

OLDHAM PARTNERSHIP PRESS RELEASE

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ART FOR ALL; ALL FOR ART

OLDHAM SCOOPS ART'S OSCAR

Oldham has scooped a major national award which recognises how performing and visual arts have been used throughout the Borough to successfully strengthen local communities.

The Oldham Partnership won the Cultural Contribution Award from the Government's Academy for Sustainable Communities, for its Art For All; All For Art initiative.

The initiative provides an opportunity for local people from different communities to come together through the medium of performing and visual arts, and help to bridge community, generational, and ethnic differences.

There were over 200 entries into the awards, but Oldham beat off competition from Whitechapel, Tower Hamlets, and Portsmouth to win the Cultural Contribution Award.

The award will carry a particular resonance for many Oldhamers, who have been brought up in a Borough with a thirst for performing arts.

Kevin Shaw, Chief Executive of Oldham Coliseum Theatre, has pioneered the initiative in Oldham.

"I am really pleased that the work that is taking place within the communities of Oldham is being recognised nationally."

"Taking part in cultural activities such as drama, music, art and theatre brings an extra dimension to people's lives and helps to enrich their local community."

"As well as improving the quality of life for the people who take part it helps to build their confidence levels and self-esteem."

"It has huge benefits to the local community too, as it has been proven to stimulate the local economy, reduce crime levels, improve educational attainment, and improve the sense of local pride, identity and belonging."

"The Oldham Partnership and the Arts For All initiative provide a framework to support these projects, and it is tremendously rewarding to know that they are having an impact on the local community."

Nick Brown, Principal of Oldham Sixth Form College and Chair of the Oldham Partnership, said: "This is an excellent example of the ways effective

partnership working can make a difference in Oldham. It is very pleasing that we are in the forefront of such developments.”

Andrew Kilburn, Chief Executive of Oldham Council said, “Activities such as the Festival of Diversity and the Carnival Arts programme illustrate what can be achieved when local partners and the local community work hand-in-hand.”

“National awards from major bodies help to dispel some of myths about Oldham, and demonstrate to a national audience the talent of local people and the ambition of local partners.”

Arts Council England, North West has worked very closely with the Oldham Partnership on Art for All; All for Art. Arts Council England, North West’s Executive Director, Michael Eakin, said: “This is great news.”

“This bold and imaginative initiative, on which we have worked so hard with the Oldham Partnership, matches several of the Arts Council’s current priorities of creating vibrant communities, celebrating diversity and getting more people involved in the arts – particularly young people.”

“I am delighted that it has received this wholly deserved national recognition.”

The judges said: “By tapping into the existing cultural diversity and by taking arts into communities, the project has rebuilt local identity. As a result the Oldham Partnership has been recognised locally and nationally as an example of how to use culture as a tool for creating community cohesion and delivering Local Area Agreements.”

As part of the Local Area Agreement – a multi-agency delivery contract between Oldham and Government – the Oldham Partnership has set a target of getting an additional 14,062 people to participate in performing or visual arts over the next three years.

To ensure that this represents all members of the community, a target has been set to ensure that this includes an additional 2,023 adults from Black & Minority Ethnic groups.

The excellent performance within the first twelve months of this three-year agreement illustrates this is a project which resonates amongst the people of Oldham. To date, there have been an additional 11,002 adults participating in performing and visual arts (78.2% of the three year target), 2,774 of whom are from BME groups (already 37% over the three year target).

The target is designated as a stretch target in the Local Area Agreement. This means that if the Oldham Partnership achieves the three-year goal agreed with Government, it will receive a reward grant of £628,271. This will be new money attracted into the Borough, and will be used to support further initiatives which improve the quality of life for residents.

ENDS

Media Opportunity: Photographers are invited to attend a photo opportunity of the award with those involved in the project. Those in attendance will include Kevin Shaw (Chief Executive, Oldham Coliseum Theatre), Annie O'Neill (Arts Manager, Adult & Community Services, Oldham Council) and Richard Grossick (Festival of Diversity Coordinator).

Date: Tuesday 19th June 2007
Time: 11.30am
Venue: Gallery Oldham (in the Foyer)

For further information please contact **Adam Patterson**, Marketing and Communications Co-ordinator at Oldham Partnership on **0161 615 5038**, or email adam.patterson@oldhampartnership.org.uk

NOTES TO EDITOR

Award Submission

A copy of the Oldham Partnership's award submission is available at www.oldhampartnership.org.uk/awards

Awards

'Creating the Future' succeeds the Deputy Prime Minister's Award for Sustainable Communities, which since 2003 has recognised projects and initiatives that contribute to making better places in which to live and work.

ASC is the national centre for delivering the skills and knowledge needed to make better places. ASC undertakes major research studies, promotes good practice, develops new learning resources and launches careers drives.

For further information on the Awards, please visit <http://www.ascskills.org.uk/pages/awards>

Oldham Partnership

The Oldham Partnership is the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) for the Borough of Oldham.

The Oldham Partnership brings together the various groups in Oldham – the public, private, voluntary, community and faith sectors – to ensure that they work together, and achieve more than they could individually.

For further information on the Oldham Partnership, please visit www.oldhampartnership.org.uk