

AAPTLE Minutes of meeting #4 14th July 2020 – 12 – 13.30 via Zoom

1. WELCOME and Apologies

SBTD welcome members to the meeting they are hosting. Announced the opening of Staging Places: UK Design for Performance (this exhibition was previously at the V&A and PQ) at the National Centre for Craft and Design in the East Midlands from 19th September 2020 – 10th January 2021. The gallery is opening to the public again on 25th July. They will be working with Government guidelines for install and to create a safe environment for the public. SBTD will share all information about realising an exhibition installation at this time. Wraparound education and professional development programming will be physical and digital, working with our Regional Heart : East Midlands to engage with our key themes for the organisation of Sustainable Design, Education, New Collaborations, Accessibility and Inclusive Aesthetics, Designers Taking the Lead and Mentoring.

SBTD action point from previous meeting: Equity representative has been contacted and confirmed that a PDF of the Interim UK Theatre/SOLT Collective Agreements for Designers will be made available as PDFs shortly. These agreements were reached prior to lockdown and should be used as a point of reference by designers and their agents going forward.

Updates

Freelance Theatre Task Force

3rd collective meeting tomorrow 150 freelancers working towards advocacy for freelancers. Each freelancer is being paid £150 per day

Immediate issues to be tackled are funding support and structural issues. An Open Space forum led by Improbable takes place on the 15th July.

There is a lot of importance being placed on inclusivity and diversity. Several subgroups have started work and are feeding back to the Task force. Looking to expand its national identity. Please share information and they can share further.

Wales Taskforce

Wales Taskforce has expanded upon the original Taskforce call to include a greater range of freelance practitioners supported via a wide range of organisations. Wales as a sector is large geographically so they have looked for a diverse range of practitioners from across Wales, Welsh language /disabled/ young community's, rural community, looking towards financial support. Talking to the Welsh government, they run a green room as an open forum. Each practitioner has been introducing themselves and the particular actions and voices they want to represent via Facebook profiles.

Scotland

8 members of the Taskforce in Scotland have begun to reach out to other freelancers. There are a lot of full-time positions also under threat and a lot of redundancies are going ahead. Will invite the Federation of Scottish Theatre to the next meeting. Scottish Government have confirmed the funding going into the sector.

ABTT

There are 5 guidelines, currently in Stage 2, there a series of meetings this week, the Head of SOLT's technical working group is beginning to provide suitable guidance for the sector. There is meeting of the SOLT UK theatre working groups this week to provide industry advice to the DCMS. Covid guidelines provide information about opening venues safely. To be published on ABTT website as a further resource. ABTT will publish more granular guidelines once this is done.

CITA

Are looking at creating guidelines and wonders who are the representatives on the SOLT technical panels giving that advice. The names have been published and are available. Shocking that technicians and operatives on the ground are not a part of the SOLT deliberation.

SOLT initially wanted a BLUE-SKY Thinking group. We need to have correct consultancy with industry to ensure the return can be properly informed. There is representative from AGT who does realise the importance of talking to industry and feeding this back to SOLT.

PMF

They do recognise that they do need to consult, we should perhaps invite the UK Theatre representative for Health & Safety and representative from AGT to come to the next meeting and potentially join this group

Action: PMF to extend these invitations

OPEN LETTER DISCUSSION

There was discussion about writing an open letter to SOLT and UK theatre asking for engagement with this group. They are talking to ABTT and therefore ABTT should be the conduit to feed back to them and they should bring the members into the meetings.

There are several conversations that need to take place, and ABTT will support anyone who wants to offer guidance to a nationally supported nexus of material. This does not have to be fully formed, it can be a list of bullet points for consideration in regard to site specific/found space productions for example.

SOLT and UK Theatre have worked to get funding from UK Government, and they are equally concerned that there is a false public perception of where we in are in sense of the return to theatre.

There are many conversations to still be had with these and other associations regarding correct H&S guidance. To all sectors.

Action: ABTT are happy to help get the key points over in terms of H&S on behalf of the Associations. That information needs to put out that at the earliest possible availability. It was agreed that ABTT would provide this conduit.

CALLING OUT OF UNETHICAL PRACTICES

Concerns were expressed around new working situations of productions being staged and filmed to go directly to broadcast. No existing agreement covers this or digital distribution rights. SDUK suggested that a conversation with Directors UK (who are a collecting organisation for film directors) could be very valuable.

Other new models such as Drive-Ins were reported as only having Deal Memos – this needs to be followed up with Equity/Bectu to know what input, if any, the Unions have had.

Questions were raised about how these early returning and new style productions were being insured.

Also of concern that this situation is potentially being used by engagers to push through working practices with long term consequences.

We (AAPTLE) need to find robust mechanisms to call this out while still protecting individual practitioners.

Action: ABTT and SBTD have agreed to work together to draw up a short checklist of key information with links regarding H&S at work, CDM regs, Bullying and Harassment, Covid and PL etc. – to be made available to all of AAPTLE to share with their members to support them in making informed decisions.

ACTION: SBTD and SMA to invite representation of industry insurers to the next meeting.

ABTT pointed out that we need a strategy of engagement via UK Theatre/SOLT to DCMS in order to assist with evidencing the case further BEFORE parliamentary recess in 9 days.

FREELANCE THEATRE WORKFORCE have a limited number of days to engage widely across the profession in order to ensure that evidence is inclusive and representative.

How funds will filter down to freelance practitioners is vital to know and it was suggested by FTW that buildings receiving funds should consider supporting freelance practitioners via a scheme like ACE's Developing Your Practice to enable skills development.

There was also a request to support and share the #CultureNeedsDiversity campaign

Action : SMA will reach out to FTW representatives in Scotland and invite them to the next meeting.

PMF reported that SIPA (Sustainability in Performing Arts?) is re-launching in partnership with USITT.

SBTD Sustainability Working Group representative updated on their plans for training, sustainable materials database, and work on the new, international, Ecostage website and Ecostage pledge

SMA reiterated the illegality of contracts that deny their basic common law employment rights. A lot of members are signing COVID clauses that lead to automatic dismissal. There has been a move from producers to share the responsibility with stage managers and other creative collaborators.

AOB

ALD emphasised the need for visual campaigns such as those run by Scenexchange and Freelancers Make Theatre Work to continue making the crisis visible to the public and that we should think about what the next one looks like.

Action: 'Open letter'

SMA noted the letter has been in slack for all to interact with for a couple of weeks. SBTD said anyone who still wanted to contribute please could do so by Friday 17th July, with final editorial overview by the three 'letter facilitators'.

SMA will host the next meeting Tuesday 21st July 12.00 – 13.30/Mins by SBTD July 2020

