

Zoom What Next meeting

26th March 2020

Chairs: Marina Norris and Louise Blackwell

19 people in total attended

Notes from the meeting

Two focuses: what do we want to contribute to the national conversation? What can we do to support the local creative economy

National context

Anna Jefferson gave an overview of the ACE Emergency packages.

- £2.5k for individuals
- £35k for non NPO but previously project funded organisations
- DYCP and Project grants suspended for now. No new money until 20/21.
- Guidelines for application process released on 30th March.

Francois Matterasso was part of round table with ACE to help decide on emergency package – read his blogs here: <https://parliamentofdreams.com/2020/03/25/lets-use-this-breathing-space-wisely/>

Notes from National What's Next meeting 27th March

Chairs meeting is every week and we can feed into that via Louise and Marina

Central What's Next team are lobbying DCMS and ACE and giving a general response from the sector.

Lots of Unions are offering free membership.

BFI Film and TV rescue package of £1m. <https://www.bfi.org.uk/supporting-uk-film/covid-19-update>

Help Musicians £5m fund. <https://www.helpmusicians.org.uk/news/latest-news/help-musicians-launches-5m-coronavirus-financial-hardship-fu>

Concerns artists will leave sector and not come back.

Polka Theatre, London and Unity Theatre, Liverpool are using their social channels as community resource.

Arts Fundraising grant to support digital networks. <https://artsfundraising.org.uk/networks-funding>

This is a group of sector support organisations that meet together to share ideas called the Cultural Campaigning Network. WN National are part of this.

Everyone has different capacities, caring responsibilities etc. Need to acknowledge this.

Next roundtable with DCMS is with disabled artist colleagues.

The one after that will be about the voices not yet being heard. **Request to share information with what next about who is not being heard yet, specific examples and case studies asap.** How do we centre those with the most urgent need now? How can policy makers hear different voices when the same hierarchies currently still exist? How can we help government to make a basic safety net for all?

Encourage government to continue to work with EU funding.

How can we work up proposals to make it better than it was before? What kind of sector do we want in the future? Can there be a What Next? sub-group thinking about this?

Where does the agency of What Next sit? What should we be lobbying for in the long term? Universal Basic Income? A White Paper for Culture?

How can we share skills as a sector? Mentoring?

Fun Palaces have shared a range of offline ideas. <https://funpalaces.co.uk/news/tiny-revolutions-of-connection/>

What Next? Capacity Fund deadline is 3rd April at 10am – shall we apply to support our chapter? Info here: 5 x £500 grants and 1 x £1000 <https://bit.ly/32ydrqk>

What Next B&H meeting notes from here on:

Concerns raised re ACE package:

Putting all project grants on hold means individual artists will suffer as that is what supports a key part of their income and creative work.

Link to the open letter from independents to Arts

Council: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1KB6UfGfIY_kalslrVSW09OzhpYm-ETq0Qn9lqFaiLgA/edit (nearly 600 signatures)

£2.5k is the average UK income for one month.

If the grant conditions include having a creative response to the current situation, this will be challenging – we just need money to sustain ourselves.

Those new to ACE application have to register on Grantium by 3rd April this message needs to be clearer and shared more widely.

How will ACE take into account the track of individuals that have never applied but have worked for and with publicly funded projects for years?

Could NPOs vouch for freelance artists?

If you work freelance running a company can you apply as an individual and a company?

Can there be a focus on socio-economic background in this current context.

South East Dance is hosting a Q&A with Denise Parry (ACE Relationship Manager) next Tuesday evening about all things ACE for dance community.

Can we have greater clarity on when funding programmes will re-open and if there will be changes, huge amounts of unpaid and paid work has gone into applications.

ACE has put itself at risk by spending its reserves, Wales Arts Council has had additional funds from Central government – will ACE need this in the future?

Self-employed announcement

A quick response from Marina and Louise (the announcement was after the meeting):

Many people set up businesses but pay themselves dividends not a salary. This group are excluded from any route of support. People with around £30-40k income as this is where it becomes a tax advantage to put yourself on payroll but if you are at the borderline then tax advice from accountants is you should stick to getting dividends. I suspect a lot of people in our sector will be impacted by this as our average earnings are lower than other sectors.

Those just freelance in the last year seem to miss out as they have no self employed tax history.

Those on maternity or with periods of illness will also have a lowered average Income which would affect their claim.

From What Next National meeting: What are the ethics of lobbying for people who have set up a Ltd Co to avoid paying more tax? Response to that was that we must lobby to help the government understand the complexities of how self-employed people work in the creative industries e.g In Wales to receive a larger grant (£30k) you need to be a partnership or Ltd Co, festivals often require freelancers to have high levels of public liability insurance and so need to set up a Ltd Co. The creative economy is complex.

Real concern about the tone of the Chancellor at beginning and end of the speech – suggesting self-employed people have somehow been contributing less.

Can freelancers apply for Universal Credit and the self-employed benefits?

More info here: <https://www.creativeindustriesfederation.com/news/guidance-sector-freelance-and-self-employed>

How we support each other and share the cultural offer that is available for communities?

Sharing information:

ACE and BBC are working on curating high quality content for teachers, parents and young people. The Cultural Learning Alliance is part of that conversation (*from WN National meeting*)

Don't make new channels, use existing ones.

South East Dance (SED) are trying to collate everything and have a comms team – we can send stuff to them.

People have been using Whereby.com as well as Zoom for video conferencing.

Rasheed Rahman has set up a group for LGBTQ+ people of colour. Can share info with them.

Could use the Culture in our City BHCC website to host things/signpost?

Theatre Skills sharing database has been set up: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1--6tt_D8L37-PBikPZP7qALdQ1f5WbDqTceSTPHf-YA/edit#gid=0

Branwen Lorigan from BHCC gave an overview of possible support from the council and how we can help her as the arts community.

Branwen Lorigan is gathering info from organisations across the city on impact and needs, organisations can contact her directly to share information.

Branwen emailed this after the meeting:

Will send update as to where the business grant info will be housed on the council website.

Looks like there will be £5K cash grants for community and voluntary organisations info available on the communities page <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/life-events-and-communities/community-and-voluntary-sector-support/communities-fund> (Nothing there at the moment)

Anything that you want to have as a central point of information for the arts community send to me and I will send to the webteam – I presume they will host it on the arts and culture page

People are finding info on Arts Professional useful as a central point of information:
<https://www.artsprofessional.co.uk/magazine/covidculture>

<https://www.alwayspossible.co.uk/>

<https://www.creativeengland.co.uk/covid-19-guidance/>

How can larger organisations in the city (Brighton Dome, Phoenix, South East Dance) help smaller organisations?

Kyla Booth-Lucking asked for suggestions from group about how The Dome and Festival can help.

Suggestions that transparency about how they programme and what their programming plans/ideas are and how they are evolving an open discussion would be helpful.

Andrew Comben (via email) asked if a regular online meeting would help (like Mark Ball and John McGrath from MIF do in Manchester)?

Transparency and openness is key, really simply responding to emails is valued.

Could festival 2021 be about Brighton artists?

It might be a good time to point out to the government that we need to plan for a cultural festival of Britain. Not merely to restore confidence and self-belief, but to create a spirit of optimism for the future.

What can we do creatively for the city at this time? Greenwich artists looking at how they offer 'offline' offers to communities. What can we do that brings us together at this time and beyond?

Carousel (NPO) is concerned about how to contact and work with artists who do not or are not able to use the internet and those who may live in institutional environments They have set up chat rooms and are calling individuals to keep in touch.

There is a concern from freelance creative individuals that their careers are over.

Brighton People's Theatre happy to share cultural offer that any organisation is offering the city to their membership via social media but they are also calling up individuals and sending letters to keep in touch with those with no internet access.

Sharing experience

How can we use what we have to help each other?

Can experienced people support individuals to register on Grantium/make applications?

SED is offering advisory sessions for artists, can other experienced people help with this too? Specifically when artists need to apply to ACE for £2500 grant.

Do we have contacts with local developers who will still have budgets to reach those within social housing particularly? Louise and Marina offered to host regular meetings if it was useful, it was agreed that it would be.

Next meeting: Thursday 2nd April at 11am.