



Social and Economic Impact of the Subsidised Arts in Gloucestershire - Briefing

Background

Gloucestershire County and District Councils, Arts Council England South West and their partners commissioned research into the social and economic impact of the subsidised arts in the county. The impact study involved three surveys: audiences and participants at a range of subsidised arts venues gave information about their experience; 25 subsidised venues provided information about their finances and audience; six questions about the arts in the county were included in the survey of the Gloucestershire 2000 citizens' panel. This briefing provides a summary of the principal findings of the study.

Social impact

Involvement

Audiences and participants who responded to the surveys were frequent arts users. Nearly 60% of respondents are involved once a week or more in arts activities. Among participants the figure is 80%, and 42% among audiences. Only 4% of audience respondents had not attended an arts event in the last year.

Gloucestershire arts services

Respondents were asked to prioritise the arts services provided by the County Council. Highest priority was given to touring quality arts events to village halls, providing arts activities for older people and provision of workspaces and training for local artists.

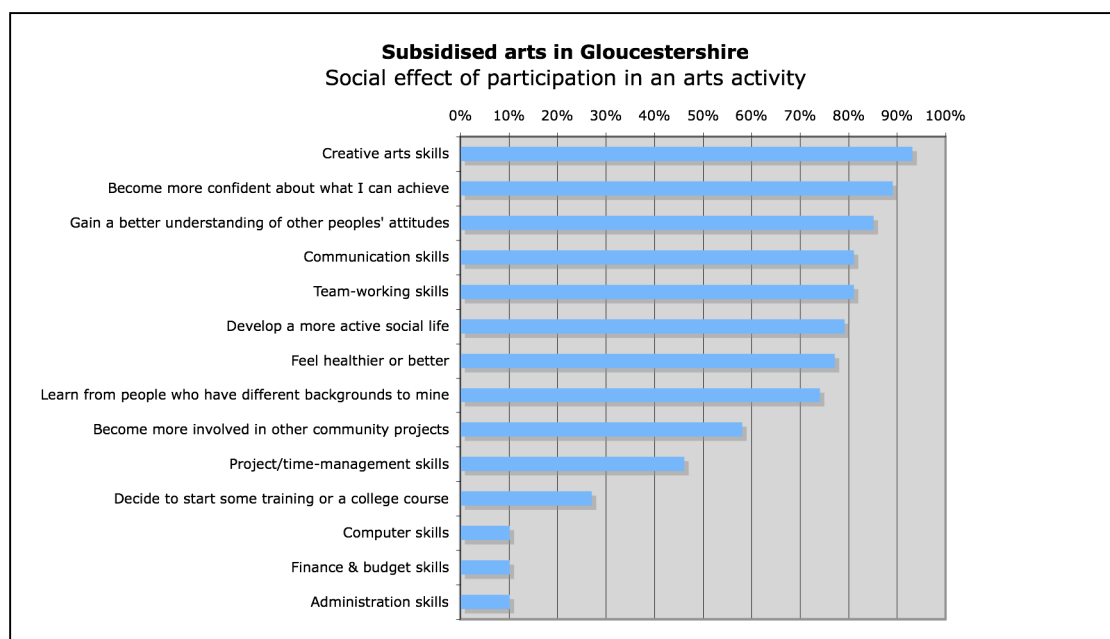
Priority ranking of Gloucestershire CC Arts Services

| | |
|----|---|
| 1 | Rural touring of quality arts events to village halls |
| 2 | Providing arts activities for older people |
| 3 | Workspaces and training for local artists |
| 4 | Making the arts accessible for people with disabilities |
| 5= | Making sure that the arts in Gloucestershire are culturally diverse |
| 5= | Visits by artist and performance to schools |
| 7 | Opportunities to learn new kinds of arts and crafts |
| 8 | Art in public places e.g. streets, parks |
| 9 | Investment in education and training for outstanding young artists |
| 10 | Involving young people in dance, drama, music and visual arts |
| 11 | Information about what's on |
| 12 | Bringing world class performance & exhibitions to Gloucestershire |

In the Gloucestershire 2000 survey just over a quarter of respondents believed that community arts projects for everyone were a priority, closely followed by similar numbers highlighting the importance of the library service.

Benefits of participation

Participants were surveyed about the benefit which they had experienced from participating in an arts activity. 93% had been helped to develop creative skills, 89% had become more confident, 85% had gained a better understanding of people, 81% communication skills, 81% team working skills, 79% developed a more active social life, 77% felt healthier or better, 74% had learned from people from different backgrounds, 58% had become better involved in their community, 46% developed project- or time-management skills, 27% had decided to start a training course.



Evaluation of events and activities

Respondents were asked about their opinion of the standard of the arts activity or event they had been at. 87% reported very good.

Asked whether the arts organisation offered good value for money, 80% reported it as very good.

68% of respondents, rather more among audiences than participants, feel that the arts are very important to the quality of life in Gloucestershire.

In the Gloucestershire 2000 survey in general there was satisfaction with local arts and cultural opportunities.

Economic impact

Direct spending

The 25 arts organisations surveyed covered a wide range. Respondents included large professionally-managed urban arts organisations, small voluntary groups in towns and rural areas, a cross-section of art forms and a wide range of local authority subsidy. These 25 organisations between them reported 937,000 attendances in the year 2005-06, either as audience or participant.

In the year 2005/06 local authority subsidy totalled £1.4m for the whole group of 25 organisations. Arts Council contributed £1.1m, and donations from various sources also contributed £1.1m. Earned income across all 25 totalled £5.5m.

Indirect spending

Combining data from the surveys of users and of the arts organisations, the total economic impact of their activities can be estimated.

Total direct spending in the local economy by these 25 arts organisations is £9.6m annually. Indirect spending by visitors is a further £8.8m. The total of direct and indirect spending of these 25 organisations is £18.4m.

Induced spending

The full appraisal of the economic impact of these organisations includes the induced spending in the local economy which flows from their direct and indirect spending. The organisations themselves have nearly 500 in-house jobs, plus providing work for a further 900 freelancers. Using a recognised local economic multiplier of 1.5, the total economic impact of the 25 arts organisations surveyed can be estimated at £46m.

Local authority subsidy return

The total of local authority subsidy to the 25 organisations surveyed was £1.4m. The total of additional direct and indirect spending in the local economy as a result was £17m, 12 times the local authority subsidy. On the basis of the total impact, including direct, indirect and induced spending, the return to the local economy from the £1.4m of local authority subsidy was more than 30-fold.

Total county estimate

The 25 organisations surveyed form only a proportion of the total number of subsidised arts organisations active in the county. It can safely be said that the total direct and indirect spending of subsidised arts organisations in the county is over £20m, and the total economic impact, including induced effects, is over £50m.

Fred Brookes
Comedia
August 2006