**Minutes of the Sheffield Culture Consortium Zoom**

**Friday 26 November 2021**

**Attending**: – Jo Towler (Music in the Round) - Chair; Andrew Snelling (Sheffield City Trust); Geff Green (SHU); Dan Bates (Sheffield Theatres); Laura Clarke (Art Catalyst); Sylvia Bednarz (Doc/Fest), Clare Stewart (Doc/Fest); Kirstie Hamilton (Sheffield Museums); Georgina Kettlewell (YAS); Ian Wild (Showroom/ Workstation); Judith Harry (Site Gallery); Sara Unwin (UoS); Nick Partridge (Sheffield Libraries), Wendy Ulyett (Marketing Sheffield); Rebecca Maddox (SCC).

**Apologies:** Rose Wilcox (The Leadmill); Vanessa Toulmin (UoS), Kim Streets (Sheffield Museums), Jane Shields (Sheffield Creative Guild).

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|  | **Notes** | **Action** |
| **1.** | **Welcome and introductions**  Clare Stewart, Interim CEO Doc/Fest was warmly welcomed to the meeting. |  |
| **2.** | **Minutes and Matters arising**  The minutes of the October meeting were agreed.   * Karen Durham has been invited to the January Consortium meeting. * Set up a joint session on Mental Health First Aid with a course provider. There will be a modest charge for this. * A joint meeting with Doc/Fest and Consortium to share learning on outreach programme to take place in the New Year. * Further Culture Consortium Plan session to be set up – Away Day to consider role and membership of Consortium, and Plan will grow out of this.   The new Consortium Plan needs to be short and readable; to show what we would want Sheffield to look like in 5 years (reflecting the context of climate emergency, Black Lives Matter and Covid recovery); and what the Consortium can specifically do, with objectives, action points and KPIs.   * Invite Climate Change Alliance to a future meeting | **RM**  **RM**  **RM**  **RM**  **RM** |
| **3.** | **Impacts of Covid on the sector and audiences**  Jo reflected on the findings of a recent Indigo report on audiences, with emphasis on classical music/older audiences. Of previously frequent attenders, 1 in 3 have not yet returned at all; 74% of non-returners expect to attend less regularly than previously in the next 12 months. This suggests that clear Covid measures are important to reassure these audiences.  Over a third who have returned in person are also accessing online content, which suggests that the future may be hybrid.  When people do attend in person (with programme being the strongest pull), they feel great, and are more likely to return. Younger people seem more confident in returning.  Some organisations on the call have seen 75-80% levels of return, with strong secondary spend, but the picture is very varied, even within different venues for the same organisation.  Geff noted that the pandemic has opened up opportunities for online literacy, and international opportunities, so we don’t just want to go back to how it ‘used to be’.  Only 40% of students have returned in person so far.  There are also implications for how the creative industries organise activity – several people apparently caught covid at the London Film Festival.  Online events are expensive and hard work, with some expectation that they are free/lower cost to audiences.  Doc/Fest ran a hybrid festival this year, which was very challenging. Live-streamed events were less popular than expected, with a large increase in catch-up viewing.  Off the Shelf are planning an in-person festival in October 2022, with year-round online events, to allow both formats and to smooth the workload.  Sara reflected on the University of Sheffield UKRI report, which was launched at an excellent event. It both demonstrated the serious impact of Covid on the sector in South Yorkshire – and the importance of having a collective voice. The new South Yorkshire Cultural and Creative Industries Network will help with this. | Jo to circ Indigo and Audience Agency reports |
| **4.** | **Race Equality Commission Interim Report and Anti-Racist Cumbria info**  Vanessa has shared a very helpful graphic from Anti-Racist Cumbria, setting out stages of personal understanding from fear to learning to growth about racism.  Rebecca summarised the REC process and some of the interim findings. One paragraph was particularly pertinent:  *There is a pattern of boards and their organisations (and other influential spaces) being unrepresentative of the city’s diverse population, so they are unable to reflect the lived experiences of those absent from these influential spaces.*  This ties in with the work we have been doing with Roger Wilson from Black Lives in Music, on Board diversity; and while the Consortium includes those with a range of protected characteristics, it is not racially diverse. The Away Day will be an opportunity to bring wider voices and experiences into the group, and to review the purpose, remit and membership of the Consortium for the future. We need to be the change we want to see.  Understanding and using the networks which we each connect to will strengthen the Consortium’s external links. |  |
| **5.** | **Refreshing the Culture Consortium and Away Day December 2021**  Where do we want the city and the Consortium to be in 2025? How do we get there and who can help shape this? How can we create an effective but also inclusive model for the Consortium?  We have adapted as a group through Covid, moving from ACE-funded projects of city-wide benefit, to setting up the Freelancer Fund. The new Place-Based Partnerships Project Grants from ACE may be a future opportunity to embed change.  Consultant Shruti Bharvaga will be facilitating the Away Day. She is also one of the REC Commissioners and understands the cultural landscape in Sheffield.  We have invited Theatre Deli and SADACCA to the Away Day to bring more voices into the room and help shape the way forward, with a view to them becoming members.  All will be asked to take a Covid test before coming to the Away Day.  [The Away Day has subsequently been postponed from December 17th]. |  |
| **6.** | **Theatre Deli - update, ideas for support and wider project on the ecology of cultural spaces in Sheffield**  Theatre Deli had been given 30 days’ Notice to Quit their current premises. Following a meeting on 15th November which brought together supporters from the City Council, Consortium and Collective, Deli have been granted a grace period by the new landlord to January 10th, which safeguards their December programme.  They are exploring various short and longer-term options.  Karen Durham from ACE has suggested applying for Project Grant funding to interrogate the Sheffield ecosystem of cultural spaces, including the role of the Council and private landlords. Rebecca will lead on this with a writing group of organisations with experience of the issues.  There are many issues and opportunities for cultural space in the city – including the redevelopment of Castlegate, the Debenhams building, John Lewis Building, Central Library – plus a city region context.  Fourth Street Consultants have been collating ideas for the use of the John Lewis building / site, and there will be public consultation on this in the Spring. |  |
| **6.** | **AOB**  All received a presentation on the Women’s Euros heritage and culture programme. Doc/Fest are keen to get involved.  NPO support – in line with the Culture Collective’s priority for more NPOs in Sheffield, there was a helpful joint meeting between current and prospective NPOs on 1st November, to create a collegiate approach to NPO applications. Smaller art-form-themed peer support sessions are taking place in December and January. The Collective has pledged £5k pa match to any organisation making an NPO application.  There have been a number of strategically-useful visits to Sheffield recently, including from Lord Neil Mendoza, the Government’s Commissioner for Cultural Recovery and Renewal. Strengthening Sheffield’s profile nationally could help with resources and development for the sector and the city.  Judith reported that the Cultural Industries Quarter has been successful in a bid to the Sheffield Recovery Fund, which will enable a series of events and micro-festivals during 2022. |  |
| **8.** | **Next meeting:**  **Away Day** – original date Friday 17 December **postponed** due to Covid.  Rearranged date planned for **Friday 21 January, 9.30-13.30**, Adelphi Room, Crucible Theatre.  Next regular meeting Friday 28th January 9.30-11.30 |  |