

WILTSHIRE COUNCIL

11 DECEMBER 2013
SOUTH WEST WILTSHIRE AREA BOARD

Chalke Valley Tourism Initiative - Cecil Beaton exhibition at Salisbury Museum

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1. Purpose of Report

The information in this report provides further information on the Area Board Project/Councillor Initiative; Chalke Valley Tourism Initiative – Cecil Beaton exhibition at Salisbury Museum.

2. South West Wiltshire Area Board (SWWAB) Priorities

On 5 March 2012 SWWAB hosted a Community Planning Event at Dinton Village Hall. Various stakeholders took part in this event, including local residents, Parish Councils, statutory services and voluntary groups. Out of this event SWWAB set priorities, which included a commitment to:

- Assist small / medium sized businesses and encourage new businesses
- Promote tourism

As a result of this, SWWAB has funded a [two year project with the three local business chambers/associations](#) to deliver agreed objectives across the area, in partnership with Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). SWWAB has also committed funding to enhance the AONB's sustainable rural tourism project in the Nadder Valley through [providing an intern](#) and [populating a website promoting local activities and businesses](#).

SWWAB Councillors have previously indicated a desire to develop the sustainable rural tourism project into the Chalke Valley.

3. Background to the Cecil Beaton exhibition (provided by Salisbury Museum)

Salisbury Museum's profile has greatly improved due to exhibitions of national importance. These exhibitions are linked with the history of the Salisbury area and appeal to a range of audiences, from local people to tourists from the UK and overseas. Their programme started in 2011 with the Constable & Salisbury exhibition, which had 38,500 visitors. This was followed in 2012 by the Circles & Tangents exhibition, which explored the artistic legacy of Cranborne Chase. In

2013 they produced a major exhibition on Rex Whistler, which has seen a 50% increase in visitors over the summer period.

The museum is planning a major exhibition on Cecil Beaton for the summer of 2014. Cecil Beaton's unique contribution to the 20th century as a celebrated photographer, designer, artist, diarist, dandy and socialite is legendary, continuing to inspire new generations in many artistic fields today. This new exhibition will, for the first time, explore the man behind the camera, the man at home.

Ashcombe was Beaton's place of lavish entertainment for fellow Bright Young Things through the 1930s; a care-free world brought abruptly to an end by the outbreak of war. From 1947 he lived in what he described as 'the abode of an adult person' in Edwardian-inspired grandeur at Reddish House, Broad Chalke, until his death in 1980. Against recreations of some of Beaton's theatrical interiors, his personality and private life are discussed – his unrelenting work schedule, his unique talent for self-promotion and his uncertain pursuit of love. Beaton's first, unrequited, love for Art collector Peter Watson, was followed by a complex relationship with screen-icon Greta Garbo and much later, the younger American academic, Kin Hoitsma - each of these revealing relationships will be explored, together with that of his mother, Ety, who lived with him for over 20 years, and his devoted secretary, Eileen Hose.

Beaton's home, simultaneously a retreat, a muse for his creativity and a stage for impressive entertaining – a canvas upon which he could project himself as the person he wished to be – was where he also discovered many simpler pleasures, such as his passion for gardening and contributing to village life.

Ashcombe and Reddish House still retain the glow of Beaton's presence, and this exhibition will bring together original photographs, artworks, furnishings, costume and possessions from both houses, along with local memories and anecdotes, to present a more rounded picture of Cecil Beaton's extraordinary life.

4. Expected outcomes of the exhibition (from Salisbury museum)

- To increase visitor numbers – the museum anticipate the exhibition will attract 20,000 people over the summer period.
- To build the museum's brand.
- To increase public awareness of the museum, its events and the exhibition programme – both locally, nationally and internationally.
- To increase revenue through the exhibition – the museum is an independent charity and depends on the income through ticket sales.
- To attract new audiences.

5. Benefit to local communities/businesses in the Chalke Valley / South West Wiltshire area

Salisbury museum has committed to the following actions:

- Highlight the key locations in the exhibition – they are borrowing items from Ashcombe and will have furniture/fittings that were from Reddish House.
- Develop a trail so visitors can explore the Beaton's world including Broad Chalke (where he lived and is buried) and Ashcombe. They will also offer a tour of the landscape as part of the exhibition.
- Provide a free education programme to schools associated with the exhibition – this will include free entry to the exhibition for schools and facilitated workshops.
- A summer events programme for local families based around the exhibition at the museum.
- Talks to local community groups about Beaton.
- Work in partnership with Beaudesert – a local business based in Tisbury who are responsible for reviving Cecil Beaton's fabric designs.
- Offering a Beaton Experience in conjunction with local hotels/B&Bs (there has already been an approach from Milford Hall Hotel).
- Joint ticketing with Wilton House (who will be having a Cecil Beaton Photographic Exhibition from April 2014).
- Have a partnership with the Salisbury International Arts Festival (the possibility of a showing of My Fair Lady in association with the Museum) and the Salisbury Arts Centre (possible performance of Beaton Diary Readings).

6. Recognition for South West Wiltshire Area Board funding

Salisbury museum have advised that any support from SWWAB would be highlighted in publicity for the exhibition, including:

- The 2pp DL Flyer (x 20,000).
- 32pp A6 Booklet (x 20,000).
- A1 Poster and A4 Poster (x 100).
- All press releases.
- On the Salisbury museum website.

Report Author: Stephen Harris (Community Area Manager)

Tel No: 01722 434211

E-Mail: stephen.harris@wiltshire.gov.uk