

CREATIVE DARLINGTON BOARD

Monday 20 April 2015 at 3.00pm
Dolphin Centre, Darlington

MINUTES

Present:

Laura Case
John Dean
Councillor Dorothy Long
Seth Pearson
Bill Vince
Councillor Nick Wallis
Stephen Wiper
Lynda Winstanley
Catherine Whitehead (chaired meeting)

Apologies:

John Anderson
Anthony Baker
Martin Barkley
Ada Burns
Peter Barron
Paul Booth
John Orchard
Kerrie Page
Sharon Paterson
Ian Williams

1. Organisational development

- 1.1 At the December 2014 board meeting the Bonnar Keenleyside report was accepted by the board. The board meeting charged the organisational development working group to meet prior to the full board meeting in spring 2015 to support the Creative Darlington manager in working up papers to take recommendations within the report forward.
- 1.2 The organisational development working group, chaired by Sharon Paterson, met at the Dolphin Centre on Tuesday 17 February 2015 and considered three papers prepared by the Creative Darlington Manager –
 - Vision, opportunities and priorities
 - Organisational development proposal
 - An action plan
- 1.3 Following the meeting of the organisational development working group the Creative Darlington Manager presented a short paper on the organisational development of Creative Darlington to Darlington Borough Council's COE meeting on Thursday 5 March 2015. The meeting considered Creative Darlington's proposed priorities for 2015/16.
- 1.4 The Creative Darlington Manager presented three papers at the full Creative Darlington board meeting of 20 April 2015.
 - a. Strategic Priorities
 - b. Board Development
 - c. Action Plan
- 1.5 The Strategic Priorities paper recommended –
 - a. Creative Darlington continues to address the maximising arts assets,

developing finance and audience development priorities, while modifying our approach and reducing the budget allocated to this work.

b. Creative Darlington focus strategic resource in 2015/16 on:

(a) Promoting Darlington through development major cultural programmes and festivals of (e.g. 2025, The Festival of Thrift) and through engagement in appropriate campaigns (Tees Valley Capital of Culture 2025 proposal).

(b) Audience retention and development with particular focus on maintaining the performing arts offer during The Hullaballoon and Darlington Civic Theatre capital programmes.

(c) Developing partnerships and securing finance to reduce Creative Darlington's operational role regarding the operation of Crown Street Art Gallery, The Bridge Centre for Visual Arts.

The Creative Darlington board accepted these recommendations for 2015/16.

It was noted that Creative Darlington will need to manage communications around the reduced budget allocated to maximising arts assets, developing finance for arts activity and audience development work.

The Creative Darlington Manager provided an update on delivery against the Action Plan and on progress in reducing operational workload (management of the Bridge Centre for Visual Arts, the OpenArt Studio, the Borough Art Collection and Crown Street Art Gallery).

1.6

Action 1: Creative Darlington Manager to circulate update on progress against action plan to Creative Darlington board members.

Action 2: Creative Darlington Manager to update formatting of the Action Plan (currently formatted on a month by month basis) to show action plans for particular priorities.

1.7

The Board Development Paper contained the following recommendations –

- a. Creative Darlington move to a board of eight members, as below and that Bill Vince (Arts Council England) is invited to continue attendance at the board in an observer role.
 - A new chair – to be identified no later than the third Creative Darlington board meeting of 2015/16
 - Sharon Paterson, Assistant Dean, Business Engagement & Educational Partnerships in the University School of Arts & Media at Teesside University as vice chair. Teesside University operate mima and the Tees Valley Visual Arts Network
 - Miranda Thain, Creative Producer, or Laura Case, Chief Executive for Theatre Hullabaloo
 - Lynda Winstanley, Darlington Civic Theatre

- John Dean or Matt Roche, Darlington for Culture
 - Martin Barkley, Tees, Esk & Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust
 - Ada Burns, Darlington Borough Council, chief executive or Catherine Whitehead, Assistant Chief Executive
 - The Darlington Borough Council member with portfolio responsibility for culture
- b. In addition to holding quarterly full board meetings Creative Darlington support two broader Forum events in 2015/16 (timetabled for July 2015 and March 2016) to help advocacy and understanding of our work. Creative Darlington to invite Darlington for Culture, Darlington Borough Council, Darlington Partnership and arts organisations working across the North East to contribute to the planning and promotion of these wider board/forum events

1.8

The Creative Darlington board accepted these recommendations and agreed that the new chair of Darlington Borough Council's Scrutiny Group with responsibility for Culture be invited to attend future Creative Darlington board meetings in an ex officio role.

The Creative Darlington Manager advised that closer working with Darlington Partnership is already underway and the board asked that Seth Pearson, be invited to attend future Creative Darlington board meetings in an ex officio role.

There was some discussion around there being a board of eight members and the board meeting agreed that should there be split vote the chair should hold the casting vote.

Bill Vince, Arts Council England, confirmed he is happy to attend Creative Darlington board meetings in 2015/16, subject to availability, in an observer role.

It was noted that work is underway to identify a new chair for Creative Darlington. A description of the chair role has been agreed by Darlington Partnership and Creative Darlington. The board noted the importance of filling the chair role in a timely fashion and that Sharon Paterson should be asked to continue as interim chair.

It was noted that Darlington Borough Council had offered to review and update the terms of reference for the Creative Darlington board at the organisational development working group meeting of the board in February 2015. The April 2015 full Creative Darlington board meeting agreed it would be sensible to undertake this review of the terms of reference of the Creative Darlington board once a new chair is in place.

1.9

Action 3: The Creative Darlington Manager to arrange meetings with individual Creative Darlington board members by end of May 2015 focused on where they might best contribute to the agreed Action Plan.

Action 4: A recommendation to the Creative Darlington board regarding a new chair to be made to either the July 2015 or December 2015 Creative Darlington board meeting.

Action 5: Creative Darlington Manager to invite the new chair of Darlington Borough Council's Scrutiny Group with responsibility for Culture and Seth Pearson from Darlington Partnership to attend future Creative Darlington board meetings in an ex officio role.

2. Minutes of meeting held 9 December 2014

- 2.1 Minutes were accepted as a fair record. All actions completed except Actions 4 (explore online box office/ticket sales with board members), Action 5 (transfer maximising arts assets award of £10,000 from strategic arts budget to Darlington Civic Theatre budget) and 6 (prepare a paper on development opportunities within cultural sector in Darlington). The maximising arts assets commitment of £10,000 from the strategic arts budget to Darlington Civic Theatre has been carried forward into 2015/16 and will be transferred to the Civic Theatre budget when required. A paper on development opportunities within the cultural sector in Darlington will be presented to one of Creative Darlington's full board meetings in 2015/16.

3 Developing Finance for Arts Activity in Darlington 2015/16

- 3.1 The Creative Darlington board considered a paper prepared by the Creative Darlington Manager which contained the recommendations below –
- operate the Developing Finance for Arts Activity scheme in 2014/15 with a reduced strategic arts budget commitment of £5,000 allocated to new applications.
 - modify the criteria of the scheme to ensure that proposals are informed by Creative Darlington's strategic priorities for 2015/16 – see appendix 1, with all major changes highlighted in yellow. This will help in increasing the impact of the Developing Finance for Arts Activity in Darlington awards we make and reduce opportunistic applications which are unlikely to have a significant impact in progressing our vision.
 - promote two rounds of application during 2015/16 – Round 1 deadline Friday 22 May 2015 at 12 noon, Round 2 deadline Friday 9 October 2015 at 12 noon.
 - Creative Darlington retain operational control of the allocated budget, Creative Darlington Manager to assess applications and make recommendations to the board, to be determined on a majority vote.

- Creative Darlington co-ordinates 3 training days in 2015/16, aiming for 30 attendees, focused on developing finance for arts activity through sponsorship, philanthropy, social enterprise etc. working with appropriate agencies (Community Foundation, County Durham Foundation, UnLTD, service providers).
- Creative Darlington allocate £1,500 to support Darlington Jazz Festival 2015, which has secured a Grants for the arts offer of £4,500.

The board accepted these recommendations. It was noted that activity from a number of Developing Finance for Arts Activity in Darlington awards agreed in 2014/15 will take place in 2015/16 and this should offset a reduction in the budget allocated to new proposals in 2015/16. It was noted that Darlington Borough Council's external funding service had offered to support the administration of this budget. Bill Vince, Arts Council England, advised the board of a North Arts Sector Trusts & Foundations Event to be held on Tuesday 28th April 2015 at BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead.

3.2 **Action 6:** Creative Darlington Manager to attend North Arts Sector Trusts & Foundations Event.

Action 7: Creative Darlington Manager to promote revised criteria for Developing Finance for Arts Activity in Darlington 2015 scheme.

Action 8: Creative Darlington Manager to advise Darlington Jazz Club of support for Darlington Jazz Festival 2015 and progress offer of support.

4. Darlington Arts Festival 2015

4.1 John Dean provided a verbal update on Darlington Arts Festival 2015, which began with a pre-election arts and culture debate at the Liddiard Theatre, Polam Hall School on the evening of 20 April 2015 and is co-ordinated by Darlington for Culture. This year's festival has more than fifty events on its programme, including Darlington Jazz Festival events and an Arts Showcase event on Sunday 10 May 2015 which will celebrate one of Darlington's 'Cultural Quarters', the area along Borough Road from the Civic Theatre, past the site where the Hullaballoon will be developed, past ScrapStudio Arts, past the Forum Music Centre and up to Haughton Road. Creative Darlington has supported marketing and promotion of Darlington Arts Festival by Darlington for Culture in 2013, 2014 and 2015. Creative Darlington is directly delivering or a partner in a number of events within the Darlington Arts Festival 2015 programme, including exhibitions, the Arts Showcase Event and an arts networking event led by Equal Arts at the Bridge Centre for Visual Arts.

4.2 Lynda Winstanley advised an accessible online box office system might benefit both the ongoing operation of Darlington arts organisations and Darlington Arts Festival. The board discussed opportunities to explore the implementation of such a resource. Laura Case noted the importance of

managing the revenue costs of any such box office system and the importance of securing usable data to enable efficient targeted marketing through such a system. The Creative Darlington Manager advised that a £2,500 strategic arts budget commitment for audience development was available in 2015/16 to support the implementation of an online box office system which could be made available to various artists/organisations in Darlington.

5. Festival of Thrift 2015

- 5.1 The board considered a request for support from Creative Darlington submitted by the Festival of Thrift and a recommendation to allocate £15,000 of the strategic arts budget 2015/16 to the Festival of Thrift 2015. The board welcomed the Festival of Thrift proposal to engage with Darlington town centre and the ten year countdown to 2025, the bi-centenary of the first railway passenger journey on the Stockton to Darlington railway in 2025. The Creative Darlington Manager advised that Darlington Borough Council chief executive Ada Burns has sent a letter confirming Darlington Borough Council support for Festival of Thrift 2015 to Arts Council England, who are currently assessing a Grants for the arts application by Festival of Thrift for the Festival of Thrift 2015 arts programme. The board agreed to allocate £15,000 from the strategic arts budget to Festival of Thrift 2015.
- 5.2 **Action 9:** Creative Darlington Manager to advise Festival of Thrift of board decision and progress offer of support.

6. Any Other Business

- 6.1 Lynda Winstanley and Laura Case provided a verbal update on the capital projects to develop Darlington Civic Theatre and build the Hullaballoon. Recent capital awards by the Heritage Lottery Fund (Civic Theatre) and Arts Council England (Hullaballoon) would support a step change in facilities for performing arts in Darlington and in promoting access to and engagement with Darlington's performing arts heritage. Theatre Hullabaloo expect to submit their application for stage two support from Arts Council England's capital programme in July 2015 and Darlington Civic Theatre expect to submit their application for stage two support from the Heritage Lottery Fund's capital programme in October 2015.
- 6.2 Laura Case advised that Creative Darlington support had enabled specialist engagement with children and young people in Darlington schools (Northwood and Rydal primary schools) which will inform the design of the Hullaballoon. The Hullaballoon proposal is currently at RIBA stage C. The board discussed whether it might be possible to introduce a specific performance management target (possibly for 'the best start in life' area) for every child in Darlington by the age of seven to have attended a performance at a local theatre/the Hullaballoon.

- 6.3 **Action 10:** Laura Case to share film of specialist engagement with Darlington children around the Hullaballoon with Creative Darlington board members.
- 6.4 The Creative Darlington Manager advised the Creative Darlington board that he had completed a return required by Darlington Borough Council as part of their partnership management tool-kit mechanism. Creative Darlington Manager is also required to identify risks for 2015/16. The Creative Darlington Manager advised the primary risks for Creative Darlington to manage in 2015/16 are capacity within Creative Darlington to progress strategic work whilst managing operational duties and developing sufficient finance to progress the Creative Darlington vision. The Creative Darlington board recognised these risks and it is anticipated that organisational development work will help in managing them. The Creative Darlington board agreed to continue to utilise Darlington Borough Council's risk management systems.
- 6.5 **Action 11:** Risk management to be a standing item on Creative Darlington's full board meetings agendas during 2015/16 - Creative Darlington Manager to provide verbal updates and papers where required.
- 6.6 Bill Vince noted that within the Activity Report, the Creative Darlington Manager has advised Creative Darlington is working with Durham Music Service to develop a Grants for the arts application to enable children and young people in Darlington to engage with the Hallé Orchestra.
- 6.7 **Action 12:** The Creative Darlington Manager to advise Bill of progress with the application.
- 6.8 Dates of future Creative Darlington full board meetings to be confirmed.
- 6.9 **Action 13:** All, Darlington Borough Council to co-ordinate dates for remaining Creative Darlington board meetings in 2015/16.
- 6.10 Councillor Dorothy Long advised the Creative Darlington board that as she was not standing for re-election as a Councillor she would not be attending future Creative Darlington board meetings as chair of the Scrutiny group with responsibility for culture. Lynda Winstanley expressed her thanks on behalf of the Creative Darlington board to Councillor Long for her contribution to our work and for her longstanding work on behalf of the arts in Darlington.

7 Activity Report

- 7.1 The Creative Darlington Manager provided an activity report for information.

8. Risk Management process

- 8.1 The Creative Darlington Manager provided a copy of the Annual Partnership Review Form for the year ended 31 March 2015 he had provided to Darlington Borough Council on behalf of Creative Darlington for information.

No queries were raised by the board.

9. Budget update

- 9.1 The Creative Darlington Manager provided budget update report for information. No queries were raised by the board.

10 Darlington's Case for Culture response

- 10.1 The Creative Darlington Manager provided a copy for information. No queries were raised by the board.