Media Brief

12-Nov-10

Somerset County Council Arts Funding Decision: Summary Statement

- The new Conservative led Somerset County Council has voted to cut 100% of the £159,000 arts development budget from April 2011.

- This decision has been taken despite considerable public support in favour of a 26% cut over 4 years, in line with the proposed grant reduction from central to local government.

- We understand that in the future, arts organisations may be able to access funds from a £160,000 Creative Industries budget, held in the Economic Development Unit.

- This new fund has been set up to support activities with a direct economic value to the county. It is laudable that the Council, through this potential funding source, are placing value on the economic benefits of the arts.

- It is baffling however that by cutting the Arts Development fund by 100% they appear to place no importance on their social, community or intrinsic cultural value.

- Arts organisations in Somerset wish to continue a dialogue with the council and as a means of ascertaining public support are currently considering starting an on-line petition.

- Councilors will be formally responding to questions about their decision to cut the arts development budget and we may also wish to ask subsequent questions at the next full Council meeting on 22nd December. More detailed information about funding from central government to councils will be available by then.

- Please see the Take Art website for all the latest developments on the campaign **www.takeart.org**

ENDS

For more information please contact Ralph Lister or Louise Bennett from Take Art on 01460 249450, or email ralph@takeart.org or louise@takeart.org