

## FLEXIBLE FUNDING ASSESSMENT

<b>Applicant name:</b>	Woodend Arts Association	
<b>Application Reference number:</b>	G20100	
<b>Amount Requested (Year 1/Year 2)</b>	£30000	£32000
<b>Officer's recommendation</b>		
<p>Summarise the key points of your assessment and draw out the strengths and weaknesses of the application taken together with any comments you have received from source evidence (portfolio of evidence/ internal / external consultation). Highlight any specific risks</p> <p><i>Note: The amount of information you provide here should be sufficient for the decision maker to reach a decision. As with all previous commentary boxes please do not exceed 250 words</i></p>		
<p><b>Comments:</b></p> <p>WAA is one of the main providers of arts activities in Southern Aberdeenshire and is well supported by both the community and local authority. One of WAA's major strengths is seen by WAA as its network of affiliates who bring their specific expertise to programming and allows WAA to deliver a wider range of activity than would otherwise be possible within their resources.</p> <p>That WAA is proposing to develop its engagement with the public through increasing the visibility of the Barn in Banchory and the neighbouring area, and is proposing to build upon their existing programme of educational and outreach work through a Community and Arts Education programme developed in conjunction with Aberdeenshire Council and local schools, shows a commitment to a priority area within our flexible funding criteria.</p> <p>WAA is planning an expansion of activity built on their experience which is financially (and artistically) prudent in its approach. Officers feel that the approach is comprehensive and useful for the development of future programming through reflecting on and learning from achievements and also through developing and awareness of opportunities as they arise. Given the resources they have (and will have) available the activities proposed are deliverable if perhaps lacking in ambition. Officers would suggest that assistance may be given to WAA to help strengthen their organisational structure in line with the (modest) increase in activity which is planned by the organisation in order that they are able to deliver the aspirations of a flexibly funded organisation. Audience development assistance may also be useful in their ambition to develop their events and outreach programme.</p> <p>Although WAA indicate that they intend to develop a café/bistro in 2008/9 and artist's studios and dedicated workshop space, in 2010/11. They have not made assumptions about these in their financial submissions. Given that they may well be applying for Capital Lottery funding for these works this is felt to be prudent by officers.</p> <p>If anything the application may be said to lack ambition however, however the funding being sought is relatively modest and would help to bolster the organisation and its future to deliver arts provision in Southern Aberdeenshire. The development of a programme of educational and outreach work through a Community and Arts Education programme developed in conjunction with Aberdeenshire Council and local schools is welcome and has great potential for developing the organisations ability to deliver a comprehensive programme of activity to a broader audience.</p> <p>The development of the Woodend Barn and the support of WAA in a more consistent way through flexible funding could provide the foundation for the delivery of arts to a rural area of underprovision as well as helping to develop and consolidate a partnership with the local authority for the future.</p>		

I have this rated the application as a medium priority as whilst support of the WAA as a delivery agent for arts activities in Southern Aberdeenshire could be seen as a priority for funding, as its fits well with the Scottish Arts Council's remit to encourage participation in the arts, as well as facilitating provision in rural area, there are some areas which could be developed further.

<b>Officer's overall priority recommendation</b>		<b>MEDIUM</b>
Lead Officer signature:		Date: 25/01/08 Revised: 20/3/08
Print name:	Andrew D Leitch	

### Stage 2: Heads of Departments prioritise applications with advice from Specialist Advisors

1. What were the strengths and weaknesses of the application identified by the Specialist Advisors? Please summarise their comments below. What were their ratings of the importance of the application in being supported?

**Comments:**

The Specialist Advisors panel that considered this application included Kirsteen Macdonald, Susan Nickalls, Sita Ramamurthy, Louise Butler, Steve Slater, Alan Riach, Wendy Niblock and Sally Wilson  
The panel comments:

The panel considered the application from **Woodend Arts Association (WAA)** to be strong and confident. It demonstrated an approach built on strong relations with the local community and good use of resources and combination of skills. The panel noted that there is a lack of consistency in terms of audience numbers and that more work in audience development is required. The panel considered the application to demonstrate an interesting approach to programme and recognised Woodend Arts Association as a valuable arts resource for the area. The panel recognised that the SOUND new music festival has been highly successful in terms of artistic work and audience development. (NB: While WWA is a venue for this festival, the festival is an independent entity).The application refers to the new café which will be built and the hope that this will help the profile of the community. The panel advised caution here as running a café brings with it additional risks, and it was important this was well researched so as not to detract from the core business of running the arts organisation. The panel noted that local partnerships and investment could be stronger.

The panel rated this application as medium priority for support.

2. Summarise the role of the organisation within the infrastructure of the sector. Assess to what extent the organisation's vision will contribute to the department's and to Scottish Arts Council's aims: (to fulfil artists' potential, to increase participation, to place creativity at the heart of learning)

**Comments:**

Woodend Arts Association was established in April 1994 and is one of the main providers of arts activities in Southern Aberdeenshire. WAA operates and runs Woodend Barn as a venue for a wide range of arts activity. It operates with a network of affiliates who bring their specific expertise to programming and allows WAA to deliver a wider range of activity than would otherwise be possible within their resources. WAA has previously received project and lottery funding from the Scottish Arts Council towards capital and programme costs.

**1. Fit with FXO criteria:**

**1.1 Excellent artistic vision and leadership; role within sector/support to artists**

Although there are some interesting programming ideas proposed, it has not fully demonstrated excellence in *artistic leadership*.

**1.2 Improving your engagement with the public**

The application meets the criteria of *public engagement*, particularly within an area of low arts provision.

**1.3 Good practice in the governance and management**

WAA is a registered charity, governed by a management committee, with the day-to-day running delegated to four part-time staff. Although the current organisational infrastructure is effective, this may need to be strengthened if WAA was to become Flexibly funded.

**1.4 Practical implementation of your equal opportunities policy; widening access**

WAA operates an equal opportunities policy for staff and aims to provide a wide, diverse and accessible programme of events.

**1.5 Raising other income at least 25%**

WAA has met the matched funding requirement.

**2. Fit with Departmental priorities**

The programme of activity expands across artforms.

**3. Fit within Scottish Arts Council aims**

WAA contributes to the Scottish Arts Council's aim 2; *to increase participation in the arts*. It also articulates a commitment to Aim 1 *'to support artists to achieve their creative and business potential.'*

**3.** Based on the lead officer's assessment and the subsequent meeting with Specialist advisors, please rate the application (High, medium, low) summarise your reasons for assessing the application as you have (drawing out the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation and highlighting any specific risks)

**Comments:**

**1.1 Application rating:**

I concur with the Assessing Officer and the Specialist Advisors that this application is a medium priority for support.

**1.2 Reasons for assessing at this rating:**

The Assessing Officer and the Specialist Advisors panel recognise the importance of WAA work in an area of low arts provision and that the organisation has demonstrated a considered approach to development and achieved some good results artistically. It is still a developing organisation and has some development areas to address.

**1.3 Strengths of application:**

- strong relations with the local community
- its network of affiliates who bring their specific expertise to programming
- important resource in area of low artistic provision

**1.4 Weaknesses of applications:**

- artistic plans modest
- approach to audience development requires strengthening

*1.5 Specific risks associated with the application:*

The application refers to plans for a building project and the development of a café/bistro but the resources for these are not currently in place and the business plan does not fully reflect the impact of these developments on the organisation.

*1.6 Development areas identified:*

The assessment identifies the organisational structure and approach to audience development as areas to be strengthened. It would be important for WAA to participate in and benefit from the Audience Development initiatives being developed in the North East stemming from the Beyond the Central Belt research.

*1.7 Recommended level of support:*

The level of financial support that WAA has from Aberdeenshire Council is low and I would recommend that if Flexible funding is awarded this is used as leverage in agreeing sustained and increased investment from the local authority. If supported, I would recommend funding at the level requested, £30,000 in 2009/10.

**4. Please comment on the geographic reach of the programme**

**Comments:**

*1.1 Where will the activity/programme take place?*

Woodened Arts Association is based in Banchory, Aberdeenshire.

*1.2 Where will the audience come from?*

The application states that the majority (79%) of their audience comes from this area with others coming primarily from Aberdeen.

<b>Head of Department's overall priority recommendation</b>		<b>MEDIUM</b>
Head of Department's signature:		Date: 15 February 2008 Reviewed: 26 March 2008
Print name:	Anita Clark	

<b>Stage 3: Collective Heads of Department (Arts Development Managers) make recommendations to Directors (Acting Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive and Co-Directors of Arts)</b>		
1. Summarise the reasons why the final rating has been made.		
<b>Comments:</b> Some fit with FXO criteria but relatively weak in comparison to others, in the context of a highly competitive funding round. Not recommended for support.		
<b>Collective Heads of Department (Arts Development Managers) priority recommendation</b>		Low Medium
Chair of Meeting signature:		Date: 2 April 2008
Print name:	Iain Munro	

<b>Stage 4: Directors make recommendations to Joint Board (strategic fit)</b>		
Record the Directors' recommendation and confirm the suggested level of support. If the recommendation differs from Stage 3, please summarise the reasons why.		
<b>Comments:</b> Agree with Stage 3 recommendation.		
<b>Directors recommendations to Joint Board</b>		<b>Low Medium</b>
Acting Chief Executive signature:	Jim Tough	Date: 10 April 2008

<b>Stage 5: Joint Board's decisions</b>		
Record the Joint Board's recommendation. If the recommendation differs from Stage 4, please summarise the reasons why.		
<b>Comments:</b> The Joint Board accepts the Stage 4 recommendation.		
<b>Joint Board Final Decision</b>		<b>REFUSE</b>
Date: 24 April 2008	If approved for support, enter sum awarded	

**End of Assessment**