

## **Extract from the minutes of the Corporate Overview Committee of 25 September 2008**

### **15 Thelma Gallery, Honiton**

Members welcomed Emma Collins, Deborah Harrison and Gill Nicoll from Gallery Creative Business Consultancy to the meeting who presented the recommendations contained in their consultancy report on the Thelma Hulbert Gallery. The consultancy report had been commissioned to look at options for the expansion and long term sustainability of the Thelma Hulbert Gallery. The consultants had concluded that the best solution for the Thelma Hulbert Gallery was for it to take over the ground floor of the Thelma Hulbert building from the Registrar service from the break in the lease in June 2009. This would allow it to expand into the whole building with a building conversion and would be a four phased approach.

A number of issues were discussed including:

- The importance of encouraging the Gallery's work with young people;
- Recognition of the dedication, professionalism and hard work of Ishbel Ramsay, Arts Development Officer, Angela Blackwell, Gallery Curator and her team in creating the successful Gallery;
- That local businesses, such as Bonham's, wished to engaged more with the Thelma Hulbert Gallery, but were not able due to the lack of space;
- The need to improve marketing of the Gallery with the consideration given to a possible change of name;
- A move to charitable status for the Gallery would help access more funding streams;
- The importance of working with the Registrar to ensure they stay in East Devon and preferably Honiton and find suitable alternative premises;
- The special feeling that having the Gallery in the current Georgian building produced, which it was felt would be difficult to replicate in a new building;
- That with this opportunity for expansion, the Thelma Hulbert Gallery could be made into a sustainable community resource for the future for East Devon;
- The Committee unanimously supported the expansion of the Thelma Hulbert Gallery.

Emma Collins, Deborah Harrison and Gill Nicoll from Gallery Creative Business Consultancy were thanked for their lively, interesting and informative presentation.

**RECOMMENDED** that the consultants second option be adopted, namely that finances be found to allow the authority (after taking back ground floor of Elmfield House from the current lease holder) to expand the gallery and staffing to cover new activity throughout the whole building and ancillary areas. This will follow a business plan that, over four phases, and with grant aid, creates better financial viability and better opportunity, enhances Honiton, provides a better learning environment, better engages the local community, and creates a cultural hub for future activity across East Devon.