

Council's cultural grants to help recovery after lockdown

The Culture and Communities Committee will meet on Tuesday to approve funding of around £4.7 million from the council's cultural grants scheme. This will include £1.9 million for the Edinburgh International Festival, a planned reduction from last year when it received £2 million.

Other festivals will also receive support and there is also funding set aside for Granton and WHALE in Wester Hailes. Funding of £60,000 has been retained for this year for The Queen's Hall and the sum of £50,000 will be paid again to Scottish Chamber Orchestra.

In summer 2019 the council decided to set the funding for three years with Strategic Partners which includes the major festivals and all the theatres in the city.

The funding was set aside for third party cultural grants in the council budget agreed in February and will be approved by the Culture and Communities Committee. Full details of all funding is below.

Councillor Donald Wilson, Culture and Communities Convener said: "It would be an understatement to say 2020 was extremely tough for our culture sector but we've been hugely impressed

by the resourcefulness and resilience they've demonstrated throughout the crisis. We are committed to doing what we can to support the sector and its recovery as safely and as quickly as possible. Our grants programme has always supported the city's year-round cultural offering and by approving the funding for 2021/22 we'll be playing our part in boosting the sector following such a hard year. We're in regular contact with all of our event and cultural partners in the city and look forward to their return to activity when that comes."

Councillor Amy McNeese-Mechan, Culture and Communities Vice Convener said: "We know this is an extremely difficult time for so many in the culture sector and I'm very glad we'll be able to maintain our commitment through the £4m+ culture sector funding programme, subject to the report being agreed next week. We'll continue to do what we can to support the sector to make sure they're in the best possible place to recover. This support will in turn play its part in the whole city recovering from the effects of the pandemic as we look forward to enjoying the positivity and dynamism that Edinburgh's cultural offer will bring."

The council will continue its support the cultural sector while theatres remain closed and there is little in the way of cultural activity owing to the continuing pandemic. The funding will help to create or retain jobs and support freelancers, artists and companies in the hoped for recovery from lockdown.

Some of the cultural bodies in Edinburgh have provided online programming which has helped to create employment for at least some in this sector. The Edinburgh International Festival for example staged a fabulous event last summer – My Light Shines On – which kept some creative freelancers in work at least for a time.



Edinburgh Castly "My light Shines On". Photo: Martin P. McAdam

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A Flexible Fund was set up by the council to fund smaller festivals. The new funding was intended to promote groups working together as much as possible, while ensuring the biggest impact from council monies.

The funding last year was approved by the Leadership Advisory Panel made up of the Council Leader and Deputy Leader with other senior councillors when the Culture Committee was not sitting formally for a few months until council meetings migrated to online.



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