

**Touring Exhibitions Group
Meeting of the Executive and Advisory Boards**



**12 January 2022
Meeting held online
MINUTES**

Present:

Katie Morton (Chair) – KM
Andrew Bullock – ABk
Karen Lewis – KL
Elena Saggars – ES
Sonja Kielty – SK
Felicity Sylvester – FS

Maria Ragan – MR
Natalie Patel – NP
Sandy Wood – SW
Alanna Davidson – AD
Miranda Stacey – MS

Megan Birchall – MB

Lauren Wylie - LW

Charlie Alexander – CA
Ann Barnes – AB

Dana Andrew – DA
Andrew Deathe – AJD

Apologies received from: Nicola Coleby – NC; Emma Dakar – ED; Janine Parrish – JP; Aaron Rossi – AR

1. Review of Action Register from April meeting

Where items from the Action Register aren't mentioned in these minutes, it is to be assumed that they are completed or ongoing.

1.2.2 Committee members are asked to continue looking out for funding opportunities that TEG could benefit from but the main focus will be on making the ACE application for now, as the timescale to do so is very tight.

1.7 CA is continuing to work on a draft policy for handling web data requests, and also deleting or re-assigning unused @TEG email address.

3 KL reported that the Marketing working group had not met often and that she would like to hear from its members to establish how often they could meet, withing everybody's schedules.

3 ES and AB plan to meet to discuss ways in which to market Education memberships to university course and their students.

6 KL will she would be able to follow a format for Marketing reports from now onwards, as we have resumed quarterly meetings and figures can be presented for comparison.

6 KL has distributed guidelines for running the Twitter and LinkedIn accounts to everyone who volunteered to help with them in this quarter. KL thanked LW and others who helped with advice.

7 Work with the funding application to ACE has begun.

7 DA budgeted the cost of creating and running new Prof.Dev courses to feed into grant application.

7 AJD said that he would continue to work at changing signatories on the bank account.

8 Invitations have been sent out to convene the first meeting of the EDI working group.

2. Risk Assessment and Recovery Plan

The Risk Assessment will now incorporate elements of the Recovery Plan, as the latter was created specifically to respond to the Covid pandemic. The Recovery Plan will be discontinued as a separate document. DA asked if sickness (not just Covid) will be included in the Risk Assessment and NP agreed that it will be. This will also cover staff employed for specific activities such as the specialists used for Professional Development workshops and training.

Risks from Covid will be kept as 'low' on the Risk Assessment as the majority of our activities will remain online for the foreseeable future. AB raised that the development of Marketplace 2022, an in-person activity, will continue with Covid and relevant law change in mind.

A Business Planning section will be added to the Risk Assessment, particularly making note of the pressures we are subject to with the majority of the committee being volunteers and committed to other jobs.

The funding working group will reconvene in February to look specifically at an application to Arts Council England for funding. A Business Planning working group will also convene soon.

As always, Committee members are asked to forward any updates or suggestions for the Risk Assessment to NP.

3. Membership

AB had circulated a report. Membership levels are lower than a couple of years ago but are holding steady now and perhaps even increasing slightly from last year.

Income from membership is on target for reaching the budgeted amount this year.

MS asked if we have targeted commercial companies by asking them to join. AB said that marketing to anyone has been on hold in the past couple of years but it is something to consider as businesses emerge from the pandemic. MS said that it could go into the Business Plan for the future. AB asked Committee members to forward recommendations for companies she might approach.

KM suggested contacting designers and design companies as well, to create a pool of small to large companies that our members would be interested in working with if they had appropriate experience. MS asked if members use TEG as a resource directory and AB pointed out that all corporate members can create an 'advert' for themselves on our website but it is not well used by either corporate nor ordinary members. MS said that we should market this facility and DA pointed out that 'Corporate member of the month' was to be a new feature of the newsletter from February.

ABk asked if we had received any feedback from members who were not renewing. AB said that she follows it up and asks for reasons, the majority of which are budgetary constraints or lack of touring, particularly over the past couple of years.

4. Professional Development Programme

DA had not supplied a written report but gave a verbal summary

A meeting with senior stakeholders of the MAGNET network has been organised for February 2022. DA will discuss collaborating with them in training, funding, research etc.

DA met with Art Fund in December 2021. They are applying to National Lottery Heritage Fund and will continue talking with TEG about future funding for training and professional development projects.

Demand continues for the 'Preparing to Borrow' workshop and DA is assessing if this could be run as a paid-for workshop again. This would be run online, which would hopefully be easy to engage the speakers for. DA is aiming to run a session after Marketplace, in the early summer.

The next workshop to be held will be Partnership Agreements, which will run online. There were two places still to fill on the course to make it viable, and KL offered to tweet to help market this.

On 11th January, in conjunction with NMDC, TEG ran a session on Principles and Guidelines of Lending and Borrowing with National Museums Liverpool. This gave a useful insight into how organisations can use the guidelines internally and externally.

DA had not heard back from ICEE on the availability of funding from ICOM to develop a workshop on International Touring Exhibitions. AD was due to meet with them on 13th January and had spoken with NC, who was happy for discussion about creating international links to go ahead.

MS asked if similar links could be made with UKRG and crossover with their training programme. DA had spoken to their new chair before Christmas and will continue to develop those links.

NP asked about the request from Welsh Government for digital exhibition training. DA said that we had been unable to take this further as they were looking for an existing package rather than funding the development of new training.

KM asked about updates to the TEG Manual, which is available to members online. DA has reviewed the current Manual but there is no time allocated within her work schedule to be able to actually carry out the updates. Some people have volunteered to work on certain sections. KM said that this was something the Committee needed to look at. MS said she would like to talk to DA to get an overview of how the Manual works and is intended to be used. DA pointed out that the one of the issues was that we have the Manual in PDF form but not in editable work documents. AB asked if they had been saved in Dropbox but AJD reported that only the 2015 versions exist as Word Documents in the folders, not the 2017 updates. KL offered to talk to the designer (Catherine Livsey) of the PDFs to see if they were an editable format. CA has spoken to Surface Impression (web support company) about converting the Manual documents into Google Docs to make them easier to edit in the future. DA said that having the document on a webpage would be a lot easier for us to adapt in the future and cheaper than PDF editing software.

DA raised the idea that money is put aside each year for funding work on updating the Manual, something that had been previously proposed but had not taken place. The same idea was supposed to be in place to support continual development of the website. KM agreed that this was something that should be written into the Business Plan.

5. Website

CA has spoken to Surface Impression about putting a sustainability resource online.

The website was down for around 24 hours in November 2021. TsoHost, the server company, were not very helpful, but Surface Impression were able to restore the service eventually.

The statistics for use of the website were very similar to those of the same quarter last year. The major difference was in the number of exhibitions listed on the site, which is at its lowest since 2019, although perhaps understandably as this could be caused by a lack of development of exhibitions during the pandemic, or by the lower membership numbers TEG is experiencing at the moment.

CA will give figures for visits to suppliers' pages at the next meeting.

NP asked if web optimisation has been explored. CA said it something that needs to be looked at and should be considered as an ongoing matter, as optimisation is something that needs constant reviewing and tweaking to work.

ABk asked if we had geographic location information for website users and whether this could be used to feed into our business and marketing plans. CA said that she can find this and report on it in the future but that she did know that most of our users are based in Britain currently.

6. Marketing

Email opening rate statistics are fairly consistent at 28-32% but KL would like to get it a little higher. We are above the industry average, however. CA pointed out that the highest amount of web engagement each month comes in the wake of a newsletter being sent out, proving its efficacy.

KL met with LW and KM to produce guidelines for anyone on the rota for controlling TEG's social media accounts. KL will continue to assist people during their turn. The first round of the rota has been filled and started last week. It runs until the end of March, when AJD will organise another. The Twitter guidelines are complete and the LinkedIn guidelines are still being finished. We do less on LinkedIn but we do have a growing number of followers there.

The Guidelines will include the login details and passwords. AJD will forward them to everyone on the rota.

A Marketing meeting was held with ES and FS attending. KS and CA said that they would join the group. KL said that it was useful but she wondered if the meetings should be held on an ad hoc basis, when necessary rather than to a strict timetable through the year. She would email around the group to canvas opinion on this.

Several new case studies have been received and are being filtered out periodically.

TEG had partnered with Museums+Heritage Show to promote the Temporary or Touring Exhibition of the Year Award category. The deadline for entries is 1st February and KL will be tweeting to promote that. Anyone on the Social Media rota who sees posts about M+H should re-tweet them to promote the event.

7. Financial Situation / Budget

AJD reported that income from ticket sales for the online Marketplace in October 2021 had been better than expected. DA pointed out that expenditure on the event had not been fully calculated as it did not include the considerable amount of time it took for the Membership Manager (AB), Professional Development Manager (DA) and Coordinator (AJD) to work on the event. DA asked that this be properly accounted for in budget sheets for the forthcoming Marketplace 2022, and this was agreed. The same was applicable to the Professional Development programme.

NP asked if a report could be put together of all paid (Secretariat) and voluntary (Trustees and Advisory Board) spent working on Marketplace in 2019 and 2021 could be put together. AJD pointed out that Charlotte Dew was both coordinator and professional development manager in 2019 a record of her hours probably didn't exist, and it was unlikely that most of

the Committee would be able to say for certain how many voluntary hours they contributed. It was agreed that the number of hours for the Secretariat in 2019 could be found from their contracts as a guide to the time they allotted to the event, although AB pointed out that this would almost certainly be an underestimate. For future events, Secretariat would keep records of the hours they worked on the event and members of the Committee were asked to do the same for voluntary time. This would be useful for grant applications when estimates of time required and contributed are needed.

AB followed this with an appeal for Secretariat contracts to properly reflect the time that they spend on Marketplace. She also asked that the Committee recognised that we are effectively organising two Marketplace events in one financial year and that Secretariat hours are very much overstretched because of this.

DA asked if the financial reserves were kept in a separate account. AJD explained that we have two bank accounts but they are linked so effectively it is one pot. DA asked if there was a minimum level that the reserves could be allowed to reach according to the constitution and NP said there was not. DA asked how long the reserves would last if we kept working at the current level and income remained the same and AJD informed her that TEG would not be likely to keep going for no longer than two more years. AB asked if the Risk Assessment could note a trigger level for the finances, which when reached would be an alert to a level of danger to the continued existence of TEG.

NP and MS gave an update on the grant application situation. NP reported that TEG was looking at applying for a <£30k project fund that has a fast turnaround. This would be used to particularly support the Professional Development Manager role, as this in turn supports the most used and high profile aspect of our work, which is not currently self-funding through fees. The grant would also help to fund a membership survey and marketing, including a Marketing Manager.

The question was then raised as to whether we should also apply for longer term NPO or IPSO (Investment Principle Support Organisation) funding. This would require buying in consultancy support to put the application together, something outside of the available time of the Committee. NC will have further discussions with ACE as to how they see IPSOs working and whether TEG would fit their model. The funding, should we be successful, would last for three years and cover the same three strands that the smaller <£30k project fund would be looking at, and include building income generating assets for TEG such as new training courses.

DA reported back from a meeting with Art Fund about their recently commissioned report into the state of touring exhibitions across Britain. DA felt that was still a need for more research into economic models of touring and business planning for the sector. She feels that TEG is well placed to gather this information as it is an unbiased body. The results of the survey would feed into the development of new and relevant Professional Development workshops. EDI statistic research could also be covered by the survey, something not in the Art Fund report. MS asked if we would learn anything new from another survey, DA replied perhaps not but at least we would have the evidence to back up what we perceive to be the issues currently.

KM asked if the documents that are being put together for the grant bids can be shared with the Committee. MS said that they were currently very broad brush at the moment but she would tidy them up before sharing with everyone. Comments and ideas could then be fed back to MS.

KM thanked everyone for their hard work on the funding considerations so far.

8. Marketplace 2021

A Marketplace 2021 review was held in December 2021 but Ann recapped in this meeting. The ambitious two-day programme was considered a general success. We did not address diversity in terms of participation at this event and there was some discussion around how this could be improved at Marketplace 2022. ED asked if we could include questions about accessibility needs in the booking process, including a need for access to BSL interpretation. AB said that accessibility needs were normally included in booking for physical events and would be so again in 2022. Provision of BSL would be asked about and would be provided if needed but should be budgeted for beforehand.

ED also asked if we could broaden inclusion at the event by inviting delegates through specific organisations. MS suggested Museum Detox and Shape Arts as examples. AB asked do we want to be seen to have a more diverse audience or are we looking to address topics of EDI with speakers at the event? The latter is perhaps not something to cover this year as the theme decided on is 'A Chance to Reconnect'. A discussion followed, the outcome of which was to concentrate on the revitalisation of touring networks post-Covid at the event, looking at EDI as a future possible theme, coupling with our own EDI work and organisations in the same field.

MR pointed out that we will need an EDI policy for future grant applications, or at least a plan to create one.

AB outlined the restrictions on delegate and stand numbers currently in place at People's History Museum. This means that Marketplace will be running at approximately 50% of normal numbers (maximum of 120 people and 15 stands).

AB ran through the draft schedule for the event. This is kept on Google Drive for everyone to see. There was agreement to the format. The involvement of ACE, either through a keynote speaker or offering 1-to-1 surgery sessions was welcomed. There are fewer speakers at the event this year, due to being just the one day but a facilitated session to encourage interactions between delegates was welcomed. MS suggested that Art Fund were involved and AB confirmed that she was in discussion with them. KS praised the focus on networking times and spaces, as this was something that had been missed over the past two years.

AB appealed for helpers at the event, with the offer of free tickets and encouraged anyone who was able to help to book as early as possible, because of the limited numbers.

Catering will be provided by Open Kitchen, who use sustainably sourced food. The cost is no higher than other caterers and Constantine and Momart have both agreed to sponsor the event this year, so costs will be covered.

The Committee discussed ticket pricing. It was agreed to base the prices on those we were to charge in 2020, but to increase them slightly to absorb the Eventbrite fees. This would allow purchasers to clearly see what they will be paying and there will be no loss to TEG. DA pointed out that this was the charging model used for Professional Development workshops. AD said that the prices looked very reasonable for her organisation.

ES asked if providers of the films to be shown will be offered complimentary tickets. AB confirmed they would be but said that most of them were from abroad so may not be able to take up the offer. Showing their films was a way to include them in an event they may not be able to travel to.

AB is on holiday from 8th to 24th April. AJD, DA, MB and LW will continue to administrate Marketplace during that time and a group meeting will be held between AB's return and the event.

9. Minutes of the last meeting: Matters arising

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the October meeting. AJD will upload the approved version to the website.

10. Any other business

DA reported that there is an opportunity to have a Leicester University Museums Studies student on placement from 18th July to 9th September. She is happy to submit an application but the dates aren't helpful for Professional Development which doesn't run much over the summer. AB asked if they could work on various policies and MS said that she would think of something related to surveys. KL said that she would be happy to contribute to supporting the student if there was a marketing element. MR said that she would be happy to supervise work on finding case studies for the Manual. This was the role finally agreed on.

DA will submit the proposal to Leicester University by Monday 17th January.

CA reported that Surface Impression are going to raise their prices for web support. They have offered us a chance to buy more support hours before the price rise. AJD worked out that purchasing a 24 hour package would save approximately £180. Committee was asked for a decision on buying more hours now. It was agreed to purchase a 12 hour package as a top up. AJD will let CA know.

11. Date and location of next meeting

The next meeting will be held online at 1pm on Wednesday, 13th April 2022.