

## CHAPTER 15 - Arts and Culture

### Aims:

- Promote arts and culture as an integral part of the design and implementation of the Forest.
- Use the arts and culture as a mechanism for community participation in the Forest.
- Involve local artists and craftspeople in the design, construction and community participation in the Forest.
- Explore and reinforce the identity of different parts of the Forest through the arts.

- 15.1** A range of events, workshops, arts projects and interpretation facilities already bring the arts into the open spaces in and around urban areas. Perhaps best known are the sculptures in Ashton Court, Blaise Castle and along the Bristol - Bath Railway Path. Good examples of arts in forests are found elsewhere in the Forest of Dean and in Grizedale Forest in the Lake District. There should, however, be more to the arts in the community forest than sculpture alone.
- 15.2** Woodlands and open spaces can provide inspiration and venues for events, theatre, writing, poetry, painting, photography, crafts and arts education which can involve all sections of the community working with local artists.
- 15.3** The Forest will also provide opportunities to involve artists, designers and craftspeople in creating a sense of identity and continuity linked to forest 'infrastructure', e.g. signs, furniture, interpretation and information. Creative use of natural materials may well be able to inform, excite and educate far better than text alone. Working through the arts and interpretation can provide a means to engage and involve people in innovative ways with their local environment.
- 15.4** The creation of the Forest will involve the expenditure of considerable sums of money, and the adoption of a 'percent for art' policy, as has been done in the context of urban development, would ensure that the arts were incorporated at the most fundamental level; 1% of the capital costs of projects could be used for employing designers or artists to contribute to key elements or overall design.

**15.5** Appreciation of the Forest in all its aspects will be enhanced by wide-ranging public participation in cultural activities, as well as by merely walking and looking. Groups not traditionally involved in the countryside and rural life could find a way to relate to their own cultural experience through creative activity in the Forest.

**15.6** An important objective of cultural activity is to entertain and to inspire. Many community events already fulfil these ideals. The extension of their aims and objectives to other areas in the Forest will be important in bringing people into the open air for the widest possible range of purposes.

### Proposals

**15.7 The Forest partners will aim to:**

- establish a number of demonstration projects to illustrate potential ways of bringing together the arts in relation to woodland;
- incorporate a 'percent for art' policy for the Forest, particularly in relation to major projects;
- develop a range of Forest-related events and activities to involve and engage the wider community in celebrating, planning and understanding the Forest;
- involve local artists and craftspeople in creating the infrastructure of the Forest and in developing local distinctiveness;
- establish an arts development group to focus on the role of the arts and culture within the Forest
- encourage ways of involving young unemployed people and recent graduates in art works for public places, e.g. seating, waymarkers and sculpture.