



Credition Arts Centre

Business Plan – January 2007

1 Aims and objectives

The Credition Arts Centre aims to be a venue and focus for community arts in Credition and the surrounding area. The constitution states that the objects of the charity are “to advance the education of the public in the arts of drama, music, dance, literature and visual arts”.

We aim to do this by running large-scale participatory community arts projects, regular classes in the arts, hosting touring theatre groups, children’s arts projects, and visits, as well as opportunities for local experienced and aspiring artists to develop their skills.

We hope to widen our role for the arts and arts development in Mid Devon, including the use of both existing and currently unexplored arts forms (dance, film, radio script writing, sculpture, video). We also wish to expand the limited provision we currently make for youth work.

We are also working to ensure the long term sustainability of the Centre both financially and organisationally, as well as improving our building and facilities.

In the longer term we need to make strategic decisions about the Centre’s future, including the possibility of becoming more involved in the use of the new Town Square, greater cooperation with other community organisations, as well as new premises.

2 Community profile

(Statistics in this section are from Devon County Council’s Market Towns survey and their ‘State of the Devon Economy’ report, 2006)

Credition Arts Centre serves the town of Credition and the surrounding villages and rural area. Credition is a small mid Devon market town with a population of about 7000. If the surrounding area is included then the Credition catchment area has a population of about 22,000.

Population in this area has shown some growth over the last 10 years, the most significant increase being Credition itself.

Key changes to the age structure are:

- Growth in the number in the family lifestyle age group 35-44
- A significant rise in the number of the older middle-aged 55-64
- A significant rise in the elderly aged 75 and over



- Increases in the working age population

The expected increase in the 15-24 age group will increase the need for youth training and job opportunities for young people, and confirms our desire to increase our work with this group.

Increases in the elderly population, although not expected to rise as fast as in recent years, are still significant and will increase pressure on the care services in the area. It is another area we wish to explore possibly in partnership with other organisations, including Upstream.

The national Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) is the main measure used by the government for targeting community regeneration initiatives and funding. No wards in the Credition catchment area are in the most deprived quartile nationally.

As measured by the IMD ranking the ward of Whitestone is the most deprived, with Credition Lawrence being the least deprived.

The percentage of children in households relying on benefit is below the Mid Devon average in all wards in the area, except Boniface. Boniface ward is where the Arts Centre is located. Here 30% of children live in households relying on benefit, and where 16% of the total population are on benefits. In addition 29% of those in the Credition area on Incapacity benefits are in the Boniface ward.

Economically the Credition catchment area is fairly well off, with about 1.6% unemployment and incomes tending to be above the Devon average.

There are 1215 VAT-registered businesses in the Credition catchment area, only 5 with 50 to 249 employees and none with over 250 employees.

Whilst the Arts Centre is aware of some of these trends, we have not yet used this information as actively as we might.

3 Organisational profile

History

Founded in the 1970's by Devon County Council, as the Credition Drama Centre, core funding ceased in 1992. It became an independent organisation managed by a voluntary management committee, known as the Friends of the Credition Drama Centre. The then community tutor continued as Artistic Director until 2004. The current constitution was adopted in January 1994 and the centre has had charitable status since 1992 (Reg. No: 1033484).



A second Artistic Director was appointed in 2004 for a 12 month contract. He did not renew the contract in order to fulfil his own artistic ambitions, and continued to serve on the management committee. The committee decided to appoint an Administrator, a Caretaker and Cleaner, with artistic direction provided by the management committee.

In 2004 a decision was taken to change the name to Credition Arts Centre to more accurately describe the increasing range of activities covered by the Centre.

In 2005 the Centre secured a grant from the Arts Council to employ an external consultant to conduct an organisational development review; to produce a report on the organisation, proposals for change, audience development and a marketing strategy. We employed Rick Bond who produced a report in January 2006.

The initial recommendations of the report have begun to be implemented, while the more strategic recommendations are currently being addressed.

Our track record

The Credition Arts Centre has a strong track record in the town and its catchment area. Since 1993 we have delivered the following;

Regular classes in the arts. These include;

Weekly classes led by professional tutors in

- Drawing
- Watercolour
- Painting
- Portrait painting
- Digital photography
- Street jazz dance
- Juggling
- Creative writing
- Drama - Queen Elizabeth's Community College (the local secondary school) use the centre each week as a drama teaching venue.

Theatre

- Professional Rural Touring Theatre Groups supported by Village in Action
- The Brown Paper Bag Theatre Company –a local community theatre company

Courses and weekend workshops in

- Watercolour
- Banner making
- Stained glass windows
- The Mask
- Photography
- Printmaking

Reading groups

The Centre runs two separate reading groups, one meeting in a local village pub and the other in members' homes

Projects for young people have included:

Regular workshops for young people

Half term projects in art and drama for primary school age children.

Outreach workshops in schools in Crediton and the catchment area.

Community Projects

1993 '**Just Popping Out to the High Street**' – a community Project for Senior Citizens

1994 '**Lighting Up the Parish**' - a community project with Coplestone Parish Council

Shakespeare in the Square- these are community projects which have an open access policy for actors and musicians (an average of 50 local actors and musicians for each show) playing to audiences of 1500 over four nights. These have been staged outdoors on the site of the now, new Town Square, as well as the local church car park.

These productions include:

June 1995 '**King Henry IV Part One**'

June 1997 '**Romeo and Juliet**'

June 1999 '**The Taming of The Shrew**'

June 2001 '**Richard III**'

June 2005 '**A Midsummer Night's Dream**'

June 2007 '**Measure for Measure**'

The Amphitheatre Shobrooke Park

July 2000 **The creation of an outdoor amphitheatre** in the local Shobrooke Park seating capacity 250

July 2002 '**The Wildling**' Combined arts project in Shobrooke Park

July 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006 "**Up The Park**" – an annual weekend of professional and amateur arts performances, including local schools

November 2004, '**Fire Fire!**' A large community arts project to celebrate local firefighters and the building of a new Fire Station. Following extensive research, the project culminated in the publication of a book, with full colour illustrations and the large performance of a specially commissioned play in the Crediton Fire Station.

Spring 2006 **Short Play Project** to encourage and develop 9 new writers and 10 new directors, culminating in 4 performances to capacity audiences, involving over 30 new and experienced actors and technicians



Stakeholders who have regularly supported Crediton Arts Centre include:

Millennium Festival Fund (Amphitheatre Shobrooke Park)

RALP -Regional Arts Lottery Programme – ‘The Wildling’ and ‘Fire! Fire!’

Arts Council England - Shakespeare2005

Awards for All – Shakespeare 2001, 2005, Short Play Project

Foundation for Sport and the Arts - Shakespeare 1999

Bsis –matching arts sponsorship - Shakespeare 1995, 1997

Strike A Match – matching funding, Shakespeare 2005

Barclays Community Award - ‘Just Popping Out to the High Street’

Community Council of Devon - ‘Lighting up the Parish ‘ Copplestone 1994

Villages in Action – VIA promotes rural arts in Devon. The Arts Centre promotes up to 4 VIA events each year.

Crediton and Devon Fire and Rescue Service – partners in the ‘Fire! Fire!’ project

Mid Devon District Council – Core costs, Shakespeare, ‘Fire! Fire!’, Up the Park. We enjoy good relations with Crediton’s District Councillors, and receive support and advice from the District Council including Paul Tucker, their funding officer. We receive regular grants for both core costs and individual projects.

Crediton Town Council - Shakespeare, ‘The Wildling’, ‘Fire! Fire!’, Up The Park,

In addition to these regular grants the Town Council supports the Arts Centre through advice on our grant applications to the District Council.

Crediton Chamber of Commerce – local businesses represented through the Chamber have been very supportive of the Centre with direct grants and the sponsorship of individual events and marketing.

Local primary Schools –Hayward’s, Landscore, Sandford, Copplestone, Cheriton Fitzpaine and Spreyton – all contribute to “Up The Park”, and some also use the Arts Centre as a source of artists for in-school work.

Crediton Rural Arts and Music Project (CRAMP) – CRAMP cooperate with and support Arts Centre events and use the centre for rehearsals and performances.

Upstream – a local ‘healthy living centre’ working mainly with older people. Individual Friends of the Arts Centre are actively involved with Upstream.

In 2006 our audience figures for events in the Arts Centre was 1206 with average attendance of 55 per event. This represents a xx% capacity. This does not include the many people that attended the open air events at Up The Park.

Our classes also attract high levels of attendance with over 360 people taking part over a 12 month period.



Organisation

All this activity is managed by a voluntary management committee of 16. The committee comprises a Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and a further 13 members and is elected at the AGM. It meets 10 times a year and is responsible for all aspects of the Arts Centre. All committee members are trustees of the charity, Friends of the Credition Arts Centre.

There are 10 working groups to cover particular aspects of the Arts Centre, made up of committee members. These are; core funding, programme/brochure, premises, health and safety, local fundraising, press and publicity, website, volunteers, bar, and Friends.

Other ad hoc groups are established to manage single projects, including the "Shakespeare in the Square" productions and "Up The Park".

These groups provide regular reports to the full management committee meetings.

The committee is currently looking at ways to spread its workload including using non-committee members on the working groups, and better succession planning for committee members themselves, as well as becoming a Company Limited by Guarantee, to better protect trustees from liability.

The Centre Administrator is employed for 3 mornings a week, and has improved the administrative and financial systems. The Caretaker is employed for 5 hours a week and the Cleaner for 3 hours a week.

Financial management

(Much of the analysis in this section comes from the Organisational Development Review, commissioned by the Arts Centre and written by Rick Bond of The Complete Works)

Overall figures

Our total turnover for 2006 was £56,662.22

Our projections for 2007-08 are as follows:

Total expenditure - £62,010

Total income - £61,350

Most of the expenditure is based on fixed costs (salaries, services, etc) while the income is less predictable, based on ticket sales and income from fund-raising.

Self-generated Income: Self-generated income covers income contributions from activities and events promoted by the Arts Centre and includes:

- Performance fees and sales
- Hire of premises
- Trips
- Bar sales
- General fundraising (events)
- Projects
- Other (Misc) income

Self-generated income is naturally greater during the years in which a Shakespeare Community Play is presented, as will be the case in 2007. 'Non-play years' have been used to assess trends so as to provide greater consistency for comparison.

Between 2002-2004 fees from performances and sales fell by 11% (£887). Income from hires fell by 2% (£121) during the same period. However, this decline has been offset by an increase in 'other income' of £1,789 (£0 in 2002).

In 2006 total gross income from performances was £8030.30 including Up The Park. If Up The Park is excluded then gross income per event was £228.

A combination of prudent budgeting, good programme planning and effective marketing has enabled CAC to reduce our dependence upon the most vulnerable source of income, grant funding, and demonstrates efficient financial control of its affairs by the committee.

Performance fees and income: The fall in performance and sales income, if not due to a reduction in the number of performances and/or ticket sales, suggests a decline in ticket yields may be a contributory factor. Our ticket yields fall when prices are not increased. However, barriers to increasing prices are reflected in the quality and appeal of our venue's facilities and natural ambience.

Bar sales: Income from bar sales has remained fairly constant during 2006 with the average take remaining at about £130. Consultation with users indicated that the current bar staff help to create an attractive social atmosphere appreciated by regular users. The bar is understood to be a key income generator on an events night.

Trips: Income from trips is slightly greater than their cost (£296 in 2004)

Hires: Income from hires has fallen slightly by 2%, suggesting that a realistic increase in hire fees is due. CAC must be able to determine the cost of hires to ensure that any increase in their number generates a net benefit rather than loss.

Overall, activities for generating income have increased by £6,744. In 2002 only income from trips is reported. 2004 income includes contributions from trips, bar income and projects.

This suggests the committee have been wise in widening sources of income. Currently it has 7 sources of self-generated income, the largest of which (performance fees and sales) comprises 31% of the total. This reduces the risk of relying upon a small number of sources.

Overall CAC received 60% of its income from self-generated sources in 2004 compared to 53% in 2002. From a financial perspective at least this increase in sustainability demonstrates good practice.

The committee and administrator are continually improving our financial monitoring systems to ensure income is maximised wherever possible.

Contributed Income

Contributed income is always greater during the years in which a Shakespeare Community Play is presented. 'Non-play years' have been used to assess trends.

Contributed income covers funds raised from external sources to support CAC and its activities. They include:

- Sponsorship, donations and Gift Aid
- Grants
- Subscriptions

Grants: Between 2002-2004 contributed income fell by 33% (£7,354). Within this the largest fall was from grants which fell by 36% (£6,275). This reflects the increasingly competitive arena for funding from this source.

However, as stated above the fall in grant income also indicates a reduced dependency on grants, and an increased reliance upon income sources over which it has more control.

Subscriptions: CAC has in the region of 170 Friends. Their subscriptions and donations represent about 15% of turnover.

4 Market analysis

For our performances average attendances are 55 per event (total capacity in the Centre is 65) with the highest consistent attendances for 'locally produced' events e.g. Brown Paper Bag's production of 'Oliver Twist', and the short plays project.

Our arts classes regular attract full attendance and our 2 book groups are oversubscribed (**Is there any more data on actual attendances?**)

Other organisations with whom we work include;



Queen Elizabeth Community College – their year 10,11 & 12 drama students use the studio on a regular basis and their music students participate in “Up The Park”.

Haywards, Landscore, Sandford, Copplestone, Cheriton Fitzpaine and Spreyton Primary Schools – all contribute to “Up The Park”, and some also use the Arts Centre as a source of artists for in-school work.

Credition Rural Arts and Music Project (CRAMP) – CRAMP have used the centre for rehearsals and performances, and future cooperation is planned.

Villages in Action – VIA promotes rural arts in parts of Devon. The Arts Centre promotes up to 4 VIA events each year.

Shobrooke Park – the Arts Centre used Millennium Festival Funds to build a natural amphitheatre in the park and we run events here each year, including the annual “Up The Park” festival. We have good working relationships with the owners of the park.

Credition Town Council – supports the Arts Centre, with advice and regular grants, as well as supporting our grant applications to the District Council.

Mid Devon District Council – good relations with Credition district councillors, and support and advice from District Council officers, including Paul Tucker, their funding officer.

Credition Chamber of Commerce – local businesses represented through the Chamber have been very supportive of the Centre, with direct grants, sponsorship of individual events and marketing.

Arts Council England – South West – provided a grant for our organisation development review and for one of our “Shakespeare in the Square” productions.

5 Operational plan

1. Following our organizational development review and a committee away day to look at our future we have decided on the following artistic and organisational direction.
2. Artistically we will focus on the following activities;
 - a. Large scale community performances using the town square, Shobroke Park and other outdoor and indoor spaces
 - b. Temporary sculpture and other visual arts exhibitions, both outdoor and indoor
 - c. Regular creative arts classes

- d. Activities for young people and families
 - e. Interesting and good quality theatrical performances
3. In addition to our artistic activities, over the next three years we plan the following :
- a. To refurbish the interior and exterior of our building, to make it more welcoming and attractive to other users
 - b. To seek permission to use the car parking facilities of Haywards School for our evening events
 - c. To put on productions in the town square
 - d. To establish a working framework with CRAMP, with a view to joint publicity and ticketing
 - e. To open a dialogue with other arts and community organisations in the area about the possibility of a new building and approach QECC about this
 - f. To upgrade some of our technical equipment
4. In addition to the above we will act on the Recommendations identified in the Organisational development review.
5. All decisions taken about our activities will reflect the above priorities, and the attached fund-raising schedule identifies current commitment in line with this operational plan.
6. These commitments will lead to fund-raising demands that will be led by the appropriate sub-committee or working group