



THIS ITEM IS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

(Please note that "Information Only" reports do not require Integrated Impact Assessments, Legal or Finance Comments as no decision is being taken)

Title of meeting:	Culture, Leisure and Economic Development Decision Meeting
Subject:	Hotwalls Artist Studios Annual Update
Date of meeting:	15 March 2024
Report by:	Director of Culture, Leisure and Regulatory Services
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Steve Pitt
Wards affected:	All

1. Requested by

1.1. The Director of Culture, Leisure and Regulatory Services.

2. Purpose

2.1. To share information and key highlights from the provision and operation of the Hotwalls Artists Studios through 2023/24.

3. Information Requested

3.1. The Hotwalls Studios development is a historic regeneration scheme of the 19th century Point Battery arches in Old Portsmouth which were transformed into 13 workshops and an eatery, providing a dedicated artistic and cultural hub and securing a sustainable future for this Scheduled Ancient Monument and its listed buildings.

3.2. The city council manages this award-winning site which supports both the development of creative businesses in the city and the sustainable re-use of these historic assets. The development provides incubator space to support local artists and it supports access to affordable studio space. The development has become a hub for the city's creative community.

3.3. The last 12 months have been a productive and busy period for Hotwalls Studios as they have continued to evolve and develop. The overarching management of Studios has moved from being part of the Museum Service to Partnership &



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Commissioning and the Hotwalls Development Manager moved to a different role within the Council. The Events and Operations officer is currently

acting up in the role of development manager and a new Development Manager has recently been appointed and is expected to start in their new role in the near future.

- 3.4. We have seen 6 studios welcome 8 new tenants over the past year after 6 studios were vacated as their tenancies came to an end. The studios were filled incredibly quickly with considerable interest from a wide range of individual artists. We have also seen Hannah Matthews open her studio to the public, which makes Hotwalls the home to the only open taxidermy studio in the UK.
- 3.5. Supporting the new artists who have taken up spaces has allowed a focus on how we best support artists whilst they have a studio space and more support in now factored into the last 2 years of the artists tenancy to encourage them to start seeking follow on space or consider what the best model for their business will be. Other specialist support is provided for this through linking in with the Council's Economic Development team.
- 3.6. From September to present, there has been no Events and Operations Officer in place whilst the present incumbent has assumed the role of acting Development Manager. Despite the reduced capacity, a strong events programme has still been delivered over the last 12 months.
 - 12 monthly Open Studios
 - 12 monthly Guest Artist residencies
 - Creative Market
 - Christmas Market
 - Stitch and Sew Market
 - Fire and Glaze Market
 - Print and Press Market
 - Lizzie Cornelius exhibition
 - Karl Rudziak exhibition
 - Alice Hume exhibition
 - Hollie Thornley and Alice Hume exhibition
 - Circles, Cycles and Cylinders, Hotwalls Studios group show
 - Hollie Thornley exhibition
 - Makers guild ceramic demonstration
 - FOURSANDEIGHTS exhibition



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- 3.7. Alongside the events programme various workshops organised and delivered independently by Hotwalls artists in their studios and in the Round Tower have also taken place across a wide range of artistic mediums.
- 3.8. The events programme is also bolstered by private hires and subsidised community use of the Round Tower. Over the last 12 months this has included:
- PortsFest Spanish guitar concert
 - The Traders Keep
 - Your Voice 2 exhibition by Motiv8
- 3.9. Over the last 12 months several projects have been delivered or are in progress:
- HNBS have replaced all non-compliant electrical cabling across the site.
 - Areas of the decking between Studios 7 and 13 have been repaired as has the decking and lights on The Canteen terrace.
 - The water ingress causing a heavy leak in Studio 10 has been solved and works have been completed.
 - An unpleasant odour in Studio 11 has been solved after the tenant was moved offsite to a temporary studio elsewhere. The odour has been eliminated after the floorboards were removed and further investigations carried out. Artists are now back in occupation in Studio 11.
 - Ongoing repairs to both the fire and intruder alarm systems continue due to water ingress in these Scheduled Monuments
 - 5 of the Sea Buckthorn trees have reached the end of life for their species. The Council's arboriculturalist confirms that the Sea Buckthorn trees were an experimental species tried at this location, it was the first time this species Sea Buckthorn had been produced as a standard tree rather than as a shrub. The trees thrived in the location but seemingly only have about a 20 year life span, this could be for many reasons, most likely is the harsh environment and the amount of fertile soils/growing medium that is available to the tree below the root system.
Working with the arboricultural team, a large project has been undertaken that involved removing trees, replacing trees, deinstalling and installing lighting and installing new gravel to bring the site up to standard. Exposure to the harsh weather conditions does cause on-going difficulties and a review of the external lighting in the trees will be occurring.
 - Telephones and Wi-Fi at Hotwalls has all been updated over a phased programme to ensure the least disruption to tenants.
 - Repairs are ongoing to fight water ingress in the Round Tower. Floorboards have been replaced and an industrial dehumidifier is now installed in the space to help with the high moisture levels.



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Being in a scheduled historic monument and in a coastal environment, it was always anticipated that the Hotwalls would be a complex site to maintain and so it continues to be. We work closely with other Council services and Historic England to support the historic fabric of the spaces whilst trying to meet the needs of the artists.

- 3.10. The Hotwalls Studios website launched in January 2023. It was developed thanks to funding from the Cultural Recovery Fund. Over the past 12 months, the site has seen 30,000 visitors and is regularly updated with new information, workshops, and events. The site has also been replenished with a new set of images taken by two freelance photographers in September and December 2023 and this is regularly updated to reflect the current artists and their outputs.
- 3.11. Over the last 12 months 6 artists reached the end of their tenancies at Hotwalls after being granted an extension on their leases. After receiving moving on support and one to one mentoring from the Development Manager, all 6 tenants found new studio spaces either within council spaces or private studios.
- 3.12. We currently anticipate that a further 3 tenants will be reaching the end of their leases in the next 12 months and we will continue to support these tenants as they look for new spaces in the city and will encourage them to explore new revenue streams to support their businesses as they move on from the incubator spaces the Hotwalls provides. Any vacancies will be filled through an open process to see recruitment of a diverse selection of new tenants to move into the vacant studios as they arise.
- 3.13. The adjustments to the lease model as outlined in the update report to Culture, Leisure and Economic Development in February 2023 have been applied to all the new tenancies and will continue to be monitored. We anticipate that this revised model will enable us to support more local creatives and ensure that the Hotwalls Studios continue to be an attractive and relevant destination for visitors as the site renews and evolves with changing tenants.
- 3.14. With an anticipated reduction in the churn of artists in and out of spaces we hope the next 12 months will enable us to expand the very successful larger arts market to three times per year which feedback from the artists has demonstrated will be very welcomed. The Events programme will continue to be wide and varied with 21 events organised by Hotwalls studios and/or their tenants in the diary for the next 12 months.



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Signed by
Stephen Baily
Director of Culture, Leisure and Regulatory Services

Appendices:

Nil

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location
CLED Hotwalls Studios Update - 10 th February 2023	CLED Hotwalls Studios Update 2023