



WELLS – CANDIDATE CITY

PRESS RELEASE – “Wells to Win” - Support the Bid to be City of Culture 2021

Following February’s registration with the Department of Culture, Media and Sport to enter the bidding to be UK City of Culture 2021, a Wells Steering Team has now been formed, with representatives from a variety of entities within the City working hard on developing the bid in time for the submission date in April.

Centred on the City of Wells and Mendip, the bid will include partnerships with the surrounding towns of Glastonbury, Shepton Mallet, Cheddar, Street, Bruton, Frome and Castle Cary along with the local rural area. The strong traditions of the area will be celebrated and local institutions, businesses, events, artists, festivals and carnivals will be working together alongside the local councils to develop a fantastic programme for the bid.

This is a hugely exciting opportunity for Wells and Mendip to compete on a national level for the prestigious title and for the multi-million-pound investment that comes with it and the steering group are asking the people of Wells and the other towns to get behind the bid.

Andrew Webb, lead for the Steering Team said “We see this as a fantastic chance for Wells and Mendip to raise its profile nationally and internationally and to gain wider recognition as the amazing City we all know it is. Residents have long thought that Wells really does have it all, and the level of astounding culture available to all, in this, the smallest City in England, far surpasses what is on offer in some of the largest cities in the country.”

John Turner, CEO of Visit Somerset said, " Wells is one of the jewels in the Somerset crown and the smallest city in England. The City has a really strong heritage and cultural scene and deserves all the publicity and potential exposure that the City of Culture would bring. Wells is so rich in its history & heritage and can reflect a really vibrant and dynamic cultural scene, that the City of Culture team will be sure to reflect in the bid proposal. I am really excited about the prospects that the bid will hold for Wells and the wider Somerset economy, hence the Visit Somerset team now officially supporting the project and throwing our full weight behind the bid team”.

The City and surrounding area is already rich with all sorts of culture, including the sublime musical history of the Cathedral choir, the musical excellence of the Cathedral School and the fabulous new programme at the brand new Cedars Hall concert hall, the annual Festivals of Literature, Food, Contemporary Music and Contemporary Art which take place in October, (the Food Festival being a wonderful reminder of the richness of the area's food heritage with particular emphasis on local Ciders and Cheddar Cheese!), the Somerset Schools Folk Dancing Festival and the annual Maypole dancing in the Market Place, the outdoor theatre seasons at The Bishop's Palace and Glastonbury Abbey, the magnificent madness of Glastonbury Festival, the lasting legacy of the brilliant 'Hot Fuzz', the sheer scale of the amazing Carnivals, and the local ancient Somerset tradition of the January Wassail to secure the cider apple harvest to name but a few!

The programme for 2021 that will be proposed by the steering team will be ambitious and will seek to involve a wide range of audiences from the local area and beyond in innovative cultural activities that will draw on the traditions and history of the area.

Residents of Wells and the surrounding area can get behind the campaign in several ways: the Facebook page www.facebook.com/WellsCoC2021 or the Twitter page www.twitter.com/WellsCoC2021 or email info@wellscityofculture.com, and post comments, pictures, ideas and encouragement for the bid!

Bids for the 2021 competition must be received by 28th April 2017, after which they will be assessed by an Independent Advisory Panel. A shortlist of four cities will then be announced in June and the winning city will be announced in December.

The Steering Team comprises:

Project lead

Andy Webb

Festivals, arts and culture

Co-ordinators

Bill Lloyd (Cedars Hall)

Emma LeFevre (Wells Literature Festival)

Heritage and historical

Co-ordinators

Rosie Martin (Bishop's Palace)

Chris Winter (Wells Civic Society)

Lindsay Mann (Wells Cathedral)

Private Sector liaison

Co-ordinator

Gayle Pennington (Wookey Hole Caves)

Wells Stakeholders

Co-ordinator

Andrew Fawcett (Wells and Mendip Museum)

Accommodation and business

Co-ordinators

Mark Tobin (Swan Hotel)

Michael Johns (Chamber of Commerce)

Public sector and Local/National government

Co-ordinator

John Turner (Visit Somerset)

Marketing, PR and comms

Co-ordinator

Merryn Kidd (Bishop's Palace)

ENDS

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