

Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee

Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 3, Senedd

Meeting date: 6 December 2023

Meeting time: 09.30 – 12.15

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Hybrid – Supplementary pack

Please note the documents below are in addition to those published in the main Agenda and Reports pack for this Meeting

4.9 Arts Council of Wales: Investment Review

(Pages 1 – 48)

Attached Documents:

- Correspondence from National Theatre Wales: Arts Council of Wales: Investment Review
 - Annex 1: National Theatre Wales production impact 2020–23
 - Annex 2: Making theatre matter as a force for change: National Theatre Wales Strategic Plan 2023–2027
 - Annex 3: Letter to the Arts Council of Wales from Trinity Chambers on behalf of National Theatre Wales: Arts Council of Wales: Investment Review – 18 October 2023
 - Annex 4: National Theatre Wales TEAM impact report 2020–23
 - Annex 5: National Theatre Wales fact sheet



Briefing Document for the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee following Arts Council Wales' Decision to Defund National Theatre Wales

National Theatre Wales Today

As with the establishment of any national organisation, there is no single moment of origin or a sole originator of National Theatre Wales (NTW). The company was conceived through extensive advocacy, both in the realm of public support and political backing, aimed at establishing an English-language National Theatre for Wales. Over many decades, there were a number of attempts to establish such a theatre. Finally, a consensus emerged, bringing together the political will and muscle of **both Labour and Plaid Cymru**, the consistent advocacy of key individuals within Arts Council Wales (ACW), and a shared understanding among the informed public that the formation of the company was imperative and time-sensitive. This collaborative effort culminated in the inception of NTW in 2007, made possible through the "**One Wales Agreement**", which allocated additional funding under ACW's jurisdiction to facilitate its establishment and continued operation.

The decision to create a new institution to celebrate, communicate, and catalyse the evolving culture of an ancient nation is an act of profound optimism, long-term thinking, and confidence. In 2023, NTW is a young national institution, and is committed, as every public institution must be, to ongoing evolution of its model, programme, and practices to best serve the needs of 21st century Welsh society. With respect, NTW urges the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee to consider its responsibility to hold the government to account in their management of Wales' cultural assets. Further, as outlined in the Cooperation Agreement, Plaid and Labour have committed to ensuring the financial sustainability of Wales's national cultural institutions. Given NTW's nature, its stakeholders, and the significant impact of its potential and imminent loss, NTW **questions the appropriateness** of ACW's decision to defund NTW through an annual Investment Review, without broader consultation with key stakeholders, and without providing a transparent, well-researched impact analysis and a robust plan to address the gaps this loss will create in within the Welsh theatre sector.

Prior Commitment

Further to the immediate question, NTW believes there is an important point about the financial resources allocated to NTW that must be considered. In the June 2007 Coalition Agreement between Labour and Plaid Cymru, the parties committed to found a National English Language Theatre for Wales. It is NTW's understanding that the new financial resources initially allocated to ACW to support the creation and operation of NTW were protected in an institutionally ring-fenced manner, as with all of Wales' National Companies, albeit subject to strategic advice and regular assessment by ACW to sustain and nourish these unique cultural agencies for Wales, at home and abroad. As such it is not only possible, but in our submission necessary, for the Committee and the Deputy Minister to not invoke the arm's-length principle and rather to consider their responsibility to examine both the historic process and the future impact of this year's ACW decision. An investigation into

the deliberations of the House of Commons Select Committee on Culture, Media and Sport in 2005-6 could easily form the subject of another long Report. The material is easily accessible.

As with all institutions, during the past three years NTW has encountered significant changes and challenges. The profound impacts of the pandemic, the ongoing effects of the cost-of-living crisis, escalating staff and material costs, and the diminished financial capacity of partners within and outside the cultural sector to invest in co-production or delivery models have all left their mark. As a building-free theatre company which delivers site-specific or touring work, NTWs' model requires complex medium-term cross-sectoral partnership for delivery, which creates additional challenges for re-starting our programme in a post-pandemic world. It should also be noted that due to our low overheads NTW was one of very few large cultural organisations that did not have to receive emergency funding during the pandemic. During this period NTW has experienced a change in Artistic Director/Chief Executive Officer, extensive staff restructuring, a change in the Chair, and a public recruitment process to its Board which has resulted in a welcome increase in diversity amongst NTWs' Trustees.

It is essential to note that throughout this period, NTW has continued to deliver an extensive range of theatre productions across Wales, along with far-reaching community engagement initiatives, artist development programmes, educational resources, and partnerships with organisations in Wales and further afield. Attached as *Appendix 1* is a brief summary of the nature and impacts of the programmes inspired and managed by NTW over the last three years.

As a company, NTW acknowledges that since 2020 it has not achieved a 'blockbuster' production that has resonated in the public consciousness in the manner of "The Passion" or "City of the Unexpected." But its work elsewhere has been very extensive, fruitful and remarkably effective right across the country. NTW is mindful of past criticism in the earlier years of its history.

During the last three years, NTW has rigorously addressed legitimate concerns expressed in the artistic and political worlds in a transparent manner and has made significant strides in areas such as promoting and supporting Welsh creatives, establishing closer strategic and operational ties with the cultural infrastructure in Wales, commissioning Welsh writers, and implementing a casting policy that prioritises Welsh actors. NTW's vision for the company's future has been publicly outlined in its most recent and well-received Strategic Plan, which is attached as *Appendix 2*.

Arts Council Wales

Throughout this period, ACW has not only refrained from expressing concerns about NTWs' performance or direction, but also expressed clear support for its achievement of newly agreed-upon targets and a renewed strategic approach. These positive sentiments are clearly documented in ACWs' Annual Reports. Shortly before submitting its 2023 Investment Review application, NTW was placed on 'Red Risk' by ACW. NTW was assured in writing and verbally at the time that this was a "standard system response" (sic) triggered by the

recent appointments of new Co-Chairs to the board and two new additions to the Senior Management Team. ACW noted that these processes were being managed by NTW without concern, and also noted that it had no concerns over NTWs' performance on its agreed targets or its financial management.

The question may fairly be asked, if ACW had fundamental concerns regarding NTWs' direction or performance, why were these not formally raised with the Board or Management in any format that ACW has available to it? Why did ACW not deploy strategies like a 'special measures' intervention, as effectively applied with other cultural institutions in the past? It is our contention that this failure to signal or communicate any serious concerns, and then to make such a fundamental strategic and structural decision with wide ranging implications for the entire sector evidences a clear failure in ACWs' duty of care towards NTW and its remit for the whole of Wales. We respectfully request that the committee examine ACWs' inaction, non-communication, and profound lack of strategic transparency and communication throughout this period.

It is NTWs' contention that ACWs' decision to remove funding appears to be a political move, masquerading as an operational one. Dafydd Rhys (the CEO of ACW) has repeatedly stated in public and private that "NTW's application" (for the investment from 2024) "did not convince."

NTW strongly disputes this characterisation of its application and has confidence in the ambition and sophistication of its Investment Review application. NTW has lodged an appeal against ACWs' decision. The appeal is extensive and detailed, and demonstrates that NTW has suitably addressed every topic brought into question by ACW, providing detailed proposals and evidence which can be easily understood, and in a manner, scale and scope fitting into ACWs' application form.

The appeal also comprehensively demonstrates that ACWs' judgement is based on at least one material error; takes into account irrelevant considerations; fails to take account of relevant and material considerations; and does not correspond with its own guidelines and strategic positioning.

It is important to note that the scope of an appeal under ACWs' rules is strictly limited to assessing whether ACW has adhered to its own procedures. It does not permit public scrutiny of ACWs' assessment of NTWs' application, nor how ACWs' evaluators have quantified or qualified the impact of their decisions upon the broader theatre/arts sector. ACW have published no art-form strategies, no impact assessment or any of the normal apparatus for their decision making to be appropriately interrogated, nor is there a wider current Strategic or Business Plan against which their new Arts Portfolio fits.

NTW also holds serious concerns about the transparency and independence of the appeals process. Attached to this briefing paper is an exchange of correspondence between ACW and NTW Appendix 3. In this correspondence, NTW requests transparency on the process for the appointment of independent individuals to judge the appeal in a manner consistent with the Nolan Principles and ECHR. ACW has taken the remarkable position that it will not release any details of how the independent reviewer is appointed, how conflicts of interest

are declared or the identity of independent reviewers in either the first or second phase of appeal. Given that ACWs' part in the decision-making process is now over; its role should now be limited to presenting its case. Yet by the rules it has set, it remains able to influence the outcome of an appeal by way of appointments. This creates a situation in which NTW, and all other applicants to the appeals process, are asked to accept an assurance of independence and transparency that cannot be checked.

Upon announcing the 100% cut to NTW, ACW also revealed its intention (for the first time) to conduct '*A Strategic Review of English Language Theatre Provision in Wales.*' NTW believes that there are three significant aspects that must be addressed concerning this new policy intention:

1. During a meeting with Dafydd Rhys and Lleucu Siencyn on 9 October 2023, after the Investment Review defunding decision was announced, NTW was informed that ACW came up with the idea for this 'Strategic Review' as a consequence of its decision to cut NTWs' funding to nothing. NTW was also told that ACW does not have a proposed timeline, draft scope, draft terms of reference, or a planned consultation schedule for its new 'Strategic Review'. In other words, the Strategic Review does not exist and is an excuse after the fact to cut out a National Institution.
2. ACW has not been willing to commit to consultation on the terms of reference for the 'Strategic Review', or whether they would be determined internally. NTW respectfully questioned the value of timing and a strategy that first cut NTWs' funding and then announced a Blank Canvas review of this magnitude without any concrete plans – even in draft – in place for its extent and purpose, and without purposefully drawing on NTWs' work. Hypothetically, assuming that the minimum timeline for a meaningful sector review is from 18-24 months, any recommendations would be delivered to a sector of public life that is halfway through a delivery and business planning cycle, without a clear plan for addressing the gaps left by NTWs' absence.
3. It should be noted that the theatre sector has endured an extended period of uncertainty due to ACW twice delaying the proposed Investment Review. It is also now reacting to a net £533,250 cut across the sector. This review introduces another extended period of uncertainty and instability in a sector desperately in need of resourcing, skills, confidence and capacity.
4. The theatre sector across Wales has wholeheartedly embraced the potential and reality of a bilingual operating model. NTWs' venue partners, producing organisations, sectoral bodies, artists, audiences, partners in health and education, local authorities, shared strategies, and every aspect of the theatre industry operate across the languages of Wales and in every local authority. In any event, NTW questions the feasibility or likely benefit of conducting a theatre provision review limited to a single language.
5. National Theatre Wales is not a building-based organisation; it thrives within its relationships and networks across Wales, its staff teams and freelance partners, its projects, productions, reputation, and the value of its brand. It is not feasible to place

it into mothballs while a 'Strategic Review' takes place, in order to retain its knowledge, value or networks.

6. Once NTW has gone, it is gone. As demonstrated by the lengthy, intricate and sometimes contentious journey leading to its establishment, it is not an institution that can easily or affordably be recreated. By dismantling the company that is NTW before the proposed 'Strategic Review', ACW would also eliminate the possibility of reshaping or refocusing NTWs' energy and capacity to address any needs identified by the 'Review'.
7. NTW questions both the effectiveness and the financial responsibility of this so-called strategy, given the sustained investment by the public purse of the £24.4 million that ACW has invested in NTW over the last 13 years.

What would be lost?

1. **Future Projects:** Typically, the journey from the inception of an idea or a relationship to the delivery of a project spans 18-36 months. Currently, NTW has 17 projects in various stages of commission and development, scheduled for delivery over the next 3-4 years. New ideas and embryo projects bubble to the surface all the time. In a shortened list, current projects include:
 - **New commissions:** including works by major Welsh writers such as Ed Thomas and Menna Elfyn, explosive new talents like Connor Allen and Faebien Averies, and opportunities for established artists like Hannah McPake and Seiriol Davies. Without NTWs' producing capacity and investment capability, there is a significant risk that these projects will not come to fruition, and the substantial public funding already invested in them will be lost. With £533,250 cut to theatre sector funding across Wales, these projects showcasing the best Welsh talent to Wales and the world cannot simply be passed to another company to deliver.
 - **Marquee international collaborations:** NTW is in advanced stages of development for co-productions with: National Theatre of Scotland and The Abbey Theatre, Dublin; a partnership with the Public Theatre in New York featuring A-List Welsh actors; an Australian and Canadian touring presentation in collaboration with WNO and BBC National Orchestra of Wales to amplify the key messages of the Future Generations Act through the voices of Welsh children; and a large-scale commercial musical depicting the story of Owain Glyndŵr. While NTW is currently managing to hold these projects in tandem with its partners, the absence of an ability to move forward with confidence in the near future puts these projects at risk of being lost.
 - **Partnership Working and Delivery:** As outlined in NTW's Investment Review application, NTW is collaborating with multiple partners across Wales and internationally. This includes, or will include organisations such as Sherman Theatre, Common Wealth, Torch Theatre, Ffwrnes Theatre, Pontio, Theatr Brycheiniog, Riverfront Theatre, Theatr Genedlaethol Cymru, Theatre Clwyd,

Creu Cymru, Yellow Brick, Yureka Network, the World Health Organisation, National Theatre in London, Abbey Theatre in Dublin, Maxim Gorki Theater in Berlin, Barbican in London and Harbourfront Centre in Toronto. This is not an exhaustive list but serves as an indication of the very substantial impact of defunding NTW on the capacity and planning of others in Wales and internationally, and the risk of removing a Welsh voice from UK and international partnerships.

- **Community Partnership and Collaboration:** NTWs' flexibility and extensive network underpins its community partnerships. Its contributions extend to Pupil Referral Units, mental health providers, Men's Sheds, schools (TEAM), Foster Care Wales, Unlimited (commissioning disabled artists), Hijinx, Focus Wales, MIF, the DO Lectures, Theatr Iolo, Newport Chartist Festival, Visit Wales, Unearthed, and numerous other initiatives that enrich Wales' communities. The removal of NTW from the contribution it makes will disrupt these essential connections and collaborations.
2. **Sector leading co-creative and Collaborative Practice:** TEAM, NTW's flagship collaboration network is an internationally recognised model for the development and empowerment of creative practice within communities traditionally marginalised and excluded from creative practice. NTW is currently engaged in the submission of three major applications to trusts and foundations for the next phase of TEAM delivery, with the potential to bring £300,000+ of income into Wales. This work will be focussed around a three-year programme of work in Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire culminating in a festival of change, celebrating the profound democratic and community roots of creative cultural practice in Wales. TEAM is a globally recognised model of excellence in collaborative practice, which is nuanced and has a deep commitment to social justice at its core. *Appendix 4* outlines the scale of operation and impact of TEAM over the last three years.
 3. **Talent Development with a focus on artists from marginalised and excluded communities:** NTW has a very substantial track record of the sustained support of theatre makers, and one need only look at the CVs of the current leaders of theatre companies in Wales to see the profound impact that the company has had on Wales' cultural life in only 13 years. The vast majority of this work is funded through investment from UK charitable trusts into Wales, secured solely by the efforts of NTW. At present NTW is in receipt of multi-year funding from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and the John Ellerman Foundation to deliver our transformative 'Creative Development' work, which has benefitted 6,500 theatre makers in Wales.
 4. **The ability to respond with agility to National and International opportunities:** As a partner in **14-18 Now**, the landmark centenary of WW1 events; as the delivery partner for the remarkable **City of the Unexpected**; in the delivery of **Galwad** with a global reach of over 5 million viewers, NTW has repeatedly proven itself to be able to flex and react with agility and speed to high profile opportunities, bringing together cross-sector partnerships with capacity, vision and efficiency. This is a critical

capacity for the Welsh Government to have at its disposal and cannot be easily replicated, if lost.

The Road Ahead:

ACWs' decision to defund NTW without consultation, with no transparent planning for the implications of that decision, and in the absence of a strategy to support any transition to a new business model, has created a complex and urgent problem for the sector. As NTW sees it, there are broadly three possible routes forward:

1. **NTWs' appeal is successful and ACW reinstates some or all of the requested Investment Funding.** A possible issue with this outcome is that ACWs' financial resource is not ring-fenced for individual organisations but has been allocated within the conditional offers made to new clients of the ACW portfolio and is absorbed within the net £533,250 cut to theatre. Any claw back of this resource from those clients will therefore cause huge disruption and substantial ill-feeling within the sector.
2. **NTWs' appeal is not successful and no core revenue model can be agreed from any other source or avenue.** Given the very short timeline within which these events are unfolding, it does not seem credible, nor indeed possible that NTW can develop and establish any sustainable new business model between now and the beginning of the next financial year. In this case, the most likely outcome is that NTW delivers the projects it is committed to in the current financial year and then either begins the process of winding the company up from April 2024, or scales the company down to a skeleton staff with no public facing delivery objectives, while attempting to establish a new business model. Clearly, key staff would leave and, with reduced funding for theatre in Wales, we risk losing the very talent that NTW was established to develop to other sectors or countries.
3. **An interim model.** ACW, Welsh Government and NTW work together to define a three-year operating remit and model of support for NTW. This would enable NTW to:
 - a. contribute fully to any proposed 'Strategic Review' of English language theatre;
 - b. to investigate and develop sustainable new income streams and funding sources on a realistic timeline. This work would have a particular focus on commercial partnership, cross sector working with creative industries, international collaboration and domestic touring;
 - c. offer a flexible and responsive producing model to address the outcomes of the proposed 'Strategic Review' once its parameters and remit are set.

NTW thanks the Committee for its consideration of this briefing paper and warmly invites any requests for further or more detailed explorations of any of the questions or areas which have been raised. For further information we also attach a fact sheet, *Appendix 5*, of some of the operating parameters and context of NTWs' current and historical model as well as addressing some common misconceptions and inaccuracies in recent coverage of the company.

NTW Production	Figures	Narrative / Further Highlights
Network Commissions (BBC & Theatr Gen)	<p>5,800+ audiences members reached digitally</p> <p>36 creatives worked on the project for a total of 265 days</p> <p>5 stage managers recruited for a total of 30 weeks work</p> <p>2 technicians recruited for 20.5 weeks work</p> <p>22 performers recruited for a total of 90 days of work</p> <p>14 Network Commissions</p>	
Dat's Love with Rakie Ayola	<p>12,000+ listening online, live and on demand in addition to those listening on the radio (figures for which are unavailable from BBC)</p>	<p>I've loved listening to Dat's Love @NTWtweets reminds me of stories from where I grew up, of friends & family. Llanrumney even gets a mention (: recommend having a listen – the words of Leonora Brito & delivery by @RakieAyola are spot on. @RhiannonWhite84</p>
Possible	<p>4* rating in the Guardian</p> <p>Reached a live audience of 600+ people</p> <p>Toured 10 mid-scale venues in Wales</p>	<p>★★★★</p> <p>“Perfectly judged, unabashedly authentic and vulnerably autobiographical” The Guardian</p>
FRANK	<p>Exceptionally strong critical response, 5000+ views online and submission to short-film festivals globally</p>	<p>“FRANK is good. It's very good. It's well-written and well-realised, beautifully shot, and well-acted, and manages to create eleven minutes of depth and nuance; it is honestly moving, visually strong, and like all good short films, lingers like a flash in the darkness” Wales Arts Review</p>
Go Tell the Bees	<p>10,000+ people have watched Go Tell the Bees film</p> <p>400 local people contributed as 'non-professional' artists and community participants</p>	<p>“The outreach to the whole community demonstrating the therapeutic and teaching value of Dramatic Art.” Audience Member</p>

	<p>240 people submitted photographs, images and video clips for the Go Tell the Bees film</p> <p>82% of audience members said “it was good to see something like this in West Wales’</p> <p>1,180+ school pupils and 35 teachers engaged in creative workshops led by local artists as part of the Simple Acts learning resources.</p> <p>Filming began in March and was the work of 7 co-creators with 61 Creative Contributors and 70 musicians working across 24 locations with 400 cast members (including 75 candlelit submissions & 211 simple acts submissions) & 12 community groups.</p> <p>The screenings had a tiered Pay What You Can pricing structure, with 30% of the audience choosing to pay above the minimum amount</p>	<p>“That it was created locally and is a message that needs to be spread not just within Pembrokeshire and Wales but nationally and globally” Audience Member</p> <p>“...A fantastic accomplishment in co-creation”. Audience Member</p>
<p>Petula</p>	<p>Nominated for the ‘Best Show for Children and Young People’ category in the 2022 UK Theatre Awards</p> <p>Petula.cymru (the show’s micro site – received) 14,000 page views.</p> <p>Despite Covid-19 related cancellations, audience numbers hit 1,500+</p> <p>Dewi Wykes was nominated for the ‘Best Performer in a Play’ in the 2022 The Stage Debut Awards</p> <p>A panel of 12 young campaign advisors gave feedback on the initial campaign artwork and helped develop ideas for creative content</p>	<p>★★★★ “A story that could be Roald Dahl or early Spielberg... this production is nothing if not unique.” The Stage</p>
<p>Circle of Fifths (2022)</p>	<p>800+ audience members</p> <p>32 cast and creative core team of freelancers</p> <p>12 theatre makers and community members shared their stories on death and grief</p> <p>Revived for further Welsh and UK tour in Autumn 2023</p>	<p>★★★★★ “You feel you are part of something real and stark and spiritual.” Buzz Magazine</p> <p>“In common with the best of NTW’s output over the years, Circle of Fifths is a genre-bending, risk-taking piece of Wales-rooted theatre... By allowing members of the Cardiff docks community to speak for themselves about their experiences of grief and</p>

		<p>loss, Gavin Porter's 'live documentary' travels far beyond the cliché of 'diverse' Welsh life in Tiger Bay." Institute of Welsh Affairs</p>
<p>GALWAD</p>	<p>5.4+ million online reach from across 149 countries</p> <p>£3.1 million was spent on 485 freelancers and individuals. Of these: 84% resided in Wales, 27% were Deaf and/or Disabled or living with a long-term medical condition; 25% were from global majority heritage backgrounds; 26% identified as LGBTQI</p> <p>2.5 million minutes watched</p> <p>125 Welsh business were engaged</p> <p>80% of production and 70% of the overall project spend taking place in Wales</p> <p>159 tonnes of carbon emissions were offset or reduced by the project</p> <p>Transmedia storytelling, including a 60-minute TV drama</p> <p>Over 400 freelancers and created across Wales were involved</p> <p>167 pieces of content unfolded over seven days across social and broadcast channels</p> <p>2 people aged 18 to 25 worked across the live story, broadcast drama, script writing, citizen journalism, access and inclusion and sustainability; 6 residencies; £6,000 bursaries for each young company member including 3 paid forward legacy days.</p> <p>67 young people were supported through skills discovery sessions; 42 freelancers undertaking training with Cult Cymru; 39 opportunities for core project team skills development e.g. deaf and disability awareness; 19 next step mentored associate roles including design, composing, film-making, writing and choreography; 10 foot in the door trainees; 9 citizen journalists trained.</p> <p>Finalist in the SXSW Innovation Awards 2023</p>	<p>"This was epic storytelling by a team of established and emerging Welsh artists, blending real-time theatre, impressionistic dance and a time-travel plot straight out of Doctor Who" (★★★★) The Guardian</p>

	<p>This project was delivered on an exceptionally short timescale and delivered critical employment to emergent Welsh talent at a time of deep employment crisis.</p>	
<p>A Proper Ordinary Miracle</p>	<p>250+ artists, including 150 theatre makers, in and around Wrexham were involved in APoM</p> <p>9 fully booked shows over 6 days and 550 audience members watched the show (capped numbers)</p> <p>4 out of 5 audience members agreed that it was good to see this work happen in Wrexham</p> <p>23 community projects took place during the course of the project</p> <p>81% of the audience felt the show resonated with the issues of the world and 77% found the performance absorbing.</p> <p>The word 'home' appeared over 60 times in the script.</p>	<p>"It just blew me away. Having such a great performance based in Wrexham, involving people of Wrexham and carrying such an important social message." Audience Member</p> <p>"It was a brilliant experience. I never heard about walking theatre, so it was something new I experienced" Audience Member</p>
<p>The Cost of Living</p>	<p>800+ audience members</p> <p>60 freelancers engaged with the project</p> <p>140+ participants from marginalised communities and identities participated</p> <p>71 freelancers brought together for an Industry Day</p> <p>14 bursaries were awarded enabled community connectors to spearhead events in their local area</p>	<p>Part 1 Highlight: Over 140 participants from marginalised communities and identities come together on each show night to share a meal with individuals with power within our society, such as politicians, police representatives and leaders of organisations, including Rob Stewart (Leader of Swansea Council) and Jeremy Vaughan (Chief Constable of South Wales Police) and Rhian Davies (CEO of Disability Wales) and Rob Stewart (Leader of Swansea Council).</p>
<p>Kidstown</p>	<p>2,630+ children and grownups attended over 16 days</p> <p>86 freelance theatre makers employed to make it happen</p> <p>1.23 million engaged via television and radio, including BBC One's BBC Breakfast TV</p> <p>Over a third of kids returned for one more day</p>	<p>"My son is 6 and can be shy and hesitant to take part in things. He loves it here, having the freedom to create and play." Parent/carer</p> <p>"I want it in every Eisteddfod." Child</p> <p>"Kidstown is incredible - a performance on many levels. My son will certainly take this experience with him long into adulthood." Parent/carer</p>

	<p>150,000 impressions on Twitter</p> <p>8 accessibility sessions were held</p> <p>800 free packed lunches were made to fuel young creative minds</p> <p>100+ suitcases were filled with exciting props, costumes and craft material</p>	
<p>Circle of Fifths (2023)</p>	<p>Touring 8 venues across Wales and London</p> <p>6 dates already sold out and an extra performance added due to popular demand</p>	<p>★★★★</p> <p>“A beautiful and moving portrait of a place and its people.” Guardian</p> <p>“My sister – who never goes to the cinema – loved it, because this play is for everyone.” Attendee in Newport</p> <p>“Great to hear about other community culture” Attendee in Ebbw Vale</p> <p>“Absolutely superb – a genuine one-off” Attendee in Chirk</p>

Making theatre matter as a force for change

National Theatre Wales Strategic Plan 2023-2027



The stories we tell ask questions, tell uncomfortable truths and bring us joy, fear, awe, magic: most importantly, as a nation, they help us to imagine.

Equality, inclusion and sustainability are at the heart of these stories.

When we first began our journey, the focus was 'place-making'. Today, our emphasis has shifted to '**change-making**'. But the same things are at our heart: we're committed to harnessing the creativity and power of individuals and communities all over Wales. And to making sure every person in Wales knows their right to access and engage with theatre, too.

In order to make it work, it's important that everyone in Wales feels represented and sees something of themselves in what we create. We have a responsibility to represent and be relevant to everyone. To do it, we need to destroy the unhelpful barriers some people face, and help create a collective national identity that celebrates and speaks to the cultures, languages and experiences of Wales - actions which carry hope for future generations. We know it's a big job.

So, how will we do it?

The foundation of our approach is simple and it will be applied across all of our projects, productions, performances and ideas.

- 1. We'll invite the people of Wales to tell their stories in different ways through performances, spaces and experiences – opportunities of all shapes and sizes**
- 2. We'll draw people closer to one another and help build meaningful relationships that create positive change**
- 3. We'll connect audiences, theatre makers and communities to ask big questions, listen and reflect upon the Wales – and the world – we all dream of.**

Our work has impacted and redefined the Welsh theatre sector in the twelve years since we started out. Now we're at a point of reflection. Our founding commitment to place-making has established a pioneering creative community engagement model. Our productions have won international acclaim, connecting with 70,000 community participants, 324,000 live audience members and a further 2.7 million people digitally since 2010. This is just the beginning and we still have lots to do. Our own experiences of recent years have sparked a period of self-scrutiny and reflection about what we're truly here to achieve and where we go next. We've listened and asked ourselves some tough questions: change is the inevitable answer.

This 2023-2027 strategy sets out the ways we'll evolve our purpose and respond to an ever-changing Wales and wider world.



Our rationale

The case for change now.

Theatre in Wales is a starkly uneven playing field, but we already knew this. Arts Council Wales' 2018-19 Arts Portfolio Wales survey showed us that fewer than 4% of the people working in the arts identified as Black, Asian or Mixed heritage or disabled. Global majority freelancers working in the arts feel insufficiently supported, describing tokenism and poor representation. During the pandemic they also lost proportionately more income than their white counterparts. And 43% of disabled arts freelancers describe feeling like irritations, rather than assets. The UK Disability Arts Alliance 2021 survey report showed that 49% of their respondents had less work than before the pandemic - or none at all.

We already know that almost 43% of people from more privileged socio-economic groups are likely to go to the theatre once a year, whilst attendance figures for their less socio-economically privileged counterparts stands at 29%. This is unacceptable - engagement in theatre can be life-changing. Those who could benefit most are also the least likely to be involved and as a result, society suffers. But we can learn from movements like Black Lives Matter, and We Shall Not Be Removed which have highlighted successful ways to bring everyone on the journey, and achieve permanent, wide-reaching change. Storytelling and self-expression are a fundamental human right.

This is also fundamental to the successful future of theatre - without representation from all walks of society we can't be relevant. In order to thrive, we must attract allcomers to get involved with NTW as makers, attendees or contributors.

Another key consideration is our environment. Human-generated climate change is the biggest threat to current and future generations. It's time to act, to limit our impact.

The Theatre Green Book has created a pan-sector approach, setting out methodologies to guide theatres and related organisations. Following it, we'll contribute to delivering COP26 goals, working with business and government to create a new norm - to limit global warming this century to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.



Our vision

Making theatre matter as a force for change. Harnessing the power of Wales' stories, people and places to collectively imagine and shape a more equal, sustainable and environmentally just world.



Our mission

We'll collaborate with audiences, communities and theatre makers to:

- Tell the stories and amplify the lived experiences of Wales, exploring the challenges of our times to inspire change
- Place equality, social and environmental justice and well-being at the core of what we do
- Create essential and extraordinary experiences together that connect us locally, nationally and globally.

Our values

Connection is the lifeblood of everything we do. We gather people to listen, question, share ideas, stories and imagine futures together, to help build a collective national identity.

Courage is vital for progress. We're bold, ambitious, prepared to take risks - and even fail-in order to keep moving forward. Discomfort can be a compelling force for good - those moments are often where the most brilliant changes happen.

Authenticity is non-negotiable. We continually challenge ourselves and our assumptions along the way and we welcome truth and difference in those who work with us, at all times.

Our aims

We'll achieve our vision and mission by building in the following six areas.



Our ethos

We'll create a culture of listening and belonging, with audiences, communities and theatre-makers all contributing, together.

We'll demonstrate this by:

- Including audiences and communities in our creative decision-making, our artistic development and production
- Researching the demands and needs of audiences, communities and theatre-makers - especially those who don't think theatre is for them and those most marginalised today
- Consulting on strategic decisions and activity from the start
- Monitoring, evaluating and reporting on our progress, transparently.

Our work

We'll stay brave and continue to produce theatre that's world-class, cohesive, bold and accessible – and that most importantly, drives change.

We'll demonstrate this by:

- Creating work of the highest quality, that reflects the commitments to inclusion and relevance in our audience engagement strategy
- Pushing our own boundaries through constant innovation in our work, embracing new forms and processes, digital and others
- Actively involving communities in our planning and delivery
- Building open and accessible development processes so that people from every walk of Wales' society can tell stories in new, impactful ways
- Listening to young people – we need their voice to inform an effective strategy that will support well-being now and in the future, and open up creative pathways.

Our reach

Everyone in Wales should feel that NTW is theirs: particularly those who've never thought theatre was for them. So we'll actively build new audiences.

We'll demonstrate this by:

- Building trust in our reinvigorated distinct, authentic and relevant brand
- Improving our communications to extend beyond existing audiences, reaching those who don't feel theatre's for them, in relevant ways
- Building an audience-centric approach to the way we capture and manage our data on people, so we produce work in response to the needs of our audiences
- Working in partnership across our sector to gather and share insights and data so that we'll all better understand audience needs and motivations.

Our commitment

We'll prioritise anti-discrimination, social justice and environmental responsibility across all we do – and we'll hold ourselves to account on this.

We'll demonstrate this by:

- Creating the right environments for theatre-making so it'll feel inclusive and welcoming to everyone
- Improving accessibility, layering digital and physical access through our activities and learning more about the needs of individuals who identify as disabled
- Safeguarding our people, nurture our flexible working culture and accommodate needs around physical and mental well-being, and caring responsibilities
- Continuing our commitment to environmentally sustainable practices and sharing these with our sector, improving understanding of climate change as we go.

Tim Rooney

Our responsibility

We're committed not just to surviving but to thriving, for everyone. We aim to attract new and diverse income streams and make sure that we offer unparalleled financial and cultural value for the people of Wales.

We'll demonstrate this by:

- Exploring the feasibility of a new commercial offer which could create new opportunities for theatre makers and brokerage or service provision fees for us
- Fostering a small number of mutually beneficial, long-term corporate partnerships with organisations who share our values, based on best practice in corporate fundraising
- Making the most of our new and extended audiences with sensitive and fair ticket pricing strategies, reinvigorated charitable donation opportunities and merchandise
- Sharing resources within the sector and beyond for everyone's mutual benefit
- Continuing to scrutinise costs, prioritising artistic expenditure.

Our identity

Being Welsh means a multitude of complex things. Being a citizen of the world does, too. We'll explore what it means to be human now, to connect us with people everywhere.

We'll demonstrate this by:

- Making sure we include lead artists from different social and geographical contexts across Wales
- Creating opportunities for new audiences, collaborators and artists to instigate projects
- Seeking emerging stories with the potential and relevance to connect globally
- Working to give our work a longer lifespan, by planning for capacity, broader reach and impact in all our projects, right from their inception.

Our people

Our focus is on three broad groups:

- Audiences
- Community participants
- Theatre makers

We love the idea that people can move fluidly across the three and believe that this is the path to incredible theatre. It opens up personal and professional opportunities for people to grow.

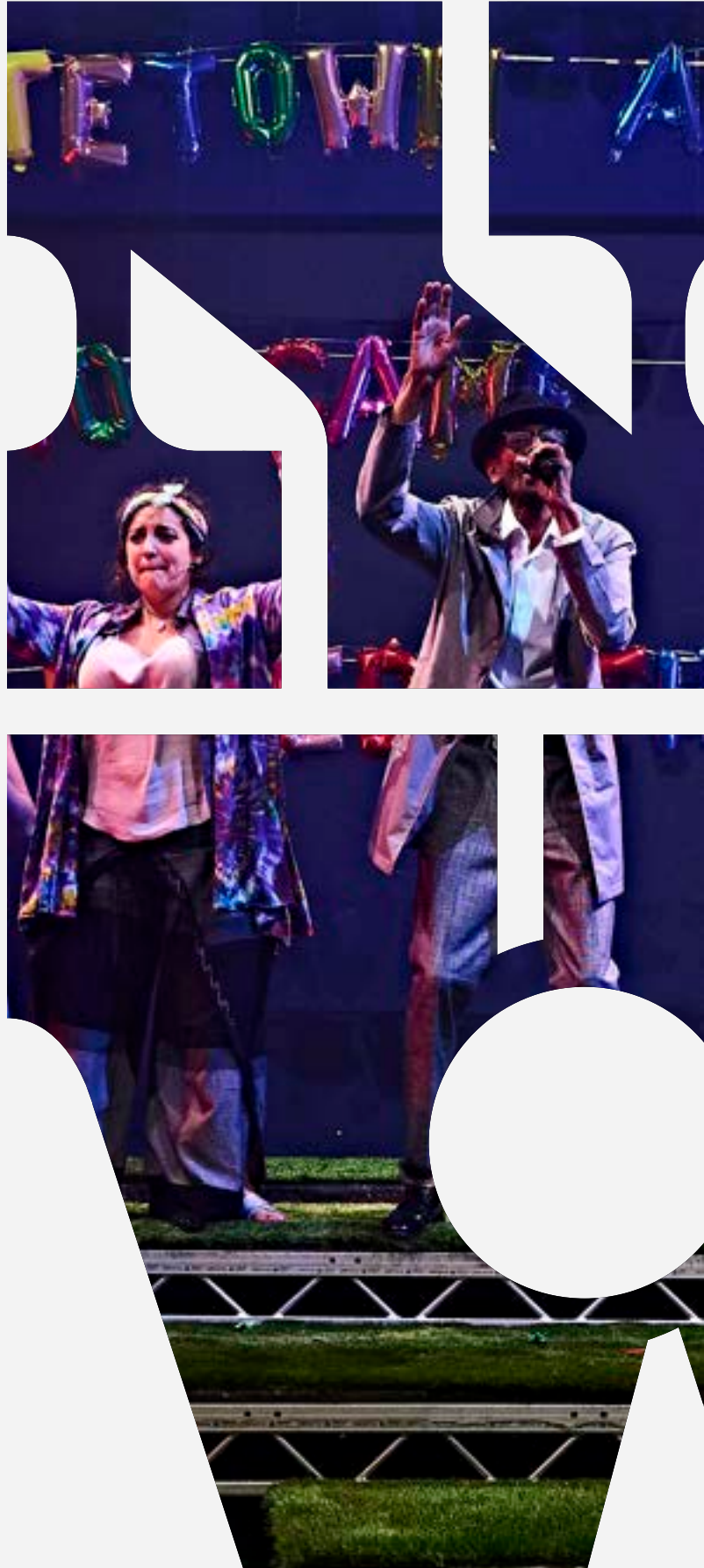
But we're particularly committed to the following people, too. We call them our Key Individuals. These are those worst hit by the pandemic, who face significant barriers and who'll benefit most from the power of theatre to bring about positive change. In broad terms, these are people who've experienced or who are at risk of experiencing:

- Racism
- Ableism
- Poverty

And also young people aged 14 – 25.

Of course, we're for everyone and that doesn't change. But we'd particularly like to encourage and welcome people who may not ordinarily get involved to join our journey.

So we'll tailor some projects to meet that need and make sure these groups are represented on our team, in our work and in our audiences. It'll generate positive change and benefit right across Wales and beyond.



Our work

Our three main areas of work are:

Collaboration – over the past ten years we've fine-tuned a programme of creative projects that boosts the power of communities, channelling stories and experiences from people from all walks of life. Now it's time to build on it, exploring models and partnerships in new ways that continue to put voices and stories at the heart of our work. It challenges the status quo and reshapes perceptions of theatre in a healthy way.

Creative Development – our big focus here is our continued work with remarkable theatre makers and collectives. But diversifying input is vital so we're relevant to everyone. We plan to open up the pathways, listening harder to audiences, communities and cultural organisations so we can attract new people to contribute to our creative output. We want to push boundaries and smash expectations – we need new voices to help us to do that.

Production – we're a free-range theatre for all of Wales. That's exciting and gives us the freedom to bring performance to new places, in new forms – we're subversive by nature and what we create is never ordinary. Our theatre is a space where people from all parts of society can join forces to imagine, dream and create together in new ways and places.

They unite to create theatre that places audiences - the Welsh public - at the heart of what we do.



Our deliverables

We've grouped these into three sections: outputs, outcomes and impact.

Our outputs

By outputs, we mean:

- Our theatre productions and creative projects
- The composition of our team and the reach of our activities
- The perceptions of the people we work with - and for
- Financial investment in our organisation and people

Our outcomes

When we talk about our outcomes, we're referring to the medium-term changes we'll generate for our people. These are specifically aligned to Wales' Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015.

A Prosperous Wales: Increasing employability

A Resilient Wales: Building self-confidence and increasing climate emergency awareness and activism

An Equal Wales: Increasing cultural activism

A Healthier Wales: Improving resilience to and reduce risk of mental illness

A Wales of cohesive communities: Exposing people to new worlds, philosophies and cultures

A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language: Deepening access to, and the impact of, Welsh theatre

A Globally Responsible Wales: Increasing ability to empathise

We're forward-looking and forward-thinking in focus, across all we do.

Our impact

This is the long-term change we'll generate for Wales, or put simply: the way our outputs and outcomes have delivered against our Vision.

Measuring success

We'll measure our success against our outcomes, outputs and impact in a range of different ways, such as collecting feedback from our audiences and people, delivering research studies and using key performance indicators for our projects and performances.



Tim Rooney

Our delivery

The delivery principles we're putting in place to achieve our goals are:

- Following the **Theory of Change** methodology to make sure what we do is comprehensive and leaves no stone unturned.
- Mapping out a number of new **Artistic Delivery Processes** outlining key considerations when commissioning any creative activity.
- Foregrounding the **Well-being Goals** and the **Sustainable Development Principles** of the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 and considering how we can support others to achieve them, too.
- Committing to our own Welsh Government **Cultural Contract Pledge** to reinforce our social purpose - and deliver on it.
- Delivering on the Goals laid out in the Welsh Government's **Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan**.
- Following We Shall Not Be Moved's, **Seven Principles to Ensure an Inclusive Recovery**, making inclusion central to our activities.
- Applying the **Theatre Green Book** methodologies - we've set ourselves targets on Intermediate and Advanced levels of compliance to ensure ongoing improvement in our sustainability.
- Supporting the Welsh Government's **1 million Welsh speakers** and doubling the daily use of Welsh by 2050 target by representing Welsh language culture within our creative activity.
- Building our knowledge of **digital forms and platforms** to attract and sustain new, broader and more diverse audiences.

- Operating in the **most efficient ways** and relying less on public funding.
- Making the most of **our national role** and our place in the sector as a facilitator and partner, in line with our Aims and Objectives.

Our programme

Our programme of shows and projects for 2023-2026 will serve our Aims and Objectives while giving us enough space to respond to emerging opportunities and challenges along the way. Everything we do will apply Our Mission, to:

- Tell the stories and amplify the lived experiences of Wales, exploring the challenges of our times to inspire change
- Put equality, social and environmental justice and well-being at the heart of all we do
- Create essential and extraordinary experiences together that will connect us all, locally, nationally and globally.



Find out more

You'll find up to date information on what is coming and how to get involved on our website: nationaltheatrewales.org

Directors

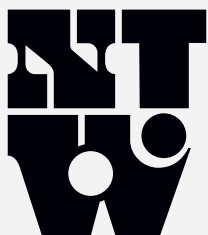
Anastacia Ackers
Anna Arrieta
Sian Doyle
Robert Edge
Sharon Gilburd
Miguela Gonzalez
Tafsila Kahn
Jo Lilford
Simon Stevens
Sanjiv Vedi

Artistic Director / CEO

Lorne Campbell

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Document is Restricted

TEAM Impact Report

2020 - 2023



TEAM is National Theatre Wales' (NTW) unique model of engagement, which comprises an innovative network of over 4,000 members from communities across Wales and further afield. NTW is committed to co-creating every aspect of our work through TEAM, by offering:

- access to creative opportunities including theatre-based workshops, professional development pathways, community cohesion events, consultation and ideas sessions
- platforms for skills-sharing and upskilling
- support and development opportunities to creative and community leaders
- new networks through collaborations with local groups, schools, arts venues, individuals and organisations.

The Numbers behind TEAM (2020-23)

- **44,600+** in-person audience and community members engaged
- **28,500** people watched TEAM's digital films and documentaries during Covid-19
- **4,000+** TEAM Members joined the extensive, diverse creative network
- **600+** theatre makers, artists and co-creators has professional development opportunities
- **70+** organisations across Wales have been part of TEAM's network
- **50+** schools, colleges or pupil referral units engaged with TEAM
- **35** TEAM Panel Members & TEAM Young Collective recruited to provide guidance for NTW
- **30+** TEAM projects were delivered across Wales

"One of the most striking aspects - and principal successes - of TEAM's work... is the sense of **shared ownership** that characterises it."

François Matarasso, TEAM External Evaluator, 2022

"All the work TEAM has led [is] a **great demonstration of the power of art to mobilise and communicate**. We are going to need it if we are going to make the changes needed."

Peter Davies OBE, Sustainable Futures Commissioner for Wales 2011 - 2016

"What I admire about NTW TEAM is that **it's not top-down, it's bottom-up**. Projects developed over time in all sorts of places and about all sorts of things with **all sorts of people who are then given a space to share**."

Molara Awen, Chair of Black History Cymru 365

"[The Dons] has been such a fantastic project. I've seen the pupils grow, change. **I've seen attendance improve, engagement improve**... Seeing the change in certain pupils is something that I will remember, well, forever"

Jemma Dennison, Head of Provision, Pembrokeshire Learning Centre

"The film and the exhibition made me **feel luckier than ever before to live where I live**... It feels like [NTW] have created this film... as a present to the people of Manorbier and Pembrokeshire. I can't wait to watch it again."

TEAM Member (Audience Member), Go Tell the Bees, 2021



TEAM Exchange, Narberth, 2022

Photographer: Ben Manning

Co-creation with Communities

Established in 2010, TEAM's fundamental principle is that its activities are **people-led**. NTW acts as the enabler; creating the infrastructure and providing the support, resources, networks and opportunities. TEAM's work has been actively [curated in response](#) to the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**. Creative collaboration and the arts has the power to bring people together – through the work of TEAM we can use our role to reverse those elements that are driving people apart. **Outcomes of TEAM include:**

- **community cohesion** through building connections, working together in a programme of co-creation and handing power back to communities.
- **improved wellbeing, mental health, connectivity and reducing loneliness** through involvement in the arts.
- **responsive arts provision that's responsive to community needs** and the most current priorities facing communities in Wales
- **a sense of community and belonging, and the inequalities faced by communities.**
- **upskilling, developing self-esteem**, helping people realise their personal potential and bringing a sense of self-fulfilment.

Case Study - Go Tell the Bees (2018 - 2022)



Go Tell the Bees, 2021

Photographer: AJ Manning

- **11,000** audience members engaged with the project
- **400** local people appeared in the final *Go Tell the Bees* film
- **240** pieces of supporting film content submitted by the local community
- **68%** of audience members had never engaged with NTW or TEAM activity before

- **500+** local school children involved
- **137** co-creators featured in the *Go Tell the Bees* film

Developed **over 4 years in collaboration** with local artists and communities, [Go Tell the Bees](#) explored the changes since Pembrokeshire's Sea Empress disaster, symbolising human-environmental interconnectedness through bees. The project's focus on environmental themes and Welsh language culture and identity enriched the experience, resonating locally and beyond, whilst empowering communities to [connect through creativity](#).

Initially conceived as a live performance, the project adapted to the Covid-19 pandemic's challenges, transforming into a [film](#) and [documentary](#) alongside various pieces of digital content. Including a well-being and **mindfulness** [web app](#) and a bank of educational resources in a [Learning Hive](#) and the [7 Simple Acts](#) initiative to reshape people's connections with the natural world

Featuring **30 locations**, *Go Tell the Bees* was streamed live, **13 times** in **4 locations**. Over 11,000 watched the project's video content during 2020-2022. **400 local participants** played a vital role in the project, including **240** who contributed content materials for the final film. The extensive engagement was well-received, with **84%** of the audience finding the project resonating with matters of importance, and **82%** appreciating the unique contribution to West Wales.

The **64-strong community cast** exemplified the transformative power of community engagement, combating loneliness, fostering creativity, and showcasing the relevance of arts and culture during the pandemic. The project had a transformative impact on many of the participants' well-being, providing vital opportunities for connection, learning, and social interaction, making it even more relevant and meaningful to the local community.

Go Tell the Bees serves as a powerful testament to the potential of art to empower communities and individuals, especially during challenging times. Through co-creation and community engagement, this project successfully enabled people to connect with their creative sides, fostering a sense of belonging, environmental awareness, and a desire for meaningful action.

Upskilling Theatre-makers and Artists

NTW TEAM bridges the worlds of professional and non-professional artists, levelling the playing field, and providing opportunities. TEAM...

- Fosters creative engagement for all ages, promote lifelong learning, and amplify voices across Wales
- Shines a light on existing talent
- Empowers emerging theatre-makers and artists by providing them with the skills and experiences needed to advance in their field
- Provides aspiring creatives a taste of what the industry offers and open doors to professional development.

This impact has been particularly vital in regions like Pembrokeshire and Wrexham, where limited artistic opportunities have been available.

“It's changed my entire life. It's changed me as a person completely. It's **changed how I think about my artistic career** and how I think about my trajectory, but also how I want to **connect in this community**”

TEAM Member, Artist

Case Study - *A Proper Ordinary Miracle* (2018-2022)



A Proper Ordinary Miracle, 2022

Photographer: Oliver Stephen

- **550+** audience members* over **9 fully booked** shows
- **150** theatre makers and **100** artists co-created the full-scale outdoor show
- **81%** of the audience felt the show resonated with the issues of the world
- **77%** found the performance absorbing
- **4 out of 5** audience members agreed that it was good to see this work happen in Wrexham

*Audience numbers were capped due to practical constraints of the outdoor performance

In the winter of 2022, [A Proper Ordinary Miracle](#) - an outdoor performance in Wrexham** that was co-created by a collective of **over 250 artists** all of whom had been actively engaged in TEAM Wrexham activities. The production supported theatre makers and artists who, in the aftermath of the pandemic, found employment opportunities to hone their skills. These artists delved into the intricacies of technical aspects, project management, creativity, and performance.

For many, this venture marked a turning point, providing them with not just work but a fertile ground for personal and professional growth. It not only served as a creative launchpad for many - especially those who had never engaged with theatre. It also underscored the spirit of community collaboration, infusing these experiences with the profound societal impact that art can have on a community.

81% of the audience felt the show resonated with the issues of the world and **77%** found the performance absorbing. **4 out of 5** audience members agreed that it was good to see this work happen in Wrexham and the localised theme was embedded throughout the performance as the word 'home' appeared over **60** times in the script.

Beyond the numbers and funding differentials, the impact of this venture is a testament to the transformative power of the arts. It provided a platform for the local people of Wrexham to find or further discover their craft - as many creatives on the project had never engaged within a personal or professional context before. Moreover, it embodied the spirit of community collaboration, enabling those first experiences to be embedded with the importance of the impact that art can have on societal change.

**Arts Portfolio Wales funding per head of population for Wrexham is currently totalled at £0 for 2023/2024, compared to £48.18 per head in Cardiff. Source: Arts Council Wales.

"It's sort of almost **skilling up a community**. I really felt it was lovely to have that opportunity that you wouldn't necessarily have, if you **haven't got that professional experience**, or in that field... What a

fantastic legacy to leave behind, because you've given someone a **chance to do something that they wouldn't have had a shot at**, otherwise, and perhaps may have opened up something for them.”
TEAM Member (Artist)

Consultation and Sector Support

TEAM's comprehensive consultation practices and ongoing dialogue with communities is key to co-creation. Our authentic approach to consultation has:

- fostered genuine community engagement
- influenced innovation in a multitude of sectors
- shaped best practices by sharing our with organisations and projects across various fields.

For example, our involvement has influenced creative consultation within Arts & Health, Welfare and Education initiatives delivered by other sectors and bolstered well-being in local communities.

Case Study - TEAM Consultation Sessions (2020 - 2023)



TEAM Exchange, Narberth, 2023

Videographer: Layla Parkin

- **1,380+* people** across Wales have been formally consulted
- **60 interviews** and consultation meetings delivered
- **33 organisational representatives** shared their views of the project
- **15+ consultation events** delivered across Pembrokeshire and Wrexham
- **1 major project blueprint** for authentic and impactful co-created community and creative engagement

Since 2018, we have consulted over 1,380 people across Wales, including audience members, theatre makers, partners, and organisations from various sectors. This extensive engagement has enabled us to listen, learn, and reflect on the diverse needs and demands of Wales. Notably, we've pioneered hyper-local creative consultation sessions, such as cross-artform Open Mic Performance Nights, offering Welsh communities a unique opportunity to share their aspirations for the theatre sector in Wales while also enhancing their own craft and performance skills.

Consultation and idea-gathering activities have been integral to the strategic development of TEAM's initiatives. Beyond shaping our own work, this consultative approach has allowed NTW to actively support the arts and other sectors. **We share best practice blueprints of authentic, impactful, and co-created community engagement models with organisations and projects in various fields.**

Many of our conversations have underlined the significance of creative opportunities for employability and community pride, especially in areas grappling with youth outward migration. In these regions,

projects like those facilitated by NTW TEAM offer a vital pathway for self-expression, skill development, and community cohesion.

“We see so many people who are **lonely and isolated** that **don't actually need medical intervention**, and I think that's where the **arts can help**... [with] ...mental health [and] physical health... We have a real opportunity here to build a **brilliant relationship with NTW TEAM** that could really have a huge impact across all three counties, from a Health Board perspective.”

Cllr Josh Beynon, Hywel Dda Health Board, 2022



TEAM Wrexham Activity 2021

“**Do you know how much creative talent is stored up in Wales?** There's only one organisation [NTW] that I know of that's doing their best to unlock it... They're trying to get all the **ideas to figure out how to unlock this talent**, so I think they need all the support they can get”

TEAM Member (Audience Member)
Hwb Narberth Consultation Event, 2023

Additional Examples of TEAM Activity 2020 - 2023

[TEAM Panel](#)

TEAM Panel is a group of up to **15 TEAM members** from across a range of ages, experiences and backgrounds who represent their communities across Wales. TEAM Panel's voices shape every aspect of NTWs' work, from the stories we tell and the people we employ to the places in which we create. TEAM Members receive an insight into how the Company runs, its governance structures alongside the development of their own creative journey through placement opportunities on NTW productions. They also attend an annual creative residency and with a dedicated budget for their own annual TEAM event, developed with the support of NTW's Collaboration and Creative Development departments.

[Educational Resources](#)

Since 2015, NTW's "The Radicalisation of Bradley Manning" has been part of the WJEC's A Level syllabus. In 2017, TEAM collaborated with the WJEC to create [digital resources](#) for schools, including discussions on Trans identity and awareness. This allowed students to access a text that raised awareness of Trans identity, fostering a more inclusive and educational environment.

[Refugee Week - Refugee Kindness Wrexham](#)

In July 2022, NTW TEAM collaborated with Refugee Kindness Wrexham to offer a free weekend of events for **75 refugee families** living in Wrexham. Participants saw film screenings, live performances and engaged with creative activities. A community football game between Bellevue Football Club (a multi-ethnic and inclusion-specific football club, providing league football opportunities to those from perceived adverse backgrounds, those experiencing social poverty and anyone else who faces barriers accessing competitive football in the area) and Wrexham Police happened on the Sunday - fostering relationships between the local community.

Gŵyl

Cymru

Workshops

As part of the Gŵyl Cymru festival, in November 2022, **Ali Goolyad**, a Somali-Welsh poet, delivered a series of bilingual workshops at Ysgol Hafan Y Mor in Tenby, supported by an Arts Council Wales Gŵyl Cymru grant. Over **200 pupils** from **5 year groups** engaged with the project that aimed to celebrate the Welsh football team competing in the World Cup. The children took part in activities like crafting football-themed accessories and creating poems and chants focused on football, unity, and Welsh identity. Ali fostered creativity, cultural understanding and connection to his Welsh heritage and culture and after expressing the desire to learn Welsh, the students eagerly assisted in incorporating the language into his poetry.

Young Collective

Wales is leading the way with its innovative Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, which puts young people at the heart of our democratic life, marking a huge opportunity to make a long-lasting, positive change to current and future generations. Creativity runs throughout the groundbreaking new National Curriculum for Wales, ensuring adaptable, inquisitive lifelong learners, and is underpinned by the theory of the [five creative habits of mind](#). Young people's voices are more powerful than ever before, thanks to the [Welsh Assembly's initiative to lower the voting age to 16 in Senedd elections](#). NTW is committed to playing its part at this exciting time for young people in Wales, by doing work that is vital in creating confident, creative individuals and cohesive communities to support the civic and creative future of Wales. In November 2022 we launched our Young Collective, a group of 12 young people from across Wales to help shape, inform and inspire the future direction of National Theatre Wales.

National Theatre Wales (NTW) Fact Sheet

Addressing some of the inaccuracies in recent media coverage of the charity:

- **NTW had an extensive first season and has not lived up to it since.**

NTW was able to offer 12 shows in its first year-long season because it pooled 2-3 years of its Arts Council Wales (ACW) grant to afford to do so and relied on staff working long hours, unremunerated. This model was unsustainable and led to burnout and a high staff turnover which largely continued until 2022 when the current Executive were able to stabilise working conditions through initiatives such as a new Well-being Policy, TOIL Policy and improved and applied Flexible Working Policy.

- **NTW has a vast budget.**

NTW has received a standstill **£1.6 million** annual average grant from ACW since it was established in 2007 in spite of spiralling inflation over this period. National Theatre Scotland received a **£4.26 million** grant from the Scottish Government in 2021/2022. The National Theatre in England has received a **£16.1 million** annual grant from Arts Council England for 2023/2024.

It should also be noted that whilst NTW has fundraised over **£7 million** in the last 3 years through trusts, foundations and other grant making bodies, the Company does not have any income generating capital asset so generates no income from presenting touring work, bar sales, hires, as in the case of venue-based organisations. This means that a much larger proportion of our public investment goes directly onto cultural activity but that it is harder for us to generate commercial income within the current model. National Theatre Scotland, for example, has been in receipt of **£10 million+** capital funding to develop its Rockvilla production facility, enabling it to generate a revenue model.

Arts Council England's investment allocations for 2023-2026 totalled £445 million annually. Arts Council Wales' for 2024-2027 is £29.6 million annually.

It is unrealistic to expect NTW to provide the same kind of scale and breadth of offers as the other national theatre companies in the UK.

- **NTW should stage 'the best' of Welsh theatre.**

Like all Arts Council Wales Portfolio Clients, NTW is tasked through its Revenue Funding Agreement to deliver on a range of political and strategic priorities for ACW and Welsh Government. These include the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales), the Cultural Contract, the Welsh Language Standards and ACWs' current key principles: Climate Justice, Nurturing Talent, Welsh Language, Transformation, Widening Engagement, Creativity. Given that NTW was the fourth highest grant

recipient within the Arts Portfolio Wales, NTW was expected to deliver on these at higher impact and scale than most other arts organisations.

As a result, NTW has stretched its activity beyond its productions and across a range of Creative Development opportunities for artists and theatre makers, and across an extensive Collaboration programme working with theatre makers and participants based in communities.

Given the cost of staging traditional theatre of the kind that the other UK national theatres deliver, the constraints of NTWs' budgets and its unique operational circumstances (e.g. being building-free - see above), NTW would have to operate a business model with an exclusive focus on productions in order for it to compete on those terms. Even then, the number of shows staged would be far fewer. Contractually, NTW cannot operate such a model. Equally, that approach is not consistent with the values of NTW, since traditional theatre predominantly appeals to repeat - and therefore low demographic diversity and already well-served - audiences.

In order to achieve goals aligned with ACWs' values and NTWs' mission to diversify audiences beyond traditional theatre audiences, NTW creates theatre in non-traditional ways and places and by involving people who've never engaged in theatre (because of multiple barriers) as participants and/or audiences.

At the same time, NTW has delivered some brilliant examples of more traditional theatre which have been lauded and awarded - e.g. *On Bear Ridge* (with Rhys Ifans). NTW included proposed plays along these lines in its 2023 ACW Investment Review application, alongside other forms which would appeal to other, wider audiences.

- **NTW has not worked in partnership with Theatr Genedlaethol Cymru.**

NTW has worked with Theatr Genedlaethol Cymru repeatedly and across all of its activity. Most recently, this includes the co-produced touring show *Petula* (2022), the script reading partnership initiative *Play On* (also 2022), and the partnership Culture Change leadership diversity programme (2023-2025). NTWs' 2023 Investment Review application included five partnership initiatives with Theatr Genedlaethol Cymru ranging from Welsh language apprenticeships on the Theatre Green Book to a shared website showcasing Wales' dramatic heritage, to commissioning 'missing audiences' research and working with them on the Wales Mid-Scale Touring Consortium (see below).

- **NTWs' audience figures are low.**

This is not true. Just a few key audience reach figures derived from the past 3 years - a period which includes the majority of the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions and outbreaks which seriously affected all theatres' ability to stage performances - include:

- *GALWAD* had a **5.4 million reach**
- The 2022/2023 programme reached **34,000 live audience members**
- Just over **9,000 people** watched *Go Tell the Bees* in Pembrokeshire, while the project trailer has 19,500 views and the project's Facebook page has a reach of 64,000
- *Petula*, our Theatr Genedlaethol and August 012 co-production, toured 6 Welsh venues, reaching **1,200+ audience members**
- **Performances at 5 out of 8 venues of our current tour of Circle of Fifths are sold out;** the others exceeded 70% capacity

It is also worth considering what constitutes 'low' and how this is being rationalised. NTW is not a venue with a repeat local audience who attend a mixture of genre performances, but instead offers site-specific and touring theatre productions. Venues are able to attract audiences through a variety of programming, from cinema to pantomimes to art exhibitions. As a building-free theatre company, NTW engages audiences from scratch for each project/show and/or relies on the venues it tours to market NTWs' shows (venues which are often under-resourced due to the challenging climate). NTWs' model prior to the last three years has not included a regular and consistent touring offer. The current business plan has centred this approach in order to enable sustained and consistent growth in partnership with venues. This is, however, a medium to long term strategy which will take time to produce results. NTWs' remit to commission and produce original work also focuses our activity, we believe rightly, on creating higher risk-higher reward projects.

NTW has spent the past 18 months developing the Wales Mid-Scale Touring Consortium which is a commitment between 12 partner venues and commissioning theatre companies across Wales to come together to address a shared and urgent need-that touring homegrown artistic theatre in Wales is on the verge of being financially unviable. A business plan was presented to ACW by Creu Cymru on behalf of the consortium in April 2023 and ACW have not responded yet to our request to work together on this essential work.

And again, NTW delivers activity well beyond its productions, so focusing on audience figures as the single marker of its success or failure is a fundamental misunderstanding of NTWs' remit.

Finally, whilst NTW can and does engage more established, affluent, monocultural and long-standing theatre audiences based in urban areas who are already served well by the sector, it is strategically committed to and successful at attracting new and diverse audiences, and focused on creating a future generation of audiences for Welsh theatre. This work is about depth of engagement rather than breadth of engagement; this work takes more time and greater resourcing to achieve, and will generate smaller audience numbers initially, but in time will layer great public value for the sector and for Wales.

- **GALWAD was a failure.**

This is personal opinion specifically about the artistic ‘quality’ of the project and, in many ways, misses the point.

GALWAD funding (£5.91 million) brought an unprecedented level of income and investment to the theatre sector in Wales during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns and as we emerged from them. £1.13 million came direct from Unboxed/Festival 2022 as well as £4.64 million via CreativeWales, a £100,000 contribution from Sky Arts, as well as £28,000 (net) of Film TaxRelief credits (£256,000 gross before financing costs incurred by Mad as Birds in its generation) and £11,000 Access to Work funding from DWP. 84% of the total budget was spent in Wales and a total of £3.1 million spent on 485 freelancers and creatives in Wales, 25% of whom were from global majority backgrounds, and 27% of whom were deaf and/or disabled or living with a long-term medical condition. The experience and skills development for the 120 people involved in the world-building process - unseen in Wales before and delivered in partnership with the creatives behind the blockbuster film *Minority Report* - not to mention the multiple mentoring, step-up opportunities, residencies, shadowing components, trainees scheme and youth co-creation and co-ideation built into the project will yield legacy within the creative sector for a generation.

As above, the project had a reach of 5.4 million across 146 countries (the second highest reach of all the Unboxed Festival projects). There were also numerous other participant and audience engagement initiatives including citizen journalist opportunities, community participation in the filming and live elements and a schools strand of tie-in activity around the central project theme (climate emergency) which reached 11,010 pupils. The multi-platform story highlighted the diversity of lived experiences in Wales, and brought deaf storytelling and the Welsh language to global audiences. In industry firsts, content was provided in BSL, bilingual audio-description and captioned forms, and the project was used as a pilot for accurate carbon footprint tracking which is now being built upon in partnership with the Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama in order to support target setting by the sector.

- **NTW does not contribute to the sector.**

There are numerous quantifiable ways in which NTW operates a central role within the Welsh theatre sector ecosystem as the only theatre company with the remit and ability to act for the benefit of all. Other theatre companies in Wales of course have their own specialisms and strengths but their business models mean that they have to almost always and exclusively prioritise their own needs. Just a few examples of how NTW has uniquely contributed to the sector include:

- Numerous leaders of smaller Welsh theatre companies - including many of those now funded by ACW following the 2023 Investment Review - have benefited from sustained professional development, freelance, staffing contract opportunities and TEAM membership at NTW.
- An annual creative development programme of opportunities for theatre makers including: Play On (script-reading service); R&Ds and commission funding; professional development conversations (Creative Chats); career development through assistant roles for shows; industry days (where freelancers meet agents, commissioning companies, partners); residencies; mentoring; bursaries to attend networking events.
- NTW TEAM delivers activity within and by communities and the health, social care, education and third sectors across Wales.
- NTW is co-ordinator and co-custodian of the Theatre Green Book which is the globally recognised sector-leading framework and innovator for delivering carbon neutral theatre. We actively share this knowledge: this year through carbon literacy training for Welsh theatre companies and organising sector events in Newport, Aberystwyth and Bangor.
- NTW is one of only three main producing English language theatre companies in Wales which tours theatre across the mid-scale venues here (Sherman Theatre and Theatr Clwyd are the other two). Venues rely on NTW for the income their shows bring. It also makes NTW one of the few theatre companies in Wales which is able to tour shows about Wales internationally.

- **NTW has taken funding away from other theatre companies.**

This is not true. ACWs' annual budget was increased by the grant that NTW received in order to support the establishment and future of NTW. NTWs' 2007 remit included partnership, co-production and touring within the existing infrastructure in order to add value rather than extract it. NTW has programmed accordingly, for example by not running Christmas shows which would reduce much relied upon revenue for other companies.

