**CREU CYMRU**

**AGM**

**15 May 2024**

**11am**

**Aberystwyth Arts Centre**

**Present: Board:** Liam Evans-Ford, Julia Barry, Sarah Beer, David Wilson

**Staff:** Megan Merrett, Louise Miles-Payne, Yvonne O’Donovan

**Members:** Sharon Casey,Emma Evans, Nicolas Young

***1. Apologies for absence:***

No apologies received.

***2. Minutes of the AGM held on 15th December 2022***

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 2024 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 2023. Creu Cymru continues as a membership organisation to support our members and the sector against a challenging backdrop.

**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.

The year under review has been one of continued challenge to the sector we support in Wales, but with signs of positive improvement as we continue to build a recovery from the well documented external factors since spring 2020.

As a membership organisation we look to respond to the needs and requests made by our membership, and the themes continue to revolve around skills, training, well-being, and a need for peer to peer contact and networking opportunities. We have been encouraged by the appetite for people to travel to events across Wales, with the 2023 conference held in Treorchy at the Park and Dare Theatre welcoming our highest attendance to a ‘non-Cardiff’ based event.

The second year of our new membership model has seen a small growth in members, a positive sign, especially considering the ever mounting financial challenges for venues, producers and individuals alike. We do continue to find it difficult to gather the necessary data from the membership to help make the right case for support with The Arts Council of Wales and Welsh Government. This is, in the most part, due to many member organisations being under resourced and/or not having the data readily available to share, and we are aware that we need to find ways of improving this into the future.

The team continue to deliver at a high level, and myself and fellow trustees are pleased with the level of information made available to us both at full board meetings, and via our two subcommittees.

The delivery of the HYNT scheme on behalf of the Arts Council of Wales remains a key area of our work, and we’ve been pleased to receive the evaluation work undertaken by Milestone Tweed highlighting the impact on Deaf and disabled people attending arts events in Wales since the scheme was launched, and the positive impact on venues who welcome HYNT card holders. As the UK wide plans continue to gather pace, we aim to ensure Creu Cymru can offer the learning and expertise gained over almost 10 years of delivering the Welsh specific scheme.

Towards the end of the financial year highlighted within these accounts, the arts sector in Wales was undertaking the significant work required for the Arts Council of Wales Investment Review. Having not taken place since 2015/16, it was always a key target for the re-modelled Creu Cyrmu to re-enter the national portfolio, and our delivery since appointing Lousie as Director has certainly put us in a strong position. This is crucial to our choices as we head into the future, and the autumn and winter of 2023/24 will likely be a time to consider our next stage of plans, but to also look at what impact the Investment Review has on our membership and the arts sector in Wales. We expect change, and will aim to support our membership as best we can through that change.

And of course, as is always the case when reviewing a year as part of audited accounts– things move on quickly. With at least one venue member now dealing with RACC within the fabric of their building, and more having to survey and test for its use, there is a new complication for our sector to navigate on top of everything the last three years has brought. We’ll only be able to navigate such things as a collective, and we are proud that Creu Cymru continues to be that collective voice for the live performance industry in Wales.

***4. 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. The work of the Finance and Audit Committee continues to support Louise, Yvonne and Megan with their budgeting requirements. Louise Amery and Gillian Mithcell completed their terms on the Board, and we recently welcomed 3 new Board members, Sara Beer, Geinor Styles and Julia Barry.

***5.* *Accounts 2022/23***

**LEF** noted that the Finance Statements had been circulated to members present through the Creu Cymru website. These accounts cover the year to 31 March 2023 and represent the company’s thirteenth year as a registered charity. The year has again been one where the company has been at the centre of a range of funded project activities focussed on the continuing improvement of the facilities and resources available to, and offered by, the professional presenting sector in Wales, furthering the relationships and partnerships with producers and independent artists, and supporting the continuing professional development opportunities for those employed in the sector.

Grant income during the year was £124,746:

ACW and ACE £113,496

WCVA £1,250

Foyle Foundation £10,000

The results for the year were an unrestricted surplus of £27,555 and a surplus on restricted funds of £9,125.

At 31 March 2023 the charity carried forward a balance of £124,644 comprising:

General Funds £10,376

Designated Funds £100,387

Restricted Funds £13,881

***6. Re-appointment of Accountant/Auditors***

**LEF** reported that a statutory element of the AGM was regarding re-appointment of auditors, The decision has been made to look for new auditors and 4 companies were interviewed for this with the decision to appoint HSJ Accountants, because of their understanding of working with charities and arts organisations. This was approved by members present.

***7. Year in Review***

**LMP** welcomed members present and highlighted the following:

* The membership continued to grow with 75 members across Wales.
* We continued to create news articles and highlight the good work of the sector.
* We ran a series of networking meetings for various levels of the membership.
* We also ran Investment Review support meetings and consultations.
* 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 3 full-time staff.
* Training: All of the training was online, we are still trying to find the balance which works for members between online and in person training. We provided training around a range of topics, picking up issues from members meetings. Thanks for funding from the Foyle Foundation we created six On Demand training videos, with an aim of creating training for members that could be undertaken at any time, fitting with the variety of hours worked by people within the sector.
* Advocacy post Covid continued to be (and remains to be), an important part of our work. We continued to present and provide evidence to both Welsh Government and UK Government committees. We also work with a number of organisations across the UK to make sure that the sector in Wales is represented and heard.
* I was awarded the WCVA Walter Dickie Leadership Bursary who allowed me research other membership bodies and sector support organisations and bring that learning into our future plans.

**Hynt:**

* With over 27,000 hynt cardholders at the end of March 2023 since launching in 2015, applications have reached pre Covid levels. As of the end of March 2023, over 40 theatres and arts centres were member venues of hynt and new associate members (Cardiff Castle Christmas Festival, Little Wander, ICC Wales and Margam Country Park) joined.
* We are a partner in the Connect and Flourish project ‘Breaking the Box‘ alongside Taking Flight Theatre Company, Theatrau Sir Gar, RCT Theatres, and Pontio.
* IMPACT REPORT - Independently researched and written by Abigail Tweed, of Milestone Tweed, and Mark Richardson, the report was funded by Arts Council England
* Training has included Disability Equality and Customer Service and Deaf Awareness Training
* We have been working with UK partners on the creation of ‘All In‘ the UK-wide access scheme based on hynt.

***8. Future priorities and programme***

Thanks to our successful application to become a multi year funded organisation by Arts Council of Wales we are able to expand our work for members. We will be:

* bringing back curated visits,
* creating a staff exchange programme
* Continuing our monthly members meetings with special guest and topics
* Creating an Access Forum
* Hosting a pitch event aimed at increasing collaboration
* back in Edinburgh with subsidised accommodation and a networking event.
* The Hynt Symposium will be held in November (location tbc).
* Continuing with our training events including the return of our free six-week wellbeing programme.
* And as previously mentioned, advocacy will continue to be a big part of our work, particularly focusing on increasing funding to the sector and preventing further cuts.

***9. Questions or comments from attendees***

No questions/comments were received from attendees present.

***10. Date of AGM 2025***

The AGM will be held on the 3rd April 2025.