My suggestion to the committee for a series of questions concerning Creative Scotland's relationship with its funded organisations, using Comar on Mull as a specific example.

From **HIE's website**:

**The beginning – HIE's involvement / Mar a tha HIE an sàs**

The creation of Comar is the result of two years of discussion and negotiation between two well established creative organisations based on Mull: Mull Theatre and An Tobar.

Initiated by **Creative Scotland's** new approach to funding provision for creative organisations, Mull Theatre and An Tobar (both with a long history of working with HIE) recognised that they needed to be more aligned in order to satisfy the requirements of **Creative Scotland Foundation Funding**.

Hi~Arts, **Argyll and Bute Council**, HIE and Creative Scotland all collaborated to support the Board and staff of both organisations to identify the best way forward, leading to amalgamation and the formation of the new social enterprise, Comar.

- How much was spent on consultancy, and to whom was it paid, during the process of setting up Comar?
- How much of the setting up of Comar (formerly “Tobermory Arts Centre Trust”) was a) organised by and b) spent by Creative Scotland?

A **petition** to reinstate the artistic directors at Comar has won widespread public support in Mull and Argyll and further afield (over 2000 signatures at the time of writing - the population of Mull is c 2,800) plus considerable press and media coverage.

- Is Creative Scotland planning to initiate any more restructuring and amalgamation of arts organisations? If so, what lessons will it learn from the Comar experience?
- Does Creative Scotland consider that making arts organisations conform to its funding requirements is a better way of fulfilling its mission than conforming its funding to the requirements of arts organisations?
- Has Creative Scotland considered that it could use its funds to canvass arts practitioners and the public directly using Open Space technology (collaborative, rather than directive, working) instead of via a (relatively small) pool of consultants?

**Jennie Macfie**

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