

## READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

### REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE		
DATE:	16 NOVEMBER 2016	AGENDA ITEM:	8
TITLE:	CULTURE AND HERITAGE IN READING		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	PAUL GITTINGS	PORTFOLIO:	SPORT, LEISURE & CONSUMER SERVICES
SERVICE:	ECONOMIC & CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT	WARDS:	BOROUGHWIDE
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#### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 As Reading's Year of Culture 2016 enters its final two months, culminating in 'Light Up Reading' through December (and of course the Christmas Pantomime - Snow White! - see Appendix 1), this report provides an update on a range of culture and heritage projects and initiatives underway in Reading. The report clearly demonstrates that the Year of Culture is not an end in itself but an initial stage in a sustained programme to raise Reading's profile and reputation and to deliver the aspiration of the Culture and Heritage Strategy that:

'By 2030, Reading will be recognised as a centre of creativity with a reputation for cultural and heritage excellence at a regional, national and international level with increased engagement across the town.'

- 1.2 The report emphasises the strong partnerships that are in place and acknowledges the key contribution of a range of agencies and organisations in developing and delivering a diverse programme of cultural and heritage initiatives and projects. The report also highlights the strong support from both Arts Council England (ACE) and the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for Reading's strategic ambition and their financial backing for key activities and work programmes to help us make further progress.

#### 2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the Committee notes the wide range of culture and heritage projects and initiatives being delivered and developed as set out in section 4.1, acknowledging that this is only a sub-set of the wide-ranging activities of many organisations in the town.
- 2.2 That the Committee welcomes and endorses the ongoing direction of travel as set out in section 4.2 of the report, including establishing a legacy programme from the Year of Culture 2016

**2.3 That the Committee notes the review underway of the Cultural Partnership's membership and endorses the continuing role of the Cultural Partnership to drive and add value to delivery of the Culture & Heritage Strategy.**

### **3. POLICY CONTEXT**

3.1 The ambition to raise Reading's cultural profile and reputation is about both the outcomes for Reading as a place and delivering better quality of life for residents. The delivery of culture and heritage contributes to achieving the following Corporate Priorities:

- Keeping the Town clean, safe green and active
- Providing the best life through education, early help and healthy living
- Providing infrastructure to support the economy.

3.2 Provision of cultural services is a non-statutory function of local government. The Council has for many years operated a number of cultural venues in Reading including the Hexagon, 21 South Street Arts Centre and the Town Hall & Museum (including the Concert Hall). This provision has been set within the context of a cultural strategy that sets a strategic framework for the development and delivery of cultural activity in the town not only by the Council but by a wide range of other agencies and organisations.

3.3 A new Cultural and Heritage Strategy 2015-2030, developed under the auspices of the Cultural Partnership, was endorsed by the Council's Policy Committee in November 2015. This reflects the strong partnership approach in Reading, recognising that it will be a range of organisations working collectively that will be key to delivery and success. The new Culture and Heritage Strategy clearly sets out an aspirational vision for culture and heritage to play a key role in the town's future, enhancing the quality of life for residents and increasing the attractiveness of the town for visitors and investors. The Strategy envisages Reading's profile and reputation as a cultural destination being transformed over the coming years, building from a strong base of arts and heritage organisations and assets and catalysed by a Year of Culture in 2016.

3.4 The new Economic Development Plan led by Reading UK CIC, "Growing Opportunity" has three key objectives of raising Reading's profile, growing opportunities to strengthen the local economy and employment for local people. The further development of arts, culture and digital economy to contribute to these objectives is at the heart of the plan.

### **4. THE PROPOSAL**

#### **4.1 Current Position:**

Whilst it would be impossible in this short report to do full justice to the range of organisations, activities and outcomes linked with cultural and heritage in the town, it highlights some of the key projects and developments that are together driving delivery of the Culture & Heritage Strategy and its ambition.



# MADE READING

## Year of Culture 2016

This Committee received an update report on Reading's Year of Culture 2016 at its meeting in July of this year. As well as highlighting key areas of success, this July report also emphasised the role of the Year of Culture as a catalyst for a sustained programme to raise Reading's reputation and profile into the future, delivering a range of benefits to local people and further bolstering economic success.

Some key facts and figures that are illustrative of the success of the Year of Culture to date:

- Alignment of the Council's cultural grants funding of £99,000 to fund 48 Year of Culture projects by local organisations;
- Close working with Reading UK CIC in managing the programme and leveraging over £100,000 of private sector business sponsorship;
- A 130% increase in grant funding from Arts Council England (ACE) to local organisations and a direct ACE contribution to core delivery costs of over £96,000;
- Over 10,000 unique visitors to the website to date and over 100 articles published by Get Reading.

In summary, to date, Reading Year of Culture 2016: has witnessed hundreds of arts and cultural events as part of the programme; new pillar events in every month for the Reading cultural calendar; the engagement of national arts organisations in Reading; the development of new relationships between artists, arts groups, Reading businesses and stakeholders; the unlocking of new funding for the arts in Reading and new platforms and venues for artistic output in the town and an increase in the quantity and ambition of artistic output.

In the final two months of the year, following a highly successful 'reading in Reading' month for October, November's 'Dance Reading' programme led by a new partnership network 'Junction Dance' continues. Also in November the new play 'Henry 1 of England' written by Beth Flintoff and performed by 'Reading Between the Lines' Theatre Company continues until November the 19<sup>th</sup> (see also a related article on The Guardian website: [https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2016/nov/02/henry-i-reading-cultural-hotspot-reading-between-the-lines?CMP=share\\_btn\\_tw](https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2016/nov/02/henry-i-reading-cultural-hotspot-reading-between-the-lines?CMP=share_btn_tw)).

The Year of Culture culminates with 'Light Up Reading' in December, a magnificent series of light installations in various locations around the town.

## Ambition for Excellence

In the July report to this committee it was reported that engagement with Artangel and their plans for a major exhibition in Reading Prison had also resulted in the development of proposals for an ambitious three year visual arts programme '**Reading International**', led by the University's new Institute of Heritage & Creativity in partnership with Artangel, the Council and Reading UK CIC. The application submitted to ACE's lottery funded 'Ambition for Excellence' programme was successful with an award of £495,000 confirmed at the end of July. The funding is supporting Artangel's '**Inside: Artists and Writers in Reading Prison**' as the 'front-end' of this three year programme and it will culminate in a major exhibition in the

re-opened Abbey Ruins in 2019. This offers an unprecedented opportunity to transform the visual arts in Reading, create a legacy for Reading Year of Culture 2016, deliver a high profile celebration for the reopening of Reading Abbey Ruins, and develop partnerships with local arts organisations, schools and communities. This in turn will generate a culture of artistic ambition, community involvement and audience development in the region.

Launching this three year programme, Artangel's Reading Prison exhibition has been hugely successful attracting 18,000 visitors to date, including a high proportion of Reading residents and a programme of engagement with local schools. This success has meant that Artangel is extending the exhibition until the 4<sup>th</sup> December having secured the necessary permission from the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) - see press release at Appendix 2.

### **'Reading Abbey Revealed'**

In December 2015 the Council received confirmation that its stage 2 application to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for grant of £1.7775 million towards the £3.154 million 'Reading Abbey Revealed' project had been successful. The project involves the essential conservation programme to the Abbey Ruins and the Abbey Gateway (both Scheduled Monument and Grade I listed); associated branding, signage, interpretation; and a five year engagement programme of events and activities across the heritage site. Reading's Museum service is pivotal for the successful delivery of the project and a rejuvenated 'Abbey Quarter'. The Council received 'permission' to start from the HLF in March 2016. Significant progress is being made and this nationally important project is on-track. Further detail is provided in Appendix 3 which also outlines parallel work and funding from Historic England (HE) to ensure all parts of the Scheduled Reading Abbey site are removed from the HE 'At Risk Register'. The update at Appendix 3 also references the 'Hidden Abbey' project, an exciting research project looking further into the extent and detail of the Abbey below ground, including potentially the exact whereabouts of Reading's buried king Henry 1.

### **Museum of English Rural Life (MERL)**

Reading University's MERL reopened on 18 October after a £3 million redevelopment project, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, which has radically transformed its public displays. The new museum aims to challenge perceptions about rural England by revealing the historical and contemporary relevance of country life. The new interactive galleries explore questions of identity, environment, technology, culture and health. As with the Abbey Revealed project there is an extensive engagement and activity programme extending into future years.

See new MERL website at <http://www.reading.ac.uk/TheMERL>

### **Museum Collaboration**

In August 2016 the MERL and Reading Museum were awarded £237,500 by Arts Council England for the '#Reading: Town and Country project'. This builds on the two museums ongoing partnership through an 18 month digital engagement project. This will transform the way the museums use technology to bring their collections and communities together.

The first stage will be a digital audit of both museums before Christmas. The project team will then start to develop training for staff and volunteers, before developing innovative digital programmes, inspired by their collections, for targeted local communities.

Link to website new page with more information

<http://www.readingmuseum.org.uk/news/2016/aug/grant-town-country-museums-work-together/>

## Library Service

The Council's Library Service is increasingly embracing cultural activities and recent initiatives have included:

- Big Wow Small Wonder
- Celebrating Ram Gopal
- Tales from the Deep!

Appendix 4 provides further details of how these initiatives are supporting the strategic development of the service to engage and benefit local people.

## South Street Arts Centre

The Council is currently in the process of refurbishing and extending South Street Arts Centre with the support of a capital grant of £499,999 from ACE. The theatre has been turned through 180 degrees, to enable the creation of backstage dressing rooms for the first time and new retractable seating installed. A new bar area is currently being completed and this will create greater flexibility and capacity for the use of the two main performance spaces as well as give a better service to customers. Disability access has been improved throughout. A number of energy saving measures have also been incorporated into the build to ensure the venue can run as efficiently as possible.

These works are due to fully complete in November with a formal re-launch of the improved venue on the 9<sup>th</sup> December, although November is already busy with a number of sold out shows. These improvements will enhance the attractiveness of South Street to both artists and audiences, increase the capacity of the venue and support its future financial sustainability. This will consolidate the venue's national reputation for excellence, particularly for its contemporary theatre and music strands, and also enable an expanded outreach and educational programme. The re-opening of the venue will also coincide with the launch of a membership scheme to offer additional benefits to customers and supporters and embed further the strong relationship South Street has with its audiences and local people.

## Partnerships

As alluded to above, the Year of Culture has helped to generate or embed a host of collaborations and partnerships within the culture and heritage sectors and it would be impossible to reference them all or all the great work being delivered. However, it is worth noting that the Culture and Heritage Forum chaired by Councillor Sarah Hacker continues to provide a valuable networking and communication opportunity. The Forum is an open one and attended by a wide range of organisations and individuals who have also signed up to receive invitations to meetings and to share information. The growing attendance is indicative of a growing appetite for collaboration and networking and new attendees are always welcome.

In the context of the wide and expanding range of activities, organisations and collaborations across the culture and heritage sectors, the **Cultural Partnership** is in the process of reviewing its membership and terms of reference in order to ensure that it can drive and add value to delivery of the Culture & Heritage Strategy. Taking forward the legacy of the Year of Culture, key initiatives as outlined above, and facilitating further activity and collaboration will be key objectives.

This includes the **Cultural Education Partnership (CEP)** that has been set-up with the aim to provide all young people with opportunities to experience high quality cultural activity, especially those young people who otherwise might not have access to such opportunities. The partnership has strong and committed representation from key stakeholders, including Berkshire Maestros, the College, the University, schools and the Culture and Arts Network (CAN). During the development phase of this partnership an initial consultation with young people was carried out and used to inform the creation of an action plan. The delivery mechanism adopted by the CEP for the action plan is through the three partnership subgroups which focus on the following:

1. Support and develop new engagement, especially with young people who do not currently benefit from high quality cultural activity or experiences.
2. Focus on activity that promotes and enables readiness for creative employment or upskilling.
3. Facilitate achievement of 'Arts Award' objectives and target Artsmark numbers (accreditation schemes supported by ACE for the cultural activities of schools and individual young people respectively)

The partnership is preparing to submit a proposal to Artsworld - Arts Council England's Bridge organisation for funding from the Partnership Investment Fund to support delivery of this action plan.

### **National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs)**

ACE's National Portfolio provides regular funding for organisations that have a long-term and sustained commitment to a programme of high quality work meeting their strategic objectives. NPOs are funded in recognition of their high standards and impact and include both nationally renowned organisations such as the Royal Shakespeare Company and more local place specific arts groups delivering excellent work. A key benefit of NPO status, over and above the reputation and kudos it provides, is multi-annual core funding over a 5 year period and applications for the period 2018-22 are now being sought by ACE. Historically Reading has had no local NPOs. ACE share the ambition and potential for Reading to be a regional cultural hub and have been incredibly supportive and integral to many of the initiatives set-out above and informal discussions have suggested that there may be opportunities for some local organisations to bid for NPO status in the current round. The Council is actively pursuing potential NPO status for South Street and for Reading Museum in collaboration with MERL. There may well be other local arts organisations also considering applying and certainly interest has been expressed previously by Open Hand Open Space, Readipop and 'Reading Between the Lines'. Whilst there are no guarantees of success in what is an incredibly competitive national process, this is clearly indicative of a step change locally in ambition and aspiration.

## **4.2 Options Proposed**

All of the initiatives referred to above, and indeed many more from the vibrant arts and heritage sector in the town, are intertwined and are mutually reinforcing Reading's reputation as a cultural hub. Many of the specifically funded projects have delivery timescales extending over the next few years providing a real opportunity to sustain and further develop momentum, including:

- Abbey Revealed and Hidden Abbey projects
- 'Reading International' and the University's Institute of Heritage & Creativity
- MERL and Museum Collaboration
- Cultural Education Partnership
- South Street Arts Centre

For the Year of Culture there are additional events and themes that offer real potential for legacy and added value into the future:

- 'reading in Reading' Book Festival was a roaring success. Both the venue and the organisations would like to continue their partnership into next year.
- Junction Dance cooperation for 'Dance Reading' also has great potential as the partnership that has been created is a very strong proposition for the future.
- Reading Rep Theatre and their collaboration with Reading College.
- Feedback from a survey of arts organisations is that they found the use of monthly themes really useful, that it helped create more synergy between arts groups and fostered cooperation that they feel will continue beyond the year of culture. Many organisations also felt that they had been more ambitious with grant applications.
- The key role of Reading UK CIC in delivering the Year of Culture and embedding the linkages between economic and cultural success.
- Positive and supportive engagement with the business community in supporting and sponsoring cultural events and activity.
- A real appetite to incorporate 'Festivals' of activity into future years' activities and programmes.

Strategically the excellent relationships established with both ACE and the HLF provide a platform for ongoing engagement, dialogue and investment and the potential of the Prison site and the wider Abbey Quarter are of major future significance.

A proactive and effective Cultural Partnership bringing together key stakeholders and influencers offers real potential to drive and add value to Reading's cultural renaissance and ensure that all of Reading's communities derive real benefits from this.

## **5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS**

5.1 The ambition to raise Reading's cultural profile and reputation is about both the outcomes for Reading as a place and delivering better quality of life for residents. The delivery of culture and heritage contributes to achieving the following Corporate Priorities:

- Keeping the Town clean, safe green and active
- Providing the best life through education, early help and healthy living
- Providing infrastructure to support the economy.

5.2 A new Cultural and Heritage Strategy 2015-2030, developed under the auspices of the Cultural Partnership, was endorsed by the Council's Policy Committee in November 2015. This strategy has an over-arching ambition that:

'By 2030, Reading will be recognised as a centre of creativity with a reputation for cultural and heritage excellence at a regional, national and international level with increased engagement across the town.'

5.3 The range of projects and initiatives covered in this report are key building blocks for realising this ambition.

## **6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION**

6.1 There has been widespread consultation and engagement in the development of the Culture & Heritage Strategy, indeed it was this consultation that led to the

development and delivery of the Year of Culture 2016. There has also been a specific consultation exercise with young people to inform the action plan developed by the Cultural Education Partnership (CEP). Ongoing engagement and involvement of young people in the work of the CEP will be integral to its success.

- 6.2 At a project level community engagement and activity programmes form a major component of HLF funded projects such as Abbey Revealed and MERL. In part this is to inform how these projects are delivered but it is also about engaging with new and under-represented groups. More broadly information, marketing and engagement is central to audience development across much of the culture and heritage sector.

## **7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct this prohibited by or under this Act;
  - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
  - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 7.2 This report covers a diverse programme of activities and engagement and aims to ensure that culture plays a full role in making Reading a vibrant, tolerant and enjoyable place to live, work or visit. The role of cultural opportunities in combating inequalities and the need to address inequalities in participation in Reading are explicitly acknowledged in the Culture and Heritage Strategy and reflected in the approach to its implementation.
- 7.3 It is not considered that an Equality Impact Assessment is relevant with regard to the content of this report.

## **8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 Provision of cultural services is a non-statutory function of local government.
- 8.2 Legal implications arise from funding agreements with external partners, such as HLF or ACE, and associated grant conditions.

## **9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 The Council's financial contributions to a range of culture and heritage initiatives is being managed within existing constrained resources and budget allocations. The cultural grants budget has been re-focused over the last couple of years to align with the Year of Culture, enabling over £99,000 to be channelled to local groups and organisations to deliver events and activities (it should be noted, however, that because of extreme financial pressure due to government funding cuts, these grants from the Council will no longer be available after the current financial year). Match funding to support the HLF grant towards the Abbey Revealed project is identified within the Council's approved capital programme and derives from accumulated s106 developer contributions sought as part of the planning process for new developments in and around the town centre.



- 9.2 The Council and partners such as Reading UK CIC and the University are working together with arts organisations and stakeholders to maximise the benefits of leveraging external investment into Reading to support the delivery of the Culture & Heritage Strategy. Resources secured to date from ACE, HLF and the private sector through the initiatives identified in this report amount to well in excess of £6m.

## **10. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

### **10.1 Culture and Heritage Strategy 2015-30**

'Reading Year of Culture 2016' - Report to Housing, Neighbourhoods & Leisure Committee 5<sup>th</sup> July 2016

## Appendix 1



**Snow White  
The Hexagon  
Sat 10 Dec to Sun 8 Jan**

The Imagine team return to The Hexagon with children's TV legend Justin Fletcher for the magical Snow White. Justin stars along with Paul Morse, winner of the UK Panto Fans Award for best Dame. They are joined by Karl Loxley, who was a contestant on The Voice in 2015 and Sarah Accomando as Snow White. Imagine always present a slapstick filled show, and Snow White is shaping up to be our most successful yet with over a quarter of the 49 performances sold out. Running from 10th December to 8th January.

## Press Release

12 October 2016

### ARTANGEL EXHIBITION AT READING PRISON IS EXTENDED DUE TO POPULAR DEMAND

For the first time in its history, Reading Prison has opened to the public for a major new project by Artangel exploring the work of the prison's most famous inmate, Oscar Wilde. Over 16,000 people have visited **Inside: Artists and Writers in Reading Prison** since it opened on 4 September and the exhibition has now been extended to 4 December due to popular demand.

For Artangel's exhibition, new works have been made in response to the prison's architecture and history by leading artists including **Marlene Dumas, Robert Gober, Nan Goldin, Steve McQueen, Jean-Michel Pancin** and **Wolfgang Tillmans**, and are installed in the prison's corridors, wings and cells.

Audio recordings of **Neil Bartlett, Ralph Fiennes, Kathryn Hunter, Ragnar Kjartansson, Maxine Peake, Lemn Sissay, Patti Smith, Colm Tóibín** and **Ben Whishaw** reading Wilde's *De Profundis*, the extended letter he wrote to his lover Lord Alfred Douglas from his prison cell, will be available to listen to in the prison chapel from 3 November.

Reading Prison, formerly known as Reading Gaol, opened in 1844 and was a working prison until 2013. Oscar Wilde was incarcerated there between 1895 and 1897, enduring the Separate System, a harsh penal regime designed to eliminate any contact between prisoners.

Historical plans, late 19<sup>th</sup> century mug-shots of inmates and work by **Ai Weiwei, Vija Celmins, Rita Donagh, Peter Dreher, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Richard Hamilton, Roni Horn, Doris Salcedo** and **Jeanette Winterson** are also on display.

The hugely popular one-hour guided walking tours of Reading Prison, presented in association with the National Trust, are also being extended until 26 November. The tours focus on the history and architecture of the Victorian prison.

James Lingwood and Michael Morris, Co-Directors of Artangel, said:

"There has been an overwhelming interest and excitement in *Inside: Artists and Writers in Reading Prison*, and we are delighted to be able to offer even more people the opportunity to experience the remarkable work by artists and writers inside the prison."

Graham Deans, the National Trust's Assistant Director of Operations for Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxon said:

"We are delighted that the tours of Reading Gaol have been extended to December. The first set of tours sold out within days of being released, and have been a great success with many

visitors getting to experience a glimpse into what prison life was like, in the present day and in the Victorian times. We hope with this extension of the tours that many more local people, and members, will be able to enjoy this unique experience that the Trust has had the opportunity to be involved in.”

**Inside** has been made possible with the kind support of the Ministry of Justice and is presented as part of Reading 2016, Reading’s Year of Culture.

**Inside** is part of University of Reading’s ‘Reading International’, which is supported using public funding by the National Lottery through the Arts Council’s Ambition for Excellence Programme.

**Inside** is generously supported by Dayana Tamendarova with further support from Jack Kirkland, Matthew Marks Gallery, Sylvie Winckler and those who wish to remain anonymous.

**Press images:** [http://bit.ly/Inside\\_Press](http://bit.ly/Inside_Press)

**For further press information please contact:**

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Artangel Head of Communications Anna Larkin at [anna@artangel.org.uk](mailto:anna@artangel.org.uk), Communications Co-ordinator Nick Chapman [nick@artangel.org.uk](mailto:nick@artangel.org.uk) or the Artangel office on +44(0)20 7713 1400

**NOTES TO EDITORS**

**PUBLIC INFORMATION**

Address: Reading Prison, Forbury Road, Reading, Berkshire RG1 3HY

Open: **4 September – 30 October 2016**  
Wednesday – Thursday 11.00 – 19.00  
Friday – Saturday 11.00 – 20.00  
Sundays 11.00 – 17.00

**3 November – 4 December 2016**  
Wednesdays Closed  
Thursdays 11.00 – 17.00  
Friday – Saturday 11.00 – 19.00  
Sundays 11.00 – 17.00

Entry: Timed entry with strict capacity, advance booking recommended £9, £7 concessions £2 children under 18

Booking: artangel.org.uk/inside, on 0118 960 6060

Visitor Information: artangel.org.uk/inside

A small amount of material is not appropriate for children as it contains nudity and content of a sexual nature.

Public enquiries: info@artangel.org.uk / +44 (0)207 713 1400

Disabled Access: Those with specific access requirements are encouraged to visit the Artangel website to read the full access statement or call the Artangel office for further information before their visit.

## **Events**

24 November 19.00 – 20.00

The history of Reading Prison

A talk by Berkshire Record Office Archivist Mark Stevens in the chapel at Reading Prison

Tickets £9, £7 concessions

## **Tours of Reading Gaol presented in association with the National Trust**

Guided one-hour walking tours of Reading Prison, focusing on its Victorian architecture, taking place on Fridays and Saturdays from 9 September – 26 November.

Fridays, 12noon and 2pm

Saturdays, 12noon, 2pm, 4pm

Tickets: £12 adults, £10 concessions (includes entry to exhibition)

[www.nationaltrust.org.uk/readinggaoltours](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/readinggaoltours)

The dark history of Victorian prison life will be revealed to visitors on the guided and timed tours, presented by the National Trust, which will tell the history of the gaol and the penal regime of the Separate System. Visitors will arrive at the main prison gate before being led into the austere interior of the prison, exploring its corridors and cells as well as the former chapel. A highlight will be the visit to Wilde's cell where his penultimate work, *De Profundis*, was written and which inspired his famous *Ballad of Reading Gaol*.

**Reading Prison** is a former prison located in Reading, Berkshire, England. The Grade II listed building was designed by George Gilbert Scott and was formerly known as Reading Gaol. The prison became a Remand Centre and Young Offenders Institution in 1992, closing in September 2013.

**Oscar Wilde**, born October 1854, was a renowned poet, author and playwright. His works include *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891), *An Ideal Husband* (1895) and *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895). Wilde was incarcerated in Reading Gaol between 1895 and 1897. He spent the rest of his life in Europe, publishing *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* in 1898. He died in Paris on 30 November 1900.

Further reading: [http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic\\_figures/wilde\\_oscar.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/wilde_oscar.shtml)

**Artangel** produces and presents extraordinary art in unexpected places in London, the UK and beyond. For over 30 years Artangel has generated some of the most talked-about art of recent times, including projects with Clio Barnard, Jeremy Deller, Roger Hiorns, Michael Landy, Steve McQueen, Rachel Whiteread, and more recently Ryoji Ikeda and PJ Harvey and currently Jorge Otero-Pailos's *The Ethics of Dust* at Westminster Hall, Houses of Parliament. Appearing anywhere from vacant apartments stores, to subterranean vaults and London's night sky, Artangel produces art that surprises, inspires and wouldn't be possible within the confines of a gallery.

[www.artangel.org.uk](http://www.artangel.org.uk)

Artangel's commissioning programme is generously supported by Arts Council England, the private patronage of The Artangel International Circle, Special Angels, Guardian Angels and The Company of Angels.



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**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**



## Appendix 3

### **Reading Abbey Revealed (RAR) project - update November 2016**

Since the 'Permission to Start' from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) in March 2016 a lot has happened with the £3.154 million project. The first report to the HLF highlighting all the project's key progress to date was submitted on 6 October 2016.

The implementation of the project's Activity Programme has commenced:

- National Citizen Service (NCS) photography competition project took place in Reading Prison (13 young people) on the 24 and 25 July in partnership with the MoJ. The event was covered by Get Reading and was extremely successful.
- Two paid interns were appointed during the summer. One for two months, in partnership with University of Reading, focussed on the project's social media strategy and developing a social media policy. The second placement was for three months focused on researching Reading Museum's Abbey collections in preparation for developing the project's interpretation content. Both interns were successful in securing heritage-based employment at the end of their internships.
- In September three new volunteers were recruited for the Reading Abbey project to work on research for the project interpretation plan.

Following a review of original proposals to lease the Abbey Gate building once restored, the new agreed use for the Abbey Gate is: 'The restoration of the abbey gatehouse building, to create a new public space and relocate the Victorian schoolroom currently in Reading Museum'. This proposal secured the approval of the HLF on the 23 August 2016.

Two part-time project staff have been recruited to help deliver the project's Activity Plan. The Community Engagement Officer and the Volunteer Coordinator will both start on the 3 January 2017.

In October 2016 Equal Studio Ltd was appointed as consultants to deliver the exciting site-wide Interpretation Implementation Plan.

On 24 October the returned tenders for the main conservation works at the Abbey Ruins and the Abbey Gate were opened. We are in the assessment process and we hope to appoint and to sign a contract with the successful tenderer by mid-December 2016.

Next steps:

- December 2016: Main contractors for the capital conservation works appointed
- November 2016 - May 2018: Delivery of the site-wide Interpretation Plan
- January 2017 - April 2018: Conservation work on site
- Until 2020: Delivery of the activity, events and volunteer programme

### **Other Reading Abbey Quarter updates**

There have also been developments concerning Reading Abbey beyond the scope of the lottery funded RAR project. In May 2016 RBC recognised its ownership of the Refectory Wall and Historic

England (HE) has agreed to grant fund a preliminary survey and any required stabilisation/conservation works. RBC has now signed a contract with HE and the survey work for the Refectory Wall will run in parallel to the RAR conservation works. After these initial conservation works, the future management and maintenance of the Wall will be the sole responsibility of RBC as part of the Abbey Ruins.

The Diocese of Portsmouth, who also owns part the Abbey remains, has appointed Hampshire County Council as its professional advisor (the same architect team than for the Reading Abbey Revealed project) to supervise their conservation works in parallel to the RAR project. These works are also grant funded by HE, and are aimed to ensure all parts of the Scheduled Reading Abbey site are removed from the HE' At Risk Register'.

Work is also progressing on preparing the former Reading Prison site for sale and redevelopment. Archaeological trial trenching should start on the former Prison site in November 2016 and will give all parties a better understanding of the location and survival the Scheduled archaeological remains on the site

Hidden Abbey Project update: Following the GPR survey by Stratascan in June 2016, the final report is now available showing the result of the survey. A landowners' meeting will be held on the 4 November to agree the next steps for this exciting project looking further into the extent and detail of the Abbey below ground, including potentially the exact whereabouts of Reading's buried king Henry 1.



## Appendix 4

### Expanding Cultural Activities in Reading's Libraries

#### **Big Wow Small Wonder**

Arts Council England funded the performance of a 45 minute play for 4-9 year olds in each of Reading's seven libraries during the week beginning October 17 2016. The aim was to engage children who do not generally go to the library, to expose them to creative, imaginative theatre and to inspire them to think about stories and to use a library.

Danielle Corbishley was the project manager for these events and did a brilliant job. She was extremely well-organised and efficient. She contacted several local schools to encourage them to bring a class of children - especially those who need help with literacy. She saw to the publicity and ticket sales using Eventbrite.

She engaged Justin Coe from the Half Moon Theatre Company in East London. He wrote and performed the play about a very small boy who wants to be bigger. As his website says: Told with huge helpings of humour, poignant poetry and original music, this is a tall story about the wonders of being small.

Tickets, which were free, sold out well in advance of the performances. There were about 30 children at each venue. The children were engaged from beginning to end and responded very well. There will be a further round of performances next February.

#### **Celebrating Ram Gopal**

SADAA (South Asian Diaspora Arts Archive) in conjunction with the V&A and Heritage Lottery Fund have recently restored Ram Gopal's famous garuda (eagle) costume. Having worked with SADAA before, they approached Reading Library to put on events celebrating the restoration. Two V&A conservators ran a 'protect and repair' textiles workshop throughout the afternoon where people could bring in any old textiles they had and find out the best ways to care for them. There was a talk by Dr Ann David, Head of Dance at Roehampton University on Ram Gopal attended by 45+ people. Most of the audience stayed on to either watch or participate in the dance workshop that followed. The afternoon was finished with a dance exhibition by members of Kalakunj Centre for Performing Arts in Reading and Kala The Arts based in Basingstoke. The Mayor attended the dance exhibition and lots of positive feedback was received by those who attended all the events.

#### **Tales from the Deep!**

Tales from the Deep! Is a poetry workshop for families with children between 7 and 13 which is taking place across all Reading libraries between 15th October and 3rd December 2016. Children are beckoned into the watery world of the octopus, to hear a tale about this fascinating creature, created, performed and read by local Spoken Word Artist Becci Louise. Local children's libraries will be transformed into a coral reef, as they create characters, make music and complete artwork to bring the story to life!