

Kingston Arts Council

(Registered Charity No.801085)

Artistic Policy and Business Plan (2008)

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1 Introduction

Kingston Arts Council was formed in 1965 and is the umbrella organisation for arts societies and individuals working within the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames.

Our aim is to represent, publicise and enhance the activities of the voluntary and professional arts sector in the Borough and to present, with our partners, high-profile arts activities. We also run networking events for affiliates and the local arts community.

We currently organise the Festival of the Voice, host various Arts Salons, and collaborate on the Summer Arts Season (Kingston Contemporary Open) as well as supporting other performances and exhibitions, held at a variety of venues throughout the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames.

We work closely with Kingston University, Kingston Music and Arts Service, the Rose Theatre, the Royal Borough of Kingston Council's Arts Office and numerous affiliated societies and individuals.

We continue to promote events and activities as well as Kingston Arts Council through the wide-ranging communication channels available throughout the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames.

2 Mission Statement

2.1 Aims and objectives

Our aims and objectives are:

- To recognise and encourage all forms of artistic expression and to reach out and nurture the next generation of artists;
- To match resources to what can be realistically achieved;
- To support arts which are challenging, captivating, inclusive and independent in spirit;
- To give value for money and enrichment to the people of Kingston through artistic and cultural merit;
- To continue to champion the Arts in Kingston, working hard to ensure that our affiliates receive the recognition they deserve;
- To support the Royal Borough of Kingston's Cultural Strategy for Kingston 2008-2012;
- To support the aims of the Cultural Olympiad;
- To support the Royal Borough of Kingston's Children and Young People's Plan;
- To encourage and assist partnerships working to achieve these aims;
- To serve our affiliates and be an influential voice for arts and culture in the Borough;
- To engage with our affiliates through meetings, the website and newsletters;
- To seek out new and different audiences.

We will:

- Speak up for the local Arts Community in whatever forum;
- Trust and seek to be trusted by the local Arts Community;
- Support local arts organisations, affiliated or not, and individuals in their artistic endeavours.

Kingston Arts Council received Strategic status in 2006 to represent the artistic community in the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames. This means we have secured funding for three years to establish ourselves as leader and mentor for the arts, and have a unique opportunity to plan and develop our strategy and policy to promote the arts at the heart of Kingston life.

We believe that the arts have power to transform lives and to deliver opportunities for people who traditionally are not participants or make up audiences.

We will attempt to help local arts organisations thrive and not just survive, and we will seek to have inclusion at the heart of our work – which includes cultural diversity, children and young people – as well as attempting to address the kind of social exclusion that prevents people from accessing the arts.

We will encourage excellence and promote the highest possible standards throughout the various art forms and work to breakdown the boundaries that exist between the arts and other disciplines.

We will regularly examine definitions of the arts to ensure we are open to current trends in emerging arts practices, and we will encourage the cross-fertilisation of art forms where appropriate.

We will recognise that participation in the arts, whether performing, creating or just watching and listening, should be fun as well as an uplifting experience.

To these ends we will:

- Actively support and encourage new projects that fulfil our mission statement;
- Source training for organisations and individuals where needs are identified;
- Assist in the management of events organised by other partner organisations;
- Consider a major event or events each year, whether in the form of a Festival, and/or seek to attract well-known performers for professional events.

This approach will feed into our business planning over the next three years and will assist in mapping out our activities for the wider arts community in Kingston.

3 Organisation

3.1 Management

The Council is managed by an Executive Committee representing the Royal Borough of Kingston (RBK), affiliates, Kingston University, local schools and artists. The Council employs an Administrator and Events Manager. The Executive Committee meets six times per year at Kingston University or at the North Kingston Centre.

3.2 Resources

The resources that the Council has are as follows:

Financial

Use of Funds

Personnel

Office and Equipment

3.3 Financial

The Council is financed as follows:

Strategic Grant from the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames;
Affiliates' subscriptions;
Sponsorship from local businesses and other organisations;
Ticket sales from events.

Use of Funds

Payment to Administrator and Events Manager;
Office expenses;
Payment to artists;
Supporting affiliates where appropriate;
Purchase of IT equipment;
Advertising;
Website development.

The KAC Treasurer keeps detailed accounts and records, which are subjected to a yearly external audit, and presents a financial report to each Executive meeting, the AGM, and any other meeting as requested. The KAC account is currently held with CAF Bank, King's Hill, West Malling, Kent (a bank which offers services exclusively to charities) and the joint signatories on the account are the Chairman and Treasurer.

3.4 Personnel

The Council is run by the previously mentioned Executive Committee, supported by the Administrator and Events Manager. The Executive Committee are volunteers representing a variety of arts in the Borough and are encouraged to share their expertise with KAC affiliates, as well as to act in a mentoring role where necessary. All are elected at the AGM. Paid employees currently include the Administrator and the Events Manager.

3.5 Office and Equipment

The Council has an office in the North Kingston Centre, which is used a postal address, work environment, and for files and storage. Executive members are encouraged to avoid unnecessary printing of KAC-related documentation, but hard copies of all records are kept at the North Kingston Centre.

3.6 Website

The website has undergone considerable improvement and continues to be developed to ensure that it becomes a valuable tool to affiliated groups. It is hoped that groups will be able to upload their own information and event details and that the site will become more visual. Details of the Executive and their skills are also provided on the site. It is hoped that this brings the Executive closer together with the affiliates. The Website has currently been updated to include affiliates' contact details.

4 Some Recent KAC Achievements

4.1 Arts Salon

Kingston Arts Council's second Arts Salon took place in June 2008 in the intimate setting of the Ram Jam Club, Kingston. Following on from 2007's successful Salon in Dorich House, this event provided another chance for arts practitioners to meet and share creative ideas with others working in all aspects of music, drama and the arts in Kingston. In the presence of the new Deputy Mayor of Kingston, the event was jointly hosted by MeWe, the acclaimed local youth arts company, and Beyonders, one of the UK's leading performance artists. In addition to hosting and performing at the event, MeWe took part in a KAC-supported workshop prior to the Salon. The guest speaker was the Rose Theatre's Artistic Director Stephen Unwin.

4.2 Festival of the Voice 2007

Drawing on a wealth of rich and varied vocal talent locally, as well as featuring a range of national and international artists and groups, Kingston Arts Council's second Festival of the Voice ran from the end of September to mid-October. Audience figures were up and costs remained comparatively low. Many new and varied venues across the borough were showcased, including local schools and the new Hook Centre. The level of commercial sponsorship also increased. There was a strong Executive presence at each event and we also ensured that audience feedback forms were available at each event. The Festival was particularly notable in that admission to most Festival events was free to under 16s.

4.3 Kingston Contemporary Open / Summer Arts Season 2007 and 2008

KAC continues to work in partnership with the Kingston Contemporary Open. Now in its sixth year, the KCO continues to go from strength to strength; securing considerable sponsorship and support this year from John Lewis, and discussions are underway about its future development. 2008's KCO saw the launch of the first Summer Arts Season in Kingston. The work of FusionARTS artists was on show at the Baxter Gallery, Kingston Grammar School and New Talent featured the work of Kingston College's Fashion and Photography students at the Penny School Gallery. KAC continues to be highly involved in the planning and implementing of each year's exhibition.

5 Promoting Kingston Arts Council

KAC undertakes advertising and promotion as a means of communication and promotion of its activities to the people of Kingston and its neighbouring communities. We currently advertise events in Kingston Time and Leisure and local publications, and in various websites and in our own website and newsletters. Affiliates of the Executive attend events on behalf of the Council and promote it in an appropriate way.

6 Evaluation

We recognise that evaluation of activities is an important aspect of any organisation and we address this by continually monitoring and reviewing our activities.

We carry out audience research and analyse the results for all our events. We encourage our affiliates to comment on how best to improve the services that we offer and where possible help with them in any way.

7 The Future

Over the next three years Kingston Arts Council will continue to organise and build on future events such as the Arts Salon and the recent Festivals. The Salons have provided a chance for members of the artistic community in Kingston to meet and share creative ideas with others working in all aspects of the arts locally (affiliates and non-affiliates of KAC). Because of their success, it is hoped to increase the number of Salons to two a year, each time hosted by a different group and in a different venue, with diversity of performers and audience being a key factor. We hope that the Salons will continue to promote social as well as artistic inclusion. Next year's first Salon will be held at the CornerHOUSE in late Spring 2009.

KAC will continue to be a major active partner with the Kingston Contemporary Open and the Summer Arts Season.

Plans are well underway for the next Festival of the Voice, due to take place in November 2009. Three key themes underpin the next Festival; Children and Young People, local talent and composer anniversaries, while following on from the success of the last Festival, there will also be three further Festival commissions from local composers. Gareth Malone (BBC's *The Choir, Boys Don't Sing*) will spearhead and appear at the Festival, following on from Government Singing Ambassador Howard Goodall's association with last year's Festival, and in conjunction with one of the aforementioned key Festival themes, that of involving young people. It is expected that the Festival will continue to take place every two years.

Kingston Arts Council will also aim to support the current Sing Up initiative as part of the Music Manifesto's National Singing Programme, and we will be working in partnership with Kingston Music and Arts Service to devise a series of workshops and performances targeted at local schools in the build up to the next Festival of the Voice and beyond.

Kingston Arts Council will continue to coordinate with other organisations such as the Rose Theatre in delivering art and culture in the Borough. We will build on our recent strategic partnership with the Rose Theatre in assisting them with the long-term development of the Culture Café, as well as continuing to offer guidance and support when appropriate.

We will continue to engage guest speakers and arts practitioners for events such as the major Festivals and our AGM.

With the Royal Borough of Kingston we will also continue to recognise and utilise Kingston University's large resources that reach beyond the confines of the University and support the multi-cultural artistic activities of the diverse communities within the Borough. To further strengthen our position and support our affiliates we are reviewing possible membership of the South London Arts Partnership and are enjoying our recent association with Kingston Voluntary Action. We are

considering our support of Voluntary Arts England and their Network and are looking at a possible contribution to their Voluntary Arts Ambassador Scheme. With this in mind we are in the process of developing our own strategy of creating local ambassadors from our own Executive, whereby Executive members have a specific portfolio/theme for arts in the Borough, i.e. children, access, minority ethnic groups and sharing best practices.

We will continue to explore new and alternative venues throughout the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames; particularly those which offer the most accessible services and arts activities, as well as encouraging those that don't. With all of our events, venues and promoters are checked and worked with intensely to ensure that as many vulnerable groups as possible can be represented. We encourage all of our affiliates to have similarly thorough procedures.

We will continue to build on raising our affiliates' profile in the local community, and will monitor closely our methods of achieving this, such as our recent involvement with Time and Leisure Magazine. We continually review our publicity to check for value-for-money and effectiveness.

8 Affiliated Arts & Culture Organisations and Individual Affiliates

KAC is proud of the diverse range of its local and regional affiliates. They offer the very best arts and culture events throughout the borough, and we are pleased that throughout the last two years the number of individual, freelance affiliates of Kingston Arts Council has increased. A full list of affiliates can be found on the KAC website. In addition to the affiliates, many of the executive committee boast a range of professional associates in the arts world; a number of whom can be drawn upon to act in an advisory capacity.

Nationally, we maintain links with Arts Council England, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, the Musicians' Union, the Royal Society of Arts, as well as a wide variety of South West London arts organisations.

9 Executive Committee 2007 – 2008

President – The Worshipful the Mayor of Kingston, Councillor David Berry

Honorary Vice President – John Bate (Conductor of Thames Philharmonic Choir, Thames Festival Orchestra, former Director of Music Performance at Kingston University)

Offers support in: Choral and orchestral music making; event planning and organisation; programme planning and writing; choral and orchestral conducting; academic music

Chairman – Benjamin Costello (Freelance musician)

Offers support in: music performance and programming; Musical Theatre; artist booking/contracts/fees; music education

Vice-Chairman – Aine Lark (Head of Kingston Music and Arts Service)

Offers support in: primary and secondary education; drama; outreach projects

Hon. Treasurer – Dr Anthony Willis (University of Surrey)

Administrator – Melanie Stowell

Events Manager – Alison Hill

Offers support in: project management; poetry and literature; proofreading and editing

Colin Bloxham (Principal Arts Officer for the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames)

Offers support in: Arts Council England Lottery Funds; RBK Grant Scheme to the voluntary sector; general artistic matters in the RBK; new arts initiatives

Kathryn Woodvine (Publicity Officer for the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames)

Dr Helen Trott (Head of Development, Kingston University)

Offers support in: events marketing; publications and delivery; audience development; membership/audience databases; liaison between University and KAC affiliates

Rick Whittle (The Green Theatre, New Malden)

William Summers (Director of the Loki Ensemble and of Kingston Early Music Festival)

Alexandra Dorman (St. Paul's Church, Kingston)

Dr Donald Bousted (Individual Affiliate)

Michael Dale (Individual Affiliate)

Pam Stephens (Individual Affiliate)

Offers support in: visual arts

Councillor Barry O'Mahony (Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames)

Councillor Howard Jones (Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames)

Councillor Sheila Griffin (Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames)

A number of sub-committees are formed each year for the purposes of organisation or strategic development.