

Senedd Cymru / Welsh Parliament

Pwyllgor Diwylliant, y Gymraeg a Chyfathrebu / Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee

Ymchwiliad i'r achosion o COVID-19 ac effaith y feirws ar ddiwylliant, y diwydiannau creadigol, treftadaeth, cyfathrebu a chwaraeon / Inquiry into the COVID-19 outbreak and its impact on culture, creative industries, heritage, communications and sport

CWLC COV07

Ymateb gan Little Wander Ltd/ Response from Little Wander Ltd

The main immediate impact to us was the cancellation of the main event we run, Machynlleth Comedy Festival, and refunding of over £100k of ticket sales. There were also sunk costs (our event was due to take place at the start of May), and almost a year's worth of staff time paid for to plan the festival. This doesn't just impact us as an organisation, but hundreds of freelancers and creatives involved in the annual event.

It is looking increasingly likely that our second festival, Aberystwyth Comedy Festival, will be unable to run in its physical form this October, and whilst the impacts won't be as large, it is a wave we can hardly afford to brace for at this time.

We also produce UK tours for comedians, all of which have had to be suspended and rescheduled, and the same has happened with all of our regular comedy clubs that happen in arts venues across Wales.

All of the above has no end point and we have to assume that business' such as ours will be the last ones back to functionality due to the gathering of people together.

To say the impact on us has been huge would be an understatement. After an initial period of high workload to cancel the festival, and reschedule all the tours we finally managed to legally furlough PAYE staff-members. However, as directors of an SME my wife and I are currently largely ineligible for the furlough scheme. I took the decision not to furlough myself anyway, and we are trying to support a freelance worker who we had on contract through this time also, as the support that they've been able to access has been minimal.

We are ineligible for the ACW grants schemes, and also not covered by Creative Wales.

However we did manage to access the small business rates relief scheme (£10k) and are in regular contact with the Major Events Unit who are trying to find ways to help us.

The immediate impact was a halting of all work which is currently decimating the supply chain of the events industry. The longer term impact will be around which organisations and individuals make it through intact, and whether there is enough equipment, suppliers, skillbase remaining to restart the events industry effectively.

We are trying to major on elements of our work that we can do without the gathering of audiences. We secured two small commissions from BBC Radio Wales, and have applied for a grant from Clwstwr to diversify into online gigs. Neither of these things

Senedd Cymru / Welsh Parliament

Pwyllgor Diwylliant, y Gymraeg a Chyfathrebu / Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee

Ymchwiliad i'r achosion o COVID-19 ac effaith y feirws ar ddiwylliant, y diwydiannau creadigol, treftadaeth, cyfathrebu a chwaraeon / Inquiry into the COVID-19 outbreak and its impact on culture, creative industries, heritage, communications and sport

CWLC COV07

Ymateb gan Codi Little Wander Ltd/ Response from Little Wander Ltd

will provide our organisation with enough work to continue, especially once the job retention scheme tapers, but they are a way of trying to keep the wolf from the door, and for us to also try and generate small amounts of work for a supply chain below us that has been hammered.

Please contact me direct for any more information on the above. I am happy to talk about the impacts on both the festival, events and comedy industry as a whole.

Warm regards,

Henry

--

Henry Widdicombe

Director

[Little Wander Ltd](#)

