

DUMFRIES CULTURE RESILIENCE ROUNDTABLE – 18 JANUARY 2023 – 9:00 – 10:30

ATTENDEES: SEE ANNEX B

OPENING REMARKS:

- **The Chair, Matt Baker (National Partnership for Culture)**, outlined the hybrid format of the meeting and introduced the questions for discussion.
- **The Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Angus Robertson**, thanked everyone for their attendance and outlined the difficult funding context and need to understand the realities and particular challenges facing those in the room and online. The Cabinet Secretary asked:
 - What examples of innovation and best practice during the pandemic may be applicable now, or adaptable to the current situation?
 - Which organisations could you work with to develop shared solutions?
 - What barriers can the Scottish Government help to break down?

DISCUSSION:

- **Rachael Disbury (Alchemy Film & Arts)** highlighted that the impact of the current crisis on the workforce is significant, as the culture sector is facing cuts to jobs imminently. Resources are required to enable the sector to be innovative.
- **Janice Kirkpatrick (Designer and CILG member)** spoke about the need to collate and utilise live data to inform decision-making. Glasgow was seen as an example of a city where culture attracted economic investment, retail and students. Janice wanted Culture to be regarded as a significant contributor to Scotland's economy, with connections being made between Culture (such as design and architecture) and the wider industrial strategy.
- **Matt Baker** asked if Janice could point to examples of best practice. Janice described a project in Glasgow's Pollok Park, which is seeking to transform disused stable blocks at Pollok House into an animal genetics centre of excellence, that would include a farrier school, conservation and craftsmanship of leather and metal, and a working "rare breeds" farm. Janice noted that Glasgow still produced the best quality leather in the world yet Scotland's investment in developing leatherworking skills was very low with only two apprenticeships per year. Comparisons were made with France, where the French design house of Hermes was a leading leather goods producer that invested in hundreds of apprenticeships each year and had doubled its value over the pandemic.
- **Claire Renton (South of Scotland Enterprise)** acknowledged that it was a tough time for the Culture Sector in Dumfries. The culture sector had the ability to make a change, embedding culture can support big ambitions such as Net Zero. Culture could be integral to food and drink, to economic development, and other industries. There were more cultural and creative workers within Dumfries region than agriculture workers, yet it was known for agriculture.
- **Alex Little (Dumfries & Galloway Arts festival)** highlighted that while the creative workforce was under threat, public services were also facing pressure. There was an opportunity for the Culture sector to work with the health sector. Culture and the arts were vital during a mental health crisis and with an ageing population. We know that engagement in culture supports patient recovery and can play a role in

preventative health. Culture should be acknowledged for the work it does in supporting wellbeing of the population.

- **Michael Pattinson (Alchemy Film & Arts)** did not see the language being used by the Scottish Government as helpful. Michael thought there was an insinuation that the Culture sector was not already being innovative. Michael emphasised the impact of public spending cuts on the culture sector and on other industries. Michael wanted to know why the culture budget had been cut by 10%.
- **Jenny Todd, (CILG member and publisher)** highlighted the House of Lords report '[At risk: our creative future](#)', and specifically the implications of the Intellectual Property Office's proposals on publishing. Jenny asked if the Cabinet Secretary could raise this issue with UK Government.
- Jenny Todd highlighted that publishing straddles culture and the creative industries, so it can fall through the gap. There were great economic opportunities in publishing.
- **The Cabinet Secretary** responded to the points discussed. Referring to the potential of architecture and design in supporting other sectors and industrial strategy, the Cabinet Secretary highlighted that it would be beneficial to add gaming and screen to this. He asked what can Government and Government agencies do to ensure these sectors are supported? The Cabinet Secretary saw the potential for internationalising the creative communities who exist in Scotland. The Cabinet Secretary was clear there was a need to mainstream Culture right across public services including health (via social prescribing), justice and education. He referenced Sistema and the transformational work they had undertaken through culture.
- In response to Michael's point, the Cabinet Secretary highlighted that his own role within the Scottish Government was to ensure the greatest possible support for culture, but that the scale of public spending challenges was vast. It was important to be realistic about the constraints facing all parts of public spending. Innovation was necessary for everyone, beyond the immediate culture sector. The Cabinet Secretary would be happy to speak to Michael on the issue.
- In response to Jenny's point, the Cabinet Secretary noted he would be happy to speak to the UK Government about the Intellectual Property issue. He had already met with his counterpart, Michelle Donelan, about Theatre and Orchestra tax relief and written to the Treasury.
- In response to Rachael's point, the Cabinet Secretary noted with concern that there was also a risk of new people not joining the culture sector, a potential loss of future talent, which would impact future generations.
- **Kelly Donaldson (Creative Lives)** saw that opportunities to be creative could be a lifeline for people. Creative Lives had put out a set of micro grants (£300) last year to encourage groups to meet up together again in person. In December 2022, an additional round of micro grants called 'keep on creating' had gone live to pay for heating bills and other costs to ensure groups could continue their creative outlets. Kelly described how she had been struck at just how much joy even such small sums of money had been met with and how important people felt they were to their ability to keep operating effectively. She noted that if targeted, a very small amount of money, can go far.
- **Mark Alexander (Theatre Royal Dumfries)**, highlighted the opportunity to develop the heritage and visitor economy further in Dumfries & Galloway. The theatre had an opportunity to be a real visitor destination if this approach was taken. On funding, Mark highlighted the opportunity to use a smart-funding approach as

a safety net of grants to encourage creatives to be experimental and less risk-averse. Mark highlighted the importance of funding national and regional theatre. Without this investment, there would be no West End. Infrastructure was also a big issue in Dumfries – there was no arts college, so young people had to leave to gain new skills and then choose to return.

- **Katharine Wheeler (The Stove Network)**, placed a development focus on a holistic and cross-sector approach for the benefit of community wealth building. There was a skills deficit in the Culture sector and job advertisements were not receiving a high level of applicants. Small creative programmes can develop some of these cross-community and cross-sectoral approaches, which support the wider sector.
- **Peter Renwick (Glenkens Community Arts Trust)**, highlighted that Creative Scotland support had been vital during the pandemic. However, the uncertainty of yearly funding cycles was making forward-planning difficult and leading to workplace stress. There was a need to look at the assets we have in the Culture sector in Scotland and think about how to leverage and utilise these. Creative Scotland would be well placed to start these discussions.
- **Mairi Kidd (Moat Brae)** recognised that many individual artist voices had not been heard and should be included in these forums. On publishing, writers are licensed and not employed, which means their rights are not equivalent to other sector roles.
- **Robbie McGhee (ACHWS)** outlined positive examples of collaboration between Culture and Health already taking place. There were artists already doing great work within hospitals and care homes across Scotland. During Covid, ACHWS worked with Northern Ireland and Wales to see how those countries/organisations are working in the culture and health space. They had put forward large investments into this space. ACHWS want to provide a place to recognise the voice of the potential health and culture link-ups.
- **Rebecca Coggins (Dumfries and Galloway Council)** highlighted the Dumfries and Galloway culture strategy which had outlined the importance of culture's connection to economy, health and climate change. It was also important to recognise the impact of digital on the sector, yet there were issues around digital inclusion, particularly in rural areas.
- The community and place-making agenda in Dumfries had brought forward a substantial change. There was an arts and heritage network in Dumfries. These small organisations involved had survived due to the recovery funding available during the pandemic. The Strategy was fore-fronting Cultural partnership across Dumfries and Galloway.
- **Janice Kirkpatrick** highlighted the potential of Community wealth building and link to supporting culture and creatives. She felt that Dumfries and Galloway had industries such as wind farms, which should pay more to local communities. There should be opportunities created for the younger generation.
- **Alex Little** asked if there was a way in which Dumfries and Galloway could work better in partnership. There was an opportunity to come together as a collective and apply for reasonable and decent amounts of funding as a collective. This could be an alternative to the competitive nature of funding applications and continually applying for small pots of money.
- **Rachael McKechnie (SG)** summarised next steps and highlighted that a meeting note would be circulated. If anybody had further thoughts, they could contact Scottish Government officials. The Scottish Government was looking at developing

a tactical response that worked alongside a wider strategic response that was being considered through the Culture Strategy Action Plan refresh.

- The **Cabinet Secretary** thanked attendees for their time.

ACTIONS

1. Attendees to continue to get in touch with SG officials (and each other) on further ideas.
2. SG to build themes of the discussion into bigger strategic picture to support the Culture sector during this difficult time.
3. Cabinet Secretary to raise issue on IP and publishing with UK Government.
4. The Cabinet Secretary would be happy to speak to Michael Pattinson on the issues raised if that would be welcome.
5. SG officials to discuss with Creative Scotland how we make best use of our cultural assets.

KEY THEMES / SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION

- There is an opportunity for Culture to join forces with other sectors to achieve joint outcomes. Government can help facilitate this.
- Small amounts of funding can make a big impact for individuals and communities.
- The uncertainty of yearly funding cycles was making forward-planning difficult.
- There was a need to look at the assets we have in the Culture sector in Scotland as a whole and think about how to leverage and utilise these.
- In Dumfries and Galloway, there could be an opportunity to develop the heritage and visitor economy further – cultural venues can be a visitor attraction.
- There is a need to ensure freelancer voices are in the room when discussions such as this one is taking place.
- We need to recognise the positive collaborative examples that are already taking place across the Culture and Health sector - such as artists working in hospitals and care homes.
- Important to recognise the impact of digital on the sector, yet also issues around digital inclusion, particularly in rural areas.
- Community Wealth Building was seen as an opportunity for the culture sector and creatives.
- There could be an opportunity for the Dumfries and Galloway Culture sector to come together as a partnership.

CHAT BAR COMMENTS

To expand on her comment, **Janice Kirkpatrick** highlighted that Hermes market capitalisation was now at Euro 174.8bn.

Rachael Disbury noted that there **are** rural organisation providing opportunities, skills development programmes and jobs for young people in the rural - this is how Alchemy Film & Arts is currently innovating in the Scottish Borders.

David Martin (Skills Development Scotland) commented that in support of boosting creative and cultural business/organisational capacity and capability, Scottish Government's Flexible Workforce Development Fund via Scotland's Colleges, Open University and SDS will reopen soon. More details here: <https://www.ourskillsforce.co.uk/develop-your-workforce/flexible-workforce-development-fund/>

Irene Kernan (Craft Scotland) commented that it was an incredibly important point about breaking down the siloed way of working within government departments to enable conversations and opportunities to develop. The Culture department is very open and responsive but it is very difficult to begin conversations with other sectors.

ATTENDEES

In person:

Matt Baker (Chair), National Partnership for Culture
Hazel Parkinson, SG
Victoria Kelly, SG
Mark Geddes, South of Scotland Enterprise
Claire Renton, South of Scotland Enterprise
David Ford, South of Scotland Enterprise
Katherine Wheeler, Stove Network
Mark Alexander, Theatre Royal Dumfries
Gwilym Gibbons, Crichton Trust
Juliet Campbell, Skills Development Scotland
Mairi Kidd, Moat Brae

Virtually:

Angus Robertson, Cabinet Secretary for the Constitution, External Affairs and Culture
Lucy Casot, Museums Galleries Scotland
Andre Reibig, Scottish Funding Council
Karen Dick, Creative Scotland
Rachael Disbury, Alchemy Film & Arts
Irene Kernan, Craft Scotland
Janice Kirkpatrick, Designer & CILG member
David Martin, Skills Development Scotland
Jenny Todd, Publisher & CILG Member
Kelly Donaldson, Creative Lives
Alex Little, D&G Council
Darren Johnstone, South of Scotland Enterprise
Janie Nicoll, Scottish Artists Union
Peter Renwick, Glenkens Community & Arts Trust
Leah Halliday, The Guild
Robbie McGhee, Arts Culture Health Wellbeing Scotland (ACHWS)
Andrew McDivitt, Scottish Government
Sophie Tonnar, Scottish Government
Stacey Berwick, Scottish Government
Rachael McKechnie, Scottish Government
Jessica da Costa, Scottish Government
Jennie Gollan, Scottish Government