

# Cheltenham Culture Board



**Culture Strategy  
2023-2027**

# Introduction

This is a moment for pioneering action consistent with Cheltenham's history of innovation. Economic recession and the deep inequalities in our town require us to make bold changes to the way we work as a cultural sector in order to find sustainable solutions. Working together with a coordinated and concerted focus provides the conditions for creative solutions. Cheltenham's Culture Board has an important and urgent imperative to which we are fully committed.

*Ali Mawle*

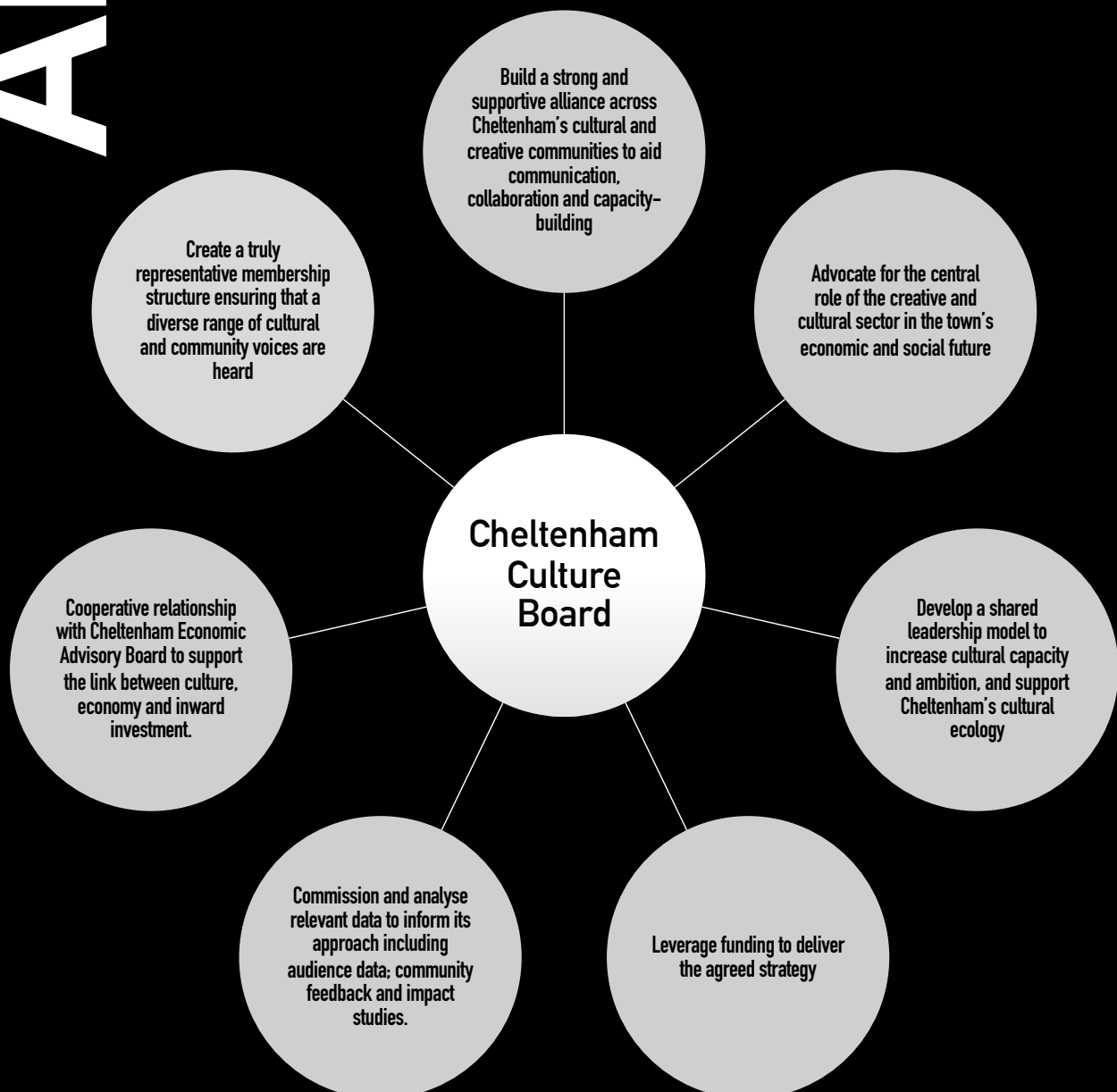
*Chair of Cheltenham Culture Board  
Co-CEO Cheltenham Festivals*



# About Us

Cheltenham Culture Board was created to unite the cultural sector (both larger organisations and grassroots creatives), the community and wider stakeholders in business, academia and the public sector behind a common vision for the town, working together to provide creative and cultural experiences which enable the town and its residents to thrive.

Taking a strategic, coordinated approach, the Board:

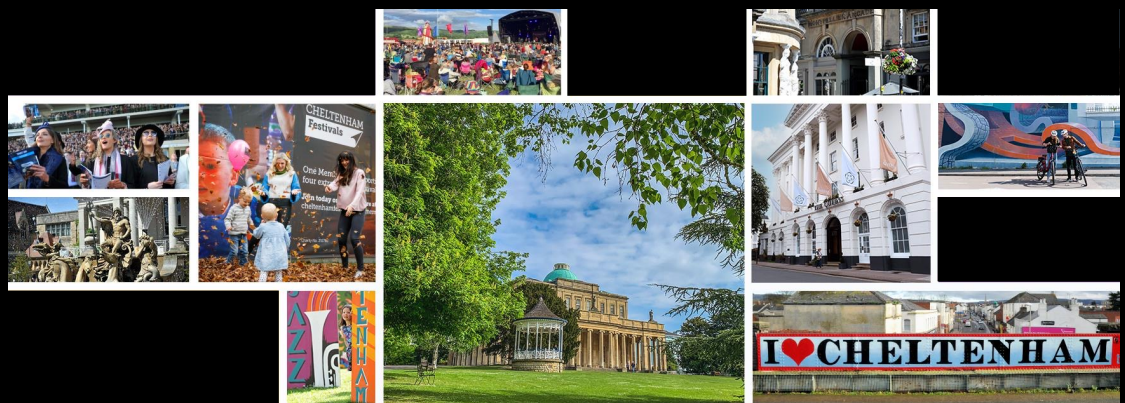


# About Cheltenham

Cheltenham has a rich and pioneering cultural history, from hosting the world's first Literature Festival to building the first British jet-powered plane.



The town is also one of the largest innovation districts in the UK with the vibrant and fast-growing cyber-tech ecosystem and the Golden Valley development. This creates potential for fusing our creative, cultural and digital capital in ways that can remake how we live, work and play.

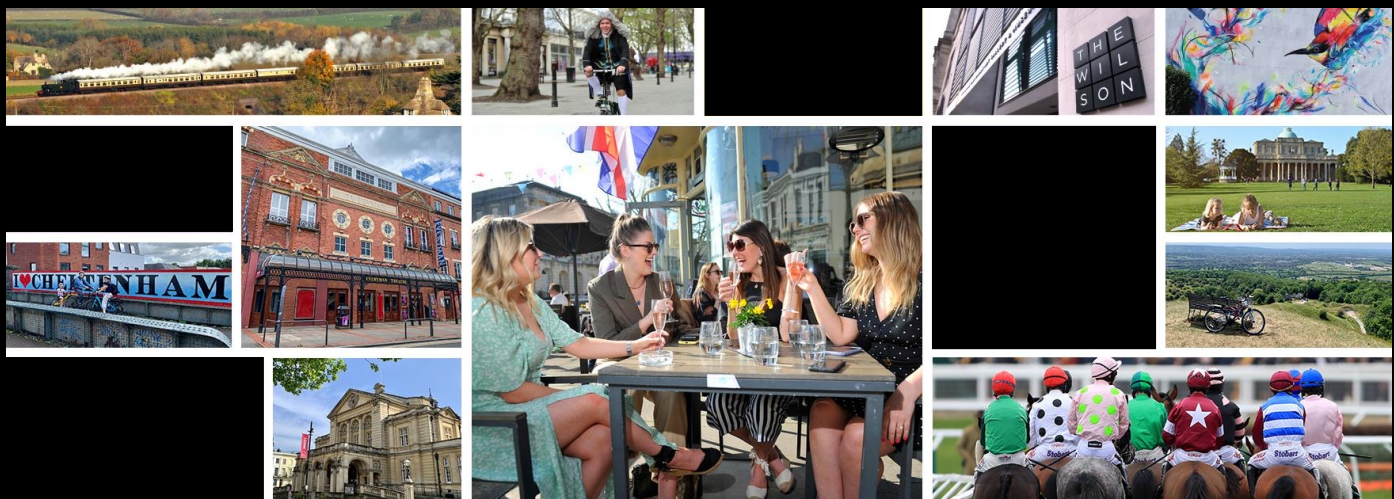


Culture brings significant value to the town and its people, not least £27 million visitor expenditure.

This has not always meant that culture and creativity have positively impacted on all our communities and residents, young and old.



We must work collectively to make Cheltenham a truly creative place where no one is left behind, and where everyone has the opportunity to play their part in shaping its future.



Creativity and ingenuity are at the core of finding powerful solutions to the current economic and social challenges. As cultural partners we need to share insight, ideas and resources where possible, with each other and across sectors, in order to build operational resilience and maximise the social and economic value we create.



# Our Vision

*Cheltenham is a vibrant place and cultural destination where the fusion of arts, digital and heritage innovation fosters creative and inclusive communities where everyone has the chance to thrive*

# Our Strategy for Culture

In producing the Culture Strategy we have consulted widely across the town through conversations and digital surveys. Continuity in the following messages emerged from across the community:

- The assessment of Cheltenham as a place with powerful cultural assets that need to be preserved and built upon
- The need to maintain and grow the town's national and international links, ensuring that Cheltenham remains open to new thinking and ideas that can fuel creative innovation and our collective recovery from the pandemic
- The opportunity for Cheltenham to capitalise on the next wave of digital innovation
- A common belief in the powerful role Cheltenham's cultural offer can play in positively impacting upon health and wellbeing; on community pride and cohesion; and on individual aspiration and attainment
- The need for the sector to shift gear in its approach to developing and deepening the cultural offer, working together to make Cheltenham a truly innovative, creative place and destination where creative expression is fostered across the town and greater community engagement is enabled

The community also stated strongly that there needs to be:

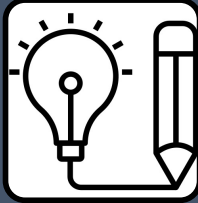
- More diverse expressions of culture and greater support for ethnically diverse communities locally
- Greater accessibility to venues and events, both financial and practical
- Better and more comprehensive marketing of cultural opportunities
- More space for cultural activity
- Greater involvement of young people in designing the cultural offer
- More live music

# Our Commitments



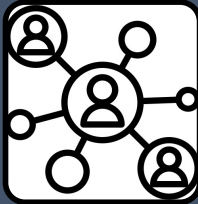
## *Forge partnerships and collaboration across the heritage, cultural and digital sectors*

- Technology is used creatively to bring Cheltenham's diverse social stories to life
- The heritage, cultural and tech communities collaborate to produce innovative and relevant events and experiences



## *Use culture and creativity to improve the life chances of our young people*

- Secondary school students across the county have a creative and tech careers offer which links them with a range of Gloucestershire organisations
- School-aged young people from diverse backgrounds report positive impact from participating in a range of creative and cultural activities



## *Promote equity of opportunity to help build inclusive and creative communities*

- Collaboration across cultural organisations enables greater inclusive practice
- A range of regular, creative opportunities are facilitated across the town which are inclusive by design and accessible to all



## *Celebrate and nurture our community, grass-roots creative talents and ambitions*

- The cultural quarter is a vibrant hub which supports and promotes local talent and participation
- Young people contribute to the design and production of cultural activities across the town



## *Drive our visitor economy and wider place brand*

- Cheltenham can quantify the value of the cultural sector to the local economy (social & economic)
- Cheltenham's cultural offer is communicated in ways which are compelling and coherent to residents and visitors



## *Use culture, creativity and innovation to contribute to the Cheltenham Zero and work collectively to address the climate emergency*

- Coordination between local sustainability groups enables a collective approach to planning, evaluation and reporting of progress towards Cheltenham Zero
- A range of creative and cultural initiatives inform and empower the community to take measurable steps to address the climate emergency



# Mechanisms & Measures

The Culture Board meets in person six times a year.

Each member of the Board gives a voice to the specific sector or interest group they represent (e.g. secondary schools, voluntary & charity sector organisations, music stakeholders). They are a point of contact, an ambassador, an agent for inclusion, a bridge-builder, and a catalyst for action within their sector.

The Board is supported by sub-groups (eg Festivals, Music, Strategy, Communications) which meet between meetings to progress Board actions and to share key issues, priorities, opportunities and initiatives.

Annual Action Plans detail how the Strategy will be progressed, monitored and evaluated. Annual Reports will detail the progress made.

Understanding and communicating the impact of the Board is an important element of the Strategy and supporting Annual Action Plans. Indicators will include:

- Case studies of individuals and groups
- Number of projects and programmes
- Funding achieved for collaborative place-based activity
- Positive impacts noted through surveys and interviews
- Social and economic impact
- Number of venues used for culture

# Who we are

Current membership is as follows:



*Ali Mawle  
Co-CEO Cheltenham  
Festivals  
(Chair of Cheltenham  
Culture Board)*



*Hilary Simpson  
Chair of Trustees  
Holst Victorian House*



*Louise Bardgett  
Project Manager &  
Programme Lead  
Create Gloucestershire*



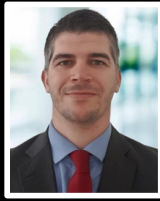
*Paul Milton  
Creative Director  
Everyman Theatre*



*Prof. Jackie Labbe  
Deputy Vice Chancellor,  
University of  
Gloucestershire*



*Lisa Edgar  
Head of Culture  
The Cheltenham Trust*



*Heath Gunter  
CEO  
Cheltenham BID*



*Sarah Bowden  
Director  
Hardwick Gallery*



*David Evans  
Advisor  
Cheltenham Education  
Partnership*



*Andy Hayes  
VCS Representative  
West Cheltenham  
Partnership*



*Reid Derby  
Director of Strategy &  
Community Engagement  
Cynam*



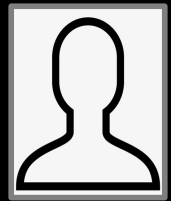
*Richard Gibson  
Head of Communities,  
Wellbeing & Partnerships  
Cheltenham Borough Council*



*Anna Saunders  
Director  
Cheltenham Poetry Festival*



*Niki Whitfield  
Cheltenham Open  
Studios*



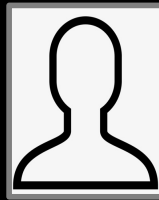
*Shivan Mistry  
Artist Development  
The MusicWorks*



*Florence Nyasamo-Thomas  
Founder / CEO  
Lives Of Colour*



*Curtis Fulcher  
Development Manager  
Libraries & Information*



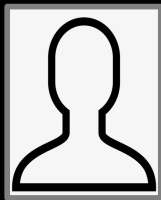
*Sue Silcock  
Chair  
Cheltenham Art Council*



*Cllr Max Wilkinson  
Cabinet member for Economic  
Development, Culture,  
Tourism and Wellbeing  
Cheltenham Borough Council*



*Helen Mole  
Head of Place Marketing  
& Inward Investment  
Marketing Cheltenham*



*Kieron Milsom  
General Manager  
Cheltenham*



*Claire Thayers  
Cheltenham Chamber of  
Commerce*

We hope the strategy inspires you to get in touch, get involved, and encourages as many people as possible to participate in making Cheltenham a place which celebrates creativity in all its guises; creates pioneering new work; contributes to our visitor economy; and is rich in opportunity for everyone.

*Ali Mawle  
Chair of Cheltenham Culture Board  
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