



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL STRATEGIC CULTURE AND ARTS STEERING GROUP
Minutes of the meeting of the Strategic Culture and Arts Steering Group meeting held on Thursday,
13 June 2019 at 1.00 pm at the Jacob Rees Meeting Room, Park & Dare Theatre, Station Road,
Treorchy, CF42 6NL.

County Borough Councillors - Strategic Culture and Arts Steering Group Members in attendance:-

Councillor A Crimmings Councillor J Brencher
Councillor S. Rees-Owen Councillor J Rosser

Others in attendance

Ms M Dunning – Arts Council Wales
Mr C Coppock

Officers in attendance

Mr P Mee, Director, Public Health, Protection & Community Services
Ms C O'Neill, Strategic Arts & Culture Manager
Mr A Williams, Theatre Operations and Development Manager
Ms W Edwards, Service Director – Community Services
Ms D Hanney, Community Asset Development Officer
Ms A Gould, Theatre Programme and Audience Development Manager

1 Declaration of Interest

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, County Borough Councillor S. Rees-Owen declared the following personal interest in Item 5 - Community Asset Transfer – Muni Arts Centre, Pontypridd. 'I work for a company that has an SLA agreement with one of the organisations.'

2 Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the 5th February 2019 as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

3 To consider passing the following Resolution:

It was **RESOLVED** that the press and public be excluded from the meeting under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act (as amended) for Item 5 of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of the exempt information as defined in paragraph 14 of Part 4 of the Schedule 12A of the Act.

4 Community Asset Transfer - Muni Arts Centre, Pontypridd

The Director, Public Health, Protection and Community Services provided the Strategic Culture and Arts Steering Group with a summary and assessment of the business proposals received for the proposed community asset transfer of the Muni Arts Centre.

Following a lengthy discussion, the Strategic Culture and Arts Steering Group

considered the summary and assessment of the two business plans received and it was **RESOLVED** that the Director, Public Health, Protection and Community Services would provide the observations for Cabinet consideration.

(**Note:** During discussions, County Borough Councillor J. Brencher declared the following personal interest 'I am a Trustee of the YMCA'.

5 Capital Investment

The Theatre Operations and Development Manager provided the Strategic Culture and Arts Steering Group with a verbal update in respect of a successful Arts Council Wales grant, which the Council applied for in January 2019. The grant was for £95,000, with £119,000 matched by the Local Authority to convert the bar area of the Park and Dare into an open performance space. The renovations would include the removal of the false ceiling to create grid space on the real ceiling, decorations, refurbished dressing rooms and the opportunity to remove the wall, which separates the bar from the foyer to create a more visible and open space from the lobby.

The Steering Group were pleased to learn of the successful funding and the exciting plans to develop the theatre and spoke of the plans to improve the toilets at the Coliseum Theatre, Aberdare. It was acknowledged that the plans to create a more intimate space at the Park and Dare theatre, would hopefully reach other areas of the community and in turn, help with artist development and produce more revenue. Advice regarding its bars and catering offer has been requested via the Arts Council of Wales' Resilience programme.

The Chair thanked the officer for the update, commenting that he looked forward to seeing the future renovations.

6 ACW Designing Public Value for Purpose programme

The Strategic Culture and Arts Manager was pleased to inform the Steering Group that RCT had been successful in an expression of interest to undergo a seven month programme commissioned by Arts Council of Wales and delivered by Lisa Baxter of the Experience Business to design and reimagine the arts experience for audiences. The Arts Manager spoke of a key priority of the Arts Council Wales' Corporate Plan, which is 'widening engagement' and advised that the programme was established to support revenue funded venues to engage with communities.

The Steering Group learned that two other venues had been successful and that the focus for RCT was on the Park and Dare due to it being a creative hub, with the inclusion of a black box. The Manager spoke positive of the seven month programme and spoke of the outputs, which included the theory of change, action and prototypes and ideas to share. The new way of thinking allowed officers to ask themselves the questions 'What is our cause?' and 'Why are we doing this?'

Speaking of the current position, the Manager advised that future workshops were in the process of being researched, using the information learned about the local community and stakeholders. Once established, representatives from the community would be invited to attend the workshops, in order to help make the change.

The Steering Group praised the programme, commenting that the new way of thinking is vital in an ever-changing time. When questioned about the roll out of the new way of thinking, the Arts Manager advised that she hoped to share what was learned with the Coliseum Theatre, along with integrating it into the development of the community hubs.

Discussions ensued around the community hubs and the holistic approach taken within each individual area and their specific needs. The Service Director, Community Services spoke of the arts and its key input into the development of the hubs. The Service Director spoke of the 'Lullaby Project', a project, which seeks to engage with babies and people with dementia through lullabies.

The Chair thanked the officer for the exciting news and asked for future updates to be reported back to the Steering Group when necessary.

7 Urgent Business

The Theatre Programme and Audience Development Manager provided the Steering Group with the following list of highlights and upcoming events for RCT Theatres:

- Frank Vickery Tribute – 19th June 2019
- Young people from the Dimensions Academy are the only group in Wales chosen to perform as part of National Theatre's Connections in London – 29th June 2019
- Italian Café Project – Stories are being collected from the local community regarding the Italian migration to Wales and the result of the first stage R&D to be shared on 24th July 2019.
- The Ned and the Whale co-production with Flossy and Boo will be presented at the Edinburgh Fringe Show in August 2019.

The Chair thanked the officer for the update, commenting on the vast range of performances available at the RCT Theatres, allowing a diverse range of people to get involved. The Chair also took the opportunity to speak of the talent and successes achieved and took the opportunity to congratulate those involved, on behalf of the Steering Group.

Before closing the meeting, the Chair reminded the Steering Group of the upcoming annual Rhondda Arts Festival Treorchy, which would take place on 28th and 29th June 2019; an event, which aims to celebrate and showcase the wide range of artistic creativity and talent throughout the Borough.

This meeting closed at 2.45 pm

**COUNCILLOR R LEWIS
Chairman.**