

Flowerfield Residuary Inheritance (Estate of the late John Onslow Springhall)	11th October 2016
To: The Leisure and Development Committee For Decision	

Linkage to Council Strategy (2015-19)	
Strategic Theme	Resilient, Healthy & Engaged Communities
Outcome	Council will work to develop and promote stable and cohesive communities across the Borough
Lead Officers	Head of Community & Culture Cultural Services Manager
Cost: (If applicable)	n/a

The purpose of this report is to inform Council of the residuary inheritance gifted to Flowerfield Arts Centre by the late John Onslow Springhall and recommendations on how to proceed.

Background

Flowerfield Arts Centre has recently received correspondence from solicitors executing the estate of the late John Onslow Springhall of 22 York Avenue, Portstewart, stating that the centre is a beneficiary of a 15% share of his residuary estate.

Mr Springhall was an ardent patron of Flowerfield Arts Centre since its opening, 36 years ago, and was particularly interested in the jazz concerts performed within the centre.

Staff confirmed that he frequented many events in Flowerfield Arts Centre over the years and his generous gift is both an endorsement and affirmation of the esteemed value he held Flowerfield Arts Centre in, as a provider of cultural events, arts and education, especially for the public.

Council has subsequently received payment of £94,500 as an interim distribution to the residuary beneficiaries, in this case Flowerfield Arts Centre, with a final undisclosed sum to be released once the estate is in a position to make a final distribution.

The inheritance is subject to the following provisions:

'As to fifteen (15) of them for the Flowerfield Arts Centre of 185 Coleraine Road, Portstewart, County Londonderry, BT55 7HU and I DIRECT that this residuary inheritance should be applied towards the teaching of arts and crafts at the centre'.

Context & opportunity

Council have committed, within the Culture, Arts & Heritage's action plan for 2016/17, to *'Enhance Cultural Venues and Assets'* and as an operational action, to *'maximise income generation and develop business models to increase sustainability, access and participation'*.

Staff will shortly be undertaking a review of the current operating models of Council's Arts centres with a view of developing fresh approaches to the service ensuring that Council actively uses its assets to create new revenue, thus creating fresh assets. This process will include analysis of the overall market the centres operate within and will identify how to best develop and implement, among other aspects, its commercial potential.

The plan will be developed, however, in the context that deliverables should exploit opportunities to enhance artistic excellence and the capacity to take artistic risks; increase Council's commitment to learning and development while ensuring the centres remain both flexible and adaptable in their approach to service provision.

Officers would therefore recommend that no immediate plans are put in place for the inheritance, but rather that options are developed within the context of the review and the proposed plan that is developed as a result. It would be within this context that this inheritance sum would support the sustainability and growth of Council's arts centres, and that it may continue to provide the broad range of activities, including the teaching of arts and crafts.

Recommendation

- a) As an interim measure, staff co-ordinate, through the mayoral office, an appropriate public relations activity, to acknowledge and thank the trustees and executors of the will of Mr John Onslow Springhall for his most generous donation to further education within Flowerfield Arts Centre.
- b) That Council hold the full sum of the inheritance until such times as the above review process and resulting options for the development of the centres and the range of activities therein, have been completed and presented to Council for consideration.
- c) That Council commits that the residuary inheritance will be solely apportioned to activities as per the provisions within Mr Springhall's will.