



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL STRATEGIC CULTURE AND ARTS STEERING GROUP
Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Strategic Culture and Arts Steering Group held on Monday, 14
February 2022 at 2.00 pm.

County Borough Councillors - Strategic Culture and Arts Steering Group Members in attendance:-

Councillor R Lewis (Chair)

Councillor A Crimmings Councillor J Brencher
Councillor J Rosser

Co-Opted Members in attendance:-

Ms M Dunning

Officers in attendance:-

Ms C O'Neill, Strategic Arts & Culture Manager
Mr A Williams, Theatre Operations and Development Manager
Mrs S Handy – Members' Researcher & Scrutiny Officer
Mr N Kelland – Principal Librarian

Guests:-

Ms J Angharad – CEO, Artis Community Cymuned
Mr R Hughes, CEO Awen Cultural Trust

17 Welcome

The Chair welcomed Members to the last meeting of the Strategic Culture & Arts Cabinet Steering Group for the 2021-22 Municipal Year. The Chair noted that Councillor Rosser was retiring and thanked her for all her hard work on the Steering Group.

18 Apologies

Apologies of absence were received from County Borough Councillors S Rees-Owen and G. Hughes and co-opted member Mr Coppock.

19 Declaration of Interest

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, County Borough Councillor J. Brencher declared the following personal interest:
"I am a Trustee of the YMCA"

20 Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Minutes of the 27th September 2021 as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

21 An update on the progress of the Muni

Mr Richard Hughes, the Chief Executive of Awen Cultural Trust, provided Members with an update in respect of the community asset transfer of the Muni Arts Centre to Awen Cultural Trust.

Members of the Steering Group were informed that in November 2021 the Council were awarded money towards the Muni as part of the Levelling Up Fund application. Members were advised that the Muni is now in stage 3, which is the design part of the process. The delivery phase is aimed for Spring 2022. The focus is currently on 2 areas; accessibility and sustainability. Members were advised that the progress is going very well and that the work is looking to be undertaken over the coming year.

Following the update, thanked Mr Hughes for providing the Steering Group with the overview of the work to date. The Chair referenced the challenges that were faced by the Council with the levelling up fund and noted how pleased he was with the final outcome.

Discussion ensued and a number of Members noted how pleased they were with the progress to date. Councillor Brencher noted how pleased she was that the Muni was going back to its original features and sought clarification as to whether Awen would also be engaging with the YMCA and Pontypridd Town Council. Councillor Brencher also noted how much she would love to sit on the Muni Board and queried there would be an opportunity to do so. Furthermore, Councillor Brencher noted that parking access is critical when designing the Muni.

The Chair noted the importance of community engagement given that the Muni has been closed for some time. It was emphasised that it is important that it is sustainable for the future. Mr Hughes agreed and noted the importance of the work being transparent to the community.

Councillor Brencher noted that lots of different community groups meet in Pontypridd and queried whether there was a list of the groups who are being consulted with on this project. The Chair noted that the wider Pontypridd groups would be the best forum for any group to get involved. The Strategic Arts & Culture Manager noted that there is a Strategic Creative Pontypridd Partnership that has Awen and YMa as its members alongside other members who manage cultural buildings in Pontypridd. For those organisations and individuals beyond buildings, the Artis Creative Conversations network is available to join, with discussions here feeding into the Strategic Creative Pontypridd Partnership via Artis, who co-ordinate the conversations.. These groups share good practice and work collaboratively. It was noted that many residents are collaborating with the Muni project through other ways.

Following discussion, Members **RESOLVED** to note the update in respect of the progress of the Muni.

22 **Artis Community Cymuned**

The CEO of Arts Community Cymuned, Jen Angharad, provided Members with a power point presentation in respect of an Arts Community Cymuned / Pontypridd YMCA Collaboration.

The Chair thanked the CEO for providing such a detailed overview. The CEO noted her particular thanks to Ann Hayes and Councillor Brencher.

Discussion ensued and Councillor Rosser noted that she had been involved in the early days of the project and noted how pleasing it was to see the plans come to formation. Councillor Brencher noted that the YMCA has persevered through particularly dark days and noted how exciting it was to see the plans in place today. It was also emphasised that RCT Council deserves a lot of credit as the funding given made the difference between failure and success. A number of Members agreed and passed on their congratulations to RCT Council and noted the value of the work for the local community. The Chair noted that the YMCA is a part of the Council's wider regeneration plans for Pontypridd.

Following discussion, Members **RESOLVED** to note the update.

23 **To consider the Arts Council Wales investment application**

The Arts & Culture Manager provided Members with an update on the Arts Council of Wales's Investment Review and the Arts Service's future focus.

Following the overview, Members **RESOLVED** to note the update within the report.

24 **An update on libraries and collections in RCT**

The Principal Librarian provided Members with an overview on libraries and collection in RCT through the use of a power point presentation.

The Chair thanked the officer for providing a detailed overview and noted the wide range of services on offer to the public. The Principal Librarian emphasised the fantastic team of staff and gave praise to them. A number of Members gave praise to the staff, particularly with how well they have adapted to the pandemic.

Discussions ensued and a Member queried what were the Council's plans to link with education going forward. The Member also queried what the plans were in respect of Pontypridd Town Library and the literature festival. The Principal Librarian noted that in respect of school children the service has been encouraging more families to join up. Further, in respect of education, they have been establishing new contacts with schools, however, there can be a lot of regulations surrounding each visit. As Covid restrictions are lifted, it is hoped that more visits will be encouraged. It was also noted that in respect of the school library system, RCT Council will also be creating its own online content. In respect of the literacy festival, the Principal Librarian emphasised that when all restrictions are fully lifted, it will be an opportunity for RCT to co operate with them going forward.

Following the overview, Members **RESOLVED** to note the update on libraries and collections in RCT.

25 Urgent Business

There was no urgent business to report.

26 Chair's Review & Close

The Chair noted that this was the last meeting of the Strategic Culture & Arts Cabinet Steering Group for the 2021-22 Municipal Year. The Chair thanked all Members for their contributions and hard work. The Chair also noted that Councillor Rosser was retiring and wished her every success for the future and thanked her for all her hard work. The Chair also thanked all officers for their hard work and dedication.

This meeting closed at 3.32 pm

**CLLR R LEWIS
CHAIR.**