

**All-Party Parliamentary Group for Music Education,  
AGM and briefing minutes - Wednesday 16 October 2019**

**AGM Business**

**Parliamentarians present:** Lyn Brown MP, Earl of Clancarty, Wera Hobhouse MP, Lord Aberdare, Lord Strasburger, Baroness Altmann, Alberto Costa MP, James Frith MP, Tracy Brabin MP

The attending parliamentarians were joined by members of the music education sector.

**1. Welcome** – Lyn Brown MP (acting chair in Diana Johnson’s absence)

**2. Election of Officers**

The following nominations were received:

**Chair and Registered Contact:** Diana Johnson MP (Labour)

**Co-Chair:** Andrew Percy MP (Conservative)

**Secretary:** Lord Aberdare (Crossbencher)

**Vice-Chairs:** Lyn Brown MP (Labour), Sharon Hodgson MP (Labour), Nigel Evans MP (Conservative) David Warburton MP (Conservative), Baroness Altmann (Conservative), Baroness Neville-Rolfe (Conservative)

**Officers:** Earl of Clancarty (Crossbencher), Baroness Bonham-Carter of Yarnbury (Liberal Democrats), Lord Strasburger (Liberal Democrats)

All were elected.

**3. Income and expenditure statement**

The expenditure of the Group (purely support in kind from the secretariat) did not exceed the levels required for reporting.

**4. Close of AGM**

**Main Business - speeches**

Following the AGM, presentations were given by Sir Nicholas Serota, Chair of Arts Council England; Bridget Whyte, Chief Executive of Music Mark and Dr Naomi Bath, Senior Policy & Research Officer from the Incorporated Society of Musicians. These presentations provided the most current picture of music education in primary and secondary schools, as well as demonstrate the value of music and creativity within education.

**1. Sir Nicholas Serota CH, Chair of Arts Council England – the Durham Commission’s report into creativity and education**

The Chair of the Arts Council, Sir Nicholas Serota addressed the APPG and outlined the findings of the Durham Commission report on Creativity and Education (Durham Commission) the report of which was published the day prior to the APPG meeting (15 October 2019). The Durham Commission is a collaboration between Arts Council England and Durham University that aims to identify ways in which creativity, and specifically

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creative thinking, can play a larger part in the lives of young people from birth to the age of 19, both within and beyond the current education system.

Sir Nicholas explained that the Durham Commission's report was not simply focused upon the arts but also looked at the utilisation of creativity in all areas of life and how creativity is prevalent in everyone – including scientists and business people who use creativity in different ways. The point was made that within the independent sector more attention is being paid to creativity than in their state school counterparts.

He then took the APPG meeting through the main recommendations of the Durham Commission and explained the proposal to have nine pilot schemes for cultivating creativity in schools that would be run throughout the UK. Sir Nicholas stated that they will use the results from these schemes to create a proposal for the Department of Education.

He briefly discussed technology, specifically how the Commission believes that phones and technology in the classroom should not be banned but rather how children should be encouraged to explore tech in a safe environment.

The Durham Commission will approach the Department for Education, Ofsted and Ofqual to look at how creativity can be incorporated into the assessment framework. He said that the Durham Commission will recommend to the DfE that English schools should take part in PISA tests; as a result the UK will be able to shape the PISA testing system.

Sir Nicholas concluded by saying that there needed to be a special plan for arts subjects and that arts subjects should be obligatory for children until the end of Key Stage 3 as an absolute minimum. He also stated that much more work needed to be done by the DfE, especially with regards to early years education. He finished by commending the role of music education hubs and stated that the extracurricular creative pursuits would continue to be important.

Sir Nicholas Serota then answered questions from the room. Upon being asked whether certain subjects should be combined or taken out of the curriculum, he responded by affirming that the Commission's recommendation that the EBacc should be extended to include a sixth pillar for arts subjects.

## **2. Bridget Whyte, CEO of Music Mark – the future of Music Education Hubs**

Bridget Whyte began her presentation by reiterating her long-held belief that the Government does not value music education enough. She also said that the Government must reaffirm its commitment to music education hubs and increase their annual funding to £100 million for at least another five years of hub funding.

Bridget stressed that hub funding has fallen by 40% in real terms. She cautioned that low funding was potentially as problematic as hubs being scrapped entirely as hubs will not be able to function adequately unless they have proper funding. She concluded by stating that if the Government is serious about providing music education to children, then they should be increasing funding to music education hubs.

## **3. Dr Naomi Bath, Senior Research and Policy Officer at the ISM – Brexit and its impact upon education**

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Dr Naomi Bath began her presentation stating that she used to see Brexit and music education as distinct topics but explained that they are actually interconnected in a number of ways. She stated that Brexit was affecting music education (and music in general) in a number of ways and that this had been communicated to DCMS through the ISM's interaction with them.

The first major issue that Dr Bath discussed was how youth orchestra tours of EU nations will become unviable because of additional costs and bureaucracy (especially in a no-deal Brexit scenario). She cited this as a 'great shame' as touring youth orchestras provide a good introduction for children who might be interested in pursuing a career as a professional musician. Issues concerning the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) continue to be problematic for orchestras generally (youth or otherwise) and the associated issues to do with CITES and Musical Instrument Certificates (MIC) are not being addressed. In some positive news, the list of ports that can process CITES-listed materials has expanded to include several additional ports – but more ports still need to be added.

Dr Bath touched on the fact that EU students will no longer come to the UK in no-deal Brexit because their fees would increase dramatically. EU citizens will now have to pay the same fees that other international students pay, leading to a decline in applicants (and therefore quality) within conservatoires. The competitive edge of UK conservatoires will suffer as a result of Brexit. Furthermore, access to research and funding will suffer as a result of a no-deal Brexit.

She also touched on the future of the UK's education relationship with the EU as Brexit means that EU education funding will cease. She stated that it is impossible to predict whether the EU will want to continue to collaborate with the UK in terms of music and education.

Dr Bath concluded by saying that there was a perfect storm of challenges in music education as hubs struggle for funding and the EBacc continues to diminish the availability of music within our schools and Brexit leads to less cultural collaboration between the UK and the EU.

### **General Questions**

**Sam Toolan, Head of External Engagement at the Open University** stated that he felt that it was all very well talking about prospective improvements to creative education, but the 'political teeth' to implement change were not there.

Both Lyn Brown and Deborah Annetts issued strong rebuttals and maintained that progress was being made when it came to raising the profile of creative education, in particular music, despite very difficult political circumstances.

**Amy Gibbons, reporter at TES** asked how late hub funding could be announced before redundancy notices would have to start being issued.

Bridget Whyte responded that redundancy notices would start to be issued very soon if funding was not announced imminently.

**Chrissy Kinsella, CEO of London Music Fund** asked in which quarter of 2020 the new National Plan for Music Education would be announced.

Deborah Annetts responded that the timing was currently unclear, but the position was being closely monitored.

**Key upcoming dates**

- The proposed date of the next APPG for Music Education meeting is February 2020. The next meeting date will be confirmed and circulated in the New Year.