



## Council Minutes

## Meeting 181

Date of meeting: Friday 3 July 2020

Venue: Meeting held remotely using Zoom videolink

Present:  
(on videolink) Phil George (PG) Chair, Andrew Miller (AM), Lhosa Daly (LD), Gwennan Mair (GM), Devinda De Silva (DDS), Marian Wyn Jones (MWJ), Mike Griffiths (MG), Kate Eden (KE), Tudur Hallam (TH), Sarah Younan (SY), Alison Mears Esswood (AME), Dafydd Rhys (DR), Andy Eagle (AE) and Victoria Provis (VP).

In attendance:  
(on videolink) Nick Capaldi (NC), Diane Hebb (DH), Rebecca Nelson (RN), Louise Wright (LW), Sion Brynach (SB) and Katy Brown (minuting).

Apologies: Sian Tomos (ST) and Iwan Bala (IB)

Observing:  
(on videolink) Gary Williams (GW) Welsh Government

Translator Lowri Gwyn (LG)

Status of paper: For public release.

Item	Action
<p>1. <b>Welcome, introductions and apologies</b></p> <p>The Chair welcomed members to the Arts Council of Wales meeting being held via Zoom.</p> <p>NC reported that ST was unwell and was disappointed not to be able to attend the meeting.</p> <p><u>Director of Operations</u> PG was pleased to inform members that Richard Nicholls, currently in post as Director of Development at the National Museum of Wales, has been appointed to the role of Arts Council Director of Operations and will join the Senior Leadership Team in September.</p>	

Item	Action
<p><u>Chair's meetings</u> PG informed Council of the recent meetings he had attended including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What Next?</li> <li>• Creu Cymru</li> <li>• Interview with Fearghus O' Conchuir about Arts and Health for the WAI channel on PYST</li> </ul>	
<p><b>2. Declarations of Interest</b> Members of Council asked for the Declarations of Interest to be recorded (attached as an appendix to these minutes).</p> <p>AM asked that "What Next?" UK should be added to his Declaration.</p>	
<p><b>3. Minutes of the meeting held on 2 June 2020</b> The Minutes of the meeting were <b>approved</b> as a correct record of the meeting.</p>	
<p><b>4. Matters arising</b> All outstanding matters were reported as having been completed.</p>	
<p><b>5. Driving forward our Equalities agenda</b> <b>Minutes of the Equalities Monitoring Group Meeting held on 17 June 2020</b> AM reported on the highlights of the meeting.</p> <p>Both newly appointed independent members Lara Ratnaraja and Shereen Williams had attended their first meeting.</p> <p>The following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There was a sense of urgency to diversify the workforce both internally and externally.</li> <li>• The priority to achieve greater equality needed to be reflected in increased funding to those with protected characteristics through our Lottery programmes.</li> <li>• The Committee is keen to know what can be learnt and understood from our management of the recent emergency Covid-19 response funds.</li> </ul>	

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The movements ‘We Shall Not Be Removed’ and ‘Black Lives Matter’ were discussed. Discussion focused on the question ‘what do we need to do and change, and commit to in this year?’</li> </ul> <p>Council <b>noted</b> the committee minutes.</p>	
<p><b>5.2 Equalities Monitoring Report</b></p> <p>DH introduced the Annual Equalities Report for 2019/20. The report had been produced following detailed analysis, interrogation and discussion of our annual data and programme updates.</p> <p>Council’s discussion of the report took place within the context of the current issues being raised by Covid-19, ‘Black Lives Matter’ and ‘We Shall Not Be Removed’. This brought into sharp focus those areas where insufficient progress was being made towards the meeting of the targets that Council had set.</p> <p>Council did acknowledge some areas of success:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creative Steps continues to support the development of BAME-led and D/disabled companies</li> <li>the Night Out programme has reached people that we would not normally have engaged with</li> <li>the accessibility of our website has been significantly improved</li> </ul> <p>The key areas of work that are behind schedule are diversifying workforce and boards, including the Arts Council’s, and widening access to Arts Council funding. Lottery programmes are failing to reach the diverse artists and arts organisations that are identified in our corporate plan, “For the Benefit of All”.</p> <p>Three questions were posed (which it was agreed would be the focus of group discussion later in the meeting):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What do we need to do now?</li> <li>2. What do we need to do/change/commit to this year?</li> <li>3. What is the key action we need to change in the SEP moving forward?</li> </ol> <p>Council <b>noted</b> the report.</p>	

Item	Action
<p><b>6. Building a different future</b>  NC reiterated ST's disappointment that she was not able to present this item in person.</p> <p>NC explained that ST was leading an internal working group of staff who were undertaking a 'horizon scanning' exercise. This involved looking at where the Arts Council is now, and what the drivers might be for Council's work in a post-Covid environment.</p> <p>The current pre-occupation with emergency needs made it difficult to see beyond the here and now. However, it was ST's contention that the successful organisations of the future would be those that had responded positively to the Covid-19 crisis and used it as an opportunity to re-appraise ways of working.</p> <p>Council has talked frequently about the need to perform differently in pursuit of its priorities. However, unless we significantly change our behaviour, there is a real risk that we will continue to struggle to meet key targets.</p> <p>It is equally important that key organisations do not see the current emergency as only about survival – something to be endured – important though that is. The 'new normal' was a somewhat hazy notion, and many arts organisations would be effectively starting from scratch to develop programmes of work that would prove interesting and engaging to audiences.</p> <p>The challenge of planning and working differently was the issue that the Arts Council needs to discuss with the sector.</p>	
<p><b>7. Covid-19 – Planning for the next stage</b>  NC introduced the report.</p> <p>The first phase of the COVID-19 strategy has been completed. Quarter 1 of annual Arts Portfolio Wales (APW) funding has been paid, with the second quarter due this month.</p> <p>The Resilience Fund for the Arts has paid out £909,000 of urgent support to individuals and just over £3million to organisations. The final programme for individuals is currently assessing applications of just over £2million.</p>	

Item	Action
<p>During this most difficult of periods, officers have tried to create some sense of stability across the sector. This had been very challenging. The funds offered so far have helped, but the respite will be short-lived as social distancing continues to delay the resumption of public activity.</p> <p>The tapering from August of support through the Job Retention Scheme – and its complete cessation from October – means that without further Government underpinning, many organisations will face a life-threatening financial cliff edge. Their survival depends on additional financial support above and beyond anything that the Arts Council could manage.</p> <p>Announcements were awaited on this from the UK Government. Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Approved</b> the continued suspension of funding conditions for the Arts Portfolio Wales</li> <li>2. <b>Noted</b> that we will return to a discussion of the Investment Review 2020 in September</li> <li>3. <b>Approved</b> the revised Strategy and Lottery Funds budgets for 2020/21, as set out in Appendices 1 &amp; 2.</li> </ol>	
<p>9. <b>Council discussion and summary</b>  Council divided into discussion groups to consider the three questions highlighted earlier in the meeting.</p> <p>Each working group fed back its conclusions.</p> <p><u>Group 1</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need for clear and urgent action. Council should issue an immediate statement of intent</li> <li>• Needed to recognise and acknowledge Council’s failure to address priorities and commit to doing better</li> <li>• Ensure the way that Lottery funding is described and promoted is accessible by all.</li> <li>• Look at what has been learnt from the experience of managing the Covid-19 emergency response funds.</li> <li>• Recruit an ‘agent for change’ role, mandated to operate at a senior level within the Arts Council to drive change</li> <li>• Enhance the status of the Equalities Monitoring Group to become a formally established Committee of Council</li> <li>• Create sense of campaign – draw in the Arts Portfolio Wales</li> </ul>	

Item	Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reshape the debate around Welsh Language and diversity</li> <li>• Ensure that Equalities issues features as one of the reporting fields in our APW Radar Report</li> </ul> <p><u>Group 2</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agree immediately to a statement covering recent developments</li> <li>• Reaffirm commitment to the corporate plan, ‘For the Benefit of All’.</li> <li>• Due to Conference being cancelled, consider a different approach based on webinars</li> <li>• Appoint ‘agent for change’</li> <li>• Support the reopening of the lottery programmes.</li> <li>• Express clearly to the APW the need for clear targets and action</li> <li>• Talk to wider constituency – use new eyes for seeing and new ears for listening</li> </ul> <p><u>Group 3</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognise the need for a broad-based approach to all areas of equalities</li> <li>• Do not underplay importance of Welsh language</li> <li>• Provide more data to inform Council of the grants decision.</li> <li>• Training for staff and Council</li> <li>• Focus on APW performance – consider sanctions if there is a persistent lack of progress</li> </ul> <p>PG agreed that he would publish on Council’s behalf a statement of intent from Council (to be drafted with the assistance of SY, AM, DDS)</p> <p>PG also endorsed the creation of a new Equalities Committee of Council, to be approved at the September Council (along with a review of the Council/Committee structure). Proposals would be presented to Council for approval at September’s Council.</p>	<p>PG</p> <p>NC/KB</p>
<p>10. Cymru yn Fenis/Wales in Venice</p> <p>LW introduced the paper from the Wales in Venice Advisory Committee. In doing so she thanked IB, committee members and colleagues.</p> <p>LW and EH provided a presentation on the direction of travel for international work, and for Venice. Future work will be focussing</p>	

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on well-being and the 5 Ways of Working defined in the Welsh Government's legislation.

It is a critical moment in time for the long-standing Cymru yn Fenis/Wales in Venice project. After a number of significant presentations at previous editions of the Venice Biennale of Art, world events require us to reassess our relationship with this major international visual arts event.

The Covid 19 pandemic has caused the deferral of the 2021 Biennale and has raised some important questions about the nature of international working in general. These issues have been reviewed and reappraised by our Wales in Venice Advisory Committee.

Council:

1. **Considered** the case and approach set out and **approved** Phase 1 and 2 development.
2. **Approved** communications for Wales in Venice as part of the commitment to opening out and extending dialogue on the possibilities of international working.
3. **Approved** a budget allocation in 2020/21 of **£30,000**. (Investment would be prioritised to pay artists and freelancers to deliver creative interventions, consultation and participation activities.)

PG thanked both LW and EH for the in-depth report.

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11. **Governance**  
**Minutes of Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Meeting held on 27 May 2020**

KE provided an overview of the meeting held in May.

The committee focussed on 3 matters.

Annual Accounts

Committee were presented with a comprehensive set of accounts. There had been a delay in the audit of the accounts due to COVID 19. The final draft will be discussed in July and signed off by Council in September.

KE congratulated RN and the team.

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Anti-fraud procedures

The Committee had commended Officers on their work on Fraud Checks.

Handling of Complaints

KE informed Council of a Complaint that had been made about an aspect of the Arts Associates programme. All recommendations put forward by the Independent Complaint Reviewer have been agreed.

Complaints will be a standing item on the Committee's agenda. All stage 2 Complaints will be reported to future Committee meetings.

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**12. Any other business**

Council discussed staff well-being and asked for its thanks to be communicated to staff during this difficult time.

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**Date of next meeting:** Friday 4 September 2020 – Zoom

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# Council Meeting: Tuesday 3 July 2020

## Summary of actions and decisions

Item	Action
9 A public statement to be produced following the Council meeting.	PG
9 Review of Council/Committee structures in September to include creation of a new Equalities Committee.	PG