# Newport’s cultural revival plans meet mixed reactions from residents



Newport's future as a cultural hub is under discussion as the council rolls out its "Empowering Culture, Transforming Communities" initiative. This plan aspires to enhance the city’s status as an international cultural destination. However, responses from long-term residents reflect a complex picture, marked by both nostalgia and skepticism about the city’s evolution.

Many residents express concern over Newport's diminished vibrancy, recalling a time when the city centre was bustling with shops and activity. Joan Musto, a local resident, reminisced about her experiences in the 1950s, stating, "It would have deserved the title CITY then not now." Liam Turner echoed this sentiment, describing his memories of the city during the 1990s and early 2000s, when the streets were alive with commerce. He attributed the current decline in retail to a combination of new, short-lived businesses and the growing prominence of online shopping, saying, "The city is losing shops due to people opening quick buck flash in the pan businesses."

The challenges facing Newport's urban environment extend beyond retail. Residents have raised issues concerning safety and anti-social behaviours, with Claire Boon noting a need for increased police presence, remarking, "I don't feel safe in the daytime." She voiced her concerns over troubling encounters with disruptive individuals, suggesting that improving safety could help increase foot traffic in the area. Similarly, Carol Davies lamented parking fees and the surfeit of empty shops, branding Newport as "a waste of space," and noted her preference for nearby Cwmbran, where she finds free parking.

Despite these concerns, there are pockets of optimism among residents regarding cultural events in the city. Andrew Lee Davies highlighted the success of the Newport Music Trail, describing it as a vibrant event that brought "culture and life coming out of its arse." He praised the attendance at various venues and the diverse music offerings that attracted families and music enthusiasts alike. Jacob Evan Richards-Powell also pointed to the packed local festivals, which he believes played a critical role in bringing people together and stimulating the local economy.

Nonetheless, scepticism persists regarding the council's cultural strategy. James Wilkie expressed concern that focusing on cultural initiatives would not address more pressing issues in the community. He criticized the effectiveness of the local police and stated, "Nothing is ever going to last here as it’s one of the worst cities around, constant violence riddled with homelessness."

As Newport's council aims to increase access to cultural activities, enhance skills, and promote sustainability, the dialogue among residents is likely to continue. The city currently reflects a division between those who cherish its historical vibrancy, advocates of its creative potential, and individuals calling for immediate improvements in safety and urban management.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/19459040.newport-residents-react-uk-city-culture-2025-bid/> - This article discusses residents' reactions to Newport's bid for UK City of Culture 2025, highlighting concerns about the city's current state and the challenges it faces in revitalizing its cultural scene.
2. <https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/newport-city-market-icc-economy-23787203> - This piece examines Newport's changing identity, focusing on the impact of the 2013 university merger and the subsequent closure of the Caerleon campus, which affected the city's vibrancy and cultural landscape.
3. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-wales-south-east-wales-15681508> - This report highlights the closure of major retailers like Marks and Spencer, Next, Burton, and Topshop in Newport, contributing to the city's economic challenges and the perception of a declining high street.
4. <https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/newport-shopping-parking-car-park-22884493> - This article delves into the issues faced by Newport's city centre, including the impact of pedestrianization on businesses and the challenges posed by increased anti-social behaviour and crime.
5. <https://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/24538703.newport-city-council-plans-reduce-anti-social-behaviour/> - This piece reports on Newport City Council's efforts to address anti-social behaviour in the city centre, including increased police presence and community initiatives to improve safety.
6. <https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/spent-day-buzzing-city-feels-28359826> - This article highlights the opening of the Corn Exchange as a new music venue in Newport, reflecting the city's ongoing efforts to rejuvenate its cultural scene and attract visitors.
7. <https://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/25139156.readers-comment-newports-new-cultural-strategy/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data