



TORBAY CULTURE - SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

April 2021 – September 2022



Torbay Culture was established in 2015 to progress [Enjoy, Talk, Do, Be - the ten year cultural strategy](#) for Torbay and its communities. The strategy is focused around people and place-shaping, with a mission to enable ***the cultural and creative development of our home, designated as the English Riviera UNESCO Global Geopark; and make Torbay a better place in which to live, work, learn and visit.*** From inception until 2021 [TDA](#) was the accountable body for Torbay Culture, executive and financial management until 1 December 2021 when the executive role was transferred to Torbay Council. That move was an important demonstration of the Council's commitment to culture and heritage. The Council and TDA work in collaboration with the independent advisory Board of Torbay Culture, and partners across the bay to implement the strategy to transform cultural provision and engagement in the area. www.torbayculture.org

The cultural strategy has three aims:

1: increase engagement and participation in cultural opportunities in Torbay

- Build from the community as well as bringing in new and diverse experiences
- Support creative and cultural learning
- Harness the health and well-being benefits of culture

2: maximise the distinctive natural and built cultural assets of Torbay

- Protect and enhance cultural places and spaces for culture
- Develop a year-round season-based rhythm of cultural provision
- Contribute to safe and sustainable living, working and visiting

3: ensure joined-up cultural development is a key contributor to economic, social and environmental development in Torbay

- Strengthen support for the creative and cultural economy and the advantages it brings
- Share knowledge, skills and resources to diversify and grow the income base
- Make links with and culture proof other policies, strategies and plans

Overview 2021 - 2022

Torbay Culture's focus is to support strategic opportunities, looking ahead to see how the bay's culture sector is better placed post-pandemic, and during the economic pressures affecting people. This last year has continued to be busy. In late 2021 we issued a [call out](#) to join the Board of Torbay Culture, and appointed [new members](#), strengthening our knowledge and experience. In February 2022, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) and Arts Council England announced [Levelling Up for Culture Places](#). This was an important development for localities like Torbay. We have long advocated for our home to be recognised as a place that needs not only more investment, but a better national understanding of our local issues. This listing is important and we are positive it will help with better decision-making in the future.

In March this year, DCMS and the Arts Council announced the news that Torbay would receive £3.5m of investment from the government's [Cultural Investment Fund](#): £3m Cultural Development Fund (CDF2) for **Torbay's Cultural Development - Paignton Picture House**; and almost £.5m Museum Estate & Development fund (MEND) for **Torre Abbey**. During the last year we hosted visits from partners, including Stuart McLeod, Director for England, London & South, and Richard Bellamy, Head of Engagement from the National Lottery Heritage Fund (March 2022) who spent time visiting Oldway and Torre Abbey - both places are receiving investment from the Fund. We continued to strengthen working relationships with Historic England and Arts Council England; have supported local organisations with their applications to Arts Council programmes as part of its [investment plan for 2023–26](#), including National Portfolio Organisation funding; and supported the new Torbay Events Advisory Group.

During 2022 our focus is:

- Development and delivery of the Cultural Development Fund (CDF2) investment focused on the Paignton Picture House
- Continuing to work closely with the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Arts Council England, and others to consolidate achievements, and strengthen future opportunities for Torbay's culture, creative, and heritage sectors.
- Alignment with investment such as Towns Fund, Future High Streets Fund and other Levelling Up opportunities.
- During 2023 we will be looking ahead and developing a route map for culture and heritage – through briefing notes and conversations; and using Torbay Council emerging issues papers to define opportunities for Torbay's culture, heritage and creativity.

A summary of Torbay Culture's actions during the 18 months between April 2021 and September 2022

Examples of actions are given by way of illustration. Priorities agreed by the Board of Torbay Culture are in capital letters

KEEP GROWING - CULTURAL AND CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT FOR OUR HOME

Encouraging more place-based cultural programmes, including local and invited artists, and a range of cultural and community organisations. This needs to be **popular and accessible, as well as new and diverse**.

ACTIONS:

- '[Lightplay at Royal Terrace Gardens](#)' was completed and opened by the Civic Mayor on 3 December 2021. Inspired by Torbay's local heritage and nature - including Amelia Griffiths (1768-1858), William Pengelly (1812-94) and our UNESCO designation. Michael Grubb Studio led the concept and lighting design, Anouk Mercier provided surface design for the columns in partnership with Torquay Museum, and other partners included Drew & Co, Ginkgo Projects, SWISCo and TDA. (Towns Fund investment)
 - A new artwork celebrating Agatha Christie was commissioned for The Strand and harbourside in Torquay. Following a public tender, Brixham artist [Elisabeth Hadley](#) was selected by popular vote. She is now working with The Christie Archive Trust to finalise designs, with the artwork due to be installed in late 2023. (Towns Fund investment)
 - Torbay Culture supported the Policy & Evidence Centre (PEC) [Creative Industries Innovation in Seaside Resorts and Country Towns research](#) (published September 2022) by brokering links with local sector partners and interviewees. Research led by the University of Exeter, funded by NESTA. [Publications available here.](#)
 - We supported the work of the charity [Hospital Rooms](#) which was commissioned by Devon Partnership NHS Trust to create artwork for the three mental health wards at [Torbay Hospital](#). This will transform the environment and experience for people using the hospital in the future.
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LIVING WELL - SHAPING A BETTER FUTURE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Supporting creative interventions which improve social outcomes and opportunities for young people. This will support young peoples' health and wellbeing, specifically mental health and be devised through a forum of interested parties. It **builds on the 'test and learn' projects for culture, health & wellbeing**.

ACTIONS:

- Continued to advocate to local government, NHS, public health and others, using the Torbay Culture evidence of [impact](#).
 - Supported the [National Centre for Creative Health](#) research with examples and evaluation from pilot projects completed in Torbay (2022)
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ENCOURAGING A RENAISSANCE FOR OUR HISTORIC BUILDINGS, VENUES AND SPACES

Developing cultural spaces and innovative thinking about historic assets. This complements the town centre improvement plans, and connects to a **refreshed Heritage Strategy and action plan**. Throughout 2021 we worked with Heritage Arts & People (HAP) and Torbay Council Spatial Planning team to implement the Heritage Strategy, which was formally adopted in November 2020. The strategy was Highly Commended by the [Royal Town Planning Institute in the RTPI South West Awards](#).

ACTIONS:

- Using our Culture Recovery Fund for Heritage grant we worked with Heritage Arts & People to progress the Heritage Strategy, specifically advisory reports on heritage assets in Council care provided to senior management to inform future plans; publishing the [heritage interpretation framework](#) and progressing site visits with Historic England to review heritage at risk and urban improvement opportunities. A local heritage forum was also held on 17 February 2022.
 - The cornerstone of our work is the Cultural Development Fund investment in [Torbay's Cultural Development – Paignton Picture House](#). Funding was confirmed from DCMS and Arts Council in March 2022, and the planning and development for this work has been a priority in recent months.
 - Torbay Culture has continued to liaise with external culture and heritage lead bodies to strengthen partnerships for longer-term future opportunities, and has successfully encouraged the inclusion of culture and heritage in major developments (Towns Fund and Torquay Town Investment Plan; Future High Streets Fund for Paignton)
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THE ENVIRONMENT – CELEBRATING AND RESPECTING OUR UNESCO GLOBAL GEOPARK

We want to maximise the opportunities of the English Riviera UNESCO Global Geopark through creativity and innovation. It is the **canvas on which we all live our lives**, and the bay's unique and distinctive offer to visitors. This builds on Torbay Culture's earlier work (Eyeview, the cultural tourism development and regeneration-supported projects); as well as Geopark initiatives like The Rock Connects Us and the annual Geopark Festival.

ACTIONS:

- We continued to champion the UNESCO designation through strategic fora, with local and external partners including Arts Council England, Heritage Fund and others, and in the new English Riviera Destination Management Plan (2022)
 - Looking ahead, the Board of Torbay Culture and executive role will be actively supporting the quadrennial UNESCO visit and (re)validation process during 2023
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CULTURAL TOURISM ON THE ENGLISH RIVIERA

Working with partners including English Riviera Business Improvement District (ERBIDCo) and Council to support activity which **underpins the visitor economy for the area**. This builds on our cultural tourism product development; and the English Riviera Destination Management Plan.

ACTIONS:

- We created [short films](#) that celebrate the less well-known aspects of Torbay heritage as part of our Culture Recovery Fund activity (Agatha Swims went live September 2021; Heritage Gardens January 2022).
- We continued to support ambitions by engaging with the Destination Management Group and in the development of the new Destination Management Plan (2022)
- Culture and heritage related content was supplied for the English Riviera new website (January 2022) including legacy content ([Writers on the Riviera](#), and [Speed Up and Slow Down](#))
- We worked with partners including the [International Agatha Christie Festival](#) to look ahead; in the coming year we will support the festival as we ensure its sustainability

During 2021-22 Torbay Culture's activities and programmes were supported with investment from the following:

- In April 2021 Torbay Council and TDA committed to support Torbay Culture's work; on 1 December 2021 the executive role transferred into Torbay Council
- The Culture Recovery Fund for Heritage from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), administered via the Heritage Fund (during 2021)
- The Cultural Development Fund (CDF) a Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) fund, administered by Arts Council England (during 2022-25)

We are grateful to those who have supported and collaborated with us during 2021-22.

Jacob Brandon, Chair of Torbay Culture and **Martin Thomas**, Executive Director

<https://www.torbayculture.org/news>

<https://twitter.com/TorbayCulture>

Images (from left to right): Morwenna Graziano in 'Agatha Swims' / Amanda Bluglass, Karen Marshall, Matt Newbury receive English Riviera Film Festival Award for Torbay Culture's 'Agatha Swims' (2021) / 'Lightplay' launch (Images by Kathy Coley, 2021) / Devon Partnership NHS Trust and Hospital Rooms team members during the installation of art by Tom Hannick (Tim Shaw, 2022) / Paignton Picture House open day (J Brandon, 2022) / 'Heritage Gardens on the English Riviera' film for Torbay Culture (A Bluglass, K Marshall, D Cook, 2021)

Supported using public funding by



**ARTS COUNCIL
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Culture
Recovery Fund
for Heritage

The
National Lottery
Heritage Fund

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Digital, Culture,
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