



CREATIVE INDUSTRIES ORGANISATIONS REVENUE FUNDING 2024/2025

Report by Depute Chief Executive

PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of the Report is to consider funding agreements with the creative industries organisations in 2024/25

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 An Lanntair, Taigh Chearsabhagh, the Hebridean Celtic Festival (HebCelt), Ceòlas, the Eilean Dorcha Festival and the seven Western Isles Fèisean are a long-standing feature of the islands' cultural heritage and have successfully delivered activities as anticipated in terms of their 2023/24 funding agreements.
- 2.2 A number of the festivals being supported by the Comhairle have received year-on-year support over an extended period. The Comhairle took a decision to phase out the funding to the festivals and events over the three years to 25/26. Since then, officers have engaged with organisations receiving both economic development and Sgioba na Gàidhlig funding to gauge the impact this approach would have on the organisations. Following that exercise it is proposed to retain the Sgioba na Gàidhlig funding at 2023 levels as there is provision in the budget to do so for Heb Celt, Ceòlas and the Fèisean. Eilean Dorcha Festival has not been in receipt of Sgioba na Gàidhlig funding in the past but has been supported through Crown Estate Funding to purchase a marquee, that will contribute significantly to future sustainability of that music festival and this support represents an annual saving to the festival in excess of the annual grants received in the past.
- 2.3 The funding to An Lanntair and Taigh Chearsabhagh, the recognised RFO's (organisations receiving regular annual funding from Creative Scotland) is proposed to continue at 2023 levels. Those RFO's are currently engaged with Creative Scotland (CS) on future annual funding awards and the outcome of the Stage 1 application to CS will be known by the end of January. The funding proposed for the remaining arts organisations is listed below, with the 23/24 award included in italics for reference:

	Heb Celt	EDF	Ceolas	Feisean
<i>2023 / 24 – 100%</i>	<i>£18,703</i>	<i>£7,200</i>	<i>£7,588</i>	<i>£10,720</i>
2024 / 25 – 66% (E.D)	£ 13,893	£4,752	£6,542	£9,280

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Comhairle, subject to Budget setting for 2023/24, and the satisfactory conclusion of one-year Funding Agreements for 2024/25, approve:
- (a) £47,579 to An Lanntair Ltd. from the Economic Development Budget;
 - (b) £13,998 to the Taigh Chearsabhagh Trust from the Economic Development Budget;
 - (c) £4,752 in total to the Eilean Dorcha Festival from the Economic Development Budget;

- (d) £13,893 to the Hebridean Celtic Festival Trust (£9,618 from the Economic Development Budget and £4,275 from the Sgioba na Gàidhlig Budget);
- (e) £6,542 to Ceòlas Uibhist Ltd. (£2,030 from the Economic Development Budget and £4,512 from the Sgioba na Gàidhlig Budget);
- (f) £9,280 in total to be distributed directly to seven Western Isles Fèisean (£2,880 from the Economic Development Funds budget and £6,400 from the Sgioba na Gàidhlig Budget); and
- (g) Approve the funding proposal, retaining Sgioba na Gàidhlig funding at 2023 levels for the Hebridean Celtic Festival, Fèisean and Ceòlas Uibhist as outlined at 2.3 of this report.

Contact Officer: Murdo Mackay Development Manager
Appendix: None
Background Papers: None

IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The following implications are applicable in terms of the Report.

Resource Implications	Implications/None
Financial	£80,057 from Economic Development Investment Budget in 2024/2025 and £15,187 from Sgioba na Gàidhlig grants budget. Funding is subject to approval of the 2024/2025 Budget.
Legal	None
Staffing	Administration to compile and monitor funding agreements with external organisations.
Assets and Property	None
Strategic Implications	Implications/None
Risk	Loss of key arts organisations and cultural infrastructure (further detail provided at Section 14).
Equalities	All arts organisations comply with equalities legislation.
Corporate Strategy	The significant contribution to delivery of the Comhairle's objectives under the Single Outcome Agreement, the Comhairle's Plana Cànan nan Eilean Siar, and the Post Covid-19 Economic Recovery Strategy to deliver <i>"Empowered communities maximising the value of our natural, human and cultural resources, and empowered to support social and economic regeneration"</i> .
Environmental Impact	None
Consultation	Engagement with Organisations in receipt of Sgioba na Gàidhlig funding

BACKGROUND

5.1 In December 2016, the Comhairle approved a Report on a revised Outer Hebrides Creative and Cultural Industries Strategy 2017-2020 which identified An Lanntair, Taigh Chearsabhagh, the Hebridean Celtic Festival, Fèisean nan Gàidheal and Ceòlas as five of eight main Creative Hubs in the Outer Hebrides and stated:

"Providing support to the main 'hub' organisations, whose cultural, social and economic impact extends beyond their own defined objectives is crucial to the wider local sector....."

- 5.2 An Lanntair, Taigh Chearsabhagh, the Hebridean Celtic Festival, Ceòlas, Fèisean nan Gàidheal, the seven Western Isles Fèisean and in more recent years the Eilean Dorcha Festival, are now established as part of the island's cultural heritage, ensuring a vibrant Outer Hebrides wide arts programme can take place which adds to the quality of life for the local population and is a significant driver for tourism.
- 5.3 The organisations deliver significant economic impact in terms of jobs supported, monies recycled through the local economy and through the leveraging-in of additional new resources. The grant provided by the Comhairle to support the arts programme is therefore a contributor to these economic impacts.

AN LANNTAIR

- 6.1 An Lanntair Arts Centre was established as a charitable trust in 1985. Housed originally in Stornoway Town Hall the organisation expanded significantly in 2005, when a new purpose-built arts centre, at a total build cost of £5.3 million, was officially opened. Housed under one roof are a large gallery, with further display areas throughout the building, a 250-seat auditorium with back-stage changing rooms/green room for performers, education room, large office space, staff room, bar, restaurant, kitchen, reception area and retail facility. The multi-function auditorium is fully equipped to act as a performing arts space, a cinema, and a conference venue. An Lanntair provide an annual year-round programme of contemporary art exhibitions, performing arts events, film screenings, festivals and related education and outreach activity, which help to ensure a more equitable geographic spread of cultural provision across Scotland. An Lanntair, like all RFO's (Regularly Funded Organisations) is currently going through a lengthy process of staged applications to secure Creative Scotland Annual funding for 2025 onwards, this funding is crucial to the future sustainability of An Lanntair. Results of Stage 1 funding will be known by the end of January 2024.

TAIGH CHEARSABHAGH

- 7.1 Taigh Chearsabhagh is part of an internationally recognised creative cluster of arts venues across Scotland. This recognition has taken many years of consistently innovative and highly regarded arts programming. Creative Scotland has acknowledged Taigh Chearsabhagh's achievements and status by awarding the organisation £305,000 in three-year Regular Funding for the period to 2018-2021. This releases an average of £101,667 per annum. This agreement was extended by one year in 2021-2022, and subject to approval by Scottish Government will continue for another year, with an indicative award of £101,667 in 2022-2023. As with An Lanntair, support from the Comhairle is a vital factor in the leverage of these significant sums from Creative Scotland. The application process for future annual funding is underway and the results of Stage 1 in this process will be known by the end of January 2024

HEBRIDEAN CELTIC FESTIVAL

- 8.1 The Hebridean Celtic Festival (HebCelt) is a major international event on the Celtic music calendar and a key asset in branding the Outer Hebrides as a culturally rich and vibrant travel destination. It plays an important role in bringing visitors to the islands throughout the tourist season. The 2023 year, which marked the 25th Anniversary of the event, was a sell event and won several awards, including the Scottish Thistle "Outstanding Cultural Event" at the Highlands & Islands awards.

EILEAN DORCHA FESTIVAL

- 9.1 The first Eilean Dorcha Festival (EDF) in 2016 was held over two days in July, at a beautiful location, on the machair adjacent to a white sandy beach on the Isle of Benbecula. It proved popular, with a total attendance of 1246. The event has since grown to become a fixture on the annual festival calendar, there were almost 30 acts playing in the 2023 event and a similar number lined up for 2024. EDF has recovered well from the Covid era challenge and plays an important role in the summer activity calendar of the area. EDF has been supported by CNES to purchase a marquee as there were significant challenges in hiring and transporting the large tent to the site. This support will help ensure the future sustainability of this music event.

CEÒLAS UIBHIST

- 10.1 Ceòlas core work (supported via the annual agreement) is an annual weeklong Gaelic cultural summer school and series of community events in South Uist, which attracts participants from the Outer Hebrides, the Scottish mainland, England and internationally. Ceòlas organise an increasing number of additional cultural projects throughout the year. This has included the Moladh Uibhist Song Conference in early May, As an Tobar/ Uist Book Festival in November, a winter festival over Christmas and the New Year, instrument tuition and performing arts events both in Uist and at prestigious international festivals such as 'Celtic Connections' in Glasgow.

WESTERN ISLES FÈISEAN AND FÈISEAN NAN GÀIDHEAL

- 11.1 Funding provided in the last financial year enabled the Feisean to provide weeklong community-based Gaelic arts tuition festivals to take place between April and August in the Outer Hebrides, plus a varied programme of classes and additional projects throughout the year.