

STOP THE SHROPSHIRE ARTS CUTS

Art is important because it belongs to all of us as an expression of our humanity and our drive to find and make meaning. It provides us –people of all ages and backgrounds - with a universal way to express and share our feelings, concerns and beliefs. Art can foster and strengthen humanity, inspiration, emotional maturity and inclusiveness. Engaging in the arts is vital to our health and wellbeing.

We the undersigned are dismayed and shocked at Shropshire Council's proposed cuts in funding for the arts, to the point at which any serious claim to a commitment to the arts would become laughable, and at a time of great economic and social stress in many of our communities.

These cuts represent less than 0.3% of the total budget cuts Shropshire Council plans to make in 2016/17. They are almost irrelevant to the Council's attempt to reduce their budget, and would seriously endanger the role of the arts in local communities. In particular they would jeopardise the future of Shropshire's smaller community-based arts events and their positive impact on local communities' sense of identity and cohesion.

The Arts are also an important part of the local economy, contributing to tourism, to the viability of local community venues, to business growth and SME start up activity, job creation and work based training opportunities.

We call on Shropshire Council before proceeding further with these proposals to:

- a) Carry out full consultation with the public on these proposals, with at least one substantial and well-publicised public consultation event in each of Ludlow, Church Stretton, Much Wenlock, Shrewsbury, Oswestry, Bridgnorth, Market Drayton, Wem and Whitchurch.
- b) Carry out assessments on the probable local economic, equality, cultural and social impacts of withdrawing the remaining small arts grants and of reducing the hours of the sole remaining Council arts worker;
- c) Present the outcomes of these consultations and assessments to a full meeting of the Council before any decision is implemented.

Signed:

Name	Address	Age (optional)	Signature

