Brecon Heritage and Culture Network

Case Study

Introduction

Originally it was recognised that the strength of the heritage, culture and arts offer in Brecon is fragmented and constrained by a lack of marketing capacity and an uncoordinated approach. This presented an opportunity for Brecon's heritage, arts and cultural attractions to work together to raise its profile and strengthen Brecon's sense of identity and distinctiveness by using digital technology.

The development of a Network, led by a Steering Group, encouraged those with an interest in heritage culture and arts to get involved and work together. All were encouraged to contribute their time/in kind support, share and support each other to progress the project

Project aims
- To create the new Network to enable the partners to work together to achieve a joined-up approach to delivering new bottom-up marketing activity
- To enable engagement with partners staff, volunteers and community groups, to deliver training in implementing the project
- To create dynamic marketing content including data, imagery and video
- To research & develop an innovative and sustainable solution for making content accessible for use by partners, businesses and local, regional and national marketing organisations
- To enable innovative digital marketing campaigns: including packaging of unique cultural experiences and delivering collaborative social media by bringing together community organisations with the heritage, cultural & tourism sector to deliver the service

Challenges

In the past providers of heritage culture and arts in Brecon have worked largely independently and it was perceived that much of the town's rich heritage and lively cultural scene were hidden assets.

- The key challenge was to bring together providers of heritage culture and arts to work collectively and develop a sharing culture for the benefit of independent businesses and organisations but also for the benefit of the town.
- Revealing Brecon's hidden assets through digital methods such as storytelling and use of good images and video was not used actively by many providers, their staff and volunteers.
- The recruitment of a team of volunteers who could help to develop the Network and its digital outputs
- Delivering the project and meeting targets was extremely difficult with the outbreak of an international pandemic and lockdown.
- The Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown in mid-March 2020 had a serious effect on every business, organisation and resident in Brecon, alongside all communities across the UK. The culture, tourism and hospitality sectors were the first to be affected and drastically so.

- This period coincided with the start of the delivery phase of the project. The pandemic had a substantial effect on the delivery phase of the project. Engagement with the community was seriously hit by the pandemic.

Solutions

i) To bring together providers of heritage culture and arts in Brecon and to demonstrate the benefits of collective working. The funding allowed the project to develop the following;

A Steering Group of stakeholders led the project giving their own time/in kind support. In addition, working groups were created to provide experience and expertise to certain aspects of the project

ii) To encourage providers of heritage culture and arts to embrace digital communication, see the benefits, share knowledge, information and help to promote the destination. The funding allowed the project to develop the following;

- A reveal of Brecon's hidden assets through storytelling a proven method of communicating digitally to audiences.
- A branding process was undertaken involving stakeholders and individuals with an interest in heritage culture and arts in Brecon. The output was a new brand direction Brecon Story.
- A fully bilingual digital platform was created including a portal and social media channels.
- Creative use of imagery, messages and interactive content helped to enthuse audiences.
- Those with an interest in contributing to the project were given free training on telling stories, improving photography using a mobile phone and social media.

iii) The Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown coincided with the delivery phase of project and affected engagement on many levels. Fortunately, the first phase of the portal had been completed by mid-March the start of lockdown and it carried some examples of stories and video. The project plan was revised and the following actions taken;

- Project team continued to work from home and communicated online including set up of online workshops and meetings where possible.
- The portal was live and continued to be developed suing recorded material.
- Some tasks had to cancelled or delayed until the next phase of the project however some tasks were remodelled and delivered in mid-July-September 2020
- Social media channels were launched to encourage engagement and profile raising. Local press releases were distributed when the time was right.

Benefits to community and businesses

The funding has helped to develop a strategic digital platform for the community to engage with, contribute to, learn from and share with others. The Network is helping to raise the town's profile and encourage local day and staying visitors to Brecon. Some benefits;

- Developing a pride in the community for its heritage culture and arts
- Demonstrating to the local community the benefits of working together and building a sharing culture.

- Providing a voice for heritage culture and arts in the local community and with local organisations.
- Raising a positive profile of the town
- Introducing the range of attractions and events to local people so that they can enjoy them.
- Driving more visits and attendees to local assets to improve their viability.
- Demonstrating to the community that digital communication is a way to access information and a modern way to do business.

Results

- The Brecon Heritage and Culture Network has been established and members are keen to take the Network forward with a voluntary and financial contribution.
- A brand direction has been established called Brecon Story Stori Aberhonddu
- A fully bilingual digital platform has been launched carrying exciting imagery and interactive.
- Volunteers have begun to come forward to contribute to the Network primarily by sharing via social media
- Brecon Story content is being shared by the community with encouraging results.

The Arwain funding has been the catalyst to establish the Brecon Heritage & Cultural Network – a digital network. The Legacy working group created a plan to go forward to the next phase on completion of the Arwain funding. It scoped sources of funding for the next phase and to date there have been two successful applications along with a financial commitment by two donors.

Project Outputs/Outcomes

Output (Case Level Indicator)	Achieved
No. of feasibility studies	N/A
No. of networks established	1
No. of jobs safeguarded	N/A
No. of pilot activities undertaken / supported	1
No. of community hubs created	0
No. of stakeholders engaged	19
No. of participants supported (awareness raising events only)	53
Outcomes	
No. of jobs created	1 (2 part time)
No. of communities benefitting	7
No. of businesses benefitting	10

Project Contact Details

For more information please contact: Administration bhcn@gmail.com

Partners/Match Funders Logos

The new Network brought together Brecon's heritage and cultural attractions and activities, community organisations, Brecon Town Council/Visit Brecon, Brecon Beacons Tourism and Powys County Council's Tourism Unit. Stakeholders also included the wider tourism and business community

Project Details

Key Data	Project Specifics
Delivered by:	Brecon Heritage, Cultural and Arts Network
Start Date:	15/10/2018
End Date:	30/09/2020
LEADER Theme:	Theme 5: Exploitation of Digital Technology

Financial Details

Description	Amount
Total Expenditure:	£124,291.17
RDP Funding:	£93,800.40
Match funding:	£30,490.77