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Clare Adamson  
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Constitution, External Affairs & Culture Committee

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17 October 2023

Dear Clare,

I am writing to you following my appearance at the Committee pre-budget scrutiny session on culture funding held on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> October.

At that session, you will recall we had a useful discussion about how we might better report on the efforts of our publicly funded culture bodies who work tirelessly with organisations across the sector to support them through difficult times and regularly make game-changing interventions that lead to successful outcomes for cultural organisations across Scotland.

We also acknowledged as part of that discussion the issue with communicating the nature and impact of these interventions is that not all organisations will want the nature of their situation to be public knowledge and it is absolutely right and proper that our publicly funded organisations exercise the utmost discretion when dealing with such sensitive commercial issues.

However, I recognise that more can be done to, where possible, provide case studies that provide insights into interventions and approaches which have yielded positive outcomes for venues, organisations, individual artists and creative producers working in the sector.

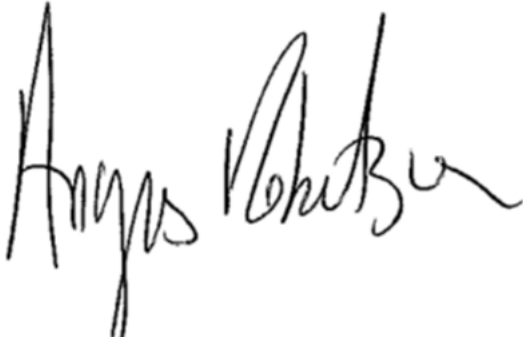
As an annex to this letter, I have included some recent examples of key interventions from a range of our Scottish Government-funded bodies and, where commercial sensitivities have prevented disclosure of details, signposted more generally to avenues of support being provided. I have also included additional information about some of the other key programmes and broader services we support across Scotland which impact on cultural and creative provision at community level.

These examples illustrate the profound impact that interventions can have for many organisations and my thanks again goes to all those working across the sector who make such a positive difference in this way.

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I have asked my officials to keep me informed on an ongoing basis of all key interventions that come to light through their continued engagement with our publicly funded bodies and to ensure that, where appropriate and of broader interest to do so, case studies are published, shared and signposted for the benefit of the wider sector. I have also asked that the Committee is signposted to any such publications going forward.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Angus Robertson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A' and 'R'.

**ANGUS ROBERTSON**

## 1. Recent examples of key interventions from a range of Scottish Government-funded bodies

### Creative Scotland

- Creative Scotland have provided support to a number of cultural organisations that have been experiencing significant financial difficulties. This has included signposting organisations to relevant cultural funds and in some cases bringing forward funding payments.

### Screen Scotland

- Earlier this year, Screen Scotland supported the mobile cinema Screen Machine with £176,641 for the lease of a temporary Machine, to maintain service provision to approximately 40 rural and island locations in eight local authorities across Scotland, while they fundraise for a new permanent replacement. This has enabled the Machine to continue bringing its unique cultural, educational, community, and climate benefits to areas where a visit to the cinema may be impossible without a long, expensive journey.
- Following the Centre for the Moving Image (CMI) entering administration in 2022, the future of the Edinburgh International Film Festival (EIFF) was in doubt. Screen Scotland stepped in, purchasing the intellectual property rights for the world's longest-running Film Festival, and ensuring that it was able to return for its 76<sup>th</sup> year in 2023, as a special one-off iteration as part of the Edinburgh International Festival. Since then, Screen Scotland have also run a recruitment campaign for a new Chair for the EIFF, and have now appointed the veteran Scottish producer Andrew Macdonald, who will take the EIFF into 2024 and beyond.
- The collapse of the CMI also led to the closure of the Aberdeen Belmont and Edinburgh Filmhouse cinemas. Screen Scotland worked with Aberdeen City Council and other relevant parties to secure the future of the Belmont, which now has an operator and plans in place to reopen as an independent, not-for-profit cinema, operated and programmed from Aberdeen, which focuses on four key areas – cultural film programming, education and filmmaking, community, and customer experience. To support this, Screen Scotland provided £60,000 funding to undertake feasibility and transition work in respect to future of the Belmont cinema and provision of cultural cinema in the Northeast.
- In relation to the Filmhouse, Screen Scotland have engaged consistently and closely with a range of stakeholders, including the Administrators, City of Edinburgh Council, Scottish Government, and others, to work towards the reintroduction of cultural cinema in Edinburgh. They have already provided funding of £60,368 to Filmhouse Edinburgh Ltd., the charity formed with the purpose of retaining the Filmhouse for cultural cinema - along with the community and educational benefits that brings - and will continue to lead work across parties to support these ends.

### Historic Environment Scotland

Historic Environment Scotland, the lead body for Scotland's historic environment has distributed approximately £14.5m per annum in grants since it was established in 2015. HES use their expertise and strategic understanding of historic environment priorities to deliver a

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range of grant programmes focusing on different areas of activity aligned with their corporate priorities including the [Heritage & Place Programme](#) which aims to contribute to the development of vibrant and sustainable places in Scotland through community-led regeneration of the historic environment. It supports developing and delivering heritage-focused schemes within Conservation Areas or distinctive heritage areas.

HES have also provided a range of support and advice to organisations facing challenging circumstances including through resilience and maintenance funding in 2022/23 received by Auchindrain Trust, Knockando Woolmill and New Lanark World Heritage Site.

## **Museums Galleries Scotland**

Museums Galleries Scotland, the national development body for Scotland's museums and galleries, supports the sector through strategic investment, advice, advocacy and skills development. They have a broad reach across all of Scotland from national bodies to small community run spaces and have provided support and advice to a number of local museums and galleries experiencing financial difficulty.

## **Enterprise Agencies**

**Scottish Enterprise** has had a long-term business support relationship with Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society (EFFS) and had a unique role in helping their recovery post-Covid including providing £100k grant funding in March 2022 which contributed towards:

- Phase 1 development costs for creation of new Fringe App
- Phase 1 development costs of new Access Ticketing programme
- Recruitment costs for new EFFS Development Team

**South of Scotland Enterprise** has supported many cultural organisations, venues and individual artists in a variety of ways through their business and enterprising communities specialists and advisors. Examples of intervention support has included:

- mentoring and advice for cultural organisations looking to review their working practices
- specialist support for board and trustees to review strategic direction
- capital support for venues to invest in equipment that will reduce their carbon footprint as they make their journey to Net Zero
- capital infrastructure support to expand and enhance current provision
- a CreaTech fund for creative and cultural enterprises to invest in technologies that introduce new innovative ways of working
- support to other bespoke projects that unlock creative and cultural excellence

Whilst it has been a challenging time for the cultural and creative sector, SOSE's approach is bespoke for each individual or organisation with interventions tailored to their specific circumstances and needs.

## **2. Other key funded programmes and services**

### **Culture Collective**

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Our Culture Collective programme, supported by over £10m of Scottish Government funding to date, is a network of 26 participatory arts projects based in communities across Scotland. Since launching in 2020, it has employed over 490 creative practitioners and engaged with over 600 grassroots and community-based organisations. The Culture Collective's focus is on engaging and supporting target communities and creative practitioners: this is more important than ever in light of the ongoing impacts of the Covid pandemic and cost of living crisis.

For example, the North East Culture Collective's project 'Stories to Tell' works in partnership with Alcohol and Drugs Action to deliver creative writing workshops for people with lived experience of addiction in Aberdeen; while Toonspeak Theatre's 'Here We Are', based in North Glasgow where several communities are among the 5% most deprived datazones in Scotland, has provided free workshops for children, young people and adults, engaging with almost 3,500 attendees. 100% of 'Here We Are' participants reported improved wellbeing and 96% reported an improvement in skills development.

A full evaluation of the Culture Collective programme's impact to date is due to be published shortly.

## Youth Music Initiative

Creative Scotland deliver the Youth Music Initiative (YMI) which is receiving £9.5 million of funding in 2023-24 including £500,000 which has been ringfenced to continue delivering on our commitment to expand the YMI model into other art forms.

YMI consists of two main strands:

(i) a universal in-school offer/ school based music making - £7.2 million to fund every child to have access to a year's free music tuition before they leave primary school (defined as 12 hours). This is funded through local authorities, who all deliver a universal offer. Many also provide some targeted work as well, for example further provision to young people with additional support needs. Some local authorities choose to make financial or in-kind contributions to support the work but this is not compulsory.

(ii) access to music making/ out of school music making – this is a fund for out-of-school music making for target groups of young people who might otherwise not have these opportunities. It is an open fund for organisations to bid into. The budget is normally around £1.4 million and in 2018/19 supported 70 projects, reaching over 44,000 young people (13,000 excluding Bookbug activity).

The Scottish Government's long-standing investment of over £150 million since 2007 in the YMI has made a huge impact helping young people across Scotland access music making opportunities and develop their wider skills and learning. It has helped young people in all 32 local authorities access music-making with every pupil offered a year's free music tuition by the end of primary school.

According to the 2021/22 evaluation, over 362,000 children and young people took part in YMI-funded projects, with the majority of those in high-deprivation areas. The funding also supported 1,182 music education posts across all 32 local authorities, 200 volunteering opportunities, over 100 traineeships and continuing professional development for more than 5600 people.

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YMI is used not only as a tool for music learning in local authorities across Scotland, but also as a means to develop core language and social skills, which research has shown leads to a positive impact on reading and literacy development.

## **Sistema Scotland**

The Scottish Government has been funding Sistema Scotland since 2012 and has provided £1.1 million for 2021/2022 and 2022/23 from the Culture budget, to support Big Noise projects in Raploch, alongside a satellite Big Noise in Fallin, Govanhill, Torry, Douglas, and a new Big Noise project in Wester Hailes. Our support for Sistema Scotland is one of the key ways that Scottish Government Culture funding contributes to the government priority of tackling child poverty as well as our aims to increase access to culture, and is an example of how projects funded by culture spend can contribute to wider policy outcomes.

Sistema Scotland, the charity that delivers the Big Noise model and runs the Big Noise Programmes, believes that all children and young people in Scotland have great potential, skills and talents. Sistema Scotland's work is independently evaluated by the Glasgow Centre for Population Health, and this research has demonstrated the benefits of funding Big Noise projects. Evidence is clear that the current impacts of Big Noise act upon important determinants of health and wellbeing in adulthood.

Through targeting disadvantaged communities, Big Noise has the potential to reduce health inequalities in later life. This evaluation also includes an economic analysis which concludes with the long-term projection that for every £1 spent on Big Noise delivery; around £9 of social benefit is generated.

## **National Performing Companies**

The Scottish Government protected funding of £22.5m for the five National Performing Companies (NPCs) for 2023/24. The 5 NPCs are committed to work to improve access to artistic and creative work amongst communities across Scotland. They cover a vast geographical spread, working Scotland-wide and engaging and touring far and wide in Scotland.

The role of education, learning and community involvement is central to the artistic purpose of all five NPCs and they all share a desire to communicate with as large and diverse an audience as possible. The NPCs are increasingly involved in health and wellbeing projects. For example, Scottish Ballet has renamed itself earlier this year as the National Centre for Dance Health with projects for schools on themes that include identity, respect, LGBTQ+ communities and dementia friendly dance programmes; Scottish Opera producing Long Covid Resources; SCO residency in Craigmillar in Edinburgh; RSNO and NTS schools programmes

The NPCs have commissioned a joint piece of work on the impact of their community work. This is due to be finished later this year.

## **Libraries**

The Scottish Government places great importance on public libraries and believes everyone should have access to library services. Libraries do not just provide access to reading

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material. They play a crucial role in providing access to IT, improving attainment, supporting children in the early years, helping engage older people, and empowering our communities.

The Scottish Government supports the Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC), which provides leadership and advice to Scottish Ministers, local authorities, and the wider libraries sector.

In 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23, we have provided funding of £665,000 to SLIC as recognition of the importance of our public libraries, and as an expression of our support for the excellent services they provide (this is an increase of £10k for SLIC's core funding from 2019-20). This includes £450,000 for the Public Library Improvement Fund, which enables libraries to undertake a wide range of pioneering projects within communities.

Our libraries are demonstrating tremendous strength and resilience, proving they have a key part to play in Scotland's economic, political, social and cultural life and have a central role to play in building thriving communities with a strong sense of place. The power of the public library in place-shaping rests in its ability to act as an open, trusted and adaptable hub at the heart of the community. The library space and services can be configured and reconfigured throughout the day to support a very broad spectrum of community needs and activities.

Public libraries deliver a range of targeted services which combat loneliness and social isolation, including events and activities, which encourage people to come together, make friends and participate in their community. Of those who engaged with or used library services during lockdown 64% of people said it had a positive impact on their wellbeing.

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