

History of Open Studios

2003

33 artists participated

Artscape lead the first Open Studios in Swindon which took place in June

They paid £25 to join and marketing was produced in the form of a brochure to accompany the artists' own marketing

2004

53 artists participated

It was a similar set up as the previous year

There was an event at the Community Crossroads for artists who didn't have studios

This event included workshops, the 'Big Paint' and an installation

2005

3 artists participated

There was no 'Official Event'

The participating artists went ahead, on their own, and had good numbers of 'invited' visitors and promoted each other's studios.

2006

45 artists participated

Contact was made with SBC for support again

Artists paid £25 to join and marketing was provided in the form of postcards, brochures and a website

There was an event at the Community Crossroads for artists without studios

54 artists participated in this event (including 14 of the Open Studios artists)

There were over 400 visitors to this 10 day event

Open Studios Review Meeting Minutes

Meeting: 26th July 2006 at the Wyvern Theatre

Regrets: Deana Kim Page, Helene Howse, Scott McGrath, Meryl Ainslie, Jennifer Bailey, Steve Causer and Claire Heathcote.

Attendance: Helen Miah, Barbara Dixon, Paula Sullivan, Andy Preston, Carol Bent, Christine Antoinette, Vanetta Joffe, Kim Pethybridge, Gordon Dickinson, Toni Robinson and Shanta Barber.

Chairperson: Helen Miah

Secretary: Shanta Barber

Ground rules: Honesty, reality, agreements settled in a democratic manner, good communications and constructive suggestions for improvement.

Agenda: Planning, Artsminds involvement, recruiting artists, Open Art exhibition at the Art Centre, Open Studios, Open Art Exhibition at the Community Crossroads, Marketing and public relations / website.

Planning

<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Weaknesses</u>
A strong feeling to make it happen and voluntary offer of help from Shanta Initiated by Carol and Vanetta Use of Artsminds network Some artists self marketed	No overall aim or vision. No clear planning process Inadequate time scale Lack of clear structure or ownership Lack of some artists to promote / present themselves Not clear who was 'in charge' No Open Studios budget No artistic director

Recruitment issues

- Had to work hard to recruit participants
- Lack of communication about who it was aimed at
- Lack of confidence of some artists
- Some artists reluctant to participate

Open Art (Art Centre)

<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Weaknesses</u>
Great forum and sampler Good feedback for the look and feel of the work Good to see larger pieces of work	Marketing/ promotion issues? Not enough promotion targeted to the exhibition Audience for the launch not targeted Timing needs considering Literary festival was on at the same time The launch was held on the day of the Council elections (too much going on) ← Hospitality/bar (some were satisfied with this and some were not)

Open Studios

<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Weaknesses</u>
Use of a volunteer Good quality of artists who opened their studios/homes Work was well presented / high quality Some artists sent out personal invites Visitors made to feel very welcomed Most artists sold work Artists showed commitment to the event	← As the event snowballed this became a weakness. There is an element of risk as to who turns up A need to broaden the 'audience' Poor timing of distribution Communication problems Need to build the 'culture' of Open Studios Lack of support from Artsminds members

Open Art (Community Crossroads)

Strengths	Weaknesses
Lots of space	Problems with the volume of music – bad acoustics and too much reverberation from the room. Question as to it's purpose Did it represent the Arts in Swindon Too much variety of work There were questions as to how it should be curated

Marketing and Promotion / Website

Postcards

- Some people liked the visual design and some didn't.
- Some felt that there was a lack of clarity of purpose and information
- The timescale was too late for adequate promotion and design development

Brochures

- Most people liked the map
- Some did not like the front image
- There was a lack of marketing strategy and it was not targeted to a particular 'audience'

Website

- There was initial confusion as to who was doing it
- It had good usability
- Most people liked the diary
- It has had 1415 unique hits to date

Overall it was felt that there was not enough support from the local press, there were two radio interviews and several online articles.

Moving Forward

1. We need to agree and define what we mean by Open Studios for Swindon.
2. Who is in charge of doing what?

Next Meeting: Tuesday 5th September 2006 (6pm - 8pm) at the Wyvern Theatre
To discuss item 1 of the Moving Forward Agenda