

Arts in Motion Adventurers Unlimited Ballet West Charioteer Theatre Company Dannsa DogDaze
Dog Star Grey Coast Theatre Company Goode for a Giggle Fiery Thistle

Highlands and Islands Theatre Network

Mull Theatre Out of Darkness RightLines Perhilion Theatre Company Plan B Roadrunner
Skeklers Tartan Chameleon Tabula Rasa theatre collective@highland Theatre Hebrides Tosg
Zenwing Puppets

Minutes of Meeting of HITN Board of Directors held on 31 August 2005 at Moray Firth Training, Inverness at 12.30pm

[please note that these Board Minutes have still to be ratified by the HITN Board]

Present:

Ian Brown, Robert Livingston, Sandy Anderson, Muriel Ann Macleod, Stuart Brownlee. Not quorate – Minutes to be ratified at next Board meeting.

Apologies:

Dolina MacLennan, Lara MacDonald, John McGeoch.

1. Welcome - minutes of the last meeting & matters arising

Minutes of meeting of 22 April 2005 – approved at Board meeting held on 8 June 2005. Need to track down minutes of 8 June 2005 and take forward to next meeting of the Board for approval.

2. Update on Company set up, Memorandum and Articles of Association

- 2.1. The Memorandum and Articles, Forms 10 and 12, have now all been signed and sent to Companies House on 22 August 2005. Signed form with date of birth and tax reference and CV's required from all Board members. MAMaCL (Company Secretary) to circulate request for this information to all Board members. Sequence of next steps – confirm all Directors of the new Company prior to opening HITN Bank Account. In the meantime, HI~Arts will continue to act as account holder. **ACTION: Muriel Ann Macleod.**

3. Festival of Theatre 2007 – STAFF update

- 3.1 Minutes of Meetings: 8 July 2005 and 24 August 2005 (attached)

Minutes received. Minutes of 8 July fed into meeting of the 24 July. Concentrate on minutes of 24 July. HITN Board recognises that George Gunn (Grey Coast Theatre Company) has been appointed to the STAFF working group. Minutes of 24 July set out a number of items for development. It was agreed that the HITN Board has the executive power to further revise the worked up Vision Statement and revised Aims as a final draft (see 3.2 below). HITN Board approved subject to acceptance at the members meeting following this Board meeting. **ACTION: Ian Brown to put the unconfirmed Minutes and recommendations before the Members meeting held on 31 August 2005.**

3.2 STAFF Vision and Aims

“Celebrating the best of today’s theatre in the Highlands and Islands; offering a forum to learn, create and debate.”

The Festival project needs to be identifiable as Highlands and Islands, but also needs to be more than this. The role of large Scottish companies in the festival was questioned. The Vision Statement has been left open-ended to reflect the desire to focus on the best of Highlands & Islands theatre of today as well as the wider ambition of celebrating and learning from the best of today’s theatre from outwith the H&I’s, performed in the H&I’s. The core of the participants will be the H&I’s Theatre community and while the final shape and scope of the Festival idea is still a bit amorphous, (IB) has been tasked to prepare a paper on the principles of programming policy. At this stage ideas are forming around a core of activity that will be focused on H&I’s companies, along with guest companies, e.g. a themed country and other complementary work from Scotland and other areas of the UK. There is a strong indication that NTOS will want to be a part of the festival. Moving away from original title towards a Highlands & Islands Theatre Festival (HITF). (RL) – hold onto STAFF as a strap-line as still have an ambition to fulfill this role. It was agreed that there should be a tighter title for the event (e.g. HITF) with the STAFF strap-line to fully reflect the scope. (SA) – it is down to the members to decide. It was agreed that the concept was fundamentally about creating opportunities for H&I’s companies and this needs to be described, along with the exchange of ideas and creative elements of the festival. (RL) – regional distinctiveness needs to be to the fore (wherever that region is). HITN Board approved to recommend the Vision Statement as it stands to the membership.

Aim 1:

“To celebrate, share and promote the highest quality theatre and build links between the Highlands and Islands and national and international practitioners.”

The ambiguity in Aim 1 is deliberate, with the core focus on the H&I’s Theatre companies and practitioners, but with the added value of a richer menu of material from wider regional input from other areas. Aim 1 approved as stands.

Aim 2:

It was the working group view that the Festival should be strongly integrated with the community and state the claim that youth and community are core to this. Not just an elitist festival. Working with Eden Court outreach, PAN - reaching into the community. (RL) – need to ensure that there is work there that specifically addresses young audiences. Inclusion issues. (SA) – Not sure exactly how the Festival would meet the needs of young people and children. Better phrasing proposed – “to create opportunities for the involvement of wider communities, including young people and children”. Aim 2 approved with this proposed re-phrasing:

“To create opportunities for the involvement of the wider communities, including young people and children.”

Aim 3:

(SA) - remove ‘a’, as this suggests a physical space. Aim 3 approved as:

“To provide space for Scotland’s theatre community to learn, debate, innovate and create.”

HITN Board approved to recommend to Members. **ACTION: Ian Brown to put Vision Statement and revised Aims as a recommendation for approval to the Members meeting held on 31 August 2005.**

3.3 STAFF Working Group – formalisation & membership

It is proposed that HITN manage the project through the working group, ask the HITN Board to manage on behalf of the members. STAFF Working Group now be ratified as a Festival Implementation Group with HITN members, and observers from the following bodies: Eden Court, NToS, HI-Arts, Highland 2007, The Playwrights Studio. The HITN Board approved to recommend this to members.

It was agreed that the Festival Implementation Group (FIG) needs to be aware of what powers it has, e.g. progressing funding applications etc., the Implementation Group would steer the development of the Festival, advised and directed by the HITN Board.

(RL) – Observed that there remains a significant challenge of getting the importance of HITN through to SAC. (SA) – Observed that at a future time HITN may look to set up a subsidiary company, arising from the Festival Implementation Group.

It was noted and agreed that the STAFF working group (now renamed Festival Implementation Group) recommended the appointment of an executive producer who would be directly responsible to the HITN Board.

(RL) – regarding possible sources of funding for the Festival, the situation regarding the 2007 Regional Fund is now clearer, with project bids up to £25k being possible (October and April submission dates). The funding for the Regional aspect of 2007 is about helping to support projects that will attract significant numbers of people into the Highlands during that year. If the Festival focuses on Inverness for its main programme of activity with the idea of pre-festival build up from the periphery into to Inverness (in line with the idea of the ‘saltire’ journey), it may be possible to attract funding from both the Inverness Area Community Fund and the Regional Fund. This won’t provide all the money required, but with a possible combination of an enhanced Highland Producers Fund, Highland 2007 in-kind administration and sponsorship support, Eden Court in-kind programming support, NToS in-kind

programming support and perhaps a direct case to the SE through SAC for financial support it might well be possible to put together the required funding package. The 1st year is a pilot for proving that what we have created is worth having and Highland 2007 sees a theatre festival as one of 3 core projects. It was agreed that in order to take matters further, a programming/costing exercise needs to be carried out. **ACTION: Muriel Ann Macleod agreed to prepare an indicative festival costings paper to complement the paper on programming principles to be prepared by Ian Brown.**

(RL) – raised the matter of when would be the right time to meet with SAC regarding the HITF concept. It was agreed that a meeting with SAC should be sought following the next meeting of the Festival Implementation Group (FIG) on 28 September 2005. It was further agreed that at that time HITN should be asking what help can SAC give HITN to plan the 2007 event and what enhanced support SAC can offer to HITN. It was agreed to aim for SAC meeting in either week beginning 3 or 10 October 2005. **ACTION: Ian Brown.**

The HITN Board approved to recommend the formalisation of the STAFF working group, to be re-named the Festival Implementation Group (FIG) to Members. **ACTION: Ian Brown to put proposed formalisation of group as a recommendation for approval to the Members meeting held on 31 August 2005.**

4. Northern Periphery Project – update

- 4.1. Defer to members meeting held on 31 August 2005, following this Board meeting.

5. Marketing – Marketing Plan, Company logo and branding

- 5.1 It was agreed that Stuart Brownlee would prepare a Draft Marketing Plan for HITN and e-mail this for comment from Board Members, with a view to going to the next Board meeting for approval for recommending to the members.
- 5.2 (RL) – In a wider, but related, context, HI~Arts have been having discussions with SAC on how best to take forward Audience Development in the H&I's. It appears that SAC are now less focused on creating a specific northern Audience Development Agency and more concerned with wider audience development issues. HI~Arts may therefore consider creating a central services administration unit idea (along the lines of that proposed by SAC in the Choreographic Unit model) for servicing the marketing, audience development and administrative needs of theatre companies, festivals, and even promoters, incorporating both *thebooth* and Audience Development functions. HITN therefore needs to ask itself, "is this a service required by HITN members and do they expect HITN to provide it?"

(SA) - HITN wants to raise the profile of theatre in the H&I's, not supply these kind of services directly to its member companies. Following the PAN example, HITN could negotiate the service from a third party, such as HI~Arts propose, rather than provide it. The finance for this could possibly come from Service fees, e.g. following the Tourist Board model, where being a member

gives you access to buy in marketing, admin. support that the network has put in place, either directly or via a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with a third party.

HITN is not a service organisation. SAC is interested in developing theatre in the H&I's and this is why it is supporting HITN. The work of Theatre companies in the H&I's is mainly project based, so the model might well look like this: HITN Membership fee paid to HITN opens up an opportunity for member companies to buy-in administration, marketing or other support services, the cost of which they would build into their project costs, and HITN would then make the appropriate arrangement to provide these services.

6. Any other Business

None.

7. Date, Time and Place of next Meeting

The next Board of Directors Meeting will take place on Wednesday 2 November 2005 at 12.30, at LivingWell Health Club, Inches Retail Park, Inverness (01463 663700). A soup and sandwich lunch will be provided. The Board Meeting will be followed by the Members Meeting at 2pm.

Meeting closed at 13.50.