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CREATIVE CARDIFF: FIVE YEARS ON

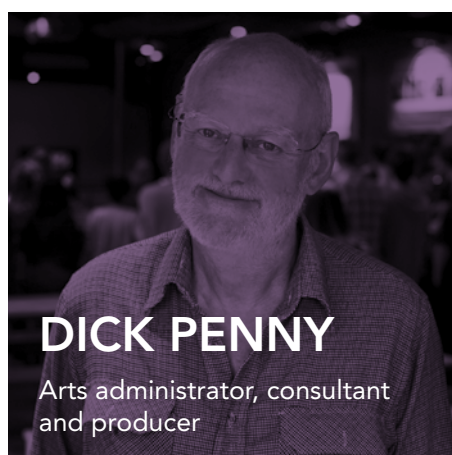
**CREATIVE
CARDIFF
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CREATIVE CARDIFF:
FIVE YEARS ON



**PROFESSOR
COLIN RIORDAN**

Vice Chancellor and President,
Cardiff University



DICK PENNY

Arts administrator, consultant
and producer



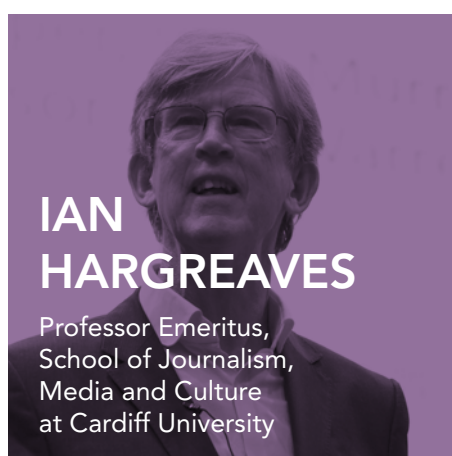
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Centre Director for the
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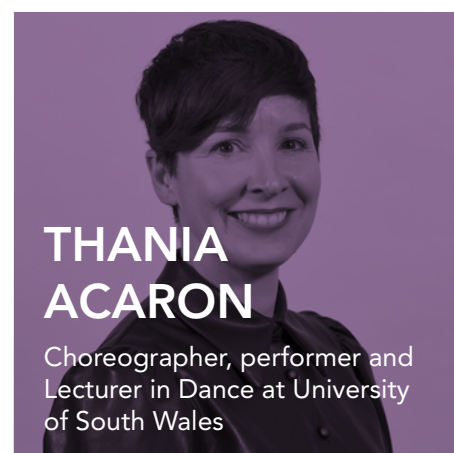
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**THANIA
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Choreographer, performer and
Lecturer in Dance at University
of South Wales



GARETH JONES

Founder of TownSq and
former CEO of Welsh ICE



VICKI SUTTON

Project Manager at
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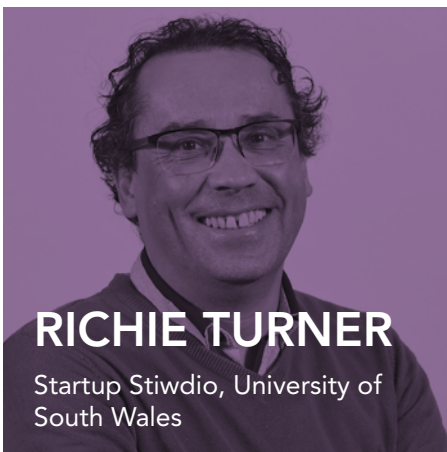
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Impact Analyst, Clwstwr



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Entrepreneur and founder
of Cardiff Start



RICHIE TURNER

Startup Stiwdio, University of
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DR SAM MURRAY

Lecturer in music business
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JANNAT AHMED

Editor-in-chief,
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IAN COOKE-TAPIA

Multidisciplinary storyteller

Creative Cardiff celebrated its fifth birthday in October 2020 in testing, unprecedented times. To mark this, we have brought together thoughts on our work from some of those who have been present throughout this five-year journey and who can offer their insights for the future. Our aim is to showcase a wide range of voices: Creative Cardiff's founders, its partners and those who are delivering its vision. Politicians, academics and stakeholders from a wide range of disciplines, business owners, social entrepreneurs and cultural leaders: from across the UK and from across the world. If you would like to follow up on any aspect of what you read here, just let us know.

Professor Colin Riordan, Vice Chancellor and President, Cardiff University



Our introduction is provided by Professor Colin Riordan, who was appointed Vice Chancellor and President of Cardiff University in September 2012, and who spotted Creative Cardiff's potential early, sharing in its ambitions for the university's focus on research and civic mission and its ambitions for the Cardiff Capital Region to grasp the opportunities offered by the UK's emergent creative economy. For all of the devastation caused by COVID-19, there is no doubt that this digital, creative economy will be even more important in the decade which follows Creative Cardiff's fifth birthday than the decade we see in the rear-view mirror.

Cardiff University is proud to be home to the community of researchers and practitioners who recognised the need to provide leadership in order to bring Cardiff's creative sector – industry, research, education and policy – together in more strategic ways. As a flagship enterprise, Creative Cardiff combines the university's expertise in research and development with its emphasis on innovation and its commitment to civic mission. This has enabled Cardiff University to speak knowledgeably, proudly and with impact in discussions about the City Region's cultural and business strategies.

It is the distinctive characteristics of place that the Creative Cardiff team have set out to understand and respond to so well. What is it about the Cardiff Capital Region's creative workforce that makes it so important to the city, region, Wales and the world? What might creative citizenship mean for both individuals and the region? What were the particular challenges facing a city of multiple small creative entities? What kind of connections could most valuably be forged to achieve critical mass and a sense of common identity and brand? What kind of creative funding programme might prompt the best game-changing ideas? Through consultation, co-production and the creation of peer networks (partners, stakeholders, funders and supporters), Creative Cardiff has assisted the sector in arriving at answers to these questions, while remaining ready to respond to leftfield challenges and to the shifting social and economic circumstances that have marked its anniversary year.

In 2018, along with other partners, Creative Cardiff played a key role in securing funding from the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) Creative Industries Clusters Programme for Clwstwr – a project to create new products, services and experiences for a sustainable screen and news sector in South Wales that will as a result be better equipped to compete in an industry dominated by the integrated strength of global media companies. As Creative Cardiff reaches this anniversary, it has again taken up a leading role, with a strong cohort of partners, in developing a large-scale UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) Strength in Places bid, whose aim is to build on Clwstwr's success and establish the Cardiff Capital Region as a global centre for media innovation that grows talent, connects up creative assets and plays a key role in defining the region's sense of place – both for its own multicultural citizens and for the rest of the world.

Five years in, Creative Cardiff's ambition continues to help define and shape the cluster, constellation, ecosystem and engine that form the Welsh capital region's creative life.

CREATIVE CARDIFF IS A CITY-WIDE NETWORK TO HELP GROW AND CONNECT CREATIVES, WITH A PURPOSE TO MAKE THE CITY THE MOST CREATIVE PLACE IT CAN BE. LAUNCHED IN 2015, THESE ARE CREATIVE CARDIFF'S FIVE KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN ITS FIRST FIVE YEARS:

1.

LAUNCHING, GROWING AND BUILDING A NETWORK OF NEARLY 4,000 CREATIVES

As of December 2020 Creative Cardiff had 3900 creatives signed up to its member directory. Each one of these represents a touch point for Creative Cardiff and the human capital making up the expertise, dynamism and community for which the network exists. From graphic designers to choreographers and TV producers to architects a great range of specialists have played a part in building the network.

2.

TELLING THE STORY OF CARDIFF'S CREATIVE COMMUNITY, DEVELOPING ITS NARRATIVE AND SPOTLIGHTING EXCELLENCE

We have delivered this through our website (1.5 million hits), social media channels (18,000 total followers), English and Welsh podcast series, digital storywall, events and research, we have increased awareness and understanding of creative and cultural industries activity in the city. We amplify creative work which has a local, and global resonance, and share stories with our own community as well as across the UK and internationally, in Europe and South-East Asia in particular. This work won Creative Cardiff the inaugural Cardiff Life Civic Award in 2019.

3.

FOSTERING CONNECTIONS AND COLLABORATIONS ACROSS THE CREATIVE COMMUNITY

An extensive programme of more than 1500 meetings and 65 events, both online and in real time, has enabled an increase in the connectivity of creative practitioners in the city. Feedback suggests that this has given rise to more collaboration – particularly cross-sector and interdisciplinary fusions – and resulted in new work and innovations.

4.

UNDERTAKING RESEARCH TO BETTER UNDERSTAND WHAT IS HAPPENING IN THE CITY'S CREATIVE ECONOMY

Up-to-date and reliable data, information and analysis is key in understanding the rapidly growing and evolving creative sector. A research programme has informed Creative Cardiff's activity drawing attention to the issues, challenges and needs of the creative community. This work, which has included mapping the creative economy of the city and surveying the impact of COVID-19 income support on freelancers, has been developed by encouraging collaboration both within and beyond Cardiff University with external organisations and relevant sector bodies.

5.

ADVOCATING FOR THE VALUE AND DEMANDS OF CREATIVE ECONOMY WORK AND ENCOURAGING CREATIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP

We have seen significant changes in how and where creative work is taking place in the last five years, with hubs and coworking spaces coming to the fore. We recognise these spaces are vital in supporting and building a community of like-minded individuals and providing workspaces fit for a future creative workforce, which is why we founded the Coworking Collective in 2017 to facilitate knowledge sharing. Enterprise and entrepreneurship thrives in these environments and in 2017, Creative Cardiff launched Ymlaen! – a creative desk placement for graduates entering the creative industries and wanting to start their own businesses.

Sara Pepper
Director of Creative Economy,
Cardiff University



Sara's background included producing, programming and presenting content for the live performance industry, when she took up the new role of Director of Creative Economy in 2014. Her vision was 'to make Cardiff the most creative place it can be.' She has been a pivotal figure in the design and launch of both Creative Cardiff and Clwstwr. Both initiatives reflect her passion for championing and developing creative talent and ideas and for brokering partnerships. Sara writes:

Together, we have built a network to be proud of. A network that has been co-produced with, by and for the creative community to encourage connectivity and collaboration, amplify opportunities, provide a catalyst for innovation, a voice for the creative sector and an evidence base for the development of policy.

Among the most significant achievements of these first five years are:

- 3900 Creative Cardiff network members.
- 65 in-person and online events (with 3000+ attendees).
- 1.5M hits on creativecardiff.org.uk and 1000+ jobs uploaded.
- 100+ fortnightly newsletters sent to members with latest news, events and jobs.

"As one of the UK's fastest growing cities, Cardiff has witnessed much change over the past five years; the creative sector even more so and most especially since COVID-19."

- 18K followers on social channels (Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn).
- 2700 plays of our 2020 podcasts Rhywbeth Creadigol? and Get A 'Proper' Job.
- Mapped Cardiff's creative economy resulting in a research report, interactive maps and sharing with 10+ speakers and 100 attendees.
- Founding of the Festivals Research Group, the Coworking Collective and Immersive South Wales.
- Research focusing on hubs and coworking, festivals, COVID-19 Self-Employment Income Support Scheme and creative city networks.

As one of the UK's fastest growing cities, Cardiff has witnessed much change over the past five years; the creative sector even more so and most especially since COVID-19. Creative Cardiff's work has always been about helping to grow momentum, and understanding, of the city and its region's creative economy, this turn has played an important part in providing jobs, prosperity and a culturally and socially richer way of life in all aspects, including a commitment to addressing social issues such as ensuring a more equal, diverse and inclusive creative sector.

It is vital that we continue to work with others to ensure that the benefits and opportunities are felt by all across the region, and beyond. Some of the current pressing matters for our community include: work spaces, innovation readiness, enterprise skills, diversity, attracting and retaining talent, availability of tech skills and health and wellbeing.

"The goal which drives us forward every day is to support the growth and development of the creative economy in this part of the world"

These are all key concerns for Creative Cardiff, and we are already trying to address them with initiatives such as the Coworking Collective and Immersive South Wales meetups. We are developing plans for the next five years to enhance impact further and ensure that the network functions as a support resource for the sector post COVID-19, , but there is more to do.

The goal which drives us forward every day is to support the growth and development of the creative economy in this part of the world so that it is resilient and consequentially is recognised and celebrated in and around the world. If we can achieve this goal, all creatives in the region will have the opportunity to achieve greater visibility, profile and success.

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Ian Hargreaves

Professor Emeritus in the School
of Journalism, Media and Culture
at Cardiff University



Ian is one of Creative Cardiff's co-founders. Here he explains his part in Creative Cardiff's creation. Ian's interests include the creative economy, media, journalism, intellectual property and the impact of digital communications technologies. Ian writes:

For reasons more complicated than can be fully explained here, I found myself at the back end of 2010 in conversation with Professor Justin Lewis, then Head of what is now called the School of Journalism, Media and Culture (JOMEC) at Cardiff University. We were discussing jobs. Having spent most of my working life as a journalist, based in Bradford, London or New York, I had also for some years enjoyed a significant relationship with JOMEC, but in 2010 I was coming to the end of a stint at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, where as Director of Strategic Communications I worked for Foreign Secretary David Miliband, whose term of office ended with Labour's defeat in the May 2010 General Election.

"All we needed was a brilliant team of people. We got that too. Now they rightly ask: what took you so long?"

During my time at the Foreign Office, I had somehow managed also to author a report on creative industries in Wales. Published in March 2010, we called it: The Heart of Digital Wales: a review of creative industries in Wales. Great title. It urged Wales to seize its opportunities in the booming national and international creative economy, where the internet was tearing apart the rules of the game. Amid the disruption of news, film, television, the arts, sport and much else, there was always a chance of innovating your way to success. I suggested as a job title for myself: Professor of Digital Economy and we quickly completed the deal, starting work in October 2010.

The decade which followed, 2010-2020, saw sustained out-performance in growth of the UK creative economy, defined as the value of the creative work done across the whole economy (rather than confining this calculation to compute only the healthily growing value of output in the creative industries). Working with colleagues at Nesta, we co-authored A Manifesto for the Creative Economy, published in 2013. This work coincided with my involvement in one of the four UK Knowledge Exchange Hubs for the Creative Economy funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC). Ours was a Wales and the West of England project led by Professor Jonathan Dovey from UWE, the University of the West of England, best known by its abbreviated title: REACT. From REACT, we learned much about partnership, combining high energy and leadership with the curiosity and sensitivity to understand your partners' aspirations. REACT's end of programme report said its most lasting legacy would be "this network of agile connectivity."

Looking back, it's not too hard to see why by 2015, we were eager to get on with Creative Cardiff. All we needed was a brilliant team of people. We got that too. Now they rightly ask: what took you so long?



Aseem Inam
Professor and Chair in Urban
Design, Cardiff University



Aseem is an urban activist, scholar and practitioner who has worked in Canada, Brazil, France, Greece, Haiti, India, Morocco, the United Kingdom, and the United States. He is also the Founding Director of TRULAB: a Laboratory for Designing Urban Transformation. When Aseem moved to Cardiff he spent a day walking around the city with the Creative Cardiff team, getting to know our creative hubs and coworking spaces. He writes:

As we celebrate Creative Cardiff's fifth birthday ["Happy Birthday, Creative Cardiff!"], we also celebrate the network's many collaborations and innovations, while reflecting on its future contributions to the Cardiff city region. Cities are among humanity's greatest creations, and the public realm is arguably the most significant aspect of cities. The public realm is what makes a city so rich, so complex, and so full of potential. The public realm is the realm of the other, par excellence. The public realm consists of spatial networks constituted by places of encounter and interactions of different bodies, cultures and ideas.

"Creative Cardiff has contributed significantly to the public realm and the future of the city through its collaborative innovations in projects such as Coworking Collective, Festivals Research Group, Immersive South Wales and its partnership with Community Gateway."

The vast potential of the public realm lies in its capacity to act as a catalyst for interactively and collaboratively generating hope—by deepening understanding and building solidarity, creating dreams and pursuing transformative actions. While the public realm is spatially grounded at multiple scales in specific geographic contexts, it is also constantly evolving because the urbanism of a city is constantly in flux.

The most potent aspect of the public realm lies in its capacity to design publics. Publics never simply exist; they are always created. Publics are created out of groups of people who are made and remade by the actions of other people. For example, when there is a common concern or desire (e.g. that emerges out of a crisis such as urban inequality, lack of affordable housing, or inadequate infrastructure), there is a call to creative and strategic action and then groups of people respond to that call, a public is summoned into being.

Creative Cardiff has contributed significantly to the public realm and the future of the city through its collaborative innovations in projects such as Coworking Collective, Festivals Research Group, Immersive South Wales and its partnership with Community Gateway. Most of all, through such efforts, Creative Cardiff has summoned a public into being around the many facets of creativity—both formal and informal—which can become springboards for further exploration and transformation.



Professor Justin Lewis Professor of Communication and Creative Industries, Cardiff University



Justin is former Head of School at Cardiff University's School of Journalism, Media and Culture. He has written widely about media, culture and politics. Justin is a co-founder of Creative Cardiff and continues to play an important part in planning its strategy and future. He writes:

Creative Cardiff began with a broad vision informed by what we knew about creative cities. We knew that most successful creative cities have strong networks. We knew that collaboration can inspire new forms of creativity. We knew that a city needs to be able to understand its own strengths and weaknesses to inform its future. And we knew we had to resist old divisions between the (generally subsidised) cultural sector and the (more commercially oriented) creative industries.

We also knew that we had to be realistic about how much could be achieved by a small core team. Five years on, here are just a few of the things we've learned.

"Raymond Williams called it a structure of feeling, a sense of community and shared purpose, the spark of something new"

1. The alchemy of bringing people together. Over the last five years, Creative Cardiff has employed many different forms of creative gathering, some focused and themed (the Coworking Collective, Immersive South Wales, conferences and workshops), others more open and diverse (the many 'Show and Tells', the hub crawls, the celebrations). There are never any guarantees, but the right provocation and the right mix has summoned a little bit of magic. It's hard to measure the value of these in hard, accounting terms. Their worth lies in what Raymond Williams called a 'structure of feeling': a sense of community and shared purpose, the spark of something new.

2. Building on diversity. When creativity becomes formulaic or predictable, our culture dies a slow and dull death. Creative energy comes from positive difference – which is why diverse companies are often more creative. Diversity is now built into Creative Cardiff's spirit. For me, the 2020 storywall project was a brilliant expression of that – a cluster of creative stories that showcase the diversity that has long been integral to our city's creativity.

3. The importance of freelancers. Freelancers are an increasingly large part of the creative economy, but they are often neglected in policy and funding mechanisms. From year one, supporting freelancers has been core to Creative Cardiff's activity. Its first piece of research (one of '52 things') was the production a more detailed and definitive map of Cardiff's creative sector. This was the first survey of its kind to go beyond existing data sets and include (over a thousand) creative freelancers. Freelancers now comprise the bulk of Creative Cardiff's 3900 membership, a network that allowed us to co-create a survey of creative freelancers to detail the shortfalls of government support for sole traders during COVID-19, and thereby lobby effectively on their behalf.

"Creative Cardiff has confirmed something I already knew: 90% of a project's character comes from the people at the heart of it. It has been my privilege to work with a small but brilliant team who have breathed such abundant life into Creative Cardiff."

4. Leading with evidence. Creative Cardiff's primary focus is the creative sector, but its location in Cardiff University means that research has always been in its DNA. Creative Cardiff's voice has been punctuated by a range of projects to understand the shape and character of our creative sectors, the benefits they bring and the conditions that allow them to thrive. Highlights have been the Festivals Research Group, work to evaluate the first Festival of Voice and a variety of international British Council research projects. It was this grounding that enabled Creative Cardiff to lead a successful UKRI research bid – worth £10 million – to create the Clwstwr programme in 2019. And it is this sense of curiosity that inspired the team to (beautifully) curate the first ever conference of the UK's creative networks so that we might learn from one another. There was certainly a whiff of magic in that Zoom room.

But on a more personal note, Creative Cardiff has confirmed something I already knew: 90% of a project's character comes from the people at the heart of it. It has been my privilege to work with a small but brilliant team who have breathed such abundant life into Creative Cardiff. Its openness, ambition, positivity and energy comes from them.

Kayleigh Mcleod

Communications and
Engagement Manager,
Cardiff University



Kayleigh took up the role at Creative Cardiff in 2016. Originally from Glasgow, she made Cardiff her home in 2015 and has since spent her time as Creative Cardiff's communications and engagement lead. Her work is focused on devising and implementing strategies to amplify the network's activity. She writes:

While Creative Cardiff connected creatives in real life at meet-ups, networking events and socials, it was online where the community truly flourished.

From zero network members in October 2015 to 3900 members five years on, individuals and organisations steadily signed up. They wanted to showcase their creative skills, to upload and apply for jobs (there have been close to one million hits on our Opportunities page to date) to collaborate with other creatives and to receive our fortnightly newsletter, which compiled the latest in creative news and events.

"We have built a brand that is trusted"

From our '52 Things' project in year one to the inaugural Our Creative Cardiff storywall, the website has been a crucial platform to spotlight the work of the creative community. Our mission is to strengthen and showcase Cardiff's creative accomplishments by telling Cardiff's creative story, both within the city and to the world.

We have built a brand that is trusted and that creatives are keen to stand behind and be involved with. We've been in many a room where Creative Cardiff has been recommended, without prompt, as a useful network to be a part of. And the 'big Cs' of the Creative Cardiff logo have even become recognisable – we like to think of them as magnets pulling creatives together to spark new ideas and make cool things together.

Our approach to digital engagement has always been rooted in authenticity. We're not on 'broadcast' mode – there is a person behind our accounts (most often me!), championing the activity that happens in the city and ready to have conversations. We encourage the creative community to ask questions, shout about what they do, challenge us and, most importantly, to share their needs. Organic, two-way and bilingual communication is always what we strive for.

We engage with creatives online in a manner familiar to most people: we like, we share, we comment, and we follow. You'll find us on most social platforms because it is important to us to be where our community is. This approach amplifies the basic mechanics of social networks, generates person to person links, stimulates the emergence of new groups and grows the Creative Cardiff brand. The process is crucial to realising our founding ambition – to have a fully networked creative economy in the city.

We also move with the times, adapt to new technology and change up our offering to respond to the network's needs. In keeping with being where our audiences are. In 2020 we launched an English and a Welsh podcast to talk about the issues that matter to creative workers. We make Get A 'Proper' Job and Rhywbeth Creadigol? (Something Creative?) with, and for, our creative community.

"We also move with the times, adapt to new technology and change up our offering to respond to the network's needs. In keeping with being where our audiences are."

That is true of all the work that we do. Telling the story of Cardiff's creative community is a job that we are proud to do, and we are moved every day by the work that is created here. It can be known, and celebrated, even globally, because it is an irresistible force. And the story is nowhere near over.



Hasan Bakhshi

Director for the Creative Industries
Policy and Evidence Centre (PEC)



Hasan is the Director of the Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre. He leads the Centre, a Nesta-led, AHRC-funded research consortium of ten universities, charged with improving the evidence base for policies to support the UK's creative industries. Prior to Nesta, Hasan worked as Executive Director at Lehman Brothers, as Deputy Chief Economist at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and as an economist at the Bank of England. From the first days of Creative Cardiff, he has been inspiring our team with his knowledge of data and how to source and analyse it. He writes:

On 8 December 2016 I gave a keynote speech at the Cardiff: Creative Capital symposium at Cardiff University. The subject of my speech was how classification and measurement help legitimise the creative economy as a driver of economic development, or in other words help put creativity on the map.

“Creative Cardiff has certainly helped put creativity on the map. Through convening networks, hosting events, promoting jobs and other business opportunities as well as collating data and conducting research, it has quickly become a resource for all creative talent working across the South Wales economy.”

In the time since, Creative Cardiff has certainly helped put creativity on the map. Through convening networks, hosting events, promoting jobs and other business opportunities as well as collating data and conducting research, it has quickly become a resource for all creative talent working across the South Wales economy. It has also played a key role in developing Clwstwr, an R&D hub for the creative media industries, funded through the UK's Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund, which brings together Cardiff University, University of South Wales and Cardiff Metropolitan University.

In short, Creative Cardiff has rapidly become part of the ecosystem that is South Wales' Creative Economy. One that, for example, explains why Cardiff is identified as a Creative Challenger cluster in Nesta's Creative Nation mapping: clusters which have experienced rapid growth in recent years and are on track to become central nodes within the UK's creative geography.

But the usual ways of measuring the contribution of clusters – of the sort governments typically use to evaluate their investments – use official statistics that focus on business units and households. Surveys and administrative data sources rarely, if ever, measure the relationships between agents that underpin ecosystems. Alternative indicators looking at the nature of collaborations between Cardiff-based universities and creative businesses, for example, show that the vast majority of such collaborations are with businesses based throughout the UK, not just those in Cardiff. And they show that these research collaborations are with a much more diverse set of sub-sectors than is the case with universities in other Creative Challenger clusters like Edinburgh, Bristol or Sheffield.

It's time that we evaluated the performance of the creative cluster in terms of the health of the relationships that underpin it, not just by the number and growth of businesses, important though these are.



Kevin Morgan
Professor of Governance and
Development and Dean of
Engagement at Cardiff University



Kevin's research interests revolve around a wide range of areas such as innovation, spatial development, food sustainability, devolution, Governance, the Foundational Economy and Civic+Social Enterprise. He has taught the Creative Cardiff team much about economic geography and innovation clusters, sharing inspiration of examples in the UK and around the world. He writes:

Far from being the product of the solitary and heroic entrepreneur, innovation is a collective social endeavour, a team sport. One of the great achievements of Creative Cardiff is that it has recognised and acted on this insight from the start. That's why it has tried to create a sense of shared destiny among the many small enterprises that make up the creative sector in the Cardiff Capital Region and why it has realised that the main problem for a firm is not being small but being lonely – that is to say, not being part of a cluster where small enterprises collaborate to find joint solutions to common problems.

***"innovation is a collective social endeavour,
a team sport."***

Successful clusters never stand still. They constantly evolve through new ways of working, spreading and sharing the burden of innovation. That's why one of the challenges for the next five years is for Creative Cardiff to seed and catalyse a form of cluster leadership that is even more collaborative and even more distributed so that different people at different times can take the lead in initiating ideas and projects.

The creative industries are now a priority sector for the Cardiff Capital Region and over the next five years I hope and believe that Creative Cardiff can help the sector to fulfil its potential – not merely in economic terms but also as a source of inspiration to demonstrate that culture, health and wellbeing are the true hallmarks of a successful city-region.

Rhiannon White

Co-founder and co-director of
Common Wealth Theatre



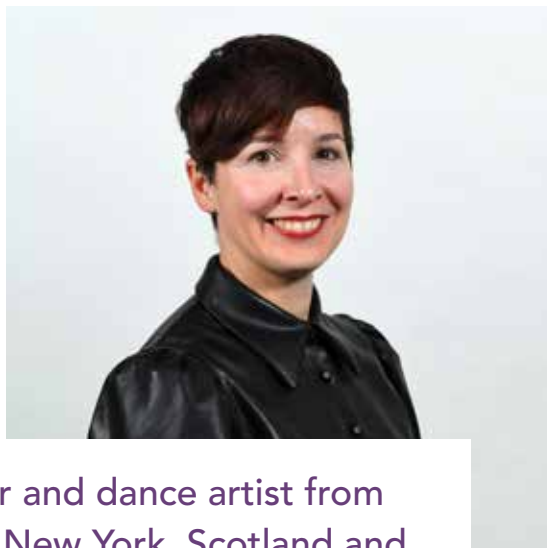
Rhiannon is co-founder and co-director of Common Wealth - a site specific political theatre company. She has collaborated and made work with National Theatre Wales, National Theatre (UK) Chapter Arts Centre, Sherman Cymru, Southbank Centre & Circus 2 Palestine. She writes:

Art can help us see ourselves, understanding who we are and where we come from. It can help us recognise the power we have; it can give us agency. I believe in the power of storytelling, of understanding who you are and where you come from. It gives you strength. It hasn't always felt like that for me but when you start to practise it starts to make sense. No one can challenge that.

"Creative Cardiff gave me a space... they trusted me... that's how the good things start"

I'm a working class woman from St.Mellons. I was always told my narrative, not good enough, will never amount to anything. I set up Common Wealth as a reaction to that narrative. It's not easy being working class and working in an elite industry. You fight your own internal battles as well as the external ones. You have to work hard to push through. That's why organisations like Creative Cardiff are important: they connect and offer an online platform that opens us up as a city. Networks are important, critical and lead to magic collaborations. It creates a space where it doesn't matter if you're from St.Mellons or Cyncoed – you have access. I first heard of Creative Cardiff about five years ago, I was invited to talk on a panel. They give me a space, on stage to tell my story – it felt rare for that to happen, they trusted me. Opportunities like that change you, give you confidence and help you to understand that of course we all have a story to tell, something to bring and so why shouldn't someone from St.Mellons be on stage, talking, celebrating what they're doing. Creative Cardiff are a linchpin, they offer support, champion, connect and are always there for a cuppa and a chat. That's important. That's how the good things start.

Thania Acaron
Choreographer, performer,
educator and dance artist



Thania is a choreographer, performer, educator and dance artist from Puerto Rico, currently residing in Cardiff, after New York, Scotland and Buenos Aires. She is currently a researcher and lecturer at University of South Wales (USW). She writes

As both an independent artist, dance movement therapist, and lecturer at University of South Wales, the opportunity to work with professionals from other fields is always welcomed. Being part of the Creative Cardiff Advisory group meant that not only could I understand the creative industries from different perspectives, but I could also contribute my own experience and voice some of the aspects that particularly affect dance and theatre practitioners in Wales. Being part of an advisory group has that double benefit of both being a consultant, but also being a catalyst for potential changes and opportunities which can help deepen and expand our field in these challenging times.

“The team has a ‘let’s do this’ attitude, supporting events, individuals and creative initiatives.”

This past year, thanks to encouragement from many colleagues in the creative industries, I founded my own company, The Body Hotel, which is a Wales-based company & social enterprise prioritising movement as a therapeutic intervention. The company provides training, professional development programmes & dance movement psychotherapy services to the health, wellbeing, education & arts sectors. It was crucial for me as an international, Puerto Rican, LGBT+ professional to keep deepening my roots in Wales and find spaces in which I could reduce professional isolation, which prompted me to respond to the Creative Cardiff Advisory Group open call and ultimately become part of this incredible team.

Networks and opportunities that are offered through Creative Cardiff’s platforms give encouragement for students and professionals to access connections, particularly when we feel isolated from our industry. The team has a ‘let’s do this’ attitude, supporting events, individuals and creative initiatives. For example, Vicki Sutton (Creative Cardiff Project Manager) has been a fervent supporter of my dance movement psychotherapy practice workshops and USW symposium on Movement for Wellbeing. It is great to have a group of people that say ‘yes’ to initiatives and show up to show encouragement for what you do and collaboratively build a professional community of creative practitioners in Cardiff and beyond.

CREATIVE CARDIFF CAERDYDD CREADIGOL

OUR VISION

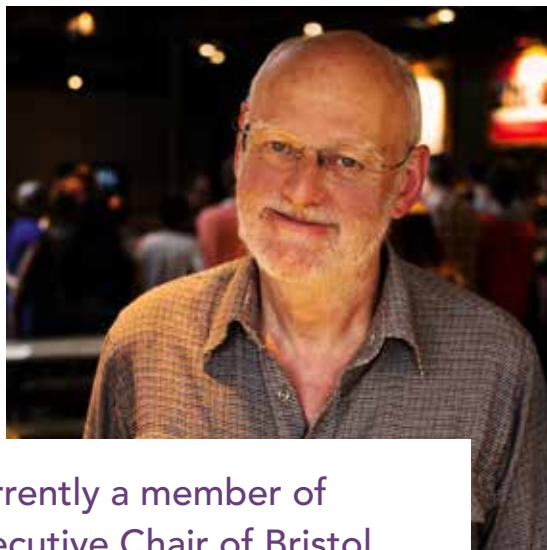
FOR CARDIFF TO BE
RECOGNISED AS THE
CAPITAL OF CREATIVITY
IN THE UK

EIN GWELEDIGAETH

I GAERDYDD CAEL EI
HADNABOD FEL
CANOLBWYNT CREADIGOL
Y DEYRNAS UNEDIG



Dick Penny
Arts administrator, consultant
and producer



Dick is a former Director of Watershed and currently a member of the West of England LEP. He has served as Executive Chair of Bristol Old Vic and helped to found several collaborative development initiatives. Dick has been a mentor and guide to Creative Cardiff from the beginning. His advice, experience, questioning/probing and encouragement has been invaluable. He writes:

Creative industries are rightly much heralded and promoted for strengths and potentials from economic growth to community building. The increasing consensus that the creative sector is vital for a prosperous and healthy society is welcome, but the mechanics by which creative industries can be successfully helped to flourish is less well understood.

Often the dynamics of the people and companies who make up the creative industries do not conform to the established processes of 'industrial' development which underpin the decision making of government, bankers and investors. The agile, shape shifting, project focussed nature of many creative organisations does not fit with standard investment programmes and this is compounded by the very high proportion of micro companies and freelance talent. Often it just looks too complex to the outsider and there are more obvious concerns in the decay of more conventional industries.

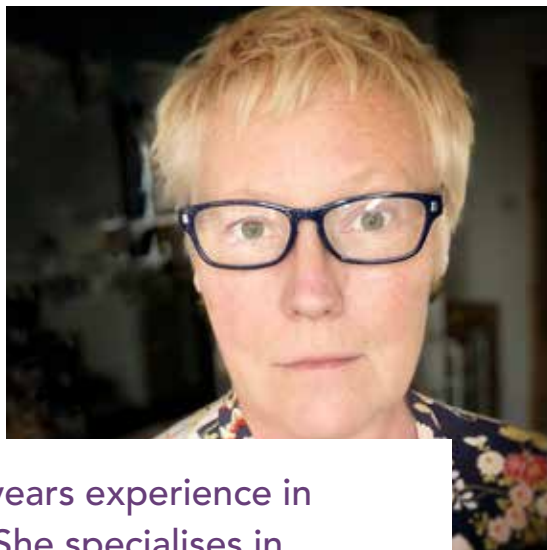
"The increasing consensus that the creative sector is vital for a prosperous and healthy society is welcome, but the mechanics by which creative industries can be successfully helped to flourish is less well understood."

Clusters are an established industrial phenomenon but are only recently coming to prominence in creative industries development strategies. Here too there is the barrier of complexity as creative clusters have distinct dimensions and characteristics, with flow of ideas and inspiration superseding more conventional materials supply chains. The 2017 UK Government Review of creative industries led by Sir Peter Bazalgette put clusters front and centre of development strategy with a recognition that creative clusters are unusually place specific. This review led to the Industrial Strategy Creative Industries Sector Deal. AHRC championed cluster investment as a key action with the result that AHRC have created the Creative Industries Clusters Programme and Clwstwr is one of the funded clusters.

All well and good but this short narrative omits the fundamental role of Creative Cardiff in bringing together the place-based consortium which led to the successful Clwstwr bid. The connectivity of the cluster captures and projects both capacity and capability which builds a sense of scale and leads to increased confidence, profile and competitive position. Without the agency of network co-ordination, it is almost impossible for creative clusters to become visible and attract the diverse talent and investment so vital to sustainable growth and inclusion. The vision and commitment to establish Creative Cardiff five years ago has already demonstrated the potential and diversity of Welsh creative industries when the approach is more eco-system than industry - now the challenge is to sustain the role of cluster support and network co-ordination over the long term to embed localised mutuality, raise the bar for all, and develop both home and international markets.



Professor Jacqui Mulville
Professor of Bioarchaeology,
Cardiff University



Jacqui is an archaeologist, with more than 35 years experience in professional, field and academic archaeology. She specialises in archaeological science (particularly bioarchaeology), the archaeology of islands and coasts, contemporary and historical archaeology and heritage management. She is also a founding member of the interdisciplinary research Festivals Research Group set up in partnership with Creative Cardiff in 2016 to undertake collaborative research on the festival scene, and to consider urgent questions on the future of festivals. Jacqui writes:

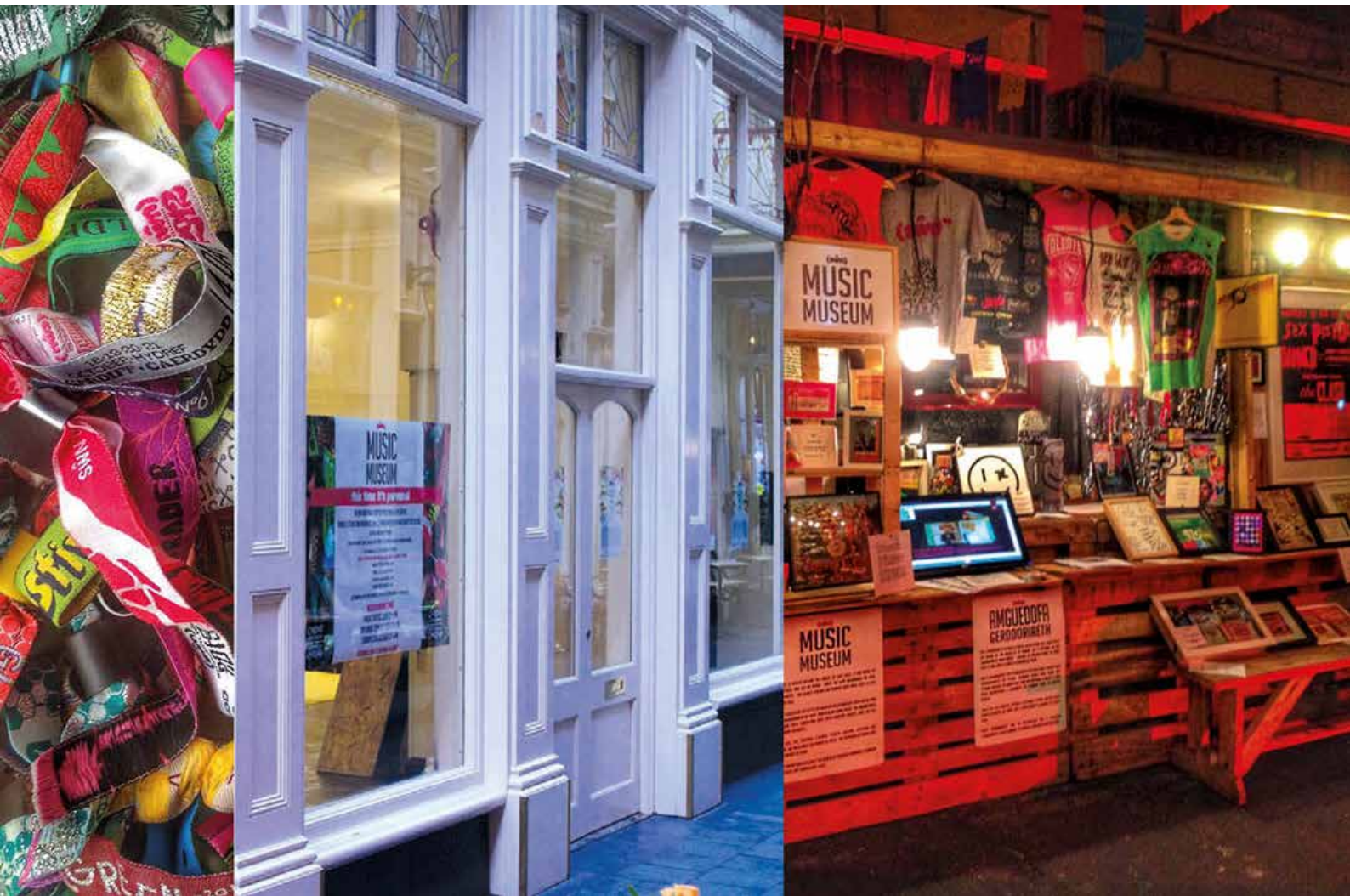
Festivals play a significant role in British culture. Pre-COVID-19, the UK music festivals and concerts market was worth an estimated £2.6bn with over a quarter of UK adults attending at least one music festival a year. In addition to their economic importance, festivals contribute socially and culturally by creating a sense of belonging and memorable experiences, driving creativity and delivering wider benefits to communities.

"Sara Pepper and her team were the chemical element that bonded us together and helped us find a common research focus."

The Research Group was set up in 2016 bringing together academics from across the University with a passionate interest in festivals and festivalgoers. Creative Cardiff was one of the founding members of the Festivals Research Group. Sara Pepper and her team were the chemical element that bonded us together and helped us find a common research focus. With Creative Cardiff we enjoyed our first collaboration with Jon Rostron and the annual urban contemporary Sw^n Festival in 2016. Supported by funding from AHRC, we explored the impact of Sw^n Festival on the audiences, the city and its music scene. We also set up Cardiff's first pop-up Music Museum.

Even before the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, there was an urgent need for the festival sector to develop innovative sustainable and resilient solutions to preserve the social and cultural value of these events. Over the last four years, Creative Cardiff has facilitated collaborations with other festivals, promoters and policy makers in the Cardiff City Region and beyond. The Festivals Research Group has worked closely with the National Eisteddfod and Hay Festival, providing new insights into audience experiences and attitudes towards sustainable events.

It's a beautiful thing to be surrounded by other individuals and organisations who share a common passion in wanting to make positive contributions to the staging of sustainable festivals. Collaborating with Creative Cardiff has created unique opportunities for us to communicate and maximize the impact of our research, benefit festivals and shape a future research agenda on this important part of the creative economy.



Gareth Jones

Founder of TownSq and
former CEO of Welsh ICE



Gareth has invested time and energy into every facet of the Welsh start-up scene. In 2011 he founded Welsh ICE, one of the UK's largest communities of entrepreneurs which offers coworking and office space for over 200 innovative businesses. In 2017 he set up TownSq to develop his vision of bringing the insights of his work in Wales to entrepreneurs around the rest of the UK. He has been a member of Creative Cardiff's Coworking Collective since it began in 2017 and is a great advocate for building communities and encouraging individuals. He writes:

In the last decade the coworking revolution – seen the world over - has created communities of freelancers and creative industries professionals working side-by-side in Cardiff's thriving coworking spaces.

The magic when you see members meet strangers, build relationships and create something bigger than they could alone is so powerful. The sense of isolation experienced in a career as a freelancer can be a major reason to quit, and it's why I'm so passionate about coworking. When we created our first space, I was only interested in surrounding myself with inspirational people. Now we're doing this in communities across the UK. Across the Cardiff Capital Region, coworking spaces are connecting diverse networks of people to trade and learn together. They're creating local wealth, keeping that wealth in their communities and creating opportunities for future generations.

"The magic when you see members meet strangers, build relationships and create something bigger than they could alone is so powerful."

While I was CEO at Welsh ICE in 2016, Sara Pepper and the team made contact to explain how Creative Cardiff wanted to further support the emerging collective - recognising the role that coworking spaces can play for the creative industries.

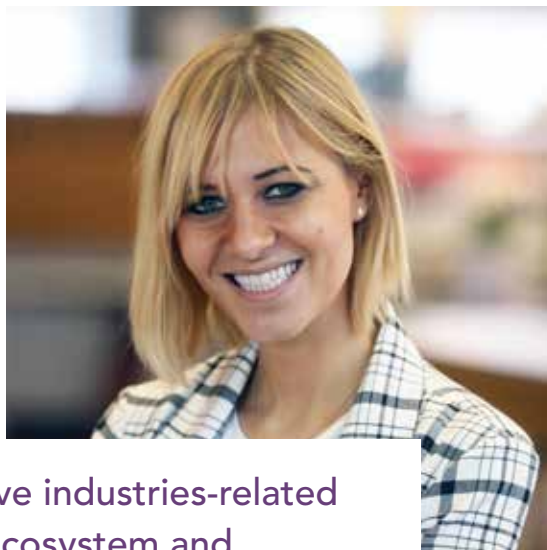
Creative Cardiff has created a valuable platform for a community of independent businesses to connect and share, recognising the old adage - a rising tide lifts all boats. The more we can do together to raise awareness and understanding of coworking, based on research rigour, the more sustainable our spaces become.

There is also a role for policymakers to support this growth, and create these essential pieces of public infrastructure for more communities. Coworking spaces still have to deal with high business rates and little protection from landlords. Creative Cardiff has given us the environment to discuss these challenges collectively, through their formation of the Coworking Collective, and raise them with the people who can make a difference. Connecting the spaces gave them strength. And this collective power, backed by the team's work internationally, has raised the profile – and demonstrated the value – of coworking in our part of the world.

We see the shifting sands of 2020 as creating the perfect conditions for more coworking spaces to thrive for years to come. People are not keen to return to their office, backed by research from countless studies, or their commute, even when the crisis is over. This change of habit has one asterisk - people miss the camaraderie of the workplace. If coworking spaces in the Cardiff Capital Region, and beyond can become that local place for headspace, for productive days, and for a coffee with someone who knows what you're going through, then they have a bright future. We believe we can take cars off the roads, benefiting the environment, and build local communities that we all know deliver so much value.



Dr Marlen Komorowski
Analyst at Clwstwr University
and Senior Researcher at SMIT –
Vrije Universiteit Brussel



Marlen's research focuses on media and creative industries-related projects, impact analysis, industry clustering, ecosystem and value network analysis, new business models and the impact of the digitisation on industries and firms. She has worked with the Creative Cardiff team on research projects covering subjects such as intercultural dialogue, creative hubs and creative city networks. She is a master at data analysis and visualisation. Marlen writes:

In the last five years, Creative Cardiff has become a network and an ambassador for the local creative economy. Especially vis-à-vis policymakers but also with other industry stakeholders on all levels. Creative Cardiff has helped identify the local creative economy's strengths and weaknesses.

It is now widely acknowledged that in order to create successful creative clusters, it is necessary to build strategies and enable change based on existing strengths and to recognise existing weaknesses. This is why research and building the right knowledge base is so important. Such research and new insights can support evidence-driven policies and strategies from creative organisations and policymakers on a local level and beyond. As a result, there may be new investment into creative clusters, new projects and new clients.

"In the last five years, Creative Cardiff has become a network and an ambassador for the local creative economy. Especially vis-à-vis policymakers but also with other industry stakeholders on all levels."

The UK already enjoys a strong reputation for creative economy research, involving organisations like Nesta and the DCMS, but data about Cardiff's and Wales' creative economy is still thin by comparison. I have found that Cardiff has rarely gained recognition as a leading media city in the UK, even though Cardiff has attracted many creative internationally successful projects like high-end TV and film production. Relatively speaking, Cardiff is still not widely known as an attractive location for creative activities.

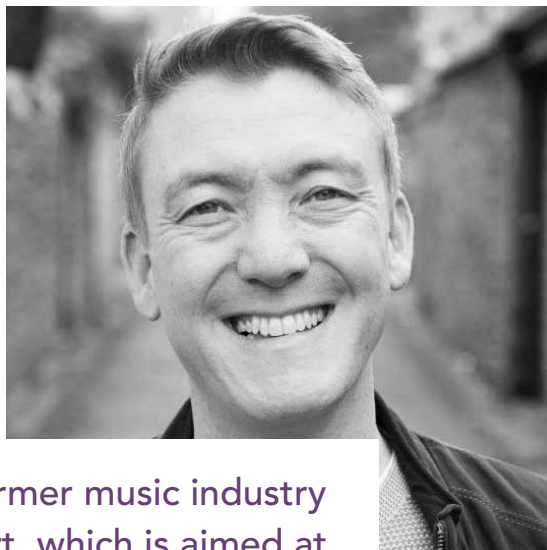
So, work needs to be done in order to make Cardiff more visible as a leading European creative city and media production centre. Creative Cardiff has made its first steps to close these knowledge gaps. This includes, for example, Creative Cardiff's Network Directory showcasing the profiles of 3900 creative individuals and organisations in the city, its new podcast series, and its increasing volume of research projects. The Clwstwr programme has greatly strengthened the sector's R&D capacity and provided a base for further high-profile bids. All of this is possible because Creative Cardiff provided evidence about the strength and weaknesses of its local creative economy.

We are currently working on a mapping platform that visualises in greater detail the local creative ecosystem. I am confident Creative Cardiff's research agenda will continue to evolve to meet the region's needs.



Neil Cocker

Entrepreneur and founder of
Cardiff Start



Neil is an entrepreneur, startup mentor and former music industry A&R. He founded the organisation Cardiff Start, which is aimed at promoting and growing new tech startups in the city, co-founded the TEDx Cardiff series, and is on the boards of Ffilm Cymru Wales and the Welsh Music Foundation. He is an arch networker and connector and has always been very generous and open with his thoughts on community building and engaging with the creative community. Neil writes:

Imagine you live in a tiny village in the dense jungle, with no means of reaching other villages around you. You, as a village elder, have to choose between spending all your available money building facilities in your village, providing entertainment and resources for your villagers, or building roads through the jungle between you and the other villages?

The initial temptation might be to build a cinema and doctor's surgery for a village cut off from the rest of the world. But surely if the cause of the isolation can be removed, that's better: solve the problem rather than providing a distraction from it.

Very often, when building communities it's easy to end up creating projects, events, and funding pots, that serve an immediate need, but don't necessarily address a wider, long term, more important issue of opportunity, and how to facilitate it. It's why in recent years, before using any sort of resource for community building, my mantra has become 'build pathways, not stuff'. 'Stuff' can be fun. 'Stuff' can be useful. 'Stuff' can make it look like you're doing something of value.

"my mantra has become 'build pathways, not stuff'"

But the real value comes when you clear a path for someone, point them in the right direction, or even carry their bags right to the doorstep. You can't control what happens when they get there, but you have ensured that they don't arrive exhausted and dispirited.

I've been at the heart of Cardiff's tech startup community for years and, before that, its creative community through founding events like TEDxCardiff and Ignite Cardiff. But these events weren't the end point themselves. They were a method for bringing everybody together, to discuss, form relationships, and forge new partnerships. It's what has always impressed me about Creative Cardiff. As a team they understand that it's the quality of the connections (the pathways) that count. They're not just ticking boxes.

With the abundance of technology at our fingertips, it's easy to create something because it's simple to do. But we often overlook the important question of how it serves the wider community. As community builders we should all be using tech to improve our lives, and those of our community, but let's ensure that we use it to build pathways, not 'stuff'.



Richie Turner

Startup Stiwdio, University
of South Wales



Richie runs incubation and graduate entrepreneurship services for the University of South Wales and manages the Startup Stiwdio at their Cardiff Campus, where he supports mainly creative industry and digital startup companies. He also lectures at the Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama MA Arts Management, and is an arts, innovation, equality and diversity consultant, currently working for National Museums Wales and the Arts Council of Wales. Richie is a Non-Executive Board Member of Creative Wales, a Trustee of Newport Live Chairing their Arts Committee and a board member of Gentle Radical (a culture and social change organisation based in Cardiff). He is also an inaugural member of the Creative Cardiff Advisory Group, set up in 2020 to inform our work and plans, challenge us, fire our ambitions and aspirations, and help spread the word about Cardiff's creative economy, at home and further afield. Richie writes:

In my role supporting entrepreneurship at the University of South Wales (USW), I only need look at the creativity, passion and innovation of new business ideas I have been able to support in the past year and those startups just beginning their journeys, to know that we can achieve even more than we did before the COVID-19 outbreak.

For example Startup Stiwdio newest member is Llusern Scientific, who have developed a rapid and affordable COVID-19 point of care test which can produce results within 30 minutes. This innovation could mean people being tested before they arrive in work or college and the results known by the time they've sat and waited over a morning coffee.

But we must remember that 2020 was also an incredibly difficult year for most of our South Wales based creative freelancers and startups. Members of the Startup Stiwdio lost their customers almost immediately when the first lockdown occurred. Yet their ability to never give up by constantly developing new products or services, relevant to a changed COVID-19 society, has also inspired me throughout the past year.

The pandemic has also been a catalyst for USW to establish its first Entrepreneurship Summer School (with over 50 graduate participants) and its first dedicated graduate startup fund enabling four new startup companies to begin trading. In an economic situation where finding a job has become significantly harder many people have realised they can rely on their own creativity and make their own work.

Adversity does lead to greater levels of innovation and creativity, as we have also seen from the response both globally and across Wales to the Black Lives Matter movement and the 'We Shall Not Be Removed' campaign. The arts and creative industries sectors in the Cardiff Capital Region, in particular, need to lead the response to the multiple threats of COVID19 (health inequalities, mental health impacts, reductions in economic and social development) coupled with increasing social divisions from a lack of diversity and equality plus the ongoing climate emergency. It was therefore encouraging for me to support Creative Cardiff's project Our Creative Cardiff which commissioned 14 local artists and creative producers to tell stories which clearly demonstrated the wide range of talent and diversity the city has to offer.

"If this pandemic has shown us one thing it must be that we have more in common with each other than we realised"

If this pandemic has shown us one thing it must be that we have more in common with each other than we realised. Initiatives such as Creative Cardiff will have an increasingly important role in bringing isolated people and separated communities together, throughout the region, to share experiences and collectively and creatively tackle these threats with positivity and confidence that 2021 will end much better than it has begun.



Dr Sam Murray

Lecturer in music business
and arts management at
Middlesex University



Sam is a lecturer at Middlesex University, which he joined following his work as a Policy & Research Officer for UK Music, the main campaigning and lobbying group for the music industries in the UK. He has previously been a research associate at Teesside University on the Creative Fuse North East project. Sam started his research career as Research Assistant at Creative Cardiff where he worked on creative economy mapping with the team in 2015. He was such an asset he stayed with the team until 2017 when he left to complete his PhD. He writes:

One of the great strengths of Creative Cardiff has been in bringing together an uplifting community of support for the workforce of the future. The creative industries have always had fewer traditional routes of entry, often not predetermined by qualifications, and for many the entry point is through the bold leap of undertaking self-employment. What Creative Cardiff has managed to do is to carve a community where those in the first stages of their creative careers can seek practical advice, mentorship, and feel part of a positive movement for creative change.

My own story with Creative Cardiff is a good example. I was studying for my PhD in Music when I got the chance to work with the creative economy team mapping Cardiff's creative economy. I stayed on to help build Creative Cardiff and received incredible mentorship from the team, who I am still in touch with today, learning key skills I have taken through all my roles since. I had not expected to have engaged with any other creative industries aside from music, but now I have learned how they often interact and collaborate with each other to make meaningful change.

What students often bring to Creative Cardiff is questions that experienced practitioners have always wanted to ask. Their curiosity allows for an examination and construction of pathways into the creative industries that could become sustainable, allowing the talent pipeline to keep flowing. Being launched from a university also helped Creative Cardiff to focus upon training for the creative workforce of the future. Aside from the obvious benefits to those who learn new skills, this work also enables universities to truly show important civic leadership.

Creative Cardiff has helped grow sustainable creative industries for Cardiff, keeping a talent pipeline flowing and letting the workers of tomorrow realise their potential today.

Jannat Ahmed

Editor-in-chief at Lucent Dreaming



Jannat is Editor-in-chief at Lucent Dreaming, an independent magazine and publisher of beautiful and surreal fiction, poetry and art from new and emerging authors/artists. She is also Subscriptions and Marketing Officer at Poetry Wales and herself a poet. She met the Creative Cardiff team when she successfully applied to be the first recipient of the Ymlaen! project. She writes:

Lucent Dreaming would probably not exist today were it not for Creative Cardiff. I was fortunate at the end of 2017 to be interviewed for, and be the first recipient of, their pilot Ymlaen! scheme. I was based at Rabble Studio--one of Ymlaen's creators--for six months, and received seed funding from Santander Universities, and business mentoring from the Creative Cardiff team, Rabble Studio members and the Enterprise team at Cardiff University. Creative Cardiff was much smaller then. Its office, tucked away down what felt like a lost set of stairs, was an unusual mixture of homely and exciting.

But it was the people at Creative Cardiff who made my experience so brilliant and rewarding. The people I spent time with during my placement helped me unlearn my self-sabotaging lack of confidence in creative pursuits and business. I learnt that, despite all the extraordinary things the people I met were doing in their creative worlds, these people were also ordinary too. It was reassuring seeing that creative people and businesses existed and thrived in Wales, and in the city. It was reassuring to have Creative Cardiff support me in becoming--still becoming--one of them.

"The people of Creative Cardiff helped me unlearn my self-sabotaging lack of confidence"

The Ymlaen! placement they designed transformed Lucent Dreaming from an online-only to a print magazine. With seed funding, I was able to put money into our first print run. (Every subsequent print run has been paid for by the previous issue's sales.) Because the scheme was tailored for creative businesses, it bridged the gap between graduation and working creative life, but much more valuably, it gave me opportunities to meet and collaborate outside of my pre-existing not-very-creative world. Put simply, it really allowed me to be creative in Cardiff, something that my university experience didn't always afford me.

Lucent Dreaming has now been running for more than three years. In that time --because of the magazine-- I've dabbled in podcasting, public speaking, and putting on a musical. As a start-up, it was so valuable, having accessible expertise from, and conversations with, rooms full of other creatives. And as the placement scheme continues, I'm so excited to see it reach many more who, like me, will benefit from reaching the networks, mentors and guidance they need to turn their ideas into reality. Congratulations Creative Cardiff on five extraordinary years!

Ian Cooke-Tapia

Multidisciplinary storyteller,
illustrator and entrepreneur



Ian's work happens at intersections: materialism, the lived environment, animal migrations, multilingualism come together to create wonderful worlds. In 2020, Ian founded Cooked Illustrations as a platform to collaborate with tropical and social scientists from around the world to research ways to improve science communication through new stories and mediums. He writes:

In my second year of university, a tutor asked who was looking to establish a career in Caerdydd. The group hesitated; my hand shot up.

The following week I found myself thinking how cool it was to be eating Welsh cakes alongside heavy metal nightclub owners, theatre producers and cultural economy professors at a Creative Cardiff event. You can imagine how a confused illustration student felt in that room; being asked about how he felt the creative ecosystem worked in Cardiff, having his opinion respected and placed on the same level as those who really knew their stuff.

"I talked about my ideas; and they went beyond listening - offering to help, to keep me in the conversations and point me in the direction of others working in the same sphere."

This would not be the last time that Creative Cardiff, as an organisation, network and people, would make me feel not just deserving of being part of a bigger industry, but invaluable in my experience.

Several years later, just out of uni and not really knowing what I was doing, I went to Creative Cardiff's presentation about the mapping of the creative economy. There, I talked about my ideas; and they went beyond listening - offering to help, to keep me in the conversations and point me in the direction of others working in the same sphere.

I was made to feel that Creative Cardiff was there to also support me by providing that most valuable of things for a young creative: being taken seriously.

What got me through the height of the pandemic, when stress and uncertainty buried me under a tonnage of blankets, wasn't some idealized never-ending energy source those who buy into the cult of entrepreneurship believe in - it was my community. The years I spent connecting to others, both locally and internationally, gave me access to new projects at a time I thought none would come. Beyond the financial, it was this sudden shift in perception: what we once did in competition, now had to be done collaboratively.

Creative Cardiff as a network has always felt like a building's concierge: invisible most of the time, but willing to help when you need it. They not only helped me to connect with even more amazing people, but also facilitated me as an artist and a business, to experiment in a way that makes tomorrow all the more realistic.

Copyright: Encounters: Ian Cooke Tapia for Our creative Cardiff



Alongside Cardiff University, three prominent organisations signed up to become the founding members of Creative Cardiff in 2015, in order to help us shape our future plans. We are sincerely grateful to them for helping us to launch, develop and deliver the network for the benefit of the creative economy in the city. Here are some words from the leaders of these organisations:

Councillor Huw Thomas, Leader of Cardiff Council

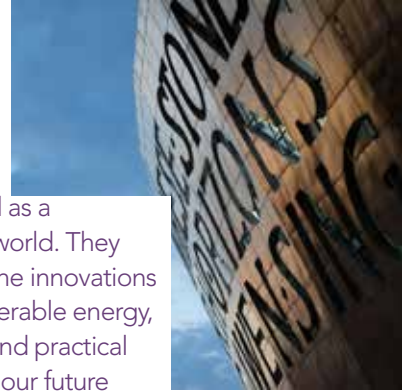


I'd like to wish Creative Cardiff a very happy fifth birthday and congratulate the team on their achievements to date. The creative sector is at the forefront of our city's Economic Strategy, and one of the many reasons why Cardiff Council were one of the founder members of this network. The events, research, projects and business development work undertaken by Creative Cardiff has without doubt contributed to our city's emergence as a leading UK centre for the creative industries. The sector has grown from strength to strength in recent years and is now celebrated internationally for what we make here. We're home to some of the UK's biggest and best prime-time TV productions, exporting across the globe and working with some of the biggest names in the industry.

Creative Cardiff has played a significant part in securing investment into the sector including leading on the Clwstwr screen innovation research and development project with Cardiff's two other Universities. Creative Cardiff's industry events share the latest thinking and technology in the sector, bringing people together to share best practice in creative business. This is also critical to how we nurture innovation in the city. We see Creative Cardiff's work promoting employment opportunities to sustain and develop talent – from every part of the city and region – as hugely important. and essential to future growth.

Cardiff has successfully transformed its economy in recent decades from industry to services, and subsequently a flourishing knowledge economy, establishing successful bases for financial, tech and creative sectors. Among the many challenges we now have to face, a priority for the city is to develop these sectors to deliver more and better jobs for the people of Cardiff and the wider city-region. Our ambition is to further establish Cardiff as a global leader for the creative industries and put Cardiff at the heart of the UK's creative and digital sector. We look forward to working with colleagues in Creative Cardiff and the wider sector in Cardiff and the region to help achieve this.

Graeme Farrow, Artistic Director, Wales Millennium Centre



Creative Cardiff must be congratulated in the role they have played as a lighthouse for the creative industries in Wales and for Wales in the world. They have been a beacon for our emerging talent and shone a light on the innovations and ideas being developed in Wales. The team has used its considerable energy, talent and dogged determination to provide much needed hope and practical support for creativity in our city. We fully support the approach that our future cultural and creative development must be driven by grassroots initiatives, and by harnessing the skills, ideas and power of creativity of our young people. For individuals to have their creativity recognised and nurtured, the effect can be life changing. Creative Cardiff has also demonstrated that by bringing people together: this can have a significant impact at scale.

Importantly they have also attracted funding that will allow our talent to achieve its potential. Funding is the crucial enabler that will allow ideas to grow into future economic success and employment opportunities. I have no doubt that the initiatives Creative Cardiff has taken will continue to grow and will pay dividends for years to come.

Wales Millennium Centre shares the view that the creative industries will be a major engine of growth for Wales which is why we have been pleased to be a founding member. Creative Cardiff have been a catalyst for change and the result is that we can now see the network effect taking hold in Cardiff. Given what has been achieved in five years, we look forward to being a part of the exciting potential that will be unleashed in the next five years. Congratulations to Sara Pepper and the team.

Rhodri Talfan Davies, BBC Director of Nations and Director BBC Cymru Wales



Creative Cardiff couldn't have marked their fifth birthday at a more difficult time - for the creative industry and for the country as a whole. But, the networks and connections they've created during those five years of collaboration and innovation couldn't be more necessary as we look to support this brilliant industry in the wake of a global pandemic. Thanks to Creative Cardiff there's a solid network in place to boost and harness the creative spirit and help turbo charge the sector back to full strength.

BBC Cymru Wales became one of Creative Cardiff's founder members at a time of great change for us as a broadcaster. Five years on, the vision of a broadcast hub in Central Square has been realised. It's more than that of course – it's also a home for the creative sector offering a base for local independent TV companies, as well as a base for the brand-new National Film and Television School in Wales. And we've only got there thanks to the fantastic creative networks we have here in the city and across Wales who've worked with us along the way.

So here's to the next five years of Creative Cardiff – llongyfarchiadau a phob llwyddiant i'r dyfodol.

From its inception, Creative Cardiff has sought to learn from and to share its own experience with creative economy initiatives elsewhere in the UK and internationally to build partnerships and collaborations.

UNITED
KINGDOM

Creative Dundee Founder and CEO, Gillian Easson writes: As a fellow creative city network lead who has known Creative Cardiff since their formation, I've always admired their ethos and approaches to nurturing Cardiff's creative network. Joining the Dots is a perfect example of the reach and impact they enable. The opportunity to meet a number of diverse creative networks during a global pandemic, to share practical case studies and learning, when our communities have been some of the hardest hit, was greatly needed and appreciated. Creative Cardiff is very generous, and we are delighted that they are part of our extended family!

SERBIA

Nana Radenković Programme Manager for Nova Iskra in Belgrade, Serbia, writes: Having an opportunity to get to know projects, specific methodologies and activities of Creative Cardiff was of great value to us, especially when contemplating the possible future developments within the creative industries domain in Serbia, or the Western Balkans region. We see Creative Cardiff as a possible role model for systematic and cross-sectoral approach in creating a road map.

TURKEY

Cansu Ataman, British Council Turkey, writes: Working with Creative Cardiff and getting a first-hand insight into Cardiff's creative economy has been a huge inspiration to all of us. Learning from the initiatives that set an equally beneficial example for our respective countries, hearing from the creative network who are shaping the global creative scene and connecting with counterparts for potential partnerships was a unique and invaluable experience.

ISTANBUL

Emre Erbirer, Event Manager for ATOLYE, a creative hub in Istanbul writes: Creative Cardiff has a meticulous and attentive approach. They also demonstrated the role of creative hubs in intercultural dialogue clearly. I believe that Creative Cardiff and ATÖLYE will collaborate and implement impact-oriented projects in the future by enabling collaboration and innovation, and opening space for learning together.


 GEORGIA

Zaza Purtseladze, Director, South Caucasus and Georgia, British Council, writes:

The keynote speech delivered by Sara Pepper and her participation in the Forum demonstrated the diversity and inclusiveness of the creative industries sector of the UK which Georgia is striving at seeing the UK as a role model. We are looking forward to the opportunities for further collaboration with Creative Cardiff.

ASIA

Roxana Apostol, British Council Creative Economy Programme Manager, Hubs & Communities, Advisor East Asia writes:

We value our long-lasting and wide-ranging collaboration with Creative Cardiff. Their team have an astute understanding of the creative ecosystem and are able to draw from their expertise and vast knowledge of policies to effortlessly convey innovative ideas across cultures. Our collaboration with Creative Cardiff on the Connect for Creativity project in Turkey, Greece, Serbia and the UK, has yielded the Creative Hubs: Opportunities and Challenges for Intercultural Dialogue report. The report and its findings have become compelling references in the British Council's global creative economy work.

THAILAND

Jay Tunprawat Patcharawee, British Council, Thailand writes: The work that Creative Cardiff did, led by Sara Pepper, was the first stepping stone for the development of creative hubs in Thailand. This pioneering project trained hub managers from nine universities across the country and equipped them with an understanding about the roles of creative hubs in advancing innovation. The training initiated a conversation between Creative Cardiff and the Thai Minister of Science and Technology, resulting in a study trip by the ministerial delegates to the UK, which has an implication on the development of Thailand's creative economy policy.

MALAYSIA

Florence Lambert, of British Council Malaysia writes: In the course of the Hubs for Good programme, we collaborated with Creative Cardiff on a meeting and exchange with a Malaysian delegation of academics during a UK study tour and an online webinar between UK and South East Asian hubs leaders to Reimagine the Future of Creative Hubs (Post COVID-19 crisis).

Creative Cardiff's approach to sustainability and global challenges was a source of inspiration for upcoming South East Asian hubs managers. Creative Cardiff is an important stakeholder for us, Wales and for the UK creative sector as it advocates for the increase of international networking and collaboration.

Vicki Sutton Project Manager at Creative Cardiff



Vicki joined the team in 2019 after working to support the film and television industry in Wales through BAFTA Cymru and Mad Dog Casting. The focus of her work at Creative Cardiff is to nurture and grow the network by curating a series of events and initiatives for the creative economy community in the city and beyond. She writes:

I joined the Creative Cardiff team nearly two years ago. I would say that it has taken me nearly all of that time to truly understand the scope and wide range of work that Creative Cardiff does and has the potential to do. The opportunities that present themselves for us to engage and run with are plentiful and much of that is testament to Sara and the team's relationship building across the University, the sector and the city as a whole.

Whilst it's been an incredibly challenging year for all of us as a result of the pandemic, there have been some golden moments. Some may appear small and we may not shout about widely such as the very open and honest sharing and connecting that took place in workshops between our commissioned creatives for the Our creative Cardiff project. Or watching from the corner of Rabble Studios as students from across the three Universities networked, swapped contact details and planned collaborations at the coworking hub crawl in March. Other achievements are more public such as launching and gaining 2000+ listens of our new podcast series or our In conversation with events at the start of lockdown with creative leaders, or hosting the first ever gathering of creative network leaders from around the UK.

"I'd like us to be thought of, now and into the future, as full of energy and vital to many of those who populate our city region's creative economy."

I see the concept of the 'network' as much more than the individuals and organisations signed up to our site. It's all the people who engage in our work – who listen to our podcasts or attend an event. It's the students we mentor through placements and catch up with over coffee. It's the hundreds of quick email connections we set up and the pieces of knowledge we accrue and share.

As we look to the future, we will look to enrich our three main areas of focus – Connections and Collaborations, Telling Cardiff’s creative story, and Enterprise and Entrepreneurship - with even more value and purpose. Creative Cardiff as a model is not a fixed entity. We must continue to work hard to identify how and in what ways we can be most valuable to the groups we serve and adapt and grow accordingly. The COVID-19 pandemic and the move to digital and remote working has provided us with an opportunity to open up new connections, conversations and ideas which we’ll look to explore in the immediate and longer-term future.

In 2020, the role and place of networks proved to be more vital than ever, with the need for shorter advocacy loops and direct pathways to policy makers and emergency funding providers. New sector and topic specific networks and taskforces have been established across the city with the aim to collect and share the voices of certain groups that might previously have been unheard. Creative Cardiff must continue to connect with and support these people, sharing our experience and knowledge of network building in order for us to continue providing an overarching, broad and informed perspective which represents the creative economy as a whole.

The foundation of the network and its reputation has been growing over the past five years. For this to continue we must continue to listen, be involved, respond and reflect in our offering. We hope to continue to develop our understanding about networks and share that knowledge with other Welsh cities and towns for the benefit of the whole of the Welsh creative economy.

Our mission is to strengthen and showcase Cardiff’s creative accomplishments and our vision is for Cardiff to be recognised as the capital of creativity in the UK. This can be brought about by working with partners to continue to build and develop meaningful connections and inspire a confident and innovative creative community. We want to increase connectivity between the Universities, colleges and the creative sector, increase collaboration between creative individuals and organisations and raise the awareness of Cardiff’s creative economy outside of the city.

A final thought....

A creative freelancer recently remarked to me that he treats Creative Cardiff as his “morning coffee” – a source to connect to the latest news and opportunities across the creative sectors. And that’s how I’d like us to be thought of now and into the future – full of energy and vital to many of those who populate our city region’s creative economy.

THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

1.

CHAMPIONING AND EMPOWERING FREELANCERS

It has been evident for some time, and particularly throughout 2020, that despite their importance and value to the sector, freelancers working in the creative industries are largely unmapped, under-represented and overlooked. We will explore what role Creative Cardiff can take to better understand the needs of freelancers in the city region and develop the most suitable actions and activities to enable them.

2.

PROMOTING AND MODELLING EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Our vision is for Cardiff to be recognised as a capital of creativity and we recognise that in order for this vision to be fulfilled, the creative economy of the city must be fair, equal and inclusive. We want to play our part in supporting the creative economy to achieve this and know we must lead by example.

3.

GATHERING, SHARING AND COMMUNICATING UP-TO-DATE DATA

How does the creative community understand data, engage with it, and share it? We would like to explore what role Creative Cardiff can play in acting as a hub for gathering, displaying and sharing data to help individuals and organisations working in the sector to engage with the data that we have.

4.

FOCUS ON INNOVATION, PARTICULARLY RELATING TO EMERGING AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

Cardiff is increasingly redefining itself as a creative city and within that there has been significant growth over the past five years – 16.5% of its businesses are now creative enterprises. Creative Cardiff is committed to working with others to develop strategic, future-focused interventions to drive inclusive and sustainable economic growth. These interventions are designed to respond to emerging technologies, increase capacity for innovation among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and address sector skills gaps. To achieve this we are committed to developing this kind of knowledge exchange between students, staff and the city's creative economy.

5.

ENGAGING WITH PARTNERS, STAKEHOLDERS AND ENABLERS

Working with others has always been a key part of Creative Cardiff's strategy. We want to development and implement a partnership strategy for the next five years that includes structures within it that allow us to collaborate (even more) effectively with a broad range of people who can help us deliver our vision.

Credits

The Creative Cardiff team have always committed to working with people who want to work with us. We have remained sure throughout that the best way to do this is by working collaboratively, playing to our collective strengths and co-producing our ideas and activity.

While this publication was concocted by Sara Pepper and Ian Hargreaves in a Cardiff coffee shop and guided wisely to completion, it has been brought to life by those who have given their time, their thoughts and their reflections.

Our heartfelt thanks to:

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Ymlaen!