

CREU CYMRU
AGM
15th December 2022
11am
Online

Present: **Board:** Louise Amery, Liam Evans-Ford, Sarah Horner. David Wilson
Staff: Megan Merrett, Louise Miles-Payne, Yvonne O'Donovan
Members: David Baxter, Sharon Casey, Nicola Edwards, Branwen Jones,
Nia Mills, Marina Newth

1. Apologies for absence:

Giles Ballisat, Gillian Mitchell

2. Minutes of the AGM held on 15th December 2021

The minutes of the meeting were approved as a correct record.

3. Chair's report & Board Development

Chair's report:

LEF welcomed members to the 2022 AGM and noted that there was translation available if members chose to speak in Welsh. The year being reported on is the year ending 31st March 2022. Creu Cymru continues as a membership organisation to support our members and the sector against a challenging backdrop. Audience numbers are improving but not back to numbers pre-pandemic levels. Community engagement has become more important for most organisations, but that continues to be challenging both audience wise and engagement wise because of the cost of living and recession. The year we are reporting on is the first year of the change in membership approach that Creu Cymru took, that went through wide consultation and was noted at the last AGM. There were two parts to the change in approach, one was the financial modelling and the other the widening of the membership, initially being a representative body for venues in Wales, now representing producing companies and individuals along with theatres and art centres.

LEF noted as Chair of the Board and on behalf of the Trustees on how continually impressed we are with Louise, Yvonne and Megan and the work that they deliver alongside the freelance support they have in supporting members. **LMP** is doing a lot with Welsh Government, during Covid **LMP** learnt to lobby and the Welsh Language and Culture Committee are continually coming to **LMP** for information on the sector and the membership. **LMP** has also been helping with the St David's Hall challenge where she can, lobbying local governments, whilst that is not Creu Cymru's only or indeed main focus, its an increasing part of our work. **LMP** has also taken up a position on the Board of UK Theatre, which is helping us to ensure that there is a Welsh voice in the UK Theatre scene.

Board Development:

At the last AGM we reported on our improved structures around governance, the Finance and Audit Committee was formed, they do a lot of good work making sure that we know exactly the financial position of Creu Cymru. We've been quite open with members, its been a challenging 3 or 4 years for Creu Cymru, we are in a far more stable position and getting a lot more live financial information from **LMP** and the team now, thanks to **GM** who Chairs that and **DW** who deputises. We've also introduced for the first time a People and HR Committee which **LA** is looking after on behalf of the Board, looking at how we look after our staff at Creu Cymru and freelancers, but its also linking with a lot of the feedback we're getting about resourcing challenges across the sector.

LEF thanked Angela Gould from RCT Theatres who stepped down after 6 years of service and David Haywood who had a brief time with us from the finance team at Aberystwyth University, and has been helping us with increasing the financial resilience and reporting. **LEF** welcomed Jodi Anne

Nicholson who has joined the Board over the last 12 months. We have been aware that as a Board we need to increase our diversity, both with lived experience, but also because of the widening of the membership, we now have members who represent producing companies and individuals and freelancers working in the sector. We are looking for more Board members to represent the membership, also with different professional and lived experience, currently we are looking for people with a financial background. Finally, on Board membership its worth noting that at the last years AGM we agreed a special resolution to extend tenures of a few Board members, to make sure we had continuity as we look to recruit further Trustees. We agreed for this year that tenures are to be extended for **GM**, **LA** and **LEF** to be able to stay on for an extra term from outside of their two first terms. We're not all going to stay on for a full term, we're really keen to get fresh views and voices at the Board, but considering we are about to go through Portfolio reviews, we felt that continuity was important. Members present agreed with the application of the special resolution for Trustees concerned.

LEF noted the continued support for Creu Cymru from ACW. ACW off the back of their Resilience programme continue to support Creu Cymru in our development and remodelling. Finally, just to note that members will be going through challenging times over the next 6 months with the Investment Review that many of you are leading on for your organisations, **LMP** and the team have suspended Creu Cymru activities to a point, but the team are here for you if you need support through any of that portfolio review, also to note that Creu Cymru are looking for some portfolio status. We think it is important that Creu Cymru has stable revenue funding so that we can support the sector and the membership to a greater extent. Also encouraging members to make the most of Creu Cymru, the team offer a huge amount of training opportunities, support and networking.

4. Accounts 2021/22

LEF noted that the Finance Statements had been circulated to members present through the Creu Cymru website. A sensible reserve was carried forward for Creu Cymru, which is stable for now, we as Trustees have agreed that we are using some of the unrestricted reserves against this financial year that we're in now and likely having to allocate a small amount against the next financial year that we are going into. The year we are reporting on was stable, a lot of the funds carried over were project grants. Its worth noting that the membership changes that we made have made a significant difference to the stability of Creu Cymru's finances. Previously with the old model, membership income was around 5-6%, we're now up to around 16-17% of our income is from membership.

5. Re-appointment of Accountant/Auditors

LEF reported that a statutory element of the AGM was regarding re-appointment of auditors, formal approval from within the membership is needed for the re-appointment of Azets. This was approved by members present.

6. Year in Review

LMP shared a Powerpoint presentation showing some of the achievements during 2021/22 and highlighted the following:

- **Income/Expenditure:** Income wise by remodelling the membership our membership income has increased. We want to be less dependable on grants as it makes us more sustainable in the long run. The majority of the expenditure goes on staff costs, the year we are reporting on there were 2 full-time and 1 part-time members of staff, we are pleased that this year we have been able to extend Megan's post temporarily to full-time to enable her to do the work that she is doing with the hnt Impact Report and the expansion of hnt. The biggest achievement for that year was the growth of membership, we went from 40 members to 73 members in the space of a year, we've managed to attain that figure for this year.
- **Training** – all of the training was online, we're still trying to find the right balance of whether we continue with online training or in person training. We piloted a few on-demand training

sessions and in the New Year we will be launching 5 more videos that we've created ourselves, the idea of this is to make sure that as many members of staff throughout the organisation can take part in the training.

- Sharing Together – off the back of the Cultural Contract work we were awarded funds from the Sharing Together funding from ACW, where we ran Cultural Cafes where we tried to look at each of the issues within the Cultural Contract and get experts together and hear from people what they do within that area, where we can learn from and we're continuing to find out how can we support your learning and journeys around everything to do with EDI and sustainability. During those cafes we made some great contacts.
- **LMP** presented at AMA Conference, **MM** has done a lot with Access to Inclusion which she will talk about in her presentation. Actively involved in What Next, as part of the organising group or helping to co-ordinate sessions.
- There has been a lot of conversations with Welsh Government, what we are trying to do now with them is to stress we're not just here for Covid, we're here for the long run. This is the current battle that we're having, it was very easy for them to contact us to gather information such as at one point giving them capacities of all the theatres in Wales at 50%, they knew they could come to us for this information, the issues that we are now facing as a sector they should be doing the same thing and asking us what we need from Welsh Government. We are getting that through the Culture Committee. **LMP** wrote letters to the Deputy Minister and the Culture Committee around issues with St David's Hall, an immediate response was received from Culture Committee and a result of which they've written to Cardiff Council and discussed in one of their meetings and raised at the Senedd.
- Development of Culture Strategy: We've volunteered our services to co-ordinate sessions with members.
- UK Theatre: Through my involvement with UK Theatre, there are things that come out of DCMS which influences Wales, there's been a lot of work we can do cross borders, and continually meet on a monthly basis with our counterparts in Scotland, Northern Ireland other UK wide theatre bodies where we talk about issues. Now we're looking at how we can work together and come up with a joint project.

MM spoke about the following:

- Figures: hynt members being 22,157 and 40 hynt venues for the financial year ending March 2022.
- Membership: With the expansion of the Creu Cymru membership, we've also been looking at what that might mean for hynt in terms of what other types of organisations could join in a slightly different way to the venues. An Associate membership has been introduced, Cardiff Castle Christmas Festival have joined us this year. They have a slightly different offer to the venues as they don't operate throughout the year, there are some elements that they would not be getting that the venues do. What will be interesting to look at is how they have used hynt data to talk to their Box Office System to enable booking and will hopefully be something that we can introduce at more hynt venues.
- Accessible Reopening Checklist: This is something that we shared in this financial year. This was as part of the Audience Access Alliance which we joined through the Covid period, a group of around thirteen organisations cross sector e.g. sports, museums, galleries. The Accessible Reopening Checklist was designed to be a practical checklist for cross sector organisations to ensure that re-opening plans post lockdown were to welcome back everyone, giving them information to plan their visits with accessibility being considered at every stage.
- Connect and Flourish: This was an ACW Connect and Flourish project, Breaking the Box, it was designed to look at the workforce being more inclusive and diverse in our venues. The aim of the project was to develop a network of inclusive and accessible venues in Wales that

were confident and supported in welcoming diverse artists, backstage crew, administrators as well as audiences. Hynt's role was co-planning and working on delivering an industry sharing day. **MM** line-managed one of the project managers and engaged three early career creatives following interviews. The full project partners list is Taking Flight Theatre Company, Disability Arts Cymru, hynt, Carmarthenshire Theatres, RCT Theatres and Pontio. There has been a lot of learning from the project that we are keen to share.

- Symposium: We had planned for an in person event, it got moved online due to Covid. We had an online Zoom version, where we had the following speakers, Andrew Ogun and Ben Pettit-Wade, Andrew gave us the bigger picture of his role and experience, he also gave us some useful take-aways for approaches for accessible recruitment. Ben spoke about Hijinx's experience, shared a video of a recent Hijinx R&D.
- The Audience Agency Research: We supported Nancy Sheterline with information about which venues were participating, made introductions with the Card Network.
- ACW: ACW agreed that they would be renewing our contract and we continued relationships with Diverse Cymru and Limegreentangerine.
- Hynt Impact Report: The Hynt Impact Report is a major part of our work currently, the report will have some real impact on how we move things forward. Recommendations will be made as part of the report which will inform our decisions moving forward to look at where we're focussing, what we can do better, what's important for user groups or for people who are eligible for hynt but haven't joined yet.
- UK Wide Access Scheme Consultation: We have been in conversations with the people who are leading on this work at ACE. We are sharing our learning, our experiences. They are looking for a pilot launch in 2024.
- Training: **MM** reminded members present regarding the training opportunities coming up in the Spring.

LMP thanked **MM** for all the work regarding the Impact Report.

7. Future priorities and programme

LMP reported on the following:

- Investment Review: We will be applying for portfolio status, the work we've done over the last couple of years to try and shore up the organisation demonstrates our needs and value for money. We've run some consultations so far, thanks to those who have attended, if there is anything you think we should be doing then do please contact. We will still continue our Open Circle events, once a month to discuss the IR application process/guidance notes.
- Meetings and Training Jan-March: Meetings and training will be online during this period, to allow people to attend without having to take time out of the office whilst working on their Business plans etc. for the Investment Review applications.
- Conference: 9th May at Park & Dare Theatre, Treorchy. We are focussing on audiences and skills throughout the day, there will be time for networking during the day as well. We are introducing a section in the day called 'Member Moments' where you can talk about whatever you want to talk about in a pecha kucha style which is 20 slides, 20 seconds per slide. There will be a charge to attend the Conference this year to cover costs for refreshments, speaker fees etc. The offer with renewal of membership this year will be if you renew your membership before end of April you can have one place free at the Conference.

8. Questions or comments from attendees

No questions/comments were received from attendees present.

9. Date of AGM 2023

LEF noted that we do have flexibility with the date for our AGM, it doesn't have to be within 12 months, we do have an extra few months to play with. **LEF** asked whether members present would prefer the AGM at a different time of year. **LA** noted that if the AGM was in person then a different time of year would be better.