

CREATIVE DARLINGTON BOARD

Tuesday 16 September 2014 at 3.00pm
Town Hall, Darlington

MINUTES

Present:

Anthony Baker
John Dean
Sharon Paterson (chaired meeting)
Miranda Thain
Councillor Nick Wallis
Stephen Wiper

Apologies:

John Anderson
Martin Barkley
Peter Barron
Ada Burns
Paul Booth
Councillor Dorothy Long
John Orchard
Kerrie Page
Bill Vince
Ian Williams
Lynda Winstanley

1. Minutes of meeting held 17 June 2014

- 1.1 Minutes were accepted as a fair record. All actions had been progressed except action 1, exploring the feasibility of promoting ticket sales through a website available to Darlington arts organisations. John Dean advised Creative Darlington has allocated support to develop the Darlington for Culture website and that this site and/or the whatsonindarlington.co.uk website might be helpful in addressing this action.
- 1.2 **Action 1:** SW to meet with appropriate board members re possibility to either incorporate ticket sales mechanism into the whatsonindarlington.co.uk site or to investigate indicative costs for/feasibility of co-ordinating another system.

2. Creative Darlington activity report

- 2.1 An activity report was presented by the Creative Darlington manager. Darlington has been featured as one of eight case studies in the ON WITH THE SHOW Supporting Local Arts & Culture publication produced by the National Local Government Network with support from Arts Council England. John Dean, for Darlington for Culture, and Councillor Nick Wallis, for Darlington Borough Council, had presented the Darlington case study at a national conference held post publication in London. They advised that the Darlington case study has been well received by the National Local Government Network, demonstrating Darlington Borough Council, Creative Darlington and Darlington for Culture have developed a positive working relationship and managed the transition of arts activity in Darlington effectively, following significant budget management challenges and Darlington Borough Council's decision to close the Arts Centre in July 2012.

2.2 No questions were received from the board regarding the action report.

3 Strategic Arts budget update

3.1 SW presented a paper advising on budgets managed by Creative Darlington in 2014/15.

3.2 SW advised the board that various budgets are securing finance through hires, commission on sales, fees for courses and training and that the proposed organisational development work to be commissioned by Creative Darlington was likely to develop our capacity to generate finance for our own projects via fundraising, sponsorship and philanthropy.

3.3 SW advised the board that a Performance Reward Grant commitment of £60,000 in total to support the arts transition in Darlington must be utilised in 2014/15.

3.4 The board noted that Creative Darlington had committed budget to support the UnLTD proposal. SW advised the board that a commitment of £10,000 in total from the strategic arts budget was required to partner the UnLTD proposal and that this would be accommodated from the strategic arts budgets for 2014/15 and 2015/16, given proposed activity covers both years.

3.5 **Action 2:** SW to include UnLTD pilot programme financial commitment from the strategic arts budget in his report to the December 2014 Creative Darlington board meeting.

4. Darlington's offer for the creative sector discussion

4.1 Sharon Paterson advised the board that the Teesside University application to UnLTD round 5 to promote a pilot programme for social enterprise in the cultural sector, in partnership with Creative Darlington, had been successful. Sharon and Stephen had been invited to discuss the application in London and to pitch the proposal following the last Creative Darlington board meeting. Only a small number of awards will be made nationally, so this is great news for Darlington. The pilot programme will help Creative Darlington address the aim of developing Darlington as a creative place in which artists, arts producers and creative businesses can flourish. The UnLTD announcement is currently embargoed, but once the news is public, this should help develop Creative Darlington's branding and profile, following the success of the Festival of Thrift and the recent Theatre Hullabaloo capital application.

With just under £20,000 expected by Teesside University from UnLTD, the pilot programme will include research, support for a small number of social enterprises as case studies, development of a toolkit for social enterprise in the creative sector and a dissemination event/conference in the Darlington campus of Teesside University. Sharon advised the board that a meeting between Teesside University and Creative Darlington would be scheduled post Festival of Thrift 2014, so work can begin.

4.2 It was noted that Creative Darlington board members may have expertise and/or contacts within the business development/social enterprise sectors which might

assist development of the pilot programme.

- 4.3 **Action 3:** Teesside University and Creative Darlington to meet to stage initial planning meeting for the pilot programme before the next board meeting. Stephen Wiper to liaise with Darlington Borough Council's business advice service following this meeting.
- 4.4 Stephen Wiper advised there is an opportunity for Creative Darlington to consider options for the development of the cultural sector within Darlington borough. A number of locations are currently either being developed, or may accommodate future development (North Road near to Valley Street, around Darlington's Bank Top station, establishing a Heritage campus around the Head of Steam). Part of this might incorporate, subject to the feasibility of proposals, development of studio/workspace for artists and creative enterprise.
- 4.5 The board discussion noted parts of Darlington were developing with a concentration of cultural assets, e.g. Parkgate with the planned Hullabaloon, potential development to Darlington Civic Theatre (HLF capital application result expected late September/early October 2014) and the Forum. Other parts of Darlington, including Skinnergate, might also be further developed as cultural quarters. The board asked whether there is evidence of demand from artists, arts and cultural organisations and creative enterprises for a cultural quarter incorporating studio/workspace in Darlington and considered what sources of information are available to measure what the sector requires. The Take report, which informed Darlington's Arts Enquiry gathered some information and Darlington Borough Council's business service and other organisations supporting business development should also be approached/
- 4.6 **Action 4:** Stephen Wiper to review sources of information re demand from artists/artists arts organisations and creative enterprise for facilities and workspace within Darlington borough and to report back to a future board meeting with a draft survey to test demand, should limited information be available.
- 4.7 **Action 5:** Board members with who wish to nominate people to approach for advice on taking forward cultural sector development opportunities to contact Stephen Wiper.

5. Creative Darlington organisational development update

- 5.1 Following the June 2014 Creative Darlington board meeting a board away day focused on the organisational development of Creative Darlington was hosted at the Darlington campus of Teesside University in July 2014, facilitated by Hilary Carty (notes available on request).
- 5.2 Following the board away day the Creative Darlington manager developed a brief for services to report and make recommendations on the organisational development of Creative Darlington, with support from the working group.
- 5.3 Two tenders to provide these services were received by the Creative Darlington manager and hard copies thereof circulated at the board meeting.

5.4 Stephen Wiper advised that Ada Burns and he had discussed Creative Darlington with grant advisors at the Esmeé Fairburn Foundation following an introduction through Jonathan Blackie. The discussion had identified interest in Creative Darlington's work, however it appeared unlikely that our current organisational structure might fall within the parameters of organisations which the Esmeé Fairburn Foundation would normally consider applications from. Stephen has advised the Esmeé Fairburn Foundation we are commissioning services to explore options for our organisational development.

5.4 **Action 6:** Members of the Creative Darlington board working group to select which tender to accept to progress the organisational development brief. An organisational development update will be on the December 2014 Creative Darlington board meeting agenda.

6. Creative Darlington website

6.1 Services have been commissioned to design the Creative Darlington website, which is currently under construction. The site is being developed on WordPress and the service provider will deliver training for the Creative Darlington Manager regarding site maintenance. The creativedarlington.org and .com domains have been purchased; the site will operate independently of, but be linked to, the Darlington Borough Council website. A site demonstration will be on the December 2014 board meeting agenda.

6.2 The homepage is focused on Creative Darlington's vision, with the following tabs –

- ABOUT (offers subpages on STAFF, THE BOARD, ARTISTS WE'VE WORKED WITH, ORGANISATIONS WE'VE WORKED WITH, PLANS & PAPERS)
- PROGRAMMES (offers subpages for DEVELOPING FINANCE FOR ARTS ACTIVITY, MAXIMISING ARTS ASSETS, DEVELOPING AUDIENCES FOR THE ARTS)
- NEWS (offers subpages for CURRENT EVENTS, FORTHCOMING PROJECTS, ARTS IN DARLINGTON, REVIEWS, WHAT'S ON)
- SUPPORT (offers subpages for HOW TO SUPPORT US, CURRENT SUPPORTERS, SUPPORT FOR YOU, RESOURCES)
- CONTACT US (contains contact details and message by e-mail option within page)

6.3 Banners have been commissioned to promote the website (for the .org address) and will be used at appropriate events.

6.4 **Action 7:** Stephen Wiper to circulate Creative Darlington's website address prior to soft launch to board members. Comments should be sent to the Creative Darlington Manager, particularly regarding some of the organisations we've worked with.

6.5 **Action 8:** Board members to e-mail brief copy re their interest in Creative Darlington's vision, their professional work and interest in the arts, plus an image, for inclusion on the website. Copy should be conversational in tone, 250 words max. These should be e-mailed to Stephen.wiper@darlington.gov.uk

7 Festival of Thrift 2014 update

7.1 Stephen Wiper provided a brief update on the Festival of Thrift 2014 informed by Stella Hall's Festival report of June 2014 and a marketing report from Cool Blue. The Festival of Thrift has secured support from Marchday, Darlington Borough Council, Creative Darlington, Teesside University, sponsorship from a number of businesses and a significant Grants for the arts award from Arts Council England. Significant additional in kind support will be provided by a number of businesses, organisations and individuals. Darlington Cares are recruiting volunteers for the Festival of Thrift 2014 with interested parties asked to contact Katie Blundell there.

7.2 Significantly more outreach and pre festival work has been supported with school and community groups in Darlington and the arts programme will include more performing arts and stage based activity than sat within the Festival of Thrift 2013 programme. Cool Blue's marketing report for the Festival of Thrift 2014 is securing significant coverage across a range of media.

8. Any other business

8.1 Stephen Wiper advised the board that the Developing Finance for Arts Activity criteria had been updated following discussion at the June 2014 board meeting. Updates include the introduction of three deadlines for application in 2014/15 (July, September and December) and greater emphasis on the legacy of projects and applicants engagement with Darlington borough.

8.2 **Action 9:** Stephen Wiper to circulate applications, his assessments thereof and recommendations to support or not support for Developing Finance for Arts Activity in Darlington bids received by September 2014 deadline, for consideration by the board. The board discussed the resources occupied by the Developing Finance for Arts Activity in Darlington scheme.

8.3 **Action 10:** Stephen Wiper to add Creative Darlington's approach to the developing finance for arts activity to the next board meeting agenda.

8.4 The board asked when a decision on Darlington Civic Theatres' application to the Heritage Lottery Funds capital scheme was expected and was advised late September/early October 2014. Creative Darlington has committed up to £10,000 in 2014/15 to The Civic Theatre subject to their application to the Heritage Lottery Fund being successful.

9. Dates of next meetings

- 9.1
- Tuesday 9 December 2014
 - Tuesday 23 March 2015

All meetings 3pm – 5pm at Darlington Town Hall, unless otherwise advised.