

Agenda – Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee

Meeting Venue:

Committee meeting via Zoom

Meeting date: 19 May 2020

Meeting time: 08.45

For further information contact:

Manon George

Committee Clerk

0300 200 6565

SeneddCWLC@senedd.wales

Informal meeting (08:45–09:15)

In accordance with Standing Order 34.19, the Chair has determined that the public are excluded from the Committee's meeting in order to protect public health. This meeting will be broadcast live on www.senedd.tv.

1 Introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

(09:15)

2 COVID–19: Evidence session with the Arts Council of Wales

(09:15–10:15)

(Pages 1 – 10)

Nick Capaldi, Chief Executive, Arts Council of Wales

3 Papers to note

(10:15)

3.1 Letter from the Wales Community Radio Network

(Pages 11 – 12)

3.2 Correspondence with the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee

(Pages 13 – 15)

3.3 Brief from the Arts Council of Wales

(Pages 16 – 19)

4 Motion under Standing Order 17.42 (ix) to resolve to exclude the public for the remainder of the meeting

(10:15)



5 Covid-19: consideration of evidence

(10:15-10:45)

Document is Restricted

7th May, 2020,

Dear Senedd Member,

Emergency Covid 19 Funding for Welsh Community Radio Stations

We, the undersigned, collectively forming the Wales Community Radio Network, write to express our grave concerns over the state of and financial risk to our sector.

All are licensed not for profit broadcasters, severely affected by the financial crisis caused by Covid 19.

We provide skilled, targeted, local programming to the communities we serve, largely delivered by volunteer broadcasters; above all we provide social gain, a requirement measured and costed into our performance criteria, a benefit to the communities in which we live.

Whilst our volunteers have been severely affected by the lock down, in most cases restricting our activities, services and ability to deliver programme content, all stations have continued to broadcast, delivering highly valued items of news and information. The collapse in revenue from advertising is causing great distress. The cancellation of pre-booked advertising has had a catastrophic impact. All stations are faced with essential costs, including wages, rent, Ofcom fees, licence fees, insurances, energy, maintenance, and the general overheads required to be met in any business. Most have had to incur the additional burden to purchase remote broadcasting equipment.

Since the lock down has been in place, community radio stations have been preparing mission critical safety information in the form of radio bulletins and key messages to LOCAL populations across Wales. This has helped save lives, educate and inform people, and pass on essential information from Public Services and the Welsh Government.

This cannot and should not be underestimated, particularly when the circulation of local and regional newspapers is in decline, and other communication channels limited. Particular respect must be given to the elderly who turn to local radio as a valuable means of local information.

Whilst we are volunteer driven, we pay for the privilege of broadcasting to serve our communities in areas defined by Ofcom, as being in need of localised broadcasting services. Other than occasional grants, we are not supported by them financially in any way at all. They do, however, provide a regulatory framework with which we are required to comply or face fines, suspension or loss of the license.

We URGENTLY need financial support.

We URGENTLY need financial support from the WELSH Government for WELSH Community radio stations, owned, licensed, operating, and servicing communities IN WALES.

This provision is required over and above any provision that may be made or distributed across the UK, wherein limited funds may have to be spread across up to 300 community radio broadcasters in Britain, and of which a small proportion only are located in Wales.

Our plea to you, and the Assembly Government, is for assistance to keep our sector alive. We

Rhwydwaith Radio Gymunedol CYMRU

WALES Community Radio Network

provide a highly valued and hyper local delivery of news, information, and in these dark times entertainment to our communities, warmly received by all. We cannot shoulder this burden alone, and due to the structure of our industry are unable to qualify for the grant aid and assistance available to the wider business community. We would wish to develop our relationship with the Assembly, and have it recognise more precisely the work that we do, but above all we need financial assistance to survive.

We need YOUR help to enable us to continue with the important next steps as we come out of lock down and into recovery. Time is not on our side.

We cannot stress enough the need for help, by way of grant and advertising revenues from the Assembly to get us through these difficult times, enabling us to continue to serve our communities and the aspirations they have every day of the year.

We ask you as members and task you as representatives for assistance to our sector.

We welcome greatly the help you may give us.

We look forward to your assistance and support.

In all sincerity,

The Wales Community Radio Network

David Hanson, Station Director, **Tudno FM**

Lee Cole, Station Manager, **Rhondda Radio**

Harold Martin, Radio Consultant, **MônFM Community Radio**

Donna Zammut, Station Manager, **Radio Cardiff**

Tony Wyn Jones, Station Director, **MônFM**

Amy Hughes, Station Editor, **Calon FM**

Michael Lewis, Station Director, **Radio Tircoed**

Nathan Spackman, Operations Director, **Bro Radio**

Stephen Bower, Station Director, **BGFM Radio**

Steve Johnson, **University of South Wales**

Dai Lloyd AM

Chair of the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee

27 April 2020

Dear Dai,

COVID-19 and Sport

The Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee will be scrutinising the Welsh Government's response to the pandemic and the impact of COVID-19 on areas within our remit. As part of this work, we are hoping to question the Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism on support for organisations within his remit.


Given the relationship between sport and culture, and in order to make the best use of time and relieve pressure on your Committee, would you be content for our Committee to scrutinise the Deputy Minister on the impact of COVID-19 on sporting issues as they intersect with culture?

If so, please can you contact my Clerk by 4 May, to allow us sufficient time to prepare for the session?

We are also planning to issue a call for evidence to all organisations within our remit to assess the longer term impact of the pandemic and the Government's approach to support. Would you be content for us to include the impact of COVID 19 on sport in our call for evidence?

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee as I understand that the economic impact of sporting events in Wales is part of his Committee's remit.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Helen Mary Jones". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Helen Mary Jones

Chair of the Committee

cc. Russell George AM

Chair of the Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee

Helen Mary Jones MS
Chair
Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee

14 May 2020

Dear Helen Mary


COVID-19 and Sport

Thank you for your letter of 27 April relating to Covid-19 and sport.

The Committee considered the letter at its last meeting and is content with the approach you have outlined.

We would be grateful if you would keep us informed of any developments in this area as you progress with your inquiry.

Yours sincerely



Dr Dai Lloyd MS
Chair, Health, Social Care and Sport Committee



The impact of COVID-19 on the Arts in Wales

A briefing for Senedd Cymru's Culture, Welsh Language & Communications Committee

All arts organisations – and many individuals – have been adversely impacted by the pandemic, some quite catastrophically.

1. Our sector is largely made up of charities, community interest companies, social enterprises, and freelancers. Charitable organisations and individual creatives generally carry no sizeable reserves and, even when operating in normal circumstances, do not set out to make large profits. Any profit that is made is generally re-invested back into enhancing delivery and extending the impact of arts programmes.

Some of our most effective organisations find themselves worst affected.

2. Current difficulties are exacerbated for those organisations (mostly venues) who achieve a high proportion of their income from ticket sales, retail income and other secondary spend. Under normal circumstances we applaud organisations like Chapter, Galeri in Caernarfon and Wales Millennium Centre for their success in operating with a low dependency on public funding. But with around 80% of their income coming from commercial activities, an otherwise stable business model crashed overnight.

3. There's also the potential impact on associated expenditure. The Wales Millennium Centre, for example, sustains 1,200 jobs onsite and has estimated its annual economic impact in Cardiff Bay to be around £70m per annum.

The cumulative loss of income is very serious, to the organisations themselves and to the economy of Wales.

4. The Arts Council of Wales provides annual grant-in-aid support of around £27m to a nation-wide network of 67 key arts organisations – the Arts Portfolio Wales (APW). These organisations alone are losing around **£1.45m a week** in earned and contributed income.

5. We also provide support to many organisations outside the Arts Portfolio Wales. One of the highest profile sectors is Wales' festivals, with many usually taking place between May and August. These include Hay, Llangollen, the National Eisteddfod and Green Man. These aren't just important cultural organisations – they're also part of Wales' overall visitor and tourist economy.

But it's not just organisations who are struggling – many individual artists and creative freelancers have suffered an immediate loss of income.

6. Freelance artists and creators are the ultimate “gig workers”, moving from project to project to find the next pay-cheque. Often, they're doing this without the benefit of employee protection, and without any significant savings to draw on in times of crisis.
7. Most creative freelancers have had 100% of their work cancelled. They are without income and without promise of work. Part-time and freelance workers continue to be denied the protections that their employed counterparts take for granted. The Job Retention Scheme and Self-Employed Income Support Scheme have been welcome interventions. However, many are falling through the gaps between these two.

There is a differential impact on individuals that reinforces inherent inequalities.

8. The suspension of live performance and public cultural activity is one of the most comprehensive shocks to society's sense of well-being, as well as to the economy. But we need also to recognise that public health crises aren't equal opportunities events: the poorest, most marginalised and disabled are generally the worst affected, while the wealthy, connected and healthy are usually better able to weather the storm.

Working with the Welsh Government, we reallocated money from existing budgets to create a Resilience Fund for the Arts of £7.0 million (later increased to £7.5m).

9. The Welsh Government's grant-in-aid to the Arts Council has been the vital foundation stone on which our COVID-19 emergency response strategy has been built. On top of this we 're-purposed' discretionary grant-in-aid funding and money from the National Lottery. We subsequently secured a further £500,000 from a private charity, the **Freelands Foundation**.

We moved quickly to divide the Resilience Fund into three 'emergency' strands.

10. The three are:
 - Urgent Response Funding for Individuals
 - Stabilisation Funding for Individuals
 - Stabilisation Funding for Organisations
11. The Urgent Response Fund has been the first to make awards. Designed to support freelance artists and freelance creative practitioners working in the not-for-profit sector in Wales, it is focused on those who are experiencing immediate financial difficulty due to the loss of income caused by the Coronavirus/COVID-19 pandemic.

12. The fund offers micro-grants of up to £2,500. Round 1 of the fund has been completed and we have offered **214** applicants funding totalling **£489,826**. We are currently assessing round 2 of the Urgent Response Fund for Individuals, and the Stabilisation Fund for Organisations.

The immediate future is difficult to predict, but confidence in being able to launch an autumn season is evaporating.

13. Even if theatres, arts centres and galleries can reopen, who will come? How is a theatre audience compatible with the social distancing principles that are likely to continue long after we can leave our homes?
14. Return and recovery will depend in large part on the policy that the UK Government takes towards restarting the economy. A serious programme of investment to stimulate the UK out of recession would prompt a dynamic response from the arts. The alternative route, saving our way out of debt, will create a slower, more cautious environment with the risk that some organisations would become a casualty of the process.

The immediate concern is around solvency, or the immediate cash position and cash prospects for organisations.

15. Since every form of immediate and projected income for venues has ceased, every organisation has gone dark, hoping that their best strategy is their survival for another day. Some are improvising alternative ways of promoting their activities – live streaming, digital collaboration, online readings and podcasts. Others are making their time, talent, and physical space available for immediate community needs — field hospitals, production of PPE, food production etc.
16. Some basic practical actions would help ease current anxieties.
- the extension of Job Retention Scheme and the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme as far as necessary for those sectors that need time to open and rebuild their businesses
 - enabling furloughing to be done on a part-time basis to allow organisations to work where possible
 - revising the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme to ensure no freelance worker falls through the gaps of government support.
 - clarifying the eligibility of culture and leisure trusts to benefit from Government funding
 - extending access to Local Authority administered business rate relief in Wales to all parts of the creative industries, not only those in retail, hospitality and leisure

- shaping the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to deliver a recovery focused business finance scheme, designed to stimulate business development and innovation across the arts and creative industries
- ensuring that funding continues to be available to organisations experiencing cash-flow issues and facing significant commercial rental costs
- the development of “safe space” protocols to help the sector return to business

The achievements of the arts in Wales have been rich, innovative and deeply appreciated.

17. They should be sustained. But we also believe that whatever emerges after the pandemic must feel fresh and refocused, rather than a faded shadow of former glories. Could the darkness of this crisis, give us an opportunity to bring about lasting and systemic change? It's possible that such change that would be good for the sector, for our values generally and, in particular, help us get to grips with the urgent need to address issues of equality, diversity and social justice in terms of who is able to enjoy and take part in the arts. This is the debate that we're now initiating with the sector.

Nick Capaldi
Chief Executive
Thursday 14 May 2020