

What Next? Minutes 04.06.2020

Marina Norris - Co-Chair, What Next? Brighton & Hove and ED at Brighton People's Theatre and Co-ordinator at South East Creatives.

Louise Blackwell - Co-Chair, What Next? Brighton & Hove and independent producer.

National update:

- Caroline Lucas (Brighton MP who attended What Next? Meeting 21.05.2020) has proposed an early day motion which says we need a cultural sector hardship fund and suggests one way of accessing money for that could be through the £122 million that was for The Festival of Great Britain in 2022. She also is asking for a live entertainment task force as well as the cultural task force to enable more detailed representation.

- New survey to support broadcasting industry, deadline 10th June. The DCMS Select Committee is conducting an [inquiry](#) into 'The future of public service broadcasting'. The inquiry will look at the future of public service broadcasting (PSB) within the wider media and digital ecology, including funding, content and regulation of PSBs and how this compares with alternative subscription, streaming services and Freeview services.

- DCMS survey gather 7 case studies so far. . As a reminder we are still collecting case studies for Brighton & Hove City Council and Coast 2 Capital, and gathering feedback on the DCMS [survey](#). Deadline to send in case studies to Louise and Marina is next Thursday.

- What Next? National are recruiting for steering group members, deadline 17th June. Want to broaden representation at leadership level. There will be a meeting every two weeks till October, then once a month after that. Looking for up to 8 members and if you aren't salaried it will be £1500 for a year. Please find the What Next? Steering Group Recruitment Pack [here](#) .

We also want to acknowledge and recognise the extraordinary week we are living in not only because of the virus but because of the awful events in America and in the UK in terms of the Black Lives Matter campaign. It's an important thing to have in the room today.

Comments:

Karen – Caroline has also done an early day motion 389 about supporting freelance/self-employed people and getting people to write to MP's. It's a parliamentary procedure.

Andrew - What Next? Young Vic meeting yesterday packed with speakers therefore another meeting to be arranged for next week so there is time for questions with the speakers. Addressing arts councils' approach for the next 3-4 years. Also talking about climate change commitments within the arts.

Louise - [Alison Tickell](#) from Julie's bicycle talking about climate action and what venues can be doing in this time to embed work to become carbon neutral for example. Also what independents might

offer for that too? She wants to listen to options for that and talk further on this topic therefore we may invite her to a future What Next? meeting.

Local update:

- Liz Porter and Damien Appleby are starting disability and access subgroup, hopefully starting a meeting a week on Friday. They are currently attending the #WeShallNotBeRemoved zoom meeting.

- Nicki on Children Young People Sub Group: Shelley Lake & Katrina Lane, presented about what's been happening in secondary schools and how they're managing creative arts. Schools been adapting a lot and quickly. It looks like there will be some digital and some face to face lessons in September. Now arranging to see if we can have a meeting with people from primary schools. This sub group is for anyone freelance or organisation where part of your work engages with children & young people through cultural education/arts - get involved and come to the meetings.

- Michelle Digital Sub Group: We were talking about how we feel about presenting work, how we have been doing that, how we've been presenting platforms for artists to make work, challenges of art being presented digitally without too much pressure on ourselves and artists especially when competing with TV. Karen had an idea about an education and digital platform where we could pull everyone's work together and where teachers could browse these zooms all in one place. Connects local artists and schools together too.

Culture in Our City could be a strong partner on this. Could there be an education page to have artistic content for teachers to access on here? Reading Culture Online similar opportunity? Future Creatives which is part of Culture in Our City seems like an obvious choice – Branwen and Andrew to look into. Visit Brighton is also exploring something to be presented digitally in [United We Stream](#) project.

From the chat panel:

- futurecreators.org.uk
- emma.collins@brightondome.org
- United We Stream Contact - Markus Saarlander
underground@berlin-brighton.com



In response to Nicki & Michelle's sub group

- Reminder that there's a freelancer task force being pulled together across the country led by performance-based companies who have contributed funding to have freelancer representatives to come together to build work around freelancers at this time and in the needs of that community. Brighton Dome and Festival are contributing to this by sponsoring the project (not the individual people) and the deadline is Monday 8th June. 100 organisations signed up nationally to give work to freelancers therefore 100 or more appointed freelancers appointed by themselves or job share.

- ACE in South East are encouraged by how our city is working together and particularly in collaborating with the Arts Commission and Epic. We are in conversation with them about talking about stuff that comes through What Next? meetings to take forward with ACE, looking at what we can immediately address; support for independent sector and reigniting the city is current conversation. Karen mentions we should highlight the climate emergency with ACE too.

- Local authority opening discretionary grant for soul traders and small businesses. Fund opened this morning it closes next Friday! Includes charities, community interest companies and third sector organisations who undertake commercial work.

Thank you to anyone who wrote to their councillor and to Brighton & Hove thank you for prioritising arts, culture, creative and events industries businesses. If you've had a government business grant you won't be eligible for this one. The fund is 3.7 million and will be given out in 3 parts; 25k, 10k and any amount under 10k. We will be going over the application process and questions in next week's What Next? meeting however a lot is required for the application so start it before then. Deadline is 12 June. Branwen can raise questions in a meeting tomorrow from this meeting but encourages you to highlight how you work across the city and support others.

Thanks to Cllr Siriol Hugh-Jones for following up after the meeting in response to feelings of a very tight deadline for the applications, who sent this response after the meeting:

'After this morning's What Next? call I contacted a senior council officer to ask why the time frame for the grant applications was so tight. He said that businesses had lobbied hard for a short deadline as many are desperate for financial support. He said they had originally planned two weeks but were receiving criticism for making the process too slow. I don't know whether it's worth mentioning that at next week's call? If people are really experiencing problems getting the information together in time they should let me (or their own councillor) know. We want this to work for everybody.

Best wishes,

Siriol

Cllr Siriol Hugh-Jones'

Andrew – Economic and climate impact of creative industries can be discussed too so highlight that.

Black Lives Matter:

Jenny Lewin-Turner sent a statement that is part of her ongoing community consultation for the cultural framework inclusion strand. She's asking various networks to contribute to a collaborative proposal to suggest how Brighton and Hove can begin to move forward on this issue, create a level playing field, what a collaborative proposal could be. Marina read the moving statement in full to the group.

This is a truly sensitive time - emotions are very raw and I don't think I'll ever be able to find the words to fully convey the level of pain, grief and absolute anguish all of my friends and family are currently experiencing. It's unbearable...

The horrific events in Minnesota have sent shockwaves across the world - triggering the reopening of old wounds and unleashing deeply embodied historical trauma. A situation intensely exacerbated by the backdrop of a vicious pandemic and the huge inequalities and fractures in society it has exposed.

Racism is a deeply entrenched social ill with no magic cure and it is not the sole responsibility of the cultural sector to tackle it. However, the widely acknowledged transformative and healing power of the arts really need to come to the fore right now - the sector needs to take a stance and take the lead in challenging and eradicating hate.

Proclamations of solidarity and support are appearing across broadcast and social media channels at the moment, but words are just not enough anymore. Without positive and sustained action words are futile. I am therefore urging cultural agencies to refrain from simply paying lip service or just resorting to the usual knee-jerk reactions to a crisis. I also strongly advise against elevating the needs of one community at the expense of others - the playing field needs to be levelled not skewed. Any action plan needs to fully consider the impact on the wider population, as ill-conceived and short-term discrete projects are counter-productive. They serve only to raise false hope and further alienate communities.

As part of my ongoing community consultation for the Cultural Framework Inclusion Strand I am asking various networks to contribute to a collaborative proposal with suggestions of how Brighton & Hove can begin to move forward on this issue. In the meantime I've attached a document listing numerous anti-racist resources. Locally, there are a number of anti-racist consultants with a lived experience as well as theoretical knowledge - their expertise has never been more critical.

jenni lewin-turner

Members of the group then commented on Jenni's statement in passionate and clear ways:

Tarik – please share the resources Jenni has sent with the statement (shared in the newsletter)

David S: There is a circularity to the conversations that have been part of the Culture Framework Inclusion and Equality strand. Things get lost in reports. It's been the same conversation for the last 5 – 10 years around leadership and how it is resourced around how we lead different cultural communities in the city. How can we use the Culture in Our City as a platform for case studies? Can there be an initiative or action plan that all organisations in the city sign up to that gives some kind of measurable target. We constantly have these conversations or create a sub-group that don't then influence the main group. I feel the frustrating of people of colour that we work with. We have to make a more concrete proposal.

Marina – wants to support everything you have said and would like to be a part of what we do next. What platform can we do it on? What do we need to do next?

Tarik – the biggest platform is our body and our brains. Some much of the work is inside. I get frustrated with the knee-jerk reaction when I see people sharing things online but I know that these people are not doing the work inside. Need to look inside about our own internalised racism. As a person of colour I have done that. I want white people to do the same. It's important here because it is a room full of leaders. Leaders need to know what they are doing to support white supremacy. I'm seeing constantly that people don't want to rock the boat, they don't want to speak out, they don't want to offend people but what that leaves is black and brown people pushed to the sides not being able to speak out. I want to look at cultural organisation leaders as why are their boards so white? Why is your leadership so white after all this time even though everyone agrees things need to change? Why has nothing changed? It's not like BLM is a new organisation. These murders have been happening for years and it's not like anyone is new to this information. Lots of these organisations will share the work of black and brown people but not have them in a leadership position. So, what is everyone going to do to change it or will you keep just talking about it?

David – some of us put in for this communal training pot in our arts council emergency fund. One thing we wanted to pose which is literally just the start of this work is some kind of anti-racism training for organisations and senior management and board level as a way of starting to introduce some of these ideas. We've experienced this within the Spire board and the Marlborough board, there are differing levels of knowledge. Jenni has suggested some trainers. We can use some of this money around how we can remake and restore the sector.

Tarik – I've been thinking a lot about the structural way our organisations are built. We have trustees and we rely on them not being paid for their time so mostly you have privileged people in privileged positions; older white people mainly. These are people who actually have sway over organisations. They didn't join for anti-racism reasons – how can we update them? Do you have restart our boards? I just want people to think about that. If you want to diversify your boards how can you make it safe for black and brown people to be part of your boards when you also might have racist people on that board? They don't think they're racist but they continue to do the staff that makes us get tired and have to leave again. We get exhausted. I'm tired at the amount of educating that I'm being asked to do. I have the same Google as everybody else.

Louise – David's idea is fantastic and we should start with that. What can we do as What Next? It's a platform of action. There's a small pot of money we can access on a semi-regular basis. I don't know what the answer is but how can we take action?

Marina – not everyone knows who the 8 companies are that came together to pool resources from their ACE emergency funds: Marlborough, Brighton People's Theatre, LOOKOUT, Little Green Pig, Creative Future, The Old Market, Shared Space and Light and The Spire. Can we commission a piece of training that's open for more people? We're meeting in the next two weeks and could apply to What Next for match funding.

Laura – thanks to everyone who put work into that statement and for the contributions today. I want to note the opportunity we have from this pandemic – the giant pause – that's an opportunity. As Tarik said – so much of this work is deep and complex and structural. We have the ability to dig into that when other activity is paused is a massive opportunity. I run a venue on a University campus, we float between lots of things – not eligible for ACE emergency funding because we are backed by Uni although budgets currently frozen – we are in a strange place. Love to stay involved in these conversations and that training. There are quite a few brilliant and proactive student led

initiatives and societies working on subjects of decolonisation, the black and minority ethnic awarding gap etc. There's good energy among the next generation of people at Sussex. I'd love to connect them into this work.

Marina – should we be thinking about these discretionary grants and supporting everybody to apply for those. Are there any black led organisations or artists in the city that need support in applying – how can we facilitate that?

Rasheed – My feeling is the first step to recovery is to admit that you have a problem. We're seeing this in the government at the moment. Admitting liability is seen as failure. I've worked in the city for 16 years. We know there is a lack of black and brown leadership and there always has been. If anyone wants to make an intervention and redress imbalances of power, they would have done it by now. The system, the arts ecology – most people weren't making much money out of it to start with. We were working very hard for not much money and the system before Covid was pretty exploitative. There's only a handful of people who are making good money out of this. Lots of reasons, not just about race – disability, class, even some institutions don't feel particularly gay friendly on the ground. There's so much that isn't happening but everyone falls short of saying...people can regret a situation, be sad for people's pain but they will fall short of saying, I'm sorry,. This is my fault, this has happened on my watch, I'm accepting some responsibility for institutional structural racism and it starts there. I will call for organisations to make that clear statement to admit a failing and then we can actually start work. I sit on a network of 160 – 180 BAME arts and cultural workers or people who are interested in Brighton & Hove. I set it up 18 months ago, I haven't got paid for it, it sits there, we're posting job ads. I didn't show leadership at the beginning of Covid – I was exhausted. That is there, if anyone comes to me in the spirit of collaboration (I know I can be a bit spikey sometimes) this is there, it can be done. Leadership. People have been asking me if I know any good trainers recently. There are so many skills so many people are working in intersectional ways, particularly in the independent arts sector. We've got the skills here – we know what it's about. Brighton University hospitals NHS trust were one of the only trusts in the UK to admit institutional racism (this is going back some years). There has been work that has been done in health that we can be learning from. There's something that's happening tomorrow that's bringing together all the NHS and social care staff groups to talk about a BAME response action plan for Sussex. There's stuff that's happening. People say there aren't any black and brown people in the city, I can prove that's not the case, we are running projects, there's a network. I won't take that erasure any more. Sorry.

Marina – thank you Rasheed for your honesty and direct call to anybody here. Does anybody want to add to that or reflect?

Louise – I just want to say that's brilliant to hear Rasheed that there's 180 people that you're bringing together, showing leadership. It feels like that is what the spirit of What Next is. What the action is we need to take feels not only urgent but possible.

Marina – agreed. Can we pick up on this at a later date in terms of some of the issues raised, the suggestions, some of the actions. Talk about who leads a further meeting.

Karen – thank you Rasheed for your honesty. I'm totally devastated about what's happening. I'm wondering if Rasheed or some of your colleagues would be interested in leading one of these meetings so that we can all be guided in what to do next.

Rasheed – I'm happy to help in whatever way I can . like many of us we are juggling whatever paid work we can do with stuff we care about and also looking after ourselves. Just to bear that in mind we are all in very precarious situations. I want to say something also about the solidarity of that, we are coming together and we all care about that, we are all passionate, That's a good foundation.

Marina – good suggestion from Leila on the chat - can we tell Rasheed's network about this meeting and invite them to come to What Next?

Rasheed – it might be about a trust gap. They don't need me to tell people that thee networks exist many of these people have been working in isolated ways in the ity. There's lots of product happening, there's lots of stuff happening, there's a scene.

Marina – how can we build that trust? What do we need to do to build that trust? What do we need to do to highlight the leadership that is taking place even if it is not big formal; organisations? Laura says on chat can we keep any work done by freelancers paid? Can we form a consortium of organisations?

Louise – the What Next fund is £750 it's tiny. I want to find a way for people to be paid. There are lots of people here who are unsalaried. I also wonder, Tarik and David, we've talked about a fund 'Resourcing Racial Justice'. We need some money in order to have impact – can we apply to this fund to take action? Admitting what the problems are and paying people to try and help work them out seems like the way forward. I don't know what the idea is yet but can we work together on a bid?

Marina – we've come to the end of the meeting. I want to thank everyone for coming together with such openness and willingness to collaborate. Thank you to everyone who has spoken today and for all the resources people have been sharing. Let's recognise it's a conversation and we need to see some action.

Links on the chat box:

- <https://www.meandwhitesupremacybook.com/>
^This is a brilliant workbook, exists as an ebook you can get it today.
- The BAME Arts & Culture Network is a public group on Facebook

Next meeting 11th June 11am: focus is training session from Always Possible on BHCC discretionary grant applications and how to do them.