

North Walsham Cultural programming summery

Our Cultural programme will devise and deliver a wide range of events aimed at all age and other groupings. Each will be created using community input and participation, to ensure a truly community focussed programme.

North Walsham has a rich and unique heritage and character on which will inspire our programme design. Pivotal events such as the peasants' revolt and the formation of the agricultural worker's union demonstrate Norfolk's culture of 'dew different'. The town has a rebellious streak running through its history, and we will seek to reflect this in our cultural programme

The programmes outcomes are for the community to have,

- Increased understanding, perception and pride in the town's heritage and especially of the importance and value of the High Street
- An understanding of the benefits of the HS HAZ funded improvement works in town
- A legacy of experience and skills that ensure self-funded continuation of events that began under this programme.

Project Plan

1 Discovery phase

Research on themes, storylines and anecdotes to inform detailed project development. Involving the Heritage Centre/ Group, Norfolk Records Office and the ongoing Heritage England research project on the town centre and community involvement.

2 Design phase

Use the outputs from these workshops to generate scripts, scores and artworks etc for events throughout the whole delivery. Workshops will be held early in 2021 between project team/ event providers with the wider community. These will actively engage with young citizens through school and college groups and with societies and community organisations, with 'hard to reach' groups via Good Neighbours and with self-selecting members of public, to discuss the heritage of the town.

3 Delivery

The timeline of events will be linked to:

- Established events such as the Norwich Festival, North Norfolk Open Studios and The 'Battle of North Walsham, 1381 revisited' event (2021 = 640th anniversary).
- Historic anniversaries such as the 250th anniversary of Nelson leaving Paston School
- Tied into milestones in the HS HAZ physical works – completion of Market Place (Easter 2022), restoration of Cedar House, and celebrating the completion of the project in April 2024 etc.

The key events identified to date are listed below:

- Launch event - Publicity and information on scope timeline and how to get involved. To tie in with start of HAZ construction works
- Major productions – Theatre Merchants play. Based on workshops/ engagement or on an already researched investigation of a curious and macabre Gothic tale set in Eighteenth century North Walsham. Taster and full performances. Indoor/ promenade.
- Orchestras Live musical events. A strand of place-based creative activity, involving a renowned professional orchestra and the people of North Walsham. This will form part of a wider cultural programme of events to increase community wellbeing and aspiration within the Heritage Action Zone, helping to regenerate the town centre whilst contributing to community cohesion and pride of place
- Smaller productions, which we hope will become self-funding annual events after the programme ends in 2023.
 - Anthology of annual plays by Walsham Drama & Singing Club. Bert, a fictionalised North Walsham local, will introduce the production and speak about the various changes that have occurred in the town during his lifetime. References to past and present landmarks and public/commercial/social amenities in the town
 - The People's Voices - annual musical events based on North Walsham heritage led by New Stages - research, skills development, creating and writing, rehearsing and performing. The project will also integrate with North Walsham People's Choir and the Creative Wellbeing Workshop programme of New Stages
 - Each year an agreed theme from North Walsham's heritage will be identified, provisionally 'protest' (peasants' revolt, agricultural union etc) 'war'(WW1 and WW2 etc) and 'traders' (markets, shops). Each group will produce their event on a different aspect of that theme.
 - annual plays by Paston College students, presented to student and public audiences in various venues
 - annual plays by North Walsham High School students, presented to student and public audiences in various venues
- Exhibitions, again we hope for some legacy continuation of some of these
 - annual art exhibition/ participation by public and North Norfolk Open Studios, linked to drama themes above
 - annual Paston themed exhibition by Paston Heritage as part of the NHLF funded Paston 600, living history interpreters. May include 3D virtual recreation of St Nicholas church. Paston Pathways historic guided walks to Paston and Bacton
 - annual art exhibition by Paston College students of their year's work
 - pop-up exhibitions in disused shops
- Artist in residence possibly within The Cedars for periods prior to decision when safe to do so/ works not in progress
- Guided heritage walks, in various styles, led by Heritage Group historians, and/ or by entertainers
- Guided tours of heritage locations – including HAZ restoration works in progress, including normally unseen cellars and roofs etc
- Annual Lord of Misrule. Building on medieval tradition and North Walsham's rebellious past. Lord of Misrule appointed to lead Christmas revelries. This could be a mince pie eating contest, a mumming play, a high street advent calendar or any other idea they come up with.
- Heritage themed stall/ activities at Childrens day and Fun day events as well at the 1381 event