

Subject:	The Norden Farm Centre Trust Limited (NFCT)
Reason for briefing note:	Update and summary of progress to the Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel since the previous report to Panel.
Responsible officer(s):	Suzie Parr
Senior leader sponsor:	Chris Joyce
Date:	25 th August 2020

SUMMARY

Jane Corry, Chief Executive and Artistic Director has prepared a report on activities at NFCT from April- June 2020. This includes audience development and highlights, education and outreach and their social art projects.

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Norden Farm Centre for the Arts Ltd have been running the arts provision in Maidenhead since 2000.
- 1.2 NFCT celebrates its 20th Birthday this year and has continued to operate a varied programme during lockdown.
- 1.3 The centre aims to... 'offer a wide range of high-quality artistic events and participatory and educational activities that are accessible to all.'
- 1.4 NFCT commissioned a feasibility study on the development of the site to increase corporate hire possibilities.
- 1.5 Changed Funding from RBWM in recent years. (2018-2019 it was £100,000, 2019-2020 their funding increased to £158,000 and in 2020-2021 their funding from RBWM has decreased by £17,000 so £141,000.)
- 1.6 2018-2019 was scheduled after NFCT AGM in November 2019. Due to RBWM re-scheduling and COVID-19 it was reported on 9th June 2020. The panel has requested regular updates.

2 DETAILS

- 2.1 Norden Farm Centre for the Arts is a theatre venue in Maidenhead with live events, gallery and café bar.
- 2.2 NFCT creates a diverse programme for residents and visitors
- 2.3 NFCT continues to increase its outreach programme of educational activities and working with vulnerable community groups

3 RISKS

- 3.1 NFCT is reliant on grant funding from the council.
- 3.2 The Centre is near maximum capacity for generating income (from 2019 report)
- 3.3 2018-19 Report states concerns in increased overhead costs, repair costs to essential equipment and facilities and seasonal fluctuation in income. Highlighting the need to take investment opportunities to make the centre sustainable.
- 3.4 COVID-19 impact on the centre's closure and operation

4 NEXT STEPS

- 4.1 Recommend that NFCT present again this year after their AGM in November as a special meeting on 2019-2020 Report

Norden Farm Centre for the Arts: Summary of Activity April – July 2020 for RBWM Overview & Scrutiny Panel

APRIL

Audiences: Programme Highlights

- Norden Farm closed for the entire month due to the on-going Corona Epidemic. Many staff were placed on the government furlough scheme. Despite this, we managed to launch a community project, move a range of classes online <https://norden.farm/pages/online-classes-and-workshops>, commissioned artists to create some free content for children and families and started planning to deliver outreach work for the disadvantaged groups we work with on a regular basis.
- AllWrite Together; a community project, led by local poet Simon Mole to work with Maidonians on a creative response to the health emergency.
- Kayleigh's Crafts; we commissioned a local artist to record a series of craft sessions using easy to find materials that might be in your home, to host on our various platforms, free to view.
- Magic story telling; we commissioned a local actor/ magician to record a series of story telling and magic trick sessions also hosted on our various digital platforms, free to view.
- We began a weekly blog, 'Pick Your Own, the farm recommends' to maintain contact with our supporters and give them ideas for finding entertainment online. <https://norden.farm/pages/pick-your-own-the-farm-recommends>

Education & Outreach

Formal Education

Covid19 – School Response

With the government announcing school closures on Wednesday 18 March we have worked to update schools and practitioners about workshop cancellations.

Where possible we have looked to rearrange workshops for later in the year, or next year.

Research has continued to find out how many students are in RBWM schools during this time, to ensure we are offering suitable content and support for staff.

Communications have continued throughout April with schools to look at how we can support them during this time.

Plans are in place to support schools with online live workshops for students at home, and in the classroom together.

Community & Outreach Work - special projects and regular projects

Covid19 – Project Response

With Norden Farm's closure due to covid19 in March, Jane and Robyn have begun to work on plans for a digital community project which will reflect the community experience during this time.

All Write Together

- In April, the All Write Together project was launched, funded by SMR.
- The project features a series of online live poetry workshops, and pre-recorded tasks which the community can take place in. The outcome will be a piece of community poetry which will be recorded against an animation. The poem and short animation will reflect the community's experience during the lockdown.
- In April, our practitioner, Simon Mole was contracted. As was our animator, Scott Tyrell/.
- In April, our first pre-recorded task, and live session took place.

Quest: Family Fest

- During March the Quest Family Fest 2020 was cancelled due to Covid19 and the closure of Norden Farm during this time.
- Robyn has ensured that all practitioners and project partners have been updated regarding the cancellation.
- Quest will return in 2021.

Young Leadership Programme

With the closure of Norden Farm taking place across the Easter holiday and Quest Family Fest, the Easter leadership programme has sadly been cancelled.

The programme will return in 2021.

Learning

Groups & Classes

Youth Engagement, Achieving for Children

- Robyn and Elaine have continued to look at possible opportunities for 2020.
- In March, Robyn and Elaine began to confirm digital workshops for the Kickback group while they are social distancing.
- The first 2 sessions will take place in May.
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Family Friends

In April communications have continued with the FF group – to ensure we can offer content during the lock down period, through a series of pre-record or live sessions

SocialArts

Throughout April, with sessions paused while we are closed and social distancing is in place Robyn and Jane has worked to look at a route forward to continue to support our vulnerable group members.

In April, Robyn contacted all of the participants to check in, say Hi, and have a chat – all are doing okay and are well.

MAY

Audiences (May 2020): Programme Highlights

- Norden Farm continued to be closed to the public due to the on-going Corona Epidemic, with all staff but 5.5 remaining on furlough leave.
- Online classes this month for adults included; Yoga, Crochet, Guitar and Zumba
- Online classes for children and young people included; 3 weekly youth theatre groups Digi Den and Kayleigh's crafts.
- AllWrite Together; our Maidenhead community project response to the health emergency, with workshops led by local poet Simon Mole continued.
- Magical story telling; led by local actor, Patrick Ashe continued as weekly sessions
- The weekly blog, 'Pick Your Own, the farm recommends' highlighting online events and activities continued as weekly content <https://norden.farm/pages/pick-your-own-the-farm-recommends>
- The Vinyl Frontier live streamed shows delighted audiences with their usual combination of great music, pop trivia and audience interaction via an onscreen chat bar.

Education & Outreach

Formal Education : Covid19 – School Response

- Communication with schools continued to find out how best to support RBWM schools during this time, to ensure we are offering suitable content and support for staff.
- Plans were put in place to support schools with online live workshops for students at home, and in the classroom together.
- Robyn has begun to work on an online 'Schools Hub' web page which will feature OnDemand and live resources for schools.

Community & Outreach Work - special projects and regular projects

Covid19 – Project Response

With Norden Farm's closure due to covid19 in March, Jane and Robyn have begun to work on plans for a digital community projects ensuring we can continue to delivery high quality arts activity to the local community, at such an important time.

All Write Together

- The community project features a series of online live poetry workshops, and pre-recorded tasks which the community can take place in. The outcome will be a piece of community poetry which will be recorded against an animation.
- In May our pre-recorded tasks and live workshops continued.
- The sessions have received great feedback from participants -

I felt my well-being go from 4 to 10 (10 being feeling great). To be given the chance to laugh and create is saving my sanity!! I mean it!!

- As the project continues Simon will bring together the final poem and it will be animated and launched in June.

Lantern Parade

During May, initial conversations with Same Sky have begun to look how we might be able to hold the 2020 event in a socially distant manner, taking into account the expertise and ideas Same Sky can offer.

The Beach

Work on the 2020 project has been put on hold for now, due to social distancing restrictions it's unlikely it can take place.

The Kite Festival

- In May we began to explore the options for a 'Virtual Kite Festival'
- Robyn has been in contact with our artist, Chris, to update him on our planning.

- We hope to host online workshops with kite packs which people would be able to purchase from us in advance.

Learning: Groups & Classes

The programme of online classes launched in May, with dates running through until the end of July so far.

Youth Engagement, Achieving for Children

- In May, the first 2 online live workshops took place for the Kickback group.
- The group enjoyed a dance workshop and an art workshop
- During May, we've been working with the group to finalise more workshops for the group, to take place virtually.

Family Friends

In May communications have continued with the FF group – to ensure we can offer content during the lock down period, through a series of pre-record or live sessions

SocialArts

- In May, plans began to come together for the new 'Creative Arts Social Club Online' – an online class for those can get online, but also offering a offline version where participants can catch up with artist on a weekly basis via the phone.
- In the coming weeks Robyn and Jane will work together with artist Amelia Pimlott to work out the logistics ahead of opening the bookings.
- The project is made possible by funding from the Arts Council.
- In May, Robyn contacted all of the participants to check in, say Hi, and have a chat – all are doing okay and are well. They are all excited about the ideas around the class relaunch.

JUNE

Audiences (June 2020): Programme Highlights

- Norden Farm continued to be closed to the public due to the on-going Corona Epidemic, with all staff but 5.5 remaining on furlough leave.
- Online classes this month for adults included; Zen Drawing, Yoga, Crochet, Guitar and Zumba
- Online classes for children and young people included; Chill Club, 3 weekly youth theatre groups Digi Den and Kayleigh's crafts.
- Magical story telling; led by local actor, Patrick Ashe continued as weekly sessions

- The weekly blog, 'Pick Your Own, the farm recommends' highlighting online events and activities continued as weekly content <https://norden.farm/pages/pick-your-own-the-farm-recommends>
- The Vinyl Frontier was streamed direct from the main stage

Education & Outreach

Formal Education

Covid19 – School Response

- The online 'Schools Hub' web page is now live and features OnDemand and live resources for schools.
- In June we hosted the first 2 workshops of a series of 4 for St Edmund Campion. The weekly comic book drawing workshops for Year 6 are hosted via zoom by practitioner James Parsons.
- Robyn has been in communication with other local schools to confirm more workshops which will take place before the end of the school year.

Community & Outreach Work - special projects and regular projects

- **Covid19 – Project Response**

With Norden Farm's closure due to covid19 in March, Jane and Robyn have begun to work on plans for a digital community projects ensuring we can continue to delivery high quality arts activity to the local community, at such an important time.

All Write Together

- In June the project came to an end having completed workshops with community groups and members of the public.
- In June the final animated poem was released. <https://youtu.be/ayTZXCPTyVw>
- We hope to have it located with local groups including the Heritage Centre and Museum. We will also be screening it at The Farm when we re-open.

The Kite Festival

- In June Robyn confirmed a series of public workshops which are now on sale.
- Workshops with Alexander Devine Children's Hospice and Family Friends are also confirmed to take place in July.

Learning

Groups & Classes

During June, Robyn has continued to look after the youth group and classes programme.

The programme of online classes launched in May, with dates running through until the end of July so far.

Early Years

- Little Wrigglers – 21
- Ballet Beats – 22
- Magic and Storytelling - 25

Youth Groups

- Youth Theatre Online – 80
- Chill Club – Yoga - 36

Digi Den

- Virtual Digi Den - 28

Vulnerable Groups

NEW: Youth Engagement, Achieving for Children

- Robyn and Elaine have continued to look at possible opportunities for 2020.
- In June online workshops with members of the KickBack – Children in Care Council continued.
- The workshops are being well received and providing a creative outlet for the group during a time when they cannot meet in person.
- The practitioners have all enjoyed working with the group.
- The group all have access to the online Community Group Hub which offers free live and on demand content.

Family Friends

- Communications have continued with the FF group – to ensure we can offer content during the lock down period, through a series of pre-record or live sessions

- The group all have access to the online Community Group Hub which offers free live and on demand content.
- In June workshops were confirmed to run through July and August with the group.

SocialArts

- In June arrangements for Creative Arts Social Club Online were finalised – we have 10 people signed up to take part online.
- During June, Robyn worked with each participant to ensure they could access the zoom facility.
- The classes will begin in July.
- The project is made possible by funding from Arts Council, England