

BUSINESS PLAN 2025-28

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As The Cumnock Tryst has evolved over the last ten years, so has our understanding of our potential as a powerful influencer. We began as a four-day festival, *for and of* our community, but through constant and thoughtful evolution in our programming and management structure we have become a respected arts organisation, providing engagement opportunities all year round. We are drawing audiences, participants and performers from across East Ayrshire, the rest of Scotland and far beyond.

We pride ourselves on striving to reach the highest level of care for everyone involved in what we do: artists, audience, community neighbours and businesses, freelancers, investors, participants, partners, team members and volunteers.

The media interest in The Tryst has brought an international awareness of our work, particularly the impact that music and music-making can have on the people and visitors to Cumnock.

The Business Plan focusses on how our proven success now informs a pragmatic way to build upon our achievements. It sets out our approach to exploring growth opportunities and is bold and ambitious for both the organisation and our community. We will deliver three strands of activity:

1. an annual, four-day, international music festival.
2. a wide-reaching community engagement programme.
3. a year-round programme of high-quality cultural events.

This activity will include the full integration of The Cumnock Tryst Ensemble and The Cumnock Tryst International Summer School for Composers into our programme of work for the first time. We will bring young singers from across Ayrshire together to perform with The Cumnock Tryst Festival Chorus in a major collaboration with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and we will explore partnerships and funding opportunities that will allow us to develop a community opera with our community.

Place: The size of our community and the intimacy of our venues enables us to generate powerful encounters and a meaningful, direct connection between performers and audience, creating unique shared experiences. The connection between place, people and performers has been, and remains, an important part of our approach. Our community Engagement Programme delivers relevant and ground-breaking initiatives all rooted in the people, culture and history of the area.

Excellence: We're an ambitious organisation implementing exciting new strands of work to grow our offer throughout the year, such as: the launch of The Cumnock Tryst Ensemble, a group of performers who will be active across our Engagement and Concert Programmes;

and the launch of The Cumnock Tryst International Summer School for Composers which will run every two years from 2024.

Wellbeing: We will develop strategic working partnerships with, for example, Drake Music Scotland and the Transitions Team within East Ayrshire Council who are charged with managing the most disabled school pupils as they move on to community care. We will work with Drake Music Scotland on the associated research project, sharing our learning as we explore how creative music-making can support individuals through this challenging period in their young lives. We will explore with Dumfries House how we could play a role within their social prescribing programme for those with mental ill health. We will continue supporting disabled members of our community as they work with us as volunteers, participants and members of our Festival Chorus to ensure they are welcomed as equals and fully integrated into our work through the provision of the right support. We will focus on nurturing emerging talent, local composers, singers and instrumentalists, cultivating their wellbeing and the social benefits of music-making alongside major projects for children and adults with additional support needs.

We have identified four strategic goals which will drive our work over the next three years:

1. **Concert programme:** We will create a world-class festival programme and a series of concerts across the year to connect leading artists to our community
2. **Engagement Programme:** We will curate a range of engagement activities for emerging musical talent and local community groups, establishing The Cumnock Tryst as a centre of excellence in the learning and teaching of composition, creative-music-making and community performance.
3. **Audience:** Through our evolving and sensitive marketing strategy, we will grow our audience and participant numbers across all of our activity ensuring that our work is reflective of our local and regional demographic including both residents and visitors.
4. **Sustainability and Resilience:** We will review our staff structure while deepening our commitment to EDI and environmental sustainability.

This business plan and its strategic goals will be regularly evaluated by The Tryst team and the Board of Trustees. These reviews are part of how The Tryst functions, through: regular planning meetings between the Chief Executive and Artistic Director; weekly team meetings; with individual Board members when/if required; short-life working groups when/if required; and quarterly Board meetings.

PURPOSE, VISION, MISSION, VALUES

Purpose: Our purpose is to create vibrancy, be challenging, promote social regeneration, support emerging talent and to connect artists and audiences through the transformational power of music.

Vision: To make Cumnock a renowned cultural destination through world-class musical events, an exemplary year-round community engagement programme and an annual four-day festival.

Mission: To build the most relevant, place-based contemporary classical music organisation, connect communities to international musicians, and provide uplifting experiences for audiences, participants and performers.

Values

- **Innovative:** Creative experiences and ambitious community engagement are at the heart of everything we do and shapes our organisational values
- **Inquisitive:** We challenge ourselves, audiences and participants to embrace curiosity through outward-looking artistic and community engagement programmes
- **Experimental:** We're a greenhouse for experimentation, artistic exploration and new ideas, evidenced through world-class programming and the commissioning of new talent
- **Collaborative:** We're committed to sharing inspiring experiences, success and learning with others
- **Respectful:** We take pride in creating mutually respectful relationships with artists, audiences, partners, investors and across our team, to ensure our vision and journey is a shared one
- **Dedicated:** We operate with honesty, compassion and integrity across everything we do and aim to be flexible and adaptive to ensure long-term sustainability
- **Quality:** We always seek to do the best job that we can

STRATEGIC GOALS 2025 – 2028

Our four strategic goals will drive all our energies and activities as follows:

GOAL 1: Concert Programme			
We will create a world-class programme throughout the year that connects artists and communities			
	Objectives	Outcomes	Measures of success
1.1	We will bring international artists to Cumnock, rarely seen in Scotland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrich the local culture and quality of life by bringing international musicians to Cumnock • Engagement of the most innovative local, national and international musicians across genres including classical, jazz, folk, world and experimental • Local people and visitors have access to world- 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivered 3 four-day festivals • Audience research projects at concerts and events • Delivered 4 year-round concerts each year • Delivered a wide diversity of musical genres

		<p>class performers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased access to high quality performances • Increased public profile for The Tryst • Increased social, employment and volunteering opportunities for local people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programmes include full scale orchestras • 2% increase in audience by visitors from beyond the region per year • 25 freelance and volunteering opportunities per year • Online coverage 25 pieces per year • Print coverage 25 pieces per year • Broadcast coverage 1 piece per year
1.2	We will commission new music from leading composers at all stages of their careers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local people and visitors have access to new music • Engagement of the most innovative local, national and international composers and musicians • Increased peer profile for The Tryst 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 or 2 composers engaged per year • 1 or 2 new commissions per year
1.3	We will programme familiar and more challenging work for our festival and local audiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local people will have access to performers they know and performers who are new to them • Audiences will have fed their ideas in to our plans • Widening our reach and developing new audiences • Increased public profile for The Tryst 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 familiar performances per year • 8 performances of artistically challenging work
1.4	We will develop opportunities for local and international musicians to work and perform together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local musicians have access to international musicians in person and digitally • Increased skills and confidence for emerging local musicians • New creative partnerships and collaborations • New performance opportunities • Increased profile and credibility for The Tryst as an organisation supporting creative collaborations • Increased signposting to The Tryst's annual programme for local and international musicians 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 120 local musicians engaging per year • 2 creative collaborations per year • 2 performances per year

GOAL 2: Engagement Programme

We will further establish The Tryst as a recognised centre of excellence in the learning and teaching of composition and create access opportunities for all to engage in creative music-making

	Objectives	Outcomes	Measures of success
2.1	Define an annual community engagement plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear strategy to focus resources • Clear frameworks to guide operational activity • Clear targets set to help measure success • Partnerships developed for project delivery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation with key stakeholders • Research and development complete by November each year • Plan approval by the Board
2.2	Further develop Cumnock as a centre for excellence for composition and creative music-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-term role in the cultural infrastructure of East Ayrshire • Cultivation and growth of emerging musical talent • Foster the creative development of the next generation of composers and performers • Enhanced music-making skills for young people • Increased opportunities for 'real life' hands-on delivery experiences for young people • Improved skills base for teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed a skilled workforce in project delivery • New partnerships with education institutions, arts organisations and community groups, including 4 internationally • New training materials • Performance content developed for The Tryst's year-round programme • Enhanced audience and participant reach
2.3	Maintain our commitment to providing high quality music education experiences including specifically	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harder to reach groups benefit from participation • Research completed on using creative music-making as a tool to ease the transition from school to community care for those with special needs • Grow and diversify our participants and audiences • Create meaningful connections with schools and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivered two or three major community engagement projects each year • Dissemination of research findings

	for children with additional support needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> community groups Connect high quality artists with young people and community groups to support creative learning Connect students studying composition with vital training opportunities in community settings Exported composition teaching methods to teachers internationally Connected Cumnock schoolchildren to young people internationally through creative music-making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produced and performed a community opera with community groups in Cumnock and Doon Valley Mentored 10 student composers from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in the teaching of composition in the classroom Held two international summer schools for composers James MacMillan delivered 4 workshops for teachers and pupils in association with his international touring
2.4	Establish an academic research partnership to obtain evidence on the social impact of our work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Empirical evidence of the impact of our work Raise the profile of The Tryst and the community benefits of our work Enhance 'our story' to lever further funding from current and new funding partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding for research secured Research report by 2028/29

GOAL 3: Audience

We will grow our audiences and increase footfall across all our activities ensuring that they are reflective of our local and regional demographic including residents and visitors.

	Objectives	Outcomes	Measures of success
3.1	Implement a brand refresh, creative design and brand narrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An up-to-date brand that reflects our growing status and year-round programme of events Improved communication and add value to funders, sponsors and other stakeholders Increase in engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refreshed branding and creative design seen across all platforms Increased profile of our festival and year-round programme 10% increase in audiences
3.2	Develop the website to increase accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scalable text Text rather than images to clickthrough Descriptive titles on all content Addition of a side menu for navigation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsive and accessible website for those with additional needs Easier navigation for those with additional needs
3.3	Implement a data focussed approach to supporting revenue growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in data collected at point of sale and improved methods of analysis New database driven analysis programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence based research on audiences/participants to inform our programme Increased revenue from patrons Ticket scanning technology used at all events
3.4	Increase ticket sale revenue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved customer experience at point of purchase for tickets Increased revenue from ticket sales Increase in audiences from under-represented groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skills training for pop-up Box Office volunteers New pricing strategy maximising income without creating a barrier to access New audiences and participants Annual review of communications and marketing strategy

GOAL 4: Sustainability and Resilience

We will review our management structure to create a resilient organisation while deepening our commitment to environmental sustainability and EDI.

	Objectives	Outcomes	Measures of success
4.1	Develop a team structure appropriate to Business Plan objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revised job descriptions Recruitment of new Board and team members where required New team structure Increase in funding streams EDI Action Plan and environmental sustainability embedded across outputs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successful delivery of Business Plan objectives Appropriate Board and staff levels to undertake all activity Funding achieved from new sources Increased financial stability

4.2	Provide relevant training opportunities for Board, staff and volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A supported and motivated team • A challenged team • Real skills development • Increased confidence and responsibility for individuals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular skills audits • Annual appraisals • Positive volunteer feedback
4.3	Further integrate EDI and environmental sustainability into programming and management processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an appropriate EDI Action Plan • Measuring of carbon emissions across all outputs through Creative Carbon Scotland 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated EDI Action Plan • Reduction in emissions

WHO WE ARE

Context

Situated in south west Scotland, East Ayrshire has a varied natural environment, a rich and diverse cultural heritage, a proud industrial history and a range of hospitality and leisure activities, which attract residents and visitors alike. Many parts are prosperous and it's a vibrant place in which to live, work and visit. However, the area as a whole has higher levels of poverty than the Scottish average with significant inequalities existing within and across these communities. The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) combines data from seven different domains of deprivation, namely Income; Employment; Health; Education; Housing; Access and Crime. Income (23.9%), employment (23.3%) and health (22.7%) are the largest elements of deprivation in East Ayrshire.¹ Parts of Cumnock South and Craighs both sit within the top 15% of the most deprived areas in Scotland and roughly 25% of the population of Cumnock are in the bottom 20 percentile areas of multiple deprivations with 31% of young people also in the bottom 20% in terms of educational attainment.² There is a high proportion of the population who identify as white (98.86%) and a lower amount (2.14%) who are from other ethnic groups with Chinese being the largest of these ethnicities (0.26%).²

About Sir James MacMillan CBE

James MacMillan is a world-renowned composer and conductor and arguably the pre-eminent composer of his generation in the UK. His musical language is flooded with influences from his Scottish heritage, Catholic faith, social conscience and close connection with Celtic folk music, blended with influences from Far Eastern, Scandinavian and Eastern European music. He was awarded a CBE in January 2004 and a knighthood in June 2015.

About The Cumnock Tryst

The Cumnock Tryst is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation, founded and established in 2013 by James MacMillan to deliver a celebration of music-making in his

¹ <https://docs.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/crpadmmin/2012%20agendas/cabinet/11%20March%202020/Scottish%20Index%20of%20Multiple%20Deprivation%202020.pdf>

² <http://simd.scot>

home town of Cumnock. The festival's name was inspired by a piece of music James wrote in the 1980s, the setting of William Soutar's love poem, *The Tryst*. *Tryst* is an old Scots word which means a meeting place, or a romantic rendezvous. Ten years on, the appetite for, and the interest in what we do has proven to be so successful that The Cumnock Tryst is now a meeting place for music lovers and creators all year-round.

Why Cumnock?

James MacMillan's musical interests began in his home town of Cumnock where he was raised alongside three generations of his family. As a boy, he was active in music-making at school playing the recorder, tin whistle and later on, the piano. His grandfather was a coalminer, but his true love was music. James credits the support and guidance he was given from his grandfather, music teachers, band leaders and mentors in Cumnock as being of critical importance in the development of his own musicianship. The sense of belonging and emotive connection with Cumnock has remained with James throughout his life and he, through the work of The Tryst, is giving something back to the community that shaped him.

Cumnock and its surrounding communities have experienced significant infrastructural challenges in the post-industrial period including the closure of the local mining industry and a steep decline in manufacturing, leading to pockets of significant unemployment, and subsequently a wide range of complex social and health issues. These challenges can seriously affect the collective ambitions and aspirations of a community resulting in a lack of optimism and direction. However, within the area there has remained a love of music, choral singing, participation in church choirs, brass bands, music theatre and instrumental learning. So, we highlight these challenges across our engagement programme, giving a voice to ex-miners for instance through song-writing, by using aerial photography of the former open cast mines as a stimulus for musical composition in schools, or by writing a school song with the Supported Learning Centre about confidence, self-worth and ambition.

James knows from his own experience of directing creative and performance projects in schools and communities across the country that there is a strong connection between creativity and social regeneration.

Whilst James is the catalyst and vision behind The Cumnock Tryst, he's the first to say it's not about him - it's about the place, the people and the music. Our mantra is that "everything we do is *of* and *for* the community" and we believe we are contributing to bringing a sense of pride and passion back to Cumnock.

What makes us different?

The Tryst takes its inspiration directly from two of the UK's pioneering composer-led festivals; the Aldeburgh Festival founded by Benjamin Britten and the St Magnus Festival, founded by Peter Maxwell Davies. These two musical icons created wonderful festivals of

and *for* communities which were important to them, Aldeburgh and Orkney. Cumnock is not a place you would ordinarily associate with an award-winning contemporary classical festival, however, there are two reasons why The Cumnock Tryst is different: Cumnock and James MacMillan. James is from Cumnock and he's *of* the community - Cumnock is in his DNA.

James is at a point in his career where he can commit the time and energy required to use his success and influence in a concentrated way to benefit a whole community. James brings integrity, honesty and a sense of aspiration for others to his leadership of The Tryst. James opens doors, he is a kite mark of quality and excellence within the music industry and he brings credibility to the company. James is why world-class performers want to come and perform at The Tryst.

James is quite unique in his ability to talk about what he does to the widest of audiences and age-ranges. Other composers may not get the same joy from engaging in creative music-making with school children for instance. They may not have the same commitment to giving everyone, regardless of ability or disability, the chance to make music quite like James has. James gets stuck in to every strand of our outreach programme. If he's not leading it, he's mentoring, or writing new music for its participants. We invest in the emerging talent of the future and our audiences trust that the programmes will be of the highest quality, which means we can programme more challenging and experimental music. But we have also invested in a management infrastructure that allows us to realise James's dream. A delivery model that works, has room to develop and is fleet of foot, has brought stability, energy and creativity to our programme and allows for both organisational and personal growth for our dedicated team. And through James MacMillan's international touring, we can now share our experience of teaching composition in East Ayrshire classrooms internationally and explore how we can connect young people in Cumnock with others around the world.

Our unique selling points

- We bring high quality music to where people are, rather than making people go to where the music is.
- We provide a platform for local musicians and composers to shine and share the stage with some of world's leading musicians.
- Artistically, we respond to the town and its people and contribute to place-making and community identity.
- We use the whole town as a venue, delivering world-class performances in unexpected places and venues.
- We challenge expectations and assumptions about where an international classical music festival can take place.

EXTERNAL INFLUENCES

The political, economic, and social landscape has changed significantly for arts organisations both at home and abroad during the last 10 years. We have emerged from a global COVID-19 pandemic that no one could have predicted. The Black Lives Matter campaign and Me Too movement have delivered new and timely spotlights on unacceptable behaviours and have challenged us all to become active respondents. Targets set by government to help combat global warming have required all arts organisations to consider their environmental footprint, with the government in the UK looking to the arts to help raise awareness through our programmes of work and to reach net zero by 2045. Added to this, we are experiencing the impact of unexpected wars in Ukraine and the Middle East which have contributed to significant increases in racial intolerance, and increased costs of goods leading to a cost-of-living crisis across the UK. All of these external factors have either directly or indirectly impacted upon the work of the arts sector in Scotland. The Cumnock Tryst has not been immune of course, particularly through the COVID-19 pandemic. However, that period did allow us to consider different ways of providing cultural activities for our community using digital delivery and live streaming of concerts and by adopting these different technologies we opened up our work to new audiences beyond Cumnock and East Ayrshire.

We understand the impact the cost of living crisis has had on large parts of our community and, despite stable audience numbers, know we will need to continue to monitor the external financial pressures being exerted upon audience members and participants.

While we are now three years on from the COVID-19 pandemic, we are acutely aware of the significant increase in mental ill health across all ages of our community.³ Evidence shows that music is an activity that can assist in quieting busy minds whether it be passive listening to high-quality performers or participation through active engagement in creative music-making activities.^{4,5} We will continue to seek out those most affected and develop partnerships to deliver life-enhancing programmes of work across our community.

With Sir James MacMillan at the helm, we can think big and will continue to be ambitious for the people of East Ayrshire and beyond. We listen to the ideas of other creative musicians, respond to a myriad of approaches each year from arts organisations and artists, consider all ideas that come to us from audiences and participants at our regular planning meetings and are not afraid to consult or take advice. We actively encourage others to engage with our team to develop projects and ideas.

³ https://www.mwscot.org.uk/sites/default/files/2023-10/MHA-MonitoringReport_2022-23.pdf

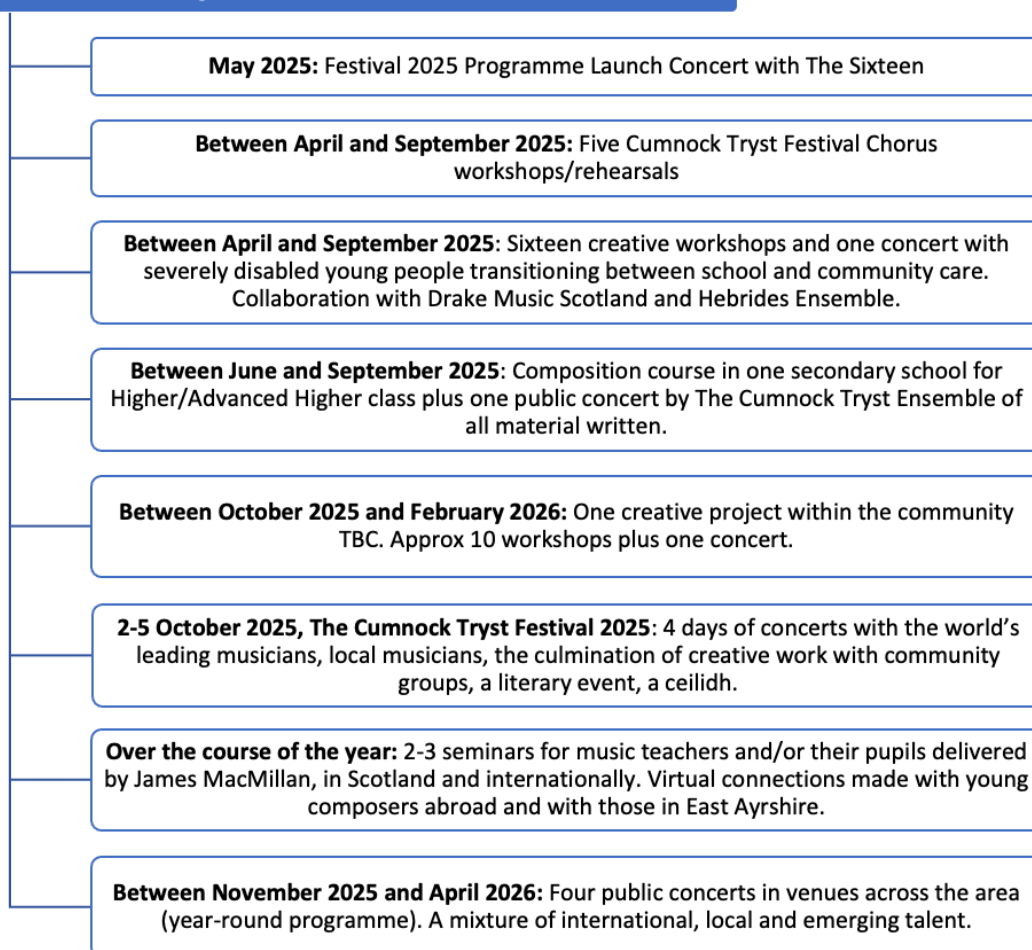
⁴ Gustavson, D.E., Coleman, P.L., Iversen, J.R. et al. Mental health and music engagement: review, framework, and guidelines for future studies. *Transl Psychiatry* 11, 370 (2021).

⁵ <https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/10886/pdf/>

LOOKING AHEAD

The next three years will see the consolidation and further development of our Festival, our Engagement Programme and our Year-Round Concert Series. Each of these strands does not sit in isolation and at times there is cross-over between one or all three depending upon the activity being delivered.

Year 1: 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026



The Cumnock Tryst Festival 2025

Thursday 2 October 2025	Friday 3 October 2025	Saturday 4 October 2025	Sunday 5 October 2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evening The Cumnock Tryst Ensemble • Late night Musicians in Exile 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morning Pupils from Hillside School and those attending Riverside Centre with Drake Music Scotland and Hebrides Ensemble. Culmination of major education project looking at the role music can play when a disabled young person leaves school for care in their community. • Afternoon Book discussion TBC • Evening Sansara • Late night Gabriel Prokofiev TBC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morning Dalrymple ukuleles or similar TBC • Afternoon NYOS Camerata • Evening The Cumnock Tryst Festival Chorus with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra TBC • Late night Chalamanda's African band TBC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morning Mass at St John's with Academy of Sacred Music • Afternoon Lorna McGhee – Flute recital TBC • Evening Nicky Spence • Late night Ceilidh

Year 2: 1st April 2026 to 31st March 2027

Funding dependant: we would aim to begin work on a major community opera project during this period that could culminate during Festival 2028.

April/May 2026: Festival Programme Launch Concert

Between April and September 2026: Five Cumnock Tryst Festival Chorus workshops/rehearsals.

Between June and September 2026: Ten creative workshops and one concert with severely disabled young people or adults with learning difficulties or within a carehome setting.

Between June and September 2026: Composition course in one secondary school for Higher/Advanced Higher class plus one public concert of all material written.

July/August 2026: One week-long international summerschool for composers at Dumfries House, directed by James MacMillan. Plus two associated public events. (Discussions are ongoing with Edinburgh International Festival to determine whether the creative work from the summerschools could have a repeat performance there).

1-4 October 2026, The Cumnock Tryst Festival 2026: 4 days of concerts with the world's leading musicians, local musicians, the culmination of creative work with community groups, a literary event, a ceilidh.

Between November 2026 and April 2027: Four public concerts in venues across the area (year-round programme). A mixture of international, local and emerging talent.

Over the course of the year: 2-3 seminars for music teachers and/or their pupils delivered by James MacMillan, in Scotland and internationally. Virtual connections made with young composers abroad and with those in East Ayrshire.

Year 3: 1st April 2027 to 31st March 2028

April/May 2027: Festival Programme Launch Concert

Between April and September 2027: Five Cumnock Tryst Festival Chorus workshops/rehearsals

Between April and September 2027: Ten creative workshops and one concert with severely disabled young people or adults with learning difficulties.

Between June and September: Composition course in one secondary school for Higher/Advanced Higher class plus one public concert of all material written.

30 September – 3 October, The Cumnock Tryst Festival 2027: 4 days of concerts with the world's leading musicians, local musicians, the culmination of creative work with community groups, a literary event, a ceilidh. Potentially, the culmination of a community opera project.

Between November 2027 and April 2028: Four public concerts in venues across the area (year-round programme). A mixture of international, local and emerging talent.

Over the course of the year: 2 international seminars for music teachers and/or their pupils delivered by James MacMillan. Virtual connections made with young composers abroad and with those in East Ayrshire.

Our Festival

Over the last ten years we have created one of the United Kingdom's most ambitious and creative festivals, which provides the impetus for a merging of worlds where the unexpected happens. In our plans for 2025 and beyond, we will be approaching international artists who are based in the UK, being mindful that few of them ever have the chance to perform in rural Scotland and additionally mindful of our environmental impact. They will include: Sheku Kanneh-Mason, Isata Kanneh-Mason, Nicola Benedetti, Catriona Morrison, The Swingle Singers, Ora Singers, Voces 8 amongst others and local groups such as the Dalrymple Ukelele Orchestra, Dalmellington Band, Cumnock and District Pipe Band and Centrestage. In addition to premiering new work by MacMillan, it is anticipated that we will look at commissioning composers involved in our international summer school who have a special affinity to our aims, and also those composers who we mentor on placement within our engagement programme at the start of their careers.

Our festival is *for* and *of* our community. For four-days many people are coming from far-and-wide to, briefly, be part of our community. We see people returning to us like old friends every year, yearning to be part of, participate in, and contribute to making a festival that leaves a profound impression on festival-goers through the moving power of world-class music.

Our Engagement Programme

Our Engagement Programme runs all year-round and is an integral part of what we do. We understand the benefits to individual confidence and personal development that engagement in the arts can have, and for young people in particular, skills development can benefit them in their future careers.

Our programme will create showcasing opportunities for emerging talent and progression routes for participants, regardless of age or ability, to help them to reach their potential.

All the activities have been developed with four specific target groups in mind:

- People who may not normally benefit or seek to engage in cultural/musical activities.
- Those with additional support needs.
- People who are already engaged.
- The next generation of emerging musicians and composers.

We work hard to achieve a parity of access to our projects, equality and inclusion being the core tenet of our activity. We work with themes relevant to the community, looking at for example, the environment, the changes it is undergoing, the town itself and its people and history, self-worth and confidence. We work with the very best creative musicians to run our projects. For example, Eamonn Dougan of The Sixteen is the Artistic Director of our Festival Chorus; Cellist Christian Elliott is the Artistic Director of The Cumnock Tryst Ensemble;

composers and animateurs Stephen Deazley, Ailie Roberston, Gareth Williams, Karine Polwart, Patricia Panther, Gillian Walker and Anna Thorvaldsdottir have all delivered work for us. They feed their ideas to us throughout their time in Cumnock and beyond, because we care what they think and have respect for their integrity. We bring only the very best to Cumnock.

Our Year-Round Concert Series

With a rich mix of the best musical talent performing a variety of musical genres, this series gives us the opportunity to bring people together over the winter months to experience artists who don't normally come to Cumnock. It gives us the opportunity to maintain contact across the year with local audience members, but it also helps us build new audiences who come from far and wide to hear specific artists or genres of music. Roderick Williams, Karine Polwart, The Sixteen, Cerys Matthews and Barbara Dickson are all under consideration for the next three years alongside The Cumnock Tryst Ensemble.

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion are hardwired into the ethos and values of The Tryst. We address economic deprivation and social isolation in addition to protected characteristics across our programme of work. We acknowledge that the development of an EDI Action plan is now crucial, to further define our commitments within our artistic programme and embed our approach into all of our operational activity. We understand the value in working with and encouraging artists who embody the protected characteristics identified in our Equal Opportunities Policy and engage a rich mix of performers across classical, jazz, gospel, folk, world and experimental music. We include British Sign Language interpretation at a selection of our choral concerts, the interpreter signing not only the words but the intention of instrumental passages ensuring an inclusive experience for those who identify as d/Deaf. We have worked with a wide range of young people and adults with additional support needs through special schools, the National Autistic Society, our ongoing partnership with Drake Music Scotland, Riverside Centre, the Supported Learning Centre and a range of established community groups including the Things Tae Dae Group. Our next project, which looks at how creative music-making can support disabled young people transitioning between school and community care, is groundbreaking, so we will work with East Ayrshire Council's Transition team to develop a research project which Drake Music Scotland will undertake, and the outcomes will be made publicly available in due course.

We ensure inclusion for all parts of our community by offering free or reduced-price tickets to local residents. We are building social cohesion in the programmes and projects we are delivering by ensuring that everyone can access these regardless of age, race or socio-economic background. Composers and animatuers come from a rich mix of socio-economic

backgrounds as do those we commission. Our workforce and Board are recruited in accordance with our Equal Opportunities principles and our volunteers come from all walks of life. We currently support two disabled volunteers who cannot take on paid employment, enabling them to be an integral part of our operations. In essence, The Tryst has given them a purpose they didn't have before.

Equality of access to world-class, creative activity is something that the Tryst has brought back to the area and with it has come a real sense of civic pride as local participation in events has developed. Our Equal Opportunities Policy can be found at Appendix 2.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The Cumnock Tryst is committed to embedding environmental sustainability across all aspects of our work. We create events and projects that:

- Celebrate artistic expression while exemplifying environmental responsibility.
- Demonstrate the power of music in promoting the cultural change needed to create a more sustainable future.
- Help our community to raise their awareness of the environment and effects of climate change through artistic expression.

All members of our team work from home, and most of our programmed international artists live in the UK. If we book international artists who live outside the UK, we ensure that we are piggybacking on to other events or concerts that they have in their diaries thus splitting the carbon footprint of air travel across different arts organisations. Cumnock is a rural town not particularly well served by public transport despite having several bus routes and a train station nearby in Auchinleck. This means that for most people outside of the town the use of their own transport is their most likely mode of transport. Over the next three years, we will start to gather data on how our audiences travel to events. We will publish information about public transport on our website and in marketing information and encourage our audiences to car share if possible. Our Environmental Policy can be found at Appendix 1.

GROWING, REACHING AND MAINTAINING AUDIENCES

The Tryst has an engaged, loyal and adventurous audience and it's one of our greatest assets. Supporting that audience is a core priority alongside widening its base and reaching new audiences.

We define a comprehensive marketing and communications plan each year delivered by our marketing consultant, Jackie Westbrook and Premiere, our PR consultancy. The marketing and PR budget is aligned directly to the artistic plans with information targeted to different segments of our audiences through a variety of online and print media. An example of a Marketing and Communications plan (for 2024-25) is available at Appendix 6.

Festival audiences have returned to pre-pandemic levels and visitors arrive from around the globe. Print and broadcast journalists attend from across the UK, and we receive very favourable coverage both on BBC Scotland news and in the national and local press. Audience members travel to East Ayrshire specifically for the festival from as far afield as Canada and the US. Local audiences continue to increase and with the breadth of engagement work expanding, we are seeing a wider demographic of local people at our events. Audiences also travel from across the UK and abroad and stay for several days bringing economic benefit to the area. Ticket sales can vary each year due to the differing number of events programmed; the geographic spread and the various capacities within our venues; and the number of community engagement events priced lower (or free) to encourage family groups, school groups and new attenders to join us.

Our Audience

The focus of our marketing and audience development work will be on the following four areas:

1. Brand profile

To help us communicate the ambitions laid out in this plan to current and potential new stakeholders, audiences and participants, we have refreshed The Cumnock Tryst brand and values so that it reflects our growing status and year-round programme of events and activities. Specifically we will:

- Create a brand narrative to better reflect the look and feel of everything The Cumnock Tryst does.
- Develop the accessibility of our website.
- Increase The Tryst's profile through partnership marketing and promotion with participating artists, ensembles and orchestras, with local businesses and cultural organisations.
- Increase overall audience and participant engagement through the implementation of a social media strategy and paid for advertising campaigns.

2. Growing sales

The new Barony Hall provides us with the opportunity to significantly increase earned income through ticket sales for the festival and our year-round programme of events. Other measures to increase participation and sales growth include:

- Regular reviews of pricing strategy whilst ensuring cost is not a barrier to access.
- New marketing initiatives to increase access for under-represented and new audience groups.
- Annual review of the marketing and communications strategy.
- Improve the customer experience at our Pop-up Box Office in Cumnock.

- Develop regular and engaging content for social media.

3. Local engagement

We will implement a range of communications tactics to promote the multiple ways that local people, schools and groups can engage with our events and community projects such as:

- Increased use of local media and generation of content for digital platforms.
- Engaging volunteers and Festival Chorus members as informed ambassadors for all Tryst's activities.
- Negotiate mutually beneficial offers with local businesses, cultural organisations and tourist destinations to instil a shared sense of ownership of our events.
- Build relationships with local media to share good news stories and promote the benefits of our community engagement programme.

4. Data analysis

A key priority of this business planning period is to develop and implement a data focussed approach to supporting revenue growth. To help with this we will:

- Conduct regular analysis of ticket sales data, trends analysis, audience research and market research to evidence demand and evaluate impacts.
- New ticket scanners to capture customer attendance at all events.

IN FOUR YEARS TIME...

By 2028 we will have achieved the following in relation to our strategic goals:

1. Concert Programme

- Brought international artists to Cumnock each year to perform at the highest level for our festival audiences
- Sought opportunities to ensure local musicians and school pupils have access to our international artists, to learn from them and perform alongside them
- Included one professional orchestra at our festival
- Delivered 4 year-round concerts each year for local audiences across the area
- Integrated ideas from audience and participant feedback into our plans

2. Engagement Programme

- Further developed Cumnock as a centre of excellence in the learning and teaching of composition through: establishing our international summer school; delivery of teachers' seminars across the country and abroad; implemented two creative projects each year with schools and community groups; and started work on developing a community opera

- Commissioned and performed 6 new works
- Integrated The Cumnock Tryst Festival Chorus into major programmes each year
- Developed our partnership with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra to provide opportunities for local performers and singers of all ages to learn and perform alongside professional orchestral musicians
- Mentored 10 student composers from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in the teaching of composition in the classroom
- Completed the initial phase of our work for those with multiple disabilities; produced associated research project on the role of music-making in the transition from school to community care

3. Audience

- Successfully integrated the refreshed branding and increased The Tryst profile
- Developed accessibility features across our website
- Increased ticket sales by 10%
- Increased earned income by 10%
- Increased annual audience numbers by 10%
- Increased broadcast, press and specialist media coverage locally and nationally

4. Management and Production

- Developed a management infrastructure to reflect the needs of our ambitions
- Provided career development and training opportunities across the team
- Further embedded EDI and environmental sustainability across outputs

GOVERNANCE

The Cumnock Tryst is governed by a Board of Trustees which sets the overall strategic direction of the organisation and ensures all the necessary checks and balances required are in place for effective governance and reporting.

In setting up as a charity with the legal form of a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO), it was deemed that members of the public and funders could have confidence in their dealings with us, and being regulated by the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) gives that confidence. By having our financial records subjected to independent examination by our accountant, McFadden Associates Limited, before submitting an annual return to OSCR, information about what we do is then publicly available. There are financial benefits too. We can apply for Gift Aid for donations made by individuals to the charity and some organisations won't fund bodies which do not have charitable status.

Our Board (see Trustees and Staff Structure Appendix 5) is an experienced and committed group of professionals from a wide range of sectors who provide substantial expertise, knowledge, networks, connections, ideas and pragmatism to ensure the Tryst continues to be viable and fit for purpose. A revised organisational structure will be implemented within this planning cycle to ensure the necessary composition, experience and professionalism to deliver the ambitions of this plan and most crucially, to fund it as we move the organisation towards our aspirational vision. There are two key personnel at the helm of The Tryst who lead on all artistic, strategic and operational planning and delivery of all events and activities and they jointly report to the Board of Trustees:

- James MacMillan, Artistic Director, responsible for programming of all events and activity, artist planning and liaison. James contributes his time pro bono.
- Jennifer Martin, Chief Executive, responsible for governance, legal, financial and artistic planning, operations, staff management, recruitment, fundraising.

Other essential members of the team (see Trustees and Staff Structure Appendix 5) are:

- Rufus Sullivan, Senior Producer, responsible for production of all activity, concert and front of house managers, tech teams, administration, volunteer and chorus management.
- Jackie Westbrook, Marketing Consultant, responsible for strategy development and implementation, commissioning design, copy, newsletters, programme production.
- Premier, responsible for public relations, online, print, broadcast and social media platforms.
- Alison Thorburn, bookkeeper.

A comprehensive Risk Management Framework is reviewed regularly by the Board and is available at Appendix 4, attached separately.

FINANCIAL PLAN AND SUMMARY

Investment in The Cumnock Tryst enables funders, patrons and supporters to gain positive recognition by being associated with an organisation of significant cultural and social value. They can be confident that their financial investment will be well-managed and make an important contribution to Scotland's cultural ecology and the regeneration of Cumnock.

Financial Controls

The Chief Executive has day-to-day control of the budget. In addition, a bookkeeper oversees and updates the company's general ledger.

The Chief Executive reports on a monthly basis to the Board's Finance Committee which is

led by Trustee Caroline Kerr, a chartered accountant. The Finance Committee scrutinises the financial information provided in the form of management accounts, cashflow projections and annual accounts prior to presentation to the full Board of Trustees. Major funders are provided with financial information often through their own project monitoring report templates and sometimes through management accounts and annual reports.

The company's annual accounts are independently verified by McFadden Associates Ltd.

Fair Work

The Cumnock Tryst is committed to the Fair Work principles of Effective Voice, Respect, Security, Opportunity and Fulfilment, and will use its best endeavours to ensure that all our dealings with staff and contractors will be in accordance with these principles. If there is concern that we have not lived up to these principles an individual can invoke our Complaints Procedure. (Complaints Policy available at Appendix 3). Our core staff are employed with the benefits of holiday pay, job security and company Pension scheme. We negotiate fees with artists and agents directly and pay well above union norms. Our staff team and freelance contractors are highly valued and are paid in line with industry norms, if not higher. All volunteers and those working with us on student placements have their expenses refunded, and fees are negotiated with academic institutions where students perform in our programme. We offer training to staff and volunteers to ensure there is career progression and we set aside a training budget each year to cover costs. Our Fair Work Principles are set out in all contracts.

Summary of Income and Expenditure

INCOME						
Source	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Artistic Activity	£19,970	£20,105	£40,550	£18,800	£35,200	£21,200
Creative Scotland Multi-Year Funding				£80,000	£80,000	£80,000
Creative Scotland OPF	£70,000	£70,000	£85,000			
Local Authority				£5,000	£6,000	£7,000
Other Public Funding		£20,417				
Private: Donations, Gifts and Legacies	£20,644	£13,533	£6,000			
Trusts and Foundations	£186,812	£226,280	£157,983	£158,500	£181,500	£186,500
Other	£6,422	£9,367	£6,530	£12,000	£12,800	£13,500
Total	£303,848	£359,702	£296,063	£274,300	£315,500	£308,200

EXPENDITURE						
Artistic and Creative Programme	£130,334	£216,456	£166,697	£121,300	£157,750	£141,600
Administration	£85,749	£107,452	£112,171	£105,059	£109,985	£115,635
Marketing and Communications	£37,785	£48,554	£41,960	£44,000	£47,000	£50,000
Total	£253,868	£372,462	£320,828	£270,359	£314,735	£307,235

Notes on table above:

Festival: Artistic costs vary depending on the scale of activity. Income and expenditure increased in 2023-24 due to the culmination of our large-scale 'A Musical Celebration of the Coalfields' initiative. An additional day has been programmed in 2024's festival in celebration of our 10th Birthday. The year-round programme is also more expensive in 2024-25 due to our birthday celebrations. 2025-26 will see a return to a 4-day festival and a slightly more (financially) modest year-round programme.

Engagement Programme: In 2024, we will launch our new International Summer School for composers generating income but also increasing expenditure. In 2026 a similar increase can be noted.

Marketing: Expenditure in 2023-24 included the making of two significant films featuring the extent and impact of our engagement work and a summary of our 'A Musical Celebration of the Coalfields' initiative, both for dissemination internationally. Marketing and Communications costs include fees to Marketing and PR Consultants.

Fundraising and income generation

The Tryst currently has a reasonably broad revenue model with the biggest contributor to our events and activities coming from a range of trusts and foundations. We have developed a number of mutually beneficial relationships through our individual giving initiative, earned income is through ticket sales, chorus and summer school participation fees, and a residual amount will be achieved through business sponsorship.

The Tryst acknowledges the increasing pressures faced by our funding partners and the constraints that this places on their decision making. Whilst we are confident and committed to maximising our fundraising efforts it is prudent to emphasise the additional challenges the current fundraising landscape presents.

The Tryst's fundraising efforts for this planning period will focus on:

- Maintaining and increasing current levels of project funding support.
- Achieving Multi-year funding support from Creative Scotland.
- Increasing earned income levels through strategic ticket pricing and increased

number of available seats within Barony Hall.

- A renewed drive to develop business sponsorship.
- Increased income from relationship building to expand our cohort of committed investors through The Tryst's Individual Giving initiative.
- A new focus on Fundraising within our staff team.

The Tryst maintains £40,000 in unrestricted reserves each year.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

As specialists and leaders in our field we understand that active working partnerships will enable us to inform and shape, local and national agendas, and help set our operational framework to meet the social and creative ambitions of this business plan.

We thrive on working collaboratively and examples of strategic partnerships for our next planning cycle include:

- Centre of Excellence for composition and creative music-making - partnership with East Ayrshire Council schools, the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Dumfries House, Drake Music Scotland, Hebrides Ensemble, The Cumnock Tryst Ensemble and community groups across the area.
- Community Coalfields Landscape Partnership – funding and practical support to engage the community in creative music-making that explores environmental themes.
- East Ayrshire Council – potential for financial investment in to our work in addition to in-kind support.
- Fieldstead, long term funders of overheads, projects and festival activity.
- Genesis Foundation, sponsors of commissions for and concerts by The Sixteen.
- International seminars with Stockholm Philharmonic, Minnesota Orchestra, Tallinn Chamber Orchestra.

ASSUMPTIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

To be the best you have to be able to overcome challenges. We've demonstrated that as an organisation we're flexible, adaptable, creative and savvy. Over the next three years, The Tryst is poised to move to the next level in our growth trajectory through optimising opportunities and continuing to remove barriers to engagement in our programmes of work.

The opportunities described in this business plan predominantly relate to the areas where we are already excelling, such as high level music-making projects for community groups,

supporting emerging talent, curating an international music festival and providing rewarding experiences for those in our communities who are often marginalised. Our commitment to Equal Opportunities and the Environment drive all of our outputs, from defining our artistic programme to the themes we explore within our Engagement programmes. Fairness is at the heart of everything we do, from employment contracts to the treatment of all those we encounter as we undertake our work.

However, we will also be expanding and moving into new areas of work for the organisation specifically the development of our international summer school and projects involving our new Cumnock Tryst Ensemble which will make its debut in October 2024. And ultimately, we hope to begin work developing a community opera.

Our key organisational challenges over this period relate to further diversifying our fundraising activity and consolidating a new staff structure that allows us to designate more time to fundraising and sponsorship.

The successful delivery of this business plan is based on the following assumptions and considerations:

- **Sustainability** – strengthening our core staff team, achieving Multi-year funding, continuing to expand our revenue model including earned income, and building up organisational reserves.
- **Overheads** – are maintained at budget forecast levels.
- **Organisational risk** – ensuring the ambitions of the organisation are properly resourced.
- **Infrastructure** – transport links and local services.
- **Programming** – cohesion combined with a broad offer to widen the appeal without compromising artistic standards.
- **Partnerships** – we are able to build and maintain mutually beneficial partnerships with shared outcomes and agreed remits.
- **Audiences** – we are able to meet our increased audience levels and income earned from ticket sales.
- **Customer service and data** – improving the customer experience and our capacity to collate and analyse customer data.
- **Brand refresh** – carefully managing the implementation across all platforms to ensure successful enhancement of our profile.

MEASURING SUCCESS

We will focus our energies on four areas to measure our performance against The Tryst's operational, strategic and artistic objectives.

1. **Programme** – the breadth and depth of our concert and engagement programme is a sound indicator of the vitality and cultural health of Cumnock and East Ayrshire.
2. **Financial** – to provide value for money, achieve a balanced budget and grow our reserves.
3. **Audience** – attendance and participation in our events and activities demonstrates their value and importance to residents and visitors.
4. **Profile** – an increased profile across our community, the wider general public and our peers internationally, will help highlight our growing status and reputation.

We have established a range of project management systems for guiding and monitoring our performance and progress including:

- Project initiation and rationale
- Resource planning and allocation
- Assessing risks
- Scheduling
- Review and evaluation
- Financial controls
- Concert and project evaluation - questionnaires, comment cards, face to face feedback and concert exit interviews all feeding in to planning meetings.

Evaluation

We have 10 years of experience in evaluating the activity we provide.

We monitor attendance numbers and geographic spread through Box Office data, so we continue to gather evidence on whether our programme is appropriate for our community, locally, nationally and internationally. We ask our audiences to complete questionnaires about their experience and they often tell us directly what they have liked or disliked.

Through our local networks, we have eyes and ears on the ground and we hear pretty quickly a range of opinions about what we're doing. It has taken time to raise awareness of our activity in our most deprived areas but through street bunting, decorated shop windows, and mail drops, we feel that we are making progress year on year. We know what kind of music our community will support in greater numbers, what requires a different kind of communication strategy, the time of day they want to attend and how we can raise awareness for more challenging activities. We distribute 'Tell us what you think' cards to our audiences at events for those not able to access our surveys online or through QR codes, inviting ideas for concerts and engagement projects. Our Artistic Director and Chief

Executive discuss all ideas from audiences during regular planning meetings and artists are often programmed as a direct result (eg Evelyn Glennie, The King's Singers, Nicola Benedetti, Nicky Spence).

The size of our community, the intimacy of our venues and the openness of our project leaders enable us to generate powerful encounters and a meaningful, direct connection between performers, participants and audiences, creating unique shared experiences. The connection between place, people and performers has been, and remains an important part of our approach. We talk to all of our artists about their expectations and then their experience of working with us in Cumnock and we review comments or suggestions in planning meetings and with the Board when required. We have established a Complaints Procedure should anyone engaged by us have any concerns and this procedure is made explicit in contracts.

Our evaluation of participatory projects is currently done in three ways: paper evaluation noting expectations at the outset of a project, then the learning, experience, and the impact of the initiative on the individual at the end; specialised evaluation for our work with those with disabilities, directed by Drake Music Scotland; audience evaluation following public sharing of work produced. During the period of this Business Plan, we want to secure the funding to allow us to engage an academic researcher to collect empirical data in relation to our impact on individuals, the local area and East Ayrshire. We believe we are making considerable differences to people's lives and livelihoods, but now want to formalise the anecdotal so we are talking to both the RCS and St Mary's University in London about developing a formal research project.

All evaluation is reviewed by the Chief Executive and Artistic Director as a matter of course within their planning meetings and can lead to changes, modifications or new approaches to any area of our work.

Appendix 1



ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

Introduction

Overview of the Organisation

The Cumnock Tryst's inspiring vision is to be a world-class music festival, fostering year-round community engagement and concert programmes to elevate Cumnock as a globally recognised cultural hub. With a focus on music, we aim to unite communities, educate, connect international musicians, and provide enriching experiences for all involved. Central to our mission is a commitment to minimising our environmental impact, enhancing our existing efforts, and collaborating with others to achieve sustainability across all our activities.

Importance of Environmental Responsibility:

Environmental responsibility is fundamental to our ethos, shaping our cultural practices and influencing wider societal attitudes. Recognising our unique platform within the arts industry, we acknowledge the significant role we play in raising awareness of ecological issues and reducing our carbon footprint. By embracing sustainable practices, we contribute to global efforts to combat climate change while inspiring positive action within our community.

The Cumnock Tryst's Ambitions for Net Zero

In the context of Scotland's ambitions for a net-zero nation by 2045, as outlined in the Scottish Government's Climate Change Plan, Creative Scotland, has demonstrated its commitment to supporting initiatives aligned with these goals. By aligning our environmental efforts with Creative Scotland's commitment to the government's plans, we reinforce our dedication to contributing to Scotland's transition to a low-carbon economy. This commitment underscores the importance of integrating environmental sustainability into all aspects of our operations and programming, ensuring that we are actively contributing to Scotland's broader environmental objectives.

Policy Statement

Commitment to Sustainability

Integration of Environmental Sustainability:

At The Cumnock Tryst, we are dedicated to embedding environmental sustainability throughout our operations via a comprehensive Environmental Policy. We recognise the urgent need for responsible stewardship of our planet and pledge to minimise our ecological footprint. This commitment encompasses eco-friendly event production, energy efficiency, waste reduction, and ongoing improvement of our environmental performance. Through collaboration with stakeholders, we aim to create a cultural space that celebrates artistic expression while exemplifying environmental responsibility.

Acknowledgement of Responsibility:

We acknowledge our duty to minimise our environmental impact across all aspects of our organisation. Recognising the environmental implications of our operations, events, and activities, we commit to adopting sustainable practices. This includes responsible sourcing of materials, energy conservation, waste reduction, and promotion of eco-friendly initiatives. By upholding these responsibilities, we aim to set a standard within the arts sector and foster a collective commitment to environmental stewardship.

Goals and Objectives

Reduction of Environmental Impact

a. Specific Targets for Energy Consumption Reduction:

- Encourage minimal energy consumption during working hours through the use of all employees working from home.
- Collaborate with venues and partners to minimise energy usage.

b. Goals for Waste Reduction and Recycling Efforts:

- Minimise physical marketing materials and ensure recycling of excess materials.
- Promote the use of multi-use marketing materials made from recyclable or sustainable materials.

c. Strategies for Water Usage Reduction:

- Maintain minimal company water usage, considering the absence of a Tryst office.
- Minimal intervals and refreshments at Cumnock Tryst concerts.

Implementation Strategies

Energy Efficiency

Assessment of Current Energy Usage:

- Conduct a formal assessment of energy usage, considering home office consumption.

Promotion of Energy Conservation Practices:

- Ensure all staff and partners are aware of and encouraged to follow the Environmental Policy.

Waste Management

Implementation of a Comprehensive Recycling Programme:

- Manage recycling of all leftover materials, ensuring proper recycling after events.

Reduction of Single-Use Plastics and Packaging:

- Avoid single-use plastics and packaging where alternatives are available.

Responsible Disposal of Hazardous Materials:

- Adhere to government guidelines for the disposal of hazardous waste.

Sustainable Procurement

Prioritisation of Environmentally Friendly Products:

- Consider environmental impact before purchasing items, prioritising environmentally friendly options.

Collaboration with Suppliers Committed to Sustainability:

- Work with suppliers committed to sustainable practices across various aspects of our operations.

Consideration of Materials' Life Cycle Impact:

- Prefer materials with longer life cycles over single-use ones to minimise environmental impact.

Transportation

Most meetings and all board meeting will be conducted are online to reduce the need of transportation.

Promotion of Sustainable Commuting Options:

- Encourage sustainable transportation methods for staff and partners, minimising travel where possible.

Implementation of Green Transportation Practices:

- Encourage walking or cycling between venues, where feasible, and minimise transportation needs.

Consideration of Carbon Offset Programmes:

- Explore options for carbon offsetting for unavoidable travel, balancing environmental impact.

Communication of Environmental Efforts within Spheres of Influence

Partnerships and Collaborations:

Where possible we will seek out partnerships and collaborations with individuals, organisations, and businesses that share our commitment to environmental sustainability. In these partnerships, we will advocate for and encourage environmentally responsible practices.

Supply Chain Management: Recognising the interconnected nature of supply chains, we will work closely with our suppliers and vendors to promote environmentally sustainable practices throughout the entire supply chain. This includes sourcing environmentally friendly materials, reducing packaging waste, and supporting suppliers who prioritise sustainability.

Programming and Artistic Practices: We will integrate environmental themes and messages into our artistic programming whenever feasible. Through performances, and events, we will raise awareness about environmental issues and inspire action for positive change. Additionally, we will encourage artists and creatives to adopt sustainable practices.

Audience Engagement and Education: We will engage with our audiences to promote environmental awareness and encourage sustainable behaviours. This may include providing educational resources, hosting discussions, and

incorporating sustainability messaging into marketing materials and communications.

Community Engagement and Outreach: Recognising our role as a cultural leader within the community, we will actively engage with schools, local residents, organisations, and policymakers to advocate for environmentally sustainable policies and practices. Through community outreach initiatives, we will foster dialogue, collaboration, and collective action toward a more sustainable future.

Continuous Improvement and Innovation: We will continuously evaluate and improve our environmental performance within our spheres of influence. This includes setting measurable goals, tracking key performance indicators, and exploring innovative solutions to reduce our environmental footprint and enhance our positive impact on the planet.

Reviewing and Adhering to Government Guidelines: The Cumnock Tryst is committed to reviewing and adhering to current government guidelines and regulations pertaining to environmental sustainability. We will regularly monitor updates from relevant governmental departments and agencies, ensuring that our practices remain in line with the latest standards and requirements. By staying informed and proactive, we will contribute to the collective effort to address environmental challenges and build a more sustainable future.

Monitoring and Reporting

Regular Environmental Audits

Periodic Assessments of Environmental Performance:

- Conduct regular assessments of environmental performance, including metrics such as travel emissions, energy consumption, and waste production.

Identification of Areas for Improvement:

- Use audit findings to identify areas needing improvement and implement strategies to address them.

Annual Environmental Reports

Compilation of Key Environmental Metrics:

- Compile key environmental metrics and achievements annually for transparency and accountability.

Transparent Communication with Stakeholders:

- Communicate progress and challenges with stakeholders to foster transparency and demonstrate commitment to environmental goals.

Continuous Improvement

Feedback Mechanisms

Encouragement of Staff and Stakeholder Input:

- Facilitate regular discussions with staff, the board, and artists to gather input on environmental initiatives and policies.

Regular Review and Adaptation of Policies:

- Review progress towards environmental goals annually and adapt policies based on feedback and changing circumstances.

Compliance and Legal Obligations

Commitment to Comply with Environmental Laws and Regulations:

Ensure compliance with all relevant environmental laws and regulations.

Regular Updates to Policies:

Update policies regularly to align with legal requirements and best practices.

Conclusion

Reiteration of Dedication to Environmental Sustainability

Call to Action for Ongoing Commitment

We reaffirm our dedication to environmental sustainability and call for continued commitment from all stakeholders to ensure the success of our environmental initiatives.

Policy last reviewed: March 2024

Next review date: March 2025

Policy lead: Vice Chair

Appendix 2



EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

1. Purpose

This policy's purpose is to:

- I. Provide equality, fairness and respect for our staff, commissioned artists and performers, volunteers, audience members, participants and anyone working with or on behalf of The Cumnock Tryst.
- II. Not unlawfully discriminate in respect of the protected characteristics set out within the Equality Act 2010:
 - Age
 - Disability
 - Gender reassignment
 - Marriage and civil partnership
 - Pregnancy and maternity
 - Race
 - Religion or belief
 - Sex
 - Sexual orientation
- III. Oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination.

The Cumnock Tryst is committed to embedding equality, diversity and inclusion into everything that we do; and to eliminating unlawful discrimination. We are continuously working to understand and dismantle systemic inequities in our policies, procedures and practices.

This means that no employee or applicant, collaborator, partner, performer, volunteer, audience member or participant will be treated less favourably on the grounds of their sex, marital status (including civil partnerships), race, nationality or ethnic origin, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity.

Equal opportunities, inclusion and diversity are central to our values and mission. We specifically work towards removing barriers to engagement in creative activities, attending performances, commissioning artists and performers, employment and volunteering for those groups whose level of participation is historically disproportionately low.

Our aim is for our staff, commissioned artists and performers, volunteers, audience members and participants to be truly representative of all sections of society, and that they feel valued and respected so that they are able to give their best.

2. Our commitments

The Cumnock Tryst committed to:

- Promoting and encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion in our employment and volunteering practice, commissioning of artists and performers, programming and community engagement activities
- Creating work, participation and performing environments that are free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all.
- Vigorously and earnestly investigating complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination made by our staff, volunteers, commissioned artists and performers, audience members and participants and anyone working on behalf of The Cumnock Tryst.
- Ensuring that our marketing and communications across all formats, including digital, is accessible and written following the principles of plain English.
- Addressing issues of affordability wherever possible to ensure cost is not a barrier to participation.
- Regularly reviewing and updating practices and procedures (including employment) to ensure fairness, and to take into account of any changes in the law.

3. Responsibilities and Implementation

- I. The Board of Trustees of The Cumnock Tryst assumes overall responsibility for the implementation, monitoring and annual review of this policy.

- II. The responsibility of ensuring this policy is put into practice on a day-to-day level is delegated to the Chief Executive.
- III. It is the responsibility of all staff, volunteers, commissioned artists and performers, and those working on behalf of the Cumnock Tryst to proactively work towards delivering the aims and commitments of this policy

To effectively implement this policy we will:

- Communicate its intentions to all employees, job applicants, volunteers, freelancers contractors, and relevant others.
- Incorporate specific and appropriate duties in respect of implementing the Equal Opportunities Policy into job descriptions and work objectives of all those that work for and on behalf of The Cumnock Tryst.
- Provide equality, diversity and inclusion training and guidance to trustees, staff, volunteers, and others as appropriate.
- Obtain commitments from other persons or organisations that we work with, that they too will comply with our policy in their dealings with our organisation.
- Ensure that adequate resources are made available to fulfil the objectives of this policy.
- Ensure that the spirit of this policy is embedded in our other policies, practices and procedures.
- Establish appropriate information and monitoring systems to assist in the effective implementation of this policy.
- Review on an annual basis the effectiveness of this policy and to undertake any remedial action as necessary.

4. Complaints

Should an employee, commissioned artist or performer, volunteer, audience member, participant or anyone working on behalf of The Cumnock Tryst believe that they have experienced harassment, bullying, victimisation or unlawful discrimination then they may either attempt to resolve the matter informally or invoke the formal Complaints Policy to pursue their claim. All cases will be treated in confidence, taken seriously and dealt with thoroughly and as speedily as the nature of the complaint allows.

In addition to our policies and procedures, employees, commissioned artists or performers, volunteers, audience members, participants or anyone working on behalf of The Cumnock Tryst have the right to pursue a complaint, under the Equality Act, with the relevant authority(s).

5. Malicious Complaints

We will not deter any individuals who wish to make genuine complaints which will be vigorously and earnestly investigated.

Equally unacceptable is the threat of making an unfounded complaint of harassment, bullying, victimisation or unlawful discrimination. If this were to take place then The Cumnock Tryst would take appropriate action.

6. Legal Framework

The Cumnock Tryst is committed to ensure that this policy helps to shape and inform our strategic and operational planning, recruitment, promotion and delivery of all our activities. The writing of this policy is shaped by the following legislation:

- Age Discrimination Act 2004
- Asylum and Immigration Act 1996
- Civil Partnership Act 2004
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Equality Act 2010
- Equality Duty 2011
- Immigration Act 2016
- Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

7. Recruitment

The Cumnock Tryst is a small organisation, which operates as an equal opportunity employer. We ensure that no job applicant or employee is

treated less favourably on the grounds of the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity, sex and sexual orientation as set out in part 2 of the Equality Act, 2010. Our selection criteria are developed and regularly reviewed to ensure that individuals are selected and treated purely on the basis of relevant skills, abilities and experience.

The Cumnock Tryst is committed to ensuring that our recruitment processes adhere to principles of openness and equality. Roles are advertised across relevant media and online platforms, candidates are assessed against a job description and person specification, and candidates are short-listed and interviewed by a panel.

Consultants are recruited by invitation to tender and such opportunities are advertised on appropriate networks and recruited on the basis of tender proposals. All will be treated fairly in conformity with the protection of the protected characteristics detailed above.

The Cumnock Tryst is committed to the Fair Work principles of Effective Voice, Respect, Security, Opportunity and Fulfilment, and will use its best endeavours to ensure that all our dealings with contractors will be in accordance with these principles. If there is concern that we have not lived up to these principles in any material way, a contractor can raise a concern with the Chief Executive or invoke our Complaints Procedure as set out in The Complaints Policy.

We incorporate the principles and practices embodied in Creative Scotland's Fair Work Guide in our dealings with staff and freelancers.

We reimburse travel expenses for students working with us on placement and any students engaged to perform within our programme of work receive a fee agreed by the institution they attend and the student themselves.

Work experience opportunities and volunteers are recruited through open online networks or locally in the Cumnock community through appropriate mechanisms, including the Scottish Music Centre, Creative Scotland, University of the West of Scotland and East Ayrshire Volunteer Centre. When recruiting volunteers, we are particularly interested in addressing how the volunteer will benefit personally, as

well as the skills and experience they already have. The Cumnock Tryst conducts regular evaluation of the skills and experience of board members and recruits new members based on evidence of gaps in a particular skill area.

8. Programming and commissioning of artists and performers

The Cumnock Tryst is committed to ensuring that commissioned artists and performers involved in its activities are of the highest quality. The artistic director, Sir James MacMillan, is responsible for the programming of all events on the basis of his objectives for The Cumnock Tryst. This draws on the musical roots of the area as well as providing new or more challenging experiences for Cumnock residents, in venues with which they are comfortable and familiar. The music that is presented is in a diversity of musical genres and styles and events often have a participatory element. Musicians are employed on a freelance basis and contracts and fees are in line with MU rates or further industry norms.

For the commissioning of new work, we engage composers on the basis of the quality of their work and no other factor. We may prioritise composers local to Cumnock, but we also ensure that the work of established composers from anywhere in the world is commissioned and then presented to our audiences.

9. Public engagement

There is a serious challenge to be addressed in ensuring that classical music is accessible to people of differing backgrounds. The Cumnock Tryst is especially open to members of the public from all backgrounds. The Cumnock Tryst attracts a wide spectrum of participants and audiences to its events across the year and we recognise that special efforts are required to achieve this. We provide a variety of ways in which Cumnock residents and those in the wider community might be able to engage with our work, for example, through informal meetings and conversations, workshops, and open rehearsals in the lead up to the festival in order to provide more information and answer questions about what is planned. We take care to ensure that the design of

publicity material takes account of these aims, and we produce materials on our website to introduce the programmes, including podcasts and videos where possible, and especially to support those with disabilities. We provide spoken introductions by the performers or by the artistic director at each concert, 'meet the artist' events, pre and post-concert receptions and informal engagement opportunities to help audiences to interact with musicians. Some of our events are BSL signed for people with hearing disabilities.

Our ticket prices are tailored to ensure that the events are available to as many people as possible. Some events are free. As well as full price tickets, which are set at a level which reflects the ticket prices of similar events in the area, reduced tickets are available to concert-goers under the age of 26 and to those who live in the local area.

Tickets are available for sale through an online box office, face to face in the Royal Conservatoire Scotland and pop up box offices in Cumnock. In accordance with the Data Protection Act, 1998, we only share personal information of individual members of the audience or other participants if the individuals have given us permission to do so.

Our website has already removed some barriers to awareness and participation and we are able to communicate with our audience in a more interactive way via our social media and e-newsletters. The website was built to W3C Standards and UK Government accessibility guidelines, which means it can be read by text readers, respond to browser text size changes and is also accessible on all relevant devices.

Our education and engagement programme is as wide-ranging and inclusive as possible. We prioritise local singers, young people with special needs, composers, instrumentalists and music-lovers, from those at school to those engaged in music-making as adults.

10. Venues

Cumnock is a small town, with a limited number of public venues suitable for our events, so it has not always been possible to ensure full accessibility and complete facilities for all. All of the venues except Dumfries House are fully accessible to wheelchair users. Dumfries

House has been adapted as much as is possible for a house of such historic importance and antiquity. Festival staff and volunteers are appropriately trained to assist festival-goers with additional needs to access venues and to enable them to fully participate in activities. Each venue is assessed to consider how to overcome any particular aspects that may make it off-putting to festival-goers.

Policy last reviewed: January 2024

Next review date: February 2025

Policy lead: Chair

Appendix 3



COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

COMPLAINTS POLICY

1. Complaints Policy Statement

We realise that sometimes things go wrong, and that's where this complaints policy and procedure comes in. If you wish to make complaint or raise a concern, please do contact us through any of the methods outlined below. This will help us to put things right for the person (or organisation) that has made the complaint; learn from our mistakes, and to continuously improve our services.

When we get things wrong, we will:

- Apologise and take responsibility
- Acknowledge and explain what went wrong and why
- Endeavour to put things right without delay
- Learn lessons from your complaint to improve our services.

2. Our Commitments

The Cumnock Tryst strives for high standards in the delivery of our services and we welcome feedback from audiences, participants, collaborators, partners, funders and anyone who works with us, on any aspect of our work. Any feedback that we receive will help us to evaluate and improve our services.

The Cumnock Tryst is committed to:

- Providing a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use

- Publicising the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint
- Ensuring that our staff, volunteers, Board members and anyone working on behalf of The Cumnock Tryst knows what to do if a complaint is received
- Taking seriously any concern or complaint and dealing with it promptly within clear timeframes
- Ensuring that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and relationships are repaired
- Keeping a register of all complaints, which will be reviewed to improve what we do
- Dealing with complaints in line with our Confidentiality and Data Protection Policy
- Notifying the complainant of the results of the investigation and any right of appeal
- Informing the complainant of any action that will be implemented in order to ensure that there is no re-occurrence

3. Definition of a complaint

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction by an individual (or organisation), whether justified or not about any aspect of our work or services.

4. Concern or Complaint

It is important to establish the difference between a concern and a complaint. Taking informal concerns seriously at the earliest stage will reduce the likelihood of their developing into formal complaints.

If you have any concerns about our work please tell a staff worker, a volunteer, Board member or anyone working on behalf of The Cumnock Tryst as soon as possible, so they can quickly understand your concerns and try to put things right.

If you are not happy with the response to your concern and/or you want to make a formal complaint please follow the procedure below.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

1. The complaints process

We aim to formally acknowledge your complaint within 2 weeks (or 10 working days) of receiving it. And we aim to fully resolve it within 30 days. Should the complaint be of a complex nature then longer timescales may apply, and we will notify you about these when we contact you.

There are three stages to the complaint's procedure:

- Stage One – the complaint
- Stage Two – investigation
- Stage Three – appeal

Stage one – the complaint

If you wish to make a complaint, you can do so by email, letter or telephone. All complaints should be made within 30 days of the date that the event, action, issue occurred or came to your attention.

Please tell us:

- What happened
- When it happened
- Who dealt with you
- What you would like us to do to put things right.

The complaint should include the complainants name and address, the date the complaint is made and the date the issue occurred. The complaint should be signed by the complainant. On receipt, each complaint will be logged on to the complaints register.

Stage two – investigation

We aim to resolve as many issues as we can the very first time you contact us. The member of staff you talk to will aim to see it through to resolution wherever possible, but they may need to liaise with other colleagues and if appropriate pass the complaint onto a senior person within The Cumnock Tryst to resolve your complaint.

Any complaints received will be fully investigated, and a written response provided to the complainant within 30 days by the investigator. This response will include confirmation of the outcome of any investigation such as recommendations or actions to be taken, staff training, proposed improvements to our services.

Where the complaint is upheld an apology will be offered.

Should the complaint be of a complex nature and it is anticipated that we will not be able to provide a response within 30 days then we will notify you when we first acknowledge the complaint. We will endeavour to provide a proposed date for conclusion at this point.

Stage three - appeal

If you remain dissatisfied with the outcome from Stage Two then you can lodge a written appeal within 10 working days of the date of the outcome. Your written response should clearly state the grounds for appeal.

The Chair of The Cumnock Tryst will acknowledge receipt of your appeal within 10 working days.

The Chair and another trustee of The Cumnock Tryst will review the Stage Two investigation and write to you within 10 working days from receiving the written appeal with a recommendation for one of the following actions:

- Uphold the action taken at Stage Two
- Make changes to the Stage Two recommendation/actions

This decision will be final.

If you are not satisfied with the response you receive at stage three, you can refer your complaint to an external body for advice, further investigation or dispute resolution (for example [OSCR](#), [Citizens Advice](#), [East Ayrshire Advocacy Service](#), [Trading Standards](#), [Scottish Fundraising Adjudication Panel](#), a solicitor.

2. Anonymous complaints

Complaints received anonymously will be recorded and considered, but action may be limited if further information is required to ensure a full and fair investigation.

3. Confidentiality

Your complaint will be dealt with in the strictest confidence, in line with our Confidentiality and Data Protection Policy.

Information in relation to your complaint will only be shared internally with those who are required to play a role in resolving your complaint. We will only disclose your information to third parties with your consent, or if we are legally required to do so.

4. Process for receiving complaints

Complaints may arrive through the publicised channels for making a complaint or through any other contact details or opportunities the complainant may have.

Complaints received by telephone or in person need to be recorded. The person who receives the complaint should:

- Write down the facts of the complaint
- Take the complainant's name, address and telephone number
- Note down the relationship of the complainant to The Cumnock Tryst e.g. audience member, workshop participant, parent, partner etc
- Tell the complainant that we have a complaints procedure
- Tell the complainant what will happen next and an estimate of how long the process will take
- Where appropriate, ask the complainant to send a written account by post or by email so that the complaint is recorded in the complainant's own words.

For further guidelines about handling verbal complaints, see Appendix 1.

5. Monitoring

Complaints are reviewed annually to identify any trends which may indicate a need to take further action.

6. Contact details for making and/or submitting a complaint

Written complaints:

The Cumnock Tryst, Whittlieburn House, Brisbane Glen Road, Largs KA30
8SN

Electronic complaints: hello@thecumnocktryst.com

Verbal complaints: 07957 402453

Policy last reviewed: January 2024

Next review date: February 2025

Policy lead: Chair

Appendix 1 - Practical Guidance for Handling Verbal Complaints

- Remain calm and respectful throughout the conversation
- Listen - allow the person to talk about the complaint in their own words.
Sometimes a person just wants to "let off steam"
- Don't debate the facts in the first instance, especially if the person is angry
- Show an interest in what is being said
- Obtain details about the complaint before any personal details
- Ask for clarification wherever necessary
- Show that you have understood the complaint by reflecting back what you have noted down
- Acknowledge the person's feelings (even if you feel that they are being unreasonable) - you can do this without making a comment on the complaint itself or making any admission of fault on behalf of the organisation e.g. "I understand that this situation is frustrating for you"
- If you feel that an apology is deserved for something that was the responsibility of your organisation, then apologise
- Ask the person what they would like done to resolve the issue
- Be clear about what you can do, how long it will take and what it will involve.
- Don't promise things you can't deliver
- Give clear and valid reasons why requests cannot be met
- Make sure that that the person understands what they have been told
- Wherever appropriate, inform the person about the available avenues of review or appeal.

Appendix 4

Risk Management Framework

Attached Separately

Appendix 5



Trustees: April 2024

David McDonald (Chair) – Creative Consultant

Paul Wood (Vice-Chair) - Freelance Musician and Arts Education Consultant

Caroline Kerr (Treasurer) - Chartered Accountant

John Bickley - Business Development Consultant Arts & Media

Jay Capperauld – Composer

Naheed Cruikshank – Music Education Specialist

Aidan MacMillan – Senior Investment Manager

Lynne MacMillan – Former Solicitor

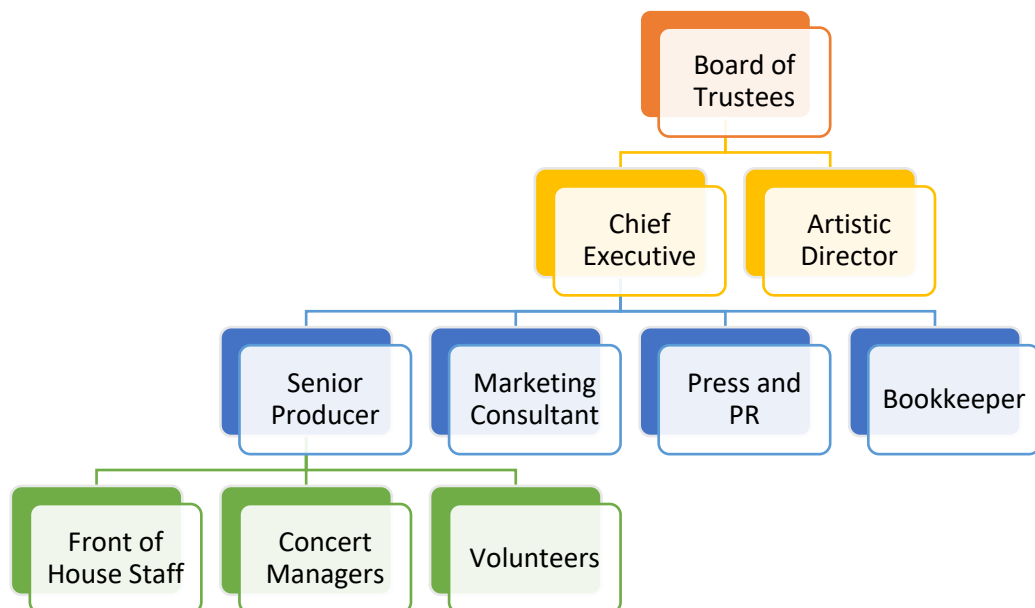
Ian Ritchie - Arts Executive

John Senior - Cumnock Action Plan

Jeffrey Sharkey - Principal, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

Pauline Stuart – Financier

Staff Structure: April 2024



Appendix 6

Marketing and Communications Plan 2024

Attached separately