

Where culture and
creativity deliver
quality, enjoyment,
prosperity and
wellbeing

Cornwall The Creation Nation

Cornwall Cultural Strategy 2026-2036

Strateji
Gonisogeth
Kernow

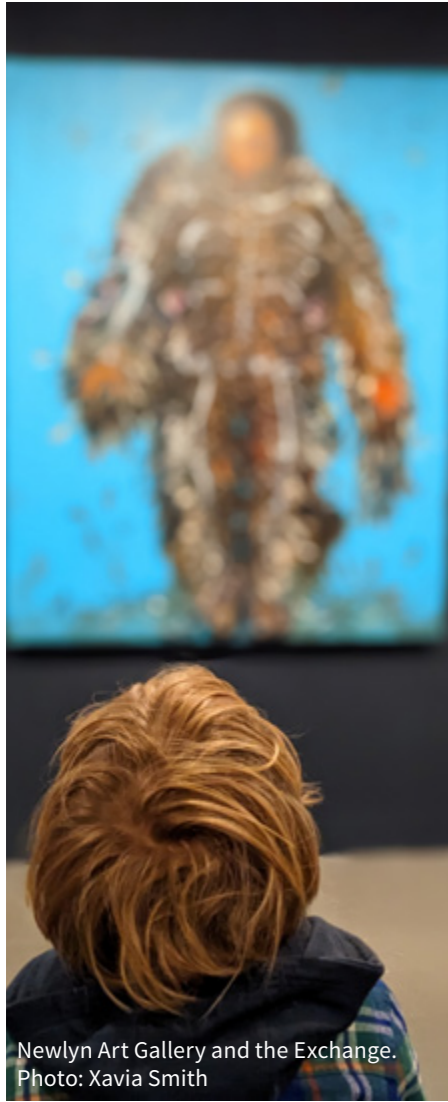




Wildworks Kneebone Cadillac. Photo: Steve Tanner

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Newlyn Art Gallery and the Exchange. Photo: Xavia Smith

Our vision is simple:

Cornwall the Creation Nation – where culture and creativity delivery quality, enjoyment, prosperity and wellbeing

Cornwall’s culture is our superpower. This Strategy sets our route to 2036 – making culture part of everyday life, growing our creative economy, and celebrating the unique identity of our places. It connects five clear ambitions directly to Cornwall Council’s priorities so partners, creative businesses and communities can see how everything fits together – and how to get involved.

Cornwall is extraordinary: a land shaped by centuries of heritage, alive with a proud cultural identity and breathtaking natural beauty. From our Celtic roots and the Cornish language to a mining legacy admired across the globe, our story is one of resilience, creativity and community spirit. Our traditions, festivals and shared sense of belonging bring this story to life every day. Together, we celebrate the people, culture and identity that make Cornwall a place like no other and invite everyone to be part of this vibrant journey.

Every person should have the opportunity to engage with culture and creativity, our towns and villages should have vibrant community life, and our creative industries should thrive, providing fulfilling jobs and contributing to Cornwall’s economy.

Cllr Sarah Preece

Portfolio holder for Tourism, Localism and Planning

Agan ragwel yw sempel:

Kernow an Genedhel Wrians – le may hwra gonisogeth hag awenekter delivra kwalita, lowender, sewena ha yeghes

Gonisogeth Kernow yw agan gorneth. An Strateji ma a dhisplet agan hyns dhe 2036 – ow kwruthyl gonisogeth avel rann bewnans dedhyek, ow tevi agan erbysiedh awenek ha solempnya honanieth unnik agan tylleryow. Y kelm pypm ughelhwans kler dhe ragwiryow Konsel Kernow may hyll kesparow, negysyow awenek ha kemenethow gweles fatel wra dos pubtra war-barth – fatel dhe omvyska.

Kernow yw marthys: tir shapys gans kansbledhynnyow a ertach, yn few gans honanieth wonisogethel gothus ha tekter naturel yntanus. A-dhyworth agan gwreydh keltek ha’n yeth Kernewek bys dhe gemynro balweyth meurgerys a-dreus an norvys, agan hwedhel yw onan a heblethter, awenekter ha spyrys kemenetek.

Agan hengovyow, golyow hag omglewans kevrynnys a berghenegi a wra dri an hwedhel ma dhe vewa pub dydh. War-barth, ni a solemp an dus, gonisogeth ha honanieth neb a wra gul Kernow tyller unnik – ha gelwel pubonan dhe vos rann an viaj bewek ma.

Y tal bos chons dhe bub person dhe omvyska gans gonisogeth hag awenekter; y tal bos bewnans kemeneth bewek dh’agan trevow ha gwigow; hag y tal sewena agan diwysyansow awenek, ow provia sodhow ow kollenwel hag ow kevri dhe erbysiedh Kernow.

Klr Sarah Preece

Synsyas Plegell rag Tornyaseth, Leelieth ha Towlenna





Tea Cake and Art Christmas Crowdfunder.
Photo: Newlyn Art Gallery

Why Culture Matters

Cornwall is recognised for its distinctive landscape, rich storytelling traditions and unique heritage. We will build on this reputation by positioning Cornwall as a leading place for creativity and innovation – where culture is embedded in everyday life and accessible to all.

Culture tells the story of a ‘creation nation’ from Lamorna to Launceston, from Padstow to Par. It builds upon our national assets through to our home-grown folk history and grass roots sector, ensuring there is an offer for everyone and that our creative sector can grow, develop and thrive.

By telling our Nation’s story, and our strategic overview, we are able to demonstrate how we make a strong offer that extends beyond the reach of Cornwall itself. Cornwall is recognised across the UK and internationally as a growing cluster of creative innovation and excellence. This cluster is made up of artists, freelancers, businesses, institutions and organisations working in diverse aspects of culture and creativity.

The Creative Economy in Cornwall includes Arts, Culture and Creative Industries

<p>Advertising</p> <p>Marketing, Branding, Media, Freelancers, Digital, Marketing</p> <p>Online, Mobile, Console, Games, Freelancers</p> <p>Games</p>	<p>Architecture</p> <p>Design Practices, Consultancies, Freelancers</p> <p>Fashion</p> <p>Haute Couture, Value Brands, Designers, Labels, Retailers, Freelancers</p>	<p>Arts & Culture</p> <p>Museums, Galleries, Libraries, Heritage, Performing Visual Arts, Freelancers</p> <p>Film</p> <p>Cinemas, Broadcasters, Producers, Distributors, Special Freelancers, Visual Effects, Animation, Video</p>	<p>Design</p> <p>Industrial, Product Design, Graphic Design, Experience, Service Design, Design thinking, Freelancers</p> <p>Createch</p> <p>Creative Technology, Immersive Media, Information Technology, Freelancers</p>	<p>Publishing</p> <p>Books, Magazines, Newspapers, E-Books, Online Journals, Academic Publishing, Freelancers</p> <p>Crafts</p> <p>Makers, Makerspaces, Digital Technologies, Freelancers</p>	<p>Music</p> <p>Live Performance, Recorded Music, Radio, Podcasts, Audio, Venues, Management, Promotion, Talent, Freelancers</p>
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How culture supports Cornwall Council's six priority outcomes:

Council priority:

How culture contributes



A safe and vibrant community with more decent and affordable homes

Culture builds belonging and civic pride, activates town centres and supports vibrant community life.



A clean, green Cornwall with healthy rivers and seas

Cultural organisations are working to lower their carbon footprint and through low carbon creative events inspiring others to change behaviour.



A resilient economy creating growth and jobs

Creative industries provide training and work for local people, create new business opportunities and attract investment.



A caring place for families where children build a bright future

Creative activities and learning build confidence and skills from early years to adulthood.



Supporting people to live healthy and dignified lives

Creative health and social prescribing activities improve wellbeing and can reduce demand on health services.



Connected, safe and reliable roads and transport

Culture supports access to local activities and events and provides accessible resources and services online.



Skate and Create Participants. Photo: Endelienta Arts

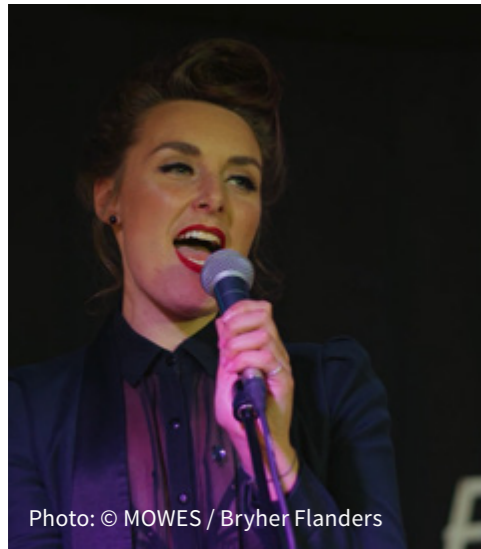


Photo: © MOWES / Bryher Flanders



Develop Cornwall Games. Photo © Develop Brighton



Vision and ambitions

We are embracing a bold future that places sustainability and innovation at its core, while empowering creativity in every community. By prioritising inclusive opportunities, we will shape a resilient, dynamic cultural landscape that is equipped to thrive and impacts across the UK and beyond.

Our vision is:

Cornwall the Creation Nation
– where culture and creativity
delivery quality, enjoyment,
prosperity and wellbeing

Underneath this Vision, we have five Ambitions which reflect the different roles of culture and creative industries. Culture and creativity is for everyone. It can be things that are part of the community such as our festivals or clubs, or larger events where we can see amazing performers or spectacles. But culture is also important for the chance for people to learn skills, get work, start a business or even improve the place where they live. And for Cornwall, our culture and heritage is an expression of our confidence and distinctiveness as the UK's Fifth Nation.

Cultural organisations and creative industries will be meeting one or several of these ambitions all at the same time and people in the sector work incredibly hard for our communities. By working in partnership we can increase opportunities for everyone while building up a strong and resilient creative sector that showcases Cornwall to the rest of the world. We will continue to develop investible priorities and provide regular progress updates in consultation with the creative sector as we evolve the strategy over time.

Ragwel hag
Ughelhwansow

Our Five Ambitions

Agan Pymp Ughelhwans



Flamm - Georgia Gendall, Change Here. Photo: Nick Cooney

1.



Ambition 1:
**Joining in
Owth Omjunya**

2.



Ambition 2:
**Supporting People
Ow Skoodhya Tus**

3.



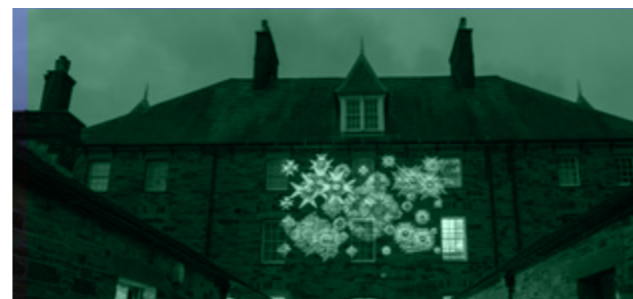
Ambition 3:
**Growing Our Economy
Ow Tevi Agan Erbysiedh**

4.



Ambition 4:
**Improving Our Places
Ow Kwellhe Agan Leow**

5.

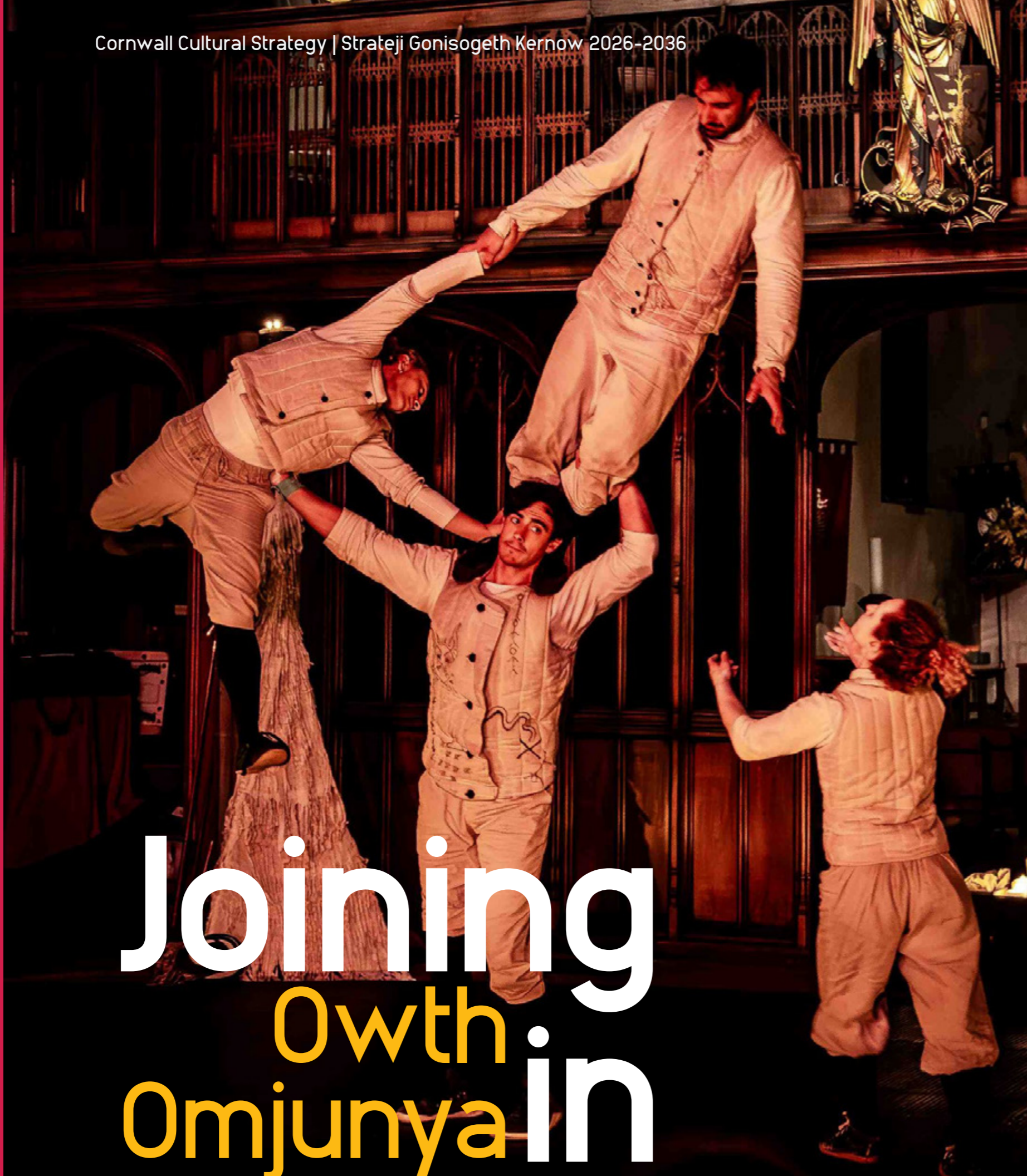


Ambition 5:
**Celebrating Cornwall
Ow Solempnya Kernow**

Ambition 1:
Joining in

Ughelhwans 1:
Owth Omjunya

Joining Owth Omjunya in



Everyone in Cornwall should be able to access and enjoy culture, regardless of who they are or where they live. The Council will work with partners to reduce barriers, widen participation, and create welcoming, quality cultural opportunities for all communities.

Fireside in St Michael's Church Newquay.
Photo: Emma Mac Photography

What Cornwall will do

1. Encourage exciting, varied culture for all

We want Cornwall to be known for its cultural excellence and diversity — showcasing local talent alongside exciting touring work. We will support a lively year-round programme, including large-scale events that celebrate Cornwall’s unique identity and attract people from all backgrounds. We will encourage curiosity and the confidence to explore new activities or artforms. We will support organisations in providing a programme of events and activities through the Cornwall Council Culture and Creative Investment Programme and we will advocate and support cultural organisations in seeking investment and encourage a broader base of funding, for example, philanthropy and business investment.

2. Make sure culture includes everyone

We recognise that barriers such as affordability, transport, access and lack of representation can prevent some people from taking part. We will champion inclusion and equity, promoting best practice in diversity and accessibility, and working with specific communities to ensure culture reflects all voices. We will work with partners to improve physical access in venues, address sensory and cultural needs, and help create welcoming, trusted spaces where people feel they belong. We recognise that volunteering can also be a meaningful route to belonging and joining in.

3. Bring people together and support wellbeing

Taking part in culture and creative activities is a good way to meet people and be a part of the community. For all of us, this boosts our sense of well-being and contributes to healthy lifestyles. This preventative approach helps individuals and helps manage demand on more acute services. Activities from community festivals to community radio, and local arts groups, and clubs are vital in shaping social life and building resilient communities. Individual creative activities can also be fulfilling and important. We will extend provision of creative health opportunities through the CloS Creative Health and Well-Being Partnership and we will work with partners to improve the evidence base for culture’s social value.



Miracle Theatre Twelfth Night 2025. Photo: Lynn Batten

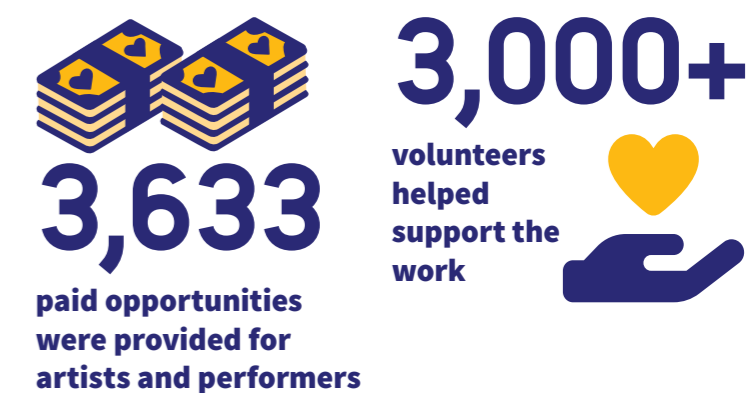



The PAR-tee Photo: Steve Tanner

Cornwall Council’s **Culture and Creative Investment Programme** supports



Through this programme in 2024/25:



 This programme is just a fraction of Cornwall’s cultural activity in the community.

Ambition 2:
Supporting People

Ughelhwans 2:
Ow Skoodhya Tus

Supporting People

Ow Skoodhya Tus



Cornwall's creative future depends on its people – their talent, energy, and imagination. Supporting people means investing in the full creative journey: from early inspiration in schools, through building confidence at events, to finding work and training. Skills England predicts that creative industries will be one of the fastest-growing sectors up to 2030 and prioritises creativity for skills development.

Beach Ceilidh Wetsuit
Photo: Perran Tremewan

What Cornwall will do

1. Inspire creativity in education.

We will champion creative learning as a foundation for curiosity, confidence and aspiration. We will support partners to provide creative experiences and cultural visits for early years, schools and young people, encourage uptake of creative GCSEs, and support national curriculum reform to strengthen creativity in schools. We will develop Curriculum Kernewek to link 'National Curriculum in England' subjects with Cornwall's culture and heritage and improve access to creative work experience and apprenticeships.

2. Strengthen pathways through further and higher education.

We recognise that barriers such as affordability, transport, access and lack of representation can prevent some people from taking part. We will champion inclusion and equity, promoting best practice in diversity and accessibility, and working with specific communities to ensure culture reflects all voices. We will work with partners to improve physical access in venues, address sensory and cultural needs, and help create welcoming, trusted spaces where people feel they belong. We recognise that volunteering can also be a meaningful route to belonging and joining in.

3. Open access to creative careers.

We will ensure that everyone can access information and opportunities to start a creative career. We will work with the Careers Hub and Cornwall Opportunities to provide clear, engaging creative careers information and partner with the Skills Team to expand apprenticeships and early-career opportunities for the creative sector where current provision is limited.

4. Support growth and development.

We will collaborate with the Growth Hub to strengthen business and planning skills in the sector. We will work with partners to develop sector-specific support such as Creative Kernow Associates to provide mentoring and networking. We recognise the value of expertise within the sector and the potential to train others, and we will work with national organisations such as Creative UK to improve investment readiness and long-term sustainability.



10 Innovate UK funding to businesses in Cornwall in 2022/3

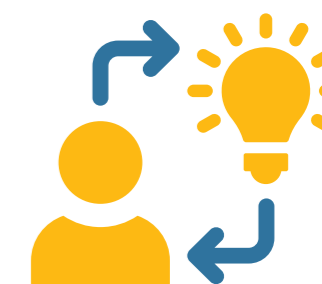
1,000+

freelancers are members of Creative Kernow Associates



businesses from Falmouth University's Launchpad programme

61



businesses supported by Create Growth Devon & Cornwall programme to increase turnover and develop new products

Growing Our Economy

Games Academy



Ow Tevi Agan Erbysiedh

Cornwall's creative economy is a broad ecosystem that nurtures talent, attracts investment, and delivers long-term value. The creative industries work across sectors, from manufacturing to the visitor economy, and Cornwall's strong creative sector is well placed to contribute to this fast-growing UK industry. Creative industries add an estimated £124bn to the UK economy each year and the UK Creative Industry Sector Plan is part of the Government's Industrial Strategy.

What Cornwall will do

1. Identify access to funding

Creative organisations are having to develop sustainable business models, diversify income and retain value. Sponsorship, philanthropy and commissioning by other sectors can also provide income. We will seek to unlock investment and improve access to advice on investment readiness. Shared approaches to commercialisation and managing IP are needed to maximise benefit from creative work.

2. Provide opportunities for networking and support

65% of Cornwall's creative sector are freelancers so connection and collaboration are essential. Stronger networks are developing through initiatives such as Creative Kernow Associates, Cornwall Games and Hall for Cornwall's Husa programme. Sector-wide events, and collaboration across disciplines can spark new partnerships. Business support is needed to focus on resilience, digital skills, and export readiness.

3. Provide workspace and infrastructure.

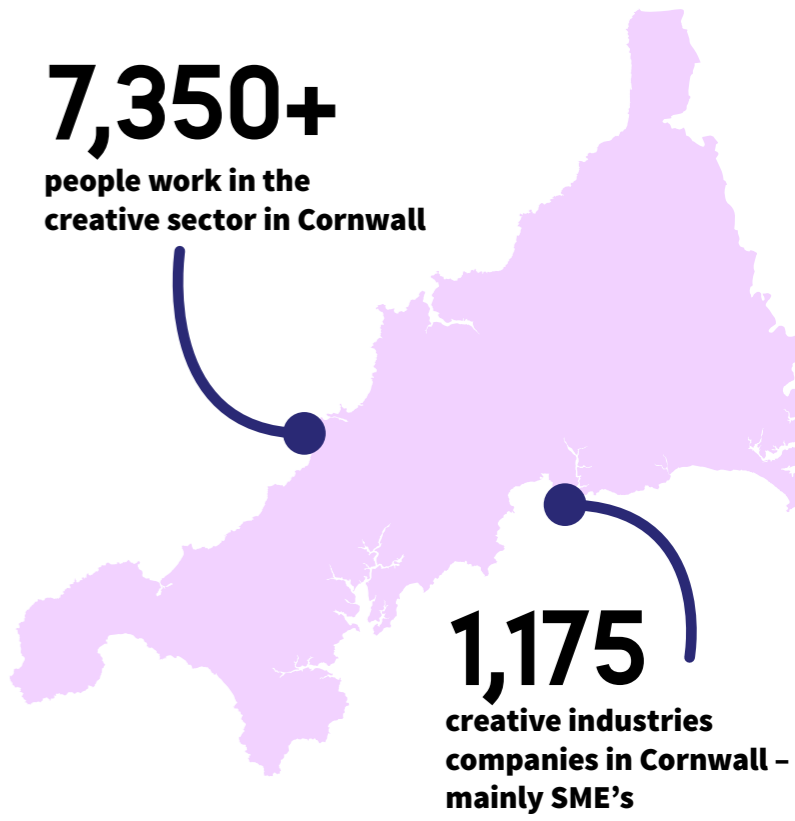
Access to affordable, flexible workspaces is vital. We will develop planning policies that integrate creative space in regeneration projects, require the provision of flexible workspace, and protect existing facilities. We will support development of creative hubs and co-working spaces and safeguard existing creative infrastructure.

4. Support research, innovation, and development

Cornwall has always been a centre of innovation and investing in research fuels growth. We will work with the Creative Industries Sector Body, HE and FE to encourage innovation and support experimentation. We will support the HE sector in developing a UKRI Creative Cluster initiative to secure investment in creative R&D.


5. Collate evidence and share insights

We will maintain the Creative Census to monitor employment and collaborate with the universities to research the sector and identify opportunities for innovation. We will improve evidence of the social impacts of culture and share insights to support small businesses.



Source: Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Good Growth Plan

Key creative subsectors in Cornwall are:

-  **Film, TV, Video, Radio and Photography**
-  **Music, Performing, and Visual Arts**
-  **Museums, galleries, libraries**
-  **Design: product, graphic and fashion**

Ambition 4:

Improving Our Places

Ughelhwans 4:

Ow Kwellhe Agan Leow

Improving Our Places

Ow Kwellhe Agan Leow

Culture in Cornwall is deeply rooted in our landscapes, towns, industries and communities. Culture and heritage have the power to lead regeneration of our towns and villages.

What Cornwall will do

1. Place-Based Culture

Cornwall has a unique heritage of outdoor performance from the times of ‘Plen an gwari’ that has carried through to outdoor events today. Cornwall has inspired literature, music, art, theatre and film that is known around the world. Key actions include delivering the Cornwall Events Strategy to support community festivals and major events, and backing initiatives such as Town of Culture, Flamm and FEAST to celebrate our culture and traditions. We will also work with partnerships such as Cornwall National Landscape and Cornwall & West Devon Mining Landscape UNESCO World Heritage Site to commission creative work across the Duchy.

2. Clusters, Networks and Momentum

Cultural and heritage organisations play a leading role in town regeneration and cultural assets will be protected and reused through the Valuing Local approach. Collaboration makes best use of skills and resource, and informal local networks can help partners work together. Town and parish councils will be encouraged to take a lead on cultural programming, event management, coordinating local assets and sharing good practice. Targeted investment and advice will prioritise areas with fewer cultural assets and higher levels of deprivation.

3. Facilities and Cultural Infrastructure

Venues, museums, libraries and community spaces are important landmarks and are key to thriving community life, but this infrastructure is hard to sustain in a region of scattered towns and villages. Twenty-eight cultural buildings were upgraded through Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) and Town Deals. These schemes have a variety of business models to sustain them. We will work with these partners to maximise impact and share good practice. The Cornwall Council/ Museum SW Museum Development Service provides support to the museum sector and a new museums strategy will guide the sustainable management of Cornwall’s 80 museums and encourage innovation.

4. Regeneration, conservation and development

Cultural investment and creative activity are strong drivers of town-centre regeneration, attracting footfall and using empty shops. Policies in the Local Plan will promote mixed-use developments that include cultural space, creative workspace and use of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to fund cultural facilities in growing communities. Our built heritage will be conserved through the Strategy for Cornwall’s Historic Environment (2022-2030) and the work of Bord Ertach Kernow.



58,000 

people go to Boardmasters each year

42,000

people borrowed one or more books from libraries in Cornwall

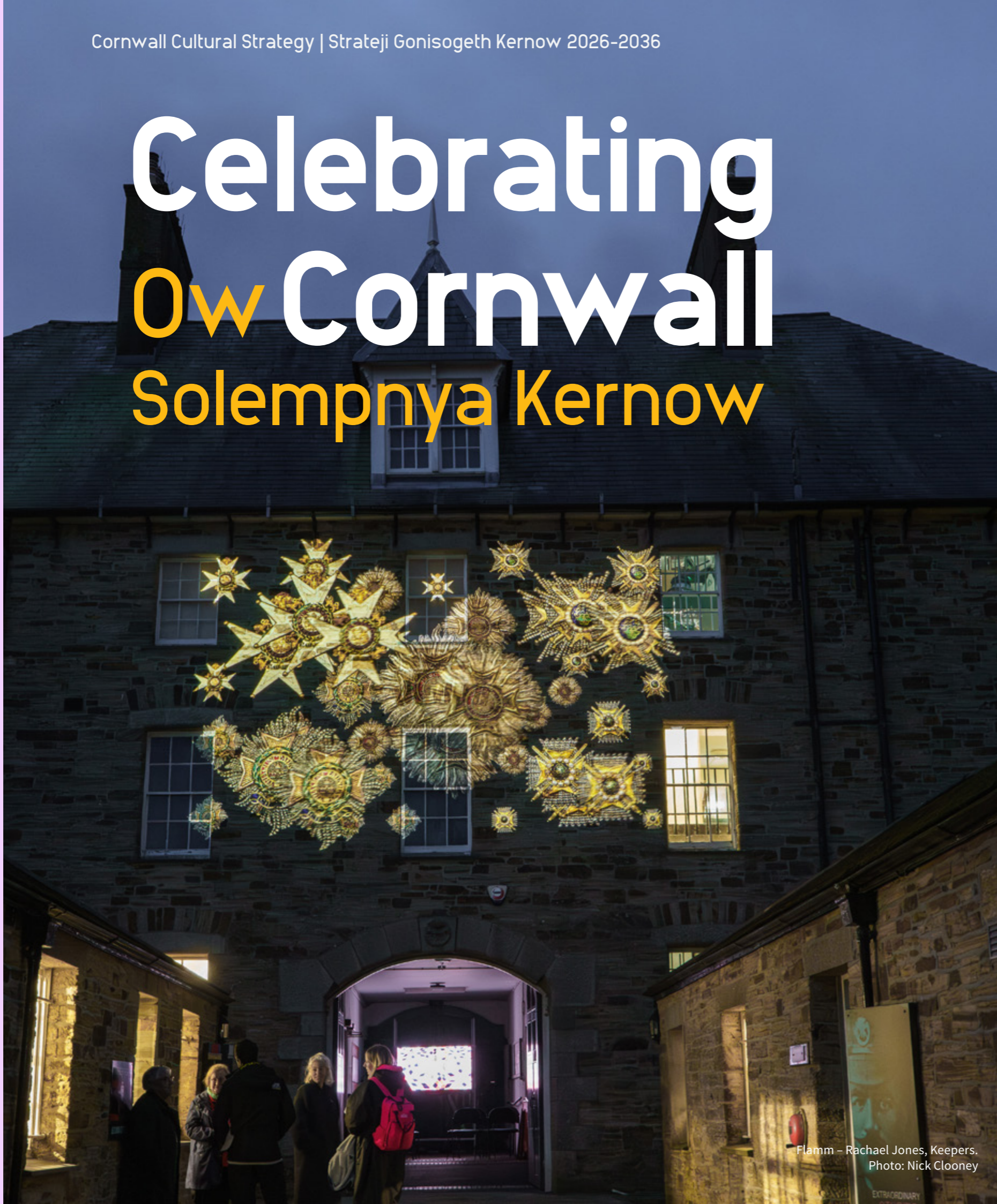
 **40,000**

people go to Eden Sessions each summer

40,000 

people celebrate Mazey Day each June in Penzance as part of the Golowan festival

Celebrating Ow Cornwall Solempnya Kernow



Our landscape, language and traditions have all shaped Cornwall's distinctiveness and global recognition. Cornwall will be recognised for its diverse, green and distinct cultural life and for new high quality, innovative cultural work.

Flamm – Rachael Jones, Keepers.
Photo: Nick Clooney

EXTRAORDINARY

What Cornwall will do

1. Promoting culture from Cornwall to the UK and beyond

Cornwall's culture is a powerful national, UK and international asset. We will position Cornwall as a vibrant cultural part of the UK and encourage events to strengthen community pride and belonging. We will develop coordinated marketing and events programmes to showcase creative excellence and drive the visitor economy, including the shoulder season. Partnerships with Cornish cultural organisations will amplify Cornwall's cultural offer through digital storytelling, festivals and year-round cultural tourism.

2. Environment and Sustainability

The cultural sector will contribute to taking action to respond to climate change and support nature recovery through embedding sustainability in production and events, encouraging low-carbon festivals and outdoor theatre, reusing historic buildings, and collaborating with sectors such as technology and energy. The Cornwall Creative Sustainability Action Plan provides guidance and sharing good practice will help position Cornwall as a leader in sustainable cultural delivery.

3. Cornish Language

The Cornish Language Strategy 2035 aims to protect and grow use of Kernewek over the next decade. Priorities include developing digital media and film, expanding use of Cornish in schools, providing more diverse ways of learning, supporting creative projects such as music and performance, and encouraging businesses and communities to find new ways to use Kernewek.

4. Cornish Heritage

Our distinct heritage shapes Cornwall's identity today. We will preserve and promote the Cornwall and West Devon Mining World Heritage Site, Bord Ertach Kernow will develop a register of Cornish cultural traditions, and Kresen Kernow holds the world's largest collection of archives related to Cornwall. We will support projects that share traditional Cornish culture to ensure that this is passed on and opened out to new audiences.

5. International Opportunities

Through diaspora links and Celtic partnerships, Cornwall will pursue exchanges, events and international touring, reinforcing its role as a global creative hub rooted in strong identity. The Cornwall Diaspora Strategy will connect Cornish communities and share contemporary Cornish creativity internationally. Partnerships with other Celtic nations, events such as Festival Interceltique de Lorient and opportunities for Cornish artists to tour all reinforce Cornwall's international profile.



Mazey Day Photo: Shallal

900,000 

people go to Lorient Interceltique Festival in Brittany each August and see Cornish performers



2,650

dancers take part in Flora Day each May in Helston

200 

jynnji or engine houses in the Cornwall & West Devon Mining World Heritage Site

70+ B-Corp companies in Cornwall - highest number outside London

40 brass/silver bands across Cornwall

 **Part III status** for Cornish language

30 primary schools provide Cornish language activities through GoCornish



Hall for Cornwall.
Photo: Hugh Hastings

Cornwall since 2011

Achievements

Investment 2021-2025:

- £24m** Arts Council England
- £18m** National Lottery Heritage Fund
- £3m** Historic England
- £15m** UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Town Deals, delivering much of Cornwall's shortlisted UK City of Culture bid from 2022.



Creative work hubs

Pixel Penzance:
40 studio spaces

The Workshed Liskeard:
16 workspaces, co-working and outdoor event space

Krowji Redruth:
130 units – Cornwall's largest creative hub

Cultural Infrastructure

- **Hall for Cornwall reopened in 2021** – seating increased to 1,352 and joined the West End touring circuit.
- **28 buildings improved via SPF**, including The Ladder (Redruth), Creation Works (Par) and Sterts Arts & Environmental Centre (Bodmin Moor).
- **Historic chapels in Helston, Penryn, Redruth and Liskeard** transformed into venues and artists' studios.
- **Cornwall Museum and Art Gallery** – main galleries transformed; Museum of Cornish Life (Helston) – roof and windows improved with ACE MEND funding.
- **New Emily Hobhouse museum** opened in St Ive near Liskeard (The Story of Emily).

Hall for Cornwall. Photo: Hugh Hastings



Events and activities

- 2023** Flamm visual arts festival launched in Redruth – 13,000 visits.
- 2024** Cornwall Council's Culture and Creative investment Programme supported 19 organisations over 4 years who in 2024/25 alone provided activities with 1 million total audience, 65,000 participants in activities, 15,000 taking part from under-represented groups.
- 2025** Celtic Media Festival hosted in Newquay, reflecting growth in film and digital media: Screen Cornwall, Cornish language films from FyImK and internationally recognised work by Bosena/Mark Jenkin.
- 2026** Flamm visual arts festival held in Bodmin





Art Centre Penryn, Penryn Fair Day. Photo: Lottie Matthews


Culture and Creativity in Cornwall Today


Strengths and Opportunities

- **Cornwall has global recognition** through books, films and TV, plus strong connections via trading history, diaspora and Celtic links.
- **Cornwall has a global reputation** for authentic, environment-rooted culture; flourishing festivals from Flora Day and Obby Oss to Boardmasters.
- **Cornwall has a rich ecosystem of theatres, galleries, museums and community venues**, including UK institutions such as Tate St Ives and National Maritime Museum, and important institutions for Cornwall at Hall for Cornwall, Cornwall Museum and Art Gallery and Kresen Kernow.
- **There are strong networks of freelancers and leadership** from organisations such as Creative Kernow and Hall for Cornwall.
- **Cornwall has access to world-class education and research** at Falmouth University, University of Exeter, University of Plymouth and Arts University Plymouth, with cutting-edge facilities and business incubation.
- **There is strategic alignment with Cornish and UK bodies prioritising the creative sector** and the Good Growth Plan identifies the Visitor, Creative and Cultural sectors as core sectors at the heart of Cornwall's economy.
- **Neighbouring authorities' support for culture will benefit Cornish residents and creatives**, through initiatives such as the Isles of Scilly Manifesto for Culture and Plymouth's Culture Plan and regeneration of the city centre and Devonport.

 global recognition and reputation

 strong creative networks

 world-class education

 strategic alignment

Challenges

- **Access to finance and investment readiness**; shift from grants to mixed-model funding requiring commercial skills.
- **Infrastructure pressures** – affordable housing and transport; limited workspace; costly maintenance of historic buildings; limited affordable overnight accommodation for touring; digital connectivity infrastructure.
- **Geography** – peninsula distance to markets and networks; scattered settlements; external perceptions underplaying innovation and talent.
- **Business environment** – majority freelance workforce under-represented in data; few large firms to anchor clusters and provide career pathways; lack of tailored growth support; community value not fully evidenced.

An evidence-based case for investment in Cornwall

Cultural and creative sectors represent one of Cornwall’s most distinctive economic strengths. These industries are foundational to Cornwall’s identity, its visitor economy, and its future growth potential. Investing in culture is not only an investment in creativity and heritage - it is an economic, social, and place shaping strategy with proven returns.

1. Economic Value and National Growth Opportunity

The UK’s creative industries contribute an estimated £124bn annually to the UK economy, making the sector one of the country’s fastest growing engines of productivity and innovation. Cornwall is well positioned to play a larger role in this growth story, with strong clusters already emerging across the creative, cultural, digital, and visitor related sectors.

Key Sector Statistics for Cornwall

Indicator	Visitor economy	Creative & cultural
Employment	49,175	49,175
Business count	3,790	1,175
GVA	£1,912m	£291m
Productivity	£38,884	£39,544
Concentration	1.52	0.92

* The visitor economy includes accommodation, food, drink and amusements, as well as parts of the creative and cultural sector. Figures overlap and cannot be totalled.

These data illustrate that Cornwall already hosts a significant cultural workforce, with productivity levels on par with UK benchmarks and strong sectoral concentration—particularly where culture intersects with hospitality and tourism.

2. Cornwall’s Distinctive Cultural Assets

Cornwall has a unique cultural landscape shaped by its language, heritage, artistic traditions, and natural environment. This distinctiveness fuels creative excellence recognised across the UK and internationally.

Strengths include:

- **A recognised creative cluster** (identified by NESTA), with strong linkages to the visitor economy.
- **Major cultural institutions**—Minack Theatre, Hall for Cornwall, Tate St Ives, the Cornwall Museum & Art Gallery and the University of Falmouth – anchors with a UK profile.
- **A strong pipeline of businesses** across design, games, digital media, fashion, and performing arts.
- **Rapid growth in film and TV production**, with spend in Cornwall rising from £1.6m in 2021 to £16.5m in 2023, supported by Screen Cornwall’s ambition to become the UK’s leading rural screen agency.

Cornwall’s cultural and creative ecosystem is not only vibrant but globally connected, environmentally conscious, and rich in entrepreneurial microbusinesses and freelancers.

3. Skills, Talent, and Innovation Infrastructure

Falmouth University provides Cornwall with an anchor institution of UK significance:

- **Ranked Number 1 Arts University** (Times & Sunday Times 2017, 2023).
- **TEF Gold** (2017) and **Silver** (2023).
- **Contributes over £100 million annually** to Cornwall’s economy.
- Listed **among the top 50 undergraduate game design schools globally** (Princeton Review, 2024).
- Hosts the **Launchpad Programme**, driving high growth startups.

Other leading digital and creative companies—such as Headforwards, N coders, Affinity Digital, Vitamin Studios, Software Cornwall, and innovation centres at Tremough—reinforce this skills and R&D ecosystem.

4. A Sector with UK Significance

Cornwall’s cultural sector aligns strongly with UK priorities, including Arts Council England’s #LetsCreate strategy, which emphasises creativity for everyone, cultural democracy, environmentally responsible practice, and vibrant places that reflect local identity.

Cornwall’s offer to the UK stage includes:

- A living, contemporary culture rooted in a distinctive regional identity.
- Environmentally sustainable creative practice, with a high concentration of B Corp certified creative businesses (e.g., Block Design, KAST Architects, DART, LEAP, Hutch).
- A fast growing, rurally dispersed content production cluster with ambitions for international impact.
- A proven link between cultural engagement, wellbeing, community cohesion, and inclusive growth.

A formal social return on investment analysis conducted by Roundhouse (2023) found:

- **£42.25 of social value created for every £1 invested** in film and digital projects
- **£21.88 of social value created for every £1 invested** in audio projects

Cornwall has benefited from £61.8m investment between 2021 and 2025 from key funders. Even taking a conservative estimate, of £15 social value for every £1 invested, this would generate around £100m of value to the economy. Cornwall is keen to build on this investment and demonstrate the value of its cultural and creative sector’s value, locally, nationally, to the UK and internationally.



Cornwall can serve as **an exemplar for rural cultural investment**—showing how creativity can drive economic development, innovation, skills, sustainability, and prosperity.

5. Why Investment Is Needed Now

Despite strong foundations, the sector faces challenges:

- **Fragmented funding landscapes** and reliance on short term project grants
- **Infrastructure pressures**, particularly in rural areas
- **Skills gaps** in digital, technical, and production roles
- Volatility in freelance and microbusiness models

Targeted investment would unlock:

- **Increased productivity** in high growth creative clusters
- **Stronger place identity** and visitor economy resilience
- **Enhanced skills pathways** for young people entering creative and digital industries
- **Greater UK and international reach** for local cultural organisations
- **More sustainable, net zero aligned cultural production**

Cornwall’s creative and cultural sectors are a unique strategic asset. They deliver economic impact, drive innovation, raise Cornwall’s profile, and enhance community life. With coordinated investment, Cornwall can become a leading rural creative exemplar, delivering inclusive, sustainable growth aligned with UK cultural priorities.

Delivery

The Culture Strategy Ambitions contribute to key parts of other strategies and the work of various boards and key partners, and in turn we will seek to place culture into the mainstream of those strategies. Appendix 1 sets out the connections with key strategies and boards that are already in place and leading on some of our Cultural Ambitions.

Role of Cornwall Council

A strong and thriving cultural sector is good for the nation of Cornwall and Cornwall Council, as an emerging Foundation Strategic Authority, will play a leadership role, advocating and lobbying for culture and creative industries. Cornwall Council will seek to maximise impact by collaborating with partners to influence funding and promote recognition for Cornwall. We will seek to develop a strong creative sector across Cornwall, and local councils, networks and key organisations will develop strong clusters and town regeneration, promoting our offer within Cornwall, across the UK and further afield, including to the Cornish diaspora

Our place-based approach demonstrates the Council's role as enabler, supporter and facilitator, following the Valuing Local ambition to work in partnership towards a more local, community-led service delivery, support people's sense of belonging, and plan and deliver services in a way that gives more power to local people and organisations. We will seek opportunities through cross-sector collaboration, resource sharing and the exchange of ideas to deliver meaningful outcomes for people and communities across Cornwall.

Cornwall Council's various services can all play a part in working with different communities through culture and creativity, such as Together for Families, Planning, Resettlement, Libraries, Public Health and Localism.

As well as the formal boards and organisations set out in the table in appendix 1, partnership working with the voluntary sector, the business sector, with neighbouring authorities and with local councils will all add to what culture and creativity can achieve in Cornwall

Population Growth and Planning

Significant population growth is projected over the next decade, with some towns growing faster than others. It will be vital to invest in new and existing cultural facilities to meet the needs of growing communities. Local Plan policies can allocate provision for cultural facilities on new sites and protect existing facilities, while the Community Infrastructure Levy can provide funding as part of social infrastructure.

Parts of Cornwall face persistent deprivation and cultural organisations have a part to play in place-based strategies

to improve health and wellbeing and create opportunities. We will seek to extend outreach with under-represented groups and those who find it difficult to access activities.

Funding and Investment

Cornwall Council will work with cultural organisations and partners to secure a broader base of funding for culture and creativity. We will use the ambitions and principles of this Strategy as 'investment guidelines'. Projects will normally be expected to:

- Meet more than one of the Strategy's ambitions.
- Extend provision across Cornwall and to different communities.
- Provide evidence of match funding and business models that ensure future viability.
- Demonstrate alignment with relevant strategies – UK Government, Arts Council England, National Lottery Heritage Fund, Historic England and Cornwall Council.
- Demonstrate how the funding will support pathways to self-sustainability

The Hodge Review of Arts Council England in 2025 points to the need to pivot away from reliance on direct government grant funding to a more diverse mix of funding such as philanthropy, tax incentives and investment finance. There are already various funding models in place for cultural organizations in Cornwall and we will seek to build up resilience in the sector by working in partnership to open up new investment opportunities, through giving circles, individual philanthropy and new business models of delivery.

Devolution to Cornwall Council as a Foundational Strategic Authority creates opportunities to maximise investment in the creative sector. This will include creating a new culture strategy board to ensure that cultural investment meets the needs of the community as a whole and secures a good deal from government agencies such as Arts Council England and National Lottery. Devolution may also create opportunities to use tax incentives to encourage investment in creative enterprise, and culture and heritage will be priority sectors for investment from any future visitor levy in recognition of their role in attracting visits to Cornwall and supporting a year-round visitor economy.

Pipeline Projects

Cornwall's cultural vitality depends on a rich mix of events and projects. The following pipeline priorities will help deliver our ambitions. (A complementary visual roadmap is provided in the accompanying PowerPoint.)

- **Town Deals (2026/27)** – new facilities at Leach Pottery (St Ives), a new culture and heritage centre in Camborne, and improvements to Penlee Gallery and Museum (Penzance).
- **Festival growth** – Flamm 2026 in Bodmin; coordinated support for large and small events through the Cornwall Events Strategy.
- **Workspaces** – expansion and optimisation of creative clusters (e.g. Pixel, Workshed, Krowji) to improve access and affordability.
- **Creative Health** – strengthen partnerships and programmes that support wellbeing and social prescribing.
- **Heritage reuse** – protect and repurpose cultural assets through Cornwall Council's Valuing Local approaches (e.g. chapels, libraries, civic buildings).

Evidence and Monitoring

- **Employment:** Annual Cornwall Council Creative Census – insights into the economic strengths and needs of the sector.
- **Research collaboration with higher education** (e.g. Great South West 'Creative Industries in the South West').
- **Community and social impact** – commission the Social Value Engine or similar to capture and compare outcomes.
- **Programme monitoring** – audience, participation, employment and training data for the Culture and Creative Investment Programme.
- **Creative Conversations** – regular events to share insights and explore audience and visitor trends.
- **Sustainability** – further development and resourcing of the Sustainability Action Plan for Cornwall's Creative and Cultural Community (LEAP, CCIP) with sector partners.

One and all:

Cornwall's creative sector faces challenges – reduced funding opportunities, cost-of-living impacts on audiences, rising costs for buildings and operations. Yet our sense of belonging and identity as the fifth nation, places us in a prime position to collaborate in themes and places, ensuring that culture and creativity in Cornwall thrives. All of us can join in and work together to create joyful, inclusive and resilient culture for One and All in Cornwall.



Appendix 1: Delivery framework

Key strategies and Boards that lead on elements of the Cultural Strategy

Cultural Strategy Ambition	Partner Strategy	Board or Lead Partner
1 Joining in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cornwall Culture Strategy • Cornwall Events Strategy • Cornwall Plan & Belonging Strategy • Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cornwall Council - Culture • Cornwall Culture Investment Board • Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Creative Health & Wellbeing Partnership Board
2 Supporting people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Workforce and Skills Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Workforce and Skills Board
3 Growing our economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cornwall Good Growth Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative Industries Sector Body • Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Economic Forum
4 Improving our places	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Plan • Historic Environment Strategy • Valuing Local Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cornwall Council - Planning • Bord Ertach Kernow • Town Councils / BIDS / Local partnerships/CAPs
5 Celebrating Cornwall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cornish Language Strategy • Cornwall International Strategy • Cornish Diaspora Strategy • Fifth Nation Working Group Action Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cornwall Council Fifth Nation Working Group • Global Cornish



Richard Smith at The Workshed Liskeard.
Photo: Annemieke Heim Photography



Heritage Day. Photo: Experience Bodmin

If you would like this information in another format or language please contact us:

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