



To whom it may concern,

We're writing this letter in support of the Awen Cultural Trust's application for funding to continue and improve the incredible work they already do.

Last year we had the experience of working with Awen as we created our new touring theatre show *PANTHERS*. The piece explored big-cat sightings in rural communities in Wales. As a company based between Newport and Cardiff, we had an ambition to work in new spaces, reaching rural and valleys based communities across South Wales, and Awen made this possible for us.

The support we received was invaluable. Helping us in our mission to develop an exciting piece of new piece of work, as well as enabling us to host workshops with local communities. Their links with key venues and public services across Blaenau Gwent meant that we could travel to new locations safe in the knowledge we'd have staff support, space and audience/participants for our work, no matter where we went.

The ambition they have to link theatres, libraries, community centres and outdoor spaces in Blaenau Gwent is inspiring to us, and as we toured their venues we saw the evidence of a connected programme of exciting cultural opportunities. Each venue felt part of this network and unique in its own way, with each imbuing the spaces with their local ethos and approach.

Having spoken to a few venue managers and members of the public we came to understand that Awen stepped in to save closing buildings, ensuring that art, education, social environments and wellbeing opportunities stayed open for all. In a time when people are experiencing a lot of financial difficulty, social immobility and low-moral, we feel it is more important than ever to support agencies and organisations who are attempting to bring more opportunities to more people.

The fact Awen works outside of the major cities in the heart of Blaenau Gwent, Bridgend and Rhondda Cynon Taf, is essential if we want to continue to ensure that culture and creative activities reach and include everyone in Wales.

Thanks,

Justin Cliffe

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