



Fife Cultural Trust

Board Meeting

27th May 2020, 17.30 Via Zoom

Present, FCT Board: David Caldwell (Chair), Fiona Davidson, Councillor Lesley Backhouse, Sarah Scarlett, Gemma Butterfield, Brian Lawrie, Frank Quinault, Zuleika Brett, Councillor Jane Ann Liston, Derek Bottom

Present, FCSTL Board: Brian Lawrie (Chair), Frank Quinault, Sarah Scarlett, Derek Bottom, John Silcock, Lorraine Brown

Attending: Heather Stuart, Marcus Kenyon, Michelle Sweeney, Kirsty Keay, Diane White (notes)

Apologies: Councillor Ian Cameron, Councillor Dave Coleman.

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and the apologies were noted above.

The Chair asked for any comments on the minutes of the meeting of 22nd April. It was agreed that the minute around the Intimation to OSCR, should be changed to a “possible” substantial loss.

Action – DW to make this change in the minutes.

The Board Executive Advisory Group had met since the April Board meeting, and had discussed the agenda for the May Board meeting but no other decisions had been made. There was some discussion around this, and it was clarified that the Group, in line with the terms of reference agreed at the previous meeting, has no additional delegated authority from the Board, outwith that already delegated to the Chief Executive. It is intended more as a vehicle to ensure strong strategic connections between the leadership teams of both management and Board and to allow shaping of issues at a pre Board consideration stage, and to support good planning for Board meetings and associated programme of Board work. The terms of reference would be reviewed to ensure that this was clear.

Action - KK to review these terms of reference before the next meeting.

2. Chief Executive’s Report – Paper 1

HS stated that the report was intended to provide a context and a framework and was for information only. The report shows the work done in leadership terms to steer the organisation through lockdown, and the adaptability of managers and staff across the organisation to continue to deliver a digital high quality and inclusive programme of activities. Customer engagement is higher than pre lockdown and both the management team and the Board highlighted their pride in the staff and the Board wished the sincerity and content of their praise to be communicated to staff throughout the organisation, along with their thanks for such huge efforts in such challenging times. The lockdown period has demonstrated the real pride in the organisation that exists. The paper also highlighted ongoing work to secure a long term sustainable future for the Trust given short and longer term financial pressures, covered in detail elsewhere on the agenda. HS emphasised the tone of the meetings with Fife Council about finances and also key operational considerations were very constructive and helpful including those relating to plans for future reopening. It was also noted that HS had been asked by Fiona Hyslop, Cabinet Secretary, to sit on a National Strategy Partnership tasked with implementing the recently approved culture strategy for Scotland, taking account of recent changes in context for its delivery.

The Board congratulated HS on this important appointment and noted it was extended to her as an individual, and confirmed their support for her involvement, recognising the benefits to the organisation.

The Chair asked anyone who was having problems with technology, and missed anything from the meeting to catch up with HS, KK, or himself if needed

JS asked if there were any other contingencies in place other than the advance of the Management Fee from Fife Council. HS explained that a business overdraft had been considered along with drawing forward an advance on the management fee from Fife Council. Currently, there was no anticipated need to borrow funds via overdraft or any of the available loans, given the challenges of future repayment by the Trust.

3. Corporate and Commercial Update – Paper 2

KK answered questions raised by the Board from the papers. - £30k is the Fife Cultural Services Trading Ltd (FCSTL) average monthly staff cost. This is an estimate made from previous months earnings. The Furlough claim will be approximately £26k as it relates to the trading subsidiary. The £100k cushion mentioned in the paper is from the 2019/20 profit. This will be retained as long as possible to assist cashflow. The Finance Team have been asked to look into where the pinch points would be for FCSTL. The value of redundancy costs if this became an issue in the future was confirmed as approximately £70k.

KK confirmed that a claim had been made on the business interruption insurance, and applications for grants had also been made for 100k to the Pivotal Enterprise Resilience Fund and for £25k to the Small Grants Business Scheme. The IT bill highlighted as being high at £4k was a one-off cost in hardware to support the necessary remote working by staff as a result of lockdown, any ongoing cost will be much less. KK reported that the Team were keeping a constant eye on finances given the lack of trading and impact on the cashflow projections. KK reiterated that the meetings with Fife Council had been very positive. There was some discussion around FCSTL in the future, and how this may look. The Team is working very hard to look at options for reopening in line with government guidelines, and possibly using our outdoor spaces along with developing thinking on business diversification. To facilitate this there have been some positive conversations with Scottish Enterprise and a lot of thought given to offering support to other businesses in Fife including Food in Fife. KK advised that the end of year position overall for the group previously advised was likely to remain approximately the same, and this was welcomed by the Board.

Both the FCT and FCSTL Board indicated that they understood the position as laid out by KK and looked forward to seeing the end of year position when this could be sent out.

4. Operations Overview –Paper 3

MK explained that the focus of the Operations Team at the moment was planning for reopening. The process seemed to be going down well, in step with government guidelines. There seemed to be a lack of sectoral guidance especially in theatres, but more so in libraries moving forward. A lot of options are dependent on staff availability, this means that work is being done in the background to see what service we can offer. Health and Safety and Risk Assessment will include an assessment of the need for any protective equipment.

In response to the question from the Board regarding the 9 Personas used in the Walking in the Shoes report to inform thinking around the customer journey for future reopening, they were confirmed as:

- A young child starting to visit by themselves
- A teacher looking to prepare class content
- A teenager studying for exams
- A young mother with two young children

An unemployed person
A foreign national looking to improve their English
An older mother with more independent children
An older worker looking for escapism from busy life
Someone suffering from the early phase of dementia
A pensioner in a wheelchair

It is anticipated that a lot of customers may be shielding so the delivery service will be key. Theatre and other service staff may be asked to help with the gaps in the service. Hubs and key venues are likely to be prioritised but thinking around options is ongoing. There was a clear emerging critical path for reopening and there was strong engagement with frontline staff in developing the plans and support for the approach being taken.

When buildings can open has to be co-ordinated with Fife Council, given the need for key building checks. The flexibility and principles of the plan were commended by the Board. The Chair asked the rationale behind museums and galleries opening much later than libraries, and MK explained our approach was in line with the Scottish Government route map whilst also taking account of how social distancing and other key measures can be taken account of, along with the likely demand for essential services. Detailed work regarding museums and galleries had already started in parallel. Galleries would likely be open before museums, but conversations were ongoing with the museums and heritage team around this.

JAL asked about the catering facilities within libraries and museums, and it was noted that these types of services were subject to additional and different considerations and were being actively looked at but due to their nature were unlikely to open in their previous form in the near future, and certainly not at the same time as the initial reopening of libraries.

BL said that he thought the report was very helpful, showing a lot of hard work going on in the background. He asked what the Staff reaction had been to the plans MK confirmed that positive engagement had been ongoing with a lot of staff. PODS and workshops had been set up, and over 50 staff had volunteered to take part in these. It was recognised that some staff are also anxious about returning to work and will need to be supported. Detailed work on a re-induction for all staff coming back into deliver services is ongoing in parallel.

5. Creative Development Update – Paper 4

MS highlighted some of the updated statistics since the papers had gone out. The ONFife Cares team has made over 1700 calls. LibrarYay has over 1700 followers. Over 100 in the last week. As part of the Fife in Lockdown project, Gavin Grant had been interviewed on Kingdom FM this morning. The Chair asked for information on how to contribute to this. It was agreed that this should be sent to the Board. Museums Week had a massive reach with audience. MS confirmed that work was ongoing to firm up on the festive programme including any Panto related offer, and this will be decided in the next few weeks.

MS talked about the Equalities, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) ambition and Plan. This was progressing with the Senior Management Team and would be brought back to the Board when this had been discussed fully internally. MS confirmed, with full support from the Board, that a decision has been taken to postpone all programming until spring 2021. A communications strategy was being developed to get this message out. Individual and personal contact will be made with all of the organisations impacted by this decision. FD asked about EDI - can issues around HR and Finances be brought up and sorted out before this can be signed off. MS confirmed that this will be looked at with SMT.

Action – Information on how to contribute to the Fife in Lockdown project to be circulated to the Board.
Action – issues around HR and Finance within the EDI plan to be discussed with the SMT before the plan comes back to the Board.

6. FCSTL –Verbal Update

It was agreed this had been covered under item 3 and the FCSTL Board members confirmed they were content with all items covered relating to the trading subsidiary operations and finances discussed at this meeting.

7. Risk Register – Paper 5

KK reported that there had not been a lot of movement within the Risk Register, but this is thought to be positive, regarding the meetings with Fife Council etc. Another meeting with the Council informed by the intended reshaping of the furlough scheme would happen in the next week or so.

SS said that she felt that the report was a little light on the financial risks to FCSTL but that this may be resolved with further information. SS agreed to pick this up with KK. JAL asked about the risk around buildings not being able to be reopened due to legionella or other health concerns. MK confirmed that he had spoken to Fife Council regarding this. Legionella testing has been ongoing in venues, but Integrated Water Services (the company who oversee the testing) staff have been furloughed. Schools will need to be tested ahead of our venues. HS confirmed that nothing will be re-opening until we are satisfied that it is safe to do so for staff and customers.

Action – KK and SS to pick up on the re-opening risk register out with the Board Meeting

8. AOCB

FD thanked everyone for the quality of the papers as did SS and BL, particularly given the pressures on the team at the moment. BL emphasised that FCSTL is the most vulnerable part of the business just now for obvious reasons. The risks need to be considered carefully.

FQ congratulated the Management Team on positive changes in ways of working resulting from and being progressed during lockdown. JAL thanked the Team for such clear and informative reports.

LB thought that there was an amazing amount of work taking place and wanted to thank all the staff for this as well as the clear and concise reports. JS felt that positive progress was coming out of lockdown and emphasised that reopening would be important for business.

The Chair reiterated the importance of getting in touch if anything had been missed during the meeting. He added his thanks to the staff for doing so much in difficult circumstances.

9. DONM

24th June