

Executive Summary – from November Club’s 2018/19 business plan

“An invitation to the people of North East England to take extraordinary and imaginative journeys into unexpected places that touch the heart and stay in the memory forever”

November Club is a performing arts company based in Morpeth, Northumberland. We make playful and inspiring theatre and installations; telling unexpected stories of all sorts of people and places. Sharing memories, hopes and dreams is part of what we do. Weaving together historical and contemporary themes, our work is always made in collaboration with local people whose own tales become central to our projects. We bring communities together, to create memorable shared experiences, explore new ideas, meet new people and most importantly, to make new fun.

We are currently one of only seven Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisations in Northumberland, and the only non-venue based performing arts company in the county. We believe that everyone has the right to enjoy and be enriched by high quality artistic work that is culturally relevant to people and place. Participation in our productions engenders confidence, allows audiences and participants to explore their stories, creativity and heritage, and have enjoyable and profound experiences. This includes site-specific public performances, bespoke projects and events, training and volunteering opportunities all rooted in an in-depth artistic research and development process.

Audiences travel with the work as it grows and share in the culmination of large-scale dialogue about places and their people. The events themselves create opportunities for people to make journeys with their families, communities and wider audiences. We help diverse audiences engage by designing intimate, personal connections, which should always be memorable and go beyond ‘just the show’. Audience development therefore contributes to the creative outcome of the work.

Our 2018-19 artistic programme is shaped by what we have learned over the past six years of Arts Council England National Portfolio investment. We will continue to stretch ourselves artistically; to work with new and culturally diverse artists and participants; and achieve an ongoing sustainable and resilient business model. Each section of this plan outlines the specific priorities relating to various areas of work (e.g. work with young people, audience development, digital engagement etc.). The overarching artistic and organisational development priorities for 2018/19 are:

- To create 1 new production with up to 2 new creative team members and 1 new partner, in Berwick-upon-Tweed, focusing on developing the voice and future aspirations of young people across the town.
- Research and develop a *New Fairytale for Northumberland* project for 2019/20 with up to 2 experimental performances/events in September/December 2018, testing material, engaging with up to 3 new communities and building/developing up to 2 new partnerships and exploring the development of audiences for the production.

- Explore possibilities for re-mounting and/or re-imagining our musical *Beyond the End of the Road* (BTEOTR) for new venues and communities where professional arts activity is not easily accessed or available. In addition, to create a special event in May 2018, together with Highlights Rural Touring Scheme, for rural promoters, artists and other interested parties, to share the learning and experiences of the Northumberland BTEOTR tour.
- November Club currently functions as a part time organisation and is stretched to capacity. It continues to be challenging to secure additional funding for staff costs, allowing the team to be full time as opposed to the current part time situation. Throughout 2018/19 the company will work with a consultant to design, agree and implement a new organisational structure that meets our future needs by March 2019. Growing our strategic capacity will increase organisational leadership, thus generating fundraising, resilience and creative development. See page 10 of the plan for more detail.

November Club is committed to improving its environmental performance and reducing carbon emissions.

Our principle funder, Arts Council England, defines diversity as responding to issues around race, ethnicity, faith, disability, age, gender, sexuality, class and economic disadvantage, and any social and institutional barriers that prevent people from participating in and enjoying the arts. November Club aims to celebrate diversity positively, with all the artistic and creative opportunities it offers. Diversity is embedded within all our work and how we function as an organisation. We value the diverse perspectives of artists and our artistic programme reflects the lives and concerns of the audiences and communities we serve. We are committed to the promotion of equality and diversity through our artistic programme, our board representation, workforce and our audiences, delivering the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 through our values and the opportunities offered as part of our arts practice. We are part of the newly formed Northumberland NPO Forum, led by the County Council Cultural Development Manager, where, amongst other issues, we explore how we can collectively address the Creative Case for Diversity within Northumberland.

Additional Information

November Club is led by Artistic Director Cinzia Hardy, working with an artistic team including theatre designer and artist Imogen Cloët and singer, musician and composer Katie Doherty.

Our Participation Producer, Sarah Hudson, works closely with local communities throughout the lifespan of each project. We also collaborate with a group of associate performers, dramaturges, choreographers, musicians and artists - and local people - to create the finished work.

www.novemebrclub.org.uk