

Chisenhale Art Place

Business Plan 2017-2021

Introduction

Chisenhale Art Place (CAP) is a unique centre for artists, art production, education, performance and exhibition, home to 40 artists' studios and two arts organisations: Chisenhale Dance Space and Chisenhale Gallery. The artist-run Studios provides secure affordable work-space to both established and emerging artist members and supports a framework for artist residencies, professional development and collaborative work. Whilst sharing common visions, Chisenhale Gallery—an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation—and Chisenhale Dance Space are separate legal entities, and are independently managed with their own boards of directors.

An arts education charity, Chisenhale Art Place provides a vibrant public education and outreach programme that responds to the needs of the local community and the wider artistic community, nationally and internationally. Whilst Chisenhale Gallery and Chisenhale Dance Space each has its own charitable remit to fulfil, all CAP members are expected to contribute to CAP's public benefit and promote the arts to a variety of audiences. Chisenhale Art Place is an active space with regular events, exhibitions, performances, workshops, community and schools engagement and open studios.

Chisenhale Art Place has occupied the former veneer factory and brewery buildings on Chisenhale Road since 1980. It has another 15 years remaining on its lease with local authority Tower Hamlets. It has no owned estate.

Scope of Strategy

This paper sets out the direction of travel for Chisenhale Art Place from 2017 to 2022. Specifically, to deliver the following:

- a) Carry out its purposes as an arts education charity
- b) Demonstrate its commitment to arts education by supporting a community of shared interest across studio artists, Chisenhale Gallery and Chisenhale Dance.

Vision & Mission

CAP Vision: To be a community of arts practitioners and educators with impact across local, national and international stages.

CAP Mission: To maintain secure affordable arts space provision in order to support creative practice, experimentation and learning within a vibrant, inspirational & challenging arts environment.

Values

CAP aims to include and welcome all regardless of age, disability, ethnicity, religion or gender. It is committed to ensuring social, financial and environmental sustainability. CAP seeks to collaborate and partner with individuals, organisations, and funders who can further its charitable aims and who share its vision and reflect its core values.

Governance

Chisenhale Art Place is a company limited by guarantee (no.01615990). The company is also a registered charity (no. 285125). Its charitable objectives are to:

“Promote, maintain, improve and advance education for the benefit of the public, particularly by the encouragement of the arts including the art of painting, drawing, sculpture, photography, architecture, printmaking, film, music, singing, poetry, literature, lithography, ballet, dance and drama.”

CAP is led by a Board of Trustees chaired by Dr Nigel Brown, and fourteen trustees. With a current staffing level of three (1.3 FTE), responsibility for strategic direction, operational delivery and educational programming rests with Arts Manager Andrea Davidson. CAP is committed to ensuring that staffing levels are commensurate with its aims and objectives, and that staff share the values of the organisation as a whole.

London context

CAP is situated within London Borough of Tower Hamlets (LBTH). The most up to date population estimate for the borough is 295,200, projected to rise to 364,500 by 2026; it has the fastest growing population in the UK. Half the population is aged 20-39, with only 9% aged 60+ and 69% are classed as BAME.

Having announced that he was exploring plans for a **Creative Land Trust** to support London’s artists through affordable creative workspace across the capital, in December 2016 the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan pledged to write to each London borough inviting them to join him in making a pledge to support the important role of workspace for start-ups, small businesses and artists in London. The Mayor’s plans are progressing, but we do not currently know what commitment LBTH has made to artists workspace.

Mayor of Tower Hamlets John Biggs has additionally called for the borough to be “...the most creative, vibrant and enterprising place in London where people have the opportunity to realise their ambition to improve and thrive”. CAP believes that through its members, it is already contributing to ensuring that vision becomes a reality. The organisation is highly invested in its status as a community resource, providing training, creative workshops, volunteering opportunities, mentoring, affordable studio space and other enabling activities to local LBTH and wider London residents.

Although facilitating arts education is not a statutory LA obligation, unlike that of ensuring all children have a school place, CAP is recognised by LBTH as a key borough cultural asset,

Historical context

The history of CAP begins when a group of artists who had previously been working in empty warehouse blocks in Butler’s Wharf were forced to move out by developers. Determined to find new premises offering a more secure situation for themselves, a group joined together to create the kind of space required by practicing artists. Having located a derelict veneer factory that once made propellers for spitfires, in 1980 the group began to transform Chisenhale Works. In 1982, the doors opened to what was to quickly become a thriving centre for art production, exhibition, dance and performance. Thirty-five years on, Chisenhale Art Place continues to occupy a unique position in London’s East End art community, providing a distinctive platform for local, national and international artists and audiences.

Strategic Interventions 2012 – 2017

i) Expanded and diversified education programme

Implementation included a new strand of professional development (Studio4 and Standpoint Futures Residencies. The *Into the Wild* professional development programme. The Pete Lloyd Lewis Studio Award. Artist-led public sharing events.). Also, alignment of education programmes with Tower Hamlets priorities (Family Learning, Tackling Isolation), and an increase in working with external local groups and off-site activities.

ii) New partnerships and associations developed

Implementation included working with new London based organisations such as Standpoint Futures and the Wellcome Trust, and local groups such as Victoria Park, Roman Road Adventure Playground and Artburst.

iii) Redevelopment plan

Discussed; uncompleted

iv) Renovation plan

Implementation included repairing the flat roof, fire safety compliance; external fire escape refurbishment.

v) A review of CAP's Constitution

Consultation completed – no additional significant changes identified at this point

vi) New internal and external communications strategies developed

Implementation included member consultation, communications review, redesigning website and updating content (due again during business panning period); establishing and resourcing social channels; creating a 30th anniversary brochure.

Strategic objectives 2018 – 2021

CAP must continue to be financially sustainable

To ensure that the organisation can cover outgoings and maintain desired reserves, CAP commits to:

- a) Continue to robustly engage with landlord to agree rent set at a level appropriate for a derelict former factory
- b) Keep operational costs down by encouraging members to take on some of the responsibilities for managing the building
- c) Consider appointing professional fundraiser on a pro-rata basis. External revenue sources to be approached may include: external grant-giving bodies; trusts and foundations (this for capital and programmes); private individuals; commercial sponsorship opportunities; benefactors' scheme; auctions.

CAP must continue to be physically sustainable.

CAP must ensure that the building remains structurally fit for purpose as per its original function of providing the kind of space required by practicing artists by committing to invest in maintenance and upkeep.

CAP must continue to carry out its purposes for the public benefit.

An arts education charity, CAP's education activities lie at the heart of this strategic objective. CAP will review current provisioning to ensure that the work we do is timely, sufficiently resourced and fit for purpose. We must be clear about who we serve and how we define

ourselves as an organisation both to ourselves and externally. A sub-committee comprising CAP Arts Manager, trustees and a representative from each of CS, CG and CDS will be appointed.

CAP must develop plan and deliver on an effective advocacy strategy. A sub-committee will be appointed to identify key external stakeholders and influencers and devise an engagement strategy that includes a public affairs element to ensure that it operates effectively within a local and municipal context (LBTH and GLA).

CAP must actively engage with and recruit artists and board members from under-represented communities within the arts to reflect the community in which CAP is based. Studio manager to review studio allocations procedures/residencies in order to facilitate this objective. At the AGM 2017, the Chair of the Board committed to working towards 50:50 gender balance.

CAP must continue to value its staff, by following best practice. As a responsible employer, the Board of Trustees must regularly review and update staff policies in line with legislation and offer development opportunities. CAP is committed to maintaining the London Living Wage.

To note:

Public benefit. CAP is an arts education charity; it is a condition of membership that members contribute to public benefit and this contribution can take many forms. Outreach activities may include but are not limited to: arts workshops; education; student/early career mentoring; exposing traditionally absent communities to different career options.

CAP must carry out a risk assessment exercise. A Board sub-committee will be appointed to carry out a risk assessment encompassing but not limited to: finance; estate; staffing; governance and will align with key areas of risk as identified by CAP Chair Dr Nigel Brown. This committee will also have oversight of operational sustainability: whereby CAP members take responsibility for out-of-hours maintenance and emergency cover under the direction of CAP manager (employed four days per week).