

CREATIVE DARLINGTON BOARD

Monday 11 September 2017 at 2.00pm
Dolphin Centre, Darlington

MINUTES

Present:

Ada Burns

Laura Case

Caroline Darnbrook

Lucy Humphreys – presenting

Rob Irish – presenting

Sharon Paterson (chair)

Jo Potter

Bill Vince

Sarah Wilson - presenting

Councillor Nick Wallis

Stephen Wiper

Lynda Winstanley

Councillor Carson - observer

Apologies:

Eileen Atkins

Ivor Crowther

Chris Lloyd

1 Minutes of last meeting

- 1.1 Minutes of the last meeting on Monday 8 May 2017 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

2 Darlington Theatre Town

- 2.1 The board received an update on Darlington Theatre Town programme activity, including Wet Picnics presentation of The Aperitif and The Ball and After-Party in Darlington on Saturday 26 August 2017. Darlington Theatre Town programmes were shared and a short video of Wet Picnic activity in Darlington was shared. The next major element of the Darlington Theatre Town transition programme of activity is Pop-Up TheatreTown featuring Jabberwocky Market and Paines Plough, with Paines Plough's Roundabout located in Darlington market place from 5 – 8 October 2017. A Friend of Darlington Theatre campaign is underway and town centre shops and businesses are being approached re engagement, with support from volunteers.
- 2.2 **Action 1:** Promote Pop-Up Theatre Town and other Darlington Theatre Town activity through the Festival of Ingenuity. SW and SP to investigate whether videos of theatre town activity can be shared within the event. This was done post meeting and no screens or projectors are available within the event – however locations to distribute theatre town print have been agreed in each of the Festival of Ingenuity zones with the following parties leading, Caroline

Pearce/Luxi/Jabberwocky in the Market Square, Stephen Wiper at the Feethams Podium, Sarah Wilson/Big Little Gigs/Tracks at the Riverside Park.

- 2.3 **Action 2:** Opportunities to promote Darlington Theatre Town through the Ingenious Darlington week of activity preceding the Festival of Ingenuity on Saturday 23 September 2017 were discussed. Darlington Theatre Town brochures have been included in the packs of parties attending a special event focused on promotion of the Darlington offer (culture and tourism) on Friday 22 September and LC will attend the event.

Action 3: Links to videos of Darlington Theatre Town programme to be shared with Creative Darlington board members for distribution.

3 Festival of Ingenuity update

- 3.1 Seth Pearson advised the board the Festival of Ingenuity is being staged for the second time following inaugural festival in July 2016. The public Festival of Ingenuity on Saturday 23 September 2017 promotes the Ingenious Darlington brand and follows a school focused STEM programme of activity which will be held within the Dolphin Centre on Friday 22 September 2017. A campaign to mark and celebrate Darlington heritage, backed by Darlington Building Society, will be launched in 2017. A variety of businesses contribute to the education focused event, which incorporates a series of learning challenges led by different businesses, and routinely engages 200 – 400 pupils from Darlington schools, raising awareness of potential career opportunities.

The board discussed opportunities to extend the education programme focus beyond the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) to Steam (inclusion of Art). Approximately 17 businesses are engaged in the overall programme and a variety of creative activity is currently incorporated in the Festival of Ingenuity programme in 2017 including Anton Hecht, Yvonne Preston, Caroline Pearce/Luxi, Sarah Wilson/Big Little gigs, Tin Arts and other parties, alongside a variety of street theatre and entertainment. Opportunities to link Darlington Hippodrome and Theatre Hullabaloo to the Ingenious Darlington programme going forward were discussed

- 3.2 **Action 4:** - SW to agenda further discussion at the December 2017 Creative Darlington board meeting around options to extend education event remit from STEM to STEAM.

4 Tracks presentation

- 4.1 Rob Irish and Sarah Wilson presented the Tracks vision, their work to date (including Ho Ho Ho Electro and an innovative folk music event within the Spiegel Tent and the Music Box festival weekend programme which secured audience of c 500 in 2017), forthcoming activity including all female folk music event within Paines Plough's Roundabout in October 2017 and their aims

going forward. Tracks is currently an unincorporated voluntary organisation but may consider other routes including community interest company. They have three leads (the third being Dave Saunders who could not attend the meeting) who are all making a significant contribution to Darlington's cultural offer. Tracks expect to apply to Grants for the arts for a programme of activity this autumn, incorporating development opportunities for those involved in music in and around Darlington (industry coffee mornings etc), their organisational development and programme, with particular interest around developing a 'Last Train Home' festival in Darlington in 2018 in the Bank Top, Victoria Embankment parts of Darlington. Darlington Borough Council expects to allocate financial support to this proposal subject to their successful application, and has supported Tracks in working with Tees Music Alliance around their development plans.

- 4.2 **Action 5:** SW to liaise with Tracks around production of letter of support from Darlington Borough Council for their Grants for the Arts proposal and to liaise with Darlington Hippodrome re brokering Tracks conversation with particular business around Last Train Home.

5 Experience Darlington

- 5.1 Lucy Humphreys gave a presentation on findings from the Experience Darlington consultation and next steps, including the presentation of an Experience Darlington – A Visitor Economy Strategy report to Cabinet on 12 September 2017. The strategy will not be driven exclusively by the Council but is being developed through consultation with partners, including public, private and voluntary sector agencies. Consultation has had three elements, one work with influencers and stakeholders first, two work with local stakeholders and thirdly public consultation through a survey mechanism. Following this the Experience Darlington tourism strategy now has three distinct themes, one of a railway town, two of a theatre town and thirdly of a town to visit. Arts Council England advised re the importance of recognising the contribution of both services and organisations with theatres, and individuals and smaller organisations to the theatre town work. Creative Darlington board members noted only one priority was drawn from the consultation around Darlington as a theatre town although ambitions within the Culture Strategy would feed into the overall Experience Darlington work.

6 Culture Strategy action plan

- 6.1 The Culture strategy has been considered on the agenda of previous Creative Darlington board meetings and has four ambitions – 1. Theatre town 2. Creative exploration of railway heritage 3. Darlington's positive contribution to a successful Tees Valley UK City of Culture proposal in 2025 4. Darlington offering an accessible, distinctive and excellent cultural offer (through

bespoke targeted programmes and public festivals and events). An indicative action plan for each of these ambitions was on the agenda and board discussion focused on what resources can be located, opportunities might be explored, partnerships developed and additional actions undertaken to address these ambitions to build on this paper. Discussion noted measures for particular actions may help ongoing delivery, evaluation of progress.

- 6.2 **Action 6:** SW to note additional actions against ambitions and circulate an updated action plan to all Creative Darlington board members for comment.

7 Darlington for Culture small arts grants update

- 7.1 A small arts grants scheme was launched by Darlington for Culture in May 2017 (maximum awards of £500). The application process and criteria are informed in part by the operation of the Developing Finance for Arts Activity scheme which Creative Darlington managed between 2013/4 and 2016/17 which supported a variety of activity (including Big Little Gigs pilot) and generated on average £3 additional finance for arts activity from every £1 of Council strategic arts budget allocated.
- 7.2 A business has allocated budget to support the Darlington for Culture small arts grants scheme. Creative Darlington assesses applications and makes a recommendation to Darlington for Culture on whether they are supported. Darlington for Culture makes the decision on manages any awards. Since Darlington for Cultures small arts grants scheme was launched in May 2017 a number of proposals have been assessed and those offered grants include Neasham Community Centre (to support performing arts/rural touring through acquisition of stage) and the New Orleans Jazz Club.

8 Tees Valley Combined Authority Culture & Tourism update and other

- 8.1 Since the May 2017 Creative Darlington board meeting TVCA had co-ordinated a useful visit to UK City of Culture 2017 in Hull attended by various board members. The visit explored Hull's route to successful application, their learning from the application process and programme promotion and delivery to date, and the context for their bid within their overall objectives for Hull's culture and community. It was noted that TVCA is currently seeking sector led proposals to encourage sector growth and development, particularly talent retention.
- 8.2 It was also noted that a £15 million Northern Cultural Regeneration Fund to boost the region's tech, creative and cultural industries had been launched and to secure a positive legacy from the Great Exhibition of the North. TVCA is expected to look at which particular proposal from Tees Valley may best address the criteria for this fund and merit their support.

- 8.3 Following the Cultural Commissioning event organised by Darlington Borough Council at the Darlington campus of Teesside University in June 2017 the topic will be addressed at a forthcoming authority culture group meeting. Darlington Borough Council expects to work with partners to develop a proposal to take this work forward across Tees Valley, rather than in Darlington in isolation.

9 Any Other Business

- 9.1 Creative Fuse North East is looking to fund a series of Innovation projects, bringing together expertise from across the Creative, Digital and IT (CDIT) sector and the region's five universities to tackle a specific industry challenge, opportunity, or barrier to growth, and that a call out for proposals has been made and that board assistance in circulating this through their networks was welcomed. Both Innovation Pilot Grants (awards up to £5,000) and Innovation Development Awards (a small number of grants up to £25,000) will be made.
- 9.2 **Action 7:** Creative Darlington board members to raise awareness of opportunity through their networks.
- 9.3 Since 2013 Creative Darlington has supported the promotion of Darlington Arts Festival led by Darlington for Culture through the production of a dedicated festival brochure, co-ordinated by Darlington for Culture. SW advised the board he understood that Darlington Arts Festival 2018 was likely to change format, from a month long festival from late April throughout May (incorporating Darlington Jazz Festival) to a shorter c. fortnight long festival in likely to begin mid May 2018, with a focus on developing enhanced programme or encouraging new practice those regularly contributing. Darlington Borough Council is expected to offer ongoing support to promote Darlington Arts Festival in 2018.