FREELANCERS MAKE THEATRE WORK

A collective voice to advocate for the UK freelance theatre workforce

FREELANCERS MAKE THEATRE WORK
MEETING MINUTES
09:30-11:30 FRIDAY 19TH JUNE

Present: Rhiannon Armstrong; Neil Austin; Bill Bankes-Jones; Polly Bennett; Paule Constable; Alistair Cope; Hazel Holder; Matt Humphrey; Ola Ince; Tobi Kyerematenng; Simon Manyonda; Peter Mckintosh; Prema Mehta; Vicki Mortimer; Chino Odimba; Tom Piper; Beth Steel; Adele Thomas; Andrew Whyment

Feedback on social media

We need to coordinate logins to the accounts to prevent being locked-out again – to be handled via Whatsapp for now. In the future a smaller group will relay logins.
Current action points are to:

- Make more use of Facebook for social media content
- Establish consistent tone for social media posts
- Save portraits for potential future project

Feedback on conversations with other groups

SOLT have expressed support for the group and encouraged us to focus on telling personal stories as part of our campaigning. They will send us their weekly updates and any new info. They are very keen for data and any feedback we are receiving from freelancers. They have identified two points of lobbying focus: the Arts Council's allocation of support funds and government investment/tax relief alongside any bailout.

Feedback from freelancers so far has tended to fall into two areas – the dire straits of the current situation and a desire to rebuild the culture of the industry going forward, which might be a more positive narrative for us to focus on.

The PR company we approached were very helpful and suggested that it is no longer worth prioritising lobbying the government. Instead they advised focussing on drawing attention to cracks in the system such as people falling between funding schemes, further highlighting the importance of engaging with the Arts Council. It may be worth engaging the company professionally going forward.

Update on funding

We are working on an application to the NT Foundation, which has had good feedback, and have spoken to the Super Tuesday Group.

We have been offered support for an application to the Mackintosh Foundation. We would need to discuss what we would be applying for and how we would allocate any money (as well as the optix of receiving money from a charity linked to Delfont Mackintosh whilst they are making so many redundancies).

Update on staffing

The website potentially requires both some form of administrative support (responding to emails, directing information etc) and digital support (maintain the online features). Before we can determine who or what is required of these roles we need to decide exactly what function we want the website to perform and establish the best platform for it.

We have contacted people who are potentially capable of handling all of some of these elements once we have established what is required.

The website working group will begin this discussion.

Working Groups

The following working groups have been established so far but we should avoid allowing the groups to become too siloed and embrace any overlap in order to prioritise achieving tasks.

- All groups to think about potential requirements and costs to feedback.

Website/emails/social media
Immediate actions are to:

- Discuss the requirements of the website
- Establish a tone/voice for the social media platforms
- Liaise on sharing the first newsletter

Advocacy
Immediate actions are to:

- Look at the results from the survey
- Discuss organising town halls
- Discuss potential campaigns (e.g. writing to ADs)
- Discuss the possibility of creating subgroups for Engagement and Lobbying

The Newsletter – Sending the newsletter is our next priority, for which a release date should be set this week. The first letter has been drafted, which will focus on establishing a personal voice and outlining how the group was formed as well as its current purpose. The finished letter will include:

- Headlines/bullet points of wider industry developments
- and/or action points for the community
- an indication of how people can get involved
- how we are working with other groups

- a personal signature

The Survey – We have been combining our survey with another with two focusses:
- generating an image of how freelancers are coping and their issues
- using this data for advocacy such as lobbying DCMS and ACE

The survey will go out soon and require sharing on as many platforms as possible to reach the target of 2,000 submissions.

Financial, legal and mental health support – We have had lots of offers of help since launching. For now we will hold off on determining how best to utilise people but this might be a future role/group we need to establish. For now, we will continue to coordinate responding to emails on Whatsapp.

Actions

Continue to work on how we feedback to 'suggestions and concerns'.

Send through any social media handles of individuals who submitted portraits through you so that we can tag them online.

Identify groups/disciplines we are missing out:
- Talk to the National Theatre casting department about actors
- Continue working on involving Equity
- Reach out to individuals to engage the dance community
- Engage the opera community

Arrange representatives to report to the Monday Group meeting and the Freelancer Task Force meeting (on a Friday so may require avoiding clash).

Inform wider group of meeting times for working groups.

Share the National Nature Service campaign and the *Offer More Support To The Arts* petition online.

Date and time of next meeting

Friday 27th June at 09:30, with the same chair for the time being.