

**FEDERATION OF SCOTTISH THEATRE
TOURING FORUM**

Wednesday 10 April 2019
Adam Smith Theatre (Beveridge Studio), Kirkcaldy
1pm - 4pm

Attendees:

Verdi Clark (Fife Cultural Trust – ONFife); Susan Drummond (Fife Cultural Trust – ONFife); George Carson; Kate Taylor; Anna Plasberg-Hill (Lyra); Tony Reekie (Lyra); Verity Leigh (Magnetic North); Mark Alexander (Theatre Royal Dumfries); Michelle Rolfe; Kate Nelson (Nutshell Theatre); Laila Noble (Nutshell Theatre) Michael Emans (Rapture Theatre); Yolanda Aguilar (Shaper/Caper); Tessa Buddle (Suitcase Ensemble); Lyndsay Walker (Theatre Royal Dumfries)

In attendance:

Chair: Dani Rae, Dumfries & Galloway Arts Festival

FST: Amanda Liddle; Agnieszka Swida

Creative Scotland: Lorna Duguid

1. Welcome/Introductions – Chair

Dani Rae (DR) welcomed attendees and led introductions around the room.

2. FST Update – Amanda Liddle

Until more is known regarding Brexit proceedings current advice includes, when travelling ensure passports are valid for at least six months and check whether you might need an international driving licence, if you plan to drive.

The way that theatres are licensed is about to change, local authorities will in future license theatres under a public entertainment licence rather than the current Theatres Act licence. FST will shortly be establishing a working group with volunteers from the membership to focus on the principles of any new licensing schemes.

Details of FST's current training programme are available [here](#), offering a mix of both free (to FST members), subsidised and certified courses ranging from Mental Health First Aid to Negotiations and Contracts.

Upcoming Deadlines

[Producer Placement Bursary – deadline: 26 April](#)

[Assistant Director Bursary – deadline: 26 April](#)

[Go, See, Network, Share Fund – next deadline: 30 June](#)

Diary Dates

[Producers Forum – 23 May, 2-5pm, Macrobert Arts Centre, Stirling](#)

This forum will focus on access provision and will also include some 'Open Space' discussion groups.

[Dance Forum – 3 May, 2-5pm, The Moray Arts Centre, Findhorn](#)

This forum will discuss the role and impact of festivals and will also include some 'Open Space'

discussion time.

[Members Meeting](#)

19th June meeting will be in Aberdeen, to see the new Music Hall – times tbc

[Festivals Reception](#) 20th August, Our Dynamic Earth

3. Creative Scotland Update – Lorna Duguid

LD noted that Creative Scotland are still awaiting the results of the Funding Review and it will come out for a consultation with the sector next month (May).

4. Touring Fund Information Session – Lorna Duguid: Discussion & Group Feedback

Members can download a copy of the presentation from our resources section with points to note below:

Fund open now, deadline: 30 April, decisions expected week beginning 24 June. Next deadline will be for 2020/21.

LD reported that Lisa Baxter from the Experience Business has created a framework on how to complete the application questions on audience focus as this has proved to be the section that applicants have struggled with most. The protocol created to help applicants communicate their work to venues and audiences more effectively will be made available on the Creative Scotland website.

CS will also be creating statistical baselines alongside qualitative interrogation to assess the impact of the fund on the touring culture and landscape.

Criteria changes and advice to note – please also see fund guidelines for further details:

- Producers with a portfolio of projects should make separate applications per project, this is to mitigate the ‘all or nothing’ rule per application resulting in all projects being rejected on the basis of one.
- Assessment criteria – contrary to OPF which can demonstrate one more strongly than the other, Touring fund applications require articulating both artistic quality and public engagement/benefit
- There is now a budget template which although not mandatory does assist in ensuring all required budget lines are considered by applicants
- No letters of support, notes of interest or pencilled dates are required at the point of application rather applicants should provide information on the types of venues and locations there is an intention to tour
- Additionally, a clear description of what audiences will get from the work is required however no marketing or audience development plan is required at point of application
- Use your application to communicate about the work (don’t use jargon) you could also choose to add a video of you talking about your show or a ‘vox pop’ to your application as part of your supporting documentation
- Box office fees should not be included in the budget. The fund dictates an 80-20 split in favour of the venue, 20% of the box office retained by the applicant.
- The assessment panel will consist of 4 Creative Scotland staff and 5 sector professionals. Additional panel members will be recruited following round 2 of the fund.

Q&A

LD confirmed that writers' royalties should be calculated on the gross box office and narrated in a separate budget line as part of your operational expenses.

LD confirmed that the fund is intended as an agent of change within the touring ecology in terms of audience development and development of economic models – it is the only mechanism for funding touring via CS but there may arise a mixed ecology where economically successful projects require less subsidy in future. The fund aims to support less work better and to reach a wider audience.

A forum member noted that other models do work well elsewhere such as partnerships between subsidised and commercial companies or several producing houses working together to invest in a production. LD responded, noting that the fund anticipated consortia bids in the near future.

LD confirmed that a venue is defined as a place audiences have decided to come to (not a school or retirement home however other community spaces would be eligible).

Further discussion was held around what the impact of the 80/20 box office split may have on the incentive of venues to prioritise marketing – views were mixed on whether impact would be positive or negative but CS will be evaluating venue/company relationships as the fund progresses. The ideal is that box office income, no longer forming part of the project budget, will result in additional funds coming into the touring ecology, but this will likely take some years to show impact.

LD confirmed that second instalment payments are contingent on submission of the venue agreements.

LD confirmed that the criteria of a 12 venue minimum still stands with an aim to encourage ambition and address the issue raised in the Theatre and Dance review, that tours were too short. If more than 12 shows are planned and the number subsequently reduced, then funding may be reduced if appropriate. If there is more than one production in the project then it is still 12 venues per production minimum.

Development and production (not including any touring) is still covered by Open Project Funding – the Touring Fund is not the only mechanism to make and present projects.

5. Touring Code of Practice

The Touring Code of Practice and supporting process documents, developed by the FST Touring Strategy Working Group can be found [here](#).

Forum members found the code a positive refresher on good practice and a useful checklist, those currently utilising the process documents reported finding them useful.

Further discussion followed around the challenges of booking a tour and the role of Tourbook. Ideally Tourbook should act as a list of venues which neither CS nor FST hold. It does require both venues and companies to buy into the process to achieve critical mass and LD confirmed that the cost to companies should be included in marketing budgets and will be funded. **Action FST and CS** to liaise around incentivising Tourbook sign up from both companies and venues.

Action FST to arrange a further presentation/discussion between Tourbook and members – possibly at members meeting to discuss issues of pricing and use.

A member clarified that although the one show option does exist you can archive that show in order to add the next at no additional cost.

6. Touring outwith the Touring Fund for Theatre and Dance - Discussion

Discussion was held around the landscape and feasibility for touring projects not funded by the Touring Fund. Attendees who had been unsuccessful, noted that some work had just not gone ahead and that they would be re-applying, while others had utilised company reserves to proceed, highlighting that this was of course not sustainable. Although some saw limited commercial potential – a lack of expertise or available training in securing commercial sponsorship was raised as an issue. It was noted that Fringe Central hold some useful sessions around this; Arts & Business provide training in sponsorship and Stage One offer particularly specialised training in commercial theatre production. **Action** FST will look at possible training offers in securing commercial investment for productions.

DR noted the D&G touring network model which has a specific to underwrite some of the work, thereby providing a safety net – if venues don't achieve the ticket sales. It has proved very successful with 40 funded applications, only 7 claiming the full amount. The remaining money goes back into the pot. The forum agreed that this was very positive practice and more like it could help support the touring landscape outwith the fund.

LD noted that the Scottish Government was currently working on policy that may see further funds released to Creative Scotland from other departmental budgets such as Health, Education etc. which, if it goes ahead would more fully represent the range of performance indicators the Arts fulfils. This will not be confirmed until the Culture Strategy is published but would make a significant difference to the CS budget.

Further discussion was held around international models, noting that the significant difference was in the scale of funding available. LD noted that CS are doing some comparison work with other arts councils such as Canada. All voiced the understanding that CS were limited in what they could fund and that concerted advocacy and lobbying for higher levels of government funding for culture was key if the sector was not to continue just to 'manage decline'. Both FST and its membership have a key role to play in this. **Action** FST to continue to advocate directly for increased government funding.

AL queried whether, with the changing landscape, Emporium was still the most useful mechanism for FST to support touring. Response was positive that the event was still very useful and that there would be no scheduling change that would suit everybody's programme. The March event would be in line with the February Touring Fund decisions.

Date of next forum TBC - provisionally October

DR thanked the attendees and closed the meeting

Actions

Action FST to continue to advocate for increased government funding.

Action FST will look at possible training offers in securing commercial investment for productions e.g. Stage One or similar.