

Ideas & Connectors Group: Terms of Reference

Background

There are two levels of governance for Lancaster Arts: the Lancaster Arts Board (LAB) and the Arts Strategy Committee, both of which report to Arts Council England and Lancaster University. As a result of the need for oversight, there is little opportunity for discussions of depth and exploration and the sharing of new ideas. The original intention of the LAB was to enable this alongside the management functions however this was lost in the necessary reporting functions.

The pandemic has highlighted the need to reconsider the values and functions of an arts organisation embedded within a university and its ability to engage new people, both within the university communities as well as beyond, locally and regionally. An additional layer of engagement would enable a broader voice to our other Boards and act as a two-way sounding board. This group will meet three times a year and for a few hours - less of a meeting and more of a workshop format. It is likely that many of the artists working with us will be joining the meetings.

Lancaster Arts has a commitment to addressing diversity, and inclusion in three specific areas to enable focussed planning, activity, and reflection:

1. who our work is for (audiences & participants)
2. Who it is by (artists) and
3. Who it is with (communities, governance, partners & our teams)

This group will hold these commitments to account and enable a broader engagement with our programme. It will allow Lancaster Arts to gather views of aspects of our work and hear fresh and new ideas.

The LA Ideas & Connectors Group will:

- Act as a Sounding Board and be invited to respond to new ideas, initiatives, our public programme and also, to introduce new ideas from members.
- Meet three times a year; one of these meetings will take place off campus.
- Be hosted live but also with the chance to participate online.
- Make a difference to our programme such as creatively evaluate recently concluded programmes and help us to set up next steps and/or assist in the design and programming of upcoming seasons.
- Meetings or workshops will last approximately 3 hours in order to be effective.
- Be invited to join the Retreat that the LAB will host annually.
- Act as Champions and Connectors for Lancaster Arts.
- Be kept up to date with all of LA activity through the regular newsletter and invited to our public gatherings.
- Commit to at least one year of engagement.
- Members will be invited to contribute agenda items and shape the areas of attention for each meeting.

The group will be supported by many staff members of the Lancaster Arts team but in particular, the Production Assistant, Operations and Planning Manager and the Director. It may be that a member of the Lancaster Arts Board would wish to join to ensure join up with the Advisory Board.

Membership:

The Ideas & Connectors Group will be recruiting members through a light touch application process. Prospective members would be expected to have some kind of experience of Lancaster Arts and/or an understanding of what Lancaster Arts does or is keen to learn. The group will be approximately 15 members and will be balanced across the following groups, both internal and external to the university:

- Lancaster Arts volunteers who come from the student body as well as residents in Lancaster District
- Previous Lancaster Arts Board (LAB) members
- Regular audience members and visitors (to include representation across the combined arts programme (concerts, theatre, dance, visual art)
- Artists or arts professionals interested in contributing in this way
- Participants in our programme, in particular those who have engaged with the programme on multiple occasions.

We particularly encourage applications from those who are marginalised or face prejudice, such as racism and/or socio-economic barriers.

Members for the Ideas & Connectors Group will be sought and invited to apply from August 24th to October 8th. The group will be confirmed on October 16th and our initial meeting will be held in early November.

We really look forward to hearing from you.

The Lancaster Arts team

