

STATES OF JERSEY

Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel Cultural Strategy Review

MONDAY, 4th OCTOBER 2010

Panel:

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier of St. Saviour (Chairman)

Deputy J.M. Maçon of St. Saviour

Witnesses:

Arts Trust Co-ordinator, Jersey Arts Trust

Vice-Chairman, Jersey Arts Trust

Also Present:

Ms. S. Power (Scrutiny Officer)

[11:44]

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier of St. Saviour (Chairman):

Let us start. You are both new to scrutiny, yes?

Arts Trust Co-Ordinator, Jersey Arts Trust:

Yes.

Vice-Chairman, Jersey Arts Trust:

Yes.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Yes. Underneath your papers there is a witness sheet there which it is best you acquaint yourself with.

[11:45]

They are all transcribed so we will start now, Rebecca? Okay. I would like to welcome you to this

session. My name is Roy Le Hérissier, Chairman, Deputy of St. Saviour.

Deputy J.M. Maçon of St. Saviour:

Good morning, Deputy Jeremy Maçon, St. Saviour.

Vice-Chairman, Jersey Arts Trust:

I am the Vice-Chairman of the Jersey Arts Trust.

Arts Trust Co-ordinator, Jersey Arts Trust:

I am the Arts Trust Co-ordinator.

Ms. S. Power (Scrutiny Officer):

Sam Power, Scrutiny Officer.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Okay, thank you all very much. Welcome to members of the public. Our apologies that we do not have 2 members with us today: Deputy Tadier is away and Deputy Pitman has been called away on family business, so apologies in that regard. But we lack in quantity we make up in quality. Also we were sad to hear that your Chairman was away and give him our best regards. We certainly look forward to meeting him on the street as one does in Jersey.

Arts Trust Co-ordinator, Jersey Arts Trust:

He sends his apologies. He is sorry he cannot be here.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Okay, thank you. As I was mentioning to Tom, but I will mention to Rhona, we are on a health check, we are not deconstructing the arts strategy, we are simply finding out where it is at and that is what we did with the Minister and his team when they came in. The Société was an interesting one, who just

preceded you, because clearly they have a relationship with the Heritage Trust rooted in history, so we analysed that because there is areas of overlap and so forth and so on. Plus they are a very ancient body in Jersey and they played a long historical role so it is interesting to see how they are positioned. You have seen the questions, and they are fairly general. We will start on them, and either of you jump in although we do have an equal opportunities participation policy so silence is not allowed. Can you explain the Trust's relationship with the Department for E.S.C. (Education, Sport and Culture)?

Arts Trust Co-ordinator, Jersey Arts Trust:

Sure. Essentially our relationship with the department consists of us receiving a revenue grant, first and foremost, which is annually distributed.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Which is how much?

Arts Trust Co-ordinator, Jersey Arts Trust:

It is currently ... for 2010 it was £152,570.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

That includes your salary of £149,000, does it? **[Laughter]**

Arts Trust Co-ordinator, Jersey Arts Trust:

Yes, it does include my salary but not quite at £149,000. Of that we now have an understanding that we will put £50,000 of that into grant funding for the arts community. On top of that ... well for the revenue grant we need to meet with them at least once a year formally, with the Minister and his team, and we submit an annual business plan and annual reports and accounts. That is part of our partnership agreement that was signed in October 2008. But we also have a day to day relationship with the E.S.C. through the cultural development officer, Rod McLoughlin, whereby I would say that I meet him at least once a fortnight to go through the issues that are being faced. So some things the department has not

very much involvement in with the organisation, other things they have much more involvement with. So in terms of our future planning and in terms of our projects and things it is quite good to always touch base with what others are doing. We also sit on the Council for Culture which was established with the cultural strategy, where we meet with other cultural organisations and occasionally we also bring other people on board, such as tourism, to see areas where we can work more closely together. In the last couple of years there has been a real emphasis on organisations working together and I think that will continue to happen because we feel together we are stronger and also you can share resources and share means. So the department is quite key in terms of facilitating an awful lot of that as well. So I suppose there is a reporting basis, there is a funding basis but also a general day to day working basis as well within our relationship.

Vice-Chairman, Jersey Arts Trust:

Financially it is also important as well because if there are areas where we are overlapping then there may be areas where we can share funding or if there are perhaps things brought to us which are not appropriate for us to fund but we can direct them elsewhere. So it helps everyone if we do work together and bear in mind finances while we are doing that.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

One of the observations that is made, and in a sense arose in the Minister's sessions, there are an awful lot of bodies in Jersey, both in the culture is art sector and culture is heritage sector and you sometimes get the impression that dealing with each other's relationships absorbs as much energy as the focus on the ultimate goals of these organisations. How much time do you spend on just working on intra-organisational issues?

Arts Trust Co-ordinator, Jersey Arts Trust:

The thing is there has been a history, I think it is fair to say, where organisations perhaps did not have a strong relationship, certainly as they do now. It precedes me, it was before my time when that happened. I am not saying that has had anything to do with the solution but at the moment not very

much time is spent on intra-organisational issues at all. What is interesting is that we originally had the Council for Culture which included heritage and the arts organisations and in the last year, following the conference last year which was in November, we agreed that it was actually more useful to have more meetings where we actually just had the arts bodies and then the heritage bodies, and then maybe once or twice a year you bring them all together. Because quite often you felt that you could not get into enough detail about the actual issues that faced you. So we ... I would say not an awful lot. What we are beginning to focus on now within those meeting is exactly where we can work together, not just project based but also organisational, we are discussing things such as marketing. Where can we see savings, where can we see joint working in terms of making it efficient and as good a service as we possibly can. Not an awful lot of consideration is give about whether it is going to be an arts centre initiative or an arts trust initiative. I have people who still think that I work for the Arts Centre all the time, but that is less important than the actual work itself getting done. I think there is a real sense of partnership within those organisations. It is one of the nicest things that has arisen over the last few years, or certainly the last 18 months, the department's relation with the cultural organisations and the relationships among themselves seems to be very strong from where we are sitting.

Vice-Chairman, Jersey Arts Trust:

That is particularly true of our relationship with the Arts Centre at the moment and that has been, I think, a big success story of the last year, in that Tom instigated something called the New Plays project which allowed local writers to enter one act plays which were adjudicated on by professional writers from the U.K. (United Kingdom), we then had professional directors coming over to work with actors and writers. That was very much done in conjunction with the Arts Centre, which meant that the cost of it was minimal but the amount of people in Jersey benefited from it and continue to benefit was quite incredible. There is a huge wealth of writing and acting talent in Jersey and for some that has provided a stepping stone to just taking it to that next level and perhaps working in the U.K. or having things put on in the U.K. That came from working very closely with the Arts Centre.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Yes, testing again the relationship between various bodies, from where you are the notional willingness to change and adapt to new policies, from what I am hearing it sounds like from your point of view and from the people that you work with it seems to be embraced and that seems to a good line to go down, would that be a fair comment to say?

Arts Trust Co-ordinator, Jersey Arts Trust:

The thing is that I think you assess everything. We are all open to negotiation. I think you always look at why you would do certain things. For example, there are people there who say: “Why are the arts not run from one central body? Why is there not one organisation that runs the Opera House, the Arts Centre and does the work of the Arts Trust that has ultimate responsibility for the arts?” I think you need to ask why would you do that. What would be the benefit? So would it save money, would it be more efficient, would it have ... would it be better artistically and culturally? I think probably from the discussions we think not: (a) it would not really save an awful lot of money because you still have to run those buildings, you still need to do the work and where you are looking at efficiencies it is more saving on board members. Luckily board members come for free. Board members bring an awful lot, all of our 3 individual boards of people are interested in the arts and have worked with the arts, it is a huge benefit. Secondly in terms of artistically and culturally I think it would be a pity to have one artistic voice because I think it is good to have diversity within the Island. So I think if you - and I am not saying you would - had the wrong person at the top of that organisation or had a particular taste or style then you have no chance then to have an alternative. I think it is really exciting that you have the Opera House brochure and the Arts Centre brochure and you have a different flavour for both of those things. Then from the Arts Trust you have projects which are very much rooted within the grass roots. Each organisation has a history and it has a loyalty base. I think on both of those sides when you think about joinedupness, there is a certain amount to protect and particularly now given that the relationship between all the organisations is so strong and open to working together, I think it is more about looking for synergies and some cost savings if we can, but is more about how can we work together rather than how can we join up. I do not think it would serve the Island any better and I do not think that it would provide any real cost savings between those things. But I do agree ... but what we are open to is if

anybody at any point can propose a new structure ... but what you do not want to do is spend all your time talking about structures and not enough time doing the work. At some point it is good to say: "What we have got is really strong and really exciting" and empowers people to go and do the business plans that they proposed and put the plans into place.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

What about the comment that you operate in this organisational context and you might unwittingly forget the fact that there are still - I am sure you do not - people out there who are not drawn into the arts world. For example, when the Opera House closed and pantomimes came for a temporary period to the Arts Centre, dozens of people said: "I have never been in the Arts Centre, is it not wonderful." So how do you deal with that criticism and it has also been said to us for example you have got this phenomena of Jersey Live which is happening outside the official framework, and perhaps that is why it does happen because it outside it, how do you broaden the base of support of bringing in people?

Vice-Chairman, Jersey Arts Trust:

I think that is something which the Arts Trust does particularly well. I do not know if you have had an opportunity to look at our website, but it really does cover a very broad base of events and things which are happening in the Island. I think that in the past it is right to say that there has been a perception of the arts in Jersey of being perhaps slightly conservative. I think when the Arts Centre came along that helped to shift it and now the Arts Trust is perhaps just helping to shift it a bit more because some of the projects which are going on, particularly for young people - and I am thinking of things in the Attic which have gone on - also some of the grants which we have been able to give to young musicians, but not just classical musicians. We recently supported a band who got the final of a competition which involved them playing on the stage at the O2 in London. Now, that is a fantastic opportunity for them and they obviously have their fan base in Jersey and it is all young people.

Arts Trust Co-ordinator, Jersey Arts Trust:

Even Jersey Live is an interesting point in the fact that when Jersey Live started up it did have a grant

from the Arts Trust. We worked with Jersey Live for a number of years and in the last couple of years it has been about an education programme. So we have had panels, we have had A. and R. (Arts and Repertoire) people from the U.K. coming to the festival just to watch the local bands and then meeting them afterwards to give them advice about how they might progress in the U.K. One of the worst things for people in Jersey bands, they have this idea of London as Mecca. "If I can just get that gig in London then we will be noticed and that will be it." But of course there are so many bands in London who are trying to do the same thing that what we want to do is save them their money from going to play in some dodgy pub in London ... and there are promoters who may take advantage of all of that, so they would ask them for £1,000 up front and say: "You will get it back in ticket sales" and 15 people turn up. So we do work with things like that. Of course with Branchage we ... we were discussing film festivals with John Davy before Branchage was born. We then met ... brought Xanthe on board and she brought this whole amazing vision to life. We have supported that for the last 3 years and will continue to do so. Within Branchage we have just launched a Channel Island filmmakers network which is working with the Guernsey Arts Commission, with ourselves and with Branchage about how you get local filmmakers instead of putting all their resources into making just a film on their own, maybe looking a little bit further afield to include other people's skills here and working collaboratively to make the most ... obviously to go and see festivals, to have the learning opportunities to meet people within the industry.

[12:00]

So there is those areas of work happening. I also think it is worth saying that that not everybody wants or is particularly interested in the arts. I think you always have to accept that. As in I do not know ... the Football Association could do the most spectacular event, the chances are I am not going to go to it. I am not going to play football. It is great, I love that people do but it is not going to happen for me. The same way for us. I think you always have to accept that it does not matter what you do there is some people who are not all that fussed. But what is important is to give people the opportunity. I think it is right, I think you do things that try and inspire, I also think you have an open door policy so that anybody can take part. That is what we do with a lot of our work. So for something like the New Plays

project, anybody can submit a script to us and it will be read and you will get some feedback on it. Then from that process you select 4 which are your most promising plays and you give those people more of an opportunity, but everybody has the opportunity to take part. Everybody could come to the workshop, anybody could be involved. Then you also, in terms of making it affordable, you have discretionary schemes whereby if somebody cannot afford to come to the workshop then you can subsidise them. So it is spreading that as well. We are very aware that there are people over there that ... already the workshops are subsidised so we bring over ... this time we had a National Theatre writer and a BBC director so that obviously has a cost. The workshop, I think, is £35 and £20 for students, which already is subsidised and there were a couple of people who did not have the money so we gave them a grant to be able to come for free.

Vice-Chairman, Jersey Arts Trust:

The interesting thing is when you get a part in that workshop^[1] ... it was lovely because there was such a wide age range. Quite often you see theatre workshops where you will get a lot of the young students, but there was a whole spectrum of age there and a whole spectrum of experience. There were some there who had never done anything at all and they had just come along to see what it was like. Another thing which demonstrates perhaps a new way of involving people is the poetry slam which is coming up on Thursday. Now traditionally you would have the poetry readings and I think people see that as fairly formal occasions, the poetry slam is a way of getting young people involved in poetry, in literature in a way which is just completely different and I think most of the schools are taking part, are they not?

Arts Trust Co-ordinator, Jersey Arts Trust:

Yes. Most of the secondary schools. We do it for Year 9 students, which I think is quite brave because you start off at the beginning of the day and Year 9 students generally are not all that interested in doing performance poetry. In particular what I enjoyed the most was when I went and watched the J.C.G. (Jersey College for Girls) and Vic Year 9 students where they stand around in a circle, and because they do not mix as much in Year 9 no one even wants to say their name because of the fear of not looking cool in front of the other sex, by the end of the session - it is a 3 hour session - they are absolutely going

for it, performing and rapping and all sorts. A slam is performance poetry so you put rhymes and movements and things to what you have written. Then we have a competition at St. James which will be on Thursday evening. It is free, anybody can come.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Get the diaries out. Just moving on now, what are the key issues facing the trust as you see them?

Vice-Chairman, Jersey Arts Trust:

I suppose it is ... in recent years the first thing that would have come up was finance, do you have enough to give the grants, to keep the projects going, and Finance is always going to be an issue however we are in a lovely position this year because our books have balanced. So we still need funding and certainly do not want it to be cut but we are in a position where the books are balanced and we have done well. So that is still an issue but it is not a critical issue, which we could not say a year ago.

Arts Trust Co-ordinator, Jersey Arts Trust:

I think a year ago we were in the position whereby if the revenue grant was not increased we were going to have to shut our doors at the beginning of 2010 because we were in the position where we had an underspend from 2005-2006 which meant that there was a large sum of cash in the bank but the revenue grant was insufficient for the work that was being carried out. So we plugged the difference because we said it was better to spend the money than to work towards the budget that we had been given and to show what we could do. The department agreed that it was worthwhile and in 2010 we got the increase to £152,570. But that is absolutely at a tight rigid budget and that is distributing £50,000 worth of grants a year. What has happened since then, with the recession, (a) it is more difficult to get sponsorship; (b) other areas of States money have dried up so tourism has been cut year on year; the cultural strategy, originally we had a £50,000 pot within the Council for Culture which was for partnership working, that has now gone; education, there used to be a little ... you maybe bid for £2,000 towards an artist going to schools on occasion, that money stopped so little areas where you could ... we feel very proud that we

can make a tiny bit of money go very far. £2,000 to us is a small fortune. What we can do with £2,000 is a lot. So with all those little pockets of £2,000, £3,000 here and there you are in a much tighter funding position. So I suppose one of the key things facing the trust, and it is one of the things that we are tackling at the moment, is how do you locate new sources of funding? There is money in Jersey, there is lots of money in Jersey, how can we unlock that? One of the things that we are going to have to do is we are going to have to make sure that we are well marketed, which some people often think: “Is that just a vanity thing?” But if you can ensure that you can market the product well then that means that you are serving the artist well because the artists that we serve are being marketed by us, and it means that we are an organisation that people do want to partner. So that could be sponsors, that could be organisations in the U.K. This year in the New Plays project one of our partners was the Old Vic Theatre in London, which is leading ... that is Kevin Spacey’s theatre. Though I do not speak to Kevin, I speak to somebody else there. **[Laughter]** That is through making sure that you look like and are a vibrant organisation. In terms of other issues, there are things like the Branchage Festival and there are other things that could be another Branchage Festival. At the moment they have no real mechanism of getting States help, it has to be an exceptional circumstance or they need to go to the Tourism Development Fund which, again, I do not even know if that is being renewed next year. All these areas where traditionally exciting things could get that top up funding, that start up funding, they do not. The reason Branchage was a success was that John Davy underwrote it for the first year. I think for the first year it cost him over £100,000 personally. You do not get that kind of person very often. You do not get that sort of person who is willing to do that. The Arts Trust should, ideally, be in a position where we can take that hit. We should have the kind of funding that when something really spectacular and exciting comes along we can take that risk away from individuals who were going to do it for low cost and put all the time and effort in. We know we are not in a position to be able to do it at the moment, we cannot take risks or big risks and the arts are about taking risks. The most exciting things happen when you take a risk. So I think while funding in terms of surviving is not a huge issue, funding is going to become a bigger and bigger issue as this recession hits and goes further forward.

Vice-Chairman, Jersey Arts Trust:

I think one thing people do not realise as well is that things like the Eisteddfod, they relied quite heavily on us to give them funding. We give them a large chunk every year on the basis that it is an Island wide event and hundreds and hundreds of people are involved. However, without Arts Trust backing it they would be in difficulties. So, as Tom was saying, you need the money to push exciting new projects forward but there are also a lot of things in Jersey that might not happen without funding. The Samares production every year where they perform the Shakespeare, we have never had to pay out, I think, on it.

Arts Trust Co-ordinator, Jersey Arts Trust:

We have once.

Vice-Chairman, Jersey Arts Trust:

Once when the weather was bad, but we underwrite it. We give them an underwrite just in case the weather is atrocious and they lose money. That gives them the confidence to know that they can go ahead. It is not a huge some of money but without that funding it is debatable whether the productions would continue.

Arts Trust Co-ordinator, Jersey Arts Trust:

At the moment more and more people are coming to the Arts Trust because it is the only source of cultural funding, and that £50,000 pot is small. Comparatively in Guernsey they have between £120,000 and £130,000 for 60,000 people, we have £50,000 for 90,000 people. As I say, those other areas like Tourism, Education, the Tourism Development Fund, even the Economic Development, people are not getting money from there either so it is all coming back on to our pot and we really need to increase that pot in some way.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

If I could press you on that point, because we had the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture in earlier this morning, I asked him about whether the cut that went to events marketing and events from the E.D.D. (Economic Development Department) budget, how it would impact on the cultural strategy

and how that would impact on the objectives of what people would like to achieve out of having a diverse cultural strategy and things like that. I do not know if you would like to comment.

Arts Trust Co-ordinator, Jersey Arts Trust:

I think it is quite frightening what might happen if that is not renewed. Things like Branchage, in the last couple of years, I think between the 2 years they have received around £60,000. If I am right I think that paid for updates in the harbour gallery in previous years, I think it has contributed towards the refurbishment of Mont Orgueil and Elizabeth Castle museum. It has been behind the Liberation Festival, not this current one but the Liberation Festival that Gerard Le Feuvre put on a few years ago. I think it has supported the current Liberation Festival. I could go on, there are so many areas that have had significant funding. They come to us for maybe ... the largest grant we tend to give out in the Eisteddfod is about £5,000. Our average grant is about £1,000. Now obviously for these larger scale things, when you need £30,000 that is the sort of funding and if that goes, I do not know, I think it would have a huge impact and that is quite scary that it might go.

Vice-Chairman, Jersey Arts Trust:

Particularly because of the economic climate at the moment, you can go to companies for sponsorship but to get such huge chunks of money is difficult.

Arts Trust Co-ordinator, Jersey Arts Trust:

People do not want to take a risk at the moment. If you are going to be a sponsor you are going to want to sponsor something that is definitely going to be a success. So what will suffer the most ... I think the capital budgets of people will suffer, I know there are negotiations with Jersey Heritage about how they might be able to fund capital improvements, but I also think that there are new and innovative areas which cannot get sponsorship in that first year, that is why you need something like the Arts Trust or some sort of public body that can take on the risk. Occasionally something that you might fund might flop, it could happen. You could put some money into it and it is a turkey. You hope not. You have procedures and you have ways of working to try ensure that does not happen but what you are doing is

you are setting it up for a sponsor to take on board. So you plug the gap for that first year, maybe first 2 years, and when the event or whatever it is grows then at that point sponsors see a success story and they will go in and ... it is that starting up money that is really crucial. Without the Tourism Development Fund it is scary to think where that might come from. Of course, to relate it back to tourism, Branchage this year - I do not know if you were around - there were a huge number of tourists coming for the film festival and half the voices I spoke to were American. Some people from all around the world. Every time I chatted to someone they seemed to be American, it was great, it was really exciting, but it does make a huge return.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

On the question of ghosts in the room, you have divested yourself of responsibility for the Opera House, is that correct?

Vice-Chairman, Jersey Arts Trust:

Yes. We are in the process.

Arts Trust Co-ordinator, Jersey Arts Trust:

Yes, in a way. In the long run, of course, it would be better for the Opera House to be a completely independent body. Currently legally we are still shareholders and we still pay the Opera House loan, the States of Jersey pay the loan through us. It is a complicated process.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

But you have no input into the Opera House, other through the Council for Culture, you give it no direction?

Vice-Chairman, Jersey Arts Trust:

No.

Arts Trust Co-ordinator, Jersey Arts Trust:

No.

Vice-Chairman, Jersey Arts Trust:

We just act as a conduit for the money coming through, the loan coming through. It comes through us and goes straight to the Opera House.

Arts Trust Co-ordinator, Jersey Arts Trust:

I think obviously in the past when the Opera House was having financial difficulty the trust was heavily involved at that stage. But now they are managing on an even keel the trust has no involvement. I think there are plans in place - I am not quite sure how far along they are because all these things are quite complicated legally - to totally divest the trust from that responsibility so the Opera House could be set up as a charitable organisation in itself and the trust would no longer have any direct relationship. Which would be better, I think, for everybody.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

If we could just move on now. In your view, how should the implementation of the cultural strategy be progressed and are there any areas that should be focused on in the immediate future that you can think of?

[12:15]

Arts Trust Co-ordinator, Jersey Arts Trust:

I think there are some quite simple things that would help. The strategy does talk about looking towards 3 year planning rather than year on year planning. So if you are looking at a 3 year business plan cycle and 3 year funding agreement that does help, and it is something that does not cost any more money. It is just a question of how we structure our planning and funding application process. So something very small like that could, I think, be achieved and I think it would ... I do not think I am wrong in saying that

every single organisation would support it. Long term, I think the difficulty is that the strategy was adopted and there were a couple of reports and feasibility studies on what money would be needed to implement the strategy. Now all of the organisations work on skeleton staff, the people who run them are also delivering projects and the idea of doing more ... they are already working beyond full capacity, I do not think there would be anybody who sticks to their 37.5 hours a week who works within the arts and culture sector. If they do they will be working very hard in those 37.5 hours. So within our current ... I think the main is protecting what we have got and making sure that certain things continue. But moving forward there is an issue about spaces, about the lack of gallery space, there is talk about new arts centres and stuff that I think need to be addressed but most of all I think with the discussion we have just had about the tourist development, I do think there is a funding issue and I think ... I do not necessarily think that you just need to give all the organisations more money, but certainly to have a pot that can be dipped into for work of the strategy is important because it is not going to come out of thin air. You cannot create something out of nothing.

Vice-Chairman, Jersey Arts Trust:

Obviously, as Tom was saying, because there is a lot more happening in the Island culturally, there is a shortage of space, of art galleries for art works, we could really do another theatre. I think at the moment there are things falling between the Arts Centre and the Opera House. People are finding it very difficult to afford the Opera House, the Jersey Green Room Club, the JADC, it is incredibly expensive for them to put things on there yet the type of productions they want to do do not necessarily fit into the Arts Centre. I think at the moment it is a matter of keeping the status quo but, as Tom was saying, if arts in the Island are going to continue to grow and develop, there is going to have to be an input of money at some point. This year might not be the right time but it is not something ... I do not think you can ever get to a point where you say: "We have done it now, here you are, this is culture in Jersey" because it is constantly evolving. As it evolves it is going to need more money. But as Tom was saying earlier, the arts often it bring back money. Raising the profile of the arts in Jersey helps to raise the profile of the Island. One of the caveats to receiving a grant is that if you go away and you learn something you bring it back and do a workshop or a performance in

Jersey.

Arts Trust Co-ordinator, Jersey Arts Trust:

It is interesting with say, if you take the Opera House for example, generally in the U.K. with funding structures you go on £1,000 a seat in terms of what a theatre needs to survive. The Opera House has 640 seats at capacity so that is £640,000. Its revenue grant is about £460,000, or even less maybe, and so they are tight in terms of what they can do financially. As the electricity bills go up, staff increases and the revenue does not increase with that ... the Opera House have an obligation to break even, the Opera House cannot lose huge sums of money, so they are restrained in terms of what they can programme but also they cannot let the community groups come and use the facilities at the cost that they did 10 years ago. They had to put the prices up. So that is inhibiting the clubs. So really the Opera House is completely restrained by its financial position. It has no choice in what it can do. It has to do it that way. But as Rhona was saying, there is a funding issue and also, as she has alluded to, it is a difficult thing to have a strategy for culture because culture is not something you can pin down and say: "This is what it is." I think a certain successful arts or culture body will be reactive to the situation and the needs around it. Twenty years ago we did not know that we would have a huge Polish community living over here. That is something that has influenced our culture and something that we should probably embrace and do more with. So I think being reactive but also having the resources to be able to make the most of those opportunities.

Vice-Chairman, Jersey Arts Trust:

I think 20 years ago you would have never thought of something like Branchage being in Jersey. There really is a ground swell of film-making and there is potential for that to become something very exciting indeed. But it is going to take funding and it is going to take somebody who wants to back it. Again, that could be something that could be really very exciting for Jersey.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

On the issues of the Council for Culture, you have outlined a very exciting and aspirational kind of

approach, but on the issue of the council - and asking you are leading question - do you think the structure is correct?

Arts Trust Co-ordinator, Jersey Arts Trust:

I think that what we have currently got right now is much better. I think it is really good that we have the opportunity for the arts organisations to meet just as the arts organisations and then to feed into a wider council maybe every 6 months. You could not quite be ... when we had the original thing which was the heritage and arts organisations, it was not general enough, in that it did not include enough people for it to be a really scale meeting, we needed to probably include Planning and Environment, we probably needed to include the Tourism Department because then you can have much wider scale discussions. It was not specific enough so that we could really talk about specifics. So at that stage, while it was useful I think now is much more useful structure so within the arts organisations we are really able to tackle what are the key issues in the arts and we are able to talk about spaces, marketing, we are able to talk about programmes, specific projects that are relevant to all of us. Then when you broaden it out I think it is good to have that opportunity to meet with wider people. Not everybody needs to come each time but to be able to bring tourism in, be able to bring Planning and Environment if we are talking about public art for example, the Per Cent for Art scheme. That is a better structure, and then to have the conference where anybody can come, that is a really important part of the Council for Culture because it gives everybody the opportunity to have their say. I think that the focus of the conference must never be ... we should never hijack it to talk about something that we necessarily want to. I think it is good to have a theme each year or to have a particular area that we are discussing with key speakers, but to remember that the fundamental point of that conference is for anybody to come and to have their feedback on what is happening, to meet and for us to be in attendance so they can meet people who are running the organisations and to be able to have their say on what they feel. I think that is a really good way of doing it.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Is there anywhere where you feel perhaps the cultural strategy falls short?

Arts Trust Co-ordinator, Jersey Arts Trust:

As I was saying before, it is very hard for a document to ... I think it is very hard to have a strategy for culture and so inevitably there are going to be things that are missed. It is now 4 years old? The strategy was adopted in 2005, 5 years old. It is a strange one because in a way if you are working within the arts what you really want is the ability to be flexible to the opportunities that arise. Like when I started with the Arts Trust I did not think that we would be organising or helping to organise a film festival. It is purely that John Davy and I met for a coffee and clearly he was interested in film. I heard that he was funding a film locally, I got in touch with him and we started chatting about things. To start off with we organised a scriptwriting competition and then he met up with me and said: "What about a film festival?" and so we started talking about a film festival. We then brought the right people on board and he underwrote the event and then he put in a submission to the Economic Development Department about a film industry proposal. That did not get taken forward. You cannot strategise for that meeting. It sort of happens. Also I had no idea that we had so many scriptwriters. When we did the scriptwriting competition, 75 people entered. Seventy-five people who wanted to write a script. The same with the New Plays Project, we had over 50 entries. All of the short list were really very good. The writing scene in Jersey is just astronomical for its demographic. I have worked in other areas of the U.K. where they would kill for the writers that we have got; the same with poetry and creative writing. We did not know about that until recently. You need to be able to be adaptable for that.

Vice-Chairman, Jersey Arts Trust:

It is good to have as a framework but it cannot be something that is set in stone because it has got to be allowed to evolve as the arts evolve in the Island. So I think as a framework it is good but it has got to be flexible.

Arts Trust Co-ordinator, Jersey Arts Trust:

I do think that probably if you were going to rejig the strategy it would be better to have more specific areas for arts and more specific areas for heritage. I think that it is good that there is an overriding

theme and I do feel that it is something that should be absolutely adopted by the States that the funding comes with the strategy. If you approve a strategy that whereby it is wanting to achieve certain things in 5 years, it is unrealistic to expect those things to be achieved without any of the agreed or accepted finances to go with it. But, again, it is by circumstances. If those finances cannot be brought forward then it is an acceptance that has not happened, but equally we have to take things off that cannot be achieved. So I think as Rhona says, it is a living document, it is a moveable document and I think you make the most of whatever is in front of you.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

I think we have come to the end, and I mean only to the end of the session, we do not want to be too prophetic. Are there any final comments you wish to make, any things that you feel we may not have covered enough or we have got the wrong end of the stick or misinterpreted or whatever?

Vice-Chairman, Jersey Arts Trust:

I think the only thing I would like to say is that because the economic climate is difficult there may be a tendency to say: "Look, the arts is the arts but there are other things that are more important." So on behalf of the arts I would say they are just as important as the other areas that need money. I think that you are right in referring earlier to the fact that there is sometimes a view of the arts that it is something which is: "It is for *those* people." But when you find out more about the events happening in Jersey, there are plenty of people who are really trying to widen the demographic. For example, we helped to fund an artist going into The Bridge to work with parents and children. So it is not just about people going to see the opera or classical music, it is something that is absolutely worthwhile funding and it does benefit the whole community.

Arts Trust Co-ordinator, Jersey Arts Trust:

It shows other areas of people having things to do and aspirations and things. £152,000 to fund the Arts Trust, the value of that is very good value for money and it is a small investment for something that will give greater results. I think the one thing that I would like to say, given that this is an Education

Scrutiny Panel, is that we feel privileged and lucky to have the relationship that we have with the Education Department. In the last 18 months, 2 years in particular that relationship has grown stronger. We feel well supported by them, we feel that they have the Island's best interests at heart and I could not speak highly enough of Rod McLoughlin. I know there are a lot of people who, on the ground, will say: "I am not quite sure what Rod does", Rod does a lot. Rod does an awful lot in terms of the relationships between the organisations, the relationships between the organisations and the department. He has got this huge cultural strategy and picking out what is really important and what is deliverable and what is not, he does all of that work. I would just say for the record that we are incredibly grateful to have that facility and for Rod to be in that facility and for the department to work with us. We feel that it is very much a team within the organisations and it is exciting that that is the relationship at the moment.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Okay. Thank you very much, it has been very much a tour de force. We have covered a lot of ground, we have learnt a lot, I think, and although we are not here to carry out a performance appraisal we have certainly been very impressed by your passion, commitment and energy. So, both of you, thank you very much indeed.

Vice-Chairman, Jersey Arts Trust:

Thank you.

Arts Trust Co-ordinator, Jersey Arts Trust:

Thank you.

[12:30]

[1] New Plays workshop