



WE MADE THAT

REFLECTION REPORT 28-03-2013
CREATIVE FACILITATOR, GILLINGHAM

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INTRODUCTION

We Made That were commissioned by Gingko Projects on behalf of Dorset Wildlife Trust in August 2012 to work with the Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan Group (GNPG) in the role of Artist/ Creative Facilitator. We worked with GNPG in this role during a period of visioning and draft Neighbourhood Plan development between August 2012 and March 2013. This report documents the research undertaken as part of this role, our activities and findings and makes recommendations for how these may be taken forward.

The Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan

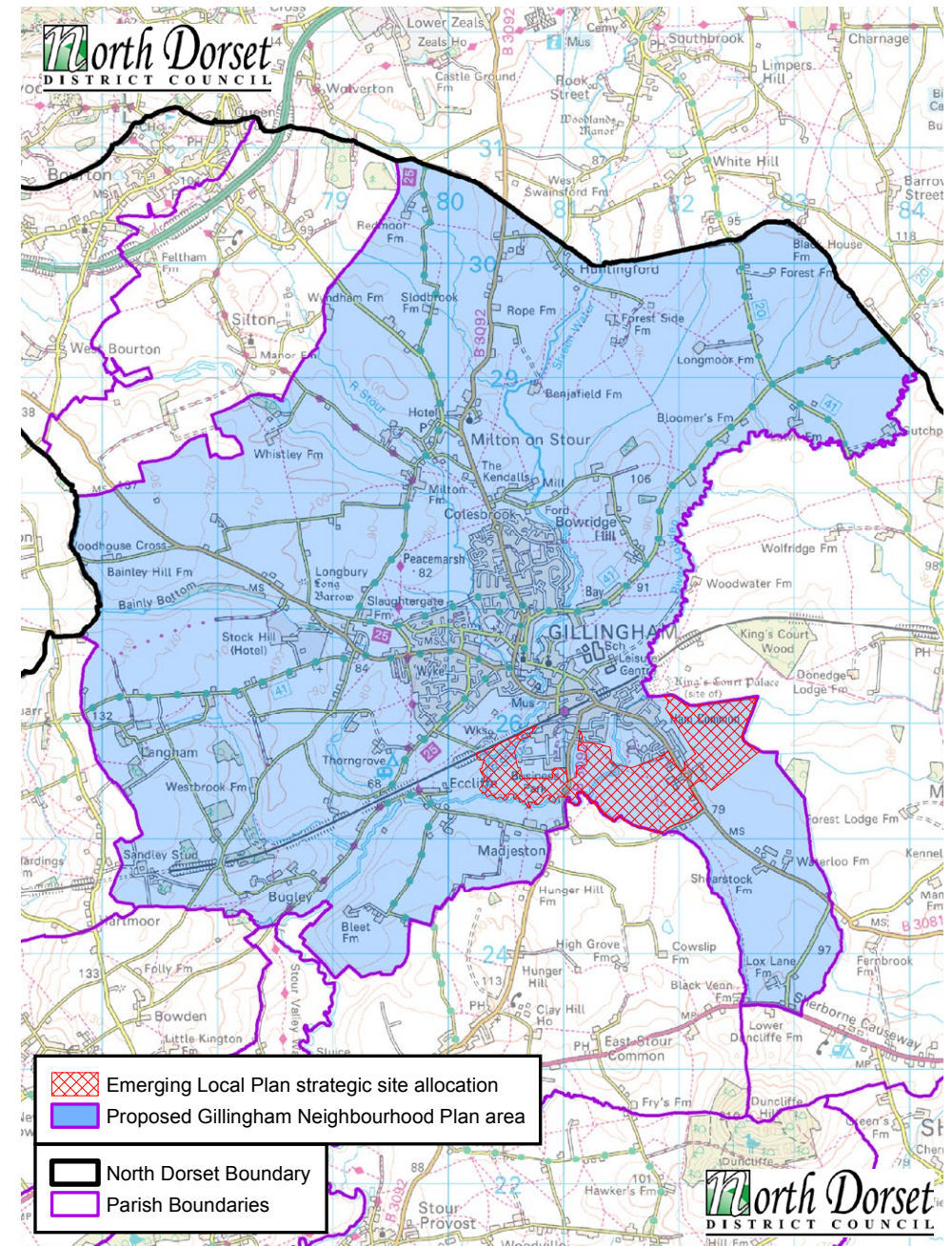
The Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan is being produced by the Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan Group (GNPG) which was formed on 29th February 2012 under the auspices of Gillingham Town Council (GTC).

The proposed plan will cover the area described on the map opposite. A 'Visioning Event' was held by the group on 22nd October 2012. The results of this event are subsequently being translated into a draft Neighbourhood Plan for development.

Creative Facilitator Role

The stated aims of the Artist/ Creative Facilitator role were as follows:

- To ensure that best practice in culture and creativity is reflected in, and incorporated into, the finished Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan
- Broaden the Neighbourhood Plan Group members' understanding of what engaging artists and creative practitioners in this context means and what unique opportunities this may offer
- Build confidence and awareness within the Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan Group around commissioning artists and creative practice
- To complete a cultural audit outlining cultural assets in Gillingham for incorporation into, and to inform the findings of, the Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan
- To identify opportunities for the provision of arts and culture in Gillingham, and through the research process to help create the space for these opportunities to develop
- Demonstrate the value of creative consultation/community engagement in the development of community-led plans.



Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan Area Boundary Map

Anticipated outputs from the project were:

- The production of an audit of cultural assets and opportunities in Gillingham
- The production of a list of identified opportunities for the provision of arts and culture in Gillingham
- Research material
- A delivered programme of creative community engagement events that demonstrate the value of culture and creativity and help to prove their value in a local planning context, feeding into the conclusions of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Our Approach to the Role

The 'Creative Facilitator' role in which We Made That were commissioned was an innovative one that has not been undertaken before. Part of our role was therefore to establish what could be achieved within the scope of the commission.

"It is our aim that by the time the referendum takes place every single person in the parish of Gillingham will have had an opportunity to contribute to or to comment on the Neighbourhood Plan"

- GNPG Website

We saw the key potential benefit of introducing creativity to the Neighbourhood Plan process through this role as being the opportunity for the GNPG to engage differently, and with people who might not otherwise be involved with the plan.

This also has the positive side-effect of publicising the Neighbourhood Plan process more widely, which will be essential given the need for a referendum on the final plan. We therefore made proposals for 'Wider Outreach' and 'Local Promotion' as part of the commission, alongside the research for the cultural audit. This approach was presented to and agreed with GNPG in November 2012.



Images from GNPG Visioning Event, October 2012 →

WIDER OUTREACH

Through our initial meetings with GNPG, we became aware of the Group's desire to communicate their work to a wider audience and to involve more of the community in the neighbourhood plan process. Although the group had already organised some consultation events, it was felt that the audience for these was generally older people or those with a professional involvement in the plan.

It was agreed that younger people and families may be best reached in ways other than conventional consultation. We therefore proposed to specifically visit these communities through a series of targeted sessions. We ran hands-on workshops with the following groups to gain their opinions on the town, and their ambitions for its future:

- Gillingham School (Year 7, 8, 9 Art students)
- Bones Youth Centre (Years 7 and 8)
- Families with young children at the Gillingham Children's Centre

The young people and families attending these sessions were asked to:

- a. Mark their homes with a sticker on the map.
- b. Illustrate the activities they currently do in Gillingham.
- c. Illustrate what could be better in Gillingham, allowing them to better enjoy the town and the activities they undertake.

Ideas discussed were collated by means of a drawn 'assets' map of the town, of which one was produced during each session. We encouraged active participation, drawing and making as part of these exercises to keep them creative and productive.

Members of the GNPG joined us in facilitating these sessions, and have since expressed an interest in running similar sessions focused on the Town Centre and High Street in their own focus groups.

The following pages summarise key outcomes from the workshops.



This page: Various young people's workshop session results





Workshop 3 - Bones Youth Centre (Years 7, 8)

Participants: Around 25, all living in Gillingham.

Current activities: this was mostly not discussed due to the 'drop-by' nature of the activities in the evening.

Suggestions:

- High street: fancy dress shop, Hollister, designer shop, Macdonalds, Shopping centre with New Look / Hollister / Primark / Superdrug, Phone Box, Gun shop, Tamburino's Italian restaurant, Lego shop, KFC, Burger King, Sports Direct
- Sports: tennis court, outdoor swimming pool
- Activities/ Culture: Splash Down, cinema, dog training, night club, golf shop, Bowlplex, Paintballing centre, theme park, casino
- Other: fibre optic cable into Gillingham to attract new businesses, WiFi in public spaces on high street



Workshop 4 - Gillingham Children's Centre, Exploring Together Session (ages 1-4)

Participants: Around 10, all living in Gillingham.

Current activities: playground on Lodbourne Rd, children's groups in St Mary's School Room, community groups in Community Church, Climb Aboard soft play (West Stour), Cool Play (Sturminster Newton)

Suggestions:

- High street: Children's Centre shopfront in old Co-op
- Sports: children's swimming pool (Riversmeet Pool is not currently suitable), toddler yoga
- Activities/ Culture: soft play facility in Gillingham, community hub at RiversMeet
- Other: Make more of the recreation ground, add safety surface by roundabout in recreation ground, make a green space behind the factory shop

Summary of Conversations

The following topics were discussed, but may not be illustrated on the workshops maps:

- The majority felt 'on balance negative' about Gillingham as it is now, i.e. that the town could be improved (11 out of 15 for Workshop 1, 7 out of 18 for Workshop 2 with 0 out of 18 feeling 'on balance positive' about Gillingham)
- Anti-social behaviour in the town was an issue: "people hanging around smoking puts you off going there". Crime and safety therefore appear to be an issue for younger people in Gillingham, perhaps more so than with adult groups who have been consulted. Future public space proposals for the town centre should consider this.
- The high street offer was a recurring theme. The young people had plenty of suggestions for particular shops that they'd like to see! The lack of shops and cafes was seen as the main reason for going elsewhere to spend time.
- The groups were positive about the countryside setting of the town, and mostly wanted to preserve this. It was seen as an important part of the identity of the town.
- There were a huge number of suggestions for other activities that were wanted. The majority felt that there was not enough to do in the town: paintballing, circus, music café, ski slope, water park, zoo, bowling alley etc etc. A cinema was an early and recurring suggestion in all the workshops.
- Green spaces were seen to be important, although the focus seemed to be the fields around the leisure centre and outside town, rather than the town meadow.
- Faster public transport and buses were desirable (a bus with jets on it!)
- The identity or 'brand' of Gillingham was discussed, in relation to a 'Hollywood' type sign, a 'statue of Gillingham' or inviting celebrities to promote the town. One comment was that Gillingham should be known for community and social interaction.
- The role of technology was discussed: fibre optic broadband was suggested for residents and to attract businesses, WiFi in the public spaces of the town centre was also suggested "so we can check the football scores when we are out because we are not allowed in the pubs"
- A wind farm was suggested. The majority felt positive about this and that environmental performance was important. Some felt that views would be spoilt by such a development.

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CULTURAL RESEARCH

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Throughout our time as Creative Facilitators, we investigated and documented the arts and cultural scene in and around Gillingham. Our interpretation of 'culture' was a broad one, including the arts, sports and pastimes, in order to allow us to better understand community activity in Gillingham.

For the purposes of this project, we have restricted our documentation to activities within the Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan designated boundary, with the exception of some individual practitioners. This is due to the fact that the emerging neighbourhood plan will only be applicable within this area, and any policies which it includes relating to Arts and Culture will necessarily be focused in this area. However, it should be noted that facilities such as the Shaftesbury Arts Centre provide further cultural opportunities and are arguably within the 'catchment area' for Gillingham residents.

In addition to the active outreach research documented earlier in this report, our research has consisted of the following:

- Attending the Gillingham Carnival on 6th October.
- Meeting with local community members and Carnival visitors at St Mary the Virgin Church Hall.
- Visiting the 'Rural Artists in Residence' Exhibition at the Slade Centre, 27th Oct to 10th Nov 2012, which featured a number of Gillingham-based practitioners.
- Meeting with Anne Hitchcock, Slade Centre, 6th November 2012.
- Attending the GNPG Visioning Event and public consultation, 22nd Oct 2012.
- Interview with 'Scenes' picture framers and art supply shop.
- Visits to neighbouring towns.
- Meeting with Gillingham Children's Centre staff
- General research into clubs and activities available in Gillingham and Shaftesbury through phone calls and web-based methods.

The results of our research are summarised in the table on the following pages.



This page: Gillingham
Carnival, October 2012

COUNCIL & POLITICS	CLUBS & SOCIETIES	Description	Website	Contact Name	Telephone	Address	Email	Meeting Days/ Times
	Gillingham Town Council		http://www.gillinghamdorset-tc.gov.uk/		01747 823588	School Road Gillingham Dorset SP8 4QR	GTC@gillinghamdorset-TC.gov.uk	
	Milton-on-Stour Village Committee			Carolyn Eastlake	01747 826552			
	Three Rivers Partnership	Bringing communities in and around Gillingham together to plan for the future	http://www.threeriversgillingham.org/	Michael Lodge		18 Cherryfields, Gillingham Dorset, SP8 4TJ	micklodge@aol.com	Annual meeting May/June
	Conservative Association	Conservative Action Team			01747 826348			
	Liberal Democrats	Ward Member for Gillingham Town	http://www.dorsetforyou.com/398061 , http://www.flocktog	Clr David Milsted	01747 826184		david.milsted@virgin.net	
	Labour Party			Bob Messer	01747 821269			
	Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan Group		http://www.gillinghamplan.co.uk	David Beaton				
NATURE & COUNTRYSIDE								
	Gillingham Action for Nature Group	Events and talks to celebrate best practice in farming and wildlife conservation	http://www.northdorset.net/groups/gillingham-action-for-nature	Bob Messer	01747821269			talks twice a year, no regular meetings or location. run 2 nature reserves.
	Gillingham Flower Club		http://www.nafas.org.uk/flower_club/Gillingham+Flower+Club	Sheila Blendall, Janet Preen (chair)	01747825927	Gillingham Town Hall	julie_mal33@hotmail.com	First Tuesday of the month, 7.30pm
	Gillingham Farmers' Market			David Walsh, Belinda Ridout		Red Lion Car Park		1st & 3rd Saturday of the month
	Gillingham Gardening Society			Eileen Westbrook	01747826207	Royal British Legion Club		2nd Wednesday of the month, 2.30pm
	Gillingham & Shaftesbury Agricultural Society	Organisers of annual agricultural event	http://www.gillshaftshow.co.uk/	Sam Braddick	01747 823955	Turnpike Showground, Motcombe, North Dorset, SP7 9PL	enquiries@gillshaftshow.co.uk	variable meeting day/times
	Threshold Centre, Cole Street Farm	Organic gardening workshops, permaculture courses	http://www.thresholdcentre.org.uk/		01747 821929	Cole Street Farm Cole Street Lane	info@thresholdcentre.org.uk	
	Gillingham & District Angling Association	Local fishing members club	http://home.btconnect.com/indigohosting/ganddaa/index.htm	David Sealy	01747823159	29 Fairey Crescent	theanglingclub@btconnect.com	
	Gillingham Country Market	Home cooking and produce in Methodist Hall	http://www.dorsetcountrymarkets.co.uk/market/gillingham/			Methodist Church Hall, High Street,		Fridays from 8.30 am - 11.30 am
	RSPB Blackmore Vale Local Group	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds	http://www.rspb.org.uk/groups/blackmoorvale/	Alison Rymell		Gillingham Primary School		3rd Friday of month, 7.30pm
	Orchard Park Garden Centre	Garden centre	www.orchardpark.biz		01747 835544	Shaftesbury Road, Gillingham, Dorset, SP8 5JG		
CULTURAL & COMMUNITY								
	Local History Society		http://www.gillinghammuseum.co.uk/	Sam Woodcock	01747822600	Gillingham Museum	office@gillinghammuseum.co.uk	
	The Slade Centre	Art classes, workshops and exhibitions in the centre of Gillingham	https://thesladecentre.com/about-the-slade-centre/	Anne Hitchcock	01747821480	The Square, SP8 4AR	info@sladecentre.com	
	Gillingham Community Church							
	Gillingham Methodist Church							
	Gillingham Baptist Church							
	St Benedict's RC Church							
	St Simon & St Jude Parish Church, Milton-on-Stour							
	St Mary the Virgin Church							
	St Mary's Mothers Union Prayer & Friendship Group			E Frayne	01747 824065			
	Gillingham Library	Books, films and music for lending, plus events for childrens			01747 822180			
	Town Twinning Association	Social events celebrating Gillingham's twinning with the French town of Le Neubourg	http://www.twinning.org.uk/gillingham_info.htm	David Lloyd	01747 825558	Gillingham Town Hall		
	Gillingham Museum		http://www.gillinghammuseum.co.uk/				office@gillinghammuseum.co.uk	
ARTS & CRAFTS								
	Arts & Craft Market		http://gillinghamartsandcraftsmarket-couk1.webs.com/		01747 825161	Methodist Church Hall	gillinghamartsandcraftsmarket@gmail.com	Saturdays, monthly, 10am-1.30pm
	Photographic Group	Est. 1977	http://www.funimaging.org/	Peter May	01747 825838		funimagingcontact@funimaging.org	Alternate Fridays, 7.30pm
	Knit and Natter		http://www.knittogether.info/england/dorset/knit-and-natter	Tamsyn Gregory	01747 823456	Wyke Primary School, Deane Avenue	knitandnatter@yahoo.co.uk	Thursdays, 7-9pm
	North Dorset Quilters	Gillingham-based activity TBC						
	Embroiderers' Guild (N Dorset Branch)	Meet in Buckhorn Weston (outside NP)						
	Northmoor Gallery	Exhibition space between Gillingham and Hilary Jackson				Northmoor House, Purns Mill Lane, Colesbrook,		
	Hilary Jackson	Individual Practitioner	www.hilaryjacksonpaintings.com	Hilary Jackson	01747 826565	6 Milestone Way, Gillingham, SP8 4TB		
	Sue Hardy	Individual Practitioner	www.suehardy.co.uk	Sue Hardy	01747 825529	Newlands Farm, Milton on Stour, SP8 5PX		
	Anne Oldfield	Individual Practitioner	www.annoldfield.co.uk	Ann Oldfield	01747 871119	6 Milestone Way, Gillingham, SP8 4TB		
	Anne Hitchcock	Individual Practitioner		Anne Hitchcock	07775 431652			
	Graham Nolan	Individual Practitioner (Rural Artists in)		Graham Nolan		Windyridge, Buckhorn Weston, Gillingham, Dorset,		
	Tessa McIntyre	Individual Practitioner						
	Robert Woolner	Individual Practitioner (Rural Artists in)	www.robwoolner.com	Robert Woolner	01747 838287	Vanners Studio, Terrace Lane, Stour Provost,		
	Patricia Lidsey	Individual Practitioner		Patricia Lidsey	01258 820293	The Old Rectory, Fifehead Maddalen, Gillingham,		
	Janet Swiss	Individual Practitioner	www.jswiss.co.uk	Janet Swiss	01747 838718	Goldings, Woodville, Stour Provost, Gillingham,		
	Chris Edwick	Individual Practitioner (Rural Artists in)	www.chrisedwickpaintings.com	Chris Edwick	01747 871 465		chrisedwickuk@yahoo.co.uk	
	Ursula Leach	Individual Practitioner (Rural Artists in)	www.ursulaleach.co.uk	Ursula Leach				
	David Marl	Individual Practitioner (Rural Artists in)		David Marl				
	Phyllis Woolf	Individual Practitioner (Rural Artists in)	www.phylliswoolf.blogspot.co.uk	Phyllis Woolf				
MUSIC, DANCE & THEATRE								
	Gillingham Imperial Silver Band & Supporters Club	Local brass band	http://www.gisb.co.uk/	Nigel Perrin	01747823534			
	Supporters Club of GISB	Supporters club		N Baker	01747 823364			
	Country Dance Club				01747 822329	Methodist Church Hall		Mondays, 7.15pm
	Tea Dance					Royal British Legion Club		First Tuesday of each month, 2pm
	The Silton Singers	40 strong fixed voice choir		Carole Brooks	01747 825826	Methodist Church Hall		Monday 7.30 - 9.30 pm
	The Pipes & Drums of the Wessex Highlanders		http://www.wessexhighlanders.co.uk/			Wyke Primary School	generalenquiries@wessexhighlanders.co.uk	Tuesday evenings 7pm - 9:30pm
	Music at Gillingham Methodist Church	Gillingham Methodist Church music venue	http://www.musicatgmc.org.uk/	Gordon Amery	07817379006	High Street, SP8 4AG	organ@lydford.vispa.com	Around 12 concerts a year

	Laburnum Live Music Club			Ted	01747 821102	Royal British Legion Club		3rd Monday of each month at 2 pm
	Artsreach Performances	Gillingham School	www.artsreach.co.uk, www.gillingham.dorset.sch.uk	Alison Diggie	01747 822222	Gillingham School		
	Arts Workshop	Organising a varied programme of performances		Mark Hebditch	01747 822746			
SPORTS & GAMES								
	Riversmeet Leisure Centre	Various activities including swimming, spinning, yoga, fitness suite and badminton	http://www.riversmeetgillingham.org/		01747 834013	RiversMeet, Hardings Lane, Gillingham, Dorset SP8 4HX	info@riversmeetgillingham.org	Full timetable available at centre
	Short Mat Bowling Club			Peter Palmer	01747 834427	1 Arun Close		
	North Dorset Rugby Club		http://www.ndrfc.co.uk/	Nigel Mattravers	01747 822748			
	Gillingham Town Football Club		http://www.pitchero.com/clubs/gillinghamtownfc/		01747823673	Hardings Lane, SP8 4HX		
	Gillingham Town Youth Football Club		http://homepages.nildram.co.uk/	Vernon Harcourt	01747 823734	edge of Kington Magna village, SP8 5ED		Tues/ Thurs evening practice. Matches every weekend (usually Sunday 2pm)
	Gillingham Town Ladies Football Club			Val Cross	01747824528			
	Gillingham Hockey Club		http://www.gillinghamhockeyclub.co.uk/	Cathy Summers	07702806203		summers77@btinternet.com	
	North Dorset Ramblers Association		http://www.northdorsetramblers.org.uk/				jan@janwardell.plus.com	
	Chess Club			R. Adams	01747 823387			
	Gillingham Bowls		http://www.gillinghambowlsdorset.com/index.htm	Phil Walker	01747 824140	School Lane, SP8 4QR	philwalker.bd@gmail.com	Members club: open every day in the summer, indoor facilities in the winter
	Gillingham School	Various activities: Hockey etc						
	Gillingham Walkers		http://www.gillinghamwalkers.webs.com/	Sheila Masser/ Penny Peat	01747 821269 / 01747 823774		pete.penny@ic24.net	Mondays, Barn Surgery Car Park, 2.30pm - 3.30pm. First Saturday every month, 2-4pm
	North Dorset Tennis Club				01747 838804			
	Griffin Tennis Academy @ North Dorset Tennis Club		http://www.griffintennisacademy.co.uk/	Ian Griffin	01747 852705, 07727061077		ian@griffintennisacademy.co.uk	
	Fitness by Design	Personal training classes, rehabilitation classes, Gillingham runners, Turbos (swimming club), North Dorset Rugby team	http://www.fitnessbydesign.ltd.uk/		01747 835180	Fitness By Design Ltd Unit 19 Old Market Place Station Road Gillingham Dorset SP8 4QQ	enquiries@fitnessbydesign.ltd.uk	Weekdays: 6.30 am - 9.30 pm Saturdays: 7.00 am - 3.00 pm Sundays: 8.00 am - 2.00 pm
	Gillingham Trotters	Running club	http://www.gillinghamtrotters.talktalk.net/			Fitness By Design Ltd	GillinghamTrotters@hotmail.com	Tuesday at 7 p.m.
	Gillingham Wheelers	Cycling club	http://www.gdw.org.uk/	James Chant	01747822306			Monday, Wednesday 7pm
	Gylla's Flying Saucers	Ultimate Frisbee		Anne-Louise Maynard	01747 835499			
	Gillingham Turbos	Swimming club	http://www.northdorsetturbos.co.uk/	Chris Gassmann	01258 820202	Fitness By Design Ltd	northdorsetturbos@hotmail.co.uk	Thursday - Sunday & Tuesday 5pm onward
	Caron Parry School of Dance		http://www.caronparrydance.co.uk/			St Mary the Virgin Primary School		Thursdays, 3.45-4.30pm
	Gillingham Tae Kwon-do					Riversmeet Leisure Centre		
	Pippin Equestrian		http://www.pippinequestrian.co.uk/	Helen Barton-Smith	01747 822997	Presthayes Farm Eccliffe Gillingham Dorset SP8 5RE	info@pippinequestrian.co.uk	Every day 9am - 5pm
	Gillingham & Marnhull Badminton Club		http://www.mgbc.org.uk/			Riversmeet Leisure Centre		
	Blackmore Vale Amateur Boxing Club		http://www.imagineboxing.com/boxing-clubs/blackmorevale	Keith Dukes - 07989036623, Susan Lodge - 01747823506,		8 ORCHARD MEWS WYKE GILLINGHAM, Dorset, SP8 4TQ		
	Bridge Club					Gillingham Youth & Community Centre		Thursday afternoon
	Integrity Martial Arts					Gillingham Youth & Community Centre		Tuesday evenings
	Mixed Martial Arts					Gillingham Youth & Community Centre		Monday evenings
	Boxercise @ Blackmore Vale Amateur Boxing Club		http://www.imagineboxing.com/boxing-clubs/blackmorevale	Keith Dukes - 07989036623, Susan Lodge - 01747823506,		8 ORCHARD MEWS WYKE GILLINGHAM, Dorset, SP8 4TQ		
YOUTH								
	Bones	Various activities, cooking and games		Trisha Walker	01747 822267	Gillingham Youth & Community Centre	P.A.Walker@dorsetcc.gov.uk	Various ages: Mondays, Banger Project, 7.15pm, Tuesdays 3pm-9pm, drop in any age, Music studio from 6.30, D of E from 4pm, Wednesday years 7-9 (year 6 in spring), 6.30-9pm, - Thursdays Junior Club, 8 years old up to Year 6, 6.30-8.30pm
	Hip Bones	Club for disabled young people		Trisha Walker	01747 822267			1st and 3rd Saturday of every month, 10am - 12pm
	Platform 1	Recording Studio, drums, mixing desk, coffee bar, indoor half pipe				Gillingham Youth & Community Centre		
	Gillingham Children's Centre	Messy Play Drop In sessions First Time Parents group Breastfeeding Support group		Sharon Russell	01747 837960		sharon.russell@dorsetcc.gov.uk	
	Girlguiding	Rainbows, Brownies & Guides	http://www.girlguiding-dorset.org.uk/	Mrs. V. Case	01747823037	The Guide Hall (rear of Youth Centre Cemetery Road)	dorsetguidingls@btconnect.com	Monday to Friday, Times vary for Rainbows, Brownies & Guides
	St Mary's Scout Group	Cubs, Beavers and Scouts	http://www.smbscouts.org.uk/	C. Westbrook	01747825482	Hardings Lane, SP8 4HX		Evenings: Monday, Tuesday - Cubs; Thursday, Friday - Beavers; Friday - Scouts
ADULTS & OLDER PEOPLE								
	Shaftesbury & Gillingham Round Table 865	Mens' social club	http://www.shaftesbury-gillingham.roundtable.co.uk/		0845 508 0000			Various events
	Senior Club	Charity supporting leisure activities for senior community members	https://www.cafonline.org/charitysearch/GILLINGHAM-SEN	Edith Brown	01747 823106	2 Downs View Drive, SP8 4RL	bedithbrown@aol.com	Meet once a fortnight, Fridays 2 - 4pm
	Day Club	Senior citizens lunch and social			01747 826878	Gillingham Youth and Community Centre		Wednesdays, 10.30am - 3.15pm
	Adult Learning	Courses in RiversMeet Leisure Centre			0800 262648	Riversmeet Leisure Centre	gillingham@dorsetadulted.info	Tuesday & Thursday 12.30pm
	Gillingham Probus Club	Various events and meetings. Retired professional and business men	http://probus-gillingham-dorset.org.uk/	Phil Butler		The Olive Bowl, Unit 23,	secretary@probus-gillingham-dorset.org.uk	1st and 3rd Tuesday of every month 10am
	Gillingham Ladies Probus Club			Nita Preist	01747 826691	Royal British Legion Hall		2nd Thursday each month 10am
	Gillingham Afternoon Womens' Institute				01747 821 632	Royal British Legion Hall		2.15pm, second Monday of the month

	Gillingham Evening Womens' Institute					Gillingham Town Hall		7.30pm, first Thursday of the month
	Milton Womens' Institute							
	Royal British Legion (& Womens' Section)			M Case	01747 822439			
	Devonshire & Dorset Regiment Association		http://www.devondorsetregiment.co.uk/	Michael Pike	01747 838214	Royal British Legion Hall	mikeandann.woodville@hotmail.co.uk	4th Wednesday of every month 7.30pm
	University of the Third Age	A nation-wide organisation for third-agers who feel the need to keep their minds active	http://www.sgu3a.org.uk/					
OTHER								
	CAMRA	Campaign for Real Ale	http://www.camra.org.uk/	Paul Smith	01747 823574			
	Town Meadow Group	Campaign to improve town meadow led by voluntary community group	http://www.gillinghamdorsetbusiness.com/news/gillingham-news/gillingham-town-meadow-2/				gtcmeadow@btinternet.com	
	Lions Club of Gillingham, Shaftesbury & Mere	Service organisation for the less fortunate	http://www.shaftesburydorset.com/content.asp?sid=9&cid=159					
	Inner Wheel Club		http://rcgk.co.uk/tag/inner-wheel-gillingham	Wendy Tindall-Shepherd	01747 822981	22 King Edmund Court		
	Rotary Club		http://www.rotary-nbi.org/clubs/homepage.php?ClubID=655	Phil Wheatley	01747 824663	16 Freame Way		
EVENTS								
	Gillingham Carnival	Annual Carnival	http://www.gillinghamcarnival.org.uk/	Mary Bailey	01747 823365			
	Party in the Park							
PUBLICATIONS								
	Gillingham Matters							
	Blackmore Vale							
	Gillingham Guide							
	SCHOOLS							
	Name							
PRIMARY	Gillingham Primary School			Mrs Catharine Jessiman	01747823245		office@gillinghampri.dorset.sch.uk	
	Milton-on-Stour CoFE Primary School			Mr James Stanford	01747822588		office@milton.dorset.sch.uk	
	St Mary the Virgin CoFE VA Primary School			Mrs Amanda Christopher	01747824446		office@stmarygillingham.dorset.sch.uk	
	Wyke Primary School			Mr Stephen Crumpler	01747825665		office@gillinghamwyke.dorset.sch.uk	
SECONDARY								
	Gillingham School			Rose Proby (Head of Art)	01747822222		office@gillingham.dorset.sch.uk	

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X CULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES X

Whilst Gillingham is a culturally active town, it nonetheless draws comments of, “There’s nothing to do...”, from many of the residents that we have spoken to, particularly in comparison to neighbouring destinations such as Shaftesbury. We hope that the above report and the ‘Gill’s Great!’ pamphlet can disprove this misconception. However, our subjective experience is that it is a reasonably diffuse community with few centralised or shared activities, which may contribute to this unflattering perception. Future cultural provision should therefore be well communicated to the community at large and should occupy shared sites within the town to maximise positive effect in the neighbourhood. We hope that this report is a strong basis to argue that, particularly with a large number of new residents due with the proposed Southern extension to the town, culture should be supported as a means of enhancing community cohesion in Gillingham.

We believe that the following cultural opportunities are worthy of pursuit into the future, either through the Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan, or future commissions which may be associated with proposed development:



‘Pop-Up Community Cinema’

The desire for a cinema came up in almost all our workshop events, as well as GNPG’s visioning events. A ‘pop-up’ project could excite the community across all ages, and the involvement of an artist or designer would help to support this excitement through an inventive setting. We feel that, with landlord support, vacant units in the high street would be ideal for such a project.



‘Carnival Creations’

We were impressed by the variety of the display, as well as the ability of the Carnival to bring together people of all ages. Facilitating the creation of a cart for the carnival could be an exciting commission to communicate the upcoming plan to large numbers of people, or a creative way to initiate new residents from the Southern extension into the town!



‘High Street Happenings’

As with the cinema, the poor state of the high street was frequently mentioned to us. A curated programme of existing clubs using high street locations to host their activities could make a show of Gillingham’s ‘secret’ cultural life.



‘Brand Gillingham’

Public perception of Gillingham could be enhanced with a graphic commission to ‘brand’ the town in a way that encourages pride. This could include: a graphic identity to be used on websites and literature, a legible point of arrival to the town through new signage, graphics to be used on vacant shopfronts or hoardings, printed materials such as tote bags or t-shirts.



‘Town Meadow’

There is great desire in the town to improve and enhance this local open space. Artist input into any proposals could be used to support links to Gillingham’s historic and natural context, such as to Constable, and the wealth of rural assets, through interpretation, sculpture, curated walks and integrated public realm arts proposals. Gillingham School has a strong art department and could be involved with such proposals to encourage young people’s ‘ownership’ of the space. This type of place-based ‘story-telling’ may also lend itself well to ‘augmented reality’ or digital platforms of communication such as smart phone apps.

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REFLECTING ON THE ROLE

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We hope that our involvement with GNPG has been beneficial to the group. We found the role both fascinating and challenging. We found the challenges to be as follows:

- To truly embed the potential of culture in the emerging neighbourhood plan, it would be necessary to attend every meeting and, most likely, to input on the draft documents. This has not been possible due to the scope of the project, but might also be inappropriate as we are not members of the plan group. We think that a supporting role for creative practitioners who are not Neighbourhood Plan group members is more appropriate than one of influence over the development of the plan.
- The aims of the project were ambitious for such a small role, and it is possible that we were trying to achieve too much with just one commission. Research, outreach and promotion/ communications would all have been valuable areas for creative input to the group in their own rights.
- There is some sensitivity regarding scarcity of resources in neighbourhood planning and we sometimes felt uncomfortable asking for additional input from the group to further the cultural agenda, particularly as they were already volunteering their time for the process. We feel that creative practitioners should be able to work reasonably independently whilst introducing skills or knowledge to the process, rather than adding to the workload of the group.

We feel that our creative involvement in this - admittedly early - part of the plan-making process has introduced the following to the group:

- alternative and creative methods of engagement that may be applicable to wider audiences
- confidence to use these methods for their own exercises into the future
- new local links and contacts, such as the Children's Centre
- the use of a strong and contemporary graphic identity for wider promotion and communication of the group
- resources for research and documentation to inform the developing plan
- knowledge and experience of community planning and engagement processes
- an appreciation of the extent of cultural activity in Gillingham, and what it can offer the community

We hope that this work will prove valuable to GNPG in both the process of further development of the Plan, and the final content of the Plan. We would be very happy to provide further information or support should they wish to take forward any of the activities that we have demonstrated and introduced.

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