



National Campaign for the Arts

nca

VOTE ARTS 2011
ELECTION TOOLKIT
NORTHERN IRELAND

INTRODUCTION

We believe that art has the power to change lives and therefore its contribution to our national life should be supported and championed by all of us

Elections are due to be held in Northern Ireland on **Thursday 5th May 2011**. With Government cuts to the art and cultural sectors potentially affecting everyone from large organisations to your average consumer on the street, it is vital that we all stand up to advocate for the arts and relay their importance to the people in power.

As well as tools and advice for advocating for the arts on a local level, this information pack aims to provide essential information to help you make a well informed voting decision in the upcoming local elections, where candidates' policy priorities will be based on concerns and opinions expressed by local constituents.

POLICY PRIORITIES



MONEY & FUNDING

- Believes that spending on the Arts in Northern Ireland should be increased.
- Believes that arts and culture should become a closer area of cooperation under the aegis of the North South Ministerial Council, so that the budget allocation for the arts in South and North Ireland will be more directed at front line services

INFRASTRUCTURE

- Supports the establishment of a single Arts Council for the island of Ireland

[Sinn Fein website](#)



GENERAL

- Will promote local artists by building a first class regional art gallery
- Will Fight to protect local libraries

MONEY & FUNDING

- Believes that the Budget allocation to the arts does not go far enough and will have a direct impact on frontline services in the sector

GROWTH & ECONOMIC ARGUMENT

- View the success of Derry as the City of Culture in 2013 as an opportunity to showcase cultural heritage in a way that boost economic growth and tourism

[Scottish Democratic and Labour Party website](#)



GENERAL

- Believes that continued support for our arts and culture is vital to addressing the current economic crisis.

GROWTH & ECONOMIC ARGUMENT

- Recognises the economic potential that supporting the Arts and Culture industries bring
- Believes Northern Ireland is perfectly placed to continue to grow cultural tourism, which will help realign the existing imbalance in our levels of public / private sector employment issues

[Ulster Unionist Party website](#)



GENERAL

- Will continue to offer high profile entertainment events to showcase province
- Will promote cultural assets and cultural tourism

INCLUSION & PARTICIPATION

- Will support high quality library provision and extend the mobile library network including internet capacity, particularly for rural users
- Will invest in Northern Ireland's marching band infrastructure

INFRASTRUCTURE

- Will maximize use of the new dedicated arts facilities

GROWTH & ECONOMIC ARGUMENT

- Will assist the arts sector to promote the Northern Ireland brand abroad and contribute to our economy

[Democratic Unionists Party website](#)



MONEY & FUNDING

- Appreciates the importance of the arts sector to a vibrant civil society, and believes severe cuts will devastate a sector already critically underfunded.
- Committed to long-term funding and grassroots funding, and believes that resources should be directed across the board

INCLUSION & PARTICIPATION

- Supports improved access to arts facilities, including those with sight and hearing difficulties and physically disabled people.
- Believes the establishment of a steering group to internationalize our cultural and artistic offering is required, as is a growth in audience numbers

INFRASTRUCTURE

- Believes sustainability must be achieved through improved collaboration and business models such as fundraising, marketing, and audience development

[Alliance Party Website](#)

METHODS OF ADVOCACY

THE ARTS MANIFESTO

'We are living in rapidly changing and challenging social, environmental and economic times. The arts and culture can and do offer opportunities and solutions to lift us beyond our current experiences.'

*As someone once said, 'In the end, art outlives politics' but of course it outlives all of us and that, in the end, is the point.'
(Baroness Joan Bakewell)*

The Arts Manifesto is a vital lobbying and advocacy tool for use in the run up to the parliamentary elections and beyond. The manifesto is not meant to be a policy wish list; instead we have sought to articulate a vision for the UK and the arts sector's place within it. We have outlined the challenges we believe the sector itself must address to achieve that vision whilst also challenging governments to address specific concerns that will help the arts sector succeed in its aims. We have taken care to articulate our concerns not in terms of what the sector wants or needs but in terms of why the arts and culture are important to our national life and worth supporting.

“Our vision is of a United Kingdom where the lives of all citizens are enhanced by the experience of excellent cultural and artistic activities, where artistic endeavour and achievement are highly prized and where the creative potential of every man, woman and child is realised”

Download a copy of the NCA's Arts Manifesto [here](#)

If you agree with the principles outlined in the manifesto then why not show your support on your Facebook page by clicking [here](#). The more support that we can demonstrate for the document the greater influence its proposals will have on politicians and policymakers.

USING THE ARTS MANIFESTO

The NCA encourages our friends and members to utilise the manifesto when contacting political candidates, conveying what they feel to be the most important aspects of the manifesto. Where possible members and friends are encouraged to link these aspects back to their own experiences or the work of the organisation with which they are associated.

The Arts Manifesto is available to read online [here](#)

Arts Manifesto: Strong summary points include:

- ✓ **Education**-We need a balanced and creative curriculum to forge a society of imaginative, creative and inquiring human beings. Ensuring opportunities exist for interaction with artists at all stages of learning will ensure that we develop a skilled, culturally educated population that is innovative and adaptive to change.
- ✓ **Economy**- We believe that the future of the UK's economy lies in its capacity to create and innovate. The recession has illustrated the dangers of over-reliance on one sector of the economy. To repair the damage, and to stabilise public funds for the future, the UK must find new growth industries and build a robust mixed economy which is able to weather future global economic turbulence.
- ✓ **Communities**- The arts and culture are often at the heart of successful places, bringing people together, reflecting a sense of place and identity and helping to boost local economies. Local authorities must address culture and the arts within their strategic plans.
- ✓ **International Standing**-We believe that the United Kingdom's reputation in the cultural and creative sectors is vital to its overall international standing and will be core to its future success.

CONTACTING ELECTORAL CANDIDATES

WHO TO CONTACT & WHERE TO FIND THEM

[Click here](#) to find your local MLA/Constituency visit

Please note: Your organisation may operate in an area covering more than one parliamentary constituency or council, e.g. a county wide organisation will have numerous MLA's representing constituencies in the county.

Contact your MLA:

First Name Surname MLA
Northern Ireland Assembly
Parliament Buildings
Ballymiscaw
Stormont
Belfast
BT4 3XX

OR contact your local constituency office

Contact the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure:

Causeway Exchange
1-7 Bedford Street
Belfast
BT2 7EG

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

When contacting local politicians, be sure to heighten their interest by outlining who you are, what you do and **why the arts are important to you.**

Some specific points to include are:

- If you are associated with an arts organisation, the name of your organisation and where you are located in the constituency.
- The type of work that you do or art/craft you are involved in/passionate about.
- The area of the community you serve or work with/in (if your work/interest extends beyond the constituency boundaries it is useful to say so – this demonstrates the draw the arts has on people coming into the area).
- If applicable, the number of people you employ both directly (full and part time members of staff) and indirectly (suppliers and other services used by your organisation). The economic power of your organisation will be important to the candidate.
- The number of volunteers who work with you or your organisation, if relevant.
- Your audience demographic if known, e.g. numbers of children and young people, disadvantaged groups, etc. who attend or participate in your events.
- Local issues and examples to strengthen your case.

SOME USEFUL FACTS:

- Arts investment plays a fundamental role in the UK economy, with the creative industries accounting for 2 million jobs and £16.6 billion of exports in 2007.
- Between 1997 and 2006 the creative economy grew faster than any other sector.
- Exports of services by the creative industries totaled £17.3 billion in 2008, equaling 4.1% of all goods and services exported.
- In 2010 there were an estimated 182,100 businesses in the creative industries on the Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR), representing 8.7% of all companies on the IDBR
- There are 1.2 million cultural volunteers. Many gain new skills useful in other areas of life.

TEMPLATE LETTER

By writing to your candidates, you can let them know that the arts are an election issue. Personalised letters generally get a better response than ones that appear to have been copied from a template, but you could use our provided template as a starting point. Include local issues or examples to support your case and **make it clear that arts policy will affect your vote.**

Click here to download a template letter that can be used when writing to electoral candidates.

Please let us know if you contact your local candidates during the local elections. We would be especially interested to receive copies of the responses you receive. This will enable us to build a good picture of how candidates and parties are responding to the concerns of the arts constituency.

Please send copies of replies to:

Selina Mehra

National Campaign for the Arts

1 Kingly Street

London W1B 5PA

smehra@artscampaign.org.uk

SUSTAINING THE RELATIONSHIP

It is important that once you have made contact with local politicians that you sustain your relationship with them. This helps to build up long term understanding among politicians and policymakers of the value of the arts to local communities.

In order to build relationships with local politicians:

- Provide regular updates on what your organisation is doing. Send your local candidates your press releases or annual reports. Highlight information that you might think will be of particular interest to him or her and remind them of past contact you may have had.
- Invite them to opening nights, launches or exhibitions.
- Offer to provide a behind the scenes guide or tour of the premises, with the opportunity to meet some of your staff and some of the people who benefit from what you do. Candidates are usually keen to have the opportunity to meet more of their constituents; after all, they are voters.
- Follow up your contacts; always refer to past correspondence, so it is clear that you have been engaged with them in an ongoing way.

JOIN US, DONATE, SHOW YOUR SUPPORT

NCA MEMBERSHIP

The NCA is the UK's only independent lobbying organisation representing all the arts. It provides a voice for the arts world in all its diversity. It seeks to safeguard, promote and develop the arts and win public and political recognition for the importance of the arts as a key element in our national culture

Membership lies at the heart of the NCA. As we receive no public subsidy we rely on the generous and invaluable support of our members to facilitate our vital advocacy and lobbying activity.

As an NCA member, you will receive weekly email updates of our activity, as well as our quarterly publication 'nca news'. Access to our online resource archive will provide you with information on everything from arts funding to visa legislation and your NCA membership card will allow you to obtain a variety of concessions in many of our member venues. Most importantly, with our member's concerns forming the basis of our campaigns, you will have the reassurance that your views are being heard by the people that matter. We have an excellent track record, with ready access to ministers and civil servants and a unique overview of policy changes affecting the arts. Since 1985 the NCA has consistently taken the lead on vital issues affecting the arts, using its influence to effect real change.

For more information on NCA Membership please visit www.artscampaign.org.uk

Support us on Facebook and Twitter
www.facebook.com/artscampaignuk
www.twitter.com/artscampaign

I VALUE THE ARTS

You may also be interested to know...

The National Campaign for the Arts decided to run the I Value The Arts campaign after being approached by members who were concerned that the public had no way of voicing their support for the arts.

By signing up to the campaign we can provide you with support and information about the arts in your area. This support includes information on volunteering or lobbying or even setting up your own programmes of arts activities.

What is the campaign trying to achieve?

The campaign is trying to give a voice to people who value the arts in their community. We know there are a lot of them out there: it's estimated that three-quarters of adults and even more children take part in the arts every year. Collectively they can be a powerful voice for audiences and participants.

We've set no time limit on the campaign. We hope it will develop and evolve over time. We will keep updating the website with new resources and keep in contact by email with, particularly when we have news of something in your area.

With over 20,295 direct signups on the campaign's website, over 6,000 'likes' on Facebook and over 11,000 people supporting the campaign on twitter, more of you are showing your support every day. If you care about the arts, please do take a minute to sign up. You'll be in good company.

To sign up for I Value The Arts and for more information please visit <http://www.ivaluethearts.org.uk> or email info@ivaluethearts.org.uk

[Click here](#) to support I value The Arts on Facebook

[Click here](#) to follow the campaign on twitter

If you require any further help with engaging local politicians and decision makers in the run up to the local elections and beyond, please do not hesitate to contact our campaigns team:

BY POST

Campaigns Manger
National Campaign for the Arts
1 Kingly Street
London
W1B 5PA

TELEPHONE

020 7287 3777

E-MAIL

campaigns@artscampaign.org.uk