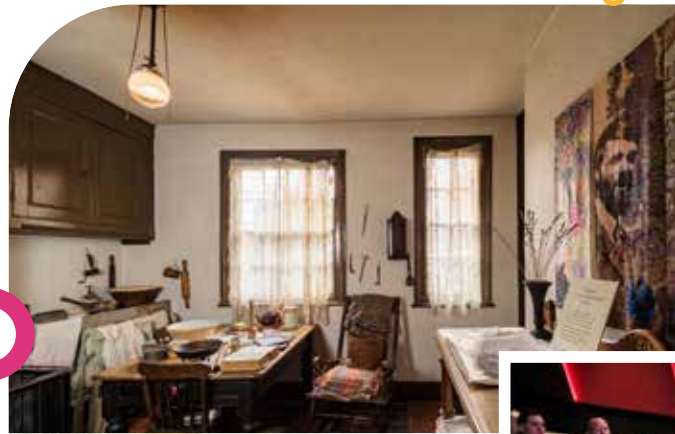




Cultural Strategy

2026-2028



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**THE LIVING
MOMENT IS
EVERYTHING**

JH Lawrence

Introduction



Broxtowe is a Borough rich in culture, where our heritage and our present-day creativity come together to shape a vibrant and welcoming place for all. From our historical links to influential figures such as Henry Ireton, D.H. Lawrence and Sir Peter Mansfield, to the diverse communities, artists, groups and organisations who live and work here today, culture is deeply rooted in who we are.

Today, culture in Broxtowe is not only something we inherit, but something we actively create and celebrate. Through events, activities and programmes delivered by the Council and our partners, we continue to offer opportunities for people of all backgrounds to connect, express themselves and take part in cultural life. Broxtowe prides itself on being inclusive and diverse – a place where culture belongs to everyone.

We recognise that the current economic climate continues to present significant challenges, particularly for the cultural sector and for many of our residents. Rising costs and financial pressures are affecting how people access and participate in culture. However, it is precisely at times like these that culture becomes even more important. It supports wellbeing, reduces isolation, strengthens communities and contributes to local pride and economic resilience.

Despite the challenges, the Council remains committed to investing in and supporting culture across the Borough. We understand the wide-ranging benefits it brings – from enhancing education and skills, to improving health and wellbeing, supporting regeneration and helping to create safer, stronger communities.

This Cultural Strategy sets out our ambition to build on our strengths and to work collaboratively with partners, organisations and residents to ensure that culture continues to thrive in Broxtowe. We know that culture means different things to different people, and our approach will remain flexible, inclusive and responsive to the needs of our communities.

We look forward to continuing to work together to ensure that everyone in Broxtowe can experience and benefit from the positive impact that culture brings.

Councillor Teresa Cullen

Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Health

Front Cover



Easter Fun Event.



Kitchen at D.H. Lawrence Birthplace Museum



C-City conference at Arc Cinema Beeston



Local exhibition

Scope

What is culture?

This strategy takes the Arts Council definition of culture:

'Culture' means many things to many people and is often used to refer to food, religion and other forms of heritage. We use it to mean all those areas of activity associated with: collections, combined arts, dance, libraries, literature, museums, music, theatre and the visual arts. By describing all of this work collectively as 'culture', rather than separately as 'the arts', 'museums' and 'libraries', we aim to be inclusive of the full breadth of activity.

It also recognises the importance of other cultural activities such as sports and film.

Approach

Culture does not belong to a single person or organisation and so our approach will be focused on acting as a champion of culture, building relationships and encouraging collaboration to help everyone share in and celebrate the cultural richness of the Borough.

This will be achieved through:

- A diverse annual Council events programme.
- Development of the D.H. Lawrence Birthplace Museum and wider heritage legacy.
- Engagement and collaboration with the many local groups and organisations in the Borough, helping to forge connections to enhance the existing cultural offer. This will include ongoing support for a Community Committee, made up of local people who are experts in various cultural fields and who deliver a range of projects to showcase and enhance the cultural offer in Broxtowe.

The strategy will be dynamic, evolving with local people and what culture means to them, as well as allow us to tailor our efforts to the resources available.

With Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) taking place across Nottinghamshire, the Council will ensure that wherever possible, culture and heritage and the positive economic, social and health benefits of a cultural programme remain an integral part of any new authorities.

We will also ensure that our cultural offering is aligned to the aspirations and guidelines of national bodies in the cultural sector, such as the Arts Council, Museums Development England and the Department for Culture, Media & Sport.

Broxtowe is home to many volunteers and community organisations who help support cultural activities.





Alignment to the Corporate Plan, Vision and Values

The Council's vision is:

A greener, safer, healthier Borough where everyone prospers.

The Cultural Strategy is closely aligned to three of the Council's priorities:

- **Business Growth - Invest in our towns and our people**

Economic growth - Research shows that cultural heritage can increase the attractiveness of a place. The more people that choose to visit, work and live in the local area, the more money is brought into the local economy in turn creating new jobs and opportunities.

Education - Evidence shows that engagement in cultural activities leads to improved engagement with teaching across the curriculum and improved academic attainment, as well as better behaviour and fewer fixed term exclusions.

- **Health – Healthy and supported communities**

Physical and mental health - Greater participation in the arts increases confidence and wellbeing, and research by Arts Council England has shown that it can improve the physical health of older adults, resulting in lower blood pressure and reduced anxiety in cardiac patients, as well as shorter hospital stays.

- **Community Safety – A safe place for everyone**

Crime and anti-social behaviour - Culture can also be an effective way to reduce re-offending and anti-social behaviour – keeping people positively engaged in their communities, bringing people together to address intergenerational fear and isolation. Research has found that such projects reduced the risk of young people engaging in crime and anti-social behaviour.



Its 'GREAT' values are:

- Going the extra mile - a strong, caring focus on the needs of all communities.
- Ready for change - innovation and readiness for change.
- Employees - valuing employees and enabling the active involvement of everyone.
- Always improving - continuous improvement and delivering value for money.
- Transparent - integrity and professional competence.

Stakeholders

- Residents
- Town and Parish Councils
- Departments across the Council
- Schools
- Partner bodies and organisations
- Local groups and forums
- Special interest groups e.g. D.H. Lawrence society, Haggs Farm Preservation Society
- Business community
- Community groups and organisations
- Potential investors
- The media
- Employees
- Elected Members, The Mayor of Broxowe and Broxtowe Youth Mayor
- MPs
- Nottingham and Nottingham Trent Universities
- Broxtowe Safety Advisory Group (SAG)
- Arts and cultural bodies e.g. Arts Council England, UNESCO, City of Literature, Museums' Development East Midlands
- Colleagues in the Council's twin town Gütersloh and other linked European cities
- Sports clubs
- Community Committee
- Environmental groups including the Green Umbrella Group
- Health and wellbeing groups
- Community and faith leaders
- Arts practitioners
- Venues



Proms in the Park is one of the many cultural events which take place in the Borough each year.



Existing cultural richness

Event programme

The Council delivers a programme of more than 100 events each year that support community cohesion, health and wellbeing, economic growth, education and community safety. The programme is designed to be inclusive and representative of Broxtowe's diverse communities, with consideration given to the needs of people of different ages, backgrounds, abilities and protected characteristics to ensure activities are accessible and welcoming to all.

Events range from large-scale community celebrations such as Hemlock Happening, attracting up to 9,000 visitors, and Christmas Light Switch On events, attracting up to 3,000 attendees, through to Fun Days, Green Festivals, civic commemorations and targeted engagement activities for tenants, businesses and community groups.

Many events are provided free of charge to reduce barriers to participation, support local businesses, tackle social isolation and encourage residents to engage with local cultural, leisure and community facilities.

The programme is delivered with a strong focus on safety, resilience and sustainability. Event planning incorporates health and safety requirements, risk management, security arrangements, emergency planning and consideration of evolving legislation. The Council also takes account of climate change and increasingly unpredictable weather, ensuring events continue to be delivered safely, sustainably and successfully for residents and visitors.

D.H. Lawrence Birthplace Museum

The D.H. Lawrence Birthplace Museum is where this literary legend was born on 11 September 1885. The Museum is a must see for fans of literature, and for those wanting to delve deeper into Nottingham's literary heritage.

The Museum offers a mixture of experiences to help visitors discover stories of this not-so-average son of a miner, as well as the wider local history of the area. This includes guided and self-guided tours, education visits, digital tours, including an Augmented Reality Trail, walking trails and wider community events to encourage those who may not normally visit to experience cultural, educational and wellbeing activity.

As a Grade II listed building, the Museum has continued to recognise the capabilities of the site and the importance of outreach work and partnerships with local and international organisations as part of its programming.



Community offering

Broxtowe is rich with voluntary arts, heritage and community organisations covering a wide range of areas of interest. These groups are run by committed volunteers and their activities make a major contribution to the cultural life of the area.

Regular events include everything from Beeston Film Festival and Oxjam to walk and talk programmes and the D.H. Lawrence Music Festival.

Cultural assets

- Heritage sites – The Canalside • Heritage sites, Bennerley Viaduct, The Breach House, Brinsley Headstocks, Beauvale Priory, Canalside Heritage and Church Cottage
- Historical assets – Beeston Railway Station, Swingate Water Tower, Kimberley Cemetery Chapel, Greasley Castle
- Museums – D.H. Lawrence Birthplace Museum
- Theatre – Chilwell Arts Theatre
- Environment and nature – 62 parks and open spaces including 15 designated local nature reserves, 17 wildlife corridors including the Erewash Valley Trail and Broxtowe Country Trail, 7 wooden sculptures across the Borough's parks and open spaces and a miner's orchard to honour colliery miners
- Libraries – six libraries managed by Nottinghamshire County Council including Beeston Library's, Beeston Gallery and Exhibition Space
- Cinema – Arc cinema in Beeston
- Artist studio space - Canal Side Art Studio and The Parnham Gallery and Attenborough Nature Reserve and Centre
- Town centre – four town centres with their own unique heritage and Character
- Erewash Valley Trail and Nottingham Canal
- The D.H. Lawrence Trail and AR Trail
- The Southern Broxtowe Plaque Scheme
- Eastwood Hall and Durban House
- Street Art throughout Beeston, Eastwood and Kimberley



Arc Cinema in Beeston



Swingate Water Tower

Context

A number of facts and figures have helped shape the strategy.

National Context

Culture and the arts make a substantial contribution to the UK, generating an estimated £10.8 billion for the economy. Research commissioned by Arts Council England and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) shows that participation in cultural activities is strongly linked to improved health and wellbeing, with cultural engagement estimated to deliver around £8 billion annually in health and wellbeing benefits.

Evidence also suggests that participation in arts and cultural activity can reduce social isolation, improve mental health and lessen demand on public services.

Studies have identified:

- Up to 68% improvement in mental health symptoms through cultural social prescribing.
- A 32% lower risk of developing depression among those regularly engaging in arts and culture.
- Reductions in GP visits and A&E admissions linked to structured arts programmes.
- Returns on investment of up to £2.90 for every £1 invested through improved wellbeing and reduced pressure on health services.

The Value of Culture and Heritage

National research demonstrates that culture and heritage contribute significantly to thriving communities, economic resilience and civic pride. Historic England estimates that cultural heritage generates around £515 per person per year in wellbeing value, equating to approximately £29 billion annually across England.

The evidence shows that cultural and heritage assets:

- Strengthen local identity and pride in place.
- Improve wellbeing and social connectedness.
- Support skills development and social mobility.
- Drive inclusive economic growth and visitor spending.
- Help tackle health inequalities and social isolation.



Local Context

Regional museum surveys have identified challenges including reduced volunteering, rising costs, lower educational engagement and financial pressures across the sector.

Recent performance demonstrates strong growth and increasing public engagement with culture, heritage and events in Broxtowe:

- The D.H. Lawrence Birthplace Museum increased visitor numbers from 3,381 in 2022/23 to 5,823 in 2025/26, representing a **72%** increase.
- **995** pupils from Broxtowe schools engaged with museum education activities.
- More than **31,000** people attended Council events in 2025/26, in comparison to 24,624 in with 2022/23.
- Over **£37,000** of external funding and sponsorship was secured to support and enhance the events programme.

Broxtowe also benefits from a strong network of community and voluntary organisations which provide opportunities to develop cultural participation and local partnerships.

This strategy also supports wider Council priorities, including:

- The Communications and Engagement Strategy.
- The Climate Change and Green Futures Strategy.
- Town Centre Investment Programmes.
- Local Government Reorganisation and future service transformation.

Demographics

Broxtowe has a population of 110,990 residents. The Borough has an ageing demographic profile, with the largest age groups aged 55-64, 45-54 and 25-34. Around 6.5% of residents are from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities, highlighting the importance of ensuring cultural opportunities are inclusive and reflective of local communities.

Consultation

Views from key stakeholders have been sought through meetings and other engagement activities.

Stakeholders included:

- | | |
|--|---|
| • D.H. Lawrence Society | • Community groups and organisations |
| • Nottingham City of Literature | • Elected Members |
| • Town and Parish Councils | • Nottingham and Nottingham Trent Universities |
| • Higgs Farm Preservation Society | • Sports clubs |
| • Broxtowe Safety Advisory Group (SAG) | • Community Committee |
| • Partner bodies and organisations | • Environmental groups including the Green Umbrella Group |
| • Local groups and forums | • Arts practitioners |
| • Business community | |

Sources

The positive economic spillovers of publicly funded creativity and culture | Arts Council England

Spillover impacts in the publicly funded arts and culture sector | Arts Council England

Annual Museum Survey · MDM

The Wellbeing Impact of Cultural Heritage on England's Economy | Historic England

Section two: Why invest in local culture? | Local Government Association

Achievements

Broxtowe's Culture and Events Team was recognised by the Nottinghamshire Safety Advisory Group as the "gold standard" for event management, highlighting the Borough as an example of best practice across the county.

Supported a successful Arts Council England bid, securing £27,000 for Parky Players, Broxtowe's theatre group for people living with Parkinson's, to participate in an accessible street theatre festival in Poland as part of the Voices Raised project.

Reduced the number of events affected by adverse weather by redesigning the annual events programme, with only 15% impacted in 2026/27, compared with 41% in 2025/26.

Correct as of September 2026



The D.H. Lawrence Children's Writing Competition has engaged more than 1,700 children, attracting entries from as far afield as Spain and Thailand.

Secured £5,000 to allow the D.H. Lawrence Museum to create British Sign Language (BSL) interpretation videos to improve overall accessibility.

Increased visitor numbers to the D.H. Lawrence Birthplace Museum by 30% since 2022/23.



Secured £30,000 of Arts Council funding to deliver a festival of culture events and activities across Broxtowe in partnership with the Community Committee.

Successfully launched the Beeston Summer Fete, attracting more than 1,200 attendees in its first year.



Engaged over 19,200 people through museum visits, exhibitions, events and activities.

Secured national and international profile for the museum through features including BBC Bargain Hunt and BBC Radio 4.

Introduced an augmented reality experience in Eastwood, enhancing engagement with D.H. Lawrence's hometown and heritage.



More than 31,000 people attended Council events in 2025/26, in comparison to 24,624 in 2022/23.

Reached 764 children through museum loan boxes, outreach sessions, digital tours and educational visits.

Supported Nottingham City Museums in acquiring the last known portrait of D.H. Lawrence connected to his hometown.

Secured £10,000 of UKSPF funding for a renewed D.H. Lawrence Trail providing an updated walking route with new signage and QR codes to exclusive content.

The C-City partnership's Cooking and Culture! recipe book won first place in the Best Plurinational Book in the World category at the Gourmand World Cookbook Awards in Lisbon, celebrating cultural exchange through food.

Secured more than £37,000 in external funding and sponsorship to support the events programme, up from £30,000 in 2022/23.

Expanded the D.H. Lawrence Festival, growing attendance from 750 in 2022/23 to more than 6,400 in 2025/26.

Launched a programme of Pop-Up Museum events, attracting more than 1,200 attendees since 2023/24.





Beijing Partnership Case Study

Since January 2025, the D.H. Lawrence Birthplace Museum has partnered with Nottingham Trent University and Beijing Culture and Language University to deliver a successful cultural exchange programme. Building on the Together exhibition, the partnership has engaged over 7,500 people through international exhibitions, supported hands-on learning for 51 students through object loans, provided practical heritage experience via student placements, and connected communities through the From Home storytelling project. The initiative demonstrates the value of international collaboration in widening participation and strengthening cultural understanding.

Tour Your Town

In summer 2026, Broxtowe Borough Council launched Tour Your Town, a tourism campaign encouraging residents and visitors to explore the Borough's heritage, green spaces and independent businesses. Showcasing attractions such as Bennerley Viaduct, the D.H. Lawrence Birthplace Museum, local parks and nature reserves, the campaign promotes civic pride, supports the local economy and increases engagement with Broxtowe's cultural, heritage and leisure assets.

C-City Project

Since signing the C-City Charter in 2022 alongside partner cities in Germany, Sweden, France and Poland, Broxtowe has used culture as a platform for international collaboration, community engagement and cultural development. Through art, music, literature and research projects, the programme has helped showcase Broxtowe's cultural offer while creating opportunities for residents, artists and young people to connect with communities across Europe.

The project has delivered a range of successful outcomes, including international cultural exchange conferences, a travelling art exhibition, musical exchanges, the D.H. Lawrence Children's Prize writing competition, Friday18 live music events and an international award-winning recipe book. It has also supported the creation of the Broxtowe Community Committee, helping secure £57,000 Arts Council funding for initiatives such as the Broxtowe Creates Festival, accessible street theatre projects, strengthening the Borough's cultural programme and community.

Parky Players

The Broxtowe C-City project has helped Parky Players, a community theatre group for people living with Parkinson's and their supporters, grow from a small online support group into an award-winning arts organisation. Through opportunities provided by C-City and Broxtowe Creates, members developed skills, confidence and creative projects, including the nationally recognised theatre production Shaken Not Stirred and its award-winning film adaptation. The project has amplified the voices of people living with Parkinson's, challenged misconceptions, supported wellbeing through the arts, and created international opportunities through the wider European C-City network.



Celebrated and protected

Opportunities to promote cultural activity from grassroots level up are maximised to create pride in Broxtowe as a culturally rich place.

It is easy to dismiss culture as a luxury we cannot afford, but the potential benefits it can bring to people and places are vast. Culture can also help enhance the reputation of the Borough and help people feel connected to it and proud to be part of it. A more co-ordinated approach to communicating about what is on offer in Broxtowe will be key in reaching more people and in turn, encouraging them to take part in the activities, as well as helping to develop what culture means to people in the Borough. As with all the Council's communications, this will be a multi-channel approach through both digital and non-digital channels to reach the many and diverse groups who call Broxtowe home.

Part of everyday life

Culture will be embedded in Broxtowe as part of day to day life, with chances for everyone in our community to take part.

Culture belongs to everyone and should reflect the diverse interests, experiences and needs of our communities. By working in partnership with residents, we will provide a broad and inclusive cultural offer, from large-scale events that bring people together to smaller activities that inspire learning, creativity and reflection. Our ambition is to make culture part of everyday life in Broxtowe, embedding it within our parks, town centres, public spaces and communities. We will break down barriers to participation, help more people see themselves represented in cultural activity, and use culture to support wellbeing, reduce loneliness and strengthen community connections.



Helps us prosper

Opportunities for culture to support personal and community development are recognised and acted upon.

Culture has the power to strengthen communities, increase pride in place, drive economic growth and improve wellbeing. A strong cultural offer can support town centre regeneration, attract visitors and investment, create jobs, and increase footfall, helping to boost the local economy. At the same time, culture creates opportunities for people to learn new skills, build connections, reduce loneliness and improve mental health and wellbeing. By embedding culture within our planning and investment programmes, we can maximise these benefits and ensure they contribute to a thriving, inclusive and sustainable Borough for future generations.

Actions:

1. Secure increased external funding for culture, heritage and events by strengthening funding applications and identifying new funding opportunities.
2. Achieve Museum re-accreditation.
3. Continue to develop a community-focused engagement model at the Museum to maximise participation and impact within the available resources.
4. Strengthen community engagement and co-production through cultural steering groups, partnerships and community-led initiatives, including the existing partnerships, community/voluntary groups.
5. Develop partnerships with Town and Parish Councils, businesses and other stakeholders to enhance cultural opportunities, support local economic growth and promote community cohesion and pride in place.
6. Maximise the use of new community assets, including Stapleford Community Pavilion and Bennerley Viaduct, as spaces for cultural events and activities to drive footfall and support return on investment.
7. Continue to build momentum of the Tour Your Town tourism campaign, showcasing the Borough's cultural assets and the people who make it a unique and attractive destination for visitors.
8. Continue to work with Visit Nottingham and other partners to promote cultural events through digital and traditional channels and increase attendance.
9. Deliver culturally inclusive events and activities that reflect and celebrate the diversity of Broxtowe's communities such as disability and neurodiversity.
10. Increase volunteering opportunities and promote the wellbeing, social and skills benefits of volunteering within cultural services.
11. Strengthen engagement with schools and young people through heritage, arts and cultural learning opportunities.
12. Continue to utilise the role of The Mayor of Broxtowe and the Broxtowe Youth Mayor to be a spokesperson of the Borough and further support the promotion of cultural activity across Broxtowe.



Local musician Jeanie Barton performing at the Broxtowe C-City Conference.



Local exhibition.

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

1. Understand the impact that Local Government Reorganisation will have on culture and set community groups and committees up for the future to ensure culture is not negatively impacted.
2. Prepare for Local Government Reorganisation by ensuring culture and heritage remain embedded within future governance and delivery arrangements.
3. Strengthen community capacity and capability to plan, deliver and sustain cultural opportunities, ensuring communities can maintain and grow cultural activity.

How will success be measured?

- Attendance/engagement with D.H. Lawrence Birthplace Museum
- Event turnout
- Event feedback
- Focus groups
- Tripadvisor reviews
- Value of volunteer hours works
- Groups engaged
- Number of cultural activities
- Awareness /perception surveys
- Town centre footfall
- School engagement

Culture helps us prosper

Opportunities for culture to support personal and community development are recognised and acted upon.

Put simply, cultural activity can have the potential to change lives and help shape the future of the Borough.

Cultural activity can be a key economic driver, supporting our investment programme and revitalising our town centres with new jobs, visitors and encouraging new investment.

Hand in hand with this is the impact it can have on the personal development of local people by offering new opportunities to learn new skills, connect with others to address mental health issues and loneliness, bringing people from different generations and backgrounds together and general improvements to wellbeing.

Strengthening our cultural offer can help support our investment programmes and revitalise our town centres, creating jobs, attracting visitors and investment and supporting the economic success of the Borough as a whole.

Recognising these values of culture and ensuring it is woven into our strategic planning in a sustainable way, will be key in maximising its benefits for future generations to come.



Friday 18 in Beeston Square