

**Matthews B (Barry)**

**From:** Gwilym Gibbons [gwilym.gibbons@shetlandarts.org]  
**Sent:** 23 February 2007 12:37  
**To:** Chalmers G (Greig)  
**Cc:** jim.tough@scottisharts.org.uk  
**Subject:** Cultural entitlements and the natural creative world.

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Dear Greig

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute the consultation day on the 21 Feb.

I thought I would take this opportunity having reflected on the day to offer some further thoughts on the Culture Bill and particularly cultural entitlements.

I have great expectations and aspirations for the Culture Bill and Creative Scotland. I believe that this is a great opportunity for Scotland, an opportunity to think a little differently on how we support our creativity.

It was interesting that much of the discussion on cultural entitlement within the groups focused on very tangible entitlements (a chance to see touring theatre, access to film and visual art etc.) I am interested in how Creative Scotland and the Cultural Bill can facilitate and enable individuals to realise their full creative potential and how that can become an underpinning national entitlement.

I believe that there is a risk that cultural entitlements could become just a tick list of provision based on the lowest achievable level that a local authority feels it can maintain – a glass ceiling on innovation and imagination. This is a natural response from our LA's Members that was expressed by many present on Wednesday. To balance this, it would be interesting to explore some national entitlements that support an environment of creative space where ideas can flourish and be supported.

I believe that for creativity and innovation to find its full potential (if it ever can be full) we need to look after and nurture of creative environment, the creative ecology. We need to find indicators that can tell us how healthy our creative ecology is and understand the actions that have positive and negative influences. In essence, we need to find what the environmental sector would call 'indicator species'. The question is; if in the natural world we have beetles as indicator species what do we have in the creative world?

With our healthy creative ecosystem in place we then need an entitlement that offers a sort of fast response safety net for when a flare of inspiration/ creativity goes up, ensuring that moment/ creative opportunity isn't lost and we can (if then want support) nurture that individual and idea even when they head of to uncharted creative places that are undefined.

To many times I have had conversations with Members and Officers in various roles in which they express the need to "manage expectation" - this term was used a number of times on Wednesday in discussion groups and this worries me. I believe that we should all feel we have the opportunity to excel, to become the next great film director, writer or songwriter. The management of expectation on behalf of someone doesn't sit well with stimulating innovation and creativity. Somehow we need cultural entitlements that can lift creative aspiration, to say you are entitled to be better than Steven Spielberg.

My final thought: I wondered if you have explored inviting an artist in residence into the Culture Bill Team. Although it might be a little late and a little scary, the results might be very surprising – and if nothing else it would be great if the Culture Bill could provide surprise.

Regards

**Gwilym Gibbons**

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