

# CREATIVE DARLINGTON BOARD

Tuesday 9 December 2014 at 3.00pm  
Town Hall, Darlington

## MINUTES

### **Present:**

John Anderson  
Anthony Baker  
Martin Barkley  
Ada Burns  
John Dean  
Sharon Paterson (chaired meeting)  
Councillor Dorothy Long  
Miranda Thain  
Bill Vince  
Councillor Nick Wallis  
Stephen Wiper  
Lynda Winstanley

### **Apologies:**

Peter Barron  
Paul Booth  
John Orchard  
Kerrie Page  
Ian Williams

### **1. Organisational development**

- 1.1 Since the September 2014 Creative Darlington board meeting, a brief had been developed by the Creative Darlington Manager and a working group of the board to progress recommendations on the organisational development of Creative Darlington. Bonnar Keenleyside tendered for the work and was selected.
- 1.2 A presentation was provided by Bonnar Keenleyside (and discussion followed with all board members. A draft report was circulated to board members in advance of the meeting. Copies of both available on request.
- 1.3 John Anderson presented a response to the report (copy available on request) to the board, emphasising the importance of identifying priority activity (e.g. 2025 programme, audience retention during capital projects involving Theatre Hullabaloo, Darlington Civic Theatre).
- 1.4 The board discussed recommendations within the report. Darlington Borough Council, as the key provider of the strategic arts budget, advised it was unlikely to be reduced during 2015/16, whilst advising that overall budget management beyond that point was expected to be challenge, one that would be influenced by factors including the government settlement.
- 1.5 John Dean, Darlington for Culture, proposed a motion that all recommendations within the report were accepted and emphasised the importance of moving forward on organisational development.
- 1.6 The board debated how best to progress this motion and agreed actions.

- 1.7 **Action 1:** Sharon Patterson, as acting chair of the Creative Darlington board, to call an organisational development working group meeting during January 2015 to develop a clear action plan on how recommendations within the report will be taken forward.
- 1.8 **Action 2:** Creative Darlington board members to advise the Creative Darlington Manager by e-mail by Friday 16 January 2015 if they wish to participate, ideally giving availability to end of January 2015.
- 1.9 **Action 3:** The Creative Darlington Manager to prepare a paper in advance of the working group meeting in January 2015 on Creative Darlington priorities for 2015/16 and 2016/17.

## **2. Minutes of meeting held 16 September 2014**

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2 **Action 4:** 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.

## **3 Darlington Civic Theatre and Theatre Hullabaloo capital project update**

- 3.1 Miranda Thain advised the board regarding the development of the Hullaballoon and thanked Creative Darlington for maximising arts assets support to date. Creative Darlington support had informed development of the proposal and successful application and will contribute to work to enable children and young people in Darlington (from primary schools and ArtSpark) to actively engage with the design process.
- 3.2 Theatre Hullabaloo, in a partnership with Darlington Borough Council, has received £1.5m Stage 1 funding from Arts Council England to realise a flagship theatre for children and young people on a site adjacent to the Civic Theatre. The venue, which will be known as The Hullaballoon, will have national significance as a centre of excellence for theatre for children and a destination for families from across the North East and beyond.
- 3.3 The venue will be vision-led, creating a space that is truly child-centred, embodying the values of Theatre Hullabaloo and providing a base for the organisation to develop new strands of child-centred work that will diversify its income streams and attract new investment. The venue will include a 150 seat studio theatre, creative play installation space, café area, workshop / studio space, dressing rooms, toilets and play space. Development of The Hullaballoon will strengthen and build on Darlington's excellent offer for children and young people (schools performance, culture and leisure offer), helping to promote Darlington as a place and to encourage growth.

- 3.4 Central to the vision of The Hullaballoon is the relationship between artists, researchers and children as creative collaborators and the venue will become a focus for research in practice in theatre for young audiences and a centre for international collaboration. Activities will particularly target younger children and families and will include creative curriculum delivery for local schools and nurseries. The Hullaballoon, which is budgeted to cost £2.35m, is due to open in 2017.
- 3.5 Once built, the Hullaballoon will be located alongside Darlington Civic Theatre, which is wholly owned and managed by Darlington Borough Council. Lynda Winstanley advised the board re progression of the Civic Theatre capital project to restore the grade II listed 1907 Edwardian variety theatre now known as the Darlington Civic Theatre but formerly known as the New Hippodrome & Palace Theatre of Varieties. The Heritage Lottery Fund (£5m offer) and Darlington Borough Council are supporting the project. It is anticipated it may take a year to develop the project to Stage Two of the Heritage Lottery Fund's capital programme with the objective of re-opening in 2017.
- 3.6 Space Architects have been appointed to progress both buildings, working to separate briefs, but enabling synergy and alignment between the projects and so that the time-scale of both can be as complimentary as possible. Wilmott Dixon Group has been appointed as the contractor for these projects.
- 3.7 The Creative Darlington Manager asked for the board's agreement to progress transfer of £10,000 from the strategic arts budget to support audience and business development work for the Darlington Civic Theatre programme. The board agreed.
- 3.8 **Action 5:** SW to transfer £10,000 from the strategic arts budget to Darlington Civic Theatre.

#### **4. Cultural Quarter update**

- 4.1 The Creative Darlington Manager advised the board that he had received some suggestions from board members of good contacts to approach regarding exploring the development of a cultural quarter in Darlington. Following discussion at the September 2014 board meeting it is recognised that Parkgate is developing naturally as a cultural quarter in terms of venues and arts organisations (Darlington Civic Theatre, The Hullaballoon, Scrap StudioArts, and The Forum) but that there may be opportunities to consider other locations for creative workspace/studio development. Meetings have been held with Tim Crawshaw and John Anderson to consider ways forward.
- 4.2 **Action 6:** SW to prepare paper on development opportunities within cultural sector in Darlington.

## **5. Any Other Business**

- 5.1 The Creative Darlington Manager advised the board that five applications had been received before the final application deadline to the Developing Finance for Arts Activity in Darlington scheme, of which four had been assessed to date. Applications received from Kando Arts, Carol Sommer, Victoria Armstrong, Anton Hecht and Joelene English.
- 5.2 **Action 7:** All – SW to complete assessment of applications and make recommendations to the board, board to vote re whether to support/not support specific applications.
- 5.3 **Action 5:** SW to prepare a paper on options for future development of the Developing Finance for the Arts scheme for future Creative Darlington board meeting.

## **6. Activity report**

- 6.1 Circulated to board members in advance of meeting. Not discussed at meeting.

## **7 Budget update**

- 7.1 Circulated to board members in advance of meeting. Not discussed at meeting.

## **8. Festivals update**

- 8.1 Various papers on the Festival of Thrift 2014 were circulated to board members in advance of the meeting. These were not discussed at the meeting.
- 8.2 Darlington Arts Festival 2015 verbal update provided by John Dean. Print deadline for Festival brochure end of January 2015. Darlington Arts Festival 2015 likely to have an increased focus on engagement of children and young people. Plans are being developed to stage a special day event in Parkgate exploring the potential of the area as a cultural quarter is being planned, various parties involved including the Forum, The YMCA, Scrap StudioArts and Darlington Civic Theatre. Board noted importance of considering residents parking requirements. Darlington Jazz Festival at end of April 2014 likely to be promoted as the start of Darlington Arts Festival 2015. While Darlington Folk Club not expected to stage an independent Spring Thing Folk Festival in February 2015, there may be opportunities to incorporate elements of Folk Festival within future Darlington Arts Festivals.

## **9. Date of Next Meeting**

- 9.1 Tuesday 23 March 2015  
All meetings 3pm – 5pm at Darlington Town Hall, unless otherwise advised.