



## Arts Commissioning Grants – Feedback on Consultation

Arts Alive is extremely grateful for the support of Herefordshire Council over the past few years, especially at a time when the Council has been making some very difficult decisions.

Herefordshire Council supports the work of Arts Alive and Flicks in the Sticks with an investment of £12,000.

Based on the last full year of activity we provided the following:

- 60 live professional events in 26 different communities
- 330 film screenings in 32 different communities
- Training events for volunteer promoters
- Audiences of over 17,000 people
- Over 3,500 volunteer hours
- Several partnerships with other Herefordshire based organisations
- Applied and received extra support for specific projects – such as Satellite installation in Ledbury Market Theatre and extra marketing support from LEADER.

Arts Alive receives a grant of over £58,000 from the Arts Council of England (ACE) to support our work in both counties. Having discussed this situation with the ACE, their view is this:

*“Arts Alive is a National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) and currently has a three- year funding agreement. Following the spending review, Arts Council England will be looking to open an NPO/MPM application process between autumn 2013 and spring 2014. This will be an open application process.”*

Our view is that the Arts Council will look at our application including the support we have from our local authorities, and will decide if our application is strong enough to be successful. Our concern is that if we lose local authority investment that this could prejudice the strength of our application.

In addition to the Herefordshire Council grant and the ACE grant, we generate at least £30,000 extra income from events, as well as extra investment from other funders such as Lottery and Sponsorship.

**We estimate that the Herefordshire Council grant is matched by a factor of 8.**

Our biggest concern with a reduction of funding is that other funders may see it as an opportunity to reduce funds also – and both of these mean that we would have to reduce the number of events, which again impacts on income – launching us into a downwards spiral.

With increasing unemployment and closing of basic local rural services such as shops, schools, libraries and pubs, Arts Alive and Flicks in the Sticks provide vital opportunities for communities to come together, to get to know and support each other and to from the sale of refreshments raise small amounts for their important community venues. This service helps to keep it viable and appealing for **all ages** to live and work in our rural communities.

Apart from the obvious outputs of the events, and the earned income as a result of Herefordshire Council investment, there are less obvious, but equally crucial aspects to our work.

Volunteering is a huge part of our work, working with hundreds of local people, meeting with them and other promoters for sharing of ideas, organising training sessions, supporting them etc. This gives each promoter a sense of worth and place, keeping them active, helping them support their communities.

We very much hope that the council can find a way to continue our funding, so that our important work which represents great value for money can go from strength to strength.

Ian Kerry

July 2013