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Peter Hall (Committee Clerk)
NI Assembly's Culture, Arts and Leisure Committee,
Room 344,
Parliament Buildings,
Belfast,
BT44 3XX

1st May 2014

Dear Peter

**RE: Submission to the Northern Ireland Assembly Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure
- Inquiry into inclusion in the Arts of Working Class Communities Submission**

Glasgowbury welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Committee's inquiry. Issues related to definitions and categorisation of 'class' have been comprehensively discussed in earlier submissions; these are helpful to understand the structural factors which limit communities engagement with the arts in both formal and informal settings. However, while significant, access to resources cannot be viewed as the primary determinant of propensity to engage in the arts at either an individual or community level. It is complex and engagement has to be considered in light of the multiple identities each person inhabits at a particular time which influence participation.

Substantial evidence has also been presented to the Inquiry describing the positive social and economic outcomes participation in the arts can deliver.¹ The arts have been recognised as a potential driver of change and numerous government cross-cutting and sectoral policies and initiatives aim to use the arts to support tourism, social inclusion and good relations, entrepreneurship, lifelong learning and better educational outcomes young people to name a few.²

¹ DCAL, ACNI, DCMS (UK), Joseph Rowntree Foundation and others have published research into the economic and social value of participation and investment in the arts.

² OFMDFM - A Shared Future – A Strategy for Good Relations, Children & Young People's Strategy & the work of the NI Children's Commissioner for NI, Older Person's Strategy DCAL/ ACNI/ LNI - Unlocking Creativity, Strategy for Creative Industries, Arts Strategy for NI, Music Strategy for NI, Strategy for Older People's engagement in the arts, Culture and Creative Development Strategy 2014-2017, DARD - Strategies for Rural Development DSD, Active Communities, Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy for NIDEL - Lifelong Learning, DoJ - Community Safety, Youth Diversionary activities, DETI - Digital Inclusion, Tourism Strategy, Support for Entrepreneurship, Support for the Social Economy, DE - Actions to support young people not in education, employment or training

Submissions have also identified major barriers to participation in the arts for communities and individuals in poverty such as homelessness, poor mental and physical health and stigmatisation as well as issues which affect participation more generally and are not directly associated with restricted access to resources including: caring responsibilities for children and increasingly for elderly parents, lack of individual confidence and community capacity, proximity to facilities and access to transport, misperceptions about the inclusiveness of programmes/ delivery organisations and restricted access to information.

Rather than reiterating arguments this submission sets out at Annex A the key challenges encountered by Glasgowbury when engaging with individuals and communities at risk of social exclusion and makes recommendations for policy makers charged with promoting participation in the arts and creative industries. Glasgowbury would be pleased to discuss these issues and their possible solutions with the Committee.

Annex B provides some background to Glasgowbury and the programmes we deliver for your information. If you have any queries or would like to discuss any aspect of this submission please do not hesitate in contacting me.

Yours sincerely

Paddy Glasgow

Creative Director

KEY CHALLENGES

1. PROMOTING INCLUSIVE SERVICE PROVISION

1.1 Participation needs to be considered in the context of the interaction of the multiple identities of each individual as a person and as a member of a specific community. Each persons' identity as a parent, as a younger or older person, as a women or men, as defined by our physical or mental health, our sexuality, ethnicity or community background interact to influence one's ability to access services. Glasgowbury recognises that individuals and communities motivation and capacity for participation differ considerably. Glasgowbury has developed a person-centred approach which takes account of confidence and skills levels to support individuals and communities to take part in a way that makes sense to them. We provide access/ progression routes to further engagement, formal learning, volunteering and employment opportunities. In developing programmes that respond to identified need Glasgowbury has consulted with users, partners and funders to understand both the barriers to participation and the desired outcomes from individual and community engagement in the arts. We have participated in and supported consultations across Mid-Ulster, commissioned reviews of our work and undertaken evaluations of our activities to further tailor our programmes.

1.2 Since Section 75 the Northern Ireland (1998) Act placed a duty on all public authorities' (and by extension the organisations they fund) to give due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between specified protected groups and promote good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group Government has placed a greater emphasis on collecting information about the beneficiaries of programmes supported with public money. Understanding the issues will be central to the identification of a sustainable solution however our experience suggests significant misreporting of status amongst project beneficiaries. Feedback suggests that monitoring activities and in certain circumstance eligibility requirements may deter participation by closely associating involvement with a welfare intervention.

1.3 The relationship between socio-economic status and take-up of subsidised community based services is impacted by feelings of unworthiness, shame and guilt associated with welfare. Recent international research³ comparing take up of services amongst lower socio-economic groups across seven countries, including the UK, suggests that the stigmatisation associated with participation persists due to a widespread perception within communities experiencing multiple deprivations that individual need was a result of personal rather than structural failings. This has implications locally and may account for the differing levels of engagement within particular communities. At a personal level the perception that involvement is dependent on socio-economic status can result in a loss of agency which impacts on self-esteem and confidence. Communities that have historically experienced discrimination in accessing services may be better placed to identify and take-up opportunities as it viewed as redress for earlier failures associated with biased policy implementation. This may offer an explanation for the higher levels of participation

³ Elaine Chase, Research Officer at the Department of Social Policy and Intervention at the University of Oxford, 2014.

amongst some communities which while experiencing multiple deprivations are better able to mobilise and organise successful community based arts initiatives.

1.4 In our experience Government's requirements to monitor and report on individuals' status in the various categories to evidence specific policy outcomes particularly in respect of the good relations agenda creates a significant 'cooling effect' for potential participants and misreporting amongst actual beneficiaries. The branding and promotion of various funds and initiatives as specific community relations interventions can also deter take-up, we have found this to be evident in both mixed and highly segregated communities and in communities experiencing differing levels of deprivation. Glasgowbury has consciously promoted its programmes to the whole community on the basis of their content. Glasgowbury's focus has been on creating opportunities for engagement in community arts, contemporary music and entrepreneurship in the creative industries. Our high quality programming and production standards delivered in a rural setting has supported intercommunal and intergenerational engagement.

1.5 Through the delivery of our programmes we have realised important good relations benefits. Glasgowbury's contemporary music events provides learning opportunities for performers and trainee music technicians as well as developing audiences from all sections of the community. Our programmes provide a forum for cross-community and inter-denominational engagement which strengthens relations within and between communities. An appreciation of difference through music, arts and creativity indirectly promotes tolerance and acceptance of cultural diversity. Developing audiences and building participant's knowledge of alternative cultures and music traditions in a wider global context can enrich and deepen understanding of others' cultures, beliefs and traditions. Developing contact in a new context on the basis of a shared interest outside of the traditional political, religious and ethnic identities normalises relations reducing real and perceived religious, social and cultural barriers to active community engagement.

1.6 Central to achieving the desired good relations outcome is the provision of community access to resources. We are currently fundraising to establish a Creative Hub for the Mid-Ulster area which will enable Glasgowbury to deliver a series of enhanced and new programmes to meet local need. Our focus and exploration of music and the arts will attract new participants and provide a further catalyst for cross-community and intergenerational engagement. Through the creative industries participants explore different cultures and societies including digital communities. Providing an inclusive venue in a genuinely shared space, which is primarily focused on contemporary music, the arts and the creative industries rather than the initiation of cross-community contact, has encouraged wide participation and intercommunal and intergenerational engagement is now an important outcome from all of our work.

1.7 Facilitating engagement enables relations between and within communities to be established and strengthened, it normalises contact in a social setting and provides further opportunities for interaction through the arts. Inclusive programmes provide the framework within which participants gain insights into their own and their communities' experience. It is through awareness raising, information giving and sustained contact that a deeper understanding of others' experiences is developed. New skills provide opportunities

for creative self-expression through participation in on-line communities, events or through the creation of new music, comics and digital content. Our group work model supports creative communication and exploration of issues around identity, diversity and culture. Outcomes include the reduction of perceived barriers to participation and of feelings of social exclusion, increased social cohesion through a greater awareness and understanding of different experiences and the development of community capacity and capital.

1.8 The effect of Government targeting of funding at initiatives that primarily promote equality, target poverty (when specifically categorised according to socio-economic status usually evidenced by receipt of passported benefits which reinforces stigmatisation) or address social exclusion is to require delivery organisations to 'bolt-on' a good relations element to existing programmes developed in response to identified community need or in the exclusion of programmes which while not primarily focused on the good relations agenda delivers the desired outcomes. Glasgowbury's organic approach to community engagement on the basis on shared interests has worked and is arguably more sustainable than short-term, targeted interventions. Similar issues are present in other targeted Government initiatives e.g. to support young people not in employment, education or training, community safety, lifelong learning, and it would be helpful if within various funding streams there was scope for innovative proposals which deliver stated objectives, if by a circuitous route. There is risk that Government reliance on area based measures of deprivation to target investment will exclude many rural areas where affluence and poverty exist 'cheek by jowl' and the identification of need required a more nuanced approach.

2. SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

2.1 Glasgowbury has struggled with various funders administrative requirements in respect of the employment of staff. We currently operate by commissioning work on a freelance basis from an experienced creative director, administrator and specialist tutors who are all self-employed. There are anomalies across various NI Government funders of the arts in respect of support for core workers and use of self-employed professionals particularly in relation to ACNI and InvestNI (both major investors in the creative sector). The administrative burden for small community based initiatives is a barrier to securing the necessary human resource to deliver existing programmes and support the development of new initiatives that both respond to community need and enhance the sustainability of the organisation.

2.2 We have recognised access to information as a barrier to participation in rural areas however securing the resources to proactively engage in promotion and community outreach has been challenging. Support for grass-roots, community based delivery organisations to manage the costs associated with government's requirements such as accountancy and legal costs attached to becoming an employer would be helpful. Consistency in Government's approach to voluntary organisations and social enterprises would provide useful clarity and may enable more organisations to actively participate in the delivery of wider social and economic objectives.

3. WORKING STRATEGICALLY IN PARTNERSHIP

3.1 Glasgowbury has been delivering access to the arts in the Mid-Ulster area, primarily in the Magherafelt District Council area, for over ten years. Despite our track record we have been unable to develop a strategic relationship with the local authority. The Council has failed to recognise the many benefits investment in the arts can deliver for local communities. The Council's investment in the arts has been historically low, in 2003/4 an ACNI review revealed the Council did not commit any expenditure to the arts. It has barely improved, when ACNI replicated the review in 2010/11 the Council's spend had increased to £25,000, largely due to the transfer of community festival funding from the former Northern Ireland Events company and still representing the lowest per capita spend across Northern Ireland. Glasgowbury was initially established to support and promote contemporary music however in response to evidence need the organisation has developed to deliver a wide range of services to the community. Many of our programmes contribute to the achievement of the Council's stated objectives, despite this the Council has operated in isolation from the community and the voluntary groups working with them on a day to day basis.

3.2 The Council's support for the arts and for enterprise development is very narrowly focused and has failed to respond to the needs of organisations working directly with communities to support their active engagement and build capacity. The new local government structure for the Mid-Ulster area presents a significant opportunity to redress underinvestment in the arts in the Magherafelt District Council area. A review of cultural assets across Magherafelt, Cookstown and Dungannon and South Tyrone will evidence the lack of Council support and provision as the other areas have recognised the potential of the arts and invested accordingly. We are hopeful that integrated Community Planning on the basis on evidenced need will engender a more strategic approach to working with and funding third sector organisations with a presence and proven track record for delivering within communities.

3.3 Our ambition is to work collaboratively with the new Council to identify opportunities at home and across Europe to harness local creativity to deliver tangible benefits in terms of community capacity, engagement and pride and employment and entrepreneurship.

GLASGOWBURY

ABOUT US:

Based in Draperstown, Glasgowbury, a multi award winning organisation is - A 'Small But Massive' force that supports and enhances creativity within individuals and communities across rural Mid Ulster. Glasgowbury is a social enterprise. The Group was constituted in 2003 as a not-for-profit organisation and is registered as a company limited by guarantee with charitable status with HMRC and the NI Charities Commission. Our primary aims are to:

- Advance arts and culture, particularly contemporary music by facilitating creative and community activities; organising and promoting festivals, performances and events; providing venues, facilities, amenities and equipment for rehearsal and performance
- Advance education and entrepreneurship by creating opportunities for work placement, volunteering and training; organising and delivering music, multi-media, dance and performing arts classes; organising workshops, discussions and other means of developing ideas and raising awareness of music, the creative industries, cultural matters and issues.

In response to the identified need for the development of the arts infrastructure in mid-Ulster to provide access/ progression routes into the creative industries and community engagement in the arts Glasgowbury, in 2000, began to develop a range of programmes to:

- nurture young creative talent
- provide a platform to develop and promote local artists
- deliver opportunities for community engagement and learning
- promote mid-Ulster as a destination to visit, to work and invest in.

Over the last 13 years Glasgowbury has impacted on 30,000+ people ranging from children to seniors through a variety of innovative, creative projects and activities. Glasgowbury aims to build upon its successes by establishing a Mid-Ulster Creative Hub at Draperstown. The Creative Hub, located in a landmark heritage building threatened with disuse, will support 8,000 people pa to access a wide range of arts, training and multi-media programmes and activities by December 2015.

The Creative Hub will enable Glasgowbury to:

- Increase the annual provision of creative mentoring to young people, students and artists. Programmes such as the 'Rural Key' integrate learning on creative processes and the music business to support local entrepreneurship.
- Deliver additional bespoke IT and creative courses for seniors.
- Provide practical support and access to digital resources for young rural entrepreneurs through the provision of 4 'Hot Desks'.
- Deliver more work experience opportunities for secondary school pupils, university students and the unemployed.
- Develop existing partnerships to deliver mentoring programmes for businesses and educational institutions.
- Offer more structured volunteering opportunities in a number of employment areas to develop to participant's skills, confidence and employability.
- Provide a venue for community engagement through the delivery of events.

- Develop its social enterprise (Small but Massive Event Services) to sustain and develop Glasgowbury.

OUR APPROACH:

Glasgowbury's activities are tailored to meet the needs of individuals and groups experiencing deprivation and rural isolation. Glasgowbury delivers services for all age groups enhancing access to the arts, creative industries and digital community. Glasgowbury's services help participants address isolation, develop self-esteem and confidence & support those experiencing mental or physical ill health through a person-based approach which aims to respond to individual development needs. Through engagement in the arts, music and the digital economy and community Glasgowbury provides a support structure through which participants can not only forget about their troubles but also place their experience in a wider context providing new insights and opportunities for exploring cultural diversity.

Glasgowbury has attracted public funding as well as trust funding, in-kind support and private sponsorship to deliver a series of award-winning events and programmes which support the development of the creative industries. Glasgowbury has reduced dependence on public funds for the delivery of established programmes and annually invests available reserves to sustain existing programmes. The development and delivery of new programmes and initiatives require ongoing support however through the implementation of a robust Sustainability Plan dependence on public sector investment will be time-bound. The development of a Small But Massive Music and Arts Space serving the mid Ulster area will provide a focal point for the delivery of all of our current and planned activities including the development of piloted projects including music and production workshops, dance, multi-media and art and design projects.

Glasgowbury currently deliver the following programmes⁴:

- **Glasgowbury Music Festival Programming and Delivery** – the multi award winning annual celebration of local music will be developed to provide event planning and showcase opportunities outside of NI.
- **G Sessions** – monthly showcase gigs for up and coming and touring artists
- **Rural Key Music Programme** – an award-winning project offering an access progression route in the music industry to aspiring musicians and technicians
- **Connected Communities Computer Courses** – Introductory computer classes aimed at getting people online and using computer technology for practical and creative purposes, in association with BT
- **Small But Massive Event Services** – a PA hire, event management and creative consultancy business
- **Creative and mentoring programmes** – tailored to the needs of specific individuals and groups
- **Music Tutoring** – weekly music tuition is offered to children and adults across guitar and drums in the Rhythm 'n' Blues and Six Pack Club programmes

⁴ Detailed programme information is provided at Annex A

OUR TRACK RECORD:

Glasgowbury has built a strong and identifiable brand with a reputation for high production standards and quality programming. We are known within the music industry as a developer of new talent providing 'real world' performance experience and technical practice for artists, technicians and for young people seeking to enter the event management sector. We have established links with the BBC, IMRO, British Council as well as the Irish music and entertainment press. The G Sessions, festival and events have provided a platform to introduce and enhance the profile of new and emerging local artists while developing new audiences for the arts. Over the past 13 years Glasgowbury developed into an organisation with:

- An Annual Turnover of over c. £270,000
- Established links and partnerships with private sector sponsors such as BT, Workspace, Diageo generating 8% of annual income
- Support from public sector funders representing under 25% of annual income
- Reinvestment of over £35,000 of reserves into programme development which responds to locally identified need
- Delivery of 10 tailored programmes with take up from all age groups.
- Delivery of the annual Glasgowbury Festival which has attracted audiences of 3,000+ and over the 13 years has provided performance opportunities for over 500 upcoming and established local bands and musicians
- Provides employment to support 2 full time and a number of part time self employed positions
- Provides 50 volunteering opportunities and supports 10 placements at 3rd level
- The generation of positive media valued at more than £1.2m worth of with reach and penetration across local media markets and those in the Republic of Ireland and in GB.

An Options Assessment report commissioned by Glasgowbury in 2010 from Pierce Communications with support from the Department for Culture, Arts & Leisure and the NI Tourist Board concluded:

Significant contributor to the music and creative industries: Glasgowbury has been a major contributor to the music and creative industry in Northern Ireland for the past 10 years. Having commenced as a charity gig with just 80 attendees at the first festival, Glasgowbury has gone on to become a significant player and award winner on the Irish Festival scene, culminating in over 3,500 attendees in 2010. In addition, the organisation has extended the scope of activities to include workshops and events dedicated to the development and nurturing of local artists, musicians, DJs and bands and to building a competitive, sustainable local music industry.

Development of a rural village into a hub for music and artistic development: The location of the Glasgowbury Headquarters in Draperstown, the promotion of showcase events such

as the G Sessions and the Rural Key Music programme also based in Draperstown, has developed the village into somewhat of a hub for music and artistic development. Added to this, Glasgowbury recently negotiated the use of the Cornstore in Draperstown to be used as a working music and arts space, a creative hub. This initiative will further help in the regeneration and reimagining of Draperstown and the surrounding rural communities.

Provision of community, youth and education and outreach services: Glasgowbury is heavily involved in the promotion of music for all through out-reach programmes, workshops for schools, arts activities (such as dance classes), music master classes and mentoring and tutoring services aimed at the development of the arts. Glasgowbury also provides opportunities for student placements from schools and universities and delivers a range of community events for all age groups including courses to reduce the digital exclusion of seniors.

Key player within the arts sector: Glasgowbury currently provides practical “on-the-job” music experience to a number of young people, interested in a career in the industry. Glasgowbury’s Creative Director has become a key speaker/panellist/facilitator in NI, the ROI and UK including being asked for advice on panels by the British Council among others. He has also been an advisor to other festival organisers in NI over the last few years (e.g. other independents organisers and councils).

Promotion of tourist attractions and areas of out-standing natural beauty: The Glasgowbury Festival has taken place in a valley at the foot of the Sperrin Mountains, one of Northern Ireland’s Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), the location has been widely acknowledged by festival-goers as a major reason for attending. Images from the 2009 & 2010 festivals as shown below have been adopted by the NITB in its on-going campaigns.