



CREATE THE FUTURE



LETCHWORTH'S CULTURE STRATEGY



Letchworth
Garden City
Heritage Foundation



“Culture gives me a sense of purpose, pride and a deeper awareness of the organic identity of a place, wherever I am.”

Sean Pearce - Founder, Eastcheap Space

“HUMAN SOCIETY AND THE BEAUTY OF NATURE ARE MEANT TO BE ENJOYED TOGETHER.”

EBENEZER HOWARD

Sir Ebenezer Howard founded the Garden City movement which led to the creation of Letchworth Garden City and influenced urban planning throughout the world.

1903 LETCHWORTH WAS FOUNDED AS THE FIRST GARDEN CITY

OUR UNIQUE HISTORY

Founded in 1903, Letchworth was the first planned garden city. Its designers sought to combine the best features of urban and rural living to offer residents a lifestyle that blended the richness and energy of the city with fresh air and open countryside.

Today, Letchworth’s founding principles feel more relevant than ever. Britain’s cities, suburbs and towns are changing to reflect environmental, economic and social realities that can no longer be ignored. The ways in which we live and work are changing too, as we seek out places that offer essential resources, convenient connections and a genuine sense of community.

Letchworth did it first, creating a blueprint for responsible development that resonates to this day. And we are doing it again by placing culture at the heart of the town’s strategy to drive sustainable growth and promote the wellbeing of its people. This strategy will improve the fabric and infrastructure of our town, boost residents’ quality of life and enrich Letchworth’s cultural offer, making it more attractive and generating more revenue to be spent for the good of the local community.

However, we cannot achieve these goals without your participation and support.

This is Letchworth’s culture strategy to 2026 and beyond. Please read it and consider how it will impact your life and what you stand to gain by being involved in its development and delivery. Then get in touch with us to find out how you can play your part in imagining a bolder, brighter future for Letchworth and bringing our shared vision to life.

Stuart Sapsford
Culture Committee Chair

WHY CULTURE MATTERS

WE ARE THE LETCHWORTH CULTURE COMMITTEE, AN ALLIANCE OF CULTURAL ORGANISATIONS AND INFLUENCERS WITH A SHARED BELIEF IN LETCHWORTH AND SHARED AMBITION FOR OUR TOWN AND ITS PEOPLE.

WE BELIEVE THAT FOR LETCHWORTH TO THRIVE IN THE FUTURE, CULTURE - IN ITS MANY FORMS - MUST CONTINUE TO FLOURISH IN THE TOWN.



Our vision is that by 2026, Letchworth will be a thriving arts, culture and heritage centre, attracting audiences from around the country and the world, providing opportunities for all to engage and achieving high levels of cultural participation for our residents.



Our commitment is to:

- Support and nurture culture-makers
- Promote the importance of culture
- Champion cultural excellence
- Drive cultural impact.

Our primary objective is that Letchworth is known for its exciting and impactful cultural offer and that current non-participating audiences experience the many opportunities we have to offer.



Our opportunity is to celebrate Letchworth's past, present and future as the world's first garden city, with rich cultural heritage, architecture, green spaces and a strong community spirit, as well as an already active contemporary cultural scene.

We have over 100 years of innovation, influence and experience, to build upon.



Our promises cover four key aspects of Letchworth's cultural offer - place, public, provider and practitioner - with each area containing several measurable objectives.



OUR PROMISES

THE PLACE

Through our arts, culture and heritage programme, we will make Letchworth a place that people want to visit and that our residents are proud to call home.

OBJECTIVE 1

Create a high-quality, regionally recognised Culture Centre enabling delivery of a range of programmes and ensuring that Letchworth's cultural offer is an emblem of, and a focal point for, the town as a place to visit and a source of pride for local residents.

- **Measure** – a business plan is created – including an economic impact assessment for the future Culture Centre – to generate income needed to deliver the vision and to evaluate ongoing revenue implications.

OBJECTIVE 2

Ensure Letchworth is known for its high-quality cultural offer, attracting arts and heritage consumers and professionals, and enabling it to grow its national and international profile.

- **Measure** – a 20% increase in the number of visits from non-Letchworth residents to activities and digital platforms.

OBJECTIVE 3

Deliver cultural activities and share the story of the garden city in our neighbourhoods and open spaces, increasing accessibility for all.

- **Measure** – a 25% increase in the number of visitors to cultural activities.

OBJECTIVE 4

Ensure that the town centre has cultural services and activities woven throughout, enhancing its vibrancy and increasing footfall.

- **Measure** – a 10% increase to town centre visits year-on-year.

OBJECTIVE 5

Work with schools to support their delivery of the curriculum and increase requirements relating to “cultural capital” and increase young people's engagement with the arts and the Letchworth Garden City (LGC) story.

- **Measure** – all local schools are engaged with the Arts, Culture and Heritage programme and are accessing the cultural learning offers.



THE PUBLIC

We will create events, activities and services that engage our target audiences.

OBJECTIVE 6

Create an audience development plan that increases the partnership's understanding of key target audiences and considers ways in which to engage and involve them. Address barriers to access, enabling all to enjoy the town's cultural offer.

- **Measure** – an audience development plan is created and its recommended measures are met.

OBJECTIVE 7

Ensure that everyone can engage in the cultural offer and that our audience is both inclusive and representative of our community.

- **Measure** – the audience profile is measured and found to represent the local community.

OBJECTIVE 8

Enable all children, young people and families to learn about the history of the town and engage with a wide range of cultural opportunities.

- **Measure** – all local children under 16 understand the LGC story.

THE PROVIDERS

We will create collaborative opportunities with arts, culture and heritage providers to enhance their current offer and their ability to deliver financially sustainable programmes.

OBJECTIVE 9

By sharing knowledge and resources, and providing training and development support, ensure that local cultural service providers develop financial resilience, sustainable operating models and relevant skills to ensure the future success of the town's cultural offer.

- **Measure** – investment into the town's arts and culture services increases by 10% year-on-year.

OBJECTIVE 10

Deliver an annual culture festival as a collaborative celebration of our local partners and practitioners, and as a focal point for the town.

- **Measure** – an annual event, led by partners, is initiated, attracting investment to support the delivery of our strategy and the growth of our cultural offer.



OBJECTIVE 11

Work with current and potential providers to map existing services, identify gaps in provision and encourage new providers to deliver activities, as led by community consultation.

- **Measure** – the service requirements of the community are identified, and work is undertaken with partners to ensure delivery. A universal monitoring framework is created and embedded to demonstrate impact on a town-wide scale.

“Culture enhances life beyond the mundane and encourages the widening of Intellectual horizons.”

Philippa Parker - Secretary, Letchworth Garden City Society



THE PRACTITIONERS

We will help the town's cultural practitioners to develop their skills and practices, and identify and secure opportunities to advance their careers and grow their businesses. This will include bringing talent into the town to enhance our offer with shared skills experience.

OBJECTIVE 12

Create a physical and digital communications platform for local practitioners to share skills, promote activities/events and showcase all that Letchworth has to offer.

- **Measure** – a digital sharing platform and one or more physical networking events are initiated.



OBJECTIVE 13

Ensure that we are inclusive and recognise diversity by providing practitioners and organisations with equal access to opportunities to deliver their works.

- **Measure** – events, activities and Letchworth's exhibition programme are found to be inclusive and representative of our local community.

OBJECTIVE 14

Support skills development within the cultural sector and the creation of jobs and volunteering opportunities within the town, and establish more workspaces for creatives.

- **Measure** – 10% more cultural jobs and 15% more cultural volunteering opportunities are created each year. A skills development programme is created and embedded, with over 100 unique practitioners engaging in programmes each year. Workspaces for at least 20 additional practitioners are created. We will attract at least 10 new, high-quality artists or art organisations each year and increase the quality of our offer.

OUR PRINCIPLES

- We will consult with key stakeholders and be community-led.
- We will use Letchworth's architecture, open spaces and history to deliver activities and celebrate the town and its cultural offer.
- We will collaborate with business and educational providers to ensure that culture supports and complements their offer.
- We will be environmentally responsible.
- We will be evidence-led.
- We will deliver activities in-venue, digitally, within communities and outdoors.
- We will be innovative, adaptable, interactive, ambitious and focused on the long term.
- We will champion diversity, equality and inclusivity within arts, culture and heritage.



WHAT DO WE STAND TO GAIN?

- Improved personal wellbeing for all.
- More employment and volunteering opportunities.
- Improved education and learning at all ages.
- Better mental and physical health.
- Increased visits to Letchworth and economic impact for the town.
- Increased usage of all culture and leisure activities.
- Improved social engagement opportunities.
- Improved community cohesion.
- Increased opportunities for creatives and expansion of creative network.
- Child/family development opportunities.
- Support for poverty alleviation.



“To me, Letchworth’s culture is the thing that gives the town a bit of buzz and character. There are many options to enjoy life, both in the community and outside of work”.

Kiera Chojecki - Illustrator



GET INVOLVED

In the years ahead, culture will play a leading role in propelling Letchworth towards an exciting future in which we all participate in a success story built on collaboration, creativity, inclusiveness and sustainability.

But we can't do this without you. Our goal is to develop new services and initiatives that focus on your needs. To do that, we need to fully understand the issues that affect the people of Letchworth, and to appreciate the vibrant culture that will underpin our success.

We need your experience, your imagination and your ideas for the future of Letchworth. Join us today: letchworth.com/culture

If you share our vision and ambition for culture in Letchworth and would like to partner with us, get in touch now at response@letchworth.com

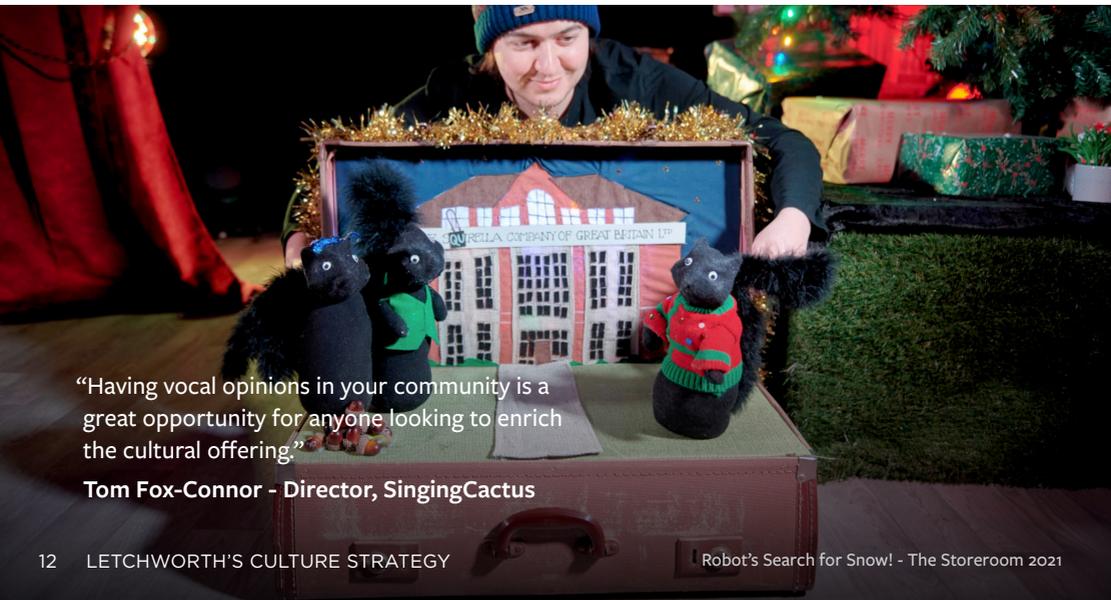
Find out more about our projects and activities at: letchworth.com/culture

OUR PARTNERS

Our partners have a passion for delivering arts-based, cultural and heritage services. Our aim is to develop Letchworth's incredible cultural sector and deliver a vision for the future of the world's first garden city.



Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation



“Having vocal opinions in your community is a great opportunity for anyone looking to enrich the cultural offering.”

Tom Fox-Connor - Director, SingingCactus

CONTACT US

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