resulted in the largest underspend across the project, and it is likely had a programme of training been developed and implemented centrally, it would not only have benefited the consortium members, but could also have been offered to a wider group of participants, strengthening the cultural sector within Grantham as a whole.

At times delays in communication with the Historic England team was barrier to moving projects forward. While the team was generally very responsive, and offered clear guidance and advice, on occasion project change requests took several months to determine and as a result there was a delayed start to projects which impacted the overall timetable of delivery and impacted the ability to be flexible around reallocating underspend.

Grantham Arts faced a specific challenge in the delivery of their two projects, Community Print and Community Ceramics. Initially the intent was to establish an Arts Hub at Grantham House, a National Trust property which is currently leased to St Wulfram's church.

Shortly after the initiation of the project, it became apparent that this would no longer be possible – largely due to the increase in costs needed to bring the space into use, which would have meant that St Wulfram's it was no longer feasible for them to offer the space rent free to Grantham Arts.

This delay had a significant impact on the delivery of the programme and potentially on its planned legacy outputs to create a permanent arts hub.

In order to support the project aims, and the legacy of the programme, it was important that the hub was located as close to the high street as possible, and this gave limited options which were

suitable, without Grantham Arts having to absorb the cost of a lease or operators licence on a vacant unit for the full duration of the project.

Working together with other Consortium Members we were able to resolve the venue problem, and the Grantham Arts projects, which included the installation of a Kiln and other equipment, were able to go ahead utilizing under used space within Grantham Museum.

In many ways this has proved preferable, as the museum site is more central to the high street and closer to parking and public transport links. Grantham Arts have been able to benefit from purpose-built exhibition space within the museum, and the museum has, and will continue to benefit from increased footfall generated by project participants.

Legacy

Creating a long-term legacy which would support ongoing access to creative an cultural activity within Grantham town centre was a key aim for the programme, as well as for the HSHAZ cultural programme as a whole.

Prior to the cultural programme, Grantham's rich heritage and arts sector was often perceived as being hidden and inaccessible, with low levels of community engagement.

There was a clear desire which had been expressed during various consultation processes for dedicated hubs on the town centre, which could both facilitate the development of arts businesses, and also increase community access to arts facilities.

Through the Cultural Programme, Consortium Members were able to create two long term arts hubs in the town centre.

Grantham Dramatic Society's Westgate Hub, created at 84 Westgate, will become a key space for both the Society itself and other performing arts and community organisations.

The Cultural Consortium funding has supported the Society in making the space accessible for all, including providing accessible toilets within the building.

To date, this has supported increased community activity from the site, including workshops and coffee mornings.

Going forward the venue will provide rehearsal and performance space – not only for GDS themselves, but also for other community groups in and around Grantham town centre.

Grantham Arts' hub, now based within the Grantham Museum, will provide facilities for artists. Although the facilities supported by the grant funding were determined by the Cultural Consortium members, they do tie in with desires which were raised by the wider community through previous consultations into arts provision in Grantham.

Alongside delivering the HSHAZ cultural programme, Grantham Arts have committed to delivering regular exhibitions which will take place within the museum going forward.

Through the programme the Grantham Arts team were able to test their business model and have established as a CIC to provide sustainable provision for the delivery of arts activity on the High Street. They have delivered their first commercial venture – a series of 'pottery and prosecco' evenings.

Through their engagement in the programme, and previous community arts activities Grantham Arts have developed experience in community engagement through the arts, and they will continue to develop and facilitate community arts activities.

Aligned to this increased community activity based at the museum, the Grantham Community Heritage Association's ongoing community cabinet project, will allow residents and community organisations to develop and deliver small exhibitions to share the heritage which is important to them.

As previously discussed within this report, many of the Cultural Consortium Members had no previous experience of applying for external funding, through the development, delivery, and evaluation process of the HSHAZ cultural programme, they have been guided through the process, and gained skills which will support them going forward.

Many of the consortium groups were also able to resource themselves through the programme in a way which will allow them to continue to deliver work inspired by the town's heritage beyond the scope of the project. For example, Grantham Dramatic Society have committed to continuing to develop and deliver heritage walks in the town building on the skills and facilities developed during the Cultural Programme.

With support from the HSHAZ Project Manager, the Community Heritage Association was successful in securing £18,600 from the Arts Fund Reimagined programme to support capacity building and museum development. They are currently beginning to deliver that programme of works which will bolster their activity – and the legacy of the HSHAZ cultural projects further.

Through the consortium, the groups had opportunity to network more widely among the cultural and arts providers in and around the town centre. Through building better and lasting links between the consortium members, local businesses, and community organisations has supported a strengthening of the arts and cultural sector within Grantham, which will continue to deliver for residents and visitors alike and bring vibrancy and energy for our town centre in the years to come.

Conclusion

Grantham 'Arts and Exploration' was successful in delivering outcomes across all of the aims set by the project, however the impact of the programme, and level of engagement was less than anticipated during the programme design phase.

Feedback from participants has demonstrated that the programme has encouraged them to explore Grantham's heritage, and that they have discovered things they did not previously know about the town which has improved their perception of the town.

The programme has clearly demonstrated a desire for arts and cultural activity to be a feature of the high street and provided the consortium members with opportunities to test new development and delivery pathways, establishing sustainable models which will continue beyond the closure of the programme.

While the capacity building project within the programme failed to deliver the identified outcomes, the project overall did support the development of a more robust cultural sector, and bolster the

organisational resilience of the consortium members.

Through the development of two hubs for ongoing community activity – one for performing arts through the Grantham Dramatic Society hub at 84 Westgate, and one through Grantham Art's permanent residency at Grantham Museum will continue this ongoing legacy, as well as support continued development of arts and cultural activities, and support the resilience of all three organisations.

Throughout the programme of activities Consortium members have made concerted efforts to engage with a wide demographic of users. They were proactive in ensuring that the activities they delivered were accessible, and able to make suitable adjustments where necessary to deliver activities to groups who may otherwise not have been able to take part fully.

The projects encouraged residents and visitors to enter heritage spaces that they may not otherwise have explored, and crucially feel welcomed and engaged in those spaces. Through activities like the Festival of Angels, and the Grantham Arts project people were able to explore spaces which they had previously identified as being for 'others', like St Wulfram's church.

Ghost Dances introduced unknown music and contemporary dance to new audiences, however it is recognised that had Chantry Dance been able to utilise the alternative spaces originally envisioned for the project, rather than performing in a traditional theatre space, their would have been higher levels of engagement.

As this was the first time that many of the organisations taking part as Consortium members has taken part in a project like this, there was inevitably a learning curve to the delivery of the works for all involved.

Most notably it has been identified that a greater degree of centralised facilitation throughout would have resulted in a more successful scheme. Should the opportunity arise to deliver a similar programme again, having reflected on lessons learned through the HSHAZ Cultural programme, we would encourage a different structure to the consortium. Rather than opting for each of the groups to be responsible for their own area of delivery, we would aim for a more collaborative approach, ideally also identifying budget to employ a cultural programme facilitator to oversee the delivery of all of the projects and increase the capacity of those organisations which struggled to deliver.

However, despite these challenges Grantham Arts and Exploration programme successfully delivered a four-year programme of arts and cultural activity which brought people together in celebration of Grantham's built and social heritage and engendered civic pride, which will leave a lasting legacy of sustainable and community driven arts and creative activity within the town centre.