



Report to

Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

17th April, 2013

Report of

Councillor Welsh

Title

Report Back on the Work Of Outside Bodies – The Belgrade Theatre Trust

Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report sets out details of the work of the Belgrade Theatre Trust over the preceding twelve months and details of attendance by the City Council's representatives.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that Coventry City Council continue to appoint members of the Council to the Belgrade Theatre Trust

3 Information on Work of Outside Body

- 3.1 2011/12 was the first year of the Theatre's three year contract as an Arts Council National Portfolio Organisation (NPO). It was a difficult year given declining core funding and low public confidence which affects ticket sales. While the Theatre has done very well to increase its earnings from new sources (commercial set building via Belgrade Production Services, Events and Conferencing, Trusts and Sponsorship and a new Non Voluntary Contribution that forms part of the ticket price) it has not proved possible to replace entirely the loss of income from statutory and box office sources. However the Theatre was able to return a surplus in the year due in large part to some highly successful visiting company work in the final quarter of the year, and thus is able to boost its reserves, which at a time of economic uncertainty is to be welcomed.
- 3.2 The ambition remains for the Theatre to reach its optimum balance between producing and presented work, keep B2 open and protect its Community & Education programme. The results from 2011/12 for BPS, Events & Conferencing and Trusts and Sponsorship see some recovery in these sources of income which remain however fragile in the face of the country's economic problems.
- 3.3 The general economic climate continues to bite, however the Theatre is still vibrant and serving audiences a wide selection of different shows, to appeal to many different theatrical tastes. During the year the Theatre presented 384 performances of 72 different productions, of which six were the Belgrade's own produced shows. Total audiences were 138,600.
- 3.4 The Theatre has returned an excellent year's result despite some very high variances in some areas of income with audiences showing more caution for unknown plays but enthusiastically embracing feel good shows. The last quarter of the financial year in particular delivered unexpectedly good box office for the Theatre's programme of Visiting Company work and the Theatre's reserves were increased and will serve as contingencies

against unexpected loss of income in the coming years. This financial strength combined with the proven ability of the staff and Executive Team to manage and control costs and maximise income opportunities, gives the Theatre the tools to meet the critical need of maintaining a reasonable balance between in-house and presented work even in the face of declining levels of public funding. Thus going forward the Theatre still plans to produce at least six in house shows a year, programme B2 for as many weeks as it can and maintain the Community & Education programmes.

4 Benefits to the City Council of the Appointment

- 4.1 Coventry City Council is a major sponsor of the Belgrade Theatre, which is a significant contributor to the cultural life of the city and an important vehicle to deliver educational programmes.

5 What Financial Contribution Does the Council Make to this Organisation

- 5.1 The Belgrade Theatre received £1,089,971 from Coventry City Council in 2011/12.

6 Attendance Record and Remuneration for the Appointment

- 6.1 Coventry City Council appoints Cllr David Welsh and Cllr John Blundell to the Belgrade Theatre Trust. During the period of September 2011 and September 2012 inclusive seven Board of Director meetings took place, of which Councillor Welsh attended six and Councillor Blundell attended seven.

- 6.2 There is no remuneration associated with these appointments.

List of background papers

Proper officer:

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None

Papers open to Public Inspection

Description of paper

Schedule of City Council Appointments to outside Bodies

Location: CH59