



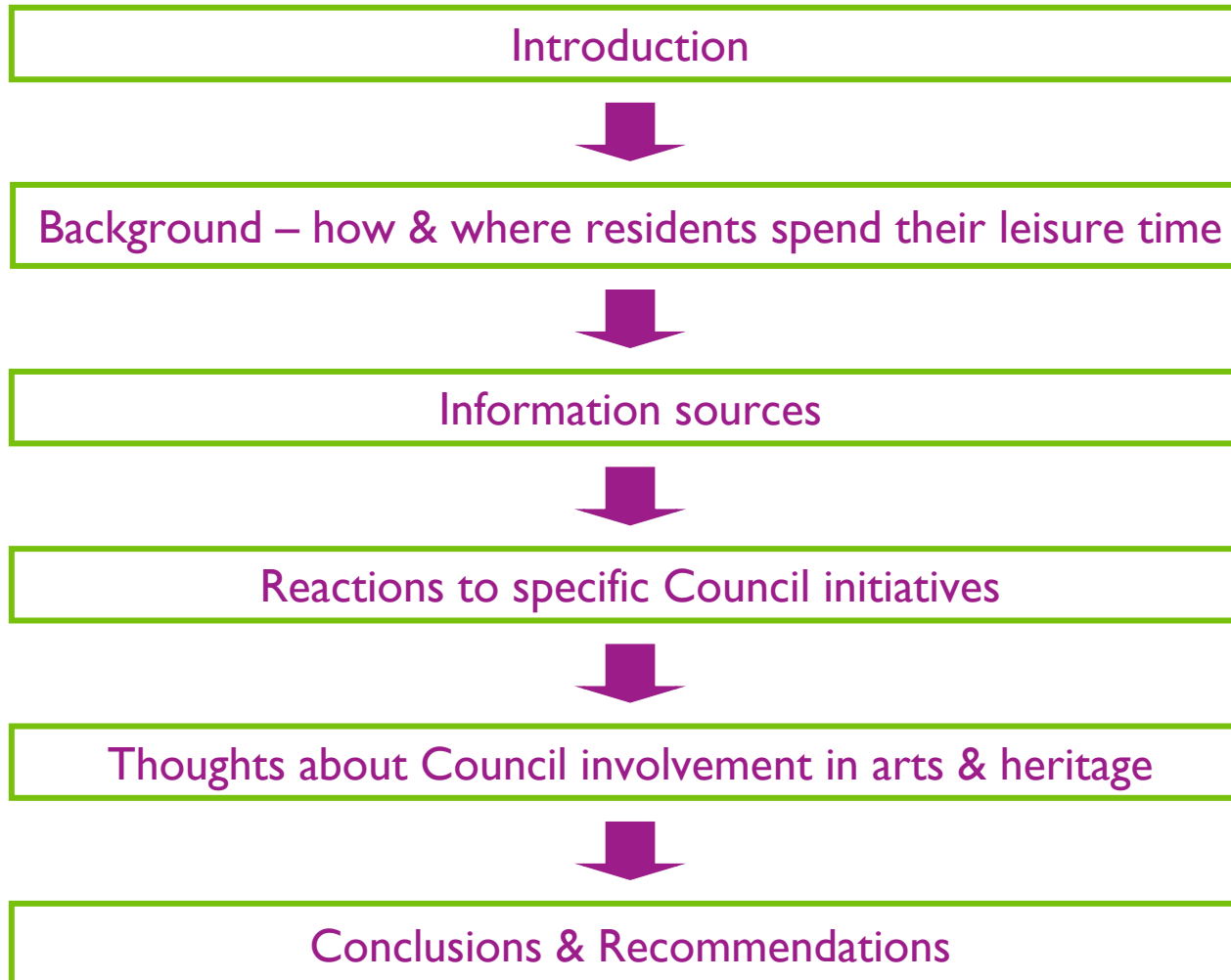
# Arts Strategy Review 2007

## Qualitative Research Presentation

Prepared for Spelthorne Borough Council  
January 2007

## Structure of debrief

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# Introduction



## Background

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- A recent review of research and consultation carried out by Spelthorne Borough Council has identified a need to find out what residents of Spelthorne think of the current provision of Leisure and Cultural services
- The initiatives of particular interest are those within Arts and Heritage
- Research is now required to ascertain:
  - what residents think of the current arts and heritage opportunities that are provided in Spelthorne Borough
  - what role residents perceive Spelthorne Borough Council should play in supporting arts and heritage activities in the future

# Objectives

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## *Overall objective*

To provide guidance on Spelthorne Borough Council's Arts and Heritage strategy in 2007

## *Research objectives*

- To explore:
  - Residents' awareness of arts and heritage facilities/venues in Spelthorne
  - Where residents tend to find out about arts and heritage activities and events
  - Whether they take part in activities and/or what prevents them from taking part
  - Whether they are satisfied with arts and heritage activities and events available to them
  - What they feel the Council's role should be in arts and heritage provision

## Overall method and sample

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- 5 focus discussion groups, each lasting 2 hours and arranged as follows.

<u>Group No.</u>	<u>Life-stage</u>	<u>SEG</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Location</u>
1	Pre-nester	BCI	4 men, 4 women	Staines / Laleham
2	Younger family	BCI	4 men, 4 women	Stanwell / Stanwell Moor
3	Older family	C2D	4 men, 4 women	Shepperton
4	Post-nester	C2D	4 men, 4 women	Sunbury / Halliford
5	Pensioners	BCI	4 men, 4 women	Ashford

## Overall method and sample (cont'd)

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- Sample definitions:
  - *Pre-nesters*: aged 20-30 and living independently; young single or married / co-habiting people without children
  - *Younger family*: aged 25 – 40; at least one child aged 2-10 years living at home
  - *Older family*: aged 40 – 55; at least one child aged 11-18 years living at home
  - *Post-nesters*: aged 55-64; no children living permanently at home
  - *Those on a pension*: aged 65 or over

## Fieldwork timings

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- Fieldwork took place between 4-11 December 2006.
- The project team was Ben Knight, Samantha Siva and Sali Howells.

## Background:

How residents spend their leisure time



## How residents spend their leisure time

The *amount* of leisure time that people have, *who* they choose to spend it with, and *what* they choose to do differs by life stage

### Pre nesters

- Have a lot of leisure time – after work and on the weekends
- High disposable income means they tend to spend their leisure time outside the home
- Usually spend their leisure time with partners or friends, or alone
- Will tend to stay local, but occasionally venture into London



#### *Leisure activities focused on arts/heritage:*

- Seeing live music
- Going to the cinema
- Occasionally visiting theatres/ art galleries/ museums
- Isolated mention of taking dance lessons



#### *Leisure activities not focused on arts/heritage:*

- Playing or watching sports
- Going for meals/to the pub with friends
- Going to the gym

Pre nesters are most interested in activities that have a social aspect – such as music and events – but also appreciate individual pursuits such as film and art

## How residents spend their leisure time (cont'd)

### Adults with young families

- Parents tend not to have very much leisure time
- Any leisure time is spent with the children, or accompanying children to their activities
- Rarely do parents have time alone together
- Leisure time tends to be spent close to home
- Will tend to stay local because it is easier with young children



#### *Leisure activities focused on arts/heritage:*

- Taking children to local parks/ playgrounds
- Attending local events/ fairs/ fetes
- Going to the cinema
- Occasionally seeing pantomimes with the children (especially at Christmas)



#### *Leisure activities not focused on arts/heritage:*

- Watching sports – children's team sports and professional
- Taking children to leisure centres
- Occasionally going out for meals/ to the pub

Adults with young families are most interested in events that engage young children, or those that are appropriate for the whole family

## How residents spend their leisure time (cont'd)

### Activities for children 6-11 yrs

- Leisure time tends to be spent with siblings, school friends, or parents
- Children spend a lot of time doing informal activities at home or close to home
- Occasionally they will be taken on outings with parents
- Children may also attend extra curricular activities organised through school
- It is a period of experimentation – children will try a range of different activities to see if they like them



#### *Leisure activities focused on arts/heritage:*

- Playing in local parks/ playgrounds
- Attending local events/ fairs/ fetes with the family
- Going to the cinema
- Learning music – the piano, guitar, drums
- Occasionally seeing pantomimes with the family (especially at Christmas)
- Isolated mention of drama/ballet classes
- Isolated mention of going to Spelthorne Museum



#### *Leisure activities not focused on arts/heritage:*

- Team sports, such as football / hockey
- Playing with siblings at home
- Scouts / Guides
- Swimming at the leisure centre
- Play station

Young children have a wide repertoire of interests, and are most engaged by activities that are hands-on and interactive

## How residents spend their leisure time (cont'd)

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### Adults with older families

- Parents find they have more leisure time to spend together, without the children
- Leisure time tends to be spent close to home, but occasionally venture out to London



#### *Leisure activities focused on arts/heritage:*

- Attending local events/ fairs/ fetes
- Going to the theatre
- Going to the cinema
- Occasionally going to museums



#### *Leisure activities not focused on arts/heritage:*

- Playing or watching sports
- Cycling
- Occasionally going out for meals/ to the pub

Parents with older families are most interested in activities that engage them personally (rather than their children)

## How residents spend their leisure time (cont'd)

### Activities for youths 12-18 yrs

- Children start to be more independent and engage in their own activities with friends
- May start to explore their own interests in a more serious way
- Will tend to spend leisure time in the local area
- However, parents express concerns that their teenagers are idle and have nothing to do



#### *Leisure activities focused on arts/heritage:*

- Hanging out in local parks/ playgrounds
- Going to the cinema
- Learning music – the piano, guitar, drums



#### *Leisure activities not focused on arts/heritage:*

- Team sports, such as football
- Skateboarding
- Play station
- Chatting to friends online

Youths are most interested in activities in which they can socialise with their peers

## How residents spend their leisure time (cont'd)

### Post nesters and pensioners

- Once children have grown up and moved out, adults have a lot of leisure time
- More freedom to explore their own interests
- Leisure time is spent alone, with partners, or with friends
- However, also spend time with their grandchildren
- Leisure time tends to be spent locally, but trips to London or outside of London are not uncommon



#### *Leisure activities focused on arts/heritage:*

- Adult education classes
  - Painting
  - Flower arranging
- Volunteering
  - For the Museum
  - Theatre productions
- U3A
- Going to the theatre
- Going to art exhibitions
- Going to museums



#### *Leisure activities not focused on arts/heritage:*

- Playing golf
- Gardening
- Travelling
- Going out for meals/ to the pub

Of all adults, post nesters and pensioners are most interested in activities for themselves

## Background:

Where do residents spend their leisure time



# Residents see a number of benefits to engaging in arts and heritage activities in their local area

*“It’s on your doorstep, so it would be nice to be able to do that without having to drive or go in to London”  
(Pensioner, BCI)*

## Local events

- Do not need to plan ahead
- Can go by foot/bicycle, but also easy to drive & park
- A fun day out with family/friends
- Meet people in the community

## Local music/gigs

- No hassle to get home late at night/on a weeknight
- If in a local park - can take a picnic or have a day out with the family/friends

## Art galleries

- Support local artists
- Easier and less crowded than going into London

## Museums

- An opportunity to learn more about your local heritage

Stay within  
Spelthorne  
Borough

Residents from all target groups express a strong preference to engage in as many activities as they possibly can in their local area – going further afield is seen to be far less convenient

## However, residents find that there is more on offer outside Spelthorne Borough

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Residents do not expect activities in Spelthorne to compete on the scale of those available in London; however, some opportunity to experience popular music (eg. Abba tribute concert) or quality exhibitions in Spelthorne would be appreciated

# Theatre is an activity that is usually done outside of Spelthorne

Theatre-goers look for specific experiences when they attend the theatre

## In London...

- The big shows with the big stars
- A special night out – get dressed up, have a meal, a night out on the town
- Better venues – with professional staging and theatre seating
- Musicals (eg. Mamma Mia)

*“I’d much rather go up to London and have a night out with a meal, maybe stay up there than go to Staines Town Hall” (Pre nester, BCI)*

## Provincial theatres (eg. Woking, Richmond, Windsor)

- Easier to travel to, and park – no need to plan too far in advance
- Cheaper than going to London
- Less crowded and easier to get a ticket
- Close to shopping centres and cafés, so you can make more of a day/evening of it
- Good productions
  - Children’s productions, eg. the Snow Show
  - Also occasionally well known productions from London

Residents do not believe they can achieve the same, or a comparable, theatre experience as they do in provincial theatres, within Spelthorne Borough

# Residents have certain negative preconceptions about attending theatre in Spelthorne

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Residents worry that theatre within Spelthorne will not be up to the same standard as provincial theatres

- Amateur performers  
*“I’ve brought the kids and they’re all excited and it’s just some old granny” (Young family, BCI)*
- Unknown/Non-mainstream productions
- ‘Unprofessional’ venues – since the Town Hall closed, low awareness of venues with tiered seating or professional stage set-up
- Very low awareness of theatre in Spelthorne

There is a need, not only to raise awareness of theatre productions in the Borough, but also to challenge negative preconceptions regarding venues, performers, or the types of performances available

# Information sources



# People are interested in finding out about leisure activities in and around the Borough

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- Residents say they keep an eye out for leisure activities available in their local area that will provide:
  - Entertainment for the kids
  - A day out with the family or friends
  - A night out with partners or friends
  - Adult education
- However, they do not feel that leisure activities in the Borough are well promoted:
  - There is only sporadic awareness of advertising
  - Often, people report only finding out about events/performances accidentally, or after they have been and gone
  - People question whether Spelthorne does anything to actively promote these activities

*“The advertising power of Spelthorne council is nil. The notice boards contain something that is 3 months out of date” (Post nester, C2D)*



The perceived lack of communication from the Council regarding leisure activities is a key issue

The Spelthorne Bulletin is somewhat effective,  
but not seen as the main provider of leisure information

### Spelthorne Bulletin



High amount of readership – and residents do mention looking for ‘What’s on’ information in the Bulletin;

However, they find that its usefulness is limited:

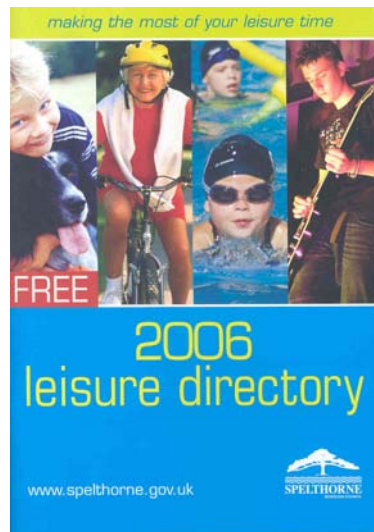
- It only comes out once a quarter – so it does not have current listings or gets thrown away too soon
- It sometimes arrives after big events have already come and gone
- The events calendar is seen to be ‘hidden’ amongst a lot of other information

### Other more useful sources of information tend to be:

- The local press – such as The Informer, The Leader, Staines and Ashford News
  - For listings of upcoming events
  - Or interesting articles on upcoming or past events
- Leaflets – picked up ad-hoc from the Library or charity shops
- Word of mouth – from family/friends, or through school
- Occasionally, advertising banners – at local parks or local venues (eg. Spelthorne College)

## In its current form, the Spelthorne Leisure Directory is of limited value

### Spelthorne Leisure Directory



- Residents can appreciate that the Leisure Directory could have value as a directory of venues and ongoing activities
- However, there is only isolated awareness of the directory
  - No awareness of it coming with the first Council Tax bill
  - An assumption that it will be available through the Library or the Council
- Mixed interest in the content
  - Most interest in ongoing activities for young children – eg. arts, dance, drama, sports classes
  - Some interest in adult education classes
- The lack of a ‘What’s on’ guide detracts from its usefulness



If the Leisure Directory is to become a useful source of information, it ideally needs to 1. include a ‘What’s on’ guide, and 2. have a higher profile

# Residents suggest a variety of opportunities to enhance communications

*Residents would welcome the introduction of a regular 'What's on' guide*

- Including more up to date listings
- In a pull-out poster/calendar format that can be kept
- Possibly sent out with:
  - The Spelthorne Bulletin
  - A local newspaper (either as a pull-out leaflet, or wrap-around)
- To optimise navigation, ideally arranged by activities to suit different target audiences, eg:
  - For the kids
  - For the family
  - For young people
  - For adults
- And within this, categories for:
  - Theatre
  - Music
  - Drama
  - Etc.

*For ad-hoc events or performances, consider additional promotional activity*

- Advertising in public places
  - Banners in High Streets
  - Placards on lampposts, bus stops, billboards
  - Posters, leaflets in pubs
- Local radio advertising (eg. Radio Jackie)
- Advertising through schools (if possible)
  - Leaflets with school newsletters
  - Posters where parents pick up their children

*"It is a vicious circle because if it is not publicised and they don't get the turn out then the next Council meeting they say well it wasn't very well attended so we won't do it" (Post nester, C2D)*

Reactions to specific Council initiatives  
*Drama*



## Participation in Drama activities

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- Attending theatre performances or pantomimes
  - In London
  - In provincial theatres (Woking, Richmond, Hampton Theatre, Chertsey, Walton Playhouse)
- Some mention of attending amateur dramatics
  - When family members or friends have taken part
- Isolated mention of attending performances by the Spelthorne Youth Theatre Company (by a volunteer to the Company)



Drama is an area of keen interest for all target groups, and attendance at professional theatre performances is particularly popular

## Awareness and interest in specific Council initiatives

### Drama

Activity	Awareness	Interest
Spelthorne Youth Theatre Company	✘	✓ ✓
Spelthorne Drama Festival	✘	✓ ✓
Professional theatre performances	✘	✓ ✓
Comedy Club	<i>(Idea for the future)</i>	✓

Although there is strong interest in drama initiatives for both adults and children, awareness is very low

# Spelthorne Youth Theatre Company



*“One of the benefits of any youth theatre is that children gain confidence on the stage ... and that shows later on in their development as an adult” (Pensioner, BCI)*

*Residents support this initiative because...*

- Drama is widely believed to help youngsters gain confidence
- Addresses a community need – it keeps youths ‘off the streets’ by giving them an interest/something to do
- Drama is something that children are interested in
- All children are welcomed, regardless of their acting/ singing/ dancing ability
- Very reasonably priced (at £30 for 10 weeks)

*However, they express reservations regarding...*

- The venue
  - For residents in Sunbury/Halliford, it is too far to go (especially in Friday-night traffic)
- The age groups being limited
  - The vulnerable 16-18 yr age group is excluded

Residents believe the Council should continue this initiative – by promoting it so that more children/parents are aware of it, and supporting it financially so that tuition fees remain subsidised

# Spelthorne Drama Festival



*“Have it as pure entertainment” (Post nester, C2D)*

*Residents support this initiative because...*

- Good for children who want to take a more serious interest in drama
- They have a sense of achievement if they win a prize
- It can be a night of entertainment for the whole family

*However, they express reservations regarding...*

- The adjudication process can put off children who are sensitive to being judged  
*“Competition can knock the confidence out of a child like that” (Post nester, C2D)*

Residents believe the Council should continue to support this initiative – by promoting it and managing its organisation



## Professional theatre performances

*“A lot of people are nine to five, get up, go to work, sort the kids out, and life is really mundane... something like this is original, fresh” (Young family, BCI)*

*Residents support this initiative because...*

- Theatre has strong appeal across most targets
  - An original/different way to spend leisure time
- Gives people the opportunity to see professional theatre close to home
- It is cheaper and more accessible, so open to a wider audience
  - More opportunities for children
  - Also for those who would not usually afford a trip to London, or ticket to a West-End performance

*However, they express reservations regarding...*

- Productions such as *Ay Carmela!* are unknown
  - More mainstream productions would attract a larger audience, particularly musicals or children’s shows
- Very low awareness of the venues – and an assumption that they will not be professional
  - Can be off-putting, especially when people are looking for a theatre ‘experience’

Residents strongly believe the Council should continue to support this initiative, and bring more professional performances to the Borough – however, much more needs to be done in terms of promotion, and addressing people’s concerns about venues

## Thoughts about theatre venues in the Borough

*People have specific expectations when it comes to theatre venues*

- Professional stage set-up
  - Raised stage with curtain
  - Professional lighting
  - Dressing rooms for performers
- Theatre seating
  - Tiered
  - Cushioned
- With a bar or café to purchase refreshments

*However, the dominant view is that venues in the Borough will be far less professional*

- Village halls
- Very small
- Stage and audience all on one level
- Draughty
- Hard plastic chairs
- Urns of tea & coffee, with very limited refreshments

*“If somebody said the same play at Shepperton village hall, I’d think oh it is some mickey mouse thing” (Post nester, C2D)*

To generate more enthusiasm for attending theatre at venues in the Borough, it is vital that promotional work challenges these negative preconceptions

## Appropriateness of venues in the Borough

✓	Riverside Arts Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Isolated mention of viewing a performance there</li><li>○ Professional set up (including orchestra pit)</li><li>○ Just like any other theatre, but smaller and more condensed</li></ul>
✓	John Crook Theatre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ No awareness</li><li>○ But sounds more like a professional theatre</li><li>○ Also, in a private school so assume it must be well equipped</li></ul>
✗	Shepperton Village Hall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Higher awareness, some mention of residents going there for amateur performances or parties</li><li>○ Very small</li><li>○ Not a 'proper' theatre set-up</li></ul>
✓	Other venues mentioned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Magna Carta School</li><li>○ The old Staines Town Hall – fond memories of it being a good venue before it closed</li><li>○ Spelthorne Leisure Centre – has a big sports arena</li></ul>

The Riverside Arts Centre and John Crook Theatre have most potential to be promoted as professional theatre venues



## Comedy Club (*idea for the future*)

*“Comedy clubs and stuff are quite a big thing at the moment” (Pre nester, BCI)*

*Residents support this initiative  
because...*

- Stand up comedy is popular – among all adults
- However, there is far more interest in being a spectator, rather than a performer

*“I’d go but I wouldn’t take part, but go and watch, definitely”  
(Younger family, BCI)*

Residents believe the Council should continue support this initiative – however rather than taking part in workshops, there is far more interest in attending comedy events at local venues

Reactions to specific Council initiatives  
Dance



## Participation in Dance activities

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- As a spectator
  - Ballet performances in London
  - Watching family members taking part in local performances
  - Watching 'Strictly Come Dancing'
- As a participant
  - Salsa lessons
  - Tap lessons



Overall, there is limited spontaneous interest in dance activities, with women tending to be much more interested (in both viewing and participating) in dance than men

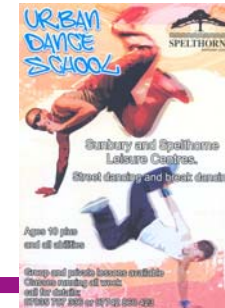
## Awareness and interest in specific Council initiatives

### Dance

Activity	Awareness	Interest
Urban Dance School	✘	✓ ✓
Surrey Young Dancemakers	✘	?
Spelthorne Dance Festival	✘	✘

In the dance category, residents are much more interested in initiatives aimed at children/youths, particularly those that have the potential to engage youngsters through their interest in urban culture

# Urban Dance School



*“It’s probably quite good because it’s for the elder kids and they don’t want to go to ballet lessons”  
(Younger family, BCI)*

*Residents support this initiative because...*

- Street dancing is trendy – so it has widespread appeal
- Sounds like fun, something young people will enjoy
- Parents do not believe it will be as hard to learn as more traditional dance (eg. ballet)
- If it is supported by the Council, parents expect it would be cheaper than dance lessons
- Leisure Centres are conveniently located

*However, they express reservations regarding...*

- Not open to younger children – even though it is something they would enjoy
  - Explore the potential to include a class for younger children (7-10?)

Residents believe the Council should support this initiative – in terms of promotion, organisation and financial backing so that classes are subsidised – and also consider making it available to younger children

# Surrey Young Dancemakers



*“If mine wanted to do something like that” (Younger family, BCI)*

*Residents do not fully support this initiative because...*

- The sort of dance classes on offer is unclear
- It has limited appeal – only for youngsters who are very interested in dance
- Considered expensive (at £60 for 10 weeks)

*However, they can see some value in it because...*

- Young people who are interested deserve the opportunity to explore their interest

Although it has limited appeal, residents feel that the Council should still continue to subsidise this initiative so that youngsters who are interested can afford to attend

## Spelthorne Dance Festival



*“It would be like a taster for salsa or something, and they might be able to advise you where you could carry on with lessons” (Pre nester, BCI)*

*Residents do not fully support this initiative because...*

- There is limited interest in taking part in dance classes (particularly among men)
- Also limited interest in viewing dance performances (in isolation of any other event)
- See little point in subsidising costs for adults – if they are interested in dance they should pay

Residents do not feel that the Council should support this initiative as interest is not widespread enough to warrant the investment

Reactions to specific Council initiatives  
Events



## Participation in Events

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- Residents say that they try to attend as many events in their local area as they can
  - The carnival (when it was on)
  - Riverside Festival
  - The Lord Mayor's Fun Day
  - Sunbury Regatta
  - Tribute to Abba – musical event in Laleham Park
  - Chertsey Show – with the Teddy Bear's Picnic
  - Shepperton Village Fair
  - Fun Run in Stanwell



There is strong enthusiasm for events in the local area, and residents express a firm preference to stay close to home for these, rather than travel further afield

## Awareness and interest in specific Council initiatives

### Events

Activity	Awareness	Interest
Urban Games	✘	✓ ✓
Staines Street Festival	✘	✓
Stanwell & Staines Lantern Parades	✓	?
Art Fest	✘	✘

Residents are most interested in events that have widespread appeal for the whole family, from young children and youths, to parents and other adults

# Urban Games



*“It could be inspirational to kids and youngsters. You see artists and what they do, street dancers, skateboarders. Get them out of the bedrooms and off computers, get them out for a bit of fresh air and exercise” (Younger family, BCI)*

*Residents support this initiative because...*

- Finally the Council is doing something to engage youngsters – even those at risk of offending
- Urban culture is cool nowadays
- May inspire youngsters to go on and learn a new skill on a more regular basis (eg. drumming workshops)
- Parents and other adults would find it interesting and entertaining as well
- Adults would not mind paying a small entrance fee for a professional event

*However, they express reservations regarding...*

- Only on once a year – but young people need more than one event to look forward to in the year

The Urban Games is seen to be a very positive event for the children and youths of Spelthorne, and residents strongly feel that the Council should support it – particularly in terms of promoting and organising the event

# Staines Street Festival



*“Just seeing some of the cultural diversity ... I like to watch that kind of thing” (Pre nester, BCI)*

*Residents support this initiative because...*

- It would be a fun day out for the family and other adults
  - Food stalls
  - Music
  - Dancing
- Interesting to see cultural diversity
- The Salsa theme (proposed for 2007) has mainstream appeal
- Could be good exposure for local businesses (eg. through sponsorship of the event/stalls)

*However, they express reservations regarding...*

- The quality of the festival – and whether the Council would put on an authentic show

While residents support the idea behind a festival, they feel the Council should put more effort into promoting what it will involve, and convincing them that it will be a quality event



# Stanwell & Staines Lantern Parades

*“It’s only if you had kids who had made a lantern and you wanted to see all your friends’ kids walking their lantern” (Pre nester, BCI)*

*Residents do not fully support this initiative because...*

- It has very limited appeal
  - Only of interest if your own child/grandchild is participating
  - Older children and young adults would find it boring
- People struggle to see the relevance/ link with Christmas
- The thought of standing out in the cold
- Fear of being on the streets of Stanwell or Staines at night

*However, they can see the value of it for...*

- Very young children
  - They get the chance to be creative and make a lantern
  - Might have fun and find the lights pretty

Residents have mixed views regarding this initiative, but support it because of its perceived value for children; however there is a view that schools should be the major supporter of such an event, not the Council

## Art Fest



*“Poetry and flower displays, just doesn’t appeal .. a slightly different age group, older” (Pre nester, BCI)*

*Residents do not fully support this initiative because...*

- It has very limited appeal
  - Very few (mainly older people) are interested in poetry readings or flower displays
- If adults are interested in attending such an event, they should pay for it themselves

Residents do not feel that the Council should be involved in this initiative as interest is not widespread enough to justify the investment

Reactions to specific Council initiatives  
Visual Arts



## Participation in Visual Arts activities

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- There is awareness of public art in the local area
  - Riverside Walk fountains and sculpture
  - Sculpture of the Staines lino
  - Mosaics along the centre of the pedestrian walkway
  - Sculptures by the Town Hall
  - Removal of the '5 Swimmers' fountain at the Elmsleigh Centre
- Residents are also occasional visitors to galleries and art exhibitions
  - Open air arts exhibition in Sunbury
  - Exhibition in Chertsey
  - Exhibitions at the major galleries in London (Tate, National Gallery, National Portrait Gallery)
- And there is a minority who take, or have an interest in taking, art classes



Overall, residents do express a modest spontaneous interest in art, but more as spectators than as participants themselves

## Awareness and interest in specific Council initiatives

### Visual arts

Activity	Awareness	Interest
Sunbury Cross Art Project	✓ ✓	✓ ✓
Aerosol workshops	✗	✓
Public art	✓	?
Artwalk	✗	✗
Surrey Artists Open Studios	✗	✗
Garden Journeys	✗	✗

Residents are most interested in art initiatives directed at youths, particularly those that give youths who are at risk of offending something to do and an outlet to channel their energies

# Sunbury Cross Art Project



*“Hopefully it gives them a sense of pride” (Post nester, C2D)*

*Residents support this initiative because...*

- It engages youths and gives them a chance to express themselves in their own way
- Something they can be proud of
- An outlet for youths who are at risk of offending

*“It is going to stop them going into the street and graffiti-ing on the wall or something” (Older family, C2D)*

- It looks good – better to have artworks on the wall than graffiti
- Contributes to a sense of community spirit

*However, they express reservations regarding...*

- The wall being constantly ‘tagged’ by vandals
- Possibly not engaging the teenagers who are most at risk of offending
  - Only open to a select few
- Doesn’t make a lot of difference in terms of safety – Sunbury Cross is still considered unsafe at night

Residents believe that the Council should continue to support this initiative – it is one way of showing that they want to do something to tackle the problem of youth idleness and vandalism in the Borough, and residents believe it gives teenagers a much-needed sense of purpose and pride

# Aerosol workshops



*“A lot of teenage boys would really enjoy that” (Younger family, BCI)*

*Residents support this initiative because...*

- Similar to the Sunbury Cross Art Project, it engages youths and gives them a chance to express themselves
- Helps to develop the talents of young artists
- Has ‘street cred’ because of the involvement of professional graffiti artists
- Channels their energies into something productive

*However, they express reservations regarding...*

- The word ‘workshop’ is off-putting – might not sound cool enough for problem teenagers to attend
- Assumed not to be a permanent record of their work, so not something they can be as proud of
- Concerns that it will give vandals the skills to go on and graffiti elsewhere

Residents feel that the Council should remain responsible for organising and subsidising this initiative for youths, but should consider repositioning it as something other than ‘workshops’

## Public art



*“I think it’s just a lack of prioritisation. There are other things they could be doing with the tax payers’ money” (Younger family, BCI)*

*Residents do not fully support this initiative because...*

- Only a minority of residents appreciate it
- The belief is that it is paid for by the Council, and is therefore a waste of taxpayers’ money
- Localised in small pockets of the Borough

*However, they can see some value in it in terms of...*

- Making a small difference to the environment
  - Giving Spelthorne some character
  - The ‘Lino’ sculpture has historical significance
  - Makes the environment aesthetically more pleasing

Residents believe that public funds are being spent on this initiative and that further funds should not be spent, particularly at a time when Council tax is rising and key services are being cut

# Artwalk



*“You are either interested in art or you are not” (Post nester, C2D)*

*Residents do not support this initiative because...*

- Only isolated interest
- Those who are interested in art would rather go to a gallery
- If adults were really interested, they could find the information online

Residents do not feel that the Council should support this initiative, as interest is too low to warrant the investment



## Surrey Artists Open Studios

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*“I am an artist myself but I wouldn’t go to a studio and watch someone else. It is too specialist” (Post nester, C2D)*

*Residents do not support this initiative  
because...*

- None could see themselves participating in this project
- There is little interest in watching a professional artist work
- Would rather support local artists by going to an exhibition of their combined works

While residents believe the Council should support local artists, this may be better done through funding of an exhibition of local artists’ work, rather than an interactive workshop

# Garden Journeys



*“I imagine 90% of people do not want to participate but would like to go and see stuff” (Post nester, C2D)*

*Residents do not support this initiative  
because...*

- The thought of attending a workshop is off-putting – people have busy lives
- Would only appeal to those with specialist knowledge of gardens/ gardening
- People are more interested in viewing art, not participating

Residents do not feel that the Council should support this initiative, as interest is too low to warrant the investment

## Ideas for the future

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### Gallery space in Spelthorne Leisure Centre



- Residents do express interest in this
  - A showcase of local artists' talent
  - Residents are regular visitors to the Leisure Centre



### Recycling Arts Project



- No interest in attending a workshop

*“The general public are fairly apathetic but will go and look at something if it is in front of them. But don't expect them to string tin cans together to do art. Because most of them are going to step back in horror” (Post nester, C2D)*

Reactions to specific Council initiatives  
Music



## Participation in Music activities

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- Smaller events
  - Seeing bands in local pubs
  - School band concerts at Thames Mead school
- Bigger events
  - Festival at Laleham Park
  - Abba Tribute concert in the park
  - Male choir and brass band event
  - Big stadium concerts (eg. at Wembley)
  - Music festivals (eg. V Festival)
- Classes
  - Some mention of children taking guitar, piano, drumming lessons



Residents enjoy attending music events, particularly as spectators to concerts and outdoor festivals

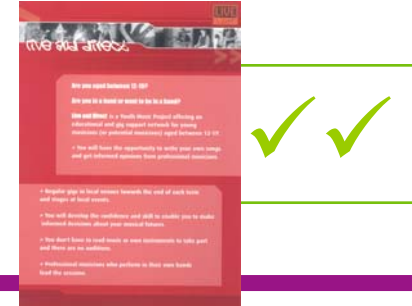
## Awareness and interest in specific Council initiatives

### Music

Activity	Awareness	Interest
Live and Direct / Drumming workshops	✘	✔ ✔
SessionZ and Live Lounge	✘	✔ ✔
Musician training courses	✘	✔

Residents believe that music is an effective way to engage youngsters, and strongly endorse any opportunities provided by the Council to allow children to learn music and help them develop their musical talents

# Live and Direct / Drumming workshops



*“If they’ve got an interest in that, then it gives them an opportunity to explore and get involved in it” (Prenester, BCI)*

*Residents support this initiative because...*

- It engages children and youths and gives them a hobby and a chance to express themselves
  - Most youngsters are interested in music
  - Provides a support network to develop an interest in music
- Very reasonable cost (at £10 for 10 weeks)
  - Much cheaper than music lessons
  - Not a waste of money if children do not stick with it
- Open to all youngsters
  - Children do not need to have their own instruments
  - No need for any prior knowledge

Residents strongly believe the Council should continue this initiative – by promoting it so that more children/parents are aware of it, and supporting it financially so that tuition fees remain subsidised

## SessionZ and Live Lounge



*“Like the band HardFi, they’re from round here and they’re really big now” (Younger family, BCI)*

*Residents support this initiative  
because...*

- It gives young bands a chance to make a break into the music industry
  - Particularly now that it is becoming more difficult to play at licensed venues
- Fostering local talent and channelling the energies of youths
- X Factor has raised people’s interest in being in the music industry

Again, residents strongly believe the Council should continue this initiative- by promoting it (possibly through schools) and continuing to organise the event



## Musician training courses

*“There are quite a few kids who I’ve taught to play the guitar over the last few years .... everybody wants to learn an instrument” (Pre nester, BCI)*

*Residents support this initiative because...*

- Youngsters – particularly youths – might like to learn from someone who is actually in a band
- Only one respondent was actually in a band – but expressed some interest in teaching

*However, they express reservations regarding...*

- The fact that musicians are not professional teachers
- The risk of teachers being trained, but not staying committed to the program

Residents believe that the Council should support this initiative – by advertising and screening for suitable candidates, and training them so that they are qualified in some way to teach

Reactions to specific Council initiatives  
Heritage

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## Participation in Heritage activities

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- In the local area
  - There is some mention of visiting the Spelthorne Museum with children
  - Seeing an exhibition of historical photographs at Sunbury Library (older resident)
  - One respondent (older resident) volunteered to work on the Millennium Tapestry
  - A few mentions (particularly among older residents) of taking self-guided walks around the local area (eg. hosted by the Local History Society, or using a Skinners Guide)
- Further afield
  - Going to the major museums in London (eg. The Natural History Museum)



There is interest in local heritage, particularly among older residents, and parents who feel that it would be valuable (and fun) for children to learn more about

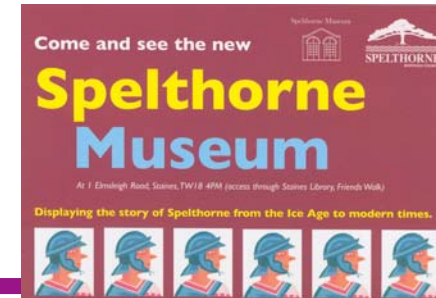
## Awareness and interest in specific Council initiatives

### Heritage

Activity	Awareness	Interest
Spelthorne Museum	?	✓
Heritage Open Days	✗	?
Promoting awareness of heritage	✗	✗

Residents do express interest in learning more about the history of Spelthorne, and feel that it something that young children in particular should be encouraged to learn more about

# Spelthorne Museum



*“I didn’t know it was there but I shall certainly pay a visit” (Pensioner, BCI)*

*Residents support this initiative because...*

- They have an interest in the history of Spelthorne
  - Particularly older residents
- Parents feel it would be a good experience for young children
  - Learning about heritage in an informal way
  - Schools should be encouraged to take pupils on excursions to the Museum

*However, they express reservations regarding...*

- The new location of the Museum
  - Not obvious – though some mention stumbling upon it accidentally
  - Close proximity to the drugs centre
  - Building is of no historical significance – just an office block
  - A very small venue
- A feeling it won’t contain very much
- Discomfort at the idea you may be the only person there

Residents feel that it is important for the Council to continue supporting the Spelthorne Museum – but much more work needs to be done in terms of promoting the new location, and also fostering links with local schools to encourage more children to learn about the history of Spelthorne

## Heritage Open Days



*“Ashford has one of these enactment days once a year” (Pensioner, BCI)*

*Residents somewhat support this initiative because...*

- Children have enjoyed re-enactment days in the past
- Parents feel it is a fun way for children to learn
- A fun day out for the whole family
- An opportunity for local businesses to gain exposure (eg. through sponsorship)

*However, they express reservations regarding...*

- The walks, guided tours etc.
  - More appealing to elderly residents than children/families

Residents feel that it is important for the Council to support local events such as these – however it would be more appealing for the Council to organise a heritage event built around re-enactments (with other heritage events on the fringes)

## Promoting awareness of heritage



*“It doesn’t appeal to kids to go and sit in the library” (Younger Family, BCI)*

*Residents do not support this initiative because...*

- Children would find it boring to attend a workshop at the Library
- These sorts of workshops would be more appropriate at school
- It should be more interactive (eg. elderly residents showing war artefacts, telling stories)

Residents feel that the Council could support this initiative ‘in name’, but that the actual workshops would be more appropriate if they were part of the school curriculum, rather than extra-curricular activity

Reactions to specific Council initiatives  
*Creative writing & poetry*





## Creative writing & poetry activities

- Currently, there is very low participation in creative writing or poetry activities among residents (one resident had written for a local publication in the past)

### Creative writing & poetry

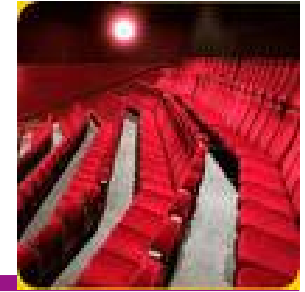
Activity	Interest	
Storytelling in libraries	?	Might be nice to take young children, but they do this at home anyway
Storytelling workshops	x	Only one respondent was interested in doing this
Creative writing workshops	x	Very limited interest – and for adults who were interested, they would take a more formal course



Residents do not feel that the Council should support creative writing/poetry initiatives as interest is too low to warrant the investment

Reactions to specific Council initiatives  
Media / film

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## Media/film activities

- Residents of all ages are very enthusiastic about attending films or film events
  - Going to the cinemas
  - Going to film festivals (eg. outdoor viewings in the park)

### Media / film

Activity	Interest
Films on tackling vandalism	?

Not believed to be an effective way to tackle vandalism

*“It’s just going to be another one of those things that you watch at school and all the kids laugh and giggle” (Pre nester, BCI)*



Film is an area in which there is a clear gap between service provision and what residents are looking for – there is much stronger interest (particularly among pre nesters) in attending an outdoor film festival event (for example, in the summer)

# Thoughts about Council involvement in Arts and Heritage activities



## Council involvement & key target groups

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*Residents believe that the Council should support Arts and Heritage activities in the Borough*

- These opportunities enhance people's quality of life
- Residents feel they are getting something back for their Council Tax
- Residents believe the Council should back these opportunities, but leave the actual running to experts (eg. theatre companies, professional events organisers)

*Residents strongly feel that activities should be focused on children and youths, rather than adults*


- Shows that the Council is addressing the problem of youth boredom and vandalism in the Borough
- Children need these opportunities to give them the best start in life

- Low priority groups:
  - Adults: Extra curricular activities for adults can be self-funded, rather than be subsidised by the Council
  - School teachers: their training should not be the Council's responsibility

## Council prioritisation

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*However, compared other services within the Leisure and Culture portfolio, Arts and Heritage is not a priority area*



- Residents would rather the Council prioritise spending on services that are used more regularly
  - Parks and open spaces
  - Play opportunities for children
  - Sports and Leisure Centres
  - Libraries

Residents agree that Arts and Heritage opportunities are 'nice to have' but do not feel they are essential services

## Conclusions and Recommendations



## Conclusions

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- Overall, residents feel that arts and heritage opportunities can enhance people's quality of life, but are not on the whole essential
  - Within the leisure and culture sector there are seen to be more important services, such as parks and open spaces, play opportunities for children, and sports and leisure centres
- Children and youths are however considered priority groups for the Council to provide for – and residents believe that arts and heritage initiatives focused on drama, music and visual arts are good ways to engage these groups
  - They should be given as many opportunities as possible to develop confidence, express themselves, and explore their artistic/intellectual interests
  - If children and youths are engaged in this way, there will be a positive knock-on effect for the community at large – particularly in terms of curbing youth boredom and vandalism

## Conclusions (cont'd)

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- With respect to adults, there is more acceptance for initiatives that can be enjoyed by both adults and children, rather than those focused solely on adults – there is particular interest in:
  - professional theatre performances coming to the Borough
  - community events
- Residents are also far more open to engaging in arts and heritage activities as passive spectators, rather than active participants (hence there is very low interest in attending workshops)
- While there is interest in certain Council initiatives, the major downfall is that awareness of these opportunities is very low across the Borough:
  - Residents tend only to pick up information about opportunities on an ad hoc basis - through the local press, word of mouth, or leaflets
  - The Spelthorne Bulletin and the Leisure Directory suffer from the absence of a regular and up to date 'What's on' guide, which reduces their usefulness

# Recommendations

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- I. Focus investment on arts and heritage opportunities for children and youths. Initiatives that have the most potential to engage youngsters are:

Broad area	Specific initiatives
Drama	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Spelthorne Youth Theatre Company</li> <li>○ Spelthorne Drama Festival</li> </ul>
Dance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Urban Dance School</li> </ul>
Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Urban Games</li> </ul>
Visual arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Sunbury Cross Art Project</li> <li>○ Aerosol workshops</li> </ul>
Music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Live and Direct</li> <li>○ Drumming workshops</li> </ul>

## Recommendations (cont'd)

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2. Continue to bring professional theatre performances to the Borough – but to maximise interest and attendance ensure that:
  - They are mainstream or reasonably well-known productions
  - There is a good mix of adult and child-focused productions
  - Promotions work to challenge negative preconceptions surrounding local venues – making more of a point to showcase The Riverside Arts Centre and John Crook Theatre as professional theatre venues
  
3. Continue to support community events – those that have the most potential to engage a broad cross-section of the community are:
  - Staines Street Festival
  - Heritage re-enactment days
  - Outdoor music events
  - Outdoor film screenings
  - Comedy Club

## Recommendations (cont'd)

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4. Re-consider the value of supporting initiatives in which there is very low interest (detailed throughout the body of this presentation)
5. Ideally promote arts and heritage activities in the Borough by:
  - introducing a regular and up to date 'What's on' guide
  - better placement of ad-hoc promotional activity – ie. in public spaces, through local press/radio, through schools (where relevant and possible)