

Task and Finish Group on Participation in the Arts

Response from Adamsdown Arts Association

The Adamsdown Arts Association (A3) is part of the Adamsdown Communities First Project, and for the last eight years we have provided opportunities for the public to become involved in community arts projects. We have a diverse membership and are sustained by the efforts of members of the community who donate their time and expertise. We have received funding from John Lewis, Tidy Towns, Arts Council, Cardiff Community Housing Association and the Welsh Government Communities First Trust Fund in the past, and this type of access to small scale fast response grants is crucial to the continuation of our work with the local community. If this were to reduce we would experience great difficulty in continuing to offer opportunities for participation in the arts to our local community.

Our role in arts participation is one of facilitation as well as providing direct opportunities; we run our own projects, but often receive requests from local charities or individuals wishing to work in partnership with A3. For example, we are currently helping a local arts charity to complete art work for the launch of Cardiff Youth Council, and we have received a request to be involved in the start of a community radio station.

Our links with other groups within the Adamsdown Communities First Project, as well as the relationships we have made with local schools and businesses, enable us to reach parts of the community that may otherwise not be engaged in community arts activity. For example, we recently completed a project culminating in the opening of the Adamsdown Museum, which was exhibited in The Cardiff Story exhibition space in the centre of Cardiff. Several participatory arts projects were completed, including a documentary of traders on Clifton Street and a series of workshops in local Primary Schools where pupils created clay models of their houses. Young people aged 11–17 created art work for the Museum, and landlords from several local pubs contributed their stories of the local area which were combined with photographs and exhibited. A Knit and Natter group was also established which engaged several older members of the community. Adamsdown is an area of high deprivation, and although other community arts activity may exist, we believe that A3 is a melting pot for creative opportunities for all members of the community. A3 has until now been completely reliant on grant funding and the generosity of our volunteers, but we are willing to explore other options for sustainability bearing in mind that the people who live and work in our community have no money to spend on the arts.