

Minutes of the Meeting of the Scrutiny Review Panel 4 (Leisure)

Date: Wednesday, 26 February 2020

Time: 19:00

Venue: The Bernard Shaw Room, Questors Theatre, 12 Mattock Lane, Ealing, London, W5 5BQ

Attendees:

Councillor Jon Ball, Councillor Linda Burke, Councillor Gareth Shaw, Councillor Alexander Stafford, Councillor Hitesh Tailor, Councillor Simon Woodroofe

1 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

No Minutes Taken.

2 Urgent Matters

Cllrs Gurmit Mann and Nagpal were unwell and could not attend.

3 Matters to be Considered in Private

There were none.

4 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

5 Minutes of the Previous Meeting - 28 November 2019

Cllr Tailor had found some issues with the minutes and had provided written comments.

Resolved: The Panel decided to accept the minutes subject to Cllr Tailor's changes being made.

6 Arts provision in the Borough: A New Cultural Strategy

Cllr Woodroofe welcomed everybody to the meeting and explained that the Chair of the Panel, Cllr A. Stafford, was going to be late and that he would chair the meeting until Cllr Stafford arrived.

Cllr Woodroofe stated that prior to the meeting he and several other Councillors had been given a very enlightening guided tour of the theatre and its facilities by the Questors Theatre's Artistic Director, Alex Marker. The Vice Chair thanked the Artistic Director for the tour.

Nine Arts and Culture organisations operating in Ealing had accepted the Panel's invitation to provide their perspective on the arts and culture in the

borough. All organisations approached, had sent representatives with the exception of Tom Morris, Schools & Colleges Administration Manager, London College of Music and London School of Film, Media & Design, University of West London, who had not confirmed attendance. The representatives then gave brief presentations on their organisations and made some suggestions on improving Art and Culture in the borough.

Cllr Woodroffe first invited Cllr J Anand to provide some introductory context to the meeting in her role as Portfolio Holder for Business and Community Services.

Cllr J Anand welcomed everyone and thanked all the contributors for making the time to attend the meeting. She pointed out that Arts and Culture was for all residents in all of the seven distinct towns in Ealing and that it needed to reflect the rich tapestry of cultures and ambitions of all the communities in the borough. The new Arts and Culture Strategy would reflect this approach. Cllr J Anand asked how spaces in the borough could better be used for cultural activity and pointed out that 25% of people in Ealing were 25 years or below and that any strategy had to take this into account. She stated that the newly appointed Arts and Culture Manager, Jan De Schynkel, would take charge of the strategy.

Cllr Woodroffe thanked Cllr J Anand for her opening remarks and stated that each organisation would be asked to present to the Panel. Some presentations were oral, and others were visual:

The Questors Theatre - Alex Marker (Artistic Director)

Alex Marker explained that voluntary effort was part of the way in which Questors Theatre worked. The theatre was 90 years old, owned its own site, purchased for £8,000 in 1929, and was entirely self-financing. The theatre had 8/9 full-time office staff; other theatre roles included education, lighting, wardrobe and directors; the theatre largely ran on volunteers and was still able to produce 18/19 fully resourced shows as well as providing outreach work for instance in recording elderly residents' memories and working with students from Southall Community College, enabling them to perform to their friends. He pointed out that Questors ran the largest non-agency run Youth Theatre in London consisting of some 400 members. However, what Questors could offer in the future may change and this meeting might inform another approach.

He acknowledged the lack of money but highlighted that Questors owned its own site and the Council could help with simple things such as:

- Signposts showing the location of the theatre from transport hubs (in particular, Ealing Broadway station)
- Provision of affordable communications expertise

The Panel:

- asked about the extent of Questors' outreach
 - Alex Marker responded that the outreach did not extend very far but that there was no reason why it should not be extended to other parts of the borough.

- pointed out that Shepherds Bush Theatre received money nationally and whether Questors received any such funding.
 - Alex Marker responded that the Questors Theatre was entirely self-funding and received no money either nationally or from the borough
- asked whether more productions could be put on.
 - Alex Marker explained that the Questors space was used all the time and that the only other expansion option would be through outreach, although he acknowledged that summer was not so busy.

Ealing Music Service (EMS): Yogesh Dattani (Head of Ealing Music Service and Trustee of Music Mark)

Yogesh Dattani explained to the Panel that the Ealing Music Service had been in existence for 20 years and was a hub. It was the lead organisation for music in the area which provided music activity for some 6,500 pupils each week including ensembles and choirs. This over a year was 30,000 pupils out of a total of 53,000. The service cost about £1Million per year to run and was 45% funded by the Department for Education and 55% by its own earnings.

He explained that the EMS was an aspirational organisation concerned about the quality of provision. In order to measure this, schools had been asked to assess their satisfaction with the service. There was found to be 97-98% satisfaction with the service.

There was a diversity of workforce for the diverse musical genres covered by the service which included Indian music, gamelan, Japanese drumming, western music, jazz as well as classical opera. In 2018/19, EMS had partnerships with 51 organisations e.g. Ealing Youth Orchestra. There was high quality choir provision and a satellite choir was to be based at the University of West London.

Yogesh Dattani:

- Suggested involving local celebrities, such as Amanda Redman or Konnie Huq in musical activities, to attract more charitable funding.
- Added that Ealing deserved its own music centre possibly funded by Section 106 money with Panel member support.
- Invited the Panel to the forthcoming EMS Festival event

The Panel asked where EMS was based and heard that it was based at the Dominion Centre in Southall.

The Panel asked what instrument Yogesh Dattani played and learnt that he played the tabla.

Ealing Arts & Leisure (EA&L): Gill Rowley (Chairman)

Gill Rowley delivered a presentation on EA&L. She explained that EA&L drew on a rich pool of talented people willing to put time and effort into nurturing artistic ability. However, the main issues were the unavailability and/or unaffordability of suitable venues and the ability to publicise events and activities.

The Council could help EA&L by:

- Providing affordable space
- Allowing publicity of local events and activities on the Council's website and premises.

Gill Rowley pointed out that Arts and Culture:

- was for everyone including the young, every ethnicity, people with disabilities and older people and that EA&L catered for all these.
- provision was delivered by local community groups and charities.

The presentation concluded with a plea for an arts centre in, what she described as, the ideal venue of Victoria Hall in Ealing Town Hall as:

- it had originally been built by the residents of Ealing for the residents.
- In 2012, there was over £1M of s106 money plus £600,000 from the sale of paintings belonging to the borough for funding an arts centre. However, only a dance studio was accommodated in the Town Hall.
- In 2018, the Council again committed to the creation of an arts centre by signing up to the Central Ealing Neighbourhood Plan, in which this was a key objective.

Gill Rowley commented that prices seemed to continually rise and mentioned that it cost the Ealing Youth Orchestra over £1,000 to hire Victoria Hall. She suggested that publishing and venue hire needed local pricing.

The Panel pointed out that the use of the Town Hall was for the General Purposes Committee to discuss and that this meeting could not debate the issue.

Borough of Ealing Art Trail (BEAT):

Kitty Hartnell (Chair, Communications and Sponsorship)

Mark Jorgensen (Finance and Advertising Officer)

Kitty Hartwell and Mark Jorgensen coordinated the running of BEAT - a not-for-profit organisation created by artists for artists in response to what BEAT believed was a gap in the offering throughout the borough. Kitty Hartnell explained that BEAT was currently preparing for a major event in the Ealing Cultural Calendar.

BEAT enabled participating artists to show off and sell work in the borough and was an inclusive organisation providing mutual mentoring, encouragement and appreciation of the visual arts. BEAT had 250 participating artists and wanted to be identified as a non-selective artistic centre. The majority of its activity was in Ealing (town centre) but was also active in Acton and Northolt and hoping to present in Southall.

Most venues were hosted by the artists themselves. The artists were in the age range of 30-60 years and although most participating artists were in the upper age group, BEAT seemed to be attracting younger people.

BEAT covered every range of material and Kitty Hartnell pointed out that the way art was exhibited enabled direct feedback to the artists, which was very important to them.

Apart from Artists self-hosting, BEAT relied on offers of other venues including churches, local groups and had been delighted to use Gunnersbury, Pitzhanger Manor and Questors.

Visitors came from all over the borough but BEAT also attracted people from outside the borough. The presenters pointed out that it was costly to attract visitors; Ealing was a big borough and it costed between £20-25,000 to publicise an event each year and that this relied on sponsorship. This money came from some success in attracting sponsors but a lot more could be done.

The Panel commented that BEAT had done well on a shoestring budget and had identified a need and filled a gap in the artistic provision in the borough.

Kitty Hartnell stated that BEAT had support from the Council and that the positive feedback was phenomenal, but Ealing had so much talent and so little space to exhibit in the borough.

The Panel:

- highlighted that although there was a lack of space in parts of Ealing there were other parts of the borough that had space such as North Acton.
- commented that although planned developments originally had community spaces in their plans but over time these had disappeared e.g. the Filmworks development.

Cllr J Anand stated that a dialogue was required regarding facilities and funding for the arts.

Open Ealing (OE):

Mandie Wilde (Founder Member and Operations Director)

Jack Jones (Founder Member and Gallery Manager)

According to its website, OE was founded in July 2010 by a group of local artists and residents with the support of local organisations such as Pathways and A2Dominion and community groups, West Ealing Neighbours and Ealing Arts + Leisure. The project has had access to numerous high street spaces from which to operate its artistic programming.

The presenters explained that in January 2013 the constituted community group became a limited company, OPEN Ealing Limited, and started the process of becoming a Charitable Incorporated Organisation in 2019:

OE used Art to say regeneration was more than bricks and mortar, it currently had 6 spaces opposite Ealing fire station. During the 10 years of its

operations, OE had worked with over 500 artists and engaged with over 10,000 people.

OE has been given a 5-storey space to use but also used pop-up shops including Orchard Café on the Green Man Estate. In 2019, when OE lost its last space in West Ealing they spoke to British Land and the 2-month lease was extended to 6 months, 115 artists exhibited of which 65 sold at least one thing and 14 of those 65 were emerging artists. This generated over £15,000 revenue. The space was also used for nine musical performances and three of these were by young performers. The space was use by 17 nationalities and also used for 30 workshops.

British Land also wanted OE to be part of the Oak Road Development.

Regarding community engagement using art as a common factor, OE bonded with the Islamic Centre and worked closely with it. At Dickens Yard in Ealing, OE were working with Christ the Saviour Church where OE had paid it rent for 3 years to use their space at this central site. The Dickens Yard location would create a landmark contemporary gallery in West London and beyond.

With regard to further community engagement, OE was forging new community links to:

- develop artistic programming this year with the local Polish community.
- agree to co-programme with Pitzhanger Manor and Questors
- develop a permanent exhibition and retail space in Ealing Broadway
- promote arts in Southall by meeting Jags Sanghera and Jonas Stout

The Panel commended Open Ealing's work in the borough.

OE indicated that in order to continue the success it needed to keep the conversations going and engage with key people.

Pitzhanger Manor and Gallery (PM&G): Rachel Page (Head of Development)

Rachel Page delivered a presentation on Pitzhanger Manor and Gallery and described how its vision was to become a meeting place for creativity, debate and participation - reanimating Sir John Soane's vision to inspire and enrich our communities with art, architecture and design.

The Pitzhanger Manor and Gallery were run by the Pitzhanger Trust on a 25-year lease.

The Manor had been restored to how it was when Sir John Soane owned it and re-opened in March 2019 with an exhibition by Anish Kapoor which attracted 3,000 visitors during the opening week.

The Panel commented that it hoped the Council would help spread the word on the Manor and Gallery. Rachel Page explained that an events pack had been created together with Corporate membership offer and brand association.

Cllr J Anand mentioned that, as an example, the South-East Asian community spent a lot of money on weddings so the details of this venue should be taken to the local community by, for instance attending the forthcoming Asian Wedding exhibition.

Alex Marker (Artistic Director, Questors Theatre) explained that he had got married at the Pitzhanger Manor.

The Panel asked whether Pitzhanger Manor and Gallery partnered with the Borough and it was pointed out that the Mayor's Office used Pitzhanger Manor for fund raising activity.

Rachel Page concluded that Global leadership attended by Hillary Clinton had taken over the Manor during the event and that Sky had also used the garden for a major event.

Gunnersbury Estate (2026) Community Interest Company: Simon Cranmer (Head of Operations and Commercial Activity)

Councillor A Stafford – arrived part way through this presentation

Simon Cranmer delivered the presentation on Gunnersbury stating that it had re-opened in 2018, was jointly owned by Ealing and Hounslow and was set up as a Community Interest Charity. Gunnersbury contained Ealing's museum and collection of 55,000 objects. It had 34,000 visitors throughout the year which was above target and had used 3,952 volunteer hours. The collection included an archive of 15,000 items managed by 10 volunteers. There was a short-term display of work from Friends of the Huntley Archive at London Archives; this collection was being digitised.

There had been 7,400 school visits which took in Victorian School, Below Stairs, Great Fire, Printing and Past and Romans exhibitions together with an expanded outdoor programme on Stone Age, Storytelling and Science, Dig for Victory, Numeracy and Nature and Vikings.

With regard to the outdoor spaces at Gunnersbury, there had been 1.1 million Park visits per year as compared with 650,000 in 2013. The Lovebox Festival funded by the Community Fund and the young people's music programme took place in Gunnersbury Park together with the Gunnersbury Concert series.

In 2020 there were plans for Secret Cinema, EMStival, Hounslow Music Services Festival, open air theatre including performances of Macbeth and HMS Pinafore, Ealing Youth Justice Service – arts projects included Secret Cinema partnership finally there were Rose Baskets, the Community Kitchen Garden and Interpretation Design.

Regarding the indoor spaces, there were 84 bookable public events in April-December 2020, including Museum lates, BEAT, Black History Month with FHALMA, Quilting Bee, West London Folk Band Summer Concert, Winter and Midsummer Fairs.

As for Literature and Art, Gunnersbury Park had The Reader – shared reading programme, creative writing courses with 'Write and Shine', Partnership with Poetical Word, Neon Life Drawing, Bronze Arts Awards and Art Macabre and Orinary Arts.

Music and Dance were covered by a Costume video – West Thames College, Midsummer fayre – Zwięc, Tamil dancers – Diwali, Dance based activities for early years children and families and older people living with dementia, historical dance in the Museum Lates and finally there was a Liam Gallagher concert involving Eric Cantona.

Fashion was covered in Gunnersbury's offerings in the form of Lates performances – costume, 'Jane Austen and The King of Bling', Ellen Wilkinson School, and Fashion Gallery in the Museum

The Panel asked how many people came to Gunnersbury Park and outside. Simon Cranmer responded that it depended on the type of activity and added that the park was a very diverse place.

The Panel felt that there could be further collaboration for instance an Ealing Arts month/an Art Fair and that the effect of such a collaboration should be measured to discover its effectiveness.

The Panel asked how the budget was used as it seemed it would be spread quite thinly given all the activities described. It was felt that perhaps it could be a bit more focussed in future on the elderly, those with disabilities and minorities.

Simon Cranmer commented that there were advantages and disadvantages to Gunnersbury's dual ownership and that perhaps they could benefit from better linkage.

The Panel noted that sport had not been spoken about, but that the Brentford Community Trust's involvement with Gunnersbury Park was positive for the Park as a whole.

Hanwell Hootie Music Festival CIC (Hanwell Hootie): June Martin (Director) and Faye Hamilton (Director)

June Martin delivered the Hanwell Hootie presentation.

She explained that Hanwell Hootie was established in 2013 to revive Ealing's music heritage and culture. It was acknowledged as the largest free one-day music festival in London and had been nominated for the best medium-sized festival. As well as receiving other awards, Hanwell Hootie had found and supported young and emerging talent.

In 2016, Hanwell Hootie became a Community Interest Company and was a member of the Association of Independent Festivals. The event was supported by community volunteers, businesses, residents, charities and schools. 10,000 programmes were distributed throughout West London to promote the event.

Funding was provided by Marshall Amplification, festival attendees, corporate sponsorship (for team building in the sponsoring companies), Ealing in

London, the Mayor of London – High Street Innovation Fund and Ealing Regeneration Team as well as grant applications to the Arts Council and Lottery Funding.

The festival had experienced year-on-year growth with over 100 bands playing in 19 venues coming out of 1,000 applications. The festival extended from Viaduct Meadow to The Foresters, Northfields Avenue. Regarding funding and partnerships, 10% sponsorship came from Marshall. Hanwell Hootie targeted corporate sponsorship but had been unsuccessful in attracting Arts Council grants.

Over 400 volunteers supported the festival and a Wall of Sound Art Gallery was created last year. Hanwell Hootie successfully agreed a deal with the Canadian Government, who flew in Canadian bands to perform at the festival. Many types of foods were available at the festival to align with the festival's health and well-being ethos.

About 30,000 people attended last year (2019) which had a huge impact on pubs and bars. However, most of these businesses did not and would not contribute to the cost of the festival. Nevertheless, the festival provided great support for local businesses which were struggling; some made three months' income on the day.

Hanwell Hootie needed help with the applications for grants as they had been unsuccessful in getting funding e.g. from the Arts Council.

Ealing Council could help Hanwell Hootie by providing guidance and expertise on grant applications for arts and culture organisations because these did not have the time, expertise or resources for a fund-raising team.

Cllr A Stafford thanked all the representatives for their valuable contributions from which it had become clear that within the new Arts Strategy there was a need to address the search for facilities, help with fund raising and communications.

Jan De Schynkel, the Council's new Arts and Culture Manager, was introduced to the meeting by Cllr J Anand explaining that it was his responsibility to put together Ealing's Arts and Cultural Strategy.

Jan De Schynkel explained that Ealing was a safe borough which was punching below its weight. It had applied to be a London Borough of Culture in 2015 but had failed as it was not ready. As a result, Ealing had not tried this year but would attempt again at the next opportunity which was now 2025 assuming the scheme still existed then. He felt that Ealing might need to take more risks and would need to work out how to succeed in achieving Borough of Culture, and that it was good to work towards this target.

Cllr A Stafford asked whether there were any questions or comments.

Alex Marker stated that this was the first one of these meetings he had attended and then suggested Council spaces should be discounted for local Arts and Culture organisations. Furthermore, he suggested that signage be provided to signpost people from Ealing Broadway and other main intersections in the borough, to the main attractions such as Questors Theatre and Pitzhanger Manor & Gallery.

Cllr A Stafford declared the Arts section of the meeting had concluded (timed at 21:30) and thanked the contributors again and told them they could now leave.

Following discussion of the presentations the Panel had just seen it agreed that:

- coordination and collaboration between local Arts and Culture groups was missing and that if a visitor attended one event then they should be able to find out about the other events going on at the time.
- there was a need for space, for instance to exhibit as there were few or no traditional art spaces to use.
- other Councils used a percentage of Section 106 money for cultural relevance and that some Councils seemed to be more entrepreneurial and was supportive of exploring innovative funding solutions.
- diversity had come across in the presentations and each of the seven towns that made up Ealing Borough had its own character which needed to be reflected in Ealing's Artistic and Cultural offering.
- there was a need for standardised metrics for audiences/visitors and impact, pointing out there were lots of examples of good practice.
- there was a need to make Ealing an attractive place for artists and arts organisations to make it their base and to engage with people of the borough.
- with regard to children and young people, the culture offered needed to reflect what these people wanted and did. As an example, Jan De Schynkel had visited Bollo Youth Centre which worked in collaboration with prestigious organisations like Tate Modern and Studio Voltaire. Ealing's music heritage was phenomenal but current musical activity was equally happening here reflecting contemporary youth culture in musical styles and genres such as Drill, Rap and Grime.
- Ealing was a borough that generally takes a cautious approach to the arts which gives the impression that it punches below its weight; the borough needed to take more Artistic and Cultural risks and its offerings needed to be more challenging.
- Ealing needed to establish its unique selling point when thinking about a strategy the ambitions of Ealing needed to be understood.
- there was a need to connect back with the communities and that roadshows were a possible method of communicating with them.
- there needed to be a cultural message or narrative for Ealing which should say 'come to Ealing' and when you get here these are the things that were going on, including details of when they were happening and where.
- in comparison with areas of East London, Ealing was not regarded as 'edgy'.
- Ealing was not seen as a destination for cultural activity and did not sell itself, whereas other organisations such as Desi Radio in Southall promoted itself and its work to other boroughs to promote what they did as Cllr J Anand had found when she visited them.
- such challenging events already taking place needed to have the appropriate level of publicity such as the LGBT event at Gunnersbury which connected with the LGBT community via a pub in South Ealing.

- in spite of some negative perceptions of Ealing expressed above the presentations by the organisations represented at the meeting had demonstrated there was a vibrant Artistic and Cultural offering in the Borough, but it was disjointed.
- the Council could offer learning and expertise to other artistic and cultural organisations for instance.
- the Council could improve signage to local venues and exhibitions.
- busy people needed to be persuaded to visit the borough.
- that Marketing and Communications expertise and advice could be offered at low cost to sell Ealing as a cultural destination
- a potential, if somewhat tongue in cheek, tag line for a marketing campaign for Ealing's Artistic and Cultural offering could be 'Edgy Ealing', to attract new visitors.

7 Panel Operations

Site Visits

On considering the Panel Operations report from the Scrutiny Review Officer, the Panel then discussed a recent site visit to London Tigers Sports Complex (visited by Cllrs Woodrooffe and Shaw). The Councillors agreed that they had found London Tigers wanted to enhance physical and mental health and their leadership was very enthusiastic in their efforts to try to do this. They saw themselves as a one-stop shop for health enhancement and had not asked for any money to provide this service.

Cllrs Woodrooffe and Shaw had also visited PACE who had an inclusivity agenda and focussed on those at risk of exclusion. They were in the process of recruiting staff to increase their capacity.

These organisations were both felt to be doing excellent jobs for the community and not asking for nor expecting support. The Panel felt it was difficult to know how to reward such positive community activity.

The Panel briefly discussed ways of recognising such community efforts and though the discussion was inconclusive, it was pointed out that there had been an article in 'Around Ealing' about the Brentford Football Club Sports Trust's scheme for children at school (young carers) looking after adults.

Work Programme

The Panel noted that the next meeting would consider its Draft Final Report.

Resolved:

That the feedback from the site visits be noted.

Ideas for the recommendations in the Panel's Final Report should be sent to Harjeet Bains.

8 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting, which is the last meeting of the Panel, would take place at **7.00pm on Thursday 30 April 2020.**

